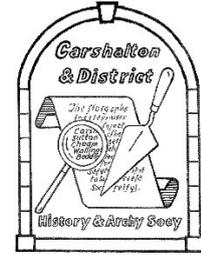


Carshalton & District History & Archaeology Society

Local History Note 1



Sutton before the railway

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1 Introduction

Less is known about the early history of Sutton than any of the villages that became part of the London Borough of Sutton. It has attracted few local historians. The earliest of note was Charles Marshall who published the *History of the old villages of Cheam and Sutton* in 1936 but it is obvious that his real interest was Cheam and that he did little or no original research on Sutton. He was followed by Robert P Smith who produced *A History of Sutton* which went through four editions between 1960 and 1970. It contained a good deal of useful material but was rather scrappy and prone to error. The other notable historian was Frank Burgess who was chiefly interested in early photographs. He worked as an engineer for the council and had an intimate knowledge of the area which fed into several volumes of meticulous photographic history which are important for understanding the development of the present suburban landscape.

Sutton was transformed by the arrival of the railway in 1847 and it quickly turned from a village to a small town which was engulfed by suburban London in the 1920s.¹ Various people have studied, and are studying, aspects of the settlement's 19th and 20th century history but the story of the village before the railway remains neglected. This essay is a preliminary exploration of the history of the village from the end of the middle ages to the coming of the railway. It is a very long way from being a comprehensive survey and is offered as no more than a tentative initial exploration.

Thanks are due to Andrew Skelton and Jeff Richards for information, discussion and comments.

¹ The first railway in Sutton was the line from West Croydon to Epsom which is generally said to have opened in 1847. *Morgan's Almanack* for 1863 says that the line opened to Sutton in 1845 (p. 12). This is supported by *A history and description of Sutton* published by WR Church in 1872 (p. 4). However, reports to the Office of Commissioners of Railways on an inspection made in May 1847 shows that the line was then nearing completion (TNA MT 6/4/25 and 26). The conventional 1847 date of opening is therefore almost certainly correct.

2 The manor and the manor house

2.1 The manor

The lords of the manor of Sutton controlled a great deal of the land in the parish and their management could have had a significant influence on the development of the village.

The manor appears to have been held by the abbot of Chertsey from the mid-Saxon period until 1537 when Henry VIII confiscated it.² It was almost immediately granted to Sir Nicholas Carew of Beddington but returned to the crown following his execution in 1539. Mary restored it to his son Sir Francis in 1553. He died childless in 1611 and the manor passed to Sir Robert Darcy who was related to the Carews through a marriage to one of Francis's sisters.

Robert Darcy died in 1618 leaving a son Edward who had no male heirs which meant that the manor would revert to the Crown on his death. There was some competition for the reversion and eventually it was acquired by Thomas Earl of Portland from whom it passed by sale to Sir Richard Mason. He left two daughters, Anne the wife of Henry Brett and Dorothy the wife of Sir William Brownlow. In 1716 after the death of Dorothy, Anne Brett (the younger sister) and Sir John Brownlow, son of Sir William sold it to Henry Cliffe, an East India captain. He had two sons, the elder Richard who died childless and Henry who left a daughter Margaretta Eleanora. She married Thomas Hatch in 1785. He died in 1822 and the manor passed to his son the Rev Thomas Hatch. He probably sold the manor to Thomas Alcock in 1845 for £13,825.³

2.2 The manor houses

There would not have been a manor house when Chertsey Abbey owned the estate although they probably had some buildings from which they managed their property. The Carews were based at Beddington, an easy ride away, so they would have had no need for a manor house. This changed in 1611 when the Darcys inherited. They were probably the first lords to live in the manor since the Saxon period and they may have built a manor house or perhaps adapted some existing building of suitable size. It is likely that Sir Richard Mason lived in Sutton. His daughter Dorothy, who married Sir William Brownlow, was commemorated by a very elaborate monument in St Nicholas Church. The Brownlow's principle house was at Belton near Grantham in Lincolnshire, but they may well have used Sutton as a convenient out of town residence. The Cliffes certainly had a big house in the parish as it is explicitly referred to in a legal dispute over the management of the estate during the minority of Margaretta Eleanora Cliffe. It appears that in 1770-2 the 'great house' was let to Richard Machall and that he then assigned the lease to one Glyn Wynne Esq.

² The descent of the manor is based on VCH Surrey vol. 4 p. 245 unless otherwise noted.

³ Smith 1970 p. 114 says that he was shown the original deeds but he confuses Thomas Hatch, the father, with the son. The VCH of Surrey says that in 1831 the Rev. Thomas Hatch, his son, and Anne Marie Ellen his wife conveyed the manor to Charles Thelwell Abbott citing Feet of Fines Surrey, Mich 2 William IV. It is possible that this relates to a mortgage or trust but the matter has not been investigated. Abbott was probably of Walton on Thames, born 1786, died 1853.

Margaret Eleanora's mother seems to have taken lodgings in a local farmhouse when she visited the estate but appears to have been normally resident elsewhere.⁴

The location of this 'great house' is problematic. The 19th century manor house stood on the north side of Manor Lane about TQ2596 6447. It was demolished in 1896 and the only known photo shows that the south front was a Tudor-gothic building which looks Victorian.⁵ The 1868 map hints that the front was added to an earlier building which was standing in the late 18th century as it appears on a map in the Surrey History Centre. The 18th century building does not look particularly like a major house, so the 18th century great house was probably elsewhere. The Surrey quarter sessions records for 1728 contain a certificate of the good repair of the highway in Sutton 'near the Court House between Cheam and Sutton'.⁶ This might be equated with Court Lodge House which is shown on the Surrey History Centre map near the corner of Robin Hood Lane and West Street at about TQ2568 6421 northwest of the church. The enclosure and tithe award maps suggest that by the early 19th century this was a farm. There was a house on the site in 1868 which was still standing when the 1934 Ordnance Survey map was made.⁷ It must have been demolished soon after to make way for Falcourt Close.

3 The church

The ancient parish church of St Nicholas was rebuilt in the 1860s. The previous building is known from a watercolour in the Minet Library, Lambeth and a photo of the east end in the Sutton Local Studies collection. It was a small structure with a chancel and nave with a wooden bell tower at the west end. The latter was replaced by a brick tower early in the 19th century. The watercolour shows a plain – probably wooden – porch on the north side of the nave and the photo a small building with a chimney on the south side – perhaps a vestry. The chancel had flint walls and a tile roof. There was a large east window in decorated gothic style – possibly from the first half of the 14th century. There were also two windows in the north and south wall – the latter not the same size. The nave was rendered. The watercolour suggests that the roof was tiled but the photo seems to show Horsham or some similar stone. The photo shows a large – perhaps 18th century – 'gothic' window in the south side with another possible window behind the supposed vestry. The watercolour shows a window to the east of the porch and a possible door to the west of it. The photo suggests that the chancel was longer than the nave and had a lower pitched roof. Overall the church appears both small and humble although it contained a notable monument to Dorothy Brownlow.

⁴ TNA C 101/6300.

⁵ Smith 1970 p. 16 and figure 1. Smith says it was demolished in 1896. It is shown on the 25 inch OS map published that year but not on the 1913 one.

⁶ List entry for SHC QS2/6/1728/Xms/27.

⁷ A house called Sutton Court stood on the south side of Carshalton Road on the site of the present police station (TQ2604 6401). Very little is known about this building which is on the chalk away from the springs. It is not shown on the Surrey History Centre map and may not predate the late 18th century

4 The village in the landscape

Sutton is at the foot of the dip-slope of the North Downs at the head of a small stream called the Pyl Brook which flows away northwards to join the Beverly Brook and then the Thames. There are hills of London clay around Rosehill and St Helier to the north of the old village while the land to the south rises up to the chalk downs. At the western end of Lower Road there is a watershed with the Wandle. A lidar scan shows that a dry valley runs down the dip slope on the west side of Brighton Road. It passes Sutton railway station where the construction of the railway has disrupted the topography, then passes two former chalk pits, one now occupied by B & Q and the other by the Water Gardens estate, and runs towards the junction of Westmead Road and Benhill Road at the watershed between the Wandle and the Pyl Brook.⁸ The old village stood on northward sloping ground to the west of the valley.

4.1 The springs

The position of the springs in Sutton is poorly understood partly because large scale water pumping started at an early date – the Sutton Water Company was founded in 1863. The works stood in an old chalk pit which is now occupied by the Water Gardens estate (TQ2365 6426). Piles street directory for 1896 says that the wells were 35 and 40 feet deep with adits driven east and west and that 950,000 gallons were pumped in an 8 hour day. These wells cut into a dry valley and would have intercepted the water flowing down to any springs.

The following streams and ponds are currently known:

- Around Manor Lane on the east side of the High Street. Roque's map of about 1760 shows the Pyl Brook rising on the north side of Manor Lane, crossing the High Street around the Green and then flowing westwards to join the present course. The 1868 Ordnance Survey map shows an oval pond in the grounds of the manor house (approximately TQ2597 6457) and RP Smith mentions three spring fed ponds on the Manor estate.⁹
- Divers Ditch was a pond on the north side of West Street to the east of the Robin Hood Pub (TQ2567 6429). This is not shown on an 18th century map in the Surrey History Centre but it does appear on Roque and the 1868 OS map.¹⁰ The pond was probably spring fed. RP Smith says that a stream from it ran down the passage from West Street to Crown Road.¹¹ Part of this is now Thorncroft and Brandon Roads (approximately TQ2571 6431 to TQ2557 6471).
- Victoria Pond at the southern end of the Green. This is shown on the 1815 enclosure map and later surveys. It is not known if it was spring fed.
- The tithe award map and the 1868 OS map shows a pond on the east side of the High Street at the junction or somewhat south of the present Burnell Road (TQ2574 6489). It is not known if this was spring fed.

⁸ This cuts across the general run of the landscape and may follow the line of a minor fault. Smee 1872 p. 21 refers to a possible minor fault in one of the Sutton chalk pits.

⁹ Smith 1970 p. 63.

¹⁰ SHC K90/55/1. See section 11.

¹¹ Smith 1970 p. 63.

I am not aware of any springs at the foot of the dry valley around the junction of Westmead Road and Benhill Road but they may have existed before the water company started pumping.

4.2 The layout of the village

The old village lay along the north-south aligned High Street which ran down from the Cock Cross Roads to the edge of Sutton Common (now the Green) a distance of about 1.1km or somewhat under three quarters of a mile. In the early 19th century the buildings were scattered along the street leaving significant gaps. There were buildings around the church, along West Street and along the edges of what is now The Green but was then part of Sutton Common.

The north side of West Street and the High Street to the north of this have gaps suggestive of vacant house plots hinting that the village may once have been more densely built up.

5 Population

There are no reliable population statistics for Sutton before the censuses carried out in the first year of the decade from 1801. These show a pattern of rapid growth through the 19th century with a sharp turn upwards from 1851:

Year	Population
1801	579
1811	638
1821	911
1831	1121
1841	1304
1851	1387
1861	3186
1871	6558
1881	10334
1891	13977

The number of houses also rose from 100 in 1801 to 272 in 1841.

Tracing earlier population levels depends on extrapolation from other indirect sources.

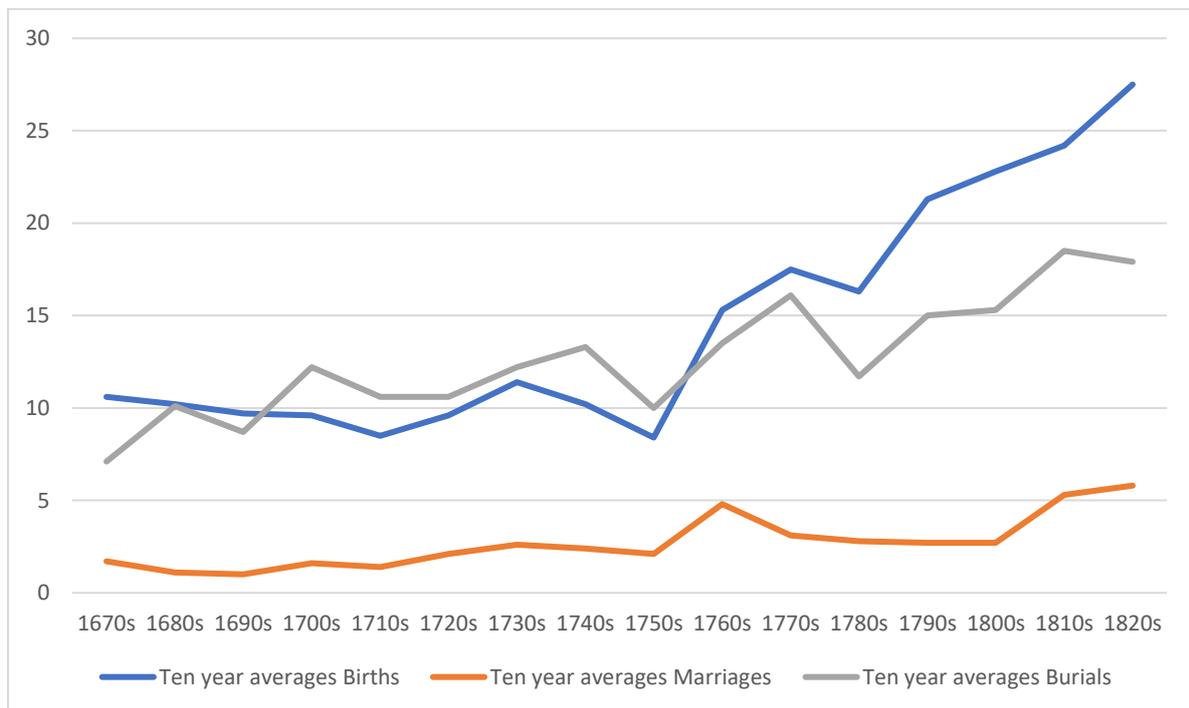
Some idea of trends can be gained by counting the number births, marriages and deaths in the parish register.¹² The surviving registers start in 1636 but there were periods after this when they were either kept poorly or not at all. The worst is the 1650s and early 1660s but there are possible gaps in 1714, 1746, 1751-2 and 1780. The number of entries in the 1640s are very low. However, this was during the civil war and it is impossible to put the decade in context as the data for the preceding and following decades are largely missing. The usable data is therefore limited to the period after 1670. The averages below ignore the data gaps in this period so the figures for the 1710s, 1740s, 1750s and 1780s are almost certainly too

¹² This is based on Bannerman printed transcript of the register. I have converted the old-style years to modern ones.

low. However, these defects, and perhaps other less obvious ones, probably don't invalidate the overall picture.

Ten year averages

	Births	Marriages	Burials
1670s	10.6	1.7	7.1
1680s	10.2	1.1	10.1
1690s	9.7	1	8.7
1700s	9.6	1.6	12.2
1710s	8.5	1.4	10.6
1720s	9.6	2.1	10.6
1730s	11.4	2.6	12.2
1740s	10.2	2.4	13.3
1750s	8.4	2.1	10
1760s	15.3	4.8	13.5
1770s	17.5	3.1	16.1
1780s	16.3	2.8	11.7
1790s	21.3	2.7	15
1800s	22.8	2.7	15.3
1810s	24.2	5.3	18.5
1820s	27.5	5.8	17.9



There are two striking features in the data: in the first half of the 18th century the number of burials was greater than the number of births, and that this changed around mid-century with a rapid increase in births. If there was no net migration this would mean that the population of Sutton was falling in the first half of the 18th century and rising thereafter. It

is therefore likely that the 1801 census was made after a period of population growth and that in 1700 numbers would have been significantly lower.

Looking further back is even more problematic. The 1664 hearth tax lists 30 households with 92 hearths who were liable to pay and 22 households with 28 hearths who were exempt. – a total of 52 households. This compares with 93 occupied and 7 unoccupied houses in 1801. If the average household size was 4.75 persons, which was typical of early modern England, the implied population would be around 247.¹³

The 1498 Chertsey Abbey rent roll lists only 21 tenants. In most cases the size of the holdings is not given but it is clear that a significant part of the land was in the hands of very few people. The entries give both the current and previous landowners and show that 20 tenants in 1498 had acquired their land from 46 previous tenants suggesting that there had been a considerable concentration of holdings in the last few decades of the 15th century. This may have led to a decline in the population of the village, but it is impossible to be certain. It is equally impossible to say how many households there were as some may have been sub-tenants and there may also have been land in the parish not owned by Chertsey.

The 18th century changes may reflect regional trends. Lysons, who was writing at the end of the century, frequently comments on recent population growth in the villages around London. However, the changes may also have roots in the local economy.

6 Farming

The southern and northern parts of Sutton parish are on very different soils. The south end rests on chalk which results in well drained soils. In the 18th century – and earlier – the higher parts of the chalk were open grass covered downland which provided good pasture for sheep while the lower slopes were arable land. There was a narrow strip of sand which ran east-west across the parish with its northern edge roughly on the line of Robin Hood Lane, Manor Lane and Lower Road. To the north of this was clay, partly the Woolwich and Reading beds but mostly London clay. This was ill drained, acidic, and in general poor. Drainage was probably somewhat easier where the clay was on a slope. The clays were partly fields but two areas – Benhill and Sutton Common – were left open as rough pasture. Edwards, writing at the end of the 18th century, said that the common consisted ‘of a strong black clay, wet, springy, and very productive of rushes’.¹⁴ It seems to have been poor cattle pasture. There were areas of alluvial soil along the Pyl Brook which were probably meadow – as suggested by the name Hallmead.

In the late middle ages England was a noted producer of wool, a significant part of which was exported to mainland Europe. The wool produced in southeast England was generally not of the best quality but downs in the Sutton area seem to have been an exception. The late 15th and early 16th century was a period of exceptionally high wool prices and, in England, a large amount of arable land was enclosed to make way for sheep.¹⁵ It seems likely that this is what lies behind the sharp reduction in the number of tenants in the years

¹³ Laslett p. 66-72 and 93.

¹⁴ Edwards 1801 p. 18.

¹⁵ Bowden 1962 p. xv-xvi, 4-6 and 24.

preceding the 1496 Chertsey rental. The document was approved before two leading tenants, Richard and John Cooke. Their father was Richard Cooke. His will, which received PCC probate on 27 July 1494, shows that he was a man of some wealth with several properties in Croydon, land in Cheam and a house in 'Streend', as well his land in Sutton.¹⁶ This was largely split between the two sons with provision for his wife for her lifetime. The elder son, Richard received his father's 'right' to the manor of Sutton. At this point the manor still belonged to Chertsey so the right must have been a lease. We do not know when Cooke took control, but it may have been he who reduced the number of tenants to make way for sheep.

The importance of sheep emerges clearly from the will of Alice Stuard which was written in 1484 and proved in 1486.¹⁷ She left 20 sheep for the upkeep of St Nicholas church, 48 to 15 named people, 1 to each of her godsons, 1 to each of the sons of three named people – over 72 in total. The only other animals mentioned were a red cow and her yoke of oxen.

All or part of the medieval manor would have been worked as common fields in which the tenants farmed strips scattered in large open unhedged fields. The Surrey History Centre map shows that these fields still survived at the southern end of the parish at the end of the 18th century but that a large part of the land to the north had been divided into smaller enclosed fields.¹⁸ The boundary was roughly along Robin Hood Lane, Manor Lane and Lower Road which approximates to the southern edge of the clay. The landscape was divided in a similar way in Carshalton where there is evidence that the northern part of the parish had been enclosed by the early 17th century.¹⁹ Both the Sutton and Carshalton enclosures may date from the late 15th or 16th century. The wet clay lands were probably never easy to plough and in the early modern period they may have been largely put down to grass.

The southern end of the parish, which remained as common field, was still being farmed a collective way at the end of the 18th century. In 1786 and 1791 the customs or collective working practices of the manor were set out in the court rolls.²⁰

The down was mainly used for keeping sheep at a rate of two for every acre of other land owned with a maximum of 300. They could be let onto the cultivated common field 10 days after the last crops had been carried away. They could remain there until 2 February but then had to be removed from any land that had been sown with crops.

Sutton Common was wet clay land would have been more suited to cattle than sheep although it appears that both were kept on it. It seems that pigs were also kept there as they were to come no further into the village than Hall Mead Gate. The common had to be clear of cattle, sheep and presumably pigs from 14 April to 25 July.

The number of cattle that someone could keep depended on the size of their landholding. All householders could have one cow, a householder with 10 acres two, 20 acres three and

¹⁶ Hooper 1952 p. 45-6.

¹⁷ *Surrey wills (Archdeaconry Court. Spage Register)*. Surrey Record Society vol. 5 no. XVII item 109.

¹⁸ SHC K90/55/1.

¹⁹ The field boundaries are shown on the Arundel map of Carshalton which is in the Duke of Norfolk's archives at Arundel Castle. It is undated but was probably made about 1620.

²⁰ Sutton 6/4 p. 141-2 and 6/5 p. 13-5.

so on up to a maximum of six. Each household paid a small sum to a herdsman who looked after them. Every householder in Sutton was allowed to cut a two-horse-cart load of furze from what is now Banstead Down for fuel.

As the 18th century progressed this type of management was increasingly seen as archaic. In 1739 the leading copyholders sued the Lord of the Manor, Richard Cliffe and James Baker of Kingston Wicke, Middlesex, Mercer, in the Court of Chancery. They claimed that Cliffe had granted Baker a lease of the common on Benhill and that he had then cleared the bushes and ploughed up a large part of it and had deprived them of their right to collect bushes and furze for use on their holdings and graze cows and sheep for the four months between the feast of St Michael the archangel (29 September) to the feast of the purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary (2 February). Richard Cliffe died while the case was in progress and his heir Henry sought to settle the matter out of court by acknowledging his tenant's rights.²¹

In 1801 the government organised a survey of the crops grown in each parish.²² The land in Sutton grew:

Crop	Acres
Wheat	268
Barley	210
Oats	154
Potatoes	6
Peas	35
Beans	24
Turnips and rape	75
Rye	7

Pasture, sown grass and land left fallow were not included. It appears that just over 82% of the arable land was devoted to cereals and just under 18% to other crops. This is a higher proportion of cereals than most of the neighbouring parishes but the reason for this is unclear.²³ The turnips and rape were likely used for winter feed for sheep.

7 A sporting landscape

In the 1730s London papers carried adverts for April horse race meetings on the downs above Carshalton. This used a straight four-mile-long track that ran from Epsom to Carshalton. The race was organised by a group of Carshalton gentleman and appears to have been a significant date in the sporting calendar. Three establishments are particularly mentioned in connection with this: The Greyhound and Barrow Hedges, both in Carshalton, and the Cock in Sutton.²⁴ It is not clear how long this race continued before being superseded by the circular course on Epsom Downs. The Carshalton races were advertised

²¹ Sutton 6/2 f. 109-111.

²² Parton 1967.

²³ Ashted 68%, Beddington 77%, Carshalton 83%, Cheam 76%. There is no data for Epsom, Ewell or Cuddington.

²⁴ *Daily Courant* 1 March 1735, *London Evening Post* 2 March 1736 both in the BL Burney Collection.

in 1740 but at some thereafter they ceased or at least went into decline.²⁵ The Cock, however, continued to be involved in horse racing. From mid-century there are adverts for the services of stallions there and also for horse sales.²⁶ The nature of the business was made clear in an advert in the *London Evening Post* on 31 December 1772:

Mr Sparrow, at the Cock, in Sutton, near Epsom, humbly begs leave to return his most sincere thanks to the nobility, gentry, and others, by whose favour he has been long supported, for which he will retain the most grateful remembrance, and acquaints them, that he is succeeded in business, by John Ryder, who has been brought up [?] in, and had the principal management of the business with him for many years, both in the management and training of horses, and who, with me, begs to recommend himself for their future favours, where no care or diligence will be wanting, either in the management and training up of their horses, or their accommodation in the house; where they will always find a good larder, and the best of liquors, therefore hopes for the encouragement of the public, so long as he makes it his chief study and endeavours to deserve it.

N.B. John Ryder desires to acquaint the public, that he has got so well of his late unfortunate accident, that he hopes very soon to be able to ride for any gentleman who will do him the honour to employ him.

Good post-chaises, able horses, and careful drivers.

In 1775 there is rare reference to Cock fighting there, the gentlemen of Croydon and Carshalton versus those of Epsom.²⁷

8 The Brighton Road

At the beginning of the 18th century the road through Sutton was of no more than local importance. It connected London with the small market town of Reigate and, beyond that, with the Weald and the small fishing harbour at Brighton. The 18th century saw a gradual improvement in the roads around London and in England generally. The usual source of this was the creation of turnpike trusts which took over sections of roads and repaired and improved them using the takings from toll gates erected at key points. There were two turnpikes of significance to Sutton. The first, which covered the road from London to the 11th mile stone in what is now Sutton High Street appears to have been authorised by a 1717 Act 'for amending the Roads from the City of London to the Town of East Grinstead, in the County of Sussex, and to the Towns of Sutton and Kingston, in the County of Surrey'.²⁸

The second trust – the Reigate turnpike – was authorised in 1755.²⁹ It controlled the Brighton road from the 11th milestone in Sutton south to the county boundary and also the road from Sutton through Cheam to Ewell.

²⁵ *London Evening Post* 2 February 1740.

²⁶ *General Advertiser* 10 February 1749; *Public Advertiser* 9 April 1754.

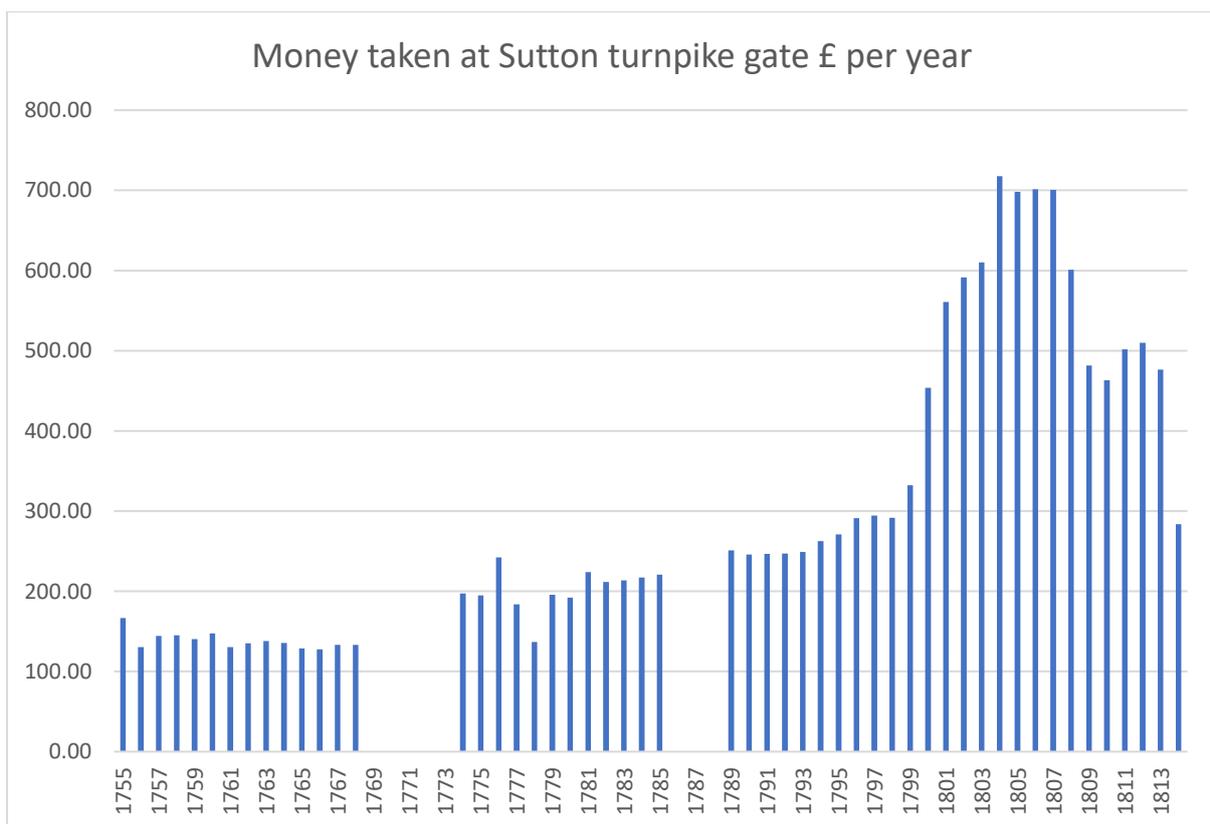
²⁷ *Daily Advertiser* 20 March 1775.

²⁸ Private Act, 4 George I, c. 4, 1717.

²⁹ 28 George II chapter 28. However, the milestone in Brighton Road is dated 1745.

When the roads through Sutton were turnpiked Brighton’s rise as a seaside resort was still in the future – but only just. A Dr Russell published a *Dissertation concerning the use of sea water in diseases of the glands* in Latin in 1750 and English in 1753. On this foundation Brighton began to develop as a spa and fashionable resort. A ball room and an assembly room were built in the 1760s. The Duke of Gloucester came in 1765, the Duke of Cumberland in 1771, 1772 and 1779 and the Prince of Wales in 1783, 1785 and 1786. In 1785 he married Mrs Fitzherbert. The Marine Pavilion – later to develop in the Royal Pavilion was built 1786-7.³⁰

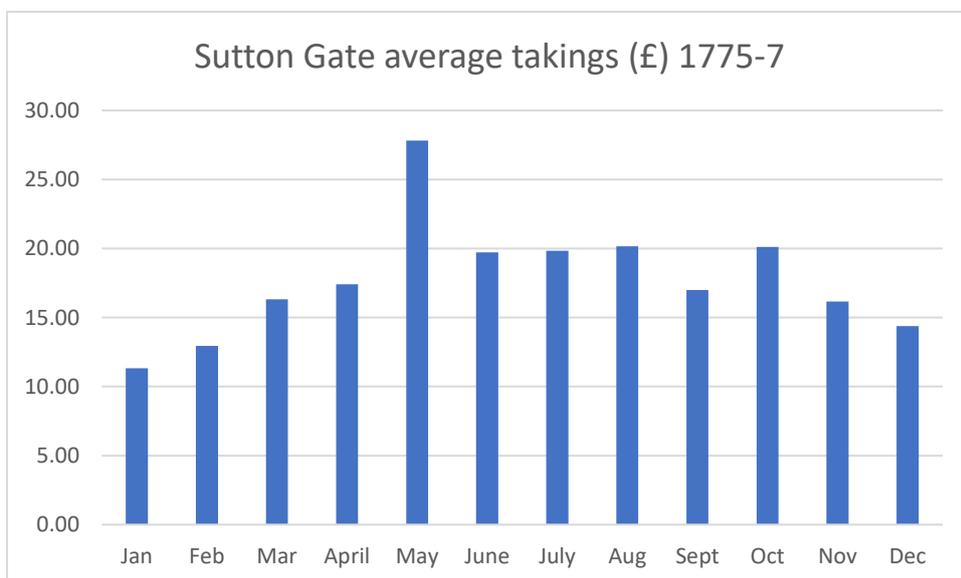
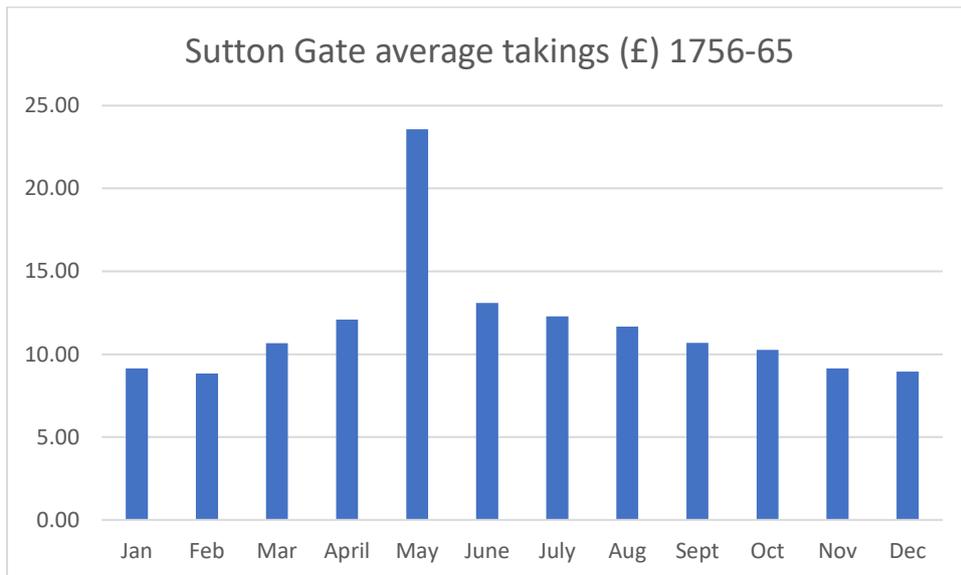
The Reigate Trust’s accounts record the takings at the Sutton toll gate for most of the years between 1755 and 1814.³¹ The takings rose gradually from about £140 in the late 1750s to just under £300 at the end of the 1790s. Some of this no doubt reflected the growing importance of Brighton but it is likely, given the growth of the economy, that a rise would be seen at almost any toll gate around London. There was sharp rise in 1800 and takings reached a peak of over £700 in 1804. This was during the Napoleonic Wars when English coastwise shipping suffered heavily from the attentions of French privateers, perhaps causing freight to be diverted from the sea to more costly but safer roads. After 1814 the tolls were leased out and we no longer have separate figures for the Sutton gate.



³⁰ Nairn and Pevsner 1965 p. 426.

³¹ SHC K68/2/1, K68/2/2, K682//3.

The accounts also contain monthly figures from 1755-78 allowing an exploration of seasonal patterns. In the period 1756-65 there was a very marked peak in May which almost certainly the result of a regular race meeting on the Downs. This suggests that the April meeting was no longer taking place in Carshalton and it seems likely that May event was on Epsom Downs. The same May peak appears in the figures for 1775-7. Unfortunately, the monthly figures end just before the creation of the Derby and the Oaks. Derby Day was to become a major source of traffic in Sutton into the 20th century.



The journey to Brighton, or anywhere else, was very slow by modern standards, and both people and horses needed regular refreshments so the rising traffic provided opportunities for inn keepers. Stage coaches were particularly extravagant. The four horses were replaced with fresh ones at regular intervals and while this was being done the passengers would take a break.

Edwards, who wrote *Companion from London to Brighthelmston* at the end of the 18th century says:

The Cock Inn is situated at the south-east angle formed by the cross roads: it is a house that has a very extensive road business, being a stage betwixt London and Reigate; and from the good order and excellency of the accommodations, joined with the obliging dispositions of Mr and Mrs Fuller, who keep it, may be justly deemed one of the first inns on this road betwixt London and Brighthelmston.³²

He also mentions The Greyhound which was on the east side of the High Street immediately north of the present Marks and Spencer. Both had gallows inn signs spanning the street and yards behind them with accommodation for horses.

9 Quarrying

Sutton town centre still contains two large disused chalk pits although they are not immediately obvious. One contains B & Q, the other the Water Gardens estate. The two pits were substantial enough to be marked on Roque's map of Surrey about 1760. George Clinch, writing at the beginning of the 20th century says that the lime used to make St Paul's Cathedral was 'procured and burnt at Sutton, Surrey, where, just by the railway station, is a large disused chalk-pit, from which according to local tradition, the chalk was dug for this purpose'.³³ The cathedral was built between 1675 and 1710 but the voluminous accounts relating to the project have not been examined to see if the tradition is correct. The pit has, however, been traced from the early 18th century when it was worked by Edmond Hawkins. His death in 1728 led to a family dispute which was litigated in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. This was, from the historian's point of view fortunate, as it produced a collection of papers from which we can learn much about the business.³⁴ The dispute largely centred on the money owed to Hawkins at the time of his death and the extent to which they was any hope of recovering it. His widow Margaret produced an inventory of his possession, assets and the debts owing to him. Several of Edmond's siblings claimed that the property was undervalued and that debts owing had been omitted.³⁵ Margaret claimed that the debts were mostly bad and unrecoverable. Further inventories were produced but it is not entirely clear how the matter was resolved. There may have been other sources of ill will. Edmond was buried at St Nicholas, Sutton, on 12 March 1728. On 1 December 1729 she remarried to one Richard Mathews at St Nicholas. Remarriage was quite usual in the 18th century and need not have caused any particular resentment. There is however, a very suspicious entry for a clandestine marriage between William Matthews and Margaret Halkins on 1 July 1726. They were allegedly bachelor and spinster, both of Sutton, Surrey.³⁶ Was his Christian name and one letter of her surname altered to conceal a bigamous marriage? It is impossible to be certain but if so, the probate dispute may have been part of a wider family feud. The troubles may have deep roots. The will of Alice Hawkins of Sutton,

³² Edwards 1801 p. 19.

³³ Clinch 1906 p. 138.

³⁴ TNA PROB 31/62/689, PROB 31/58/343, PROB 31/94/481 and PROB 31/67/293.

³⁵ TNA PROB 18/42/82.

³⁶ TNA RG 7/78 via Ancestry.

who was probably the mother of Edmund the lime burner, is a curious document. She died in 1723 and described herself as a 'spinster'. However, she left her sons Edmund, Thomas and George 1s each while the daughters Sarah and Ann were to have 40s apiece.³⁷ All the rest of the goods and chattels with the lease of the farm she had lately taken was to go to her 'loving friend' William Rogers who was also sole executor. If he was not alive her property was to be divided amongst her children. It seems that she was not in desperate financial straits and the legacies to her children – particularly her sons – were intended to be an insult.³⁸

Edmonds debts – mostly unpaid bills for lime - may have been built over many years so the accounts cannot be used as a snapshot of the business's trading position. The longest inventory lists 207 outstanding payments – some of a few shillings but 26 for over £10 and two exceptional debts were for £134 7s 0d and £117 13s 6d, much more than a year's wages for most 18th century people. In total Hawkins was owed over £1,026.³⁹

In the 18th century lime was used for mortar and plaster, improving farm land and as an industrial material – the leather industry is the most likely consumer in the local area. The lists of debts do not say what the lime was used for and very rarely give the buyer's location. Those given are seldom local and it seems likely that these were not recorded out of familiarity. The most commonly named places are Richmond and Kingston and most of the others are in the same general area. This is not entirely surprising as Sutton was one of the nearest sources of chalk. Although his market was more than immediately local his volume of production cannot have been huge as he seems to have worked a single kiln.

The chalk pit ended up in the hands of a George Hawkins who was probably the younger brother of Edmond.⁴⁰ In his will dated 23 June 1748 he describes himself as a husbandman rather than a limeburner. He left his customary messuages or tenement, lime kiln or chalk pit and three acres of land thereto belonging to his daughter Sarah and asked for the residue of his goods, chattels and personal estate to be divided equally between his three daughters Rose, Sarah and Mary. Sarah to be executrix. The will was proved 2 July 1751 and the manor court roll shows that the chalk pit was conveyed to Sara Wasingham.⁴¹ The property can be traced through the manor court rolls into the 19th century.

The pit on the north side of Carshalton Road which is now occupied by the Water Gardens housing estate appears on Roques map and must be of considerable antiquity, but nothing is known of its history before the 19th century. Morgan's Sutton directory for 1864 lists Henry Clouser as a lime burner, Jenney Lind Road. He appears in the 1841 census as 'Henry Clawse' lime burner at 'lime pit'. The freehold was offered for sale with other property on 1 January 1874. It consisted of 'The chalk pit, lime works, brick built draw kiln and well; brick

³⁷ LMA DW/PA/05/1723/059.

³⁸ The names of Edmund Hawkins siblings can be traced in TNA PROB 18/42/82 and in the St Nicholas parish register. Alice is almost certainly the mother of Edmund the lime burner. His father, her husband was also called Edmond. It is possible that they had never married but the Sutton parish register for the mid-17th century has large gaps in it.

³⁹ TNA PROB 31/58/343. Some numbers are illegible so the full total would be a little higher.

⁴⁰ Baptised at St Nicholas 14 September 1681.

⁴¹ LMA DW/PA/05/1751/047; Sutton 6/3 16 r & v.

and chalk built cottage, containing three rooms; adjoining brick-built stabling for 3 horses, with loft over; a brick-built cottage containing three rooms; and a detached timber and tiled shed; the whole being in the occupation of Mr. Henry Clowser, jun., who has the power to dig the chalk and draw in the same, and burn it in the before-mentioned kiln'.⁴²

There were several other small chalk pits around the village, all now filled and without any known history:

- On the east side of the High Street at about 78-98 – the site of Wilkinson's and the shops downhill as far as the former Dixons opposite St Nicholas Road.
- On the west side of Brighton Road just south of the railway station.
- Along the parish boundary to the south of Carshalton Road. This long narrow pit is a most unusual shape.

10 Conclusion

It appears that in the late 15th century the Abbott of Chertsey or the Cook family consolidated the land holding in Sutton and probably caused a fall in the population. This did not really recover until the late 18th century and it is likely that the lords of the manor ran it as a closed village by limiting the number of cottages that were occupied by poor people with a view to minimising the cost of relief which fell on a parish rate. Farming must have been the biggest economic activity until the 19th century. The lime industry was probably not a large employer but it probably benefited the local farmers who provided carting services.

The road was also a significant part of the economy. Much of the traffic – particularly the profitable gentry traffic – was probably connected with sporting on the downs – which was almost certainly the cause of the big jump in turnpike tolls in May. The Brighton traffic must have grown in importance in the later 18th century but it is hard to see this as the sole cause of the rise in population that is evident from the late 18th century.

The coming of the railway changed everything. Alcock almost certainly bought the manor with an eye to property development and he and his associates were soon building. By 1900 Sutton was a small town and most of the old village had been demolished.

11 Appendix: the date of the Surrey History Centre map

The label on the back says 'A Plan of Sutton drawn by M^r W^m Robinson of Reigate in the County of Surrey Tho^s Hatch'.⁴³

Thomas Hatch was lord of the manor of Sutton from his marriage to the heiress Margareta Eleanora Cliffe in 1785. The label suggests that the map is later than this but the principle land owner is Mrs M Cliffe or occasionally Mrs Mary Cliffe rather than Hatch. The latter does not seem to be named. The only M Cliffe who owned the manor was Margareta Eleanora who inherited in 1761 when she was still a minor. Her mother was called Susanna and was

⁴² Sutton 48/8/14.

⁴³ SHC K90/55/1.

initially her guardian. About 1770 Margaretta Eleanora sued her mother acting through her aunt and 'next friend' Mary Cliffe, spinster.⁴⁴ The dispute seems to have been about the income from the estate and the map may possibly have been prepared in connection with this. Susanna was buried at St Nicholas on 21 August 1771.

The variations in the depiction of the buildings suggest that the map was partly based on an earlier one. This is supported by the note 'Glebe land on the old plan' which appears to the west of the Green.

Sutton Lodge is not marked although it appears on Roques map of Surrey and there is documentary evidence that it was built by 1748.⁴⁵ There is no toll house on Brighton Road and no sign that the road had been turnpiked.

The Surrey History Centre has two other maps by William Robinson, one of 'Tranquil Dale in Betchworth and Buckland' dated 1772 and another of Reigate dated 1773-4.⁴⁶ He also carried out a survey and acted as a witness in a boundary dispute with Merton which was heard at Croydon Assizes in 1793.⁴⁷ Robinson was also surveyor Scawen estates, acting for the trustees of James Scawen. He surveyed Carshalton Park in 1782. Around the same time he bought land on the south side of Wallington Green and soon divided it up and sold it on for a profit.⁴⁸

It seems likely that the map dates from the 1770s and that William Robinson may have based it on an earlier map. This may have been the one drawn by William Brazier in 1718 which Robinson produced in evidence in a 1793 boundary dispute with Merton.⁴⁹ The label on the back of the Surrey History Centre may have been added later.

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⁴⁴ TNA C 101/6300.

⁴⁵ Sutton Court Roll 6/3, 4 April 1749 and 6/4 p. 1-3.

⁴⁶ SHC 304/K/Plan5 and SHC 3537/2/6.

⁴⁷ Sutton Manor court. Sutton 6/5 p. 25-6.

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