



# Broadbridge Heath Parish Plan 2004







## **Foreward**

The Broadbridge Heath Parish Plan Steering Committee was formed in the Spring of 2003 to give an opportunity for every member of the village to come forward with views and opinions on the future of the community. This has not been an easy task, and I would like to thank all those who participated, especially the committee who have worked so hard.

Pam Law  
Chairperson  
Broadbridge Heath Parish Plan Steering Committee  
March 2004

### **Committee Members**

Pam Law (Chairperson), Jonathan England (Secretary), Kim Gregory, Vivien Edwards, Basil Stenning, Judith Jones, Margaret Halliwell, Yvonne Piggott, Brian Venn, Nicola Gibbins, Chris Conibear, Barbara Hutton, Moira Muttick, Garey Paddock, Tracey Paddock

Photographs by Mick Law and Jonathan England

### **Cover pictures:**

**Top: The view northwards from the footpath west of the Highwoods with the main part of the village and the retail park in the distance.**

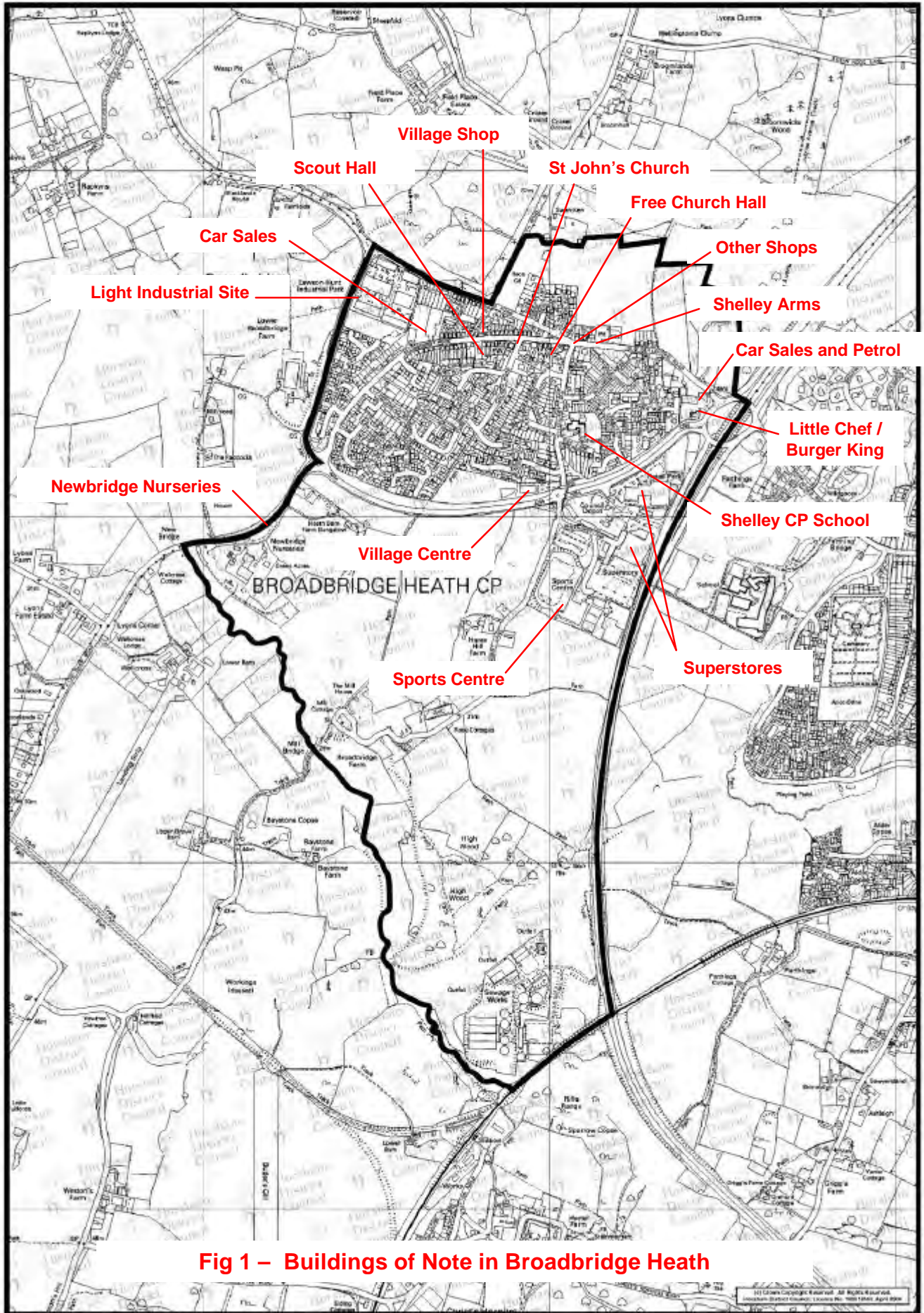
**Bottom, clockwise from top left:**

**The medieval Corsletts Farm; The Ducky, a popular pond situated on the Common; St John's Church a striking 1960s building with Crucifix by local sculptor Bainbridge Copnall; The Shelley Arms Public House.**

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# BROADBRIDGE HEATH PARISH



**Fig 1 – Buildings of Note in Broadbridge Heath**

## Introduction

### The Community

The Village of Broadbridge Heath is situated in the north of West Sussex, one mile to the west of Horsham and approximately sixteen miles from Gatwick Airport. It retains local gaps, consisting of the A24 between itself and Horsham and fields bordering Southwater, Slinfold and Warnham. The relative elevation of the village places it above the local flood plain. There have been waves of development, not all sympathetic to an area that contains much history, but a village identity has always remained and residents strongly want to retain this. There are 3000 residents living in nearly 1300 dwellings of various tax bands, as shown in Table 1.

Tax Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Number of Houses	10	300	402	335	137	75	24	3

The latest available census records (2001) show Broadbridge Heath has similar demographics to Horsham District but, on average, village residents tend to be younger, more often single, with fewer long term illnesses and lower unemployment. There are fewer unqualified people but also fewer educated to degree level and residents tend to follow blue collar employment.

Communal buildings include the Village Centre, built in the 1980s, which includes a licensed Village Club, a committee room and a community hall which is used for general functions and by the Skylarks pre-school playgroup, Bingo, Brownies, several dance and music clubs and the Horsham Radio Controlled Car Club. There is also an area for the Sea Cadets. The adjoining playing fields are used by the Junior Broadbridge Heath Football Club teams and the annual 5<sup>th</sup> of November Fireworks display, organised by the Gala Association. The Scout Hall is home to Cubs, Scouts, Guides and Brownie groups. A third building, the Free Church Hall, is used by the Busy Bees pre-school group, Sunday School and youth groups. The Village Shop (One Stop) is a vital part of village life and includes the Post Office. There is also a barbers, a ladies hairdresser, an ironing business, and small businesses such as Image Projections, Hubb Electronics and Autoweld. The Shelley Arms Public House includes a restaurant and holds various social activities. The centre of the village includes St John's Church, a striking building built in the early 1960s. The Church Hall is used by the Women's Institute, Women's Fellowship and Baby and Toddler Groups and was kindly donated for use by the Steering Committee for its meetings. Shelley County Primary School on Wickhurst Lane is a friendly and happy school with just under 300 pupils, and takes an active role in village life.

The village includes two garages. One, in the centre, retails and services Vauxhall cars. The second, a Peugeot outlet, also sells petrol and is adjoined by a Little Chef and Burger King Restaurant, mostly serving the A24 bypass. There is a light industrial site, the Lawson Hunt Business Park on the west side of the village. A garden centre, Newbridge Nurseries, is located



Various phases of development represented by (clockwise from the top left): Medieval Corsletts Farm; Houses built circa 1901, many for artisans of Christ Hospital School; The Castle Road/Wickhurst Lane estate built in the 1950s; The last development, Mulberry Court, completed in 2004.



Significant communal buildings of Broadbridge Heath (clockwise from top left): The Scout Hut; The Free Church Hall; St John's Church; The Shelley Arms.

nearby to the south west. A District Retail Park to the south east of the village, run and maintained by Horsham District Council, includes the superstores of Tesco, Halfords, Carpet Right, Homebase and a Sports Centre, home to the senior team of Broadbridge Heath Football Club.

The major open spaces in the village include the playing field behind the Village Centre, with its football pitch and play equipment known as “the Fort” (now removed). New play equipment has recently been installed on the large communal open space called the Common. Several decades ago a small stream at the north of this space was excavated to form an attractive pond known as the Ducky. To the north of the village lies the Cricket Club pitch and adjoining Tennis Club courts.

The free, quarterly Broadbridge Heath Village Magazine is much appreciated as a way to find out what is happening in the village. Originally started through the help of a Parish Council grant, this independent magazine is used for communication by St John’s Church, the Village Centre, Parish Council, village clubs, societies and local help groups.

### **Village Environment**

The village is mainly surrounded by farmland, woodland (Highwoods to the south, Broomwicks Wood to the north) and the River Arun to the south and west. Numerous footpaths lead out of the village in all directions into varied countryside creating interesting and much used walks.

Old Wickhurst Lane leads south from the village to Broadbridge Farm with its millpond. Although just outside the parish, there are four rows of horsechestnut trees forming an avenue from the Farthings Hill roundabout leading through Broomwick Woods to the stately home, Warnham Court. Planted in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria, old Ordnance Survey maps describe it as Jubilee Avenue. It is particularly beautiful in late April and early May when in full bloom and the footpaths in this area lead through fully stocked deer parks. Other paths lead past Field Place, Strood Park, Warnham Manor and to Christ’s Hospital.

The area has been somewhat under appreciated in comparison to the local Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty of the High Weald and South Downs, but this is hoped to be addressed by surveys being conducted by the Conservation Group. Environments such as the hedgerows along Old Wickhurst Lane can be traced back to medieval times and so contain diverse, mature habitats. It is already known that local wildlife includes snakes (grass and adder); amphibians such as frogs, toads and newts; larger mammals such as fallow deer, foxes, badgers, squirrels, rabbits, hares; smaller mammals such as bats, field mice, dormice and shrews and birds such as sparrow (hedge and house), tits, finches, skylark, kingfisher, heron, hawks, ducks and moorhen.





**Clockwise from top left: The Ducky, a popular pond on the Common; Although Broadbridge Heath was chosen for development in the past because of its elevation, flooding can still occur as shown here on the Common; Wickhurst Lane; The view from Wickhurst Lane up to the Highwoods.**



**The view from the footpath on the east side of Highwoods, overlooking the A24 with Tanbridge School and Horsham in the distance.**

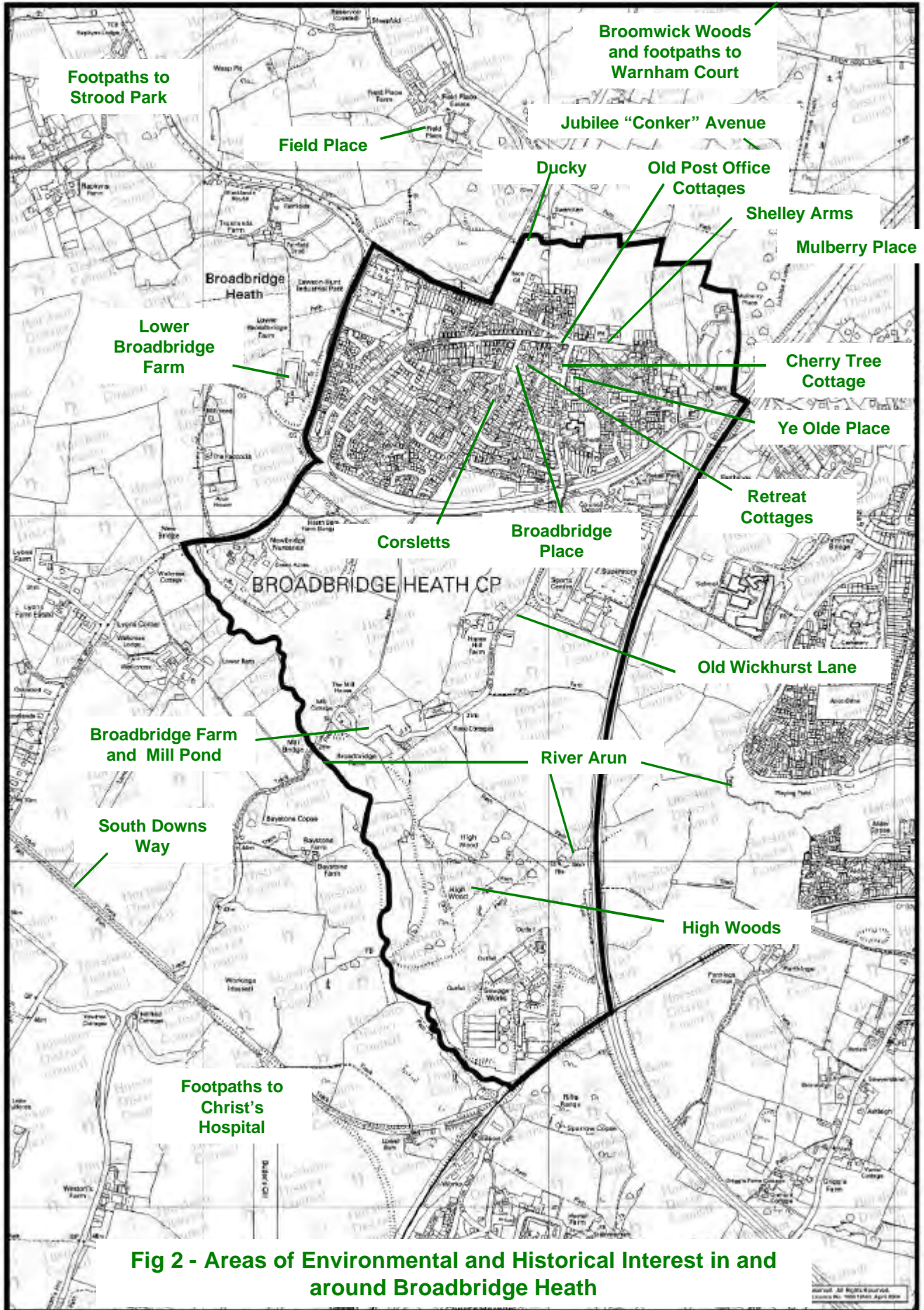
## History

Historically, Broadbridge Heath has been divided into three parts, belonging to two parishes, until combined under Horsham Parish in 1878. Two of these parts were outliers of the Manor of Sullington and are probably recorded in the Domesday Book as clearings used for herding pigs (this is similar to the origins of Denne Park, a nucleus for the development of Horsham, which was originally an outlier of Washington Manor). A first outlier, containing the Highwoods and encircled by the River Arun, defines the southern part of Broadbridge Heath. The land is more clearly described in the list of property owned by Roger de Covert on his death in 1297. A court-house and garden, mill and 80 acres of land corresponds to what is now Broadbridge Farm. The Highwoods contain multiple pits, which are the remains of mining works. According to John Mills, the Sussex County Archaeologist, these are larger than the typical iron ore workings in the region and so may have been for Horsham stone. A geology map of the region shows that outcrops of stone occur above iron ore, so perhaps both were extracted. Also of medieval time is the manmade channel encircling the Highwoods, once used to carry water to the millpond. The water flow into the channel was controlled by floodgates on the river Arun, the remains of which can still be seen. In the early 18th Century Broadbridge Farm was inhabited by Matthew Caffyn and his brother. Matthew was a baptist minister, a founder of what is now the Unitarian Free Christian Church in Worthing Road, Horsham and would baptise people in the millpond. Later that century, the Farm became first occupied by the Stanford family as tenant farmers and millers. This family was to be influential during the Victorian age as in 1839, the whole of Broadbridge Manor, corresponding to Broadbridge Heath today, was purchased from the Onslow family by Matthew Stanford.

In the 1890s, the Farm was sold by Matthew's son to the Horsham Urban District Council so the town sewage works (opened in 1879 on land in what is now the Needles Estate) could deposit partially treated sewage onto some of the fields, rather than directly into the river Arun. Parts of the buildings, agricultural equipment and other fields were rented out for agriculture, whilst one wing of the farmhouse was used as an isolation hospital. The hospital later moved around 1914 to the site in the village later occupied by the army camp and now sports centre, retaining the farmhouse as an overflow. This hospital had closed by 1932 and Broadbridge Farm has since returned to private hands. The water channels and large millpond remain as pretty reminders of the mill, as the buildings were demolished in 1969.

Wickhurst Lane, its Anglo-Saxon name (Wick – settlement, Hurst – wood) being a testament to its age, runs north from the Farm up to the part of the village that was a second outlier of Sullington. This area, centred around the Forge, includes the Common and adjoins Field Place, noted as the seat of the Shelley family and the birthplace of the poet Percy Byshe Shelley. Field Place is in fact in Warnham Parish, and historical anecdotes recount how one owner snobbishly used to make a point of returning any letters whose envelopes included Broadbridge Heath in the address.

# BROADBRIDGE HEATH PARISH



**Fig 2 - Areas of Environmental and Historical Interest in and around Broadbridge Heath**

The land either side of Wickhurst Lane, between the two Sullington outliers belonged to Horsham Parish. This area today includes several houses dating from the eighteenth century - Sleets Farm (now called "Ye Olde Place"), Retreat Cottages (originally built as quarters for officers of Horsham Barracks), Old Post Office Cottages and Cherry Tree Cottage. The Shelley Arms Public House was a well used halt for farmers as they drove their cattle to Horsham market. Another cottage became the kitchen wing of Broadbridge Place, a new house built by Matthew Stanford for his retirement in the early 1840s, after he had purchased the manor and left his son to run Broadbridge Farm. Corsletts Farm, originally a 14th century hall house, is famous for the murder which took place in 1759. Annie Whale poisoned her husband's hasty pudding with arsenic in collusion with her cousin, Sarah Pledge. The actual use of the arsenic was only discovered later when the Horsham chemist from whom it had been purchased asked the landlord of the house if his rat problem had been solved. The two women were executed on Broadbridge Heath, Annie Whale by being burnt at the stake.

Broadbridge Heath boasted one of the earliest golf courses in the country on the land adjacent to Jubilee Avenue. Chantry Barn was converted into the club house. After the course became disused, the barn became a private residence called Mulberry Place. The earliest aircraft to land in Horsham in 1911 may have done so on this course.

## **Input to the Parish Plan**

### **Information Collection Involving the Whole Community**

The Steering Committee attempted to involve as much of the community as possible to ensure the Parish Plan captured the true feeling of the villagers. All the village societies were contacted at an early stage and the Kill Your Speed and National Childbirth Trust were amongst those who responded. Talks were given to the Women's Institute and Women's Fellowship. The pupils of Shelley County Primary School enthusiastically entered a "Design a Logo Competition", the result of which is being used by the committee. In addition, articles have been published in the Village Magazine and local papers (see Appendix 5) and a web site set up ([www.bbhparishplan.co.uk](http://www.bbhparishplan.co.uk)) to advertise the activity. The Steering Committee sent out a questionnaire to all households in Broadbridge Heath Parish in early September 2003 (included as Appendix 2). This had space for up to three respondents from each household and there were 279 responses in total. A "Have Your Say Fun Day" was held in mid September at which villagers were invited to attend various activities and ask further questions or give feedback (collected comments on open spaces are included in Appendix 4).

Shelley School also held classroom written activities based on questions from the questionnaire, but modified as appropriate to suit the age of the children participating. 130 pupils aged between 5 and 11 years of age participated in this activity.



**Above, clockwise from top left: Depressions in Highwoods - remnants of mineworkings for iron ore or Horsham slab stone; A bridge over the channel that encircles the Highwoods and formerly supplied the Millpond from the River Arun; A wing of Broadbridge Farm, once used as an isolation hospital; The Millpond, Broadbridge Farm.**



**Clockwise from top left: Retreat Cottages; Cherry Tree Cottage; Broadbridge Place; Ye Olde Place (formerly Sleet's Farm House)**

After an initial review of the responses that included a willingness to become involved with village activities, volunteers were written to and a meeting held in November 2003. This has led to the formation of Broadbridge Heath Conservation and History Groups.

### **Summary of Questionnaire Analyses**

The responses to the questionnaires and Shelley School activities were analysed by Southwater Business Services. The full analysis is attached as Appendix 3 and the important findings are summarised in the sections here:

#### **Village Environment**

Respondents clearly showed that the environment is important. All the natural features around the village were equally popular. Villagers found that footpaths could be spoiled by litter or blocked by crops. Forty respondents said they would be prepared to work on conservation projects and as a result of this a Broadbridge Heath Conservation Group has been formed. In the village, respondents felt that the attractiveness, signage and landscaping around the communal buildings could be enhanced and the general village environment improved, mainly by planting more flowers. Many people wanted more dog bins, and the biggest form of pollution nuisance was given as agricultural or sewage smells.

#### **Housing / Development**

There was an overwhelming response in both the adult and children's questionnaires that the village identity was extremely important and that Broadbridge Heath should not become a suburb of Horsham. Most villagers were happy with their present housing, the only future need being for retirement and first time buyers. The Post Office was seen as being very important, closely followed by the convenience store. Villagers also appreciated the convenience of the close proximity of the retail park. If there were to be further development, improvements could be made in the provision of health and dental facilities, public transport and parking. This was backed up by the identification of special needs being related to difficulties in getting to a hospital, health centre or dentist.

#### **Transport / Traffic**

Villagers gave strong responses that there were problems with parking and speeding, with a broad range of calming measures being popular. Buses were mainly used in the daytime, because there was not enough choice of services to varied destinations and no availability out of regular business hours.

## **Leisure Facilities**

Whilst there was general satisfaction with leisure facilities, the questionnaire highlighted a lack of youth clubs and non-sports clubs for children of secondary school age. The play equipment in the village was appreciated, but could be improved for children in older age groups (i.e. around the age of ten years). Many people would like to see the annual fete resurrected, with sixty respondents expressing an interest to help.

## **Communication**

People found out about village life through the Village Magazine, local papers, word of mouth and the village notice boards. It was felt that communication with the Parish Council was good, but that Horsham District Council was isolated from the villagers' concerns.

## **Police / Crime Reduction / Anti-Social Behaviour**

Villagers showed concern for anti-social behaviour and vandalism throughout the village, although particular places frequently mentioned were the underpass (between Wickhurst Lane and Tesco) and the Fort (the play area behind the Village Centre). Much of the anti-social behaviour was alcohol related. Many comments raised the possibility of closed circuit television to cover this problem. The children were also worried about stealing, and also raised the underpass and Fort as sites of general concern. The Police were not felt to be supporting the needs of the Village. Residents wanted and, those who responded, would be prepared to pay for Village Wardens. The response to the effectiveness and willingness to start Neighbourhood Watch Schemes was lukewarm.

## **Education**

The Education provision for all age groups was generally appreciated. A few people responded about Special Needs, probably reflecting the small number who have requirements in this area, but they did express that there were inadequacies in this area. Pre-and post- school drop in clubs would be appreciated. Many children walk to school, although many travel by car due to convenience or because they live outside the village. There were no specific concerns on pedestrian safety, but villagers still felt it worthwhile to investigate safer schemes for walking to school.

## **Employment**

People did not want to see any more businesses in the village, although many respondents think that opportunity for employment in village shops should be encouraged.