

Farnham Castle, Farnham, Surrey

County Monument No 12848

**Archaeological watching brief on site of new car park
inside the Great Gate**

October 2007



David Graham

Introduction

On 4 April 2007 (letter ref HSD 9/2/9146) the Secretary of State gave consent to Farnham Castle Briefings Ltd to remove a maximum depth of 150mm of topsoil from an area inside the Great Gate of Farnham Castle to create additional car parking spaces. An archaeological condition was attached to the SM consent and this report covers the result of that element of the works.

The Watching Brief

The area of the new car park lies in the south-west corner of outer defences of the Castle and just inside and immediately to the south of the Great Gate (Fig 1). The area was under grass and formed part of the lawns to the south of the main Castle buildings. Following turf stripping, the topsoil was examined and a resistivity survey undertaken. The area lies outside the now filled in inner bailey ditch (Bird *et al* 1989, 182-3) and, not surprisingly therefore, no features were detected. The top 150mm of soil was checked by metal detector immediately prior to being stripped and removed from the site and a number of objects were recovered. These included a heavily clipped and worn sixpence of Elizabeth I as well as coins of Charles II and later monarchs.

More interestingly, a number of musket and pistol balls and three powder caps were recorded (figs 1 and 2). On 26 November 1642, a troop of Parliamentary dragoons under the command of Colonel Sir William Waller laid siege to the Royalist garrison of the Castle. Having blown in the main gate (Great Gate) with a 'petard', the Parliamentary troops fought their way over a barricade and 'gained the outer courtyard'. At this stage the Royalist garrison surrendered (Clarendon 1888, book vi, f.140).

The finds of powder caps from gunpowder flasks and the musket and pistol balls almost certainly relate to this action. Apart from the interest of these finds, they are also useful in confirming that the current ground level south of the Castle buildings in the main dates at least from the mid-17th century. However, it is likely that the level was achieved somewhat earlier, following the construction of Waynefflete's Tower in 1475.

The car park has now been completed and consists of a layer of hardcore covered by loose gravel (see front cover) and no further archaeological work is proposed. The finds will be returned to the Castle authorities.

References

- Bird, D G, Crocker, G, & McCracken, J S, 1989 Archaeology in Surrey 1987, *Surrey Archaeol Collect*, **79**, 179-89
- Clarendon 1888 *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, begun in the year 1641*, by Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, edited by W D Macray, 6 vols, Clarendon Press, Oxford

David Graham
5 December 2007

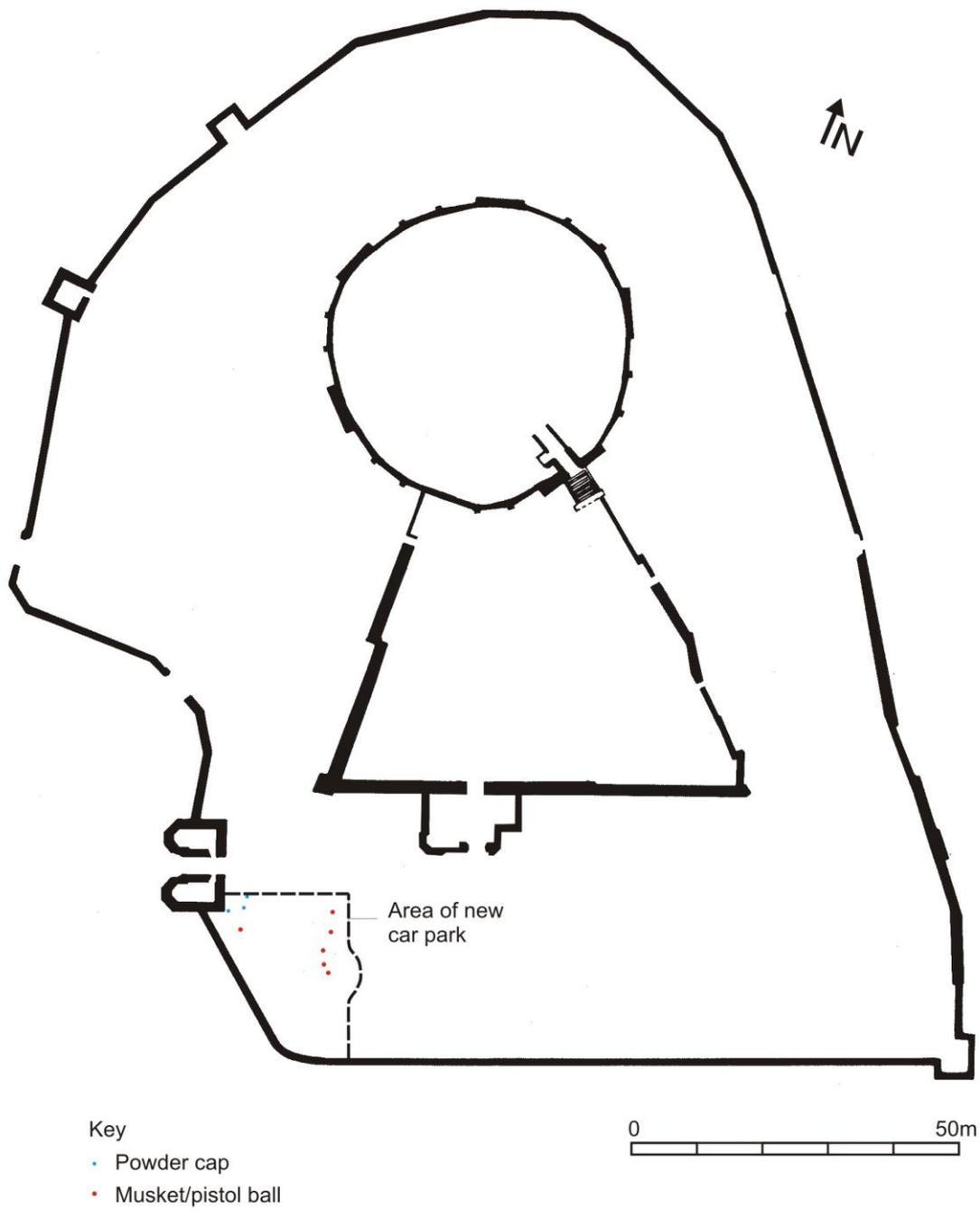


Fig1 Plan of Farnham Castle showing the area of the new car park and location of those finds that probably date to the Civil War.



Fig 2 Two of the powder caps recovered from inside the Great Gate.