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Kingston – Saxon royal estate centre to post-medieval market town: the contribution of archaeology to understanding towns in Surrey

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Excavations and documentary studies over the past 30 years have considerably enhanced our knowledge of the origins and development of Kingston, though many gaps remain to be filled. The increase in archaeological work in the town since 1990 has been particularly dramatic, fuelled by developer funding resulting from changes in planning policy. In other Surrey towns, even Guildford, investigations have generally been more sporadic and of insufficient size to provide such a comprehensive database of information. Completion and assessment of the Extensive Urban Surveys currently being undertaken for these towns will result in a better understanding of the archaeological resource and enable a more informed targeting of sites to be made when these become available for excavation. This should provide more information about all aspects of the towns, their relationships to one another, to London, and to their hinterlands. Here there is a need to place archaeology within a broader framework of academic enquiry. As the amount of information from archaeological investigations, building recording and documentary work by various organizations and individuals rapidly increases, the challenge will be to synthesize and publish this information in appropriate ways without compromising the academic integrity of the work.

Introduction

'The potential of towns for dramatically increasing knowledge concerning the growth of pan-European economies and societies at a formative period in western culture must not be underestimated' (Ayres 1997, 64).

In *The Archaeology of Surrey to 1540* (Bird & Bird 1987, 223–61) Dennis Turner wrote: 'Some urban investigations have been among the great successes of the archaeology of the Middle Ages but medieval archaeology in Surrey towns has been modest.' However, he went on to say that 'Kingston provides the clearest archaeological view of a Surrey town' and that work in towns such as Kingston and Reigate is particularly important to redress the balance of work in larger more successful towns elsewhere. Since that was written there has been an upsurge in archaeological investigations throughout the county, the vast majority of these funded by developers as a result of the introduction of Planning Policy Guidance note 16 (PPG 16). A variety of desktop studies, evaluations and excavations have been undertaken in all Surrey's towns, and some of the resulting information from this and earlier work is now beginning to appear in print. Several investigations in Reigate and Guildford have been published and a recent volume of *Surrey Archaeological Collections* (*SyAC* 1998) was devoted to work in four other towns: Chertsey, Dorking, Farnham and Godalming. Kingston, however, now a London borough and no longer within Surrey, was not considered in that volume (Poulton 1998) nor in *Historic Towns in Surrey* (O'Connell 1977).

Apart from the possible exception of Southwark, Kingston is the most extensively excavated town in the historic county of Surrey. Archaeological and documentary work over the past three decades has continued to add to our knowledge of its development, particularly in the Saxon and medieval periods. Many people have taken an active interest in the history and archaeology of Kingston, and among these the late Joan Wakeford should be singled out for her perceptive essays (Wakeford 1990) which provide much food for thought. The many articles and books published by June Sampson (eg Sampson 1997) and, more recently, Shaan Butters (1995) have also done much to draw attention to the town and the impact of modern development on historic Kingston. (In what follows, references to the extensive documentary evidence that exists for Kingston are largely based on the Charter Quay report by Wessex Archaeology (2003), where full bibliographic details can be found). In the 1960s and 1970s the Kingston upon Thames Archaeological Society (KuTAS) focused attention on the archaeology of the town and initiated modern excavation work which has been regularly undertaken by various organizations ever since. The excavations carried out at Charter Quay in 1988–90 and 1998–9 in advance of new development have been the most extensive ever undertaken in the town. They have brought to light a continuous sequence of urban development, commercial growth and land reclamation that began in the early 12th century and in many ways reflects the wider history of Kingston upon Thames. The influence of topography on the town's development is now better understood,

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especially with respect to the gravel islands which provided foci for settlement and the surrounding watercourses.

Topography

The pattern and history of the river channels and gravel 'islands' in and around Kingston is complex (Penn & Rolls 1981; Hawkins 1998) and will undoubtedly be further clarified by future work. The Hogsmill river appears now to flow around the southern edge of the 'central island' with other, smaller gravel 'islands' further to the south. Earlier archaeological work, particularly at Eden Street and Eden Walk (Penn *et al* 1984), indicates the former presence of a channel (the so-called 'east arm' of the Hogsmill) which appears to have flowed northwards, bounding the east side of the 'central island'. This probably joined another channel, the so-called 'Latchmere/Downhall channel', comprising the Latchmere stream (an existing watercourse) and the Downhall ditch (a watercourse known from documentary evidence) which together ran east to west to join the Thames and formed the northern boundary to the 'central island' as shown in figure 13.1 (Hawkins 1998, 271). Both the east arm of the Hogsmill and the Downhall channel remained active into the medieval period, although subject to progressive silting, rubbish disposal and eventual culverting.

There is evidence from archaeological, documentary and photographic sources of flooding in Kingston in the medieval and post-medieval periods, particularly around the High Street area, and the course and confines of the Thames and Hogsmill were not stabilized until the end of the 19th century. The Hogsmill has been canalized close to where it joins the Thames, and now flows in a deep concrete-lined channel to the west of the Clattern Bridge. The sequence of flooding and reclamation forms the basis for much of the settlement history of Kingston up to the end of the medieval period, particularly in the areas of the town bordering the Thames.

Prehistoric and Roman (fig 13.1)

A few flint tools of late Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic date have been recovered in Kingston town centre, but the earliest evidence for settlement is in the Neolithic period. The most important site yet discovered is at Eden Walk where both Early and Late Neolithic pottery, worked flint, worked antler and animal bone were recovered from a former river channel, part of the east arm of the Hogsmill (Penn *et al* 1984). Whether this represents temporary occupation in the channel itself or debris deposited from an

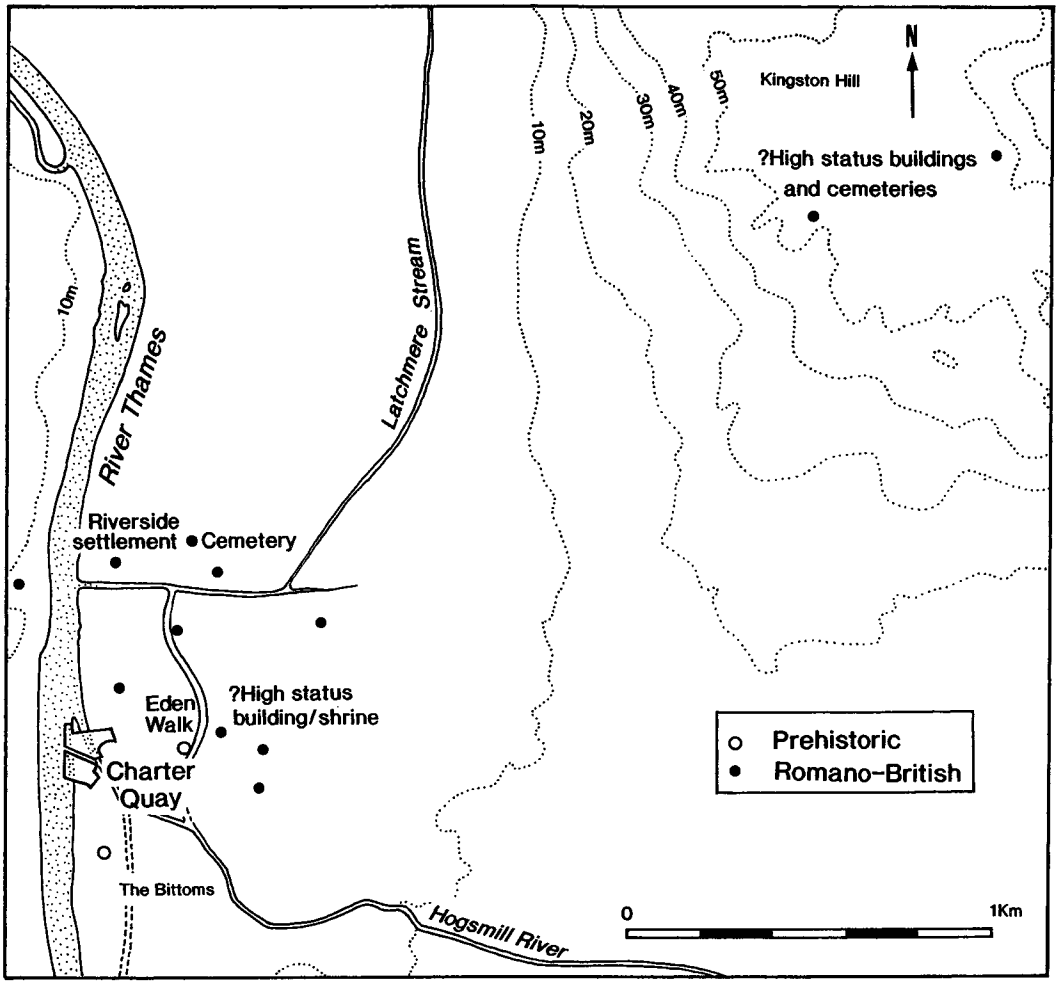

Fig 13.1 Prehistoric and Roman sites (after Hawkins 1996, fig 1) (© Crown Copyright NC/04/25242)

adjacent site is unclear. This part of the former channel also contained some brushwood, perhaps a platform or trackway of Middle Bronze Age date, overlain by a spread of burnt flint. Again, it is uncertain what this represents, but it may have been localized consolidation on the edge of the channel for seasonal use. A variety of Neolithic, Early and Middle Bronze Age finds, including stone and flint axes and collared urns, found during quarrying at Kingston Hill may represent intermittent prehistoric activity (Field & Needham 1986, 148). Other (Late) Bronze Age features and finds have been found during excavations at East Lane, South Lane and the Bittoms (Hawkins *et al* 2002); these sites may all represent part of a single, dispersed Late Bronze Age settlement on the southern gravel 'island'. A relatively dense scatter of pottery of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age date has also been found a short distance to the east at Orchard Road (Jackson *et al* 1997, 222), perhaps part of another settlement. A site at Kingston Hill to the north-east, largely destroyed by quarrying in the 19th century, may have been a Late Bronze Age defended settlement enclosed by a ditch, and the considerable quantity of metalwork recovered suggests that bronze working may have been carried out there (Field & Needham 1986). More recent work in the vicinity has recorded occasional Late Bronze Age features and some pottery perhaps representing part of this settlement (Bird *et al* 1989, 185; Bird *et al* 1996, 210). In addition to these discoveries, the Thames at Kingston has produced a number of Neolithic axes and a large assemblage of Bronze Age weaponry, some probably deliberately deposited as votive offerings (eg Needham 1987, 135).

Few Iron Age finds have been recovered from Kingston and there is no evidence for substantial Romano-British occupation in the area. However, evidence is accumulating which indicates the existence of a Romano-British rural settlement north of the 'central island' (Hawkins 1996). Excavations in 2002 exposed the possible remains of a post-built building and two pits containing Roman building material including fragments of box-flue tiles (Duncan Hawkins, pers comm), lying to the south-west of a cemetery recorded during brickearth digging in the early 19th century (Hinton 1984). Investigations on the west bank of the Thames, in Hampton Wick, have also revealed evidence for settlement, and together these sites may indicate the location of a fording or crossing point foreshadowing the construction of Kingston Bridge some 1000 years later.

Antiquarian discoveries suggest that there were Roman buildings, some possibly of high status, and (cremation) burials perhaps representing more than one settlement (?country estates) on a relatively flat area on the western slope of Kingston Hill (Hawkins 1996, 47–8). However, there have been no modern discoveries that might substantiate this and provide further information on the earlier findings. This is not the case at Eden Street where a small Roman altar was reportedly found in the 19th century, although its provenance is far from secure and it may have been brought to Kingston from elsewhere at this time. More recently, however, coins, jewellery, rolled lead strips (possibly curses) along with stone, tile and painted plaster suggesting an important building, perhaps a shrine, were recovered from part of the east arm of the Hogsmill close to the supposed findspot of the altar (Hawkins 1996, 47–8).

Saxon (fig 13.2)

Recent excavations at South Lane indicate that there was Early–Mid Saxon settlement, probably a farmstead, on the gravel 'island' to the south of the Hogsmill (Hawkins *et al* 2002), and Early Saxon occupation is also attested on higher ground to the north-east (Bird *et al* 1990, 218); Hawkins 1998, 275–6). However, during the 8th or 9th century the focus of settlement shifted to the central Kingston 'island'. There is a late tradition in Kingston that the 'town' was refounded in the Late Saxon period and had previously been called *Moreford* (marshy ford), a recollection perhaps of the earlier Roman settlement which lay a short distance downstream around the putative crossing point (Hawkins 1998, 273). It has been suggested that the lost royal estate centre of *Freoricsburna* can be identified with Kingston, but this remains an unproven hypothesis (Blair 1991, 20) and is now considered unlikely.

Documentary evidence suggests that in the 9th and 10th centuries, Kingston was not a village or a town but rather a royal estate centre. The first reference to Kingston by that name (*Cyninges Tun* or *Cingestune*) is in an agreement between King Ecgbert and King Athelwulf and Coelnoth, archbishop of Canterbury, at a council held there on 20 November 838. The venue was clearly of sufficient prominence to host this important diplomatic conference, a key moment in the establishment of the Wessex monarchy. Its location on the shore of the Thames was probably regarded as a frontier zone between the power centres of the kings and the archbishops.

At least two and possibly as many as seven Late Saxon kings are known to have been crowned at Kingston during the 10th century, the earliest in 901 and the latest in 979, and a number of royal charters are recorded as having been witnessed there. While Kingston was not a major power centre it may have seemed the natural choice in the early 10th century as a central point of the realm which comprised Wessex, Kent, Mercia and East Anglia. The location was probably determined by the original reason for

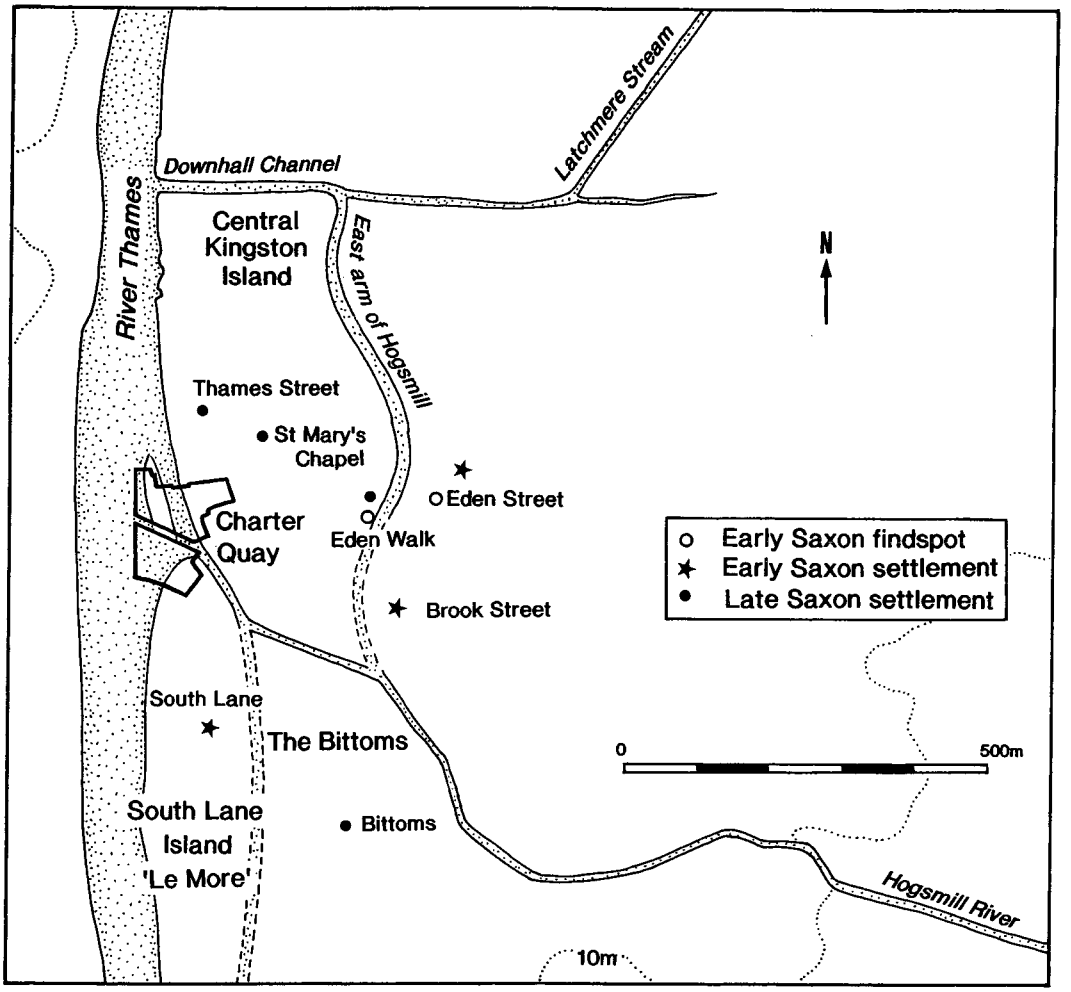

Fig 13.2 Saxon sites (after Hawkins 1998, fig 1) (© Crown Copyright NC/04/25242)

Kingston's national role as the regular and agreed meeting place of the kings of Wessex and the archbishops of Canterbury who played a key role in the coronation process. Its position near the tidal limit of the Thames may also have been of significance for a dynasty which claimed to be kings of the sea. However, there is no reason to assume the presence of a large number of buildings or extensive settlement – Anglo-Saxon kings were peripatetic and most of the retinue probably lived in tents.

The location of the royal estate centre, likely to comprise a timber hall, church and ancillary buildings, is unknown. However, it most probably lay in the area now occupied by the parish church of All Saints and the associated churchyard that is today somewhat smaller in extent than in medieval times. Further support for this suggestion comes from the fact that this is the site of the former chapel dedicated to St Mary the Virgin – perhaps a powerful Late Saxon minster church in origin (Blair 1991) and possibly part of the royal complex. This chapel lay on the south side of the parish church and survived until 1730, when it collapsed during the digging of graves inside the chapel. It had been preserved as the traditional place of coronation of the first kings of England, although excavations in the 1920s (Finny 1927) and engravings of the building suggest that it was Romanesque in style and of 11th rather than 10th century date. Furthermore, a 10th or 11th century re-used cross fragment (Tweddle *et al* 1995, 146) has been recovered from the existing 13th century and later church fabric. However, the chapel may have replaced an earlier, timber church or chapel, and it has recently been suggested that the site of the Late Saxon minster may lie beneath All Saints Church, itself replacing or incorporating a substantial late 12th century church (Hawkins 2003). Hawkins further suggests that St Mary's Chapel may have been a (smaller) replacement of the destroyed or demolished Late Saxon minster church and that this chapel was retained when the 12th century (and later) parish church of All Saints (formerly All Hallows) was constructed.

From the 9th century onwards a small settlement probably grew up around the royal complex and ditches of 9th–10th century date, which perhaps served both for drainage and as plot boundaries, have been found at Thames Street and at Eden Walk. A small number of pits and some pottery have also been found to the south around the Bittoms (Bird *et al* 1991–2, 158) and to the east in the vicinity of Tiffin School (Jackson *et al* 1997, 223; Howe *et al* 2001, 353),

indicating further settlement away from the central 'island'. However, evidence for Late Saxon structures remains elusive and our archaeological knowledge of Kingston in this crucial period remains frustratingly slight.

In the Domesday survey in 1086, Kingston was the largest settlement in the Kingston Hundred, an administrative unit extending approximately from Kew in the north to Hook in the south, and from Malden in the east to East Molesey in the west. Within this, the extensive royal estate of Kingston had a population of more than 100 families operating 30 ploughs on the arable land, as well as meadow and woodland, fisheries and five mills. It is clear from the size of the estate that its central settlement, described as a *vill*, had kept its earlier status. However, it is likely that this settlement continued to comprise a small village focused around the church and former estate centre. Again, we have very little archaeological evidence from this period although two ditches of possible Saxo-Norman date were found during recent investigations at Cromwell Road (Howe *et al* 2001, 353) and London Road (Duncan Hawkins, pers comm) respectively, in the vicinity of what later became the main route out of the town to the east.

Medieval: 12th–13th century (fig 13.3)

During the 12th century the settlement grew in size, and its urban status was recognized by King John's grant of a charter in 1200, allowing the freemen of Kingston to pay him a fixed annual sum in return for becoming lords of the manor. By this time Kingston was one of the wealthiest towns in Surrey and sometimes paid more in taxes than Guildford, and occasionally more than Southwark. The 12th and 13th centuries saw rapid urban growth throughout the country, mainly as a result of the great increase in trade. The main impetus for the development of Kingston, however, was probably the building, around 1170, of a wooden bridge across the Thames, the first bridge upstream from London and a short distance downstream from the position of the present bridge opened in 1828. Excavations have shown that Kingston Bridge in its earliest form dated to *c* 1170 (Potter 1988, 140), while the Clattern Bridge across the Hogsmill also contains elements which date to the late 12th century. Barre Bridge to the north, which crossed the Downhall channel, and Stone Bridge to the east across the east arm of the Hogsmill are also likely to have been built around this time. The construction of these bridges, together with the establishment of the Market Place, can be seen as a deliberate act of town planning when Kingston was laid out on the central 'island' in the late 12th century. Although the area south of the church may have been used for buying and selling goods and produce from the Late Saxon period, the excavations at Charter Quay have confirmed that the present Market Place, granted a charter in 1208, was not in existence until the mid-12th century. Many other planned towns established at this time, for example Reigate, also had market places at the core of the settlement, although towns in Surrey lack the regular street layouts seen elsewhere.

Kingston had no formal defences, such as a ditch and bank or circuit wall, although the surrounding watercourses, which effectively marked its boundaries, may have provided some protection. There is a reference to a castle being captured at Kingston during the Barons' Wars in 1263–5 (*VCH*, **1**, 345), but no trace of it survives above ground and the form and precise location remain to be demonstrated archaeologically. It may have been built in the mid-13th century to guard the river crossing and a location to the east of Eden Street has been suggested, although map evidence provides no clues in this respect.

The eastern edge of the Thames in the 12th century lay some 50m to the east of its present line, and a small gravel bank split the mouth of the Hogsmill (Lurteborne) into two channels (of which only the southern, now canalized, survives). The northern channel (unknown before the Charter Quay excavations) was *c* 20m wide and ran north-north-west across the northern part of the site, probably joining the Thames south of the present-day Bishops Place House. The presence of this former channel of the Hogsmill had a major effect on the medieval topography of the town in the adjacent area, influencing the layout of streets and alleys, the shape of the Market Place, and the boundaries and extent of adjoining properties to the west. Furthermore, it is clear that this channel marked the western edge of the gravel 'island' on which the 'central core' of Kingston is built, and also broadly defined the limit of building in this direction until at least the 17th century when more extensive development of the reclaimed land began.

The excavations at Charter Quay revealed evidence for continuous medieval occupation, interspersed with episodes of flooding and land reclamation, dating from the early 12th century onwards. The earliest phase of land reclamation can be assigned to the early 13th century and began along the east side of the former channel of the Hogsmill. Reclamation may have had the dual purpose of extending westwards the properties alongside the market, as well raising the level of the land to alleviate the problem of flooding which would have been a constant threat. This threat was perhaps increased after the construction of Kingston Bridge in the late 12th century which may have slowed the flow of the Thames upstream causing an increase in silting, particularly around the mouth of the Hogsmill. Flooding is recorded at regular intervals in Kingston

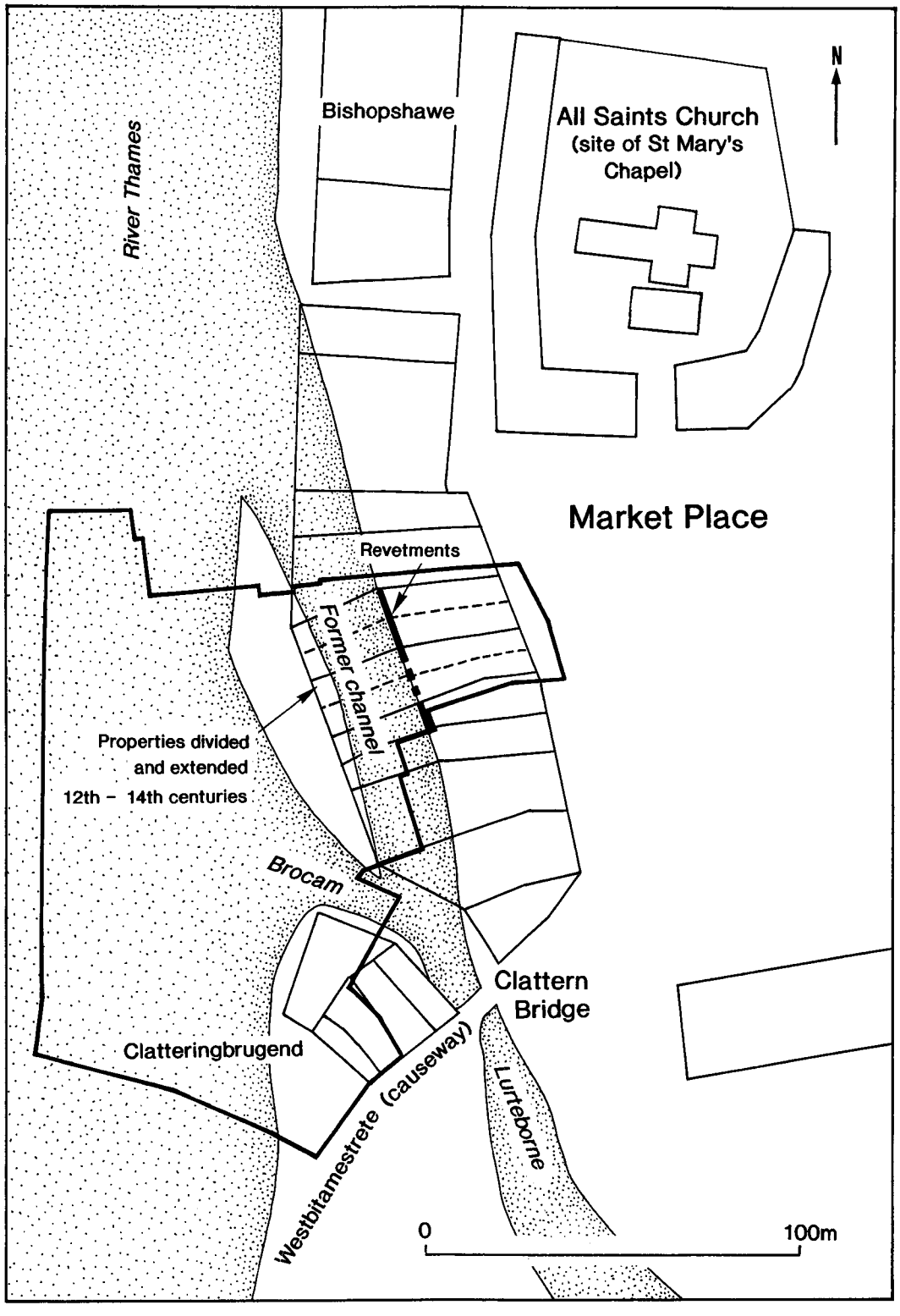

Fig 13.3 Charter Quay site and surrounding area: 12th–13th century

during the second half of the 13th century – in the 1250s, the 1260s and the 1280s. In this and later periods revetments may also have served as riverside wharves, but this was probably not the primary function of those in the former Hogsmill channel in the early 13th century.

Documentary sources indicate that the town did not originally extend to the south of the Hogsmill, and in 1253 the boundary of the borough was considered to be where the Creek (Hogsmill) lay at the south end of the market towards Guildford. The tenants of Merton Priory's manor of Canbury refused to perform watch duties south of the Hogsmill as this was seen as beyond the limit of the town. However, a small suburb of houses and yards was established there by the 1290s, and archaeological evidence indicates activity there a least a century earlier. The pattern of property divisions south of the Hogsmill suggests that this was a piecemeal process of settlement, advancing from the south end of Clattern Bridge by a series of small-scale reclamations from the Thames and Hogsmill shores. The suburb was

known as *Clateringbrugende* in the 1290s, and by 1314 the roadway was called *Westbitamestrete* (later West-by-Thames Street, and now High Street). Other suburban development probably took place in the vicinity of London Road, the principal route out of town to the east, and pits of mid/late 13th–14th century date found recently in this area may reflect this expansion (Howe *et al* 2001, 353).

Many of the town's earliest medieval buildings would have been constructed around the market, with the frontage at Charter Quay being fully occupied by houses (possibly with street-level shops and workshops) by 1200. The land behind, initially open to the Thames, is likely to have been used as wharfage. Later cellars along the market frontage had removed all traces of earlier, timber buildings in this area. However, it appears that the earliest structure in one of the three 12th century properties identified on the frontage had been dismantled and several substantial timbers re-used as part of an early 13th century revetment on the edge of the river channel at the rear of the property. One of the timbers from this revetment contained sufficient rings to allow dendrochronological dating and this indicated a felling date of *c* 1120, indicating a probable construction date for the building around the end of the first quarter of the 12th century. This would mean that it was probably in use for around 75 years before being dismantled and re-used, perhaps coinciding with a more general phase of property division and rebuilding as the prosperity of the town increased.

Building timbers have been found re-used in revetments elsewhere along the Thames in Kingston (Potter 1988, 144–5), but have invariably comprised smaller elements such as the vertical studs which formed the infill of the timber-framing: these were generally re-used as posts. The structural remains from Charter Quay are unique in that not only are they earlier than those so far recorded on other sites in Kingston (which are generally of 14th century date), but they are altogether more substantial and include an almost complete wall plate. In fact, comparatively little survives of any timber buildings of 12th century date from anywhere else in the country, and so the Charter Quay discovery is of particular importance in terms of the information it provides on vernacular architecture of this period.

Little can be gleaned about the function or internal layout of the early, 12th–13th century buildings, but it is likely that they may have been used as shops or workshops as well as domestic accommodation. They were set within what were originally relatively large plots or properties which were wide enough to allow the buildings to be built parallel to the street frontage. On the market frontage at Charter Quay the three original plots appear, from later evidence, to have been approximately 10–12m wide (?two poles) – the suggested length of building based on the re-used wall plate in the later revetment. The properties to the south of the Hogsmill, on the High Street frontage, may have been slightly narrower, perhaps 10m wide.

Documentary evidence indicates that trades and occupations known to have been represented on the west side of the Market Place included fishmongers; Kingston was famous for its salmon, and eels were also caught in large numbers. There were also some occupational surnames in this area, which must have become formalized in the 13th century. They included *le Coliere* (charcoal supplier), *le poter* (potter) and *le Orfevre* (silversmith/goldsmith). Trades and occupations to the south of the Hogsmill included a chandler and butchers. The riverside site on the south side of the mouth of the Hogsmill is first known to have been occupied by Symon le Merchaunt, a 13th century occupational surname which suggests that the plot was used for trade.

Kingston was a major pottery production centre from at least as early as the mid-13th century. Prior to the beginnings of the well-documented Surrey whiteware industry at this time, the local pottery industries of Kingston and the surrounding region are less well understood. The major traditions have been defined (eg Vince & Jenner 1991) and include Early Surrey sandy wares, shelly wares and flint-tempered wares, all with origins in the 11th or 12th centuries; source areas for each have been postulated, although actual production sites are as yet elusive. However, recent excavations have recovered a large number of pottery wasters (but no kilns), provisionally interpreted as South Hertfordshire Grey ware and dated to the early 12th–late 13th century (Howe *et al* 2001, 353).

The origins and development of the Surrey whiteware industry, and in particular that of Kingston-type ware, have already been thoroughly explored (Pearce & Vince 1988; Miller & Stephenson 1999), and are merely summarized here. On the basis of existing evidence from both Kingston and various sites in London, the manufacture of Kingston-type ware, the earliest of the Surrey whiteware industries as currently defined, seems not to have begun before the early 13th century. It was not until the middle of the 13th century that Kingston-type wares appeared in London, and in Kingston itself earlier excavations have produced some evidence of a pre-whiteware phase in which London-type Rouen style jugs were used, a type introduced at the end of the 12th century.

Several pottery kilns have been found in Kingston, around Eden Street, Union Street and more recently along London Road which lay on the eastern outskirts of the town – tanning also took place in this area. Wasters associated with all these kilns are exclu-

sively of 14th century date, and it seems that earlier kilns in the town remain to be discovered. Documentary sources refer to the supply of 3300 'pitchers' from Kingston to the royal court between 1264 and 1266, and the repertoire of the late 13th century potters of the town can be reconstructed from the range of Kingston-type wares excavated from London (Pearce & Vince 1988, figs 39–42).

Wherever the earliest whiteware kilns were established, it is apparent that their location in Kingston itself was anomalous, for the simple reason that there is no local source of white-firing clay here – the nearest known outcrops of iron-free clay from the Reading Beds are several miles away. The largest market for Kingston-type wares was always London, and the discovery of a dump of whiteware wasters at Bankside in Southwark, in a fabric identical to the Kingston wasters, tends to support the conclusion that the Kingston industry was founded by potters from London, moving closer to the source of the white-firing clay. Why they chose Kingston is uncertain, but may not be unconnected with the expansion of the town following the construction of the bridge across the Thames in *c* 1170, and the establishment of the market in 1208. The proximity of the river (for the transport of both raw clay and finished goods) and access to large supplies of timber for fuel were probably also important factors.

The original potters may have come from London, but the Kingston- and London-type industries soon diverged, and Kingston became the centre for the production of a range of highly decorated jugs, with vibrant polychrome motifs, stamped bosses and anthropomorphic forms, produced alongside plainer utilitarian jars, bowls and pipkins. The *floruit* of the industry was in the second half of the 13th and first half of the 14th century, after which Kingston wares declined in popularity in London in the face of competition from rival whiteware industries at Cheam (some six miles away) and on the Surrey/Hampshire border.

As well as the local whitewares, Kingston, as a major market, might have been expected to act as the redistribution centre for a number of other wares. While Kingston products were supplying London, London-type wares travelled in the opposite direction. Products of the various 13th/14th century greyware industries located around London in Hertfordshire, Berkshire and Surrey are also represented in the town, but imported Continental wares are extremely rare.

Medieval: 14th–15th century (fig 13.4)

The 14th and 15th centuries witnessed continued expansion of Kingston as the prosperity of the town increased, and market rights were established by the Borough Charter of 1441. At Charter Quay this development was represented by a phase of 'industrial' activity assigned to the 14th century, and by the construction of timber buildings on stone and tile foundations which extended over a far more extensive area than before. The yard areas behind these buildings were progressively built up with ancillary buildings such as workshops, stores and stables. Land reclamation and the expansion of properties to the west continued throughout this period, and the construction of timber revetments, some of the later ones incorporating re-used boat timbers, began on the Thames waterfront, probably in the 14th century.

To the north of the Hogsmill, all trace of the late medieval buildings on the market frontage had been destroyed by later cellars, but documentary evidence provides some indication of the nature of these buildings, with evidence for jettied upper storeys and shops at ground-floor level. Part of the west side of the Market Place was known as le Hyerowe, presumably because of the height of its terrace of buildings. This development is likely to have involved some encroachment on to the west side of the Market Place, and may be reflected in the rental of 1417 which records several sets of posts in the street, probably supporting jettied upper stories. The earliest cellar remains surviving on the market frontage have been assigned to the 16th century, but it is possible that some replaced earlier, medieval cellars or undercrofts. An undercroft, well-known in the 19th century but rediscovered in 1986, was excavated at the Horsefair site immediately to the north of Kingston Bridge, but it appears that Kingston as a local market centre did not possess the wealth of medieval undercrofts which survive in regional centres such as Guildford.

It is clear that there were sub-divisions of the properties on the west side of the Market Place during this period. Evidence for this appears in town rentals of quit-rents compiled in 1383, 1417 and 1427, and at least one of the properties on the market frontage at Charter Quay may have been divided at this time. In this area, the pattern of property boundaries exhibits a characteristic curvilinear 'bridgehead' form that would have provided maximum access to both the market and the waterfront. Small changes in alignment of these boundaries, some of which still survive today or are recorded on 19th and 20th century maps, reflect the periodic advances of the properties across the reclaimed ground. Several alleyways providing access between the Market Place and waterfront can also be seen to have become permanently established at this time. The sub-divisions, from wider to narrower properties, resulted in new buildings being constructed at 90° rather than parallel to the street frontage, a common development in medieval towns at this time as the pressure on land increased, particularly in areas such as market places.

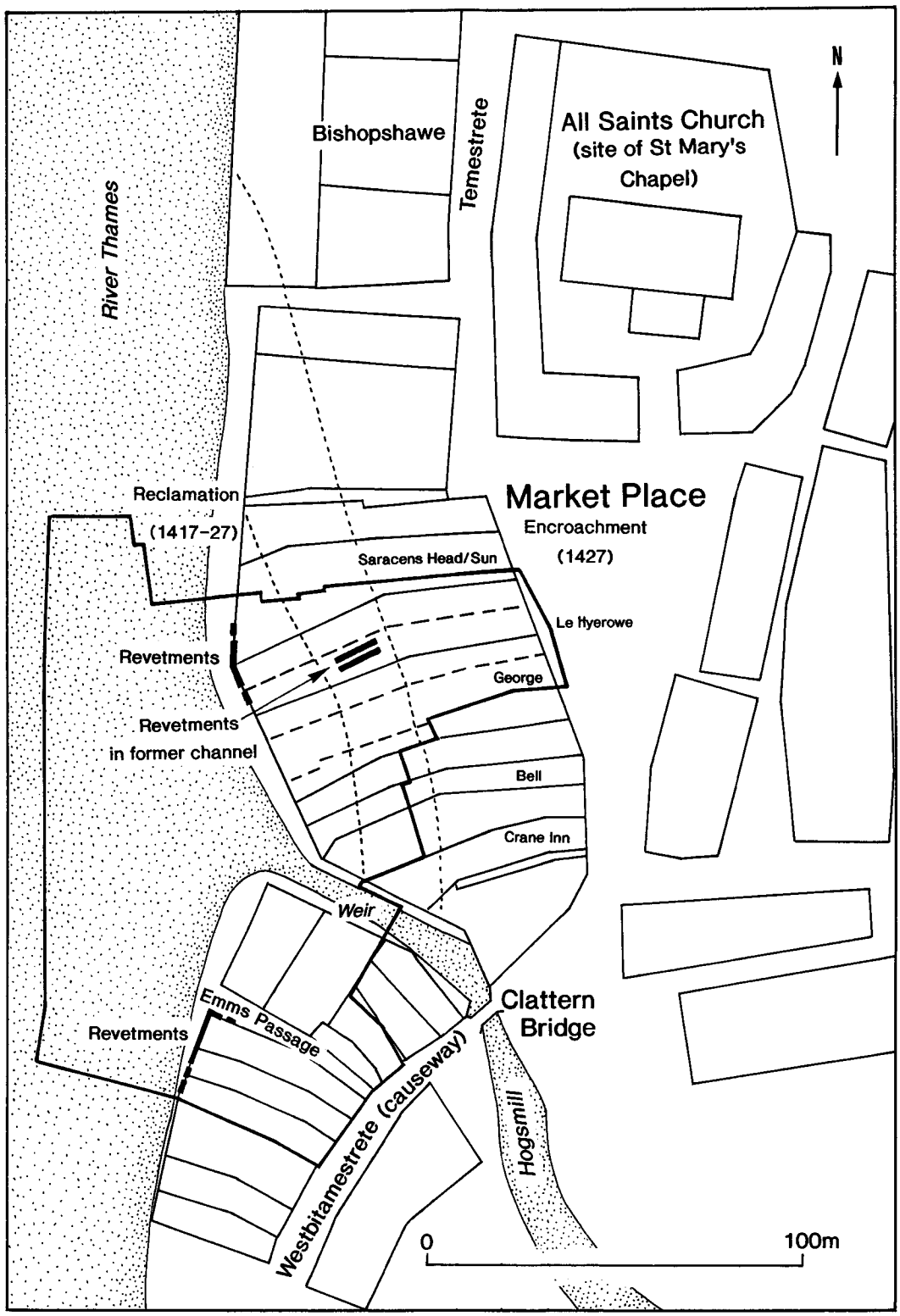

Fig 13.4 Charter Quay site and surrounding area: 14th–15th century

The southern suburb now stretched further to the south of the Hogsmill along both sides of Westbitamestrete (High Street), and Emms Passage probably became formalized as an alleyway at this time, linking the waterfront and the High Street. Two properties were identified on the street frontage north of Emms Passage, but it appears that the division of what had previously been a single property may not have taken place until around the end of the 14th century. The late 12th/13th century timber building which had previously occupied this property apparently fell into disuse, may have been dismantled and was not replaced. Instead, the area was given over to some form of industrial activity. What this activity was is uncertain, but the whole of the frontage was occupied by a series of pitched-tile hearths dated archaeomagnetically to the last quarter of the 14th century. Pottery production can be ruled out, but the concentration of hearths in this area may reflect the location of a 'dirty' industry on the edge of the town. Baking is a possibility, although documentary study has failed to determine the names of the occupiers of

the properties on the street frontage. Trades represented along the High Street are known to have included iron smithing and possibly gold working, but there is no evidence that these particular hearths were associated with metalworking.

It is clear that not all the buildings to the south of the Hogsmill were timber structures. In the 19th century some early capitals and pier bases were found on land formerly called *La Ryole*, in the Bittoms area; a fragment is now displayed outside Kingston Library. A date of *c* 1300 has been suggested for these and their presence clearly indicates a stone building (perhaps an undercroft) of some importance and architectural merit – possibly that of a London wine merchant. It may be no coincidence that there was a substantial house in Vintry Ward (the district of wine importers) in the City of London also called *la Ryole*, and perhaps this merchant also had a house in Kingston. Some Bordeaux wine may have brought by boat directly to Kingston where it could have been transferred to smaller boats for distribution inland. Kingston lay near the tidal limit of the Thames and the low clearance of the old bridge would have prevented larger vessels from sailing further upstream. It is known that other important City merchants held property in Kingston and these included the Lovekyns who were involved in some of the town's inns and wine shops. These merchants were presumably attracted by its location which provided both an important local market and a transhipment point.

Around the end of the 14th or the beginning of the 15th century the properties at Charter Quay were divided, new buildings were constructed and there was a change in use of the area. This may have resulted from a change in ownership. The London Charterhouse, founded in 1370, acquired the considerable Kingston property of John Wenge as part of its initial endowment and the Priory continued to purchase property in Kingston in the 15th century. Several inns on the west side of the Market Place were probably first established in the 15th century, their rear yards stretching westward to the Thames. They included the Saracen's Head (later the Sun) at the north end of site, which was established at least a generation before 1417, and the George further to the south which was part of the Charterhouse estate, developed out of Wenge's tenements.

Reclamation of the former Hogsmill channel continued throughout the 14th century, interspersed with periods of flooding, and as earlier was carried out within individual properties. However, this phase of reclamation progressed from north to south, rather than east to west, within the central part of the area excavated. At least three revetments of 14th century date were recorded in the same property which had earlier been extended to the west by revetments dating to the early 13th century. The later 14th century revetments present a slightly ambiguous picture in terms of their interpretation. Certainly, the early 13th century ones represent reclamation and may also have served as wharves on the edge of the channel. However, as the channel silted up, access to the Thames would have become more difficult and the importance of the waterfront may, as a result, have temporarily declined in this area during the later 14th century. The later revetments are more likely, therefore, to have been built for reclamation, stabilization and flood control rather than as wharves. The reason for them being built across rather than along the line of the channel can probably be explained by the changing nature of the channel. During the 14th century it became shallower largely as a result of silting, and building revetments across it would have served finally to block the channel and provide a 'bridge' across to the low island or 'ait' at the mouth of the Hogsmill which itself could then be reclaimed. Once this 'bridge' was established then further reclamation of the channel took place, proceeding to the north and south in adjacent properties, eventually as far as the edge of the Thames and the Hogsmill respectively. A 15th century documentary reference may be relevant to this phase of reclamation for it records 'a way for water to go backwards' at the George Inn. This probably refers to the remains of the former Hogsmill channel, now blocked, at the rear of the property in which water could have flowed southwards (ie 'backwards') into the Hogsmill, but no longer northwards into the Thames. Another reference indicates that between the rentals of 1417 and 1427, Richard Est added a purpresture at the Thames end of his property, which lay to the north of Charter Quay. This may refer to a further phase of reclamation, at the north end of the channel, and suggests that by this time it had been effectively closed off.

As properties were extended to the west there were also attempts to manage the shores of the Thames and the Hogsmill by a system of revetments, in order to limit the effect of flooding. Close to the Thames, there were several irregular lines of posts which probably represented evidence for reclamation and flood control in the 14th century. There were no horizontal timbers between these posts, and perhaps originally they merely consisted of a series of closely but irregularly spaced 'piles' along the river's edge. These were succeeded in the late 15th or early 16th century by revetments incorporating re-used boat timbers. These revetments comprised small sections of clinker-built boats similar to the earlier 14th century examples in the channel but these were held in place by a series of elm posts rather than re-used building timbers. The use of elm roundwood was a characteristic feature of the late 15th/early 16th century

revetments in this area and probably reflects an increasing shortage of suitable oak timber.

Elsewhere, the earliest Thames-side revetments so far discovered in Kingston were found in the immediate vicinity of old Kingston Bridge during excavations there in the late 1980s (Potter 1988). A sequence of at least six revetments either side of the old bridge were recorded, together spanning some 200 years from the early 13th century to the later 14th century, with the last going out of use early in the 15th century. These revetments exhibited a variety of construction techniques, some being apparently purpose built and containing sawn planks, others containing re-used boat and building timbers.

Post-medieval (fig 13.5)

Kingston continued to expand in the 16th and 17th centuries, and at the hearth tax assessment of 1664–6 the town consisted of 455 households, representing a population in excess of 2000. By comparison, London had a population of *c* 100,000, and Kingston's relatively small size must in part be a reflection of the

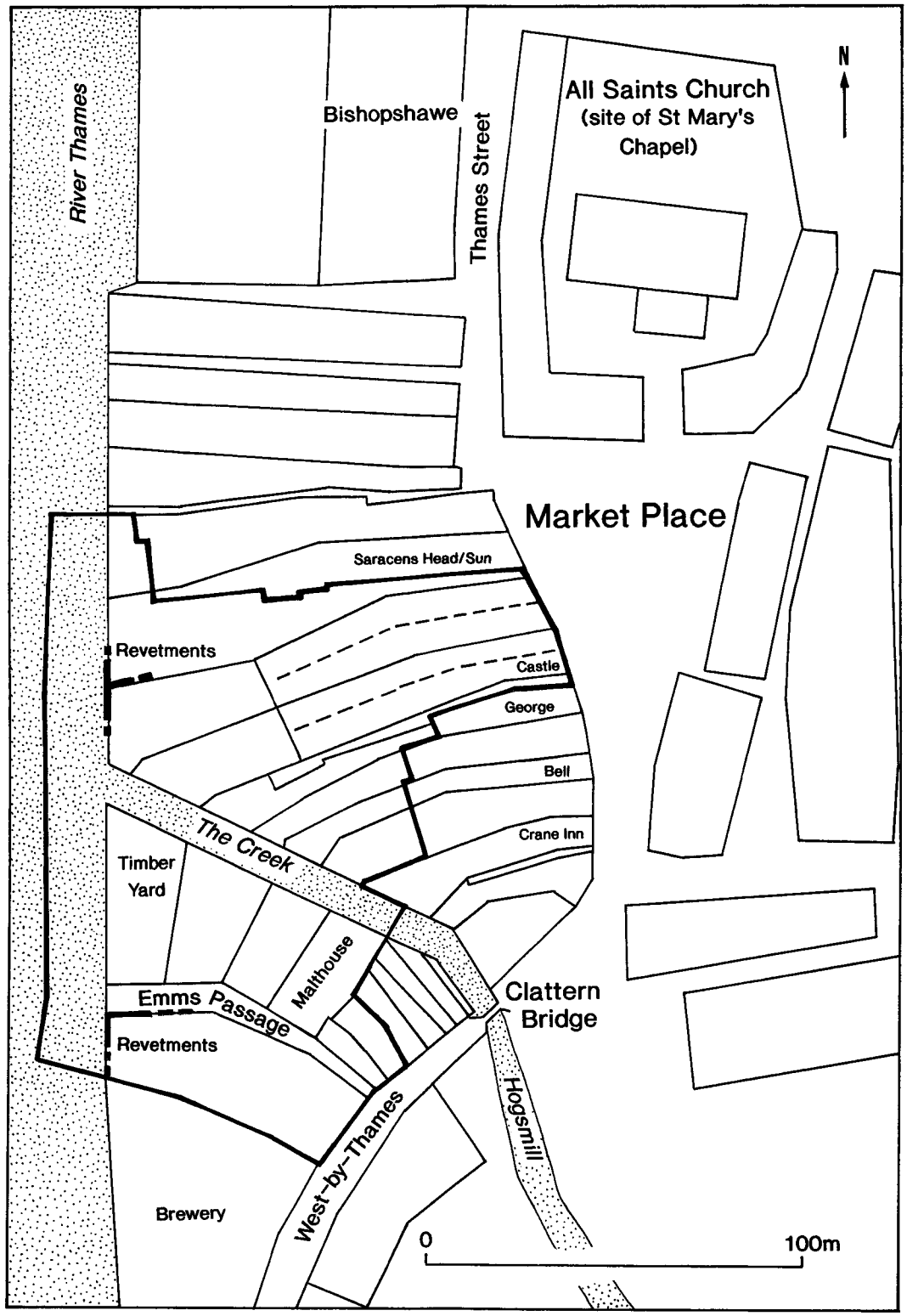

Fig 13.5 Charter Quay site and surrounding area: 16th–17th century

proximity of the capital. During this period Kingston became established as an important centre for boat building, tanning, milling, brewing and river barge traffic, and by 1580 various other trades were organized into guilds (woollen drapers, mercers, butchers and shoemakers). Kingston was a flourishing market town, aided by a charter granted by Charles I in 1628 forbidding the holding of any other market within a 7-mile radius. This charter heavily emphasizes Kingston's role as a port, and the town continued to serve as an inland port throughout the 17th century, daily transporting goods to London which by the end of the century was the largest city in Europe. Its boats at this time included pinnaces, which were capable of going to sea, and presumably could sail upstream as far as Kingston Bridge. Goods being transported upstream would have been unloaded at this point and transferred to smaller barges, to carts for transport overland, or were sold in the market. A recent study of Kingston trade tokens (Everson 2001) indicates how much trade in Surrey went by river, with only Guildford and Croydon of the large centres not being on the Thames. Of the 55 towns and smaller settlements recorded as issuing tokens in the middle of the 17th century, Kingston (21 issues) lies fourth behind Southwark (400+), Rotherhithe (54) and Guildford (22), emphasizing the importance of London within the region.

The presence of a royal residence on the other side of the river Thames at Hampton Court appears not to have had an extensive or permanent effect on Kingston's development, even after the royal family began to make more frequent use of the palace in the 17th century. However, many courtiers stayed in the town, with the Crane Inn on the west side of the Market Place being the principal lodging house. Inns were an important feature of the Market Place throughout this period and several had a continuous life from the medieval period. Kingston remained virtually free of the plague which swept England in the 1570s, largely because it banned all people coming from infected areas and established what was in effect an isolation hospital outside the town. However, the town succumbed in 1625 and 1636, and precautions were taken to prevent the disease spreading to Hampton Court. The town certainly transported goods to the palace up the river, although traffic was suspended for a time during the outbreak of plague and in 1625 there were virtually no boats travelling downstream to London. Notwithstanding these interruptions, the volume of trade was the pretext for the grant of a second market day in the week in 1662.

At the beginning of the 16th century houses in Kingston were generally small, some with tiled roofs but the majority thatched. The houses were mostly built of timber on stone footings, with wattle-and-daub infill, and it was forbidden to burn furze bavins in the town for fear of a general conflagration. There is evidence, however, for a phase of rebuilding that began around the middle of the 16th century and continued into the 17th century, with some of the later buildings being constructed at least partly of brick with timber framing above and tiled roofs. This was part of a widespread phase of urban rebuilding that took place throughout much of the country at this time. The results can be seen in the buildings of other towns in Surrey, for example Guildford, particularly along the High Street. Unlike Guildford, however, Kingston has few obvious survivals of buildings of this period. Nevertheless, elements of these may survive even in the most unpromising of circumstances. At Charter Quay parts of the cellar and roof structure of a 17th century range were recorded within a 19th–20th century department store (Hides) which had been formed from several earlier, largely 19th century, buildings and given a new façade. Also present, although not in its original location, was an elaborately carved mid-17th century staircase.

The properties to the north of the Hogsmill at Charter Quay retained their medieval boundaries until the 19th century. However, there were further sub-divisions of other properties along the Market Place and Thames Street frontage in the 17th century, and there was continued encroachment on to the Market Place itself. As further land reclamation at the confluence of the Thames and Hogsmill took place there was also lateral division of the tails of the properties behind the street frontage to form new tenements, accessed through lanes and alleyways from the Market Place. What had been open areas became more intensively built-up, and although yards and alleyways were retained they often became hemmed in and encroached upon by new buildings. The digging of new wells and cesspits in the remaining open areas may reflect an attempt to improve sanitation following outbreaks of the plague in 1625 and 1636.

The former Hogsmill channel was finally infilled at the beginning of this period, and there is a mid-16th century documentary reference which almost certainly relates to its closure where it joined the Thames. In 1563 John Jenyns was leased a piece of land at the Thames-side end of Bishop's Hall Lane with 50 feet (15.24m) of a drainage channel called the Creek – the same name was also given to the lower part of the Hogsmill below Clattern Bridge from the 16th century. He was required to fill and level this drainage channel while maintaining a watercourse for water to drain from Thames Street into the river. There were continuing efforts made to manage the rivers and defend against floods. Reclamation proceeded, particularly to the north of the confluence of the Thames and Hogsmill, and reclaimed

land along the Thames shore in this area was consolidated by extensive dumping of soil and rubbish, which raised the ground level by up to a metre in places.

Seventeenth century Kingston is known to have contained maltings and brewhouses, slaughterhouses and tan-yards, forges, timber-yards and a brickyard. Especially represented in the area to the south of the Hogsmill were the carpenters, joiners and wood merchants who operated the timber yards. Numerous other crafts and small-scale industries are recorded in documentary sources, and presumably many of these activities were reflected in the town's waterborne trade. However, there are few archaeological finds which might reflect the function of Kingston as an inland port at this time, and no indications of specialized vessel forms in the post-medieval pottery assemblage which might be related to specific craft or industrial functions.

Kingston was well within the catchment area for provisioning London with wood and charcoal via the Thames (Galloway *et al* 1996), and most woodlands around the town were probably dedicated to this lucrative fuel trade. During the medieval period the supply of livestock would have been mainly from the local area, but by the post-medieval period trade was extensive and far-reaching. It is possible that some of the cattle bone deposits at Charter Quay came from animals brought to Kingston's livestock market, slaughtered there and sent to London as processed meat. Dumps of horse bone have also been found on several sites including Eden Walk and Charter Quay where there is evidence of both skinning and disarticulation, with at least some meat removal. Horse remains from most medieval and post-medieval sites are consistently of older or diseased animals presumably at the end of their useful lives, and the animals at Charter Quay are no exception. Tanning and related industries were often situated next to rivers for easy access to water and this part of the town, close to the Horsefair, may have become a specialist area for these activities from the 16th century onwards, perhaps replacing that in Eden Walk. The Bishops Hall property to the north had become a tanner's yard by 1631 and subsequently developed into Kingston's largest and most important tannery which continued to operate on the same site until its closure in 1963 (fig 13.6).

This brings us up to the more recent, relatively well-documented history of Kingston, but even here archaeology can provide unexpected and important new information. For example, recent excavations of the Quaker burial ground in London Road 'provided a rare opportunity to investigate an early Quaker community through analysis of their burial practices and physical remains' (Bashford & Pollard 1998, 154).

Discussion and thoughts for the future

The history of Kingston is not exceptional, apart perhaps from its role during the Late Saxon period, and were it not for this it would be like many medieval and post-medieval towns further afield which functioned as local market centres. In Surrey, however, the small size of most of the other towns – partly a reflection of the proximity of London – and Kingston's location at a major crossing point on the Thames, meant that it assumed a relatively greater importance in the county, and at times paid more tax than Guildford.

Prehistoric and Roman discoveries will undoubtedly increase with further work, but these are likely to refine rather than substantially change our knowledge of Kingston's topography and early settlement history. However, any opportunities further to investigate and understand the important Neolithic (and Bronze Age) remains in the east arm of the Hogsmill should prove worthwhile, as should a programme of environmental sampling of channel deposits here and elsewhere. As part of this investigation of channel deposits one should include the interpretation of data from boreholes and test-pits routinely undertaken prior to new development, for this can provide much useful information on the Holocene geology without recourse to more extensive (and expensive) excavation.

The pattern of Early and Mid-Saxon occupation in the area is now becoming clearer, with evidence for settlement shift(s) between the 6th and 9th centuries, a recurrent trend elsewhere in the country. However, further investigations would be useful to provide more information on the nature and extent of these successive settlements. The Late Saxon period in archaeological if not documentary terms remains shadowy. All Saints Church, the churchyard and immediate surrounding area are likely to contain evidence for the royal complex, but opportunities to undertake investigations are likely to be few and restricted in area. However, any works in and around the church itself, such as new heating ducts, drains and flooring, may provide important information on the structural sequence of this, if not the layout and nature of the other buildings in this complex.

Recent work appears to demonstrate conclusively that Kingston's Market Place and street layout were a medieval development and that the town did not originate as a Late Saxon *burh*. However, there are hints of a (?early) rectilinear layout in the street pattern either side of Bridge Street to the east of the old bridge (fig 13.6), and perhaps the Horsefair was the site of an early market. Much of this street pattern has been obliterated by major retail developments over the last three decades and only a small area in the north-west corner, to the north of Bridge Street, survives unaltered. Further excavation would, therefore, be

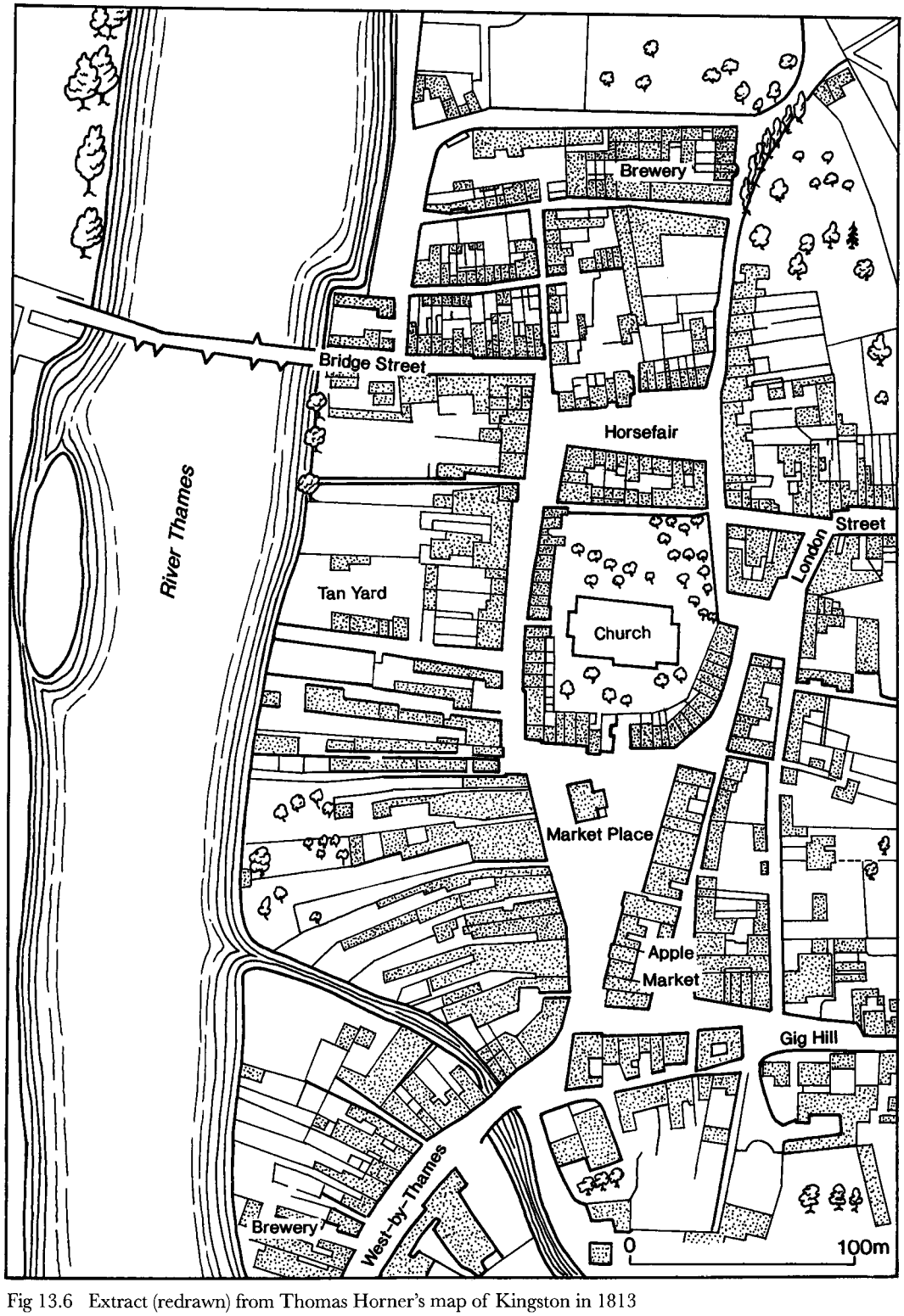

Fig 13.6 Extract (redrawn) from Thomas Horner's map of Kingston in 1813

desirable in this area and also to the east and west of the church where pockets of archaeological deposits may survive and reveal more of the Late Saxon settlement. A single ditch recorded at Thames Street during limited investigations many years ago remains our only archaeological evidence for this settlement, and the results from the extensive excavations at the Horsefair site in the mid-1980s remain unpublished. A case might be made for some further analysis of the records and, particularly, the pottery from this site in order to clarify, in the first instance, whether or not there is any evidence for Late Saxon occupation in this area.

The medieval and post-medieval sequence in Kingston is becoming increasingly better understood through a combination of excavation and study of documentary evidence. The large-scale excavations at Charter Quay, and to a lesser extent the Horsefair, along with numerous smaller investigations, have gone a considerable way to 'filling out' the picture of urban development in the town. Like many smaller towns of similar size, the depth of archaeological deposits is, for the most part, relatively shallow and has in some cases, particularly along street frontages, been entirely truncated by later cellars. However, on

larger sites at least some of these important sequences are likely to survive, and it is these sites which help provide a framework into which the results from the smaller excavations and watching briefs can be fitted. The larger sites can also provide the opportunity to undertake more meaningful investigation of finds and environmental analysis, as well as complementary documentary work (Wessex Archaeology 2003). While this may not be successful at linking occupiers or trades to particular properties, it can provide very useful information on, for example, the layout and development of properties, the economic character of an area and changes in this over time. In Kingston we can now see more detail of the commercial nature of the waterfront and market areas in the medieval period, with a mixture of trades represented, while the main 'industrial' area – principally engaged in potting and leatherworking – lay on the eastern and south-eastern periphery of the town. A subtle change is apparent in the post-medieval period, with the market becoming the location for several important inns and the town, particularly the waterfront area, becoming well-known for its maltings, breweries, tanneries and timber-yards.

In Surrey, only Southwark and Guildford could really be considered as regional centres in the medieval period, despite Kingston sometimes paying more in taxes, and excavation has confirmed Kingston's status as a local market and redistribution centre. It had tradesmen and craftsmen who provided goods and services for the surrounding villages, and to some extent London itself, but it lacked the long-distance trading contacts which characterized the regional centres. Also missing are the religious houses and other institutions which were to be found, for example, in Guildford. The archaeological potential of Guildford has yet to be realized for, although there have been numerous excavations undertaken in the town in recent years, almost all have been small-scale in nature and often in the rear parts of properties which have yielded little structural evidence. This, of course, reflects the lack of large-scale redevelopment within the historic core of the town, in contrast to Kingston where there have been several major developments over the past fifteen years and a number of other sites are currently proposed for development. This lack of recent, large-scale redevelopment is also a general feature of the centres of other Surrey towns and is the main reason why we have relatively little archaeological evidence for their origins and development.

John Schofield (1994, 195) identified three stages in the archaeological investigation of towns: data collection, construction of typologies, and the study of the archaeological evidence of specific activities and of groups which functioned within towns. In some larger towns the wealth of available data may be overwhelming, resulting in problems of access, interpretation and synthesis, whereas for smaller towns the quantity of data is usually very much smaller. The completion of Urban Archaeological Databases (UADs) for larger towns and Extensive Urban Surveys (EUSs) for smaller towns are of great importance for assessing the available resources and targeting future data collection. The EUSs currently being compiled by the Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU) will be of particular help in these respects and will provide a framework for urban study on which detailed archaeological investigations can be based to address specific, often basic, questions of settlement morphology and chronology. It is certain that much remains to be done to realize the urban potential of archaeological deposits, standing buildings, artefacts and ecofacts, and towns will remain a priority area for future research.

Towns are complex entities which have a rich material culture. They contain a great store of medieval deposits, buildings, churches, defences, evidence for commercial and industrial activity, documentary sources, artefacts and ecofacts. Towns develop and change through time, undergoing changes which may be reflected differently in the archaeological and documentary evidence – evidence which may not be in agreement in showing, for example, the extent of late medieval urban decline. Here there is a need to place archaeology within a broader framework of academic enquiry. Further evidence must also be sought for proto-urban origins, the role of the church in urban development and topography, the nature and extent of commercial and industrial activity, the distribution and survival of buildings, and the links between towns and, especially, between town and hinterland (Carver 1987). On a more specific note, environmental sampling in towns in Surrey has been very limited and any opportunity should be taken to sample contexts which reflect events (eg fires or floods), industrial processes, and any deposits which may reflect the relationship with the hinterland. Waterlogged deposits are likely to offer the greatest potential in this respect and are particularly important.

Urban archaeology is, almost without exception, likely to remain developer-led for the foreseeable future, but this should be seen in a positive rather than negative light, for it provides an excellent opportunity to add to the archaeological database. This is particularly so in towns such as Kingston which, prior to PPG 16, usually drew only sporadic and limited funding because 'they rarely offer the spectacular opportunity for excavation provided in the more important towns by urban development' (Turner 1987, 250). Today, there is also more of an onus to publish or make available the results of

investigations, as this is another requirement of PPG 16, something which all too often was not achieved in the past, particularly in the case of many urban excavations. The challenge today is for curators who prepare specifications and monitor archaeological work to set and maintain standards, as work in Kingston, for example, may be undertaken by at least half a dozen different organizations, not all of whom may be familiar with the area. There is also the difficulty of developing some mechanism for synthesizing the vast amounts of data which are now accumulating in the so-called 'grey literature', such as summary and archive reports. Contract archaeology allows little scope for research except on the largest and most prestigious projects, for example Charter Quay (Wessex Archaeology 2003), and there is an increasing danger of generating too much dispersed and indigestible data.

However, this surely must be an improvement on the lack of information which was a concern so often voiced in the past, even as recently as 1987 for the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods in Surrey. The computerization of Sites and Monuments Records and the development of geographical information systems will undoubtedly make such syntheses easier, although it is not always clear who will be in the best position, or have the time, to undertake them. Up to now Surrey has been fortunate in having people willing to organize conferences and undertake the publication of archaeological syntheses, most notably the 1987 volume (Bird & Bird 1987) and now this volume; it is to be hoped that there will be worthy successors to these in the next 50 years.

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Archaeological work continues apace and I would like to thank the individuals and organizations whose information I have drawn upon, usually by way of the useful summaries published in *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, *London Archaeologist* and the archaeological reports of the South West London Archaeological Liaison Committee. For historical information the published work of Joan Wakeford, June Sampson and Shaan Butters has been of considerable assistance.

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Finally I would like to thank Martin O'Connell, Dennis Turner and Rob Poulton whose publications in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s respectively have continued to focus interest on increasing our understanding of the development of Surrey's towns.

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