

Letters

I SHOULD like to draw your attention to the several groups of people and the individuals who are trying to record the industrial monuments and relics of London. These are disappearing daily in the various rebuilding and development schemes. In fact it is impossible for the few people already working on the industrial archaeology of London to even notice a very large number of important items, let alone record their disappearance with camera and drawing board.

An active group of members of the Thames Basin Archaeological Observers Group have carried out surveys of the Dock area at Brentford and St. Katherine's Dock at Wapping. Detailed plans and photographs are available and reports made to the Industrial Archaeology Survey of Greater London, which is being organised jointly by Paul Carter and John Ashdown of the T.B.A.O.G. and Roy Canham, Field Officer at the London Museum. Information is required to help compile this index, on items such as bridges, warehouses, railway stations, tramway depots, early cinemas, brickworks, quarries, potteries and ironworks, buildings and equipment connected with hand, wind, water, steam, diesel, gas or electric power, transport, drainage or industrial housing.

Either myself or Roy Canham will be very pleased to receive any such information, and especially glad to welcome those keen to participate in field expeditions. Those who have had any specialised knowledge of technology, photography and draughtsmanship will be doubly welcome, although people with no experience but an ability to take notes and measurements accurately and thoroughly will be almost as valuable.

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THIS new publication for London's amateur archaeologists is already meeting with great interest and wide support from societies and from both amateurs and professionals working in London and it is clear that a vast potential of active archaeologists are available. It is to be hoped that *The London Archaeologist* will help to stimulate and provide an outlet for new talent. But given this enthusiastic potential, the greatest need is for leadership and the next for actual space on the ground, space in which work can be done. Much of the archaeologist's work cannot be contained within the small walls of his home and alternative accommodation is hard to find.

Are readers satisfied with the existing work-place of their particular society? How hard have they tried to remedy the situation? Do any readers who are not members of societies know of any such accommodation available, or have any suggestions to make on how to beg, borrow or scrounge it?

The Editor would, I am sure, be grateful to hear of any ideas and suggestions that readers may have, especially if any of these results in a work space break-through for any of the local archaeological societies.

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The Editor will be grateful! —Ed.

THIS brief study is intended to act as a prelude to more detailed work on Putney and its neighbourhood in the Dark Ages (that is from about A.D. 400 to 1060), by outlining some of the factors involved. The present work arose largely as a result of the Wandsworth Historical Society's excavations in the north-eastern part of Purley, around Bemish Road and The Platt (TQ 238757) which produced considerable amounts of Roman material.

Following careful analysis of this it has been shown beyond any doubt that there was some kind of Romano-British settlement in this area until the late 4th century, possibly even into the 5th century. Coupled with this material have been numerous relics of Victoriana, and a few from the Middle Ages. There has, however, been no trace of Anglo-Saxon remains, or any evidence for a settlement during the entire period from circa A.D. 400 to 1086. Neither, in fact, has any of the random finds in Putney over the past hundred years revealed anything at all from this period.

Archaeological evidence is useful, but the period under consideration is noted for the relative sparsity of finds and for their specialised nature. It is therefore necessary to seek other evidence to prove that there was any settlement at Putney prior to about the early 11th Century.

Place names can often throw light on the origins of a settlement. In the case of Putney, all the authoritative works on place-names (for example, the 'Dictionary of English Place Names'¹ and the 'Place-Names of Surrey'² give the origin as PUTTAN HYTH or Putta's landing-place. From this the historians have always automatically tended to assume that Putta was a Saxon chieftain or group leader who established a settlement on the bluff near St. Mary's Church (TQ 242757) in the 5th or 6th Century. There is, apart from the absence of archaeological finds, no written evidence either direct or indirect to support this 'logical' conclusion. The first written reference to Putney which we have is 'PUTELEI' in Domesday Book of 1086. The form from which the origin is derived 'PUTTENHUTH' does not appear until 1279. The same is true of many settlements in England, even ones with early -ING endings, so it does not follow that Putney was derelict from circa 400 until 1086 or just before.

Somewhat dubious evidence comes from a charter³ dated 693, but in fact an 11th Century copy, partially spurious, which is concerned with the boundaries of Battersea and Wands-

Putney in The Dark Ages

by KEITH BAILEY

worth⁴. It mentions both those places, and also several minor features, one a stream called 'BEFERITHI' (? Beverley Brook) which *may* serve to show that Putney was not there at the time the charter was recopied, that is sometime about 1050-1080.

Since Anglo-Saxon place-names could be formed as late as 1200, there is no reason from the above evidence to assume that Putney was reoccupied much before 1000, which is borne out by the archaeological evidence.

This late date would mean that Putney is a secondary settlement, from somewhere, and Fulham is the obvious choice, its village core being only 400 yards away. This incidentally, supports the given etymology of Putney, the Domesday form being the result of miscopyings and Norman influences and not meaning⁵ 'Putta's LEAH or clearing.'

Turning to the Domesday entry for Putney (fol. 30B) it says merely '. . . and 20 shillings from the toll (of the ferry or wharf?) of the vill of Putelei and there is a fishery unrented.' This is part of the entry for the Archbishop of Canterbury's large Mortlake manor. (Even the fishery may not have been in Putney as we know it⁶, for in Domesday Book it says Earl Harold set it up by force *in the land of Kingston and St. Paul's*. This land was in Barnes, near Ferry Lane (TQ 216776) and survived as Putney Detached until the 19th Century.

This exclusive stress of riverside activities gives the best clue to Putney's origin. The present boundaries of Surrey/Middlesex and Putney/Fulham are merely administrative conveniences and local people at that time would never have drawn any such distinction. Further, until well into the 18th Century, Fulham was a much more important place than Putney. For example, it became an estate of the Bishops of London from circa 704-9 (Wealdhere)⁷ and was one of the largest manors in Middlesex in 1086.

The need for a ferry crossing at this point on the direct line from London to Kingston must have quickly become apparent, since it

avoids the marshy ground of Lambeth and Battersea. It is also more probable that the traffic demand would have been from London and that the ferry would therefore start at Fulham. The next stage would be for a group from Fulham to cross over to the uninhabited Putney site and be mainly concerned with fishing and the ferry. The Putta in question would have been some purely local figure, and this type of naming is still found today, for example: Tibbet's Corner, Bigg's Row and Price's Folly, all names of purely local significance, as Putney probably was before circa 1250.

In conclusion it may be said that the archaeological and place-name evidence both point to a secondary settlement for Putney, possibly in the 9th/10th Centuries; a growth out from Fulham and not a primary settlement. The facts of physical geography also bear this out, since Putney is on the outside of a meander curve, where the current is fastest, whilst Fulham is on the shallow, sandy side, a much easier landing-place⁸. All in all, then, Putney is best seen as a minor place attached loosely to Fulham, until the implementation of the manorial system after the Norman Conquest placed it in Surrey for the rest of its history.

REFERENCES

1. 'The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place Names', E. Ekwall, 4th Edn., Oxford (1960), pp. 375, 260.
2. 'The Place Names of Surrey', English Place Name Society vol XI, Cambridge (1934), also 'English Place Name Elements', Cambridge (1956).
3. 'Cartularium Saxonicum,' Ed. W. Birch, vol. 1, no. 82, London (1885-93).
4. For discussion see chapter 1 'Our Lady of Battersey,' J. G. Taylor, London (1925).
5. Professor D. Whitelock, personal communication.
6. The punctuation in Domesday makes it uncertain as to whether a fishery at Putney is meant, or merely one in Mortlake as a whole.
7. *Not* Eorcenweald as is so often said, the grant was from Tyrhtil of Hereford to Wealdhere of London.
8. See 'History of Fulham,' Faulkner (1812). Also 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle' Ed. G. N. Garmonsway, Everyman Library, entry for A.D. 879 for evidence.