

# EARLY FULHAM

## — a rejoinder

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KEITH WHITEHOUSE'S ARTICLE on "Early Fulham" (*The London Archaeologist* Vol. 1 No. 15) touches on some difficult problems of historical and archaeological interpretation which merit further discussion.

In considering patterns of early settlement, geographical and environmental aspects are of the first importance. In the London area a significant factor is the progressive and still continuing rise in sea and river levels relative to the land surface; at the Fulham-Putney crossing there is likely to have been a rise of over 4m. in the level of high tide even between the Roman period and the present day<sup>1</sup>. Land drainage has been affected, and it may be suggested that the sandy areas of the Flood Plain Terrace which extend over much of present-day Fulham within the river loop, though they would not have been heavily wooded, may not have been attractive for early settlement, and the brickearth belt to the north in Hammersmith may have been more inviting. A further consideration is the absence of significant rivers or streams flowing into the Thames from the north between the Brent and the Lee. In all periods the Thames tributaries seem to have attracted settlements.

With regard to use of the Fulham-Putney crossing in pre-Roman or Roman times, it is not possible to say at what periods, if at all, there could have been a practicable ford, but this is immaterial, since boats could have been used. However, it should be borne in mind that Professor Grimes' suggestion of a pre-Roman trackway using this crossing, as originally put forward, was very tentative, and as yet there has been no clear evidence to substantiate it. Undoubtedly the medieval and modern road pattern has grown up in relation to the crossing (when it was opened in 1729 Old Fulham Bridge was the first permanent bridge across the Thames between London Bridge and Kingston), but it may be doubted whether in Iron Age or Roman times such

a route between Essex and western Surrey would have been much frequented. River finds in the vicinity have not been of special significance. The suggestion of projecting such a trackway back to the Neolithic phase, when the whole population was very small, hardly seems realistic.

In relation to the post-Roman development of settlements in the area, more needs to be said about the significance of the name "Fulham." Most authorities have preferred to regard it as incorporating a personal name, such as "Fulla"; the suffix could be "ham," meaning a "homestead", but more probably is "hamm," which describes low-lying land within the bend of a river<sup>2</sup>. In either case it would have been a name of local application and not, of course, of the early phases of the development of Saxon settlements; but assuming the genuineness of Bishop Tyrhtil's charter there should have been settlement of some kind before the 8th century. It is reasonable, though not proven, that the name should originally have been associated with the site of the river crossing and of the later administrative centre of the Bishop of London's estates.

As regards the use of the name in relation to the Bishop's lands, it is correct that, as Mr. Whitehouse pointed out, the bounds of the medieval manor and parish of Fulham were those of modern Fulham and Hammersmith. But in the medieval period the name was also used to describe the much wider territory held by the Bishop in this part of Middlesex, which embraced the subordinate manors of Acton and Ealing (which included Brentford and Drayton) and also the separate district of Finchley<sup>3</sup>. These other manors do not appear in Domesday Book, in which the Bishop's lands appear under the "vill" of Fulham. Evidence which supports the likelihood that they included the wider area in Saxon times also is found in the fact that Bishop Theodred's will in the mid-10th century similarly refers only to "Fulham" but another charter text which was also transcribed by James

of the Royal Society of London (A. Mathematical and Physical Sciences, Vol. 272, No. 1221) (1972).

2. *The Place-Names of Middlesex* (English Place-Name Society) (1942).

3. *A History of Fulham to 1965* ed. P. D. Whitting (Fulham History Society, 1970), also *A History of Hammersmith* ed. P. D. Whitting (Hammersmith Local History Group, 1965).

1. At the Iron Age and Romano-British hut site at Old England, Brentford, the difference was estimated to be 4.5m (R.E.M. Wheeler, *Antiquity* 3 (1929) 20). Due to complex factors of eustatic rise in sea level and land sinkage and also the effects of man-made structures the detailed course of events in the Post-Glacial period is not fully established. For a full recent discussion, see Anne V. Akeroyd "Archaeological and historical evidence for subsidence in southern Britain" in *Philosophical Transactions*

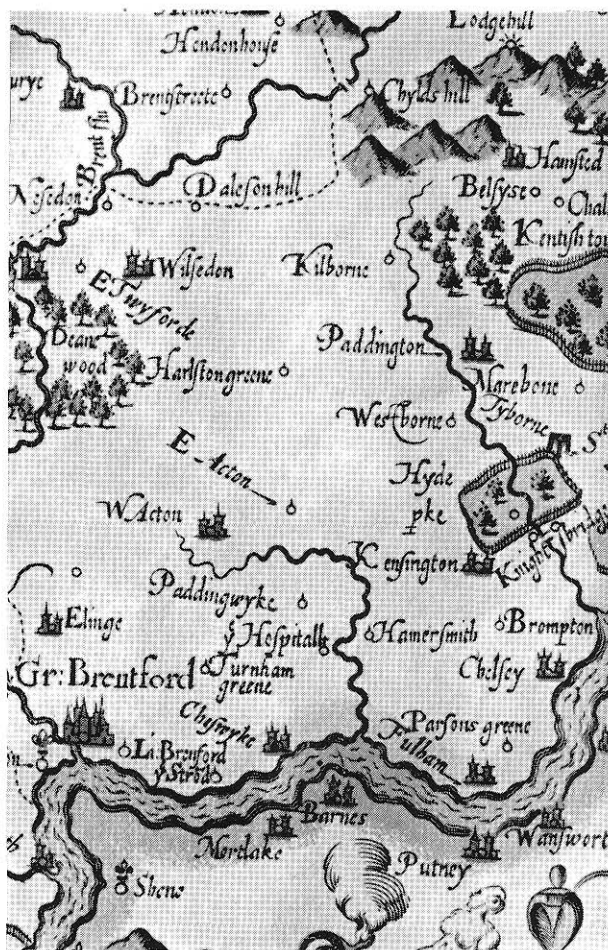
in the 17th century from the now lost St. Paul's cartulary refers to a grant to Bishop Waldhere also of 10 hides under the name of Ealing by Aethelred, Coenred's predecessor as king of the Mercians. Undoubtedly these charter texts, in the form in which they survive, must in some degree be suspect, but from their content there is no particular reason to suspect that they were later fabrications<sup>4</sup>. Both texts may be regarded as equally valid.

Further evidence in Domesday Book of the wide extent of the Fulham lands is that there were no nearer Domesday manors to the north and west of Fulham than Harlesden, Hanwell and Isleworth, and a small separate manor in the "vill" of Fulham which was held by the canons of the cathedral and not by the Bishop has been shown by later continuity to have been the manor of Sutton in Chiswick<sup>5</sup>. In any case the 50 hides of Fulham in Tyrhtil's charter suggest a relatively large territory, though the charter itself, couched in terms of religious humility, describes it as modest.

The early reference to Ealing is of particular interest, since this is a survival of a very early '-ingas' territorial name of the kind associated with the first phases of Saxon settlement. Proximity to the brick-earth belt and the River Brent is significant.

The very important evidence of Domesday Book for the contemporary pattern of settlement must relate to the whole area of the manor, but is difficult to apply, since it cannot usually be taken at its face value, particularly in the case of a large holding which may be made up of discrete parcels of land scattered over wide areas. However the Fulham estate, apart from the separate holding of the canons in Chiswick and the inclusion of Finchley, seems from the evidence of the later medieval period to have been a comprehensive holding. Domesday Book not only provides our earliest detailed evidence of the pattern of population and settlement, if it is correctly interpreted, but also provides a mid-way link in time between our available knowledge of manors and land-holdings in the medieval period and the still obscure pattern of settlement in the Saxon period and its relationship to those of earlier periods. From detailed study, which has still to be undertaken, of medieval holdings, local topography and early place-name survivals, elements of continuity may nevertheless be discovered and much of the evidence of Domesday Book may also fall into place.

Patterns of open field cultivation, which may well go back in part to the Saxon period, are found not



Fulham and surroundings in John Norden's map (1610)

only around the riverside village of Fulham, but also in Hammersmith and Chiswick, and at Acton and Ealing. On the other hand, Domesday Book, of which space here does not permit detailed discussion, shows for the whole of the Bishop's manor a total of only 113 villeins and lesser tenants owing services; in all there were 30 plough teams, usually assumed to be 8 oxen teams, of which the Bishop had four for cultivation of the demesne; the Commissioners reported, perhaps erroneously, that there was a deficiency of 10 teams for the available arable.

The canons' manor in Chiswick had four plough teams and 38 tenants, and in addition there was a sub-holding from the Bishop to a certain Fulchered with two plough teams and 15 tenants; this

lock (1955). "Hides" at this period (whatever the Latin term in the particular text—in this case *manente*) should probably be understood in Bede's sense of the land of a family unit.)

5. *A History of Hammersmith*, ed. P. D. Whitting.

4. For discussion of the charters see *Early Charters of the Cathedral Church of S. Paul, London*, ed. M. Gibbs, *Camden Soc.*, 3rd Series, vol. 58 (1939) and *A Note on the Origins of Fulham Manor*, London Borough of Hammersmith Archives Dept. (1968). Translations are in *English Historical Documents c. 500-1042*, ed. D. White-

has not been located, but possibly the best suggestion is that it was Finchley, particularly as it possessed an exceptionally large amount of woodland, as did the manor of Fulham itself. Finchley may have been an early holding, similar to many in the Weald, which became attached to distant landholdings and were valuable mainly for herding pigs<sup>6</sup>.

It remains to reconsider, in the light of the above, the likely importance in Saxon times of the riverside village of Fulham. Given that it was selected as the administrative centre of the manor as a whole, and remained so throughout the medieval period, it may nevertheless not have included more than a small part of the population of the manor. Its main advantage may have been convenient transport by river to and from London. Though the importance of the river crossing may have been increasing, particularly in the later Saxon period, it is difficult to see that its use was of any great importance to the Bishop or his officers. Surrey did not form part of the See, and the Surrey holdings listed in Bishop Theodred's will which were apparently in Wimbledon and Sheen (Richmond)<sup>7</sup>, may have been short-lived, since there is no later reference to them, and in the Domesday survey the Bishop held no lands in Surrey.

It is also difficult to see Putney as a secondary settlement from Fulham, as the Bishop retained no rights there. In Domesday Book Putney was part of the Archbishop of Canterbury's manor of Mortlake; the only information given separately for Putney is that tolls to the value of 20s. were collected. While it is possible that these were ferry tolls, similar tolls were also collected both at Southwark, where they seem more likely to have been general tolls on landings from river shipping, and Wandsworth<sup>8</sup>. In later times the ferry rights were shared between the manors of Fulham and Mortlake (later Wimbledon).

Both documentary and archaeological evidence which might confirm the special importance of Fulham prior to the medieval period is unfortunately lacking, and views may have been over-coloured by misunderstanding of the evidence of Domesday Book or the supposition that Fulham in early times had begun to assume the unique position among the

Bishop of London's possessions which it came to have in the later medieval period and subsequently. Although it might be unreasonable to expect earlier documentary evidence, it should nevertheless be pointed out that the first reference to the sojourn of a Bishop of London at Fulham is in 1141<sup>9</sup>, the first evidence of the existence of a church in 1154<sup>10</sup>, and the first reference to a ferry, as mentioned by Mr. Whitehouse, in 1210.

There remains the enigma of the Fulham Palace moat. The attribution to the Danes in 880 has not generally been accepted. It has been suggested that the Danes who wintered in Fulham may have been only a body of deserters from the main Danish army or of new arrivals from the continent<sup>11</sup>. Certainly the Danes built fortifications in England, and among those tentatively identified are so-called "D-shaped" enclosures alongside rivers<sup>12</sup>. However, as a military work the moat does not impress; it would have required considerable manpower both to dig and to defend, and there have been no indications that it was associated with any form of defensive bank. The fact that Roger Hoveden misinterpreted Fulham in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reference as "insula Hame" does not, of course, rule out the possibility of the Danes having wintered on Chiswick Eyot, which in the light of the discussion above can be regarded as having been in Fulham. Still less, even on the basis of the discovery in the Thames last century of the well-known Fulham Roman sword<sup>13</sup>, does the Fulham moat look like a Roman military work.

Nevertheless an interesting further piece of evidence which may carry the history of the moat over 200 years further back to the mid-12th century is found in a deed by which Bishop Gilbert Foliot gave land in the vicinity to William, his cook<sup>14</sup>. The date is between 1163 and 1180-1, and the land is described as "totam illam terram de antiquo managio apud Fuleham que jacet circa ecclesiam sicut divisa est per fossatam hinc a virgulto episcopi inde a via publica que descendit in Tamisiam". Translation is not altogether easy, but it appears that the land in question may have been near (rather than 'round') the church and divided by the moat ('fossata') from the Warren and also by a ditch from the High

6. For Domesday Book text and discussion see *Victoria County History of Middlesex*, vol. 1 (1969). Latin text and translation in *A History of Fulham to 1965*, ed. P. D. Whitting.

7. Identification of "Wunemannedune" as Wimbledon is unsatisfactory, but for want of a better solution is accepted in *The Place-Names of Surrey*, English Place-Name Society (1934).

8. *A Domesday Geography of South-East England*, ed. H. C. Darby and E. M. J. Campbell (1962) p.400.

9. Holinshed's Chronicles. Robert de Sigillo was captured at Fulham by Geoffrey de Mandeville.

10. *The Letters of John of Salisbury*, vol. 1, letter 5, ed. W. J. Miller and F. J. and H. E. Butler (1955). John of Salisbury was called to adjudicate in a dispute over the tithes of the churches of Fulham and Stepney.

11. London Museum—R. E. M. Wheeler, *London and the Vikings* (1927).

12. James Dyer, "Earthworks of the Danelaw Frontier" in *Archaeology and the Landscape* ed. P. J. Fowler (1972).

13. *British Museum Guide to the Antiquities of Roman Britain* (1951). No date has been assigned to the sword and sheath.

14. *The Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot*, ed. Adrian Morey and C. N. L. Brooke. (1967).



Street<sup>15</sup>. The possible reference to the moat cannot be taken as conclusive but assuming its existence so early, it should be noted that the digging of moats around habitations was an extremely common practice in the early medieval period, particularly in the 12th and 13th centuries. In many cases it does not appear that the work could have served any useful purpose either for protection or for drainage, and

15. "Circa" is also used in medieval Latin in the sense of "in the direction of."

Mr. Whitehouse writes—

I should like to have the opportunity to comment on some of the more salient points raised by Dennis Haselgrove.

Regarding Prof. Grimes' suggestion of a pre-Roman trackway, although I have not had personal communication with him, his views expressed appear to be more a serious possibility than a "tentative" suggestion. The possibility of a ford is not a new idea—G. F. Lawrence of the London Museum, suggested it in the 1920's.

Concerning the wider use of the name "Fulham," I am fully aware of this but a statement to this effect was edited out of my article. Due to the nature of my article and lack of space, it was not possible to go into detail on this and other matters.

Under the wider medieval usage of "Fulham," one could consider Chiswick Eyot as a likely contender for the Viking camp. However, the Eyot has no precedent over any other place in "Fulham" and to follow the argument to its logical conclusion, the three islands known collectively as Brentford Eyot are also equal contenders. I personally believe that Chiswick Eyot may not have been an island in the 9th century, for reasons that are too complex to go into in this space. Although river finds must be treated with caution, it ought to be borne in mind that there are Viking

the suggestion has recently been made that in some cases at least a moat was a necessary prestige symbol of the period for those unable to display stone fortifications<sup>16</sup>. At Fulham the moat could at least have served to enclose a small deer park.

At present a great deal more still remains to be learned about "Early Fulham". Virtually nothing is sure.

16. C. C. Taylor, "Medieval Moats in Cambridgeshire," in *Archaeology and the Landscape* ed. P. J. Fowler (1972).

finds from the river fronting the Palace, which are not found in this stretch generally. I know of no finds of this period from Chiswick Eyot.

C. C. Taylor's paper on Cambridgeshire moated sites (n.16 above) states that all those studied contain between  $\frac{1}{2}$  - 5 acres—Fulham Palace moat encloses approximately 28 acres. I feel no comparison can be made. Mickelham Priory claims to be the largest medieval moated site in England but is only 7 acres. Surely, this shows that the Fulham Palace moat is something extraordinary?

A key factor here is the siting of the Palace within the moated area. One would expect the manor-house to be reasonably central if it were a medieval moat, but in fact, is in the north-west corner, see (Map L.A. no 15 p.34-5). If the grounds were frequently flooded, one would not expect it to be placed so near to the river.

The present buildings, which were commenced circa 1506, are apparently on the earlier palace site. This shows that the building's position has remained the same since medieval times. There are parallels to Fulham Palace in England, where an earlier site was reused in Saxon or Norman times, by the erection of a building in one corner, e.g. Pevensey and Porchester.

Although Dennis Haselgrove puts forward alternative views, I feel that my arguments remain valid.

## London's Archaeological Societies — 12

### CROYDON NATURAL HISTORY AND SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY

FOUNDED IN 1870 as the Croydon Microscopy Society, the members of this society had wide interests, and papers in archaeological subjects were occasionally read. The Archaeology Section was formed about the turn of the century but since then it has mainly confined its interests to meetings and visits, though flint forays were much in favour during the first few decades. Fieldwork other than that depended on the ability of its secretary at the time. The Section took part in the excavation in Aldwick Road 1921 on an Iron Age/Romano-British site, and of the fourth Waddon Cave in 1953.

Since 1967 fieldwork and excavation have formed an important part of the Section's activities. Unfortunately a great deal of the heart of Croydon had already been developed or was well under way, without many observations having been kept.

Starting in a small way, permission had been obtained to put down trial trenches whenever possible, watch has been kept on pipe lines and road works as well as building sites. By these means we are seeking to establish the site of the original Saxon village, and date the spread of Croydon during medieval times and later. Croydon was named as a 13th century town in *Erosion of History*, based on

the date of the first grant for its market. Till recently, the only evidence of this "town" was the Parish Church and the Archiepiscopal Palace, but during current work for a new telephone exchange, part of a 13th century arched and vaulted undercroft built in greensand and chalk blocks was found under the market. The new section of the ring-road due to be started this year has meant much demolition in Old Town.

A fortnight's training dig financed by a grant from a C.B.A. trust, was undertaken in 1969 on prehistoric remains on Croham Hurst, in order to create a body of trained volunteers. Another excavation took place in 1970 in the great courtyard of the Palace, made possible by the demolition of the Parish Church School which had occupied this site.

New road works in Addington, Surrey, made it necessary to investigate earthworks in Church Meadow, part of which would be destroyed. This led to the discovery of an occupation site in use from the 13th to the 18th century.

The proposed development of the disused Sewage Works at Elmers End meant an examination in 1972 of an almost unknown double moated site.

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