

Fig. 1. The Fitzjames Quadrangle of Fulham Palace (early 16th Century); the photograph was taken in the first part of this century, prior to a number of alterations. (Photo: Hammersmith Public Libraries)

FULHAM PALACE

KEITH WHITEHOUSE

FULHAM Palace, home of the Bishops of London, who have had an estate at Fulham for over 1,200 years, has been given up by Bishop Stopford in 1973; Hammersmith Borough Council have signed a long lease to acquire the Palace and grounds from the Church Commissioners for community use. Today half of the grounds, known as the Warren, are used as allotments by local residents; the other half, the Bishops' garden, was opened in June to the public as an extension to Bishops Park adjoining the Thames.

The Palace site has an outstanding history extending over 4,000 years with the present building and

grounds being of great architectural and historic merit.

In 704 or 705 Waldhere, Bishop of London, acquired an estate called "Fulanham" (virtually identical to the present London Borough of Hammersmith) from Tyrhtilus, Bishop of Hereford. The Charter was approved by Sigehard, king of the East Saxons, and Conred, king of the Mercians.

'Fulham' may be a geographical place-name of early origin, consisting of two elements; 'hamme'-land in a river-bend and 'Ful'—wet and muddy state or a road and ford. The literal meaning of 'Fulham' could therefore be 'the muddy state of the road at

1. Keith Whitehouse, "Early Fulham," *London Archaeol*

1 No. 15 (1972), 344-347.

Fig. 2. Bishop's Walk and that part of the moat adjoining the Thames. The photograph was taken in 1876.

(Photo: Hammersmith Public Libraries)



the ford in a river-bend.²

A recent archaeological excavation³ has shown that Neolithic man was living here c.2000 B.C. In addition there was a Romano-British settlement in the Palace grounds, undoubtedly linked with the complementary settlement at Putney⁴ by a ford, in use from prehistoric times. This has led to the belief that the Bishop of London was attracted to the site because it was fortified. Archaeological evidence would suggest that the mile-long moat which formally encompassed the Palace and grounds of 36½ acres until it was infilled 1921/24, had its origin in a bank and ditch constructed by at least the latter part of the 4th century A.D. The size and shape of the moat would appear to be imposed by natural streams draining into the Thames.

The history of the Palace and Bishopric, prior to the Conquest is remote and little known but in 880 a horde of Danish invaders coming up the Thames, after fighting in Europe, spent the autumn months at 'Fulham'. It would seem certain that they camped in the Palace grounds seeking the protection afforded by the remains of the Roman earthwork.

The outstanding figure of this remote Saxon period is the scholarly St. Dunstan, one time Abbot of Glastonbury and later Bishop of London. This great statesman, after taking office of the Archbishop of Canterbury, virtually ruled England.

The Domesday Book (1086) under the entry 'Fuleham' covered four manors known later as the 'Lordship of Fulham'. Bishop Theodred mentions

2. A widely held view is that it may have been derived from a Saxon chieftan, 'Fulla.'

3. Keith Whitehouse, "A Section Across Fulham Palace

'Fulham', amongst other properties, in his will circa 950.

The earliest recorded date of a Bishop being resident at Fulham Palace is 1141, during the time of the Civil War between King Stephen and Matilda. Robert de Sigillo, who had been appointed by Matilda after a seven-year vacancy in the Bishopric, was seized at Fulham by Geoffrey de Mandeville, Constable of the Tower of London. Sigillo was only released after a ransom had been paid.

Henry III was said by Norden to often 'lay at this place' and a Royal Charter is dated accordingly; the first bishop known regularly to reside here was Richard de Gravesend (1280-1303). Probably from about the 13th century, the City area becoming overcrowded and insanitary, the estate at Fulham would have been very popular to sojourn to, for it is only about two hours by boat from London.

Fulham Palace was only one of several estates that the bishops held in their diocese, which covered London, Middlesex, Hertfordshire and parts of Essex; the official residence was near St. Paul's Church. Fulham did not become the official residence until recent years but was always popular; even when Middlesex was transferred to the newly created diocese of Westminster in 1540, Fulham was the sole exception! The relationship between Fulham and the City with its convenient river communication, may have always been of significance since Roman times.

By the medieval period the bishop had become a Moat," *London Archaeol* 2 No. 6 (1974), 142-146.

4. Nicholas Farrant, "The Romano-British Settlement at Putney," *London Archaeol* 1 No. 16 (1972), 368-371.

very powerful political figure, often in line for the posts of Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor, when vacant. During the Peasants' Revolt, 1381, it would appear that the Palace was attacked and the Court Rolls burnt. The aim of the rebels was to destroy property that contained official records, so that land tenure and service due, could not be proved. John Pecche, a Fulham boatman, was excepted from the King's pardon.

The Revolt was sparked off by Simon Sudbury's vicious 'Poll Tax', which had been introduced the previous year. Sudbury, formerly Bishop of London, was one of a number of members of the Government beheaded by the rebels.

Bishop Fitzjames (1506-1522), who commenced building the present Palace, was denounced by Erasmus as a notorious reactionary. Fitzjames was involved in the murder of a so-called heretic but claimed exemption of the clergy from the civil courts, for himself and the Chancellor of St. Paul's. This further infuriated the City of London's citizens, who were already concerned about the excessive power and corruption of the church. This loathsome bishop died of the plague.

The feud with the church came to a head in 1536, with Henry VIII breaking away from Rome. This destroyed the power of the Papacy and during the ensuing struggle several bishops paid the penalty. Under Mary, Bishop Nicholas Ridley was burnt with Latimer at Oxford. Bishop Edmund Bonner, known as 'Bloody Bonner', brought 'heretics' to Fulham for confinement and questioning, in the Palace and Fulham Church. Thomas Tomkins, is portrayed in Foxe's Book of Martyrs, having his hand held over a candle flame by Bonner, in the Great Hall. Another print showing Bonner flogging a 'heretic' in the Palace grounds, depicts a building in the background, apparently some kind of gatehouse. This is the earliest known view of the Palace buildings and by the architecture dates to c. 12th century. Bonner was imprisoned by Elizabeth in the Marshalsea prison, where he died after 10 years' confinement.

Bishop Grindal (1559-1570) established a botanic garden and is accredited with introducing the first Tamarisk tree into England from Switzerland, at the Palace grounds. Bishop Bancroft was renowned for the grapes he annually sent to Elizabeth and she visited him several times in the last years of her reign. James I visited Bishop Bancroft prior to his Coronation as did Charles I and Queen Henrietta Maria when Montaigne held the See.

During the troubled times of the Civil War, Bishop Juxon was removed from office. Juxon attended Charles at the scaffold and to him the King gave his gloves and whispered that enigmatic word

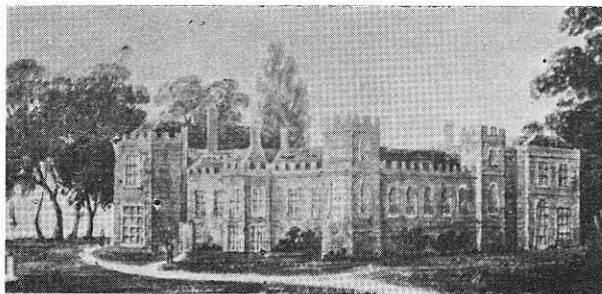


Fig. 3 The 1764 east front built by Bishop Terrick, with the river in the left background.

(Photo: Hammersmith Public Libraries)

"Remember". The Commonwealth sold the Manor of Fulham including Hammersmith to Col. Edmund Harvey, Collector of Customs. Cromwell was invited to a banquet in 1655 but two weeks later Harvey was arrested on a charge of fraud and later released on payment of a fine. He spent the rest of the Commonwealth peacefully at Fulham, with a son as co-Lord of the Manor. At the Restoration, Harvey was arrested as a Regicide, brought to trial and sentenced to death. This was later commuted to life imprisonment, which he spent at Pendennis Castle, Cornwall.

Bishop Compton (1675-1713), was suspended for two years by James II for criticising unlawful practices of the King. By ancient right, he could not be ejected from Fulham Palace, so he spent the time plotting against the King in favour of William of Orange, and planting rare botanical shrubs and trees; he was no mean botanist. Correspondence with leading naturalists and missionaries in Europe and America, enabled Compton to acquire many exotic and rare specimens, which he introduced into England for the very first time. The Palace grounds became one of the most famous botanic gardens in Europe. Unfortunately, Bishop Robinson, Compton's successor, was not very keen on gardening and many of the fine, rare specimens were either sold off or destroyed, to make way for vegetables. The grounds, still to this day, boast of several old trees which may have been planted by Compton.

By the 18th century the power of the bishops' had considerably declined, appointments mainly being made to scholars and divines. Bishop Robinson in 1715, appealed to Archbishop Tenison that, "the Manor House or Palace at Fulham is very old and ruinous," and requested that a large part should be pulled down. A commission was set up to examine the request, including Wren, Vanbrugh and Hawksmere. They decided that a large part should be demolished; these buildings were probably of medieval date. It was not until 1750 that rebuilding commenced. Bishop Sherlock built a dining room overlooking the Warren to Palladian proportions.

From 1764, Bishop Terrick erected a new Eastern

Quadrangle round a central courtyard built in Gothic Revival with battlements and corner towers. Bishop Howley in 1814 decided that "Terrick's Gothic Nonsense" should be replaced by a plainer front. The present facade is the result with peculiar looking Gothic church windows, halfway up the north wall, the last vestiges of Terrick's Chapel. Howley removed the Chapel to the Great Hall, transferring much of the old glass there. Unfortunately most of this glass, some of which was over 400 years old, was destroyed during the last War. The present Chapel built by Bishop Tait at his own expense in 1866, also suffered war damage, including the loss of its east window. The Chapel was designed by William Butterfield, as was the half-timbered house at the Palace entrance and the fountain in the Fitz-james Quadrangle.

The last major rebuilding was during the 1850's when Bishop Blomfield, who had a great love of Fulham Palace, spent thousands of pounds of his own money renovating the buildings to ensure that they remained for posterity. The south side of the Fitz-james Quadrangle was rebuilt and buttressed. Blomfield is buried in the churchyard of Fulham Parish Church, adjoining the moat. The nave of the church was designed by his son, Sir Arthur Blomfield, the eminent architect. As a boy he lived at the Palace

and later took a keen interest in Fulham's history. He commented on one being able to see the 'marks' of building foundations, under the east lawn in dry weather; they are still visible today. Apparently the strongly held view, which still pervades, that the moat was defensive and dug by the Danes, was first started by him. He stated that the Danes were the only known large armed force to camp at Fulham before the Conquest.

The tithe barn, at least 17th century, was only destroyed in 1953. This along with the moat being infilled, and the loss of the old glass are notable retrograde steps during the 20th century.

Hammersmith Council have an enlightened policy for the retention and improvement of Fulham Palace, including a botanic garden, art gallery and museum. It is hoped that the history which compares with any great house in England will be exploited to the full. Hammersmith's finest asset from the past can become a very attractive historic building, with a museum (and facilities for archaeological rescue work).

It is perhaps fitting, that in the year the Bishop of London decided to vacate Fulham (1973) after having a residence here for over a thousand years, archaeologists should discover the reason why his predecessor chose the site in the first place.

Roman Roads at Putney

EAST-WEST ROAD

AN EXCAVATION at a building site on the corner of Malbrook Road and the Upper Richmond Road, (TQ 22947532) in west Putney has revealed two parallel ditches 4m. apart with traces of gravel in-between. The density and height of surviving gravel was variable —presumably having been displaced by ploughing and other disturbances; outside the ditches there was loam on top of the natural gravel.

The north ditch of the feature, which was found on the east of the site, was picked up 15m to the west; unfortunately, site conditions made it impossible to locate the southern ditch (if one existed) at this point.

This apparent road aligns with a further small fragment 150m. to the east at the corner of Colinette Road and the Upper Richmond Road (TQ 23097527) which was excavated in 1967 (shown on map p.370 *L.A.* Vol. 1, No. 13). Here the road was only 2m. wide, with two successive surfaces (both with wheel ruts) and a ditch on its north (down-hill) side only. The double width of the road on the recent excavation may represent an overtaking point (as still occurs in some country roads today).

The alignment of the road, if extended eastwards, joins up with the straight section of the Upper Richmond Road east of Putney High Street. (Thereafter it might change direction on the spur at East Putney Station to connect with Stane Street via Clapham Common North Side — an "Ancient Causeway.") If the alignment is extended to the west, it meets at Mortlake church with the medieval road from Priest's Bridge

(south Barnes) and a (?) Roman road from the south west visible in aerial photographs crossing Richmond Park.

Although no pottery definitely attributable to the Roman period was found on the recent excavation, two sherds were found on the 1967 one, but not in direct association with the road. However, with the Roman settlement by the river, two chance finds of coins found alongside its alignment and support from a Saxon boundary charter, there must be little doubt that the road is in fact Roman.

The excavation was directed by Pamela Greenwood for Wandsworth Historical Society.

NORTH-SOUTH ROAD

Behind Putney police station on a site shortly to be developed recent excavation has revealed two parallel ditches 2m. apart with large gravelling in-between; there appear to be two surfaces, one at least with (?) wheel ruts (TQ 2371 7500). The eastern ditch has produced a Roman rim-sherd of the late 2nd/early 3rd century.

The feature appears to be a Roman road going up Putney Hill and its alignment seems to coincide with the north/south road discovered near the river (see map mentioned above). Work is continuing to check the road's direction and date, and to discover whether a converging ditch could both be Roman and on the same alignment as the partial grid of boundary ditches found near the river in earlier excavations.

The excavation is being directed by Pat and Joan Loobey for the Wandsworth Historical Society.