

Fig. 1: site and trench location

Time called at the Old Castle Public House, Putney

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Introduction

In 2003 a series of post-medieval brick buildings were excavated by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd., at the Castle Public House, Putney, in advance of redevelopment of the site. The site is located on the junction of Putney Bridge Road and Brewhouse Street¹ (Fig. 1), and slopes down towards the river Thames, 100 m to the north. The excavation trench measured 11 m north-south by 15 m east-west. Foundations located to the north of the site of the *Old Castle* Public House were dated from the 17th to 19th centuries. The finds recovered from these buildings, including ceramic and glass drinking vessels, trading tokens and cooking vessels, may have been associated with the public house.

Historical background

Putney is first recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086, where it is recorded as the vill of *Putelei* and as having a ferry and fisheries. Brewhouse Lane (later Brewhouse Street) is one of the oldest roads in Putney and was in existence by the 15th century. It was preceded by Putney High Street to the west in the 13th century. With the main landing place for ferry passengers situated at its northern end,² Brewhouse Lane provided one of the principal routes into the village. Putney witnessed considerable growth in the 17th century, with the population almost doubling between 1617 and 1664.³ This was in part caused by the fashion of the time to buy properties in riverside parishes, made attractive by their convenient position. Putney continued

to grow into a fashionable suburb during the 18th century, and in 1729 the long-established ferry route was replaced by a bridge, increasing both foot and carriage traffic through the village.⁴ In 1758 the first reference is made to a public house called *The Castle*, situated on the junction of Putney Bridge Road and Brewhouse Lane; however it is likely that it had been there for some time. A photograph of c. 1880 shows *The Castle* to be a vernacular-style building with features indicating a pre-1700 date. There had certainly been brewhouse close to Brewhouse Lane for some time. Martin the Brewer is recorded as the third-largest taxpayer in the 1332 tax list, and it is thought that he ran a brewhouse to the east of the lane that still existed in the 18th century.⁵ By the 19th century,

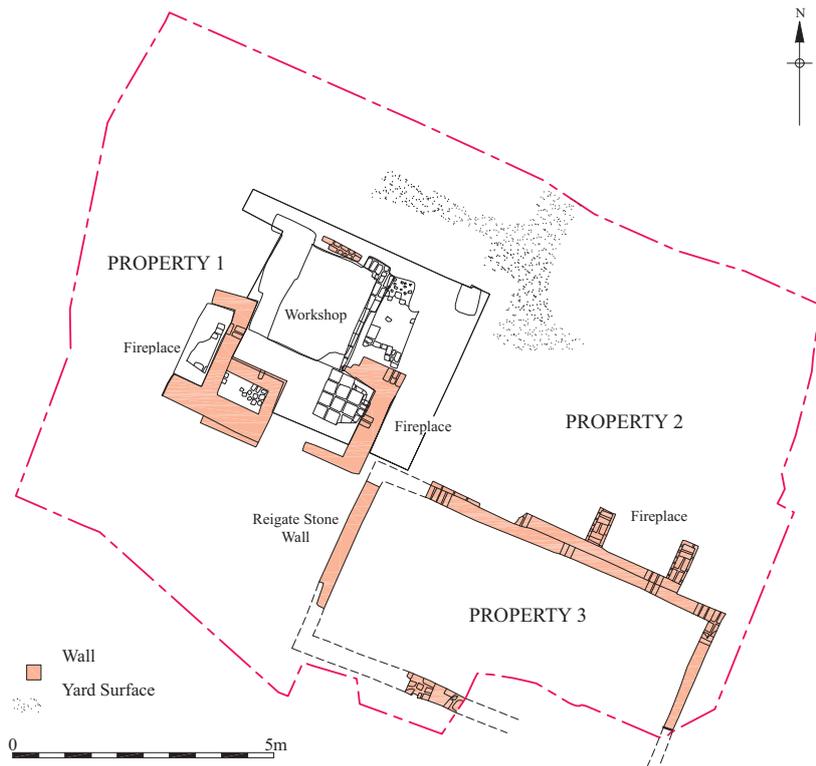


Fig. 2: pre-1700 properties

Putney seems to have entered a period of decline. Charles Booth describes Putney as an "old village poverty connected with labourers in market gardens and riverside work" and his map of 1898-9 shows Brewhouse Lane to be an area of "moderate poverty". The pre-1700 pub was demolished in 1935 and rebuilt on a much larger scale, only to be destroyed by a German bomb on Saturday 19th April 1941. This raid was to that date the biggest yet, and in *The Castle* 42 people were killed and 141 injured. The thick walls of the pub building apparently protected surrounding properties from any substantial damage.⁶ Two small wooden huts were used as a replacement until 1959, when a new building was established.⁷

Pre-1700

The excavation revealed the fragmentary remains of three properties built during the 16th century (Fig. 2). Although these were the earliest structures found during the excavation, a distinct division between the underlying levelling and ground-raising layers suggests that the east-west property boundary existed before their construction. Property 1 fronted onto

Brewhouse Street, while Property 2 fronted onto an open yard to the north called 'Henry's Place' on the OS map of 1866. Property 3 probably fronted onto a street to the east.

The remains of foundations at Properties 1 and 2 suggest they were timber-framed of more than one storey, resting on brick plinths. Property 1 had a two-room floor plan with a brick chimney stack. The main portion was situated to the west of the trench, with a fireplace positioned in the south-east corner sharing a stack with the adjacent building, with access to its rear *via* the northern side. To the east of this area was a room, probably added at a later date, which had the remains of a suspended wooden floor with a thin plaster surface; it appeared to have had two fireplaces, one in the south-east corner and one in the south-west corner. If these fireplaces were contemporary, this room could have been used as a workshop, other possibilities include one fireplace being blocked before the second was built, or the south-eastern area could have been a stair turret, although burning and the wooden floor with tiles at the edge do suggest it was a fireplace.

The finds recovered from this room included 17th-century private trading tokens, a jetton, copper-alloy dress pins and a piece of lead shot. The copper-alloy tokens form an important assemblage; four were retrieved either from the thin plaster surface immediately on top of the wooden planks, as was the copper-alloy jetton, or from the bedding layer underneath. Both tokens and jettons are associated with trade and merchandise. Jettons were used for calculating sums on a counting board, but may also have been accepted intermittently as small change. Many thousands of copper-alloy tokens circulated, above all in London, in the second half of the 17th century. The majority of private tokens were struck for traders and keepers of shops, inns, taverns and alehouses, although a wide variety of occupations are represented. It is clear, also from contemporary sources, that the tokens seldom had a circulation extending beyond the issuer's immediate neighbourhood; those found at Putney Bridge Road reflect this, with the furthest travelled token originating in Kingston-upon-Thames.⁸ The presence of the trading tokens here would indicate that some form of trade/accounting took place in the back room of Property 1. A second group of finds from this room consists of 34 dress pins and a piece of cut copper-alloy wire, suggesting that pin manufacture or sewing were also practised here at some time. The pottery from a levelling layer below the wooden floor, dated c. 1640-60, contained equal amounts of domestic food storage, preparation and cooking vessels and vessels for the consumption of alcohol, other beverages, food and tea; the latter is commonly associated with public houses and inns. Of particular interest is a dish in blue and white Chinese porcelain, decorated internally with a landscape and boat design (Fig. 4.1). It may date from the early 17th century and therefore represents a rare, expensive and desirable import for this time. As this ware was not traded to England in any notable quantity during the early 17th century, it may be the personal item of a traveller, or a gift.

Property 2 to the east was partially constructed on top of a former foundation of Property 3; the brick

plinths of both buildings probably supported timber-frames above. Pan tiles used within the base of a chimney in the building date it to 1620–1700, which along with a layer dated to the 17th century, place the construction of these buildings around the time that Putney was experiencing rapid growth and becoming more fashionable. This would also seem to be represented in the faunal remains, which included a relatively wide range of species, including a haunch of venison suggesting some use of more expensive foodstuffs.⁹ A yard surface made of broken bricks and flint was found to the north of Properties 1 and 2; they both probably had access to this area. Burnt Reigate Stone, used in the construction of the western wall of Property 3, had probably been taken from a nearby medieval building that had burnt down. The walls of this structure could have supported a single-storey brick building but they are more likely to have been timber-framed as brick buildings remained relatively high-status well into the 17th century. A small fragment of wall survived on the southern edge of the area, probably forming the boundary with a property beyond the southern extent of the site.

Late 17th/early 18th century (Fig. 3)

During the late 17th or early 18th centuries all of the properties were completely rebuilt. Two of the structures from this period can be seen fronting onto Brewhouse Street in photographs taken c. 1912 (Fig. 7). In Property 1 the main building fronting onto Brewhouse Street was rebuilt on a larger footprint, with a vaulted basement towards the front and two ground floor rooms separated by a chimney stack. The chimney stack was rebuilt close to that in the earlier structure and probably had two fireplaces, back-to-back. It would have been made of bricks with two storeys, an attic and basement. Its walls were two bricks thick in the basement and its north and south side walls, with the rear (east) wall being only 1½ bricks thick, where there was no basement. It is of interest that at this level the standards of construction just met the minimum requirements of the 1667 Act (which was not in force in Putney). The wall thicknesses wholly failed to meet the

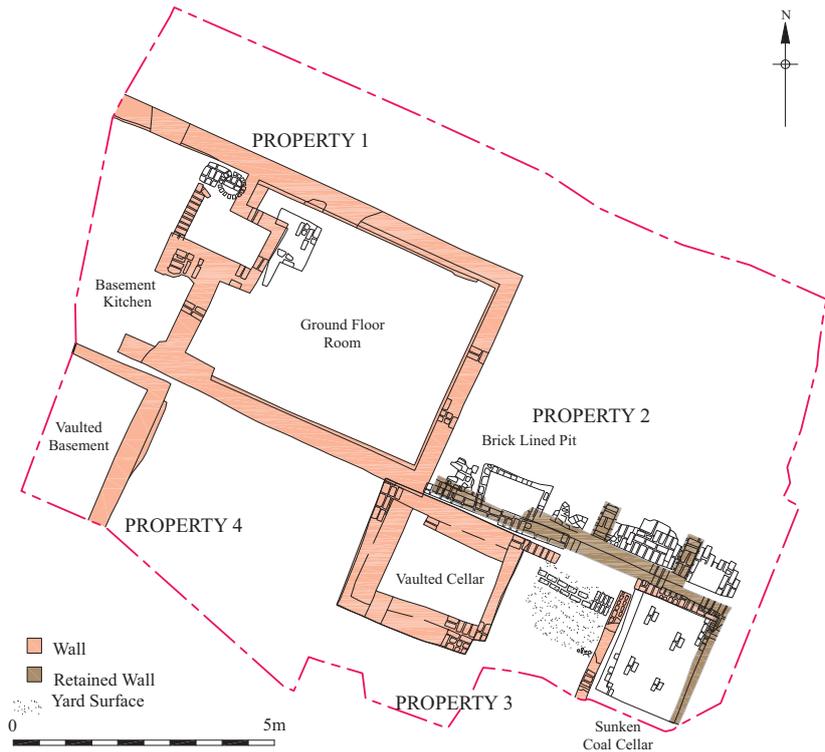


Fig. 3: late-17th to mid-18th century properties

minimum standards of the 1774 Act that specified that all walls should be 2½ bricks thick at the bottom in London and its liberties.¹⁰ Although not enforced in Putney, the Acts set the standards of what was deemed to be safe and acceptable at the time. This building is likely, therefore, to date from before the late 18th century. The walls were laid in Flemish bond in the top five surviving courses and in an irregular bond beneath this. There was variation in the standard of construction, with the Flemish bond well laid on the external wall faces but badly built internally. The date and the use of Flemish bond indicate that the building was built in the classical style. The presence of a sleeper wall, that would have supported the floor beams and joists of a timber floor, indicates that the front room of this property probably had a timber ground floor. The service functions of the house would have been located in the basement, and a large vaulted fireplace would have served the kitchen. A flue with thick soot deposits, excavated in the south-east corner of the basement, indicated the presence of a large fireplace.

The foundations of the south wall of Property 2 were built in English bond, and there is evidence for an associated chimney stack. The rebuilding of Property 2 almost definitely took place later than the building to the west. A brick-lined pit truncated the 17th-century building; its fill is interesting in that it hints at being derived from a public house, because there are a number of drinking jugs present. The forms comprise drinking vessels including two rounded mugs in plain white delftware (Fig. 4.2) and a single brown-glazed Border ware example (Fig. 4.3), as well as a cylindrical mug in jewelled Staffordshire slipware (Fig. 4.4) and Frechen Bartmann jugs; there is also a large rounded jug in post-medieval redware (Fig. 4.5). Tablewares are only represented in delftware as a plate fragment and pieces of five chargers (Fig. 5.6), but three of these vessels may have been wasters or seconds, possibly from the nearby Putney pothouse. The chargers may also have been display items as they are also very decorative. Items from the kitchen consist of two post-medieval redware tripod pipkins (Figs 4.7–8) for cooking, while food preparation wares

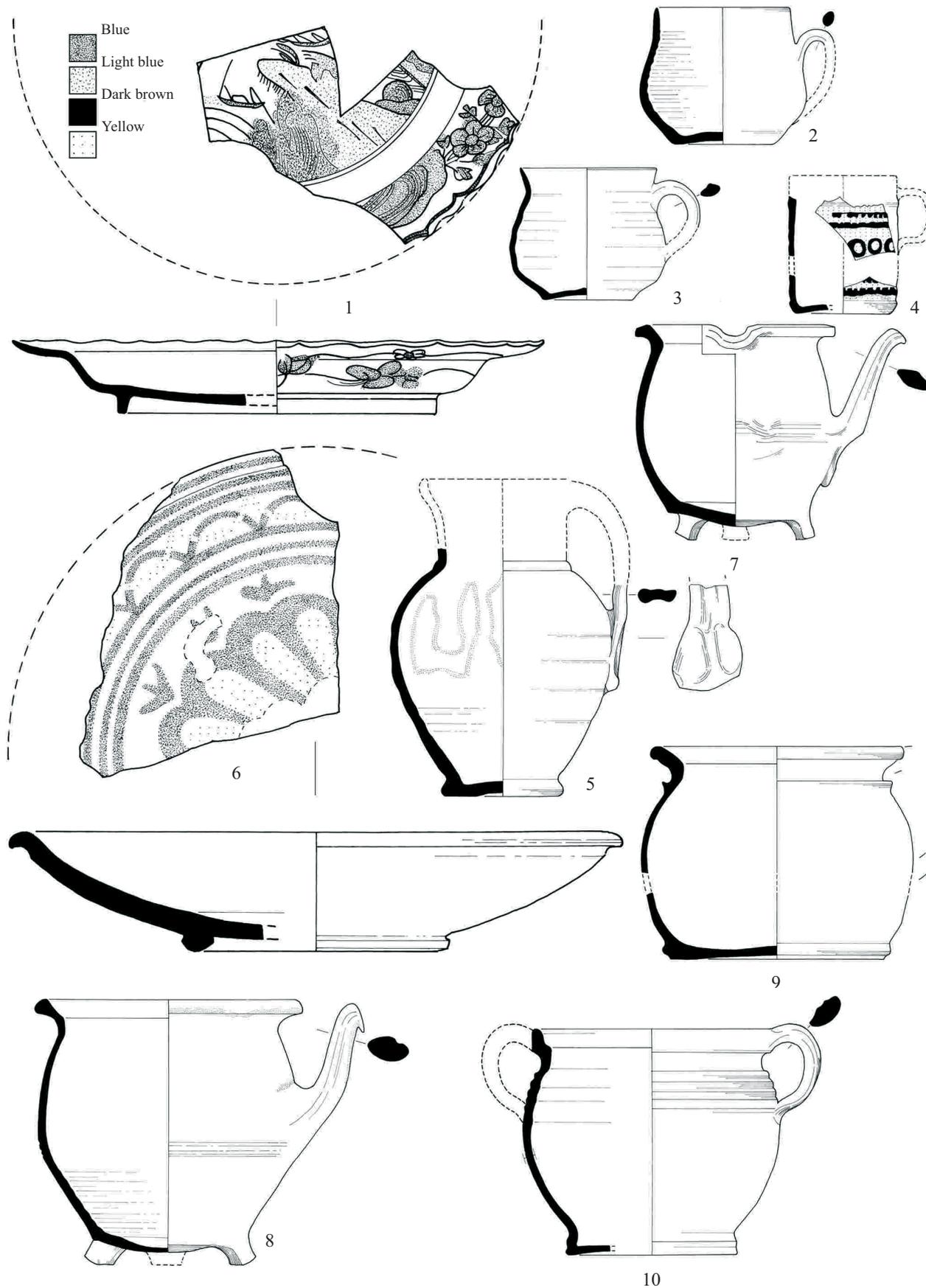


Fig. 4: pottery; 1, dish in blue and white Chinese porcelain; 2, rounded mug in plain white delftware; 3, rounded mug in brown-glazed Border Ware; 4, cylindrical mug in jewelled Staffordshire slipware; 5, large rounded jug in post-medieval redware; 6, delftware charger; 7-8, post-medieval redware tripod pipkins; 9, handled jar in Red Border ware; 10, jar, possibly a chamber pot, in post-medieval black-glazed redware

consist of bowls or dishes in green-glazed Border ware and Red Border ware. Storage vessels are represented by a Midlands purple ware butter pot, a handled jar in Red Border ware (Fig. 4.9) and a jar, possibly a chamber pot, in black-glazed ware (Fig. 4.10). There is also the rim of a delftware albarello, which may have had pharmaceutical or other storage uses.

The glassware consists of four wine bottles, two of which are globular in shape, and a cucurbit, a vessel that could have been used for distilling alcoholic spirits. This feature also produced the largest group of clay tobacco pipes, comprising forty-eight fragments including a nib and thirty-three stems as well as fourteen datable bowls. These are a single type AO11, dated 1640–1670, two AO13 types, three AO15 and a single AO18 bowl, all dated 1660–1680. The latest type is the AO19 bowl represented by seven examples dated to 1690–1710.

Functionally, the vessels from this pit are primarily associated with the serving and consumption of alcoholic drinks; three vessels are associated with the preparation and consumption of food. The evidence is generally compatible with a public house assemblage. The yard to the north was still in use at this time.

At Property 3 an external yard with a vaulted cellar was constructed at the rear and a slightly sunken coal cellar towards the front. The vaulted cellar was lined with reused medieval roof tiles, which must have derived from the careful demolition of a medieval roof nearby, and which were laid down to keep the damp at bay. There was a window opening at the west end of the south wall and the access ladder would have been in the north-west corner. From the thickness of the walls it appears that the superstructure above ground would have been timber-framed. The coal cellar was constructed using English bond, a building technique used in functional buildings and garden walls from the late 17th to early 19th centuries.¹¹ Evidence of a fourth property was found in the form of a vaulted basement adjacent to Property 1 fronting onto Brewhouse Street.

18th – early 19th centuries (Fig. 5)

Alterations and additions were made to

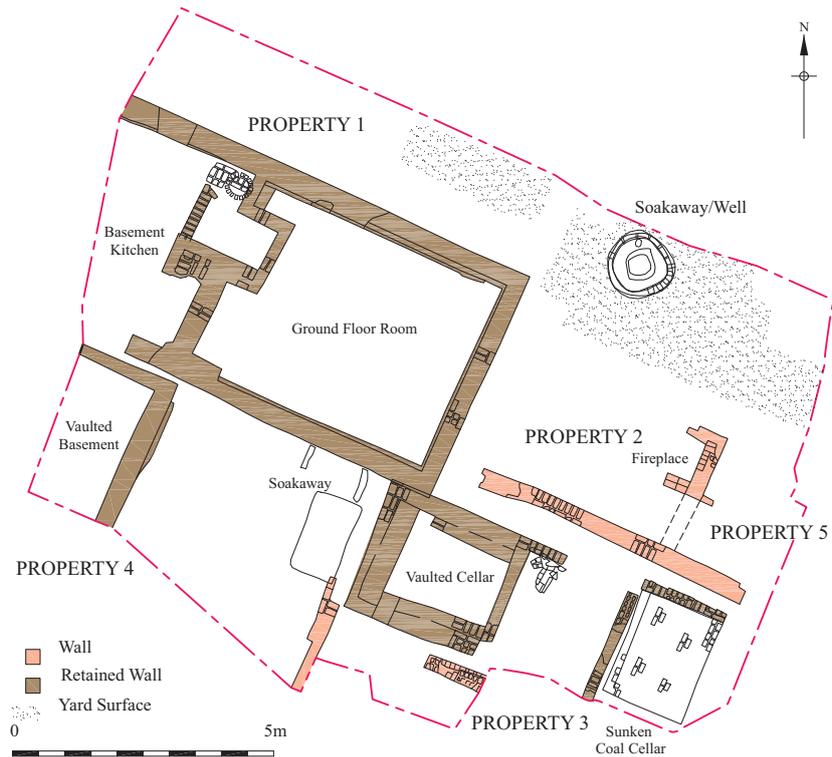


Fig. 5: 18th – early 19th century

the buildings during the 18th and early 19th centuries. It appears that Property 2 was divided into two smaller holdings with a back-to-back fireplace between the two, while in the northern yard a well or soakaway was constructed. The window opening in the vaulted cellar of Property 3 was narrowed and the entrance rebuilt, possibly to insert a steep flight of steps or a hatch.

The pottery from this period shows evidence for the ceramic revolution that took place in London and the rest of the country at the time, as industrial finewares became more popular and the importance of local pottery types reduced, ultimately leading to the demise of the delftware industry. A levelling layer produced a group of 25 ceramic and glass vessels dated 1800–20, with the main functions represented focussed on consumption, firstly with dining and tea wares and with the third most important category being multi-functional, while all other activities are represented by only one or two vessels. Another layer in this period dated to *c.* 1800–30 contains pottery with a diverse range of functions, first with liquid storage vessels represented by stoneware blacking bottles, second with tea wares and third with sanitary vessels.

19th – 20th centuries (Figs 6 & 7)

All the properties remained in use during the 19th and 20th centuries until they were damaged or destroyed by a bomb that hit the area in World War II. Before this the ground floor rooms and basement kitchen of Property 1 had remained much the same. However, Ordnance Survey maps from 1865 and 1897 show that this building was divided into two, creating a sixth property. These maps show the holdings to be part of 'Henry's Place', the name given to the houses enclosing the northern yard area. Within Property 3 the coal cellar was backfilled and rebuilt to exactly the same dimensions as before. The backfill included parts of a kitchen range, an S-shaped suspension hook, an iron tool, probably a herb cutter for the kitchen and numerous copper-alloy fittings, including what might be part of a bell service system. The vaulted cellar was backfilled; the pottery from this feature was dominated by industrial finewares with a notable number of London stonewares. Also recovered was a Bristol-glazed bottle stamped 'T. KNIGHT CASTLE PUTNEY' and a circular bone brushplate, probably from a shaving brush. The area to the rear of

PUTNEY PUBLIC HOUSE

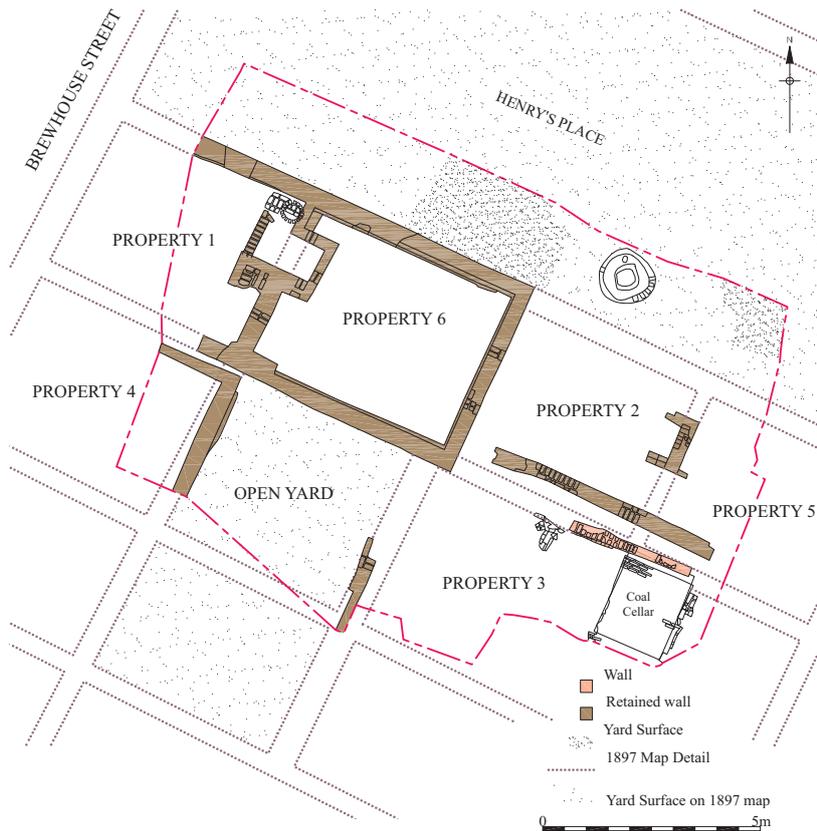


Fig. 6: 19th – 20th century properties

Property 4 was probably an open yard during this period.

Backfilling of the basements belonging to Properties 1 and 4 probably represents the clearance of the site after the bomb hit. A pewter toy watch, an oval cast-iron frying pan and an oval-bellied cast-iron pot were recovered from the backfill of the kitchen area of Property 1. The find of two near-complete cooking utensils is unusual. Both the frying pan and cooking pot are probably Victorian in date, with parallels in known Victorian household goods catalogues.¹² These forms are however identical to cooking ware from the period c. 1780–1820.¹³ Their survival in the backfill of the basement may indicate that they were part of the basement kitchen equipment of Property 1 in the 19th century. The toy watch, originally furnished with a glass face piece and probably a cardboard watch face, is decorated on the back with the Prince of Wales feathers; this feature almost certainly dates the making of the watch to sometime between 1811 and 1820 (Fig. 9).¹⁴ The tradition of lead toy watches,

however, goes back into the 18th century.

By the 19th and 20th centuries the houses had a domestic use, as is indicated by the finds assemblages and the photographs of c. 1912 showing a family standing outside Properties 1 and 4 (Fig. 7). The left photograph is facing north showing the Yard called Henry's



Fig. 7: photographs of c. 1912, looking north (left) and south (right) on Brewhouse Street

Place; Property 1 is the northern building and Property 4 to the south. The right photograph is facing south, showing Property 1, Property 4 and the Old Castle Pub on the corner of Brewhouse Street. On the northern building, the fenestration is of equal proportions on the ground and first floors, with single sash windows, indicating it was built before the early 18th century. There is a timber-planked door for the chute opening into the cellar below the sash window. Both buildings have peg tile roofs; the building at Property 1 has a pan tile roof. The southern building in the photograph has pavement grates showing the front of the vaulted basement at Property 4.

A demolition layer within Property 6 contained several groups of household and personal objects including an iron rotary key, a bone and antler bottle stopper, part of a blade of a whittle-tang knife, copper-alloy buttons and bone toothbrushes. The pottery dated to this period from the buildings was of a more domestic nature, indicated by the wider range of vessel functions.

Discussion

Putney experienced rapid growth during the 17th century. The excavation revealed the sequence of construction, rebuilding and subdivision of a number of buildings, the earliest phase of which coincides with the 17th-century expansion of the area. Several of the groups of finds give some indication of the use of the buildings. For example

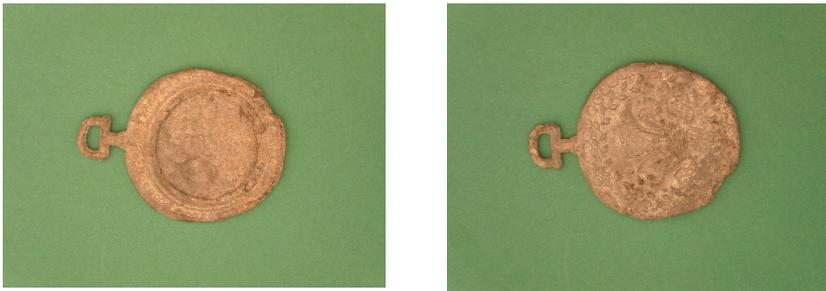


Fig. 8: toy watch, originally furnished with a glass face piece and probably a cardboard watch face, 1811–1820

the pottery, clay pipes and glass from the late-17th-century brick-lined pit, and levelling layers from the late-17th to early-18th-centuries are likely to have been used in association with the public house, while the small finds from the 17th-century room in Property 1 point towards trade, sewing and possibly pin-making occurring in this building. Although it is known that the Castle Public House stood on the corner of Putney Bridge Road and Brewhouse Street from at least 1758, a c. 1880 photograph and maps dating from 1787 onwards show that Putney Bridge Road was considerably wider than it was during the 19th to early 20th centuries. The buildings recorded in the excavation were those shown in the c. 1912 photographs, situated to the north of the pub. Although many of the assemblages resemble public house groups, none of the buildings actually formed part of the main building of the pub. A combination of the archaeological evidence and cartographic sources illustrates how the buildings were subdivided into six properties by the 19th/20th centuries.

In addition to the cartographic sources local records were consulted with the aim of trying to identify the occupants of the buildings. The Directories for Wandsworth and Putney referred to do provide a general view of some of the people who lived along

Brewhouse Street throughout the years, although it was not possible to link them with certainty to the site itself. For example in the late 1880s there were a carpenter, a collar and harness maker, a timber merchant, steam wheel works, fishmonger, umbrella maker amongst others. Towards the 20th century the trades become more industrial with a road-breaking company and an engineering works. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries there was a range of occupations represented along the road, and in its role as the route into Putney during the 16th to 18th centuries it would have undoubtedly attracted commerce. The jetton and trading tokens from the workshop of the pre-1700 Property 1 indicate that some form of mercantile activity took place here. The vicinity to the public house would be a contributing factor to this. Several other pubs were also near-by.¹⁵ Trade of various forms often took place at inns and public houses; a number of the trading tokens include an inn-sign in their design. A larger inn may have housed shops for other businesses and certainly provided food, drink and lodgings sometimes in adjoining buildings or properties.¹⁶ No less important, of course, was the closeness to main travelling routes along the river and Putney Bridge. Another group of 17th-century finds, the copper-alloy pins, may give rise to the question

whether the trading tokens reflect pin- or dress-making at this location. Given the character of industrial activities in the 17th century, with small-scale, short-term and fluctuating enterprises, it is not surprising that the material traces of production are scarce. For the manufacture of pins indications often include unfinished products, raw material in the form of drawn copper-alloy wire and tools for the sharpening of pins such as files or pinner's bones. The presence here of a cut piece of copper-alloy wire of the same thickness as the longer pins may be an indication, but is only just enough to postulate pin manufacture. There were no additional finds characteristic of dressmaking, such as needles, long scissors and traces of raw material in the form of lead cloth seals. On the basis of the artifactual evidence and the layout of the buildings themselves it seems likely that the pub might have used the excavated buildings for additional commercial activities to the main building during the 17th and 18th centuries, but by the 19th century they had become domestic, probably until the Second World War.

Acknowledgements

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1. NGR TQ 2420 7502.

2. G. Green *The History of Putney* (1925).

3. R. Gerhold *Putney and Roehampton Past* (1994) 67.

4. B. Weinreb & C. Hibbert *The London Encyclopaedia* (1983) 644.

5. *Op. cit.* fn 3, 19.

6. A. Shore & J. Mills *We Served* (2005) 33.

7. P. Loobey *Putney Past and Present. The changing face of the area and its people* (2001) 82.

8. The tokens comprise the following issues: royal farthing token of Charles I, "Maltravers" round type; private farthing token of Thomas Heburn, Wimbledon 1659, design: rose; private farthing token of Robert

Jackson, Putney 1657, design: candlemaker; private farthing token of John Feillder, Kingston-upon-Thames, design: three shuttles; private farthing token of Thomas Marques, Putney 1660, design: wheat sheaf; private farthing token of Christopher Bayley, Wandsworth 1660, design: candlemaker. See M. Dickinson *Seventeenth-century tokens of the British Isles and their values* (1986) 2–15.

9. L. Yeomans 'Assessment of the animal bone' in K. Sayer *Assessment Of An Archaeological Excavation At The Old Castle Pub, Putney Bridge Road/Brewhouse Street, Putney, London Borough of Wandsworth*, unpublished Pre-Construct Archaeology report (2003).

10. D. Cruickshank & P. Wyld *Georgian Town Houses*

and their Details (1990) 31.

11. K. Sabel *Dating Historic Brickwork in Greater London before the Advent of Rail Transportation*, Unpublished MSc Dissertation, Oxford Brookes University and University of Oxford (1999).

12. Cf. D. Bosomworth *The Victorian Catalogue of Household Goods* (1991) 220 & 247.

13. *Pers. comm.* members of The Antique Metalware Society.

14. H. Forsyth & G. Egan *Toys, Trifles and Trinkets. Base-Metal Miniatures from London 1200–1800* (2005) 380.

15. D. Gerhold 'Putney Property Holders in 1787' *The Wandsworth Historian* 67 (1995) 9.

16. *Op. cit.* fn 8, 9.