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Gateshead: An Archaeological and Historical Overview*

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SUMMARY

This article does not aim to present a comprehensive chronological history of the borough of Gateshead, since that already exists in Manders' invaluable History of Gateshead (Manders 1973). It is principally concerned with the historic urban core of the town, and is intended to revisit aspects of the History in the light of archaeological excavations (principally Oakwellgate and Bottle Bank — Reports 1 and 2) and desk-based studies (most of which remain as 'grey literature') carried out since 1973. Documentary sources for Gateshead, particularly deeds, are probably less well-known and more dispersed than those for Newcastle. Those used in this article have been examined with relation to specific archaeological projects, and are thus necessarily selective. It is hoped and expected that future work will correct and expand on the picture presented here.

INTRODUCTION

GATESHEAD IS SITUATED ON THE SOUTH BANK of the river Tyne approximately eight miles from the coast. The river runs in a deep channel at this point, the southern bank rising from approximately 5 m AOD at the riverside, where the land is reclaimed, to 32 m AOD at the top of the scarp, which bulges slightly northward into a shallow promontory where St Mary's Church now stands. From the top of the scarp the land continues to rise southwards towards Gateshead Fell, crossed by a number of post-glacial streams running northwards to the river.

By comparison with its larger and more powerful neighbour, Gateshead has received little attention from modern historians and archaeologists, the attention of both having been disproportionately weighted towards Newcastle. John Brand (1789), William Hutchinson (1787) and Mackenzie and Ross (1834) give progressively derivative accounts of the borough in their county histories, but Manders' history is to date the most comprehensive and informative published account. In his book, Manders commented '*No scientific excavation has ever been made within the boundaries of Gateshead*' and this remained true until the late 1980s, after which there were a number of limited archaeological interventions before the major excavations at Oakwellgate (the Sage Gateshead music centre site) and Bottle Bank (Reports 1 and 2). Subsequently an Extensive Urban Survey has been undertaken, defining a strategic approach to future historical and archaeological work in the borough (Gateshead MBC *et al* 2005).

* This article was written to accompany reports on two excavations in Gateshead, at sites in Oakwellgate and Bottle Bank. These are referred to in this article as, respectively, 'Report 1' and 'Report 2'. Report 1 appears elsewhere in this volume, on pages 125–249, and Report 2 will appear in a forthcoming volume of *Archaeologia Aeliana*. A further article, also drawing on these two excavations, appears elsewhere in this volume, on pages 251–255.

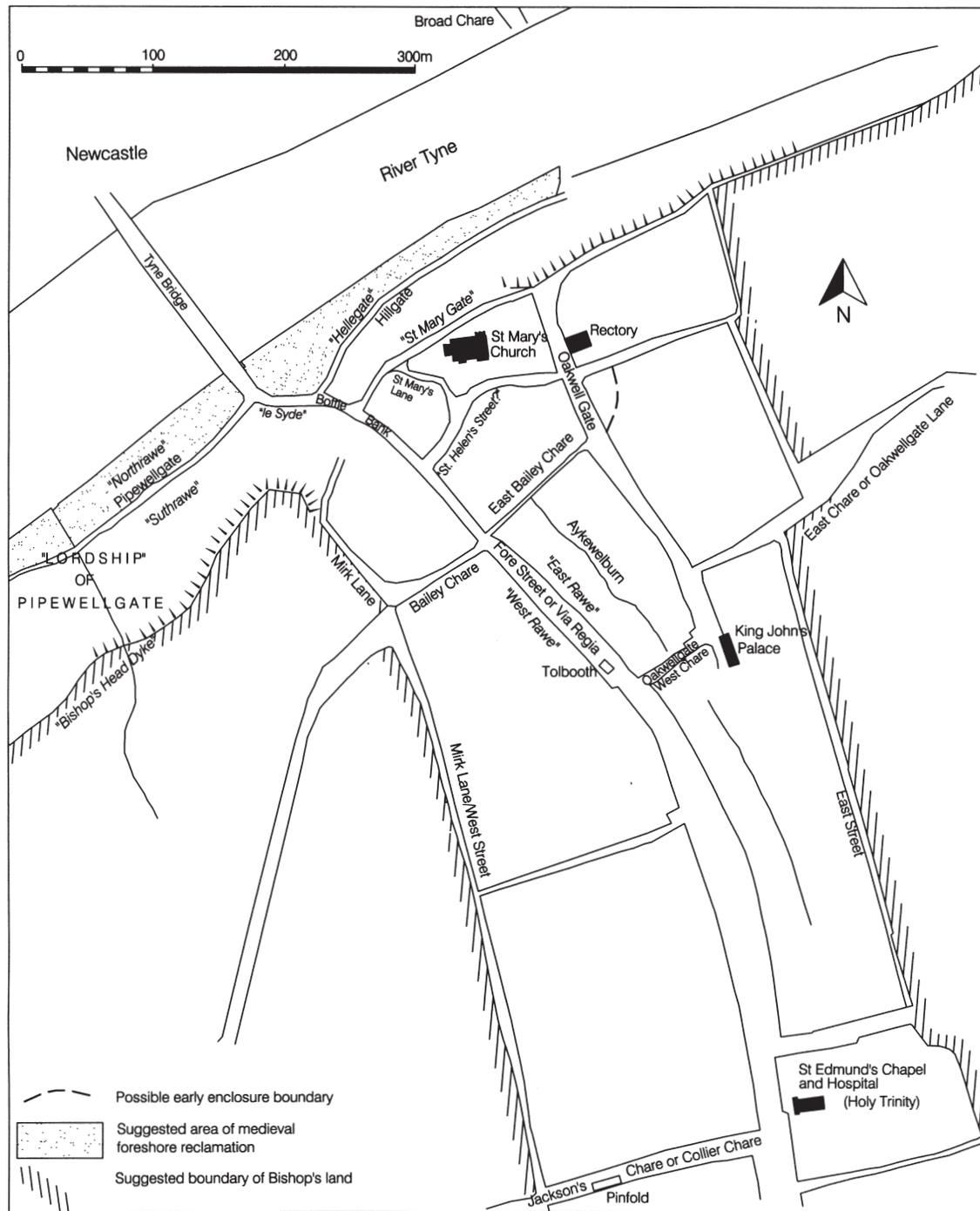


Fig. 1 Possible early enclosed settlement and 12th-century planned town (1:5000)

PRE-ROMAN PERIOD

There is little archaeological evidence for pre-Roman activity. A bronze spearhead and two bronze swords from the Tyne (*ibid.*) found in dredging the river channel in the later 19th century may have been votive offerings deposited at a natural river-crossing, though they could equally have been eroded from further up river and deposited by river action. A small number of worked flints occurred residually in the excavations at Oakwellgate, and also at Bottle Bank where two were probably Mesolithic, and some pre- or early Roman features were also found.

ROMAN PERIOD

Recent excavation has confirmed a Roman presence in the town. It has long been suggested that Gateshead originated as a bridgehead settlement on the south side of the River Tyne, overlooking the *Pons Aelius* carrying a road branching northwards from the Wrekendyke (Manders 1973, 1). This belief was reinforced by the chance find of 'a large earthen vessel, full of Roman coins (several of them of Hadrian)' during the construction of Church Street in 1790 (Longstaffe 1852, 53). Other supposed Roman remains were found at Bottle Bank in 1802, and Hodgson even suggested that the 'shape and hewing' of the stones of the medieval church of St Mary 'proves that it was built out of the ruins of some Roman edifice' (Mackenzie and Ross 1834, 84). Roman settlement was first proved archaeologically by trial trenching on the west side of Bottle Bank in 1994 (NCAU 1995), and some of its scale and complexity was revealed by open area excavation there in 2000 (OAN 2003).

Roman activity seems to have begun in the 1st century, possibly associated with a small fort, and continued until the 4th century. The occupation evidence at Bottle Bank was principally a series of criss-crossing ditches and gullies which appear to have divided the site up into plots, possibly aligned on a north-south route heading for a river crossing approximately on the site of the present Tyne Bridge. Within one of the plots were traces of post-built structures, superseded in the 3rd century by a stone building, possibly a strip-house, and evidence for industrial activity. Ranged along a north-west/south-east orientated ditch, possibly one of the primary land divisions, were the remains of stone-lined pits interpreted as cisterns, possibly part of a water management system either for domestic or industrial/agricultural use. A short section of presumed road was found, running beyond the excavation area to the north-east and south-west, apparently tending north-east across the contour of the bank above Pipewellgate and also heading for the riverside.

In marked contrast, no in-situ Roman finds had ever been reported east of Church Street (HER 293). The open area excavations at Oakwellgate in 1999 (c. 500 m to the east of Bottle Bank), produced only a handful of abraded Roman sherds and no features of Roman date, strongly suggesting that the eastern side of Gateshead was not part of the settled area in the Roman period (Report 1). Two Roman stones found when the Rectory was remodelled in 1837 were part of a Rector's antiquarian collection.

Although the excavation at Bottle Bank has confirmed Roman activity through much of the Roman period, the character and extent of the settlement has not been clearly established, the possible existence of an early fort or fortlet is still unproven, and the siting of the Roman bridge, *Pons Aelius*, is still not resolved (Bidwell and Holbrook 1989, 99–101).

ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD

Post-Roman and pre-Conquest settlement or activity in Gateshead has yet to be demonstrated archaeologically. The existence of a monastery at Gateshead in 653 A.D. has long been inferred from Bede's reference to Adda '*brother of Utta, a well-known priest and Abbot of Gateshead*' (*Ad Caprae Caput*)' (Bede 1969, 280). However it is open to interpretation as to whether it is the monastery, or the priest, which is being described as 'of Gateshead', though either interpretation indicates early settlement. This is also the earliest known appearance of the town's name, the etymology of which is debatable. Until the excavations at Oakwellgate in 1999 (Report 1), the monastery site was suggested as being on, or to the east of, the present church of St Mary, and equated with the church where Bishop Walcher was murdered in 1080 (Mackenzie 1827, 751). The location favoured by 'tradition' was a field adjoining the Rectory on the north-east recorded in post-medieval sources as 'Lawes' or 'Lawses' Close, taken to be a corruption of '*Lawless Close*', and an allusion to the murder. The excavation and subsequent watching brief at Oakwellgate revealed no evidence for monastery or early church in this area. Another view favours the site of St Edmund's Chapel, or Gateshead House, which formerly stood c. 600 m to the south (Cornford 1907, 80–1: HER 273), though this is far from the riverside or coastal headland site generally favoured for monastic settlement. A location on or close to the present St Mary's church would appear more appropriate (Boyle 1892, 574).

The only other evidence for Saxon occupation is the street name '*Bottle Bank*', which is presumably a corruption of the Old English *bottle* — a dwelling (Manders 1973, 337; UNAP 1998). However it should be noted that '*Bottle Bank*' does not appear in any of the documentary sources, including deeds, examined by this writer until 1665, and no finds or features of indisputably Saxon date have been found in excavation (Reports 1 and 2). However, two parallel and slightly curving ditches found at Oakwellgate, not firmly dated but apparently post-Roman and pre-13th/14th century, might represent part of the boundary of a curvilinear early medieval enclosure which continued west along East Bailey Chare and Bailey Chare, turning north along Mirk Lane and returning east on the north side of St Mary's church to Oakwellgate again (fig. 1). The word 'bailey', which might imply a palisade or enclosure, cannot however be traced earlier than 1770 (Hutton). Whilst no archaeological evidence for Saxon occupation can be demonstrated, a cross-headed grave marker of 11th century form — and potentially pre-Conquest — was found built into the east wall of the south transept of St Mary's in 1908 (Ryder 1985, Plate 31). Fragments of stones with similar cross-shaped markings have been found re-used in cists at the cemetery at the Castle, Newcastle, again in probably pre-Conquest contexts (Nolan and Harbottle *forthcoming*).

The absence of evidence for Saxon occupation is not particularly remarkable, and need not be taken as evidence for absence. On the north side of the river an intensively-used cemetery spanning the 8th to at least the 11th century, associated with a probable late Saxon church, is known from excavations on the site of the Castle in Newcastle. However, no trace of an actual settlement, perhaps the '*Monkchester*' referred to by Symeon of Durham, has been found. The cemetery might have served a number of small, dispersed settlements, perhaps including Gateshead. The suggestions of monastic settlement at both Newcastle and Gateshead, sites potentially within sight of one another across the river, are intriguing and may hint at complexities of relationship and identity as yet not understood.

ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH CENTURIES

After Bede, the earliest medieval documentary references to Gateshead are post-Conquest, when it lay within the lands of the Bishops of Durham (Welford 1884, ix; Manders 1973, 2). In 1068 William I defeated a Danish army under Edgar Ethling in battle on Gateshead Fell (Brand, 462). Writing in the 12th century, Symeon of Durham refers, like Bede, to '*Ad Caprae Caput*' and also to '*Gotesheved*' when describing the murder of Walcher, first Norman Bishop of Durham, outside the church there in 1080 (Simeon 1868, 98–101). The church could have been built in the 14 years since the Conquest, but it could just as well have been established earlier and be evidence for continuity of settlement in the area throughout the post-Roman period. It seems unlikely that the major north-south route served by the *Pons Aelius* would have been completely abandoned, and some form of settlement at the river crossing might be expected to have survived.

The medieval town, however, developed as a manor of the Bishops of Durham, whose 'park' occupied almost the whole of eastern Gateshead as far as Felling, from which it was divided by the Mereburn. On the west, the park probably bounded the rear (eastern end) of properties on the east side of Oakwellgate and High Street as far as Split Crow Road. It is possible that the boundary here originated as a ditch, possibly with a bank, following the later line of Maiden's Walk. This was certainly the case on the west side of the town, where the boundary of the bishop's estate was defined by the 'Bishop's head-dyke' or 'hengledyke' which appears to have run along the edge of the escarpment above Pipewellgate.

Gateshead owed much of its early development to the episcopates of Ranulf Flambard (1099–1128) and Hugh de Puiset (1153–94) who maintained the 'forest' of Gateshead (east of Maiden's Walk) as one of the episcopal demesnes. There may have been a manor house, possibly moated, on the site of the later Park House, and a substantial building at the south end of Oakwellgate — 'Palace Place' or 'King John's Palace' — may have been a residence for the bishops when in Gateshead (Manders 1973, 25).

By the date of the first charter (c. 1164) it seems some of the townsmen were already termed 'burgesses' and were granted the same liberties as those of Newcastle respecting transfer of property. Apart from this the minimal rights and privileges given in c. 1164 hardly accord with conventional borough status. When the Boldon Book was compiled in 1183 the borough, with its mills, salmon fisheries, bakehouses, and three parts of the arable land, was valued at 60 marks (Greenwell 1852). Three years later Gateshead paid £10 demesne tax, the highest of all the Durham villis (Manders 1973, 5), suggestive of rapid growth.

The present St Mary's Church was probably built (or rebuilt) at this time, and although the earliest visible fabric is dated to c. 1200 (Pevsner 2000, 283), it is almost certain that the existing building occupies the site of the church outside which bishop Walcher was murdered in 1080. From archaeological evidence (Report 1) the Rectory, which was abandoned in 1837, was probably established on the east side of Oakwellgate and opposite the church in the late 12th or 13th century.

Other significant buildings to emerge in the late 12th century were the Chapel of Holy Trinity on the east side of the High Street, for which endowments of land survive from 1196–1207 (Gateshead MBC *et al* 2005). In 1248 this was refounded as '*The Chapel and Hospital of St. Edmund, Bishop and Confessor, and of the glorious Bishop Cuthbert, in Gateshead*', but has since reverted to its original name. The only archaeological investigation on this site revealed walls and a burial almost certainly of post-medieval date (Goodrick 1992). Another possibly

late 13th or early 14th century establishment was the *Chapel of the Hospital of St Edmund King and Martyr*, also on the east side of the High Street and some 400m further south of Holy Trinity.

Detailed documentary evidence is lacking for the size, plan form and pattern of landholding in Gateshead until the later 13th century. Traces of a grid-iron pattern, are evident on the earliest published map of the town (e.g. Thompson 1746) in the alignments of Oakwellgate, the east and west back lanes (later East and West Street), and cross-streets such as Jackson's Chare. Although obviously similar to Roberts' 'regular row' village plan form (Roberts 1976, 261), it might be suggested that the layout represents an attempted planned town, tacked on to the postulated earlier curvilinear settlement. A planned development could have emerged in the 12th century, a period when the Crown or ecclesiastical landowners were creating such settlements elsewhere. This could perhaps have been during the episcopate of Hugh du Puiset who was largely responsible for developing the Palatinate into 'a kingdom within a kingdom' and may have sought to exploit the geographically favourable location of Gateshead.

Whatever the origin of Gateshead's urban form, the axis of the plan suggests a focus on an existing, or intended, river crossing some 200m east of the medieval Tyne bridge, which was probably built in the second half of the 12th century (Clack and Gosling 1976, 118). The line of Oakwellgate, its width (12 m–15.5 m), and its abrupt termination on the embankment above the river, could also be suggested as a continuation of the north-south route from the High Street, crossing the river to a landfall on the line of Broad Chare. Such a route would have the principal buildings of the medieval town ranged along it — St Mary's Church, the Rectory, 'King John's Palace', and the Hospitals of St. Edmund, further suggesting that this was, or was intended to be, a thoroughfare of some significance. Had Oakwellgate originated, or have been intended, as a route to a river crossing, it was superseded by the Tyne bridge. The northern end of the High Street, and the steep and dog-legged course down Bottle Bank might be a realignment of the north-south route leading to the established medieval bridgehead. Oakwellgate thus became a *cul-de-sac*, ultimately being cut off from the High Street by encroachments west of King John's Palace.

LATE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

If there was such a grand design in the minds of the 12th century bishops, it is possible that the development of the 'new' town, with a river crossing at the north end of Oakwellgate, was stifled as it would have restricted the development of the Newcastle quayside. New settlements were perceived as economic competitors and rivals by established neighbouring towns, which often sought to block their development as Newcastle did quite blatantly to North and South Shields (Beresford 1967, 8). Pressure from Newcastle, an economically powerful and well-established neighbour, may have dictated the establishment of the bridging point further west. Manders suggests that fierce opposition from Newcastle to Gateshead's economic development, which reached a peak in the 13th and 14th centuries, caused the bishops of Durham to progressively lose interest in the town, turning to the east coast ports such as Hartlepool to exploit trade. As a reflection of this, the extent of the Park diminished in the course of the middle ages as the bishops granted away tracts of land for clearance and cultivation. On the west an extensive tract of land between the Tyne Bridge and Redheugh was granted by du Puiset to Thorald of London, and became the semi-independent 'Lordship' of Pipewellgate. The Manor of Gateshead was itself leased by the bishops before 1380.

Nevertheless, Gateshead continued to expand. The earliest surviving dateable deeds, of the mid-late 12th century, refer only to land, sometimes described as cultivated or to have been won from the waste. By the mid-13th century there are references to structures: a booth (c. 1250) and a stone wall, possibly dividing a burgage plot (c. 1260–70). By 1295 a forge is mentioned, and between 1309 and 1315 the terms '*burgage*' '*messuage*', and '*tenement*' (not necessarily a building) appear with growing frequency. A market may have been held as early as 1246, when Newcastle first attempted to suppress it, and a borough officer, the bailiff, had been appointed by 1287 (Manders 1973, 5).

The earliest street names also appear in 13th century deeds: Elyngate or St Helen's Street (1274), Oakwellgate (1290/1), Pipewellgate, Bergate, and the Fore Street, High Street, or Via Regia (1295). The designation 'High Street' possibly included Bottle Bank, which does not occur before the 17th century. St Helen also gave her name to St Elyn's Well (1324) and the Elynwellcroft (1356). St Helen's Well, and fields known as Little St Helen's Close and St Helen's Close, appear on a 19th century plan close to the river west of the borough and just inside Redheugh estate. St Helen (c. A.D. 255–330) was the mother of Constantine the Great, proclaimed emperor at York in A.D. 306 and wrongly believed to have been born there. She may have been the subject of a late Roman cult and retained strong influence in the region (Magilton 1980, 6).

The emergence of street names and earliest archaeologically identifiable structures and deposits found at Bottle Bank and Oakwellgate, which are 12th to 13th century, reinforce the documentary evidence that this was the period in which medieval Gateshead formally developed. The built-up area of the town at this period cannot be accurately defined, but there may have been piecemeal development southward along the High Street. Reclamation of the riverside at Pipewellgate and Hillgate probably also took place at this time, though this has not been established archaeologically. A charter of c. 1322–45 describes a property in Pipewellgate as extending from the Bishop's Dyke on the south to the common way on the north, with free access to the River Tyne by stone steps. This suggests that the common way was, at this date, still a track along the river foreshore (Greenwell 1871, 6).

Most other street names do not appear until the 14th century: Jackson's Chare or Collier Chare (1368), Hellegate or St Mary Gate (Hillgate) 1354, St Mary Chare 1313, Le Syde (1355) Smithiraw and Pylotchare (1430). Development along the High Street had become sufficiently well established for the sides of the street to be referred to as the Westrawe and the Estrawe (1485). The appearance of Collier Chare shows that by the second half of the 14th century settlement already extended over 700m south from the Tyne bridgehead. The most southerly properties to carry Borough Right (Oliver 1830/1831, 189 and 190), on the west side of the High Street and apparently bounded by the Busy Burn, suggest that the limit of medieval development was defined by the later town boundary. Borough right was a privilege attached, since the Middle Ages, to the property and not to the owner, and was conveyed on payment of an entry fine. In the early 19th century about 135 burgages, also termed '*ancient tenements*', held this status, the owners of which were called *Burgesses*, *Freeboroughmen* or *Borough Holders*. Burgesses were bound to attend the Borough Court, held a share in the Common Fields, had power to make byelaws, and were exempt from toll.

Toponymic evidence (place names used as surnames) occurring in deeds and charters suggests that the medieval town had a wide population catchment area. Many names are indicative of 'local' immigration — '*of Lamesley*', '*of Urpeth*', '*of Stockton*', '*of Usworth*' or '*of Stanhope*'. Others, perhaps representing the merchant class, came from further afield:

south Durham, Yorkshire and beyond — ‘of Bowes’, ‘of Tickhill’, and ‘of Lincoln’ (Oliver 1924). Thurordo of London, granted the land between Tyne Bridge and Redheugh which became the ‘Lordship’ of Pipewellgate, may have come to Gateshead through involvement in the east coast maritime trade.

An indication of the range of trades and industries practiced in medieval Gateshead occurs in deeds of this period, including clothworking and processing — Ricardus *fullo* and Rogero *Tinctori*, stone-masonry (*cementarius*), metalworking — Brithmero *fabri* (smith), and milling and grinding — Emme *molendinar’* and Henry *pistor*. There were mills in Gateshead in the late 12th century, and in 1307 the rent roll of Bishop Bec lists rent from mills amounting to £6.3.4d and repairs to a mill there costing 13/4d. Initially these may all have been watermills; a road to ‘*le Clokmylum’* occurs in 1370 (DRO 1). By the time of Bishop Hatfield’s Survey c. 1380 (Greenwell 1857, 88–9) there were two water mills and a windmill, possibly the first to occupy the ‘Windmill Hill’, the high ground above Pipewellgate where five windmills were working in the 18th century and which is first named in 1436 (Welford 1884, 297).

Coalmining in the town cannot be traced earlier than the 14th century. The name ‘*John Colyer, chaplain’* as witness to a deed in 1315 (DRO 2) suggests an individual more than one generation removed from the trade, though he need not necessarily have been local. Mining in the town is referred to in 1344. There were staiths at Pipewellgate in 1349 (Manders 1973, 6) suggesting that production was already supplying non-local markets, and coal mines ‘in the fields of Gateshead’ occur in 1364 (Brand 1789, 477). Archaeologically the only evidence for the medieval coal industry in the town are traces of 14th century crop pits found on the east side of Oakwellgate. Still less is known about pottery manufacture, which the growing medieval town is likely to have sourced locally. A late 13th- or early 14th-century kiln was found during construction of the Gateshead Highway (Manders 1973, 62), the products of which were buff-white wares, but was not adequately recorded. The kiln site lay on the east side of road from Durham, just south of the Busy Burn and on land held by leasehold from the Dean and Chapter of Durham (Oliver 1830/1831, 164). The roadside location suggests it was sited conveniently for its products to be distributed by road transport, and thus probably served a local market.

The documentary and archaeological evidence, though both are admittedly piecemeal and in need of greater study, suggests medieval Gateshead had developed and even thrived despite lack of interest on the part of the bishops, and an overbearing northern neighbour. This limited success was to a great extent due to the town’s favourable geographical position, astride the main north-south routes and on a navigable waterway, and to its natural resources, of which coal was becoming pre-eminent. In the course of the 16th century the economic rivalry between Gateshead and Newcastle which had begun four centuries earlier reached its climax. Between 1550 and 1600 Newcastle achieved the ascendancy, effectively annexing Gateshead. The town’s market was suppressed in 1553, never to be revived (Dodds 1915, 110), and in 1581 the manor of Gateshead, together with that of Whickham, was placed first in the hands of the Crown, who then granted them to the merchant burgesses of Newcastle as the so-called Grand Lease.

There are no medieval plans of Gateshead. The earliest representation of the town appears in a late 16th century ‘birds’ eye’ view of Newcastle (Halliwell 1844), which relegates Gateshead to a truncated foreground view. St Mary’s Church is indicated, and a cluster of stylised buildings around the bridgehead representing the northern end of the High Street, Pipewellgate and Hillgate. Speed (1611) is similarly sketchy. However there are post-medieval plans

which, because the boundaries of the town's physical expansion appear to have been established by the 14th century, can be taken as broadly showing the preserved medieval urban form. Fig. 1 has been based on these plans, particularly Isaac Thompson (1746). Archaeological investigation has not contributed to an understanding of the built character of the medieval town as no above ground survival of a domestic building is known. The only attempted investigation of street frontage buildings, at Bottle Bank, was compromised by later terracing, cellars, or the presence of standing structures.

SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

Under the Grand Lease the coalmines were exploited and Gateshead initially prospered, wayleaves for transporting coal across the town fields being a major source of income for the town. The population more than doubled between 1576 and 1676 (Manders 1973, 16). The trade in Tyne coal was vital to London, but at the outbreak of Civil War in 1642 the Corporation of Newcastle declared for the King and supplies to the capital were cut by a Parliamentary naval blockade of the Tyne. In 1644 Newcastle was besieged by a Scottish army, allied to the Parliamentary cause. Artillery batteries were sited along the river escarpment at Gateshead to bombard the town, but apart from a skirmish on the Windmill Hills at the beginning of the siege, there was no fighting on the Gateshead side of the river. Nevertheless, the Rectory was ransacked and allegedly demolished, and St Mary's church used as a billet for troops and vandalised.

Archaeological investigation within the town has not added significantly to an understanding of the military impacts upon Gateshead during this period: no trace of the besieging batteries has been found, the remains almost certainly being ephemeral earthworks. These, like most of the temporary fortifications on the north side of the river, were probably infilled in the 1650s. Possible evidence of the social turmoil which followed the first Civil War was revealed in excavations at Oakwellgate, where a mid-17th century roadside burial may be a victim of the witch-hunt conducted in Gateshead in 1649 (Report 1).

Gateshead had, by the mid-17th century, become the centre of clay tobacco-pipe manufacture in the north-east (Parsons 1964; Edwards 1988). Tobacco was being smoked or traded in Gateshead by 1625, when Roger Akeman was found guilty of purloining 2lb. of tobacco worth 6/- (Fraser 1991, 110/19), but the earliest references to pipe manufacture appear in the parish registers of St. Mary's with the burial of pipe-makers James Wilkinson in 1629, and William Sewell in 1651. By 1675 the pipe-makers were sufficiently important to join the apothecaries and grocers in the formation of a guild company, incorporated by Bishop Crewe. Many Gateshead pipemakers are recorded, but only a relatively small number can be identified with marked pipes recovered in excavations. Known makers' marks of the 17th and 18th centuries include Robert and Arthur Mould II, who lived in Oakwellgate, the Parke family who had property on Fore Street, and Taylor Ansell who had property in Pipewellgate.

Manufacturing waste, including fragments of muffle kiln, has been found in the excavations at Oakwellgate and Bottle Bank. At Oakwellgate mid-17th century kiln debris and waster pipes, apparently associated with a brick-yard, could not be related to a particular maker, though dumps of later pipe wasters marked A/T may have been products of Taylor Ansell, who died *c.* 1782. The date-range of material and association with brick-making documented into the 1730s (Bourne 1730, 168) indicates this was a well-established industrial site on the periphery of the urban area. At Bottle Bank fragments of muffle kiln and pipe wasters

in Hawk's Yard could be identified with the late 17th-century maker Henry Walker (fl. 1674–99), while another dump in Queen's Head Yard produced pipes with the marks of George Liddell (died 1763). These appear to have been backland industries in burgages fronting the north end of High Street and Bottle Bank, though again on the urban fringe. The Bottle Bank, Hillgate and Pipewellgate area remained a focus for pipemakers into the late 19th century, by which time the industry was declining. The last Gateshead pipemaker, George Stonehouse, closed his business in the 1930s.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND LATER

When the Grand Lease expired in 1679 the bishops of Durham briefly regained control of the manor of Gateshead, only to lease it again in 1684 to the largely absentee landlords, the Gerards. This marked the beginning of a period of stasis in the town's growth and 18th and early 19th century plans show that as late as 1830 there was no significant expansion of the urban area established by the later middle ages. In part this was because enlargement to the east and west was constrained by large landed estates carved out of the Bishop of Durham's manor. Economic stagnation has been attributed changes in coal-mining as the shallow, easily accessible seams close to the town were becoming worked out and the principal collieries shifted operations to the well-drained seams of the high ground to the south and south-west of the town. Archaeology has, at present, contributed little to an understanding of the period, though there is documentary evidence that the low-lying coal continued to be worked, albeit by small-scale concerns: in 1699 the Gerards gave licence for working coals under '*the lane from Aquelgate to the Bishop's House on the shore*' i.e. Oakwellgate Lane, and again in 1703 under '*Trumble's Paddock and Aquelgate*' (GPL CN/1/370 and 387).

After 1835 the industrial development which shaped modern Gateshead began to make a significant impact upon the landscape as the medieval boundaries were breached. To the east, John Abbot established the Park Iron Works in 1835 on land leased from the Ellisons, the last lords of the manor of Gateshead, and within full view of the Rectory. To the south, construction began in 1837 on the massive raised platform of Oakwellgate Station, terminus of the Brandling Junction Railway. The backlands of properties on the east side of Oakwellgate were obliterated, and an inclined railway ran from the station across the Rector's Field to the river-side. The station became a goods depot in 1844, with coal drops adjoining Maiden's Walk (NCAS 2002). Almost certainly in response to this rapid onset of industrial squalor, the Rectory was abandoned in 1837 in favour of a new one at Bensham. Within twenty years the field to the east and north had almost wholly disappeared under spoil tips and gasometers (ARCUS 1998 and Report 1).

On the west side of the town, Ellison Terrace, Grosvenor Street and Melbourne Street, built by 1838 (Oliver 1838), marked the beginnings of suburban expansion, while Greene's Field, above Pipewellgate, was transected between 1836 and 1838 by the incline of the Brandling Junction Railway. This encouraged further railway development, and in 1844 the Newcastle and Darlington Junction Railway Company erected Gateshead Station at Greene's Field, designed by G. T. Andrews of York. Briefly, Gateshead was the northern terminus of the railway line from London, and Greene's Field became a new focus for the town, attracting public buildings such as the Borough's No. 1 Police Station and the Town Hall, which was relocated from Oakwellgate. This prominence was short-lived, and the station closed to passenger traffic in August 1850 when the Central Station in Newcastle, served by the High Level Bridge,

was opened (Hoole 1985, 73). Greenesfield subsequently became a locomotive works for the North Eastern Railway, a mass of sidings spreading south across the Pipe Hills Pasture. The remains of the Station and workshops were archaeologically recorded in 2002 (NCAS 2003). Shortly afterwards the 1844 Station Hotel partly collapsed and had to be demolished.

Development of the railways began the process of fragmentation of the town. The viaducts cutting across the High Street almost on the line of Bailiff Chare (Half Moon Lane) and East Bailey Chare, formed a visual, and partly physical, barrier which isolated the core of the historic town to the north. The destruction of Hillgate in the Gateshead Explosion of 1854 contributed to the already apparent trend of the wealthier residents to move away from the medieval core, which gradually declined into a combination of industrial works and slum tenements. The administrative centre of Gateshead remained on the west side of the town, and a new Town Hall was erected in West Street in 1868.

Increasing industrialisation brought an influx of labour to the town (McCord and Thompson 1998, 307). Immigration led to overcrowding, and while the street frontages in High Street and Bottle Bank — principally shops and businesses — conveyed an appearance of prosperity, the yards and courts behind were crowded tenements (Manders 1973, 162). By 1891 40.8% of the population of the town were living at a density of more than two per room, and even in 1907 Gateshead was still at the top of a list of overcrowded urban areas (McCord and Thompson 1998, 303). The situation changed dramatically after 1909, as progressive demolition of tenement and slum dwellings left large areas such as Pipewellgate looking desolate. Clearance for the Tyne Bridge in 1925–8, and again for road construction in the late 1960s and early 1970s, effectively completed the process of fragmentation and decline.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion it has to be stated that while much remains unknown or uncertain about Gateshead's origins and development, both archaeology and archival research can contribute to a better understanding. Research frameworks and agendas for addressing such issues have been defined as part of an English Heritage-funded Extensive Urban Survey Programme (Gateshead MBC *et al* 2005). In brief, the extent, character, and even the focus of Roman settlement is still unknown, and a Saxon presence also remains to be physically demonstrated. The character of medieval burgage frontage buildings and the form, chronology and extent of medieval development south along the High Street remains to be established. The medieval pottery kiln found in the construction of Gateshead Highway is a reminder that significant evidence can exist well outside the perceived historic urban core. This is particularly the case with post-medieval industry, such as pottery manufacture. By contrast, evidence for smaller-scale industry such as clay tobacco pipe making, is more likely to be revealed in backland areas within the historic core of the town.

Although so much of the physical remains of Gateshead's past have been lost, there are still many areas within the medieval and later town which have the potential to reveal evidence of these important aspects of the town's development. Perhaps one of the most significant outcomes of the archaeological and documentary work carried out in the last twenty years has been to show that Gateshead has a cultural history, and an archaeology, every bit as diverse and important — regionally, if not indeed nationally — as its long-time rival, Newcastle. The '*odiferous borough*' (Local Collections 1840, 99) still has a story to tell.

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