

Bedford's Oldest Streets

ALAN CRAWLEY AND IAN FREEMAN

SUMMARY

It is now generally accepted that Bedford as a town originated in two burhs dating from the Saxon period, the earlier one to the north and the later one to the south of the river. This article discusses how the streets which still form the nucleus of modern Bedford relate to those early burhs and also how the establishment of the burhs must have altered the pattern of the cross-country roads in the area. The name changes of these early streets are traced from the earliest recorded forms through to the names by which they are known today. Some explanation of these names is given where the meaning is not immediately obvious.

One school of thought claims that Bedford was the site of the battle of Biedcanford in AD 571. The place-name evidence is against this, but even if it were so, there is no evidence that Bedford was a town at that time. The earliest indication of a town at Bedford is in the story, related by the 13th century writer Matthew Paris, that King Offa of Mercia was buried at Bedford when he died in AD 796. Unfortunately, according to the story, his tomb was washed away by a flood and there is no confirmatory evidence. Bedford had certainly become a place of importance by AD 885, when it was used as a key point on the Danelaw boundary and there was definitely a town there by AD 914. In that year Earl Thurcytel and other Danish leaders went from Bedford to Buckingham to submit to King Edward there. The account in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of this event tells us that Edward built two strongholds at Buckingham, one on either side of the river. This is in contrast to the entry for the following year which describes Edward's occupation of Bedford itself. This tells us that Edward took possession of the burh, i.e. Bedford and arranged for the burh on the south of the river to be built up (see Fig 1).

As Haslam has pointed out (*Beds. Arch.* 16) this must mean that the burh north of the river was already in existence when Edward came to take possession. So unless this burh was built by the Danes it must have had a Mercian origin as Matthew Paris' story implies. Haslam has argued

against a Danish origin on the grounds that there are no Danish parallels to the situation at Bedford. He has also shown that the defence line of the northern burh can be deduced from the pattern of streets surviving at the centre of the town. It follows that these streets would also be Mercian or Danish in origin while those of the southern burh originate with Edward's burh of AD 915. For the northern burh, the defence lines prove to be roughly rectangular in plan. The river formed the southern defence line. The eastern defence line ran just west of St Cuthbert's Street and the northern line ran just south of St Peter's Street. This positioning of the northern line would enable the roads approaching the town from the north to funnel through a single gateway at the centre of the northern defence line corresponding to the top of the High Street, leaving Dame Alice Street and St Peter's Street outside the burh. The other sides of the rectangle would have been pierced by similar central gateways, corresponding to Mill Street on the eastern side and the bridge over the river on the southern side. The northern and eastern defence lines would correspond with the parish boundaries of St Paul's with St Peter's and St Cuthbert's respectively and would explain why those boundaries came to be where they are.

The western defence line is more speculative but it is reasonable to assume, as Haslam has, that the eastern and western lines would be roughly equidistant from the High Street. It seems likely that the western line would come to be used to mark the boundary of St Paul's, as did the northern and eastern lines. In this case the boundary would be with the lost parish of All-Hallows. Haslam places this line slightly to the east of All-Hallows Lane but there is evidence which suggests that the parish boundary lay along All-Hallows Lane itself, so that this lane would have marked the western boundary. This would push Haslam's line slightly to the west but would not weaken his general argument. Again this defence line would be pierced by a single gate, this time corresponding to Well Street, now Midland Road.

For Edward's southern burh, the defence line is

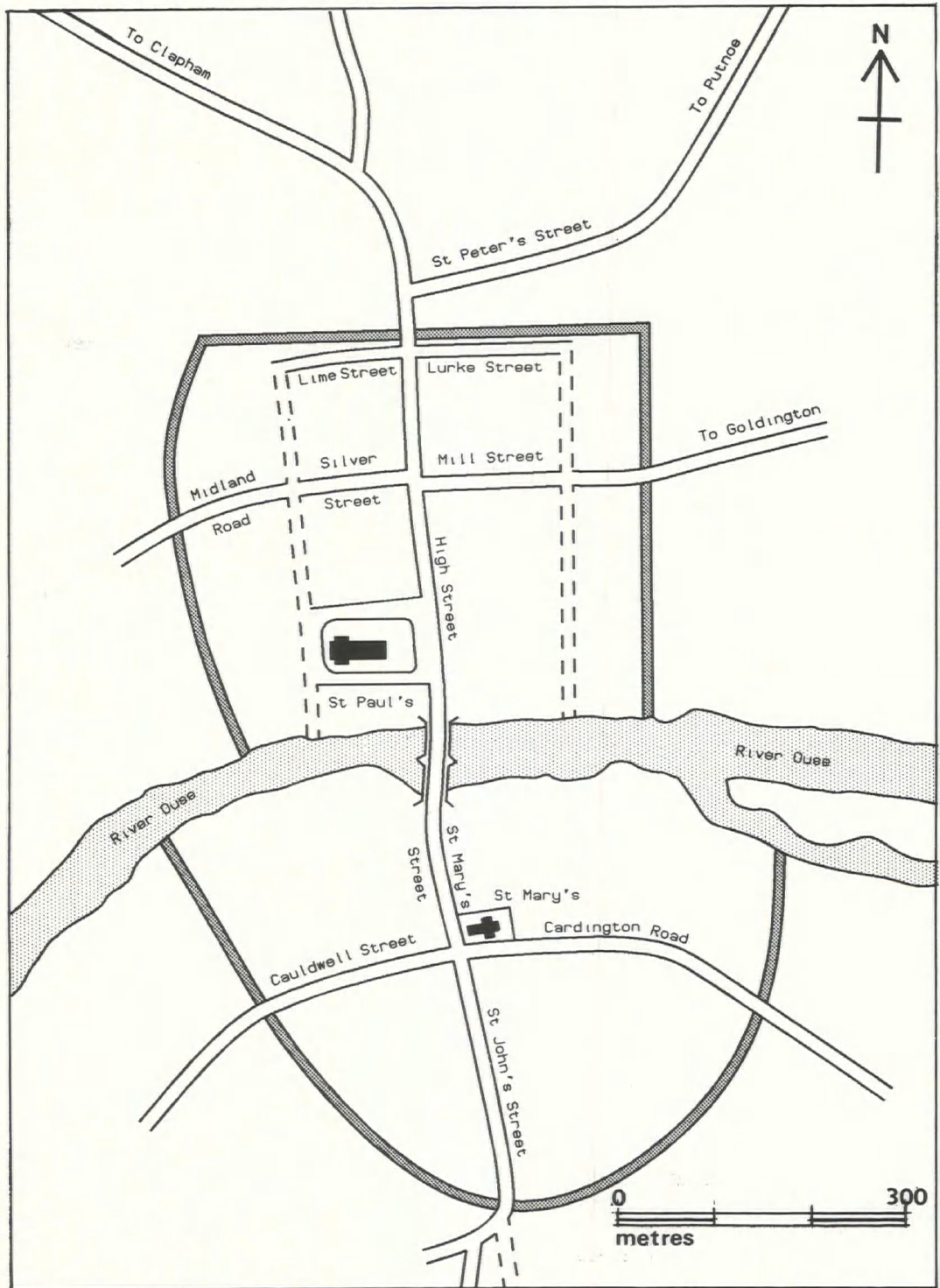


Fig 1 The Bedford Burhs

unambiguously defined by the King's Ditch whose semi-circular outline has only recently been partly obscured by modern road developments. Most of the streets in the centre of modern Bedford can be related to these two burhs. For instance, for each burh the essential feature was a central cross-roads formed by the intersection of a north to south road with an east to west road.

In the northern burh the north to south road was the High Street running from the north gate to the river crossing. The east to west road was formed by Mill Street and Silver Street with Midland Road. The High Street possibly took a straighter course than it does today. Nowadays, the line from the central cross-roads bends slightly to the east before reaching the bridge. A very important feature of the early town would have been a market and it is reasonable to assume that this was situated, as it was from medieval to modern times, close to the church and river crossing. Expansion of this market area could have been responsible for deflecting the High Street at this point. In addition to the cross-roads, the northern burh street plan would have included Lime Street and Lurke Street. These would have run just inside the northern defence line and so together would have formed an intra-mural street which was a feature of many early burhs.

It is possible that the southern part of Harpur Street was also part of the original street plan. (The extension north of Lime Street was not opened until the 19th century.) If so it would imply a grid pattern, rather than a simple cross-road pattern, with another north-south road equidistant from the High Street on the eastern side. Such a road would have been erased to a large extent when the Norman castle was built and effectively obliterated the south east corner of the old burh. However, that section of Castle Lane which runs north to south is about the right distance from the High Street and a chain of property boundaries shown on the Speed Map of 1610 and the Enclosure Map of 1797 carries the line of that road northwards past Mill Street to Lurke Street.

On the other hand, it is possible that Harpur Street was not contemporary with the rest of the burh streets. We can deduce from the Harrold Cartulary that the "territorium of Aldermannesberi" lay at the north-west corner of the town. At one time part of Harpur Street was known as Aldermanbury. It could be therefore, that the street was built as an approach from St Paul's Church to the Aldermanbury which would have been the fortified homestead of the Elderman, the senior

official of the Saxon county.

One old street which cannot be fitted neatly into the burh pattern is St Loye's Street. This seems to breach the defence line in an awkward way at the north west corner. This street could have been a continuation of Harpur Street alias Aldermanbury or it could have been built for some other purpose after the burh defences had ceased to be of importance. Alternatively, as we shall see later, it might be the remnant of one of the roads which pre-dated the burh.

The street pattern of the southern burh is much simpler in that there is no indication of any streets associated with the burh other than those forming the cross-roads. The north to south road consisted of St Mary's Street and St John's Street running from the river crossing to a southern gate near St John's Church. The east to west road consisted of Cauldwell Street and Cardington Road which intersected the north to south road near St Mary's Church. Duck Mill Lane and the other lanes in that area probably developed later as access roads leading to the Mill.

Apart from creating new streets within the defences, the building of the burhs must also have brought about the re-alignment of the cross-country roads which previously would have led directly to the river crossing (see Figs 2 and 3). This is very apparent south of the river where Cauldwell Street from the south west and Cardington Road from the south east have clearly been diverted from their original alignments on the river crossing just at the points where they cross the King's Ditch. It is also obvious that Amphill Road was once aligned on the river crossing but was diverted to the east in order to enter the newly formed defences through the south gate.

The original alignment of Elstow Road is not so clear because it changed direction at several places in the comparatively short distance from Elstow village to where it entered the southern burh through the south gate. In 1308 there was a major re-routing of the road around St Leonard's Hospital, which once stood in the area roughly occupied today by the disused St John's Railway Station. This re-routing diverted the road to the east before reaching the Hospital to join up with another road that led south from the south gate. This road, now no longer in existence, can be seen on the Enclosure Map of 1799 leading south as far as Mile Road. A chain of footpaths, hedgerows and minor roads which can be traced on the 2½ inch OS Map suggest it might have continued to Haynes.

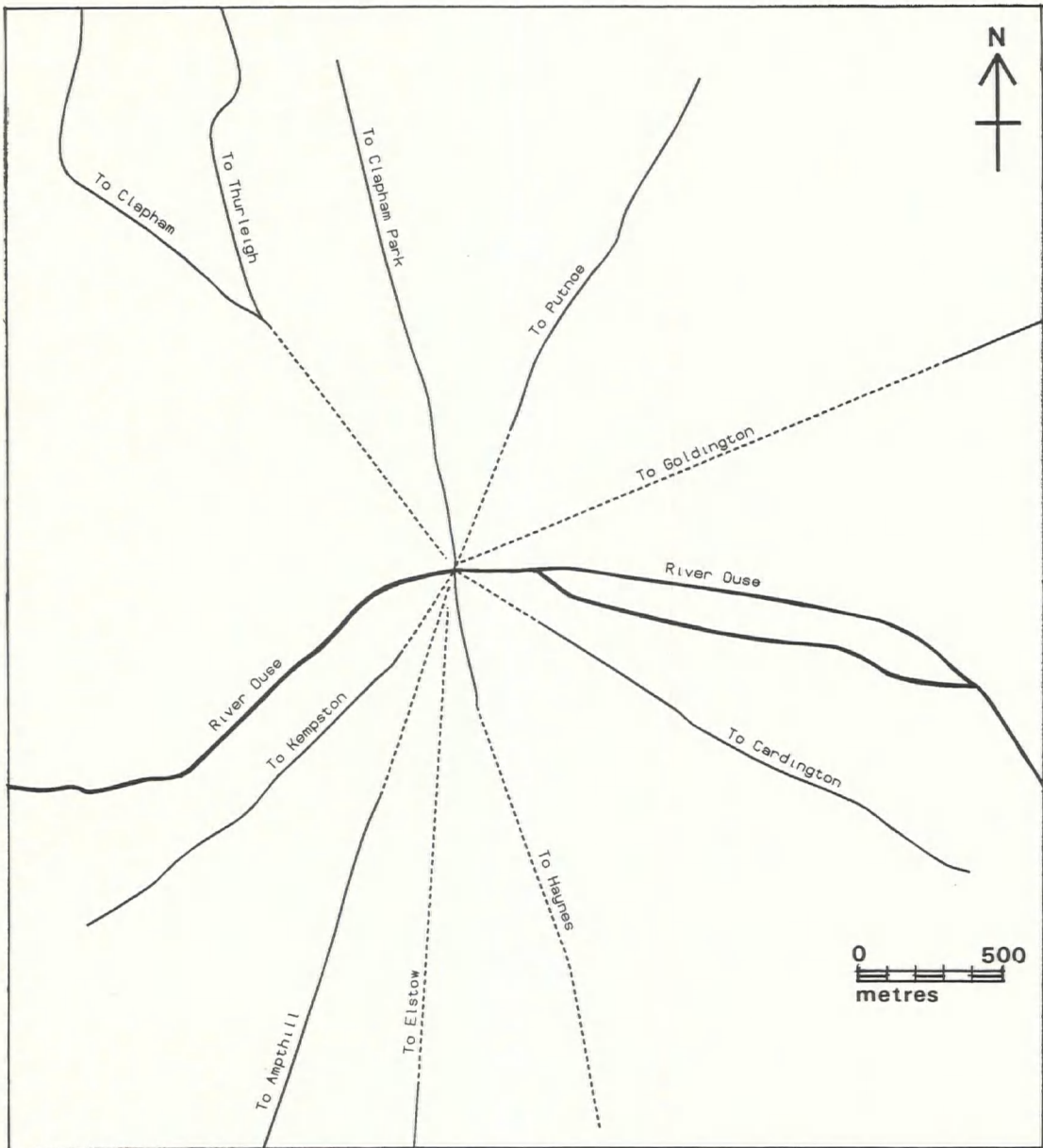


Fig 2 Pre-Burh Roads

London Road shows no obvious alignment on the river crossing although it does appear to start from the south gate and so might be associated with the burh. However, the earliest reference to this road is as part of the Bedford to Hitchin turnpike which was established in 1757, and it has not been possible to find any evidence of the road before that. Jefferys' Map of 1765 shows the road but Speed's Map of

1610 fails to indicate any road in that position. In fact it shows a block of houses built across the line of the road at the point where St John's Street turns towards Elstow and Amphill.

There are similar indications that some of the roads north of the river did once align on the river crossing and might therefore represent communication routes which pre-date the burh. Foster Hill

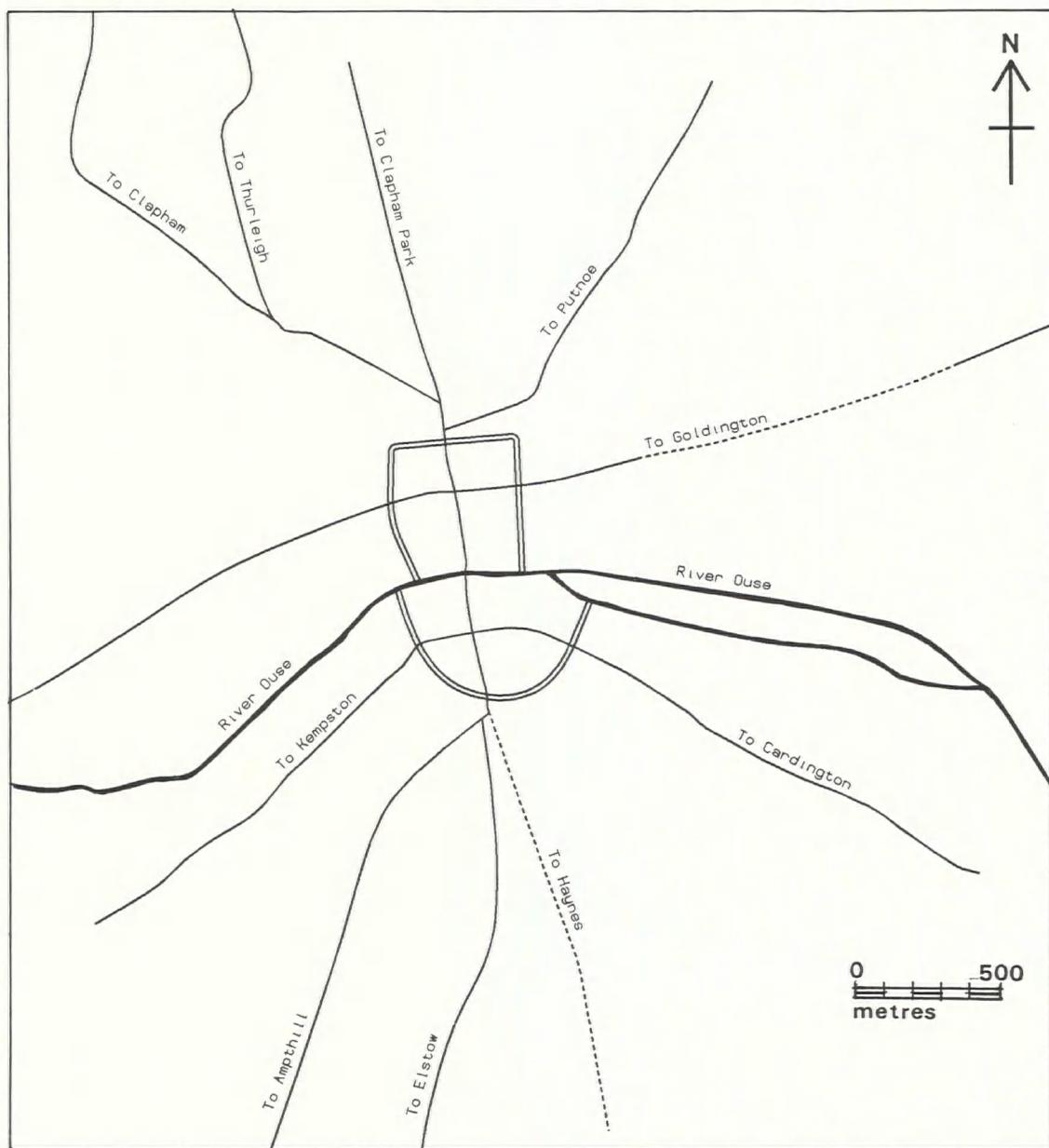


Fig 3 Post-Burh Roads

Road shows a direct connection with the river crossing, as it is a continuation of the High Street with only a slight deviation at St Peter's. It was known as Clapham Park Way in the Middle Ages and a foot-path still carries the old line as far as Clapham Park although the modern road finishes at the Cemetery. Another road which shows a clear alignment on the river crossing with a diversion to accommodate the

burgh is the present Kimbolton Road. The turnpike road to Kimbolton was proposed in 1795 and completed in 1820. Prior to that the first stretch of what is now Kimbolton Road formed part of Putnoe Way. This continued along Putnoe Lane to the hamlet of Putnoe then along what is now a bridle path past Putnoe Wood to Renhold, Wilden and other places to the north east. A continuation of this

line in a southerly direction would take it to the river crossing but the road has clearly been diverted along St Peter's Street in order to enter the burh by the northern gate.

The Clapham Road is now the major road out of Bedford to the north west and the way it follows the terrace above the left bank of the Ouse suggests it began as an early routeway. Nowadays it continues into Bedford along Tavistock Street and shows no obvious alignment on the river crossing. However, research has revealed that just at the point where Clapham Road becomes Tavistock Street it was joined by an old road which once came down from Thurleigh via Clapham Green. This old road which was called Thurleigh Way, was referred to in the Newnham Rental of 1507 and was still in existence in the 18th century although the only part now surviving is the foot path known as Slade Walk. The point at which Thurleigh Way joined the Clapham Road is still marked by a kink in the modern road which shows where the two roads merged into a common line, a line which if produced, would pass through St Loyes and intersect the river at the crossing. It is thus possible that the combined roads followed this route down to the river before the burh was built. If so they were then diverted along Tavistock Street to enter by the north gate.

The Goldington Road is now the main approach road from the east but at one time there was another road from Goldington which led through to Mill Street. This road, still in existence in the 18th century, was at that time known as Little Goldington Highway. If the line of the present A428, as it now goes through Goldington village, is extended it can be seen to be in direct alignment with the river crossing. The present Goldington Road turns off this line as it nears the top of Newnham Avenue and proceeds towards St Peter's. The little Goldington Highway turned off the original line somewhat nearer to the river crossing to approach the central crossroads via Mill Street. Such a bend is clearly shown on Jeffreys' Map of 1765 although that map is not precise enough to fix the position.

It seems therefore that the road through Goldington was also aligned on the river crossing but was diverted to accommodate the burh. Both Goldington Road and Little Goldington Highway were in existence during part of the 18th century but the latter had dropped out of use by the 19th century. The fact that Little Goldington Highway led to the central crossroads indicates that it was the earlier of the two roads, and this is confirmed by the

way the common field system developed round it. Thus it formed the boundary between the field known as the Sele which lay south of the road and the field to the north known as the Haylands. The present Goldington Road cuts across the Haylands and so must have developed after the field boundaries were laid out.

The main road from the west is now the Bromham Road but the late development of this road is evidenced by the fact that it by-passes both Bromham and Biddenham village centres. In fact one has to follow the road out to either Turvey on the northern fork or Stagsden on the southern fork before coming across a village on the road. Also, it bisected Conduit Field, one of the common fields of Bedford, which suggests it developed later than the field system. The earlier approach road from the west would have been from the river crossing at Ford End along Ford End Road, Midland Road and Silver Street to the central crossroads. A road from Biddenham village joined this road near Ford End.

CONCLUSION

This analysis demonstrates how the establishment of the two burhs influenced the pattern of the roads around Bedford. Prior to their existence, the river crossing would have formed a node at which the approach roads would converge and then fan out. With the establishment of the burhs, these roads would be diverted to enter the burhs by the appropriate gateways.

Apart from the building of the castle the patterns of the streets within the burhs and of the immediate approach roads, were to remain substantially unchanged throughout the medieval period. Speed's Map of 1610 is the earliest street map we have but most of the streets shown on Speed's Map can be traced further back through documents for some two to three hundred years, albeit with many changes of name in some cases. Speed's Map can therefore be taken as a picture of Bedford as it was after the castle had been demolished. The central crossroads in each burh are clearly apparent and the built-up area fits closely within the burh defence lines as described above, apart from a little suburban growth at St Peter's and St Cuthbert's.

This pattern of streets was to persist until well into the 19th century. Jeffreys' Map of 1765 and Brayley's Map of 1807 show that during the intervening years a certain amount of infill had taken place within the town and some ribbon development was beginning to appear along the main roads out of town but the basic pattern was unchanged.

It was to remain unchanged until the 1820's when new developments in the Tavistock Street area heralded the beginning of the expansion which was to lead to Bedford as we know it today.

GAZETTEER

In the following notes individual streets are examined and discussed as to how they were related to the early burhs (using Haslam's definition in the case of the northern burh). Their changes of name are traced from the earliest known forms to their modern equivalent and give some explanations of the names where these are not immediately obvious. One point is that in many cases more than one name might be applied to a single street over a given period of time. This happened because early street names were, in a sense, nicknames derived from the use of the street or from some prominent feature in the vicinity. No list of Official street names existed in Bedford before 1835, when the Improvement Commission set up a committee to select names for all the streets then in existence. Even after that, an older unofficial name might continue in common use, alongside the official name in some cases.

Only those streets which can be associated with some certainty with the street plan of the original burhs or might have pre-dated the burhs have been selected. Other streets developed in the Medieval period and these also show interesting changes of name; discussion of these will have to wait for a future occasion.

ST PAUL'S SQUARE

Records tell us that there was at least one church in Saxon Bedford and it seems likely that one of the earliest churches was on the site of the present St Paul's which is well-integrated into the street plan of the northern burh. Haslam has argued that the early church could have been a minster serving a wide ecclesiastical area and even that King Offa could have been buried at St Paul's. This last point however, is not compatible with Matthew Paris' account of King Offa's burial in a chapel outside Bedford town and near enough to the river to be destroyed by floods.

Whatever the truth of this, it is reasonable to assume that the early church on the site of St Paul's was built as an integral part of the northern burh. It is also reasonable to assume that the open area around the church and its burial ground would very soon come to be used as a market area even if this purpose was not part of the original burh plan. Certainly by the Middle Ages the area we know as St Paul's Square was occupied by a network of narrow market streets.

BUTCHER ROW

le bocherie, 1422 St Peter's terrier. BHRS 2.
le Botherowe, 1507 Newnham Priory Rental. BHRS 25.
Bocherowe, 1562/1603 'Black Book of Bedford'. BHRS 36.
Butcher Row, 1649 Bedford Corporation Minutes. BHRS 26.
Butcher Row, 1736 Acts of Council. Bedford Town Hall Archives.

FISHMARKET

le Fishrowe, 1507 Newnham Priory Rental. BHRS 25.
The Fishmarket, 1649 Bedford Corporation Minutes. BHRS 26.
Fish Mar(ket), 1807 Brayley's Map.

GIRDERS LANE

References in 1653, 1677, 1697 in 'Records and Other Documents of the Corporation of Bedford', published in 1883.

GOOSEDITCH LANE

Goselane, 1429 Deed. CRO X67/79.
Gosedichelane, 1507 Newnham Priory Rental. BHRS 25.

PIGMARKET

Piggmarket, 1636 Deed. CRO X67/81.

POULTRY MARKET

le Pultry Market, 1507 Newnham Priory Rental. BHRS 25.
Poultry Market, 1610 Speed's Map.
Poultry Market, 1648 Bedford Corporation Minute Book. BHRS 26.

PUDDING LANE

Pudding Lane, 1507 Newnham Priory Rental. BHRS 25.

ST PAUL'S SQUARE

St Paul's Square, 1830 Pigot's Directory.
St Paul's Square, 1835 Improvement Commission.

STONE HOUSE LANE

Stone Lane, 1610 Speed's Map.
Stone House Lane, 1694 Corporation Minutes. BHRS 26.
Stone House Street, 1765 Jeffreys' Map.
Stone House Lane, 1807 Brayley's Map.
Stone House Lane, 1825, 1829, 1830, Pigot's Directories.

VINE STREET

Vine Street, 1765 Jeffreys' Map.
Vine's Corner, 1807 Brayley's Map.
Vine's Corner, 1808 Improvement Commission.

From the Newnham Rental and other sources we can deduce the relative positions of some of these little streets. The Pigmarket had St Paul's churchyard adjoining it to the south and the Butcher Row to its east. Gooseditch Lane ran roughly parallel to these and to their north. Thus this group of lanes ran east to west across the northern side of the Square. From the 17th century onwards this side of the Square is marked on various maps as "Stone House Lane" or "Stone Lane". It seems therefore, that Gooseditch Lane followed the line of Stone House Lane, with Butcher Row and the Pigmarket lying between it and the churchyard.

A stone house stood on the north west corner of the square and served as the Town Gaol until 1589 when it was abandoned as being too noisome. This may be the stone house (domo lapidae) mentioned in the Warden Cartulary, c 1190, as standing near Bedford Bridge. Nothing is known of the ditch which gave Gooseditch Lane its name except that Wyatt (in BAAS Proc. Dec. 15th 1868) mentions a ditch running "across the lower part of St Paul's Square" into which had been thrown "numerous horns, always in pairs" which proved to be the cores of the horns of goats.

The Fishmarket was situated on the eastern side of the square between the High Street and St Paul's churchyard. Girdler's Lane was also somewhere in that area but has not been specifically located.

The Poultry Market was on the southern side of the square. A lane called Pudding Lane ran from this down to the river. The name of this lane might signify that, like Pudding Lane in London, it was the route by which the "puddings" i.e. the intestines etc. from animal carcasses were taken down to the river for disposal.

The removal of this unpleasant debris was always a problem and the Black Book of Bedford, issued at the end of the 16th century, laid down strict rules that the butchers of that time must "carry their intrayle and garbages daylye the same day the beast be kylled into Offalle Lane" (alias Tavistock Street).

In the 18th and early 19th century this side of the square was known as Vine Street, with Vine's Corner on the corner nearest to the bridge. This name probably came into use after the building of the Shire Hall in 1753 and the 'modernisation' of the neighbouring houses to give them Georgian facades, but the name could derive originally from the "Vinter's House" (domum Vineter) mentioned in the Newnham Cartulary in the 13th century.

It was not until the early 19th century that the concept of an open square surrounding the church began to emerge. This was a consequence of the Improvement Commission's efforts to tidy up the old market area. The name St. Paul's Square first began to appear in private addresses in the directories of the 1820's and was finally given official recognition in the list of approved street names issued by the Improvement Commission in 1835.

HARPUR STREET

Possibly the western side of an original grid pattern street plan or constructed as the approach road to the Aldermanbury.

EARLIEST RECORDED NAME

Doke Lane 1422 St Peter's Terrier. BHRS vol. 2.

LATER NAMES

Duck Lane, 1610 Speed Map.

Duck Lane, 1738 Acts of Council. Bedford Town Hall Archives. Aldermanbury, 1507 Newnham Priory Rental. BHRS 25.

Le Schepyschepyng, 1414 CRO X67/56.

Sheps Chepping, 1610 Speed Map.

Angell Street, 1736 Acts of Council. Bedford Town Hall Archives. White Horse Street, 1787 Corporation Records.

"Harper Street - From St Paul's Square extending through Angel Street, White Horse Street and Harpur Place to what is now Harpur Street but is intended to be called Dame Alice Street." 1835 Improvement Commission.

EXPLANATION OF NAMES

The earliest reference is to Duck Lane in 1422 and the earliest to the street being called the Aldermanbury is not until 1507. As there are references to the district of Aldermanbury in the 13th century and it would have been in existence long before that, we also believe the name Aldermanbury would have been used for the street going back to the 13th century or earlier.

One of the 13th century references (1260/70 Harrold Cartulary BHRS Vol. 17 item 133) tells us that at least a part of the district of the Aldermanbury was in the area of what we today call St Loyes. The Aldermanbury would have been the official residence of the Aldermann or 'earl' of the county in Saxon times.

The names Shepyschepyng and Sheps Chepping mean the sheep market, which the Speed Map of 1610 locates in the lower section of the street between St Paul's Square and Midland Road. As the map shows the western side of the street completely built up, it would be reasonable to assume that the market was an open area on the eastern side where no buildings are illustrated.

This same section of the street was later, in the 18th century, to become Angel Street, but the location of the Inn that gave it the name is not known. It is not included in the list of Inns in the Quarter Session Rolls of 1751.

The 18th century also saw the name of the section between Midland Road and Lime Street called White Horse Street. In this case we know the White Horse Inn was situated on the present site of Marks and Spencers and was not demolished until 1929 to make room for the store.

Harpur Street only went as far as Lime Street before the 19th century. Harpur Place, in the 1835 reference, was the extension from Lime Street to Dame Alice Street made in 1819. The further extension from Dame Alice Street to Tavistock Street was not made until after 1835. This 1835 reference also tells us, that it was then, that the present day name of Harpur Street was adopted.

William Harper (1496?-1574) was born in Bedford of a local family. He spent most of his life in London as a merchant tailor, of which company he was elected Master in 1552. In 1556 he became an Alderman of the City of London and in 1561 Lord Mayor, being knighted during his term of office. He is buried in St Paul's Church, where he is commemorated by an inscription and brasses of himself and his wife Dame Alice.

ST JOHN'S STREET

Together with St Mary's Street, this formed the north to south axis of the southern burh. It probably formed part of a pre-burh thoroughfare continuing the line of Foster Hill Road and the High Street southwards over the river crossing.

EARLIEST RECORDED NAME

Seynt Johnstrete, 1439 CRO X67/58.

LATER NAMES

St John's Stret, 1610 Speed's Map.

St John's Street, 1835 Improvement Commission.

EXPLANATION OF NAMES

St John's Hospital in Bedford was founded by Robert de Parys and John and Henry St John in c 1180. The Master and brethren were to observe a daily round of religious service and to tend the deserving poor of Bedford. The church was originally built as a private chapel for the hospital but later became the parish church of St John's Parish when this was set up some time before 1321, to cover a small area carved out of St Mary's Parish. Until recent times, St John's Street was the only street running through the parish.

HIGH STREET

This street probably preceded the burh as, together with Foster Hill Road to the north and St Mary's Street to the south, it forms a continuous north-south thoroughfare over the river. When the burh was built, this road came to be the north-south axis street.

EARLIEST RECORDED NAME

Alta Strata, c 1300 Newnham Priory Cartulary. BHRS 43.

LATER NAMES

High Street, numerous references from Medieval times to the present day.

EXPLANATION OF NAMES

The street has always been described under the name High Street or its latin equivalent 'Alta Strata', indicating that it has always been considered to be the principal street of the town. The

sinuous course of the present High Street suggests it might have wandered from its original line and that at one time it ran straight down to a river crossing slightly west of the present bridge.

SILVER STREET AND MIDLAND ROAD

The street leading from the central crossroads to the western gate of the northern burh.

EARLIEST RECORDED NAME

Well Street, 1240 Newnham Priory Cartulary. BHRS 43.

LATER NAMES

Silver Street, 1610 Speed's Map.

"Little Silver Street alias Gaol Lane," 1653 Will of Richard Beckett.

"Gaole Lane alias Silver Street," 1662 Corporation Minutes. BHRS 26.

Gaol Lane, 1638, 1743, 1796 Corporation Records.

Silver Street, 1807 Brayley's Map.

Gaol Lane, 1808, 1815 Improvement Commission.

Silver Street, 1819, 1835 Improvement Commission.

Trumpington Road, 1866 Burt Directory.

Midland Road, 1866 Burt Directory.

Midland Road, 1871 Mercer and Crocker Directory.

Midland Road, 1884 BTI Directory.

EXPLANATION OF NAMES

Well Street ran westwards to Colles Well in the 13th century and we believe would have started at the High Street, as a reference of 1507 (Newnham Priory Rental) tells us it did then. The well was situated in the street near the south end of Colles Lane (All Hallows) and until the 19th century this marked the western extent of the town. From here Forth Street continued to the hamlet of Forth or Ford End.

It is not until 1610 that we find the first reference to the eastern section, from Harpur Street to High Street, being called Silver Street. We believe the name Silver Street originated and was used for this section, along with the name Well Street, from a very much earlier time. 'Silver Streets' occur as principle streets in many Saxon towns (Anglo-Saxon towns in southern England). Silver Street could be the 'street of the Silversmiths', but in the absence of early forms of the name this should not be assumed. Silver Street in Reading, for example, was 'Sivekare Stret' in 1311, the street of the Sievemakers.

We also find Silver Streets in villages such as Great Barford and Stevington, where it is unlikely there would have been a Silver smith.

This same section of the street, from Harpur Street to High Street, was also known as Gaol Lane, the first reference to this being in 1662. Both Gaol Lane and Silver Street were used until, in 1835, the Improvement Commission finally settled on Silver Street.

The old County Gaol stood on the northern corner with the High Street until it was moved to its present location in 1801. There had been a Gaol in the street since the 12th century and is mentioned in the Harrold Priory Cartulary several times up until the 15th century.

The name Trumpington Road was briefly applied c 1866 for the section of the road between River Street and Prebend Street. The name refers to the medieval Trumpington Meadow that occupied the area between this part of the road and the river.

Midland Road was named after the Midland Railway that opened its line to the west of the town in 1857 and the new station on Freeman's Common in 1859. The census of 1861 refers to Well

Street for the full built up length, but by 1871 Midland Road was applied to the section from River Street to the Station with Well Street confined to the eastern end as far as Harpur Street. The whole thoroughfare, from the Station to Harpur Street, had become Midland Road by 1884.

MILL STREET

The street leading from the central crossroads to the eastern gate of the northern burh.

EARLIEST RECORDED NAME

Horsemylne Lane, a deed of 1341. CRO X67/39.

LATER NAMES

Scolestret, mortgage of 1447. CRO X67/63.

Scolestreet, 1508/9. CRO CRT130/43.

'Mill Lane alias School Lane,' 1681 Hagable Rental, Corporation Records.

Mill Street, 1835 Improvement Commission.

(Mullestrate, 13th century deed. Official Schedule of Ancient Charters 1895. The location in this case is not clear, it could refer to the street later to become Duck Mill Lane.)

EXPLANATION OF NAMES

The horse mill was situated on the southern side of the east end. Known as Trinity Mill as it was owned by the Fraternity of the Holy Trinity, a religious guild connected with St Paul's Church.

The School stood half way along on the northern side. It had been maintained by the secular canons of St Paul's Church from the early 12th century and later by the regular canons of Newnham Priory.

The School and the Mill were contemporary which leads us to believe that the two names were interchangeable during the early period. This is supported by the reference in 1681 and the late reference to School Lane in the 17th century, long after the School had moved to St Paul's Square in 1558. The present name Mill Street was chosen by the Improvement Commission in 1835.

LURKE STREET

This street lay just inside the northern defences of the northern burh and together with Lime Street, formed one of the intramural streets which were a feature of Saxon burhs.

EARLIEST RECORDED NAME

Lurclane, a deed of 1447. CRO X67/63.

LATER NAMES

Lorkelane, mortgages of 1476. CRO X67/66.

Lucks Lane, 1765 Jefferys' Map.

Lucke Lane, 1835 Improvement Commission.

Lurke Lane, 1839 Pigot's Directory.

Lurke Street, 1885 Kelly's Directory.

EXPLANATION OF NAMES

The origin of this name is obscure. There is a 'Lurke Lane' in Beverley, Yorks, but this was Lort Lane in 1578 and earlier, meaning muddy or dirty lane. This derivation might apply to the Bedford street but the early forms 'Lurclane' and 'Lorkelane' would seem to rule this out. The later forms Lucks Lane and Lucke Lane are obvious corruptions of the earlier form.

LIME STREET

This street lay just inside the northern defences of the northern burh and together with Lurke Street, formed one of the intramural streets which were a feature of Saxon burhs.

EARLIEST RECORDED NAME

Lime-Kiln Lane or Gee's Lane, a mortgage of 1676/7. CRO X199/2.

LATER NAMES

"Queen's Head or Duck Lane," Jeffery's Map 1765.

"Lime Kiln Lane alias Queen's Head Lane," feoffment 1805. CRO X199/24.

Queen's Head Lane, 1835 Improvement Commission.

Lime Street, 1885 Kellys Directory.

EXPLANATION OF NAMES

The lime kiln was situated in St Loyes Street, opposite the west end of Lime Street. The kiln is shown on the Speed Map of 1610 and is located on the Enclosure Map of 1797 as plot 194. There are many references to Lime-Kiln Lane until 1805 but only the one for Gee's Lane. Jeffery's Map of 1765 refers to "Queen's Head or Duck Lane". Harpur Street was at one time known as Duck Lane and the name possibly continued round into St Loyes. This we think may have confused Jefferys, as we do not believe Lime Street was ever known as Duck Lane. The Queen's Head Inn that gave its name to the street in the 18th century must have disappeared before 1751 as there is no mention of it in the list of Bedford Inn's and Ale Houses recorded in the Quarter Sessions role of that date. By 1885 the name had changed to Lime Street as it is known today.

ST MARY'S STREET

Together with St John's Street, this formed the north to south axis of the southern burh. It probably formed part of a pre-burh thoroughfare continuing the line of Foster Hill Road and the High Street southwards over the river crossing.

EARLIEST RECORDED NAME

Brugestrate, deed of 1270. CRO X67/3.

LATER NAMES

Bridge Street, 1610 Speed's Map.

High Street, 1647-1664. Corporation Minutes. BHRS 26.

St Mary's Street, 1765 Jefferys' Map.

High Street, St. Mary's, 1807 Improvement Commission.

St Mary's Street, 1835 Improvement Commission.

High Street, St Mary's, 1877 PO Directory.

Bridge Street. 1917 Lecture by W. Glassby on 'Bedford Town and Townsmen in 1507' published in the *Bedfordshire Standard*.

EXPLANATION OF NAMES

St Mary's Church has Saxon elements in its construction and the original building was probably contemporary with the southern burh, or built very soon afterwards. The church bears the same relation to the southern burh as St. Paul's does to the northern burh.

The name St. Mary's Street, however, does not appear before the 18th century. The earliest references use the name 'Bridge Street' i.e. the street leading to the bridge. The 17th Century Corporation Minutes refer repeatedly to "the High Street" as though it were a continuous road from north to south across the river. At one point the phrase "the High Street on either side of the River Ouse" is used. Jefferys' Map seems to be the first recorded use of "St Mary's Street" and this was chosen as the official name by the Improvement Commission in 1835. Nevertheless, the directories of the 1870s were still using "High Street, St Mary's".

It is surprising that in his lecture delivered in 1917, Mr Glassby could say that "Bridge Street still bears the name by which it was known four hundred years ago", even though Bridge Street had not been used officially since the 17th century. Thus does popular preference survive official decisions.

CAULDWELL STREET

The street leading from the central crossroads to the western gate of the southern burh.

EARLIEST RECORDED NAME

Caldewellestrete, a deed of 1270-1310. CRO X67/8.

LATER NAMES

Caldewellestrete, a will of 1442. BHRS 58.

Caudwell Stret, 1610 Speed's Map.

Caldwell Street, 1807 The Improvement Commission.

Caldwell Street, 1835 The Improvement Commission.

EXPLANATION OF NAMES

The name has been used consistently from at least Medieval times and it is significant that the Improvement Commission in 1835 defined it as "from St Mary's Church westward towards Caldwell Priory" which is exactly as it appears on Speed's Map of 1610.

The Caldwell (i.e. cold Spring) was evidently something more than a mere source of water as it gave its name to a locality between Bedford's south-western boundary and the adjoining parish of Kempston. According to S.R. Wigram in the *Chronicles of Elstow Abbey*, the Countess Judith in 1147, endowed 12 acres of land at Caldwell, which was to become the site of Caldwell Priory.

Caldwell Priory, like Newnham Priory to the east of Bedford, was of the Augustinian order but was smaller in size. The date of its foundation is not known but it was in existence by 1153. After the dissolution in 1534, the property was granted to William Gostwick and Anne his wife. It was not until the 20th century that the land was broken up and sold in lots.

CARDINGTON ROAD

The street leading from the central crossroads to the eastern gate of the southern burh.

EARLIEST RECORDED NAME

Potterestrete c 1300 Newnham Cartulary. BHRS vol. 43.

LATER NAMES AND REFERENCES

Potters Stret, 1610 Speed's Map.

Potter Street, 1835 The Improvement Commission.

Potter Street, 1877 PO Directory of Beds., Herts. and Bucks.

Cardington Road, 1885 Kellys Directory.

EXPLANATION OF NAMES

The most likely explanation of the name is that a Pottery existed in the street from the late 13th century or before. The name changed to its present day form of Cardington Road sometime between 1877 and 1885.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank John Bailey for his assistance with the preparation of the maps and acknowledge the great help given to us by the late Mr Arthur Guppy.

The Bedfordshire Archaeological Council is indebted to the Bedford Archaeological Society for a grant towards the cost of this paper.