

1 The Administrative and Manorial Framework

It is appropriate to begin with the manor, for of all the institutions considered here it is the best recorded and most tangible. But manors themselves have an older context: the administrative, fiscal and juridical organisation of the early English kings.

Early territorial organisation

Anglo-Saxon landholding developed within a system which was in origin social and administrative rather than tenurial: the division of the countryside into *regiones* based on royal vill. The elucidation of this structure began in 1933–4 with the publication of two works by J E A Jolliffe. Jolliffe initially concentrated on Kent,¹ where written sources are particularly rich in traces of the primitive organisation. In its division into lathes he saw a system older than the hundred, the key to the ‘free’ character of Kentish gavelkind tenure. Before manorialisation, the lathe was the basic territorial and social unit. From a royal vill at its centre the king’s authority permeated each lathe, and within it peasant obligations were assessed in round 80-sulung units. Hypothesising ‘the settlement of the whole south-eastern area by a people who shared a common custom from the beginning’,² he identified its social organisation as that of the continental Jutes.

Soon Jolliffe generalised this narrow, ethnic interpretation into a ‘view of an England whose custom has an almost universal validity’: the custom of folk-groups operating, from the time of the English settlements, within the framework of the *regio*-type unit in its various forms: lathes, rapes and small shires.³ Subsequent work, indeed, suggests that the same essential pattern is widespread through both the English and the Celtic regions of Britain: far from being exclusively Jutish, it is not even exclusively Anglo-Saxon.⁴ The message of an important new collection of essays is that *regiones* were the first Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, the foundations upon which political power was built up during the 6th and 7th centuries.⁵ Characteristics which several historians have recognised in them are summarised thus by J Campbell.⁶

The essence of the argument is that the system of lordship and local government over much, possibly all of early England resembled and, at least in wide areas, was connected with that of early Wales. The main unit in such a system was an area of varying but substantial size (say, not less than a hundred square miles) centred on a royal vill. To this vill the settlements within its area owed dues and services of some complexity . . . The area centred on the royal vill would often or always have common grazing. The subordinate settlements could vary in the nature of their obligations . . . Setting on one side questions of origin, it is reasonably certain that in much at least of early England the organisation of dues and services for the ruler was systematic, on schemes which methodically integrated settlements to their respective royal vill. The evidence of charters from the late 7th century on supports such a conclusion; for they strongly suggest that every settlement had an assessment in hides, and it looks as if these hidages related to round sum assessments for larger units centred on royal vill.

There are three main ingredients here: the *regiones*, the ‘central places’, and the round assessments. In Surrey, reconstruction of the first must depend largely on the antiquity of hundred boundaries and of territorial links between hundreds: they were the direct institutional successors of *regiones*, and were often formed through the subdivision of the larger, earlier units.⁷ In 1086 Surrey already contained its full fourteen hundreds, differing only in trivial respects

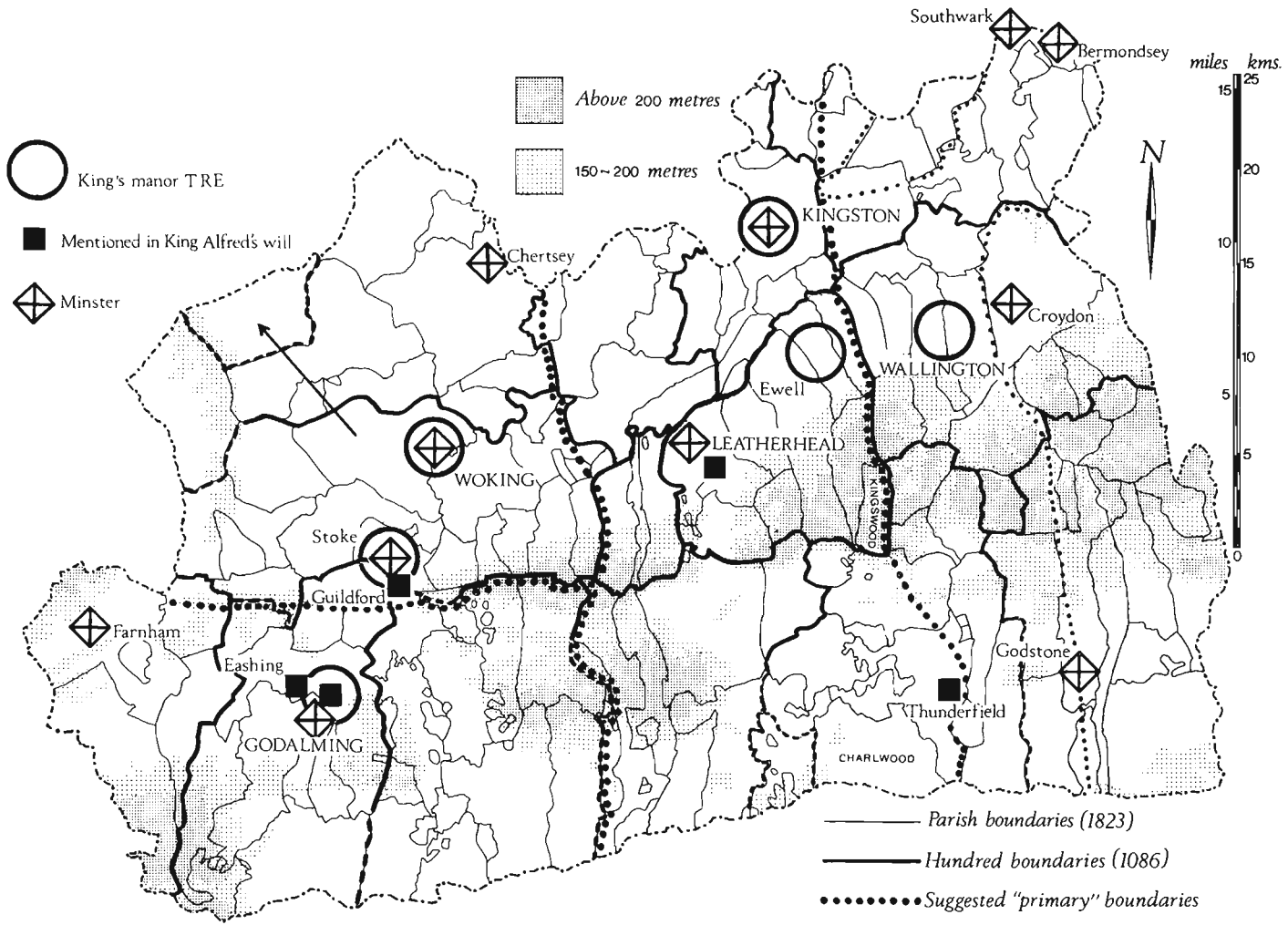


Fig 4 Hundreds, early territorial units and central places. (In a few cases, mainly in the Weald, where there is no Domesday evidence for hundred boundaries, 14th-century boundaries are shown in broken outline.)

from their 19th-century boundaries (fig 4). Five centred on royal hundredal manors (Godalming, Kingston, Wallington, Woking and Reigate), and a sixth on a hundredal manor in episcopal hands (Farnham).⁸

A key to reassembling hundreds into their 'primary' groups is provided by the relationship of manors and parishes to their outlying portions. The examples of Kent and Gloucestershire leave no doubt that these usually result from the division of land-units in a transhumance economy: as the territory was split up into manors, so too were its woods and commons fragmented into complex, interlocking archipelagos of individual pastures.⁹ The outliers mapped on fig 5 are recorded as swine-dens in late Anglo-Saxon charters, as detached farms in medieval manorial records, as chapelries of mother churches, and as fragments of parishes on the earliest detailed maps.¹⁰ This evidence is miscellaneous, and much of it rather late; not every link is necessarily ancient. Yet the overall pattern is remarkably consistent with the view that subdivision proceeded within defined territories approximating to groups of Domesday hundreds.

The Hog's Back and the Downs east of Guildford divide western Surrey into two halves: Woking and Chertsey hundreds to the north, and Farnham, Godalming and Blackheath hundreds to the south. Woking and Chertsey hundreds are clearly divisions of an earlier whole, for a wedge of Chertsey hundred cuts off Windlesham, a detached common pasture of Woking hundred and manor (below p95). As argued below (p25), Chertsey hundred is broadly identical with the estate granted to Chertsey minster in 672 \times 4.¹¹ The charter states that the land lay between the Thames, the province 'quae appellatur Sunninges' (ie the territory of Sonning, Berkshire), and the boundary 'qui dicitur antiqua fossa, id est Fullingadic'. Presumably this ditch ran southwards from the Thames through Weybridge parish and on down the long, straight boundary between Byfleet and Walton-on-Thames (fig 6).¹² Its line is preserved by a road through Windlesham, ditches on St George's Hill, Walton, an intermittent bank across Wisley and Ockham commons, and the large bank which runs southwards into the Weald between Shere and Abinger parishes.¹³ Already *antiquus* in the 670s, it must represent the eastern boundary of an earlier unit of which Woking hundred is surely the residue. It is a fair deduction that these two hundreds formed a district identified from an early date with the tribe of the Woccingas, comparable in size and shape to the adjoining Berkshire *regiones* of the Sunningas and Rēadingas (cf fig 8).

South of the Hog's Back were the hundreds of Farnham, Godalming and Blackheath. Territorial links are recorded within each of these hundreds (fig 5), but none between them. Their combined area was roughly equivalent to the 'Woking' unit, and they were self-contained to the extent that they contained no satellites of manors outside them. At the heart of this region, the large royal demesne of Godalming may be seen as the focus of a coherent territory from which Farnham hundred was detached in the 680s (below, p25). We may postulate, though only very tentatively, a *regio* of the Godhelmingas corresponding to that of the Woccingas.

The remaining two-thirds of the county, lying east of the *Fullingadic* line, show a quite different kind of territorial geography. Here Wealden outliers were attached to non-Wealden manors in a bewilderingly complex pattern of intersecting rights (fig 5). Clearly the primary units were not divided by the Downs, but stretched from north to south across the London clay, the chalk and the Weald clay. The pattern of outliers links the three hundreds along the dip-slope of the Downs with the three Wealden hundreds southwards. It can further be argued, if only tentatively, that the London Basin hundreds were components of the same overall pattern.

North of the Downs, there is a clear enough boundary separating Kingston, Elmbridge, Copthorne and Effingham hundreds to the west from Brixton and Wallington hundreds to the east. The line seems to have run south from the Thames, through Putney, Mortlake and Wimbledon parishes, to the north-eastern tip of Copthorne hundred.¹⁴ From there it takes a straight course southwards as a hundred boundary between Cuddington and Cheam, and can

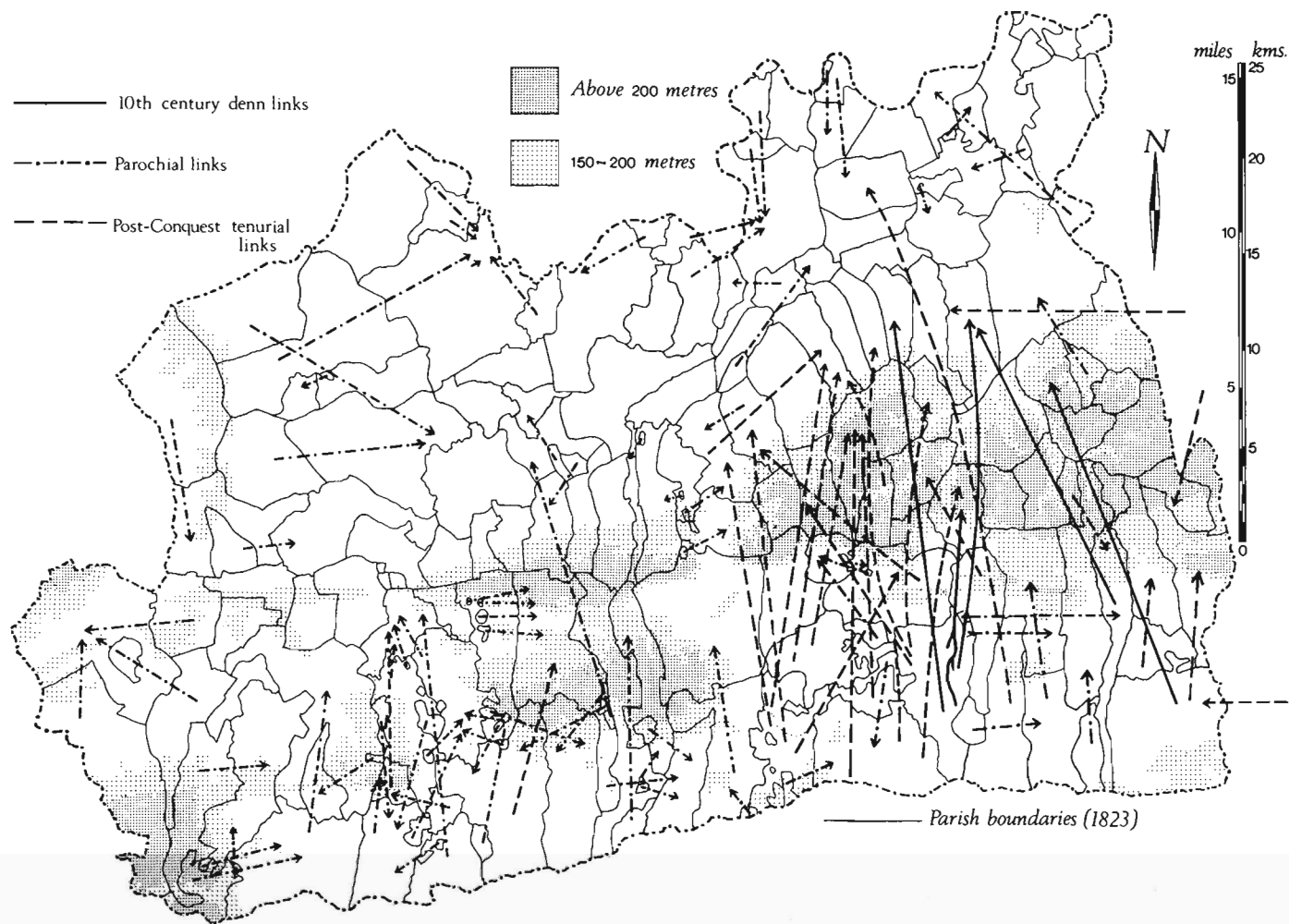


Fig 5 The evidence of territorial links

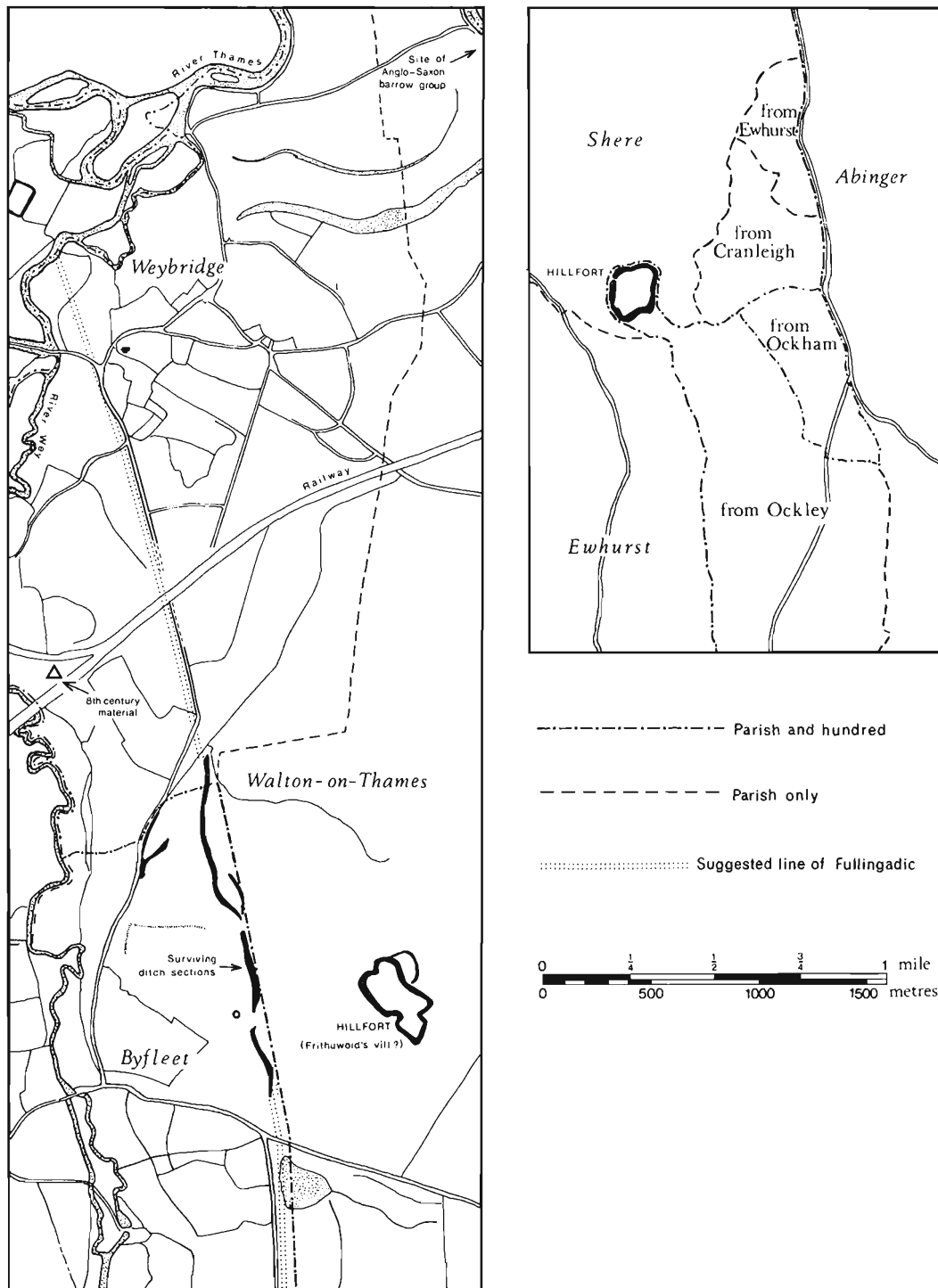


Fig 6 Two Surrey hillforts associated with territorial boundaries

then be traced as a track (Potter's Lane) which turns into a hollow-way south of Banstead Downs.¹⁵ Continuing as a field-boundary along the east side of Kingswood, it runs down towards Reigate town. The two groups of hundreds on either side of this line show connections both within themselves and with Wealden land. Westwards, Copthorne and Effingham hundreds shared one meeting-place, and a large tract of downland which crossed the two hundreds but was known by the single name of Pollesdene suggests an early unity.¹⁶ The links from hundred to hundred indicate a common origin for Copthorne, Effingham, Wotton and the western half of Reigate hundreds. The lie of the major boundaries, and the close correspondence with the pattern in Kent and Sussex (below, p22), would tend to place Kingston and Elmbridge hundreds in the same primary unit, though the absence of outliers to the south and the presence of a separate royal vill at Kingston suggests that they were split off at a relatively early date. Eastwards, tenurial and parochial links shown an equally clear relationship between Wallington, Tandridge and the eastern half of Reigate hundreds (fig 5). Topographical considerations, reinforced by the dependence of Burstow on Wimbledon from before 1100,¹⁷ would seem to place Brixton hundred in the same group.

In the Wealden area from the Downs to the Sussex border, definition of the boundary between the two proposed primary territories is complex and difficult. Parishes in Reigate hundred, most notably Horley, originated as archipelagoes of manorial outliers which are far from easy to disentangle. The formation of the Warenne barony may have obscured the older pattern around Reigate as thoroughly as it did in Sussex, and the hundred boundaries make little sense in relation to early arrangements. Fortunately, detailed work on Horley by J Greenwood has gone far towards distinguishing early from not-so-early manorial links, while still supporting the view that the pattern of outliers reflects a major pre-existing territorial boundary. Greenwood's suggested line for this boundary runs 'from the top of Reigate hill southwards down Wray Lane and across Wray Common (TQ 267 509), and skirting Redhill and Earlswood commons to the west and Linkfield Street to the east (TQ 271 502). The boundary then follows the pre-turnpike path (TQ 275 499 – 279 485 – 280 470), passing to the east of Petridge common and then along the present main road (A23) to a point south of Bourners Brook (TQ 288 440). From here it passes south-west and along the boundary with Burstow (TQ 289 437 – 290 420).'¹⁸

Thus the central and eastern areas of Surrey resolve themselves with surprising clarity into two distinct, early territories extending from the Thames to the Sussex boundary. Where the easternmost territory is concerned, however, there are two complicating factors. First, Wallington, Titsey, Limsfield and Lingfield had outliers on the Kent side of the county boundary, supporting Jolliffe's conjecture that the Kentish border lathe, which was abnormally small and lacked a *villa regia*, had included a strip of eastern Surrey.¹⁹ Secondly, 9th- and 10th-century sources show that several manors near the county boundary were in Kentish hands. Paramount in size and importance was Croydon, the scene of a synod held in 809 and a possession of the archbishops of Canterbury from before the 9th century (below, pp25, 103). In about 871 Croydon was leased to Ealdorman Alfred for his life, with an option of permanent acquisition by his heir.²⁰ Alfred's will, made soon afterwards, bequeaths land at Sanderstead, Selsdon, Lingfield and Farleigh.²¹ A century later, the mainly Kentish will of Brihtric and Ælfswith mentions land at Walkingstead (Godstone), Stratton and Titsey.²² All these manors lie south of Croydon in a north-south strip some five miles wide, broadly delimited by two Roman roads and with traces of linear earthworks on its western boundary.²³

It may be that the whole block should be interpreted as a lost archiepiscopal estate centred on Croydon, formed out of the border lathe in the mid-Saxon period in accordance with the prevailing pattern of north-south linear division.²⁴ The lease of c871 could have been the prelude to fragmentation which left only Croydon itself in the archbishop's hands. Perhaps the Surrey-Kent border vacillated from one side to the other of this conspicuously Kentish strip

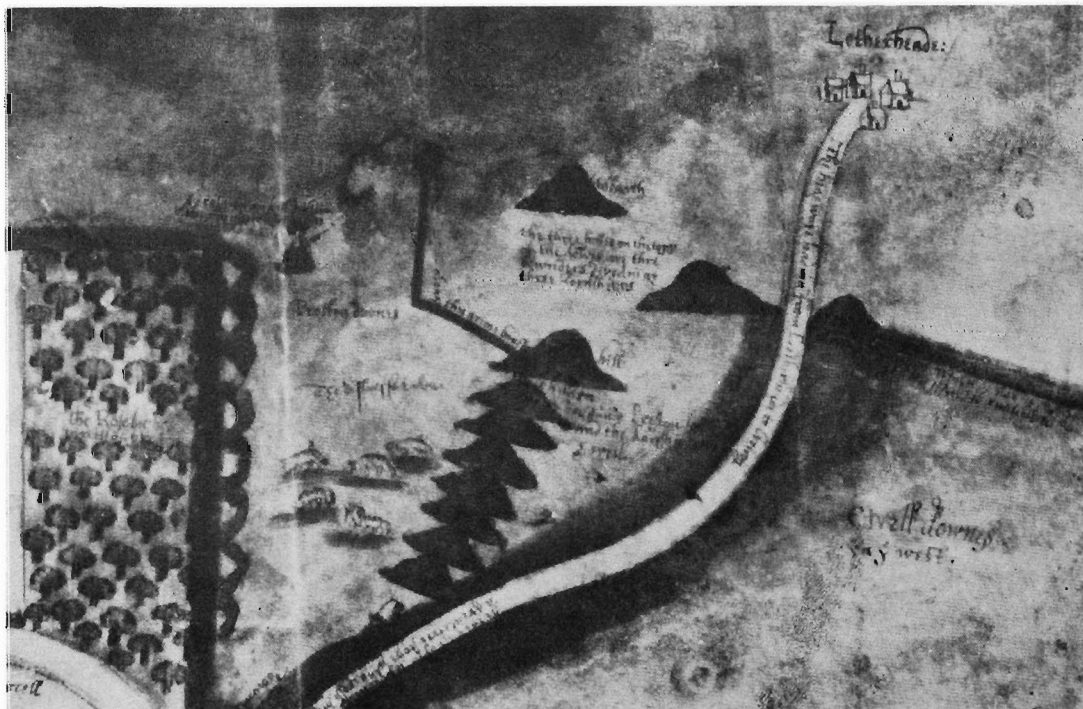


Fig 7 Preston Downs, Banstead: boundary bank and Anglo-Saxon barrows as shown on a 17th-century map. (After *SyAC* 34 (1921), opp 22)

between the 7th and 9th centuries, a possibility supported by the substantial linear earthworks both on the present border and further east (above, p18). The primary territory bisected by the present county boundary (fig 8) is so large that it probably represents two *lathe*-type units rather than one, but if so the creation of the Croydon estate has obliterated the original line between them.

At this point some cautious comments on the possible relationships between major boundaries and 7th-century barrows seem appropriate. While the general thesis that single barrows habitually marked boundaries must be regarded as unproven,²⁵ there does seem to be some correlation between the larger Anglo-Saxon barrow groups and the suggested primary territorial boundaries. The group at Walton Bridge, now destroyed, was just over a mile from where the *Fullingadic* joined the Thames;²⁶ another on Wimbledon Common had a similar, though nearer, relationship to the boundary between the 'Leatherhead' and 'Wallington' units.²⁷ Perhaps the most striking case is further south on the same boundary, where the linear earthwork across Banstead Downs ran between two groups of barrows (fig 7): westwards a cluster of twelve on Preston Down, and eastwards a group of four called Gally Hills, one of which contained an aristocratic male burial of c700.²⁸ Six barrows on Merrow Downs, probably 7th-century, adjoined the boundary between the 'Woking' and 'Godalming' units.²⁹ The only other large group is the long, very deliberately aligned series of fourteen late 6th- and 7th-century barrows which crosses Farthing Down, Coulsdon, from north to south;³⁰ these are not near any known frontier, but could be accommodated to the hypothesis of a lost *lathe* boundary destroyed by the creation of the Croydon estate (above, p17). Archaeology suggests that such barrows are generally of high status and often of late date, in the late 7th or even early 8th century.³¹ some of

the people buried in them belonged to the generation who first recorded the boundaries of estates in charters. Overall, there seems good circumstantial evidence that the barrows were territorial markers; could these be the graveyards of a service nobility, men whom Latin writers would have termed *praefecti*,³² buried on the frontiers of provinces which they had governed for the king?

The Surrey evidence, though inferior to that for Kent, reveals a similar pattern: the fourteen Domesday hundreds are divisions of four larger and older units. The second task is to identify the 'central places' within them, and here again it is necessary to work backwards from a pattern which can only be observed clearly in the post-Danish period. The main sources are King Alfred's will (872 × 888)³³ and the TRE data in Domesday Book (table 1). Both are late, and it cannot necessarily be assumed that the royal manors which they list (fig 4) were based on centuries-old sites. Minster churches on royal estates, closely linked though they were to administrative foci (below, ch 4), were often set at some distance from the secular centres and are not necessarily evidence for their exact early sites. It must also be remembered that continuity of site is not essential for continuity of administration: a centre could have moved from one place to another within its defined territory.

On general grounds, one group of sites which are highly likely to have been re-occupied by early Anglo-Saxon rulers are the Iron Age hillforts: there is no reason why south-western Britain should be peculiar in this respect.³⁴ Although there is no specific evidence for post-Roman use of any of the Surrey hillforts,³⁵ it is striking that three of the eleven (Holmbury, Felday, St George's Hill) lie on the primary territorial boundaries, and three more (Caesar's Camp, Dry Hill, Squerryes) on the county boundary: some defensive role within the Anglo-Saxon territorial system seems possible. It is worth noting in this context that the Holmbury hillfort, on the boundary between the proposed 'Leatherhead' and 'Godalming' units, was surrounded by a little cluster of outliers from four parishes in Blackheath, Wotton and Woking hundreds (fig 6).³⁶

King Alfred's *hām* at *þunres felda*, presumably the *þunresfelda* where a royal council met in the 930s,³⁷ suggests another kind of survival from a more primitive age. It appears among Surrey property in the will, and there seems no reason to doubt the usual identification with Thunderfield Common in Horley, deep in the Surrey Weald.³⁸ It is hard to see the economic and administrative rationale for a 'central place' so far from early settlement; much of the area was still swine-pasture in the 10th century, when Merstham and Sutton had denss at Thunderfield (below, p52). It seems most likely that Thunderfield's importance was in origin religious. The name ('Thunor's open space') clearly refers to pagan worship, and in 1273 a nearby location was called Wedreshulle (probably 'Woden's hill').³⁹ The next parish has the significant name of

TABLE 1 Royal villis in Surrey: the late Anglo-Saxon evidence

	<i>King Alfred's Will</i>	<i>Domesday Book (TRE)</i>
Eashing	<i>hām</i> (to nephew Æthelhelm)	—
Ewell	—	manor (£20 p a)
Godalming	<i>hām</i> (to nephew Æthelwold)	manor (£32 p a including glebe)
Guildford	<i>hām</i> (to nephew Æthelwold)	75 <i>bagae</i> (£18 0s 3d p a)
Kingston	—	manor (£30 p a)
Leatherhead	land (to son Edward)	church (£1 p a)
Southwark	—	minster and waterway
Stoke-by-Guildford	—	manor (£12 p a)
Thunderfield	<i>hām</i> (to nephew Æthelhelm)	—
Wallington	—	manor (£15 p a)
Woking	—	manor (£15 p a)

Burstow (ie *burh stow*, 'meeting-place at a stronghold').⁴⁰ Together these names suggest a former pagan religious centre used for assemblies at some time in the Anglo-Saxon period.⁴¹ Even in a Christian kingdom such a place may have retained some traditional importance, especially if associated with a royal residence. Possibly this helps to explain why nearby Godstone had a minster church by the 980s (below, p103).

The importance of Thunderfield, then, may have been largely ceremonial, and the silence of Domesday Book and later sources suggests that even this had lapsed by the Conquest. It evokes a lost class of central places in pagan Anglo-Saxon England: those which were religious rather than political. The pattern by which a mid-Saxon *regio* would have two centres, a royal vill and a minster church, may perpetuate pre-Christian arrangements. It is interesting here to note that Tuesley ('Tiwa's clearing'), another name denoting pagan worship, was the site of Godalming minster not far away (below, p99).⁴²

The central division of the county contained two royal villas, and may have been split at a relatively early date into two administrative areas. Kingston upon Thames was important both as a secular and as an ecclesiastical centre. Its name ('king's *tūn*') belongs to what is now suspected to be a relatively late class of major place-names,⁴³ and may have replaced some older name. Perhaps the lost 'villa regali nomine Freoricburna . . . in regione Suthregeona' where Offa of Mercia and Egbert of Wessex issued charters⁴⁴ should be identified with Kingston upon Thames, which is first mentioned (as 'illa famosa loco quae appellatur Cyninges tun') in 838, the same year as the last reference to 'Freoricburna'.⁴⁵ The old settlement beside the church, on what was apparently once an island, was the heart of a considerable territory, as is suggested by the names of the satellite settlements Norbiton and Surbiton (ie the north and south *beretuns*).⁴⁶ Kingston can reasonably be interpreted as the primary centre of the *regio*; the creation of a second royal vill, at Leatherhead, by the late 9th century should perhaps be explained in the context of relatively early colonisation along the Downs dip-slope (below, pp43–5).

The royal estate at Leatherhead and Ewell had fragmented by 1086. The natural focus for this territory is the crossing of the Mole by the main west-east trackway, which presumably gave to Leatherhead one of the small group of surviving Celtic place-names in south-east England (**Litorito*, 'grey ford').⁴⁷ Leatherhead minster church appears in Domesday Book as an outlier appurtenant to Ewell manor but separated by a distance of five miles (below, p101). In view of the reference to Leatherhead in King Alfred's will, there is a strong suggestion here that a large demesne in Copthorne hundred had broken up, leaving the church in isolation. The area within which the minster probably stood was later held for sergeanty services associated with royal justice. These included finding a bench in the county court, which according to jurors in 1259 had 'always' been held at Leatherhead.⁴⁸

It is *prima facie* likely that the early focus of the easternmost territory was the Domesday royal manor of Wallington, which gave its name to Wallington hundred and where evidence for 7th- or 8th-century occupation was excavated in 1976.⁴⁹ Wallington was assessed at only eleven hides in 1066, and the later township was tiny (fig 11F). It seems to have been left as a royal enclave by the creation of two episcopal estates: Croydon, for Canterbury, in perhaps the 8th century, and Beddington, for Winchester, in the late 9th (above, p17; below, p25). Wallington's importance may have been correspondingly diminished, its secular functions passing to Croydon which already had religious significance (below, p103). The service of guarding prisoners, which three Croydon cotmen owed in 1283–5 (below, p75), may preserve memories of such an arrangement.

Among the remaining places of known pre-Conquest importance, Woking and Godalming fit the normal pattern well enough. Both were large royal manors at the hearts of their respective territories; both had minster churches; and Godalming, like Croydon, had a hierarchical tenemental structure involving executive duties appropriate to a centre of royal justice (below, p75). King Frithuwold's Chertsey charter of 672 × 4, granting an estate carved out of the Woking

regio, was issued 'iuxta villam Friðeuoldi iuxta supradictam fossatum Fullingadic'.⁵⁰ It is perhaps most likely that this refers to the centre of the Woking *regio*, though since the medieval settlement of Woking (around the minster church) lies four miles west of the *Fullingadic* line, it would be necessary to postulate a lost palace site further to the east. A possible alternative is the large hillfort immediately east of the ditch where it crosses St George's Hill in Walton-on-Thames (fig 6), but this attractive hypothesis of a frontier fortress still occupied in the late 7th century will probably never be capable of proof.

The Burghal Hidage *burhs* of Southwark and Eashing, and the slightly later planned town of Guildford (below, pp56–8), are a case apart. Alfred's property at Guildford is perhaps identifiable with the Domesday manor of Stoke (ie *stoc*, 'stronghold'), and his property at Eashing with part of Domesday Godalming. These 'royal villis' may in fact represent nothing older than the defensive requirements of Alfredian Wessex, the latest layer superimposed on the early territorial framework.

Finally, mention should be made of an earthwork which may have served as an early assembly-point: the long north-south bank called Nutshambles on the boundary of four parishes at the centre of Cophthorne hundred. The name appears in 1496 as *Motschameles*, and seems likely to mean *mot scaemol*, 'the seat of the moot'. The convergence of many roads at a high point on the line of the earthwork suggests an important meeting-place,⁵¹ and it is possible that the name preserves memories of a folk-moot within the primitive provincial territory.

The third element in Jolliffe's model is cadastral symmetry: obligations assessed to the central vill in round units of 80 hides or sulungs.⁵² Jolliffe's calculations were vitiated by poor mathematics, and although his figures have been re-worked in a rather more convincing fashion by K P Witney, the basic premise cannot really be regarded as proven.⁵³ Attempts to reconstruct the early cadastral system of Sussex have been no more successful: Jolliffe's identification of the post-Conquest rapes with earlier divisions is certainly invalid, and little more confidence can be placed in D K Clarke's subsequent attempt to work back from the rapes to earlier divisions.⁵⁴ Such arguments are especially prone to circularity and self-fulfilment; given the problems experienced with Kent, it would be rash to base much on the inferior Surrey evidence.

Whether hidations conformed to round-figure assessments, and whether they remained constant through the Christian Anglo-Saxon centuries, are still questions worth asking. Unfortunately the earliest Surrey evidence is unreliable. The Farnham foundation charter (60 hides) agrees with Domesday Book whereas the Chertsey foundation charter (300 hides) does not;⁵⁵ but these survive only in late and possibly corrupt texts. The fact that both hidages are multiples of twenty is, however, worth noting, since this assessment recurs in later charters. The (admittedly dubious) Battersea charter of 693 grants units of 28, twenty and twenty hides, which is not far off the 72 hides TRE.⁵⁶ Woking minster was endowed with twenty hides by Offa.⁵⁷ Four of the eight manors described in reliable charters between 947 and 1005 are stated to be of twenty hides, and three, possibly all four, of these had the same assessment TRE.⁵⁸ Taken in conjunction with the marked frequency of five-, ten- and twenty-hide manors in the Surrey Domesday as a whole, the evidence points to a stable 'basic' unit of twenty hides;⁵⁹ this would not, of course, be inconsistent with a still earlier 80-hide system which had undergone regular division. In a minority of cases there are discrepancies between charters and TRE hidations,⁶⁰ but these are scarcely evidence for late re-assessment since all could result from the splitting or combining of estates.

Another possibility, however, is that the TRE figures are distorted by the progressive addition of *new* hides. Jolliffe discounted this: 'the rape is an organic fiscal and jurisdictional entity . . . in no way reflecting contemporary reality. It is a state within the state, the hidated area only.' Thus newly-cleared land was distinguished by its lack of hidation: 'outside the sulungs' in Kent, 'outside the rape' or *forepeland* in Sussex.⁶¹ The one indication of this arrangement in Surrey is the

947 Merstham charter, which appears to describe the denss at Petridge and Lake as *forraepe*, but a third at Thunderfield as a hide.⁶² The implication seems to be that the old hidage assessment extended to territory near Thunderfield royal vill, but not to the surrounding commons as a whole.

Other references to hidated land in the Weald suggest that assessments were light in relation to the older-settled regions. Six hides at Lingfield mentioned in the late 9th century and again, in conjunction with the church, in the late 10th (below, p51) may have included the whole large parish. Domesday Chivington was assessed at twenty hides, of which nineteen and a half were the non-Wealden half of the manor: the Wealden common which was to become Horne parish and South Park was rated at only half a hide (fig 11G, below, p54). With the analogies of Kent and Sussex, the weight of the evidence is against 'new' hides. It would seem that the original hidages covered some but not all of the Surrey Weald, at much lower rates than those imposed elsewhere. Thus clearance sometimes proceeded within an existing framework of very large hides, sometimes in the non-assessed areas which became the forinsec land of the future.

While accepting the impossibility of aggregating TRE hidages within the central and eastern territories,⁶³ we can at least discount Jolliffe's view that fiscal symmetry existed in eastern but not in western Surrey.⁶⁴ The 'Godalming' and 'Woking' territories comprise well-defined groups of hundreds totalling respectively 248 and 241 hides, which might be interpreted in each case as three 80-hide units.⁶⁵ The most that can be said for the other territories is that a uniform structure of twenty-hide units is highly probable; one of 80-hide units not unlikely; and the regular apportionment of such units within the primary provincial territories possible though unproven.

The Surrey evidence must now be set in a wider context. Fig 8 shows the suggested provincial organisation of Surrey, in relation to that of Kent (as reconstructed by Witney)⁶⁶ and of Sussex (where at present it is impossible to do more than give an outline of the prevailing alignments). To these have been added the well-defined Berkshire *regiones* of Reading and Sonning,⁶⁷ and some Hampshire names of a tribal character which suggest similar territories. The result is a fuller political map of the early Anglo-Saxon south-east than any previously attempted, but further work could certainly extend the pattern northwards and westwards. Berkshire and, rather less clearly, Wessex, provide just the same kind of evidence for large early units.⁶⁸ With the evidence mounting in several parts of Britain, any idea that this type of organisation was peculiar to a circumscribed 'Jutish' region must be finally dismissed.

One thing is clear: the regularity of the south-eastern provincial boundaries results essentially from the presence of the Weald. The broad strips run inwards, north from the coast and south from the Thames, so that each includes enough woodland pasture to serve the settled non-Wealden areas. The pattern in east Kent leaves no doubt that access to the clay was the determining factor: the alignment of the lathes tilts round to radiate into the Weald, and in the extreme east of the county, where the Weald is outside convenient range, the linear pattern breaks down entirely. Neither does it appear west of the 'Leatherhead' and 'Steyning' units, where each territory had abundant common waste on the sandy heaths of the Windsor area and Hampshire. Thus the regularity which so struck Jolliffe reflects geographical rather than political factors.

This still leaves the most important and difficult question of all: when could such a system have come into being? That it represents organic development by similar social groups, moulded by the same geographical determinants, is not impossible;⁶⁹ yet in its regularity and its large scale it resembles the prehistoric systems of land-division which have lately been recognised.⁷⁰ Much recent work has emphasised ways in which early Anglo-Saxon communities adapted themselves to the territorial geography of Iron Age and Roman Britain;⁷¹ this is no less likely in the south-east (especially in Kent where the debt to the Roman past is so evident in other ways) than

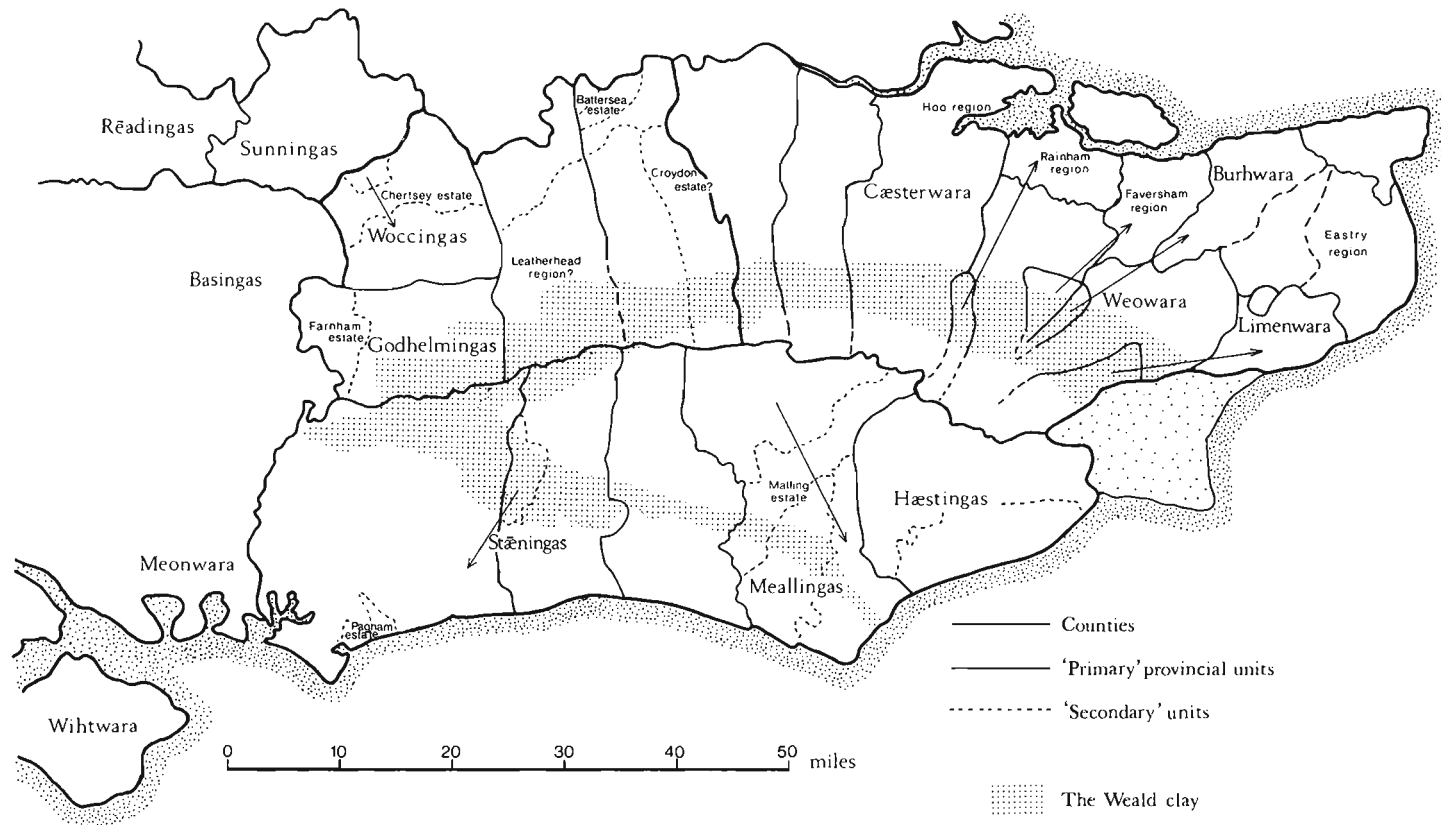


Fig 8 The early Anglo-Saxon territorial geography of south-east England

anywhere else.⁷² In a recent discussion of cemetery evidence in relation to the territorial scheme proposed here, R Poulton has suggested that the Surrey *regiones* may have been taken over by the settlers in a more-or-less orderly fashion, the Godalming and Chertsey/Woking territories remaining British after the others had come under Anglo-Saxon control.⁷³

Whether or not the framework is of pre-English origin, it is at least clear that it must have withstood all the political changes of the 7th and 8th centuries, an oddly stable sub-stratum in an unstable world. The territories were the building-bricks of the early kingdoms: the conquests by which Kent was reduced, and Mercia and Wessex successively enlarged (above, p8), must have involved the transference of *regiones* from one ruler to another as intact entities. Local organisation was sufficiently strong and stable to make capture of a royal vill almost synonymous with acquisition of its territory.⁷⁴ This institutional basis, still only dimly perceived, must have been a crucial factor behind the power of the early rulers and the gradual unification of England.

'Multiple estates' and the antiquity of small land-units

It has long been recognised that 'multiple' or 'federative' manors were a major element in the estate structure of pre-Conquest England. There is general agreement in defining them as large, complex groups of settlements or townships, sometimes discrete but more often in compact blocks, which were unified by dependence on single manorial centres; within each estate the specialised functions of the component vills provided broad economic diversity. In an important paper published in 1966, E Miller ascribed them to a form of social organisation which was alive and developing throughout England and during the whole Anglo-Saxon period.⁷⁵ He pointed out that while some 'federations' appear in the very earliest sources, others were being built up at various dates between the 8th and 11th centuries. Essentially they existed to further a type of seigneurial exploitation which was still mainly concerned with renders in kind: 'la groupe fédérale qui dépendait d'un centre était tout premièrement une groupe tributaire', and was 'le produit de l'accroissement et de la consolidation du pouvoir seigneurial dans la société primitive anglaise'. In the 11th and 12th centuries the model ceased to dominate, as demographic growth and changing means of exploitation caused the great estates to fragment into 'unicellular' manors. Thus the trend everywhere, though varying in proportion to the level of economic advancement, was towards the classic manorial regime of the 13th century.

A different approach, stressing administrative continuity rather than economic change, has attracted more notice. In a series of papers, G R J Jones has emphasised similarities between English 'multiple estates' and the formalised, multi-tier estate models of the Welsh law-codes. Just as the Book of Iorwerth describes land in a descending hierarchy of 'multiple estates', vills, holdings, sharelands and homesteads, so cases can be found throughout England of estates divided symmetrically into tithings, tithings into hamlets and hamlets into tenements. One of Jones's examples which, for its closeness to Surrey, is especially relevant here is the archiepiscopal estate of South Malling in Sussex. Just as several Surrey manors stretched southwards into the Weald from the scarp slope of the Downs, so this manor extended northwards into the Weald from the old-settled area around Lewes. It comprised two groups of six *borghs*, respectively 'within' and 'without the wood'; the *borghs* were themselves divided into smaller units, termed hamlets and virgates, which were bound to the archbishop's *curia* at South Malling by complex and well-differentiated services.⁷⁶

We should not too readily adopt the multiple estate as a comprehensive model for British and early English land organisation.⁷⁷ To interpret every estate in accordance with Jones's scheme risks ignoring fundamental differences between different kinds of multi-vill territorial units, and different stages in their evolution. Most important, it risks an automatic equation of tribal,

administrative, exploitative and tenurial entities, which may be related in structure yet functionally and chronologically distinct. Clearly, multi-vill estates must be seen in relation to the early territorial framework described above. Integral with the estates and the territorial framework is a third element, the antiquity of *very small* land-units, for an essential part of the Jones model is complex internal division. If a clear perspective on these primitive foundations of landholding can be attained, the decline of the multi-vill estate and the development of the classic manor will also become clearer.

In 1066 Chertsey Abbey held a large tract of land broadly identifiable with Godley hundred.⁷⁸ Frithuwold's endowment charter of 672 × 4 describes what was unmistakably the same area, with some detached portions.⁷⁹ The components of the main estate are named as Chertsey, Thorpe, Egham, Chobham, Woodham (in Chertsey) and *Huneuualdesham* (in Weybridge). The east boundary was the well-marked line of the *Fullingadic*; correlation of the other names in Frithuwold's charter with later sources gives a compact block, differing only in minor respects from the estate and hundred as they appear in Domesday Book (fig 9A).⁸⁰

Chertsey's sister foundation at Barking also had land in Surrey. A corrupt but probably basically genuine charter text records Bishop Eorcenwold's transfer to Barking of an estate received from King Cædwalla during 685 × 7.⁸¹ This comprised 28 hides in Battersea, twenty in the *villa* called Wassingham and twenty on the west side of *Hidaburna* (probably the Falcon Brook). Bounds attached to the charter, presumably reliable for the 10th or 11th century, enclose Battersea, Wandsworth and Putney.⁸² Though much smaller than the Chertsey block and recorded in a dubious source, this may be a genuine 7th-century estate of three distinct components (fig 9B).

By a charter of 685 × 7 Cædwalla of Wessex endowed a new church with land called Farnham, comprising 60 hides of which ten were in Binton, two in Churt, and the rest in *Cusanweob* and other places which the 12th-century copyist failed to transcribe.⁸³ By c800 the church and land had been annexed to the see of Winchester, which held them at the Conquest and after.⁸⁴ Charter-bounds of the 10th century correspond more or less exactly with the boundary of the medieval manor and hundred.⁸⁵ Farnham hundred can therefore be accepted with some confidence as the estate of the 680s, then already subdivided into at least three components and probably many more (fig 9C).

Only these three cases have early written evidence, but Surrey contained other multi-vill estates. Mortlake and Croydon seem to have been acquired by the Archbishops of Canterbury in the 8th or perhaps even 7th century.⁸⁶ Mortlake, assessed at 80 hides in Domesday Book, comprised the later parishes of Mortlake, Putney, Barnes and part of Wimbledon;⁸⁷ it seems to have been of much the same size and shape as Eorcenwold's Battersea estate, which it adjoined, though with the addition of a large Wealden common at Burstow (below, pp53–4). Croydon, also 80 hides TRE, may have been the remnant of a still greater manor, running the whole length of the Kent–Surrey border, which fragmented in the 870s (above, p17). In c900 the royal estate at Wallington was depleted by the creation of a 70-hide estate at Beddington for the see of Winchester:⁸⁸ this probably comprised the Domesday manors and later parishes of Beddington and Carshalton (25 + 25 + 27 hides), which shared a tract of Downland common and completely surrounded the residual royal land at Wallington (below, p33; fig 11F).

As late as the Domesday survey, much of southern Surrey still consisted of broad estates stretching into the Weald and reminiscent, on a rather smaller scale, of South Malling. One such was Bramley (fig 9D), a TRE manor of the Kentish nobleman Æthelnoth. Parochial and tenurial links prove that it covered the whole western half of Blackheath hundred, including West Shalford, Wonersh, Hascombe, Dunsfold, and numerous small sub-manors such as Utworth and Rydinghurst.⁸⁹ Others were Godalming, which included the Wealden parishes of Chiddingfold and Haslemere (fig 47), and Shere, which extended into Cranleigh and may once have

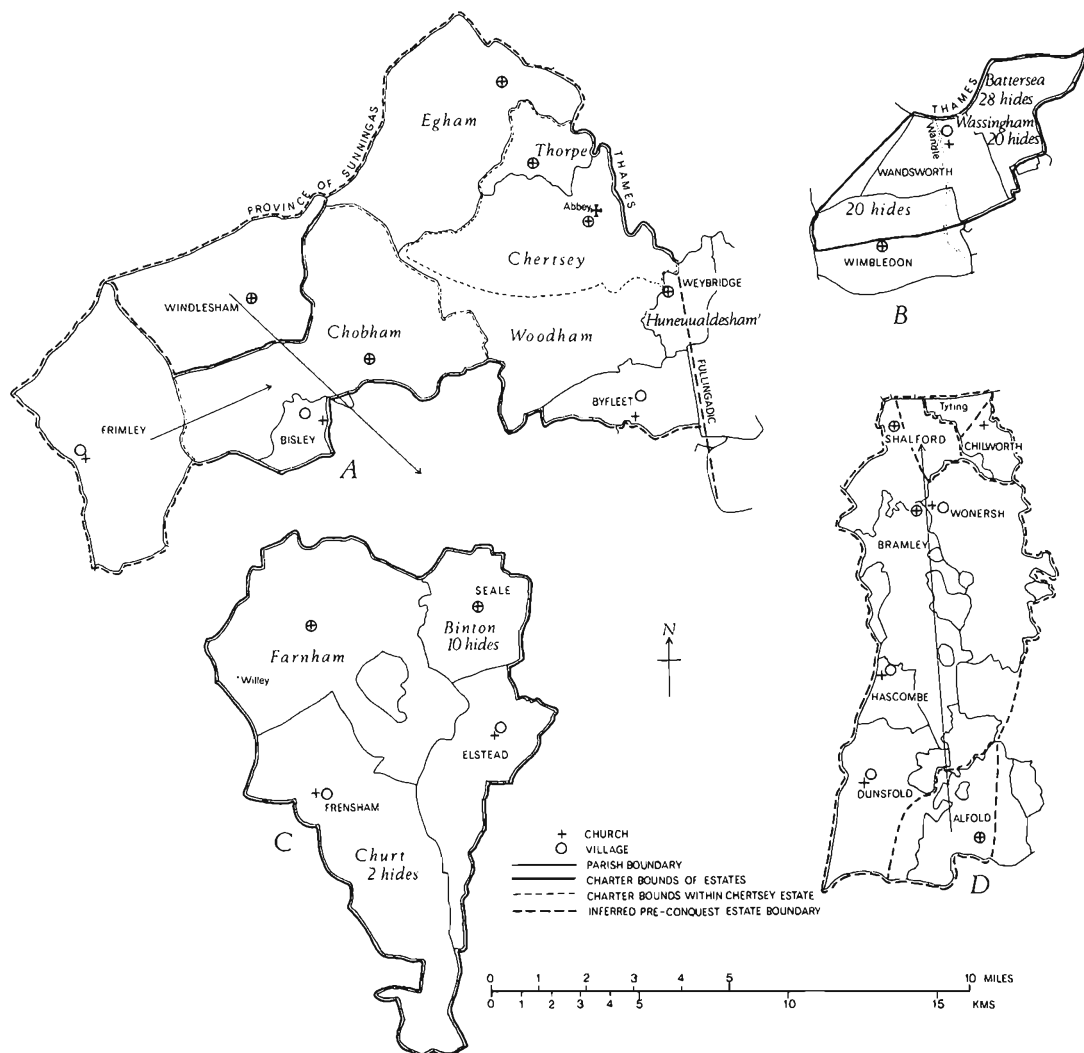


Fig 9 'Multiple estates' in Surrey. A: Chertsey estate (bounds from S1165 and S621, *PNSy* 105–6n, 114n, 119n, 132n). B: Battersea estate (bounds from S1248 and *PNSy* 12–13n, with amendments kindly suggested by Keith Bailey). C: Farnham estate (bounds from S382 and *PNSy* 165–7n). D: Bramley estate (TRE manorial boundaries reconstructed after Turner & Blair, *Manors and churches in Blackheath hundred*). The names and hidages of units granted in extant pre-Conquest charters are shown in italics. In a few places the plotting of the charter bounds is somewhat schematic

comprehended the eastern half of Blackheath hundred.⁹⁰ Such Wealden manors resemble South Malling in their tendency to contain multiple settlement units formalised as tithings. Godstone had four,⁹¹ Bramley at least twelve,⁹² while Dorking provides the best parallel with six *borghs* including a 'Walde Borough' or *borgh* in the Weald.⁹³ Perhaps most of the area south of the Downs was once divided into these large, regular blocks. Some element of overall design is suggested by the fact that Queen Edith's TRE demesne in Surrey comprised two such manors (Shere and Dorking), together with a third (Reigate) which although less regular was also large

and partly in the Weald.⁹⁴ The late Saxon queens were dowered with a stable group of manors,⁹⁵ and it may be that the Surrey Weald displays some deliberate, systematic apportionment within the royal demesne.

Does Surrey, then, support claims for the multi-vill estate as the archetypal manorial structure? Such estates contained at least 30% of the county's acreage; if their survival in the Weald is due to its retarded development, there is an implication that others once existed in the more advanced areas. Nonetheless, to see them as the essential, immemorial framework, the cradle of all later manorial types, is for two reasons misleading. First, their origins are, at least in the south-east, essentially subsequent to the comprehensive structure of provincial territories within which they were created. Secondly, they can be defined simply as very large bundles of the same basic units which, in varying quantities, composed *all* manors, of all shapes and sizes.

Seventh-century kings gave bookland principally for one purpose: the establishment of the young English Church on a basis of firm prosperity. Multi-vill estates seem so prominent in early sources largely because the initial grants to sees and great minsters were especially liable to take this form. This was a general pattern in the West Midlands,⁹⁶ and it clearly applies to Chertsey, Farnham, Battersea and South Malling. Hence these very large estates, often comprising as much as a third or a half of the provincial territories from which they were carved, reflect the specific circumstances of the 7th and 8th centuries: the urgent and exceptional demand for large-scale endowments, at a time when the land of the territory was still reasonably free of entrenched rights. Often the primary territory was divided into two parts, only one of which would remain directly subject to the royal vill. Even at this stage, the need for each part to retain adequate common grazing might result in split land-units: thus the Malling estate separates the settled area around Wilmington from its woodland pastures to the north-east, and the Chertsey estate drives a wedge between Woking manor and Windlesham (fig 8 for both). There is nothing about the topography or internal structure of secular multi-vill estates to mark them out as different in kind from their documented monastic counterparts, except that they tend on the whole to be smaller.

So far as our evidence goes, then, multi-vill estates were, as estates, essentially a product of early Christian England. Does this mean that the systematic internal divisions, so strikingly exemplified at South Malling, evolved within them and are later still? Not necessarily: it seems likely that the subdivisions often pre-date them and belong to the same stage of development as the primary territories. The language of the charters certainly suggests this: the Chertsey, Farnham and Battersea estates could be described *at their creation* as groups of named and hidated units. Insofar as the hypothesis of early, symmetrical hidation (above, pp21–2) can be accepted, it implies that the provincial territories could be broken down into twenty-hide sub-divisions, and these into individual hides.

Multi-vill manors may thus have been founded on an existing organisational structure. If the central royal vill of a territory was alienated as part of a new complex estate, it would simply continue, as the manorial centre, to control such of its former dependencies as had been alienated with it. At South Malling, for example, pre-existing links between the former territorial centre and what became the *borghs* of the manor may have provided a basis for the complex services which had evolved by c1273. More frequently the estate gained a new focus, often the minster community for whose benefit it was created; this left the *villa regia* at the head of a fragmented royal manor made ever more exiguous by later grants. Often, as at Woking and Godalming, the 'rump' was more or less compact, but another common result was a disjointed archipelago of fragments, such as Ewell with its outliers at Leatherhead, Kingswood and Shellwood.

If a structure of small, distinct hidated units was indeed antecedent to manorialisation, we would expect lesser manors to contain them too; and this is exactly what we seem to find. Many Surrey manors included components which were in some sense self-contained and were of the order of one or two hides apiece. In the West Midlands, D Hooke has shown that late Saxon

boundaries often comprehended distinct 'township' entities of a hide or a little more, largely invisible in Domesday Book and later sources; thus 'the typical West Midland parish appears to have been a 'multi-township' one, with internal divisions in existence at a very early date'.⁹⁷ Although Surrey lacks this rich charter evidence, it is clear that the Domesday accounts of manors conceal the existence of innumerable subdivisions. Very many individual farms have habitative place-names of Anglo-Saxon origin, ignored by all the early sources; it is striking, for instance, that thirteen of the 31 reliable *-hām* names describe units recorded neither as Domesday estates nor as medieval parishes.⁹⁸

Domesday Book and later sources are nonetheless revealing for the small minority of such entities which were tenurially separate. Here they provide grounds for thinking that individual hides as first defined retained some kind of long-standing territorial identity, however changed their economic potential. For the Domesday clerks a hide in terms of the TRE geld burden was also, sometimes at least, a hide in some other sense. A few one-hide or two-hide units appear as manors in their own right. In most such cases no hidation is given, as if the statement '*X tenet Y hidas*' implies automatically that '*TRE se defendebat pro Y hidis*'.⁹⁹ Where a TRE hidage *is* stated, it invariably corresponds with the number of hides that the holding is stated to contain: thus, '*istae 2 hidae . . . TRE pro 2 hidis se defendebant, modo pro dimidia*'.¹⁰⁰ Sometimes we are told the name of a manor, its TRE hidation, and then that a certain whole number 'of these hides' have since been alienated.¹⁰¹ This kind of language would make no sense unless a tract which had gelded at one hide before the Conquest was normally a stable entity and likely to remain so. This is not to deny that by 1086 the hides of the old assessment were fiscal units which had long ceased to reflect productive acreage;¹⁰² it is merely to suggest that they were not *purely* fiscal, but had retained by ancient custom some distinctness in the fabric of land-tenure or rural society.

Are these topographical entities, or simply distinct property rights within united townships? Some at least are of the former kind, for they can be identified with later medieval farms and hamlets. Generally they seem to have supported between one and half-a-dozen smallholders, often with a demesne plough and occasionally a serf. Typical examples are:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Littleton in Artington (2 hides): 1 demesne plough; 1 villan and 1 cottar with 1 plough. ¹⁰³ | |
| Anstie in Dorking (1 hide) | } 1 demesne plough; 1 bordar. ¹⁰⁴ |
| <i>Litelfeld</i> (½ hide) | |
| Tuesley in Godalming (1 hide): 1 [demesne] plough, 1 serf; 1 villan and 6 cottars. ¹⁰⁵ | |
| Tyting in Chilworth (1 hide): 1 demesne plough; 1 villan and 6 bordars with 1 plough. ¹⁰⁶ | |
| 1 hide in Dorking (Hampstead?): 1 demesne plough, a mill at the hall; 1 bordar. ¹⁰⁷ | |
| 2 hides in Elmbridge hundred (Norwood Farm, Cobham?): 6 villans with 2 ploughs. ¹⁰⁸ | |

Others are revealed by stray references in deeds, and sometimes their physical compactness can be demonstrated. A Warenne charter of c1110 grants Betchworth and 'the hide of Wonham',¹⁰⁹ the latter referring to a small unitary estate called Wonham Manor which appears on the Betchworth tithe-map (fig 11H). Shoelands in Puttenham is revealed as another such by charter-bounds of c1210, and its name, which implies ownership by a monastic community, carries it back to an unrecorded past.¹¹⁰ Such chance evidence suggests that many of the little compact 'manors' first seen in post-medieval sources may be just as old. In the one-hide units which remain topographically distinct, we may well have actual examples of the *terra unius familie* as conceived when the assessments were first imposed. Economically, it is interesting that many of these had come to support small communities of peasants by the 11th century, only to re-emerge as single farmsteads in the later Middle Ages; tenurially, they argue a high degree of traditional continuity in the fabric of local society which makes it easier to understand the stability of larger manors. Thus beneath the apparent comprehensiveness of manor, village and

fields can be glimpsed an older, more cellular structure of compact units with defined boundaries. In other regions it has been suggested that minor land-holdings of this kind, in what may be termed the order of magnitude ranging between 'hide-size' and 'parish-size', are pre-English. CC Taylor has argued that a network of sub-parochial divisions covers large continuous areas of Dorset, and concludes that 'the basic arrangement of settlements and their estates in Dorset is likely to be Romano-British or Celtic rather than Saxon in origin'.¹¹¹ The idea that stable 'sub-parish' units existed by relatively early in the Anglo-Saxon period is developed by Gelling in Berkshire, and by Hooke in the West Midlands.¹¹² Attempts to identify 'parish-type' territories as Roman villa estates by distribution analysis¹¹³ are stimulating and well worth pursuing, even if by their very nature they are inconclusive. An area of inquiry which promises more solid results, and where knowledge is rapidly growing, concerns the survival of planned Roman and

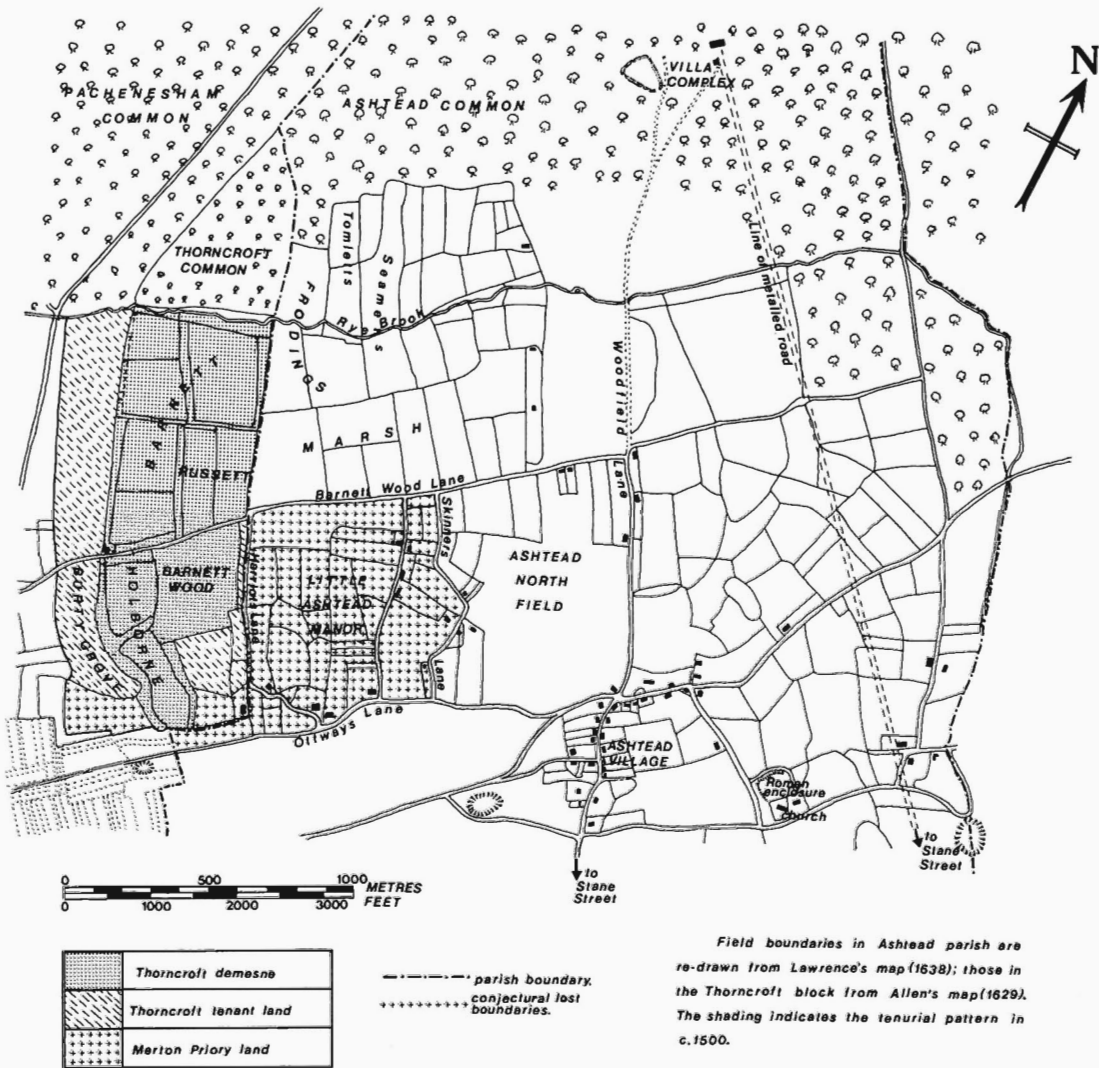


Fig 10 Leatherhead and Ashtead: a possible Roman field layout surviving as medieval land-units

pre-British boundaries. Here Surrey provides a possible example, on the London clay near the Roman villa at Ashtead (fig 10). A pattern of lanes divides an area of ancient enclosures into six or possibly nine irregular squares, aligned on a more-or-less straight trackway from the villa site to Stane Street. The squares are respected both by the parish boundary and by estate boundaries: two comprised a compact outlier of Thorncroft manor in Leatherhead,¹¹⁴ a third was the manor of Little Ashtead, and Ashtead north common field largely occupied the fourth.¹¹⁵ In the light of well-attested early divisions of this kind now identified in many parts of Britain,¹¹⁶ it is arguable that boundaries connected with the Ashtead villa survived to delimit small land-units in the early Anglo-Saxon period. It is perhaps in such points of detail that we are most likely to trace landmarks from the thoroughly settled countryside which the Anglo-Saxons found.

The early social and economic character of the small units, and their relationship to their component households and their neighbours, is hard to glimpse. Some place-names seem to define townships by reference to their specialised function in the extensive economy of the *regio*: thus the eastern division of Surrey contains Gatton ('goat-farm'), Chaldon ('calf-down'), Merstham ('*bām* at the horse enclosure'), Banstead ('place where beans are cultivated') and Chipstead ('place with a market'),¹¹⁷ while the central division has both a Kingswood ('wood attached to royal centre') and a Charlwood ('wood of the peasants').¹¹⁸ Such 'defining' place-names may, however, refer to specialised tribute obligations rather than to an exclusively specialised economy: the township which owed renders of goats may still have produced other goods for local consumption. Nor was all grazing necessarily transhumant: local commons could have been shared from an early date by neighbouring cultivators.¹¹⁹ There may, therefore, be some sense in which collections of small units are pre-manorial, representing groups of farmers sharing localised resources as well as the general resources of the *regio*. Wherever it existed, the early scheme of hidation influenced manorial developments, and the recurrence of twenty-hide manors as late as the 10th and 11th centuries suggests some basic continuity of early groupings. But the great social and economic changes of the 10th and 11th centuries worked on this material and transformed it, giving to rural communities a more strongly marked local identity and a higher level of economic self-sufficiency.

The development of the 'classic manor'

Not all early estates were of the 'federative' type. Aston has argued that unitary manors under lay proprietors are assumed by written sources from the late 7th century onwards, and may be still more ancient.¹²⁰ Units of a magnitude similar to normal medieval manors begin to appear in Surrey documents as early as do the multi-vill estates. The original Chertsey endowment of 672 × 4 included discrete holdings at Cobham, at Molesey and near London.¹²¹ Mortlake seems likely to have belonged to Christ Church Canterbury as a single manor from the 8th or 9th century,¹²² and scarcely any of the Surrey manors described in 10th-century charters exceeded twenty hides (cf fig 11).¹²³

Thus the 'federative' system co-existed with small, self-contained manors over some centuries. But for much of this period it was a static rather than an evolving type, preserved largely by the inertia of property rights. Quite apart from whatever re-structuring of the countryside resulted from economic growth, units of land-lordship must have come under increasing pressure from the expanding thegnly class. England was coming to support an extensive country gentry, and the most active participants in the land-market were the multitudes of men seeking five or ten hides to support the status of a thegn.

The evidence noted elsewhere for the formation of new multi-vill estates during the mid to late Anglo-Saxon period has no parallels in Surrey.¹²⁴ The long list of manors attributed to Chertsey

Abbey in its forged charters probably has a genuine pre-Conquest basis,¹²⁵ and could be taken to suggest that a large group of manors on the Surrey Downs, the whole of Effingham hundred, and some smaller blocks each comprising two or three later parishes, had been assembled piecemeal. It seems equally likely, however, that these lists record old multi-vill estates in the process of fragmentation (cf above, p25), a process which was largely complete by Domesday Book. Otherwise the trend is wholly towards fission. As early as 871 × 888 Ealdorman Alfred's will lists a collection of manors in eastern Surrey ranging between two and 32 hides, possibly the *dissecta membra* of a recently-dismantled archiepiscopal estate (above, p17). This reflects not only an overall impoverishment of the Church but also an evolution towards estates composed of separate manors. The distribution of the Surrey property acquired by late Saxon archbishops reflects this tendency:¹²⁶ by the Conquest, none of the six archiepiscopal manors adjoined each other.¹²⁷ Outside the main estate, the TRE manors of Chertsey Abbey were equally scattered (fig 38). Of lay estates existing in 1066, none but Oswald's suggests even faintly a policy of grouping, and even this amounts to nothing more than a concentration of five holdings in near but non-contiguous parishes.¹²⁸ Whatever was happening elsewhere, the landlords of late Saxon Surrey had no disposition to amalgamate their manors into compact blocks. By the Conquest we have already reached the stage at which land was usually exploited in self-contained units of normal manor size, run from their own centres; correspondingly, the 'federative' structure was in decline.

Here tenurial and economic factors go hand in hand. By the very fact that they belonged to bishops and monasteries, the largest and earliest estates preserved a greater appearance of stability than those which were subject to all the vagaries of lay descent. But below the surface the creation of sub-tenancies was everywhere a strong if insidious solvent.¹²⁹ From the 1070s subinfeudation can be seen at work on estates of all sizes, causing small tenurial units to proliferate. Many knights were endowed with mere fractions of pre-Conquest manors: thus a *miles* held one-and-a-quarter of the eight hides of Malden in 1086, and a fee of the 1140s comprised a compact half-hide carved out of the demesne of Thorncroft.¹³⁰ The same process was affecting the great estates both before and after the Conquest. Out of the 73 hides on the main Chertsey estate, ten-and-a-half had passed out of demesne by 1066¹³¹ and a further nine were subinfeudated during the next twenty years.¹³² At Farnham seven-and-a-half of the 60 hides were in tenants' hands by 1086, as well as the church and glebe.¹³³ Notwithstanding the stability of these great manors at tenant-in-chief level, they were experiencing a process which was both alien and inimical to the integrated multi-vill economy. The breakup of lay estates is obvious even superficially: between 1086 and c1250 the great Bramley manor dissolved from apparent coherence into a collection of small independent holdings.¹³⁴ This should not be seen as a distinctively post-Conquest phenomenon, but rather as the continuation of a late Anglo-Saxon trend into an age in which we can perceive it.

A major cause of this fragmentation was economic growth. The multi-vill manors which proved resilient beyond the Conquest contained a high proportion of under-developed land; as will be shown in ch 2, it was above all the development of this land which heralded their breakup. The later the clearance, the longer the archaic pattern survived; the dissolution of Bramley probably reflects what had already happened to lay manors outside the Weald. But simply through stability of lordship, the Chertsey and Farnham estates continued to display the outward form of a dying economic system.

Thus later Saxon and Norman Surrey was increasingly dominated by 'normal' manors comparable to, or smaller than, the average medieval parish. A striking feature of the few available sets of charter bounds is the tendency of most to correspond more or less exactly with the boundaries of modern parishes (fig 9A-C, fig 11 A-D). The evidence, sparse as it is, suggests a pattern similar to the West Midlands where nearly half the charter units are

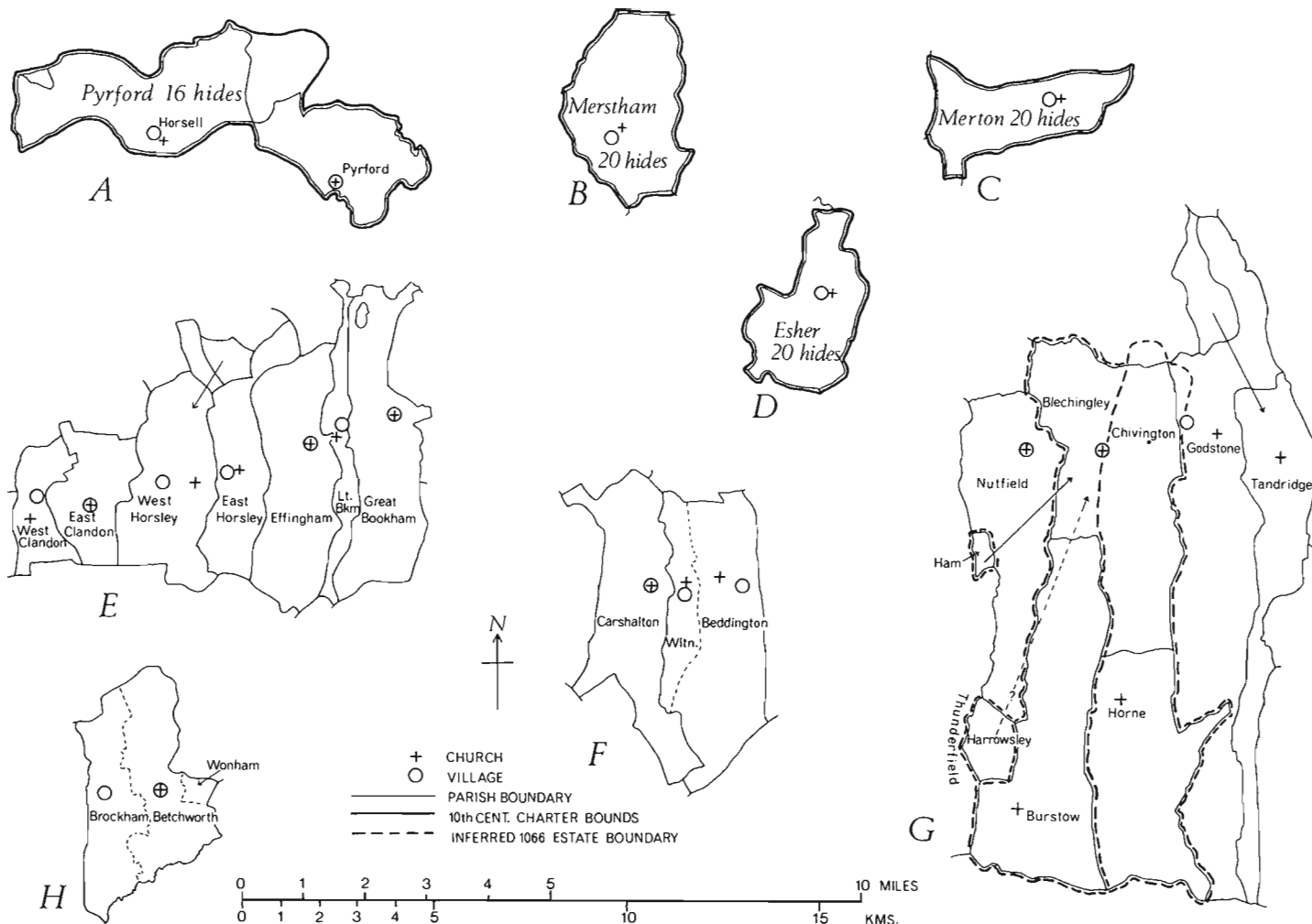


Fig 11 Selected manors of the 10th to 12th centuries. A: Pyrford (bounds from S621 and *PSNy* 132n). B: Merstham (bounds from S528 and Rumble, *The Merstham (Surrey) Charter-Bounds*). C: Merton (bounds from S747 and *PSNy* 25n). D: Esher (bounds from S911 and *PSNy* 92–3n). E: A group of parishes on the Downs dip-slope. F: Carshalton, Wallington and Beddington. G: A group of parishes in the eastern Surrey Weald (TRE manorial boundaries reconstructed after Blair, *Surrey endowments of Lewes Priory*, fig 7). H: Betchworth, Brockham and Wonham. The names and hidages of units granted in extant pre-Conquest charters are shown in italics. In a few places the plotting of the charter bounds is somewhat schematic

coterminous with parishes.¹³⁵ This is not evidence for the antiquity of parishes as such: parishes only crystallised in the 12th century, and in Surrey many contain two or more independent Domesday manors (below, ch 6). What the boundaries do suggest is a long-standing tenurial stability which was slightly, but only slightly, blurred by simple combination and division. Furthermore, the uniform and symmetrical hidations of the 10th-century charters imply that tenurial changes had respected not merely the ancient boundaries but also the primitive cadastral divisions, townships and sub-township units. The basic continuity of rural organisation is once again apparent.

The emphasis of the foregoing argument has been on manors as larger or smaller collections of distinct components. This is, of course, an inadequate definition. As conventionally understood the classic manor had centralised institutions: a demesne, a manorial curia, and a structure of tenant holdings bound together by like services, common agriculture and nucleation of settlement. Most medieval township communities were organised in units much larger than a hide or so, and in general such units were either coterminous with manors or bore some perceptible relationship to them. Aston suggests that Ine's laws of the late 7th century already assume 'that dichotomy between demesne and peasant land which is central to manorial history'.¹³⁶ To an extent this is true, yet it tells us nothing about how manors were organised internally. The antithesis of *inland* and *gestett land* need not in itself imply anything more advanced than that of 'king's vill', 'reeve's vill' and 'bond vill' in the multiple estates of primitive Wales.¹³⁷ Within a manor of any size, a new central place might inherit such authority as the royal vill had once exercised over its dependencies; but by the 13th century we find something more, a sense of internal coherence. Do manors already have this kind of integration when they come into view in the 8th, 9th and 10th centuries?

Confining ourselves for the moment to estate morphology, there is one particular development which suggests the influence of economic factors. This is the formation of manors on a north-south linear pattern to take in a variety of different soils. Such units are the basis of the long, narrow 'strip parishes' which are so marked a feature of the Downs dip-slope (fig 11E, F; fig 22) and the Weald (fig 11G); comparison with Domesday Book indicates that in many cases this tenurial geography had often, but not always, taken shape by 1066. In Surrey as in Kent,¹³⁸ fragmentation into small strip-shaped manors is a distinctive feature of the Downs and dip-slope regions, with their rapidly-developing class of manorial gentry.

Such recurrent linearity implies some internal coherence, depending on the balance of arable, open grazing and wooded commons. By dating its appearance we will pinpoint a significant stage in the evolution of the rural economy. Some units of this kind may be ancient: they reproduce in miniature the linearity of the provincial territories and Wealden multiple estates, doubtless enhanced by the presence of numerous north-south droveways. Yet none of the reliable pre-Conquest charters mentions them, while certainly some were formed in the late 10th, 11th or 12th centuries by the regular division of larger, more amorphous units. Thus Carshalton, Wallington and Beddington (fig 11F) are lineal fractions of an earlier whole, with a single tract of common pasture called Woodcote split between the manors (below, p49); part at least of this division occurred between 963 × 75, when Beddington appears as an intact 70-hide estate, and 1086, when Domesday Book shows it as two manors totalling only 50 hides.¹³⁹

Nomenclature is revealing, for the strip parishes on the dip-slope include three 'pairs': West and East Clandon, West and East Horsley, and Great and Little Bookham (fig 11E). One of the Chertsey forgeries, which may include genuine late Saxon data, lists land-units 'apud Bocham cum Effingham' and 'apud Clendone et in altera Clendone'.¹⁴⁰ It may be suspected that the Clandons on the one hand, and the Bookhams and Effingham on the other, had been whole units not long before the list was first compiled, distinct enough now to be given separate names, yet with each group still lumped together under a single hidation. These cases are pre-Conquest, but

a Warenne charter of c1210 records the partition of Betchworth and Brockham into separate manors by a line running from north to south along hedges and other landmarks (fig 11H).¹⁴¹

As R A Dodgshon has argued, 'the proprietary break-up of a township did not lead automatically to its physical splitting into separate sub-townships on the ground. There was a choice: landowners could divide their shares in the form of sub-divided fields or they could split them into discrete units or sub-townships'.¹⁴² One of the main determining factors would have been the internal structure of the township: what degree of integration it had developed, and whether or not it had organised itself into linear blocks creating natural lines of fission. Some townships withstood tenurial splitting: the manor of Esher (fig 11D) became four separate holdings between 1005 and 1066,¹⁴³ yet it remained 'Esher' in some sense real enough for it to emerge intact as the medieval parish. In other cases, by contrast, township division sometimes preceded division of ownership. The need to describe one tract of land held by one lord as 'Clandon' and 'the other Clandon' suggests that the name 'Clandon' had come to mean a defined area which was now split into two parts for reasons unconnected with property rights. In the Betchworth case, the language implies that 'the land of Brockham' and 'the land of Betchworth' were already distinct, presumably linear townships co-existing within one manor before they were split tenurially. The needs of a divided lordship might then, in its turn, lead to major reorganisation of the evolving farming communities.¹⁴⁴

Settlement, field-systems and peasant tenure are the themes of later chapters. But this evidence is largely post-Conquest; the tenurial framework is important because it suggests, if only indirectly, a broad chronology for the changes taking place within it. So far as it goes, the Surrey material agrees well with the conclusions of Maitland and Dodgshon.¹⁴⁵ Manorial fission was well-advanced in Surrey by 1066, and for some time it had tended to follow a linear pattern; sometimes, perhaps usually, this linearity was a result of divisions which had occurred during the previous eighty or hundred years. In so far as tenurial developments reflect social and economic change, attention rests on the two or three centuries for which Domesday Book is the half-way mark.

Conclusion

This chapter has described a process of fragmentation. Whatever institutions of kinship or lordship united the first English communities, they were soon overlain by a system of organisation, economic as well as jurisdictional, which aggregated regular blocks of hides into large provincial territories. Early manorialisation followed closely the sub-units of the territory, which might be granted either in groups – the multi-vill estates of the future – or as single entities. Thereafter, symmetrical hidations witness to a strong continuity: manors of the 10th and 11th centuries may often have been exact reflections of the pre-manorial scheme. The groups of farm units carried with them their rights of transhumance grazing, perpetuating in the denn system the old pattern of economic interconnections within a large territory.

Further division, into self-contained manors and along lines set by the evolving local pattern of farming and settlement, was notably a feature of the late Saxon and Norman centuries: not in itself universal, it was one sign of a more developed pattern which overlay and often subsumed the old, distinct hidated units. To this extent the 'manorial grid' remains a valid concept, but only as one part of an evolving whole. On the one hand, the estate structure changed in response to changes in settlement, agriculture and the farming community which were just as great. On the other, local conditions which moulded the structure of seigneurial organisation were also moulded by it.