5 Local Churches: The Pattern and Chronology of Foundation

By 1066 the estate church was a familiar rural institution. This is clear from the law-codes which, from Eadgar onwards, accord limited tithe rights to thegns' churches with graveyards;[1] from the inclusion of a church among the marks of status by which a ceorl of around the year 1000 could expect to rise to thegnhood;[2] and from the numerous 11th-century Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman church buildings. Above all, it is clear from the regular appearance of churches among manorial assets listed in Domesday Book.[3] Historians have tended to infer parishes from churches, and hence to conclude that the parochial system had already, in essentials, come into being. Thus it has recently been written that 'in most of England, even in 1086, the village church was already a familiar feature of the rural scene; and thereafter, the village and parish communities were identical in many places, making the village an ecclesiastical as well as a secular community'.[4]

Paramount source though Domesday Book is, its very uniqueness encourages an unduly static and homogeneous interpretation. The churches which it lists so tersely and uniformly were in fact extremely varied in status and function, and the process of foundation was far from over in 1086. Only systematic local studies using a wide range of sources can provide the necessary perspective. For the emergence of the parochial system, two questions are central: when and by whom were the churches founded; and how did their status alter over time? This chapter is confined somewhat narrowly to the first question; ch 6 will consider the second in the general context of ecclesiastical reform. It will be argued that while the area was well-supplied with local churches by 1066, the parochial system, as normally understood, was essentially a product of the 12th century.

The evidence

The 1086 data are our basic source, but their value as evidence must be assessed critically in the light of the Survey as a whole. It has long been known that Domesday Book was compiled by commissioners working on seven or perhaps nine circuits, and that between these circuits there are substantial differences in the compilation and presentation of data.[5] The recording of churches varies between the extremes of Circuit 7 (East Anglia), where we are given copious and detailed information, and Circuit 4 (Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire),where churches are only noted occasionally.[6] Standard forms of entry, *est ibi ecclesia, est ibi presbyter, presbyter habet x carucas* and so forth, also vary according to the circuit groups.

There are also differences *within* circuits. Thus in Circuit 5 Leicestershire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Northamptonshire contain numerous recorded churches, but Oxfordshire is a virtual blank; in Circuit 6, churches and priests are listed together in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, Huntingdonshire and Yorkshire, but not in Lincolnshire. While some genuine regional variations are doubtless reflected, major differences in the quality and completeness of evidence within circuits and between adjoining counties are undeniable.

Surrey, with Kent, Sussex, Berkshire and Hampshire, was covered by Circuit 1. *Est ibi ecclesia* is the normal formula in all these counties, though in Sussex and Hampshire endowments and

priests are often mentioned.[7] Kent provides what seems at first sight to be important comparative evidence, for here independent sources show that only about half the churches standing in 1086 were noted by the Domesday commissioners.[8] Certainly there are demonstrable omissions from the Surrey list,[9] and it is easy to argue that a source such as the 'Domesday Monachorum' would probably have revealed more.

Nonetheless, it seems more likely that we have here another case of strong divergence within a circuit; there are good reasons for thinking that the Domesday record of churches is considerably better for Surrey than for Kent. Among a total of 235 separately listed properties in Surrey, 61 (or 26%) are credited with churches. As shown below (tables 12 and 13, p120), however, the incidence of churches is weighted heavily towards the more valuable and populous estates, a large majority of which are stated to have them. If in Surrey, as in Kent, no more than some 50% of existing churches had been recorded, so clear and credible a pattern could scarcely have emerged. The contrast with Kent, where churches are unmentioned on numerous large estates of a kind that would normally have them in the Surrey Domesday, is clear even from a cursory comparison. The later Surrey evidence seems equally incompatible with gross deficiencies in 1086: well over half of the parish churches which existed by c1200 appear in Domesday Book, and many of the remainder are interpretable as post-Domesday foundations. Imperfect though their recording undoubtedly was, it seems a reasonable working assumption that the commissioners listed a large majority of the churches standing in the county when they surveyed it. The equally important issue of whether or not most of these churches had existed twenty years before is best considered in the light of individual local circumstances.

With occasional exceptions the other written evidence is post-1100, and mainly takes the form of charters granting churches to religious houses. Like Domesday Book, these generally only provide a *terminus ante quem* for the foundations, and of course they are heavily biased towards monastic possessions. Some churches in continuous lay ownership escape mention until the late 13th century, even though they retain 11th- or 12th-century structural features. A list of c1270 in Bishop John of Pontoise's register,[10] together with that compiled for the papal taxation of 1291,[11] probably covers all parish churches then existing, though chapels are still only very incompletely recorded.

Discussion of the buildings themselves must now reckon with drastic reappraisals of the latest phase of Anglo-Saxon architecture, to which all Surrey churches with stylistically pre-Conquest features belong. E Fernie has proposed 'a school of minor churches, inhabiting the hundred years from the second quarter of the 11th century to the second quarter of the 12th, which is neither simply "Saxon" nor simply "Norman"', and suggests that 'half, if not the majority, of the surviving buildings commonly grouped under the label "Anglo-Saxon" belong to this category'.[12] It is becoming clear that in the years c1030–1130, new churches were built and old ones rebuilt on such a scale as to justify borrowing from a later period the term 'Great Rebuilding'.[13] The Domesday survey happens to have taken place when this activity was at its height; hence it is virtually impossible to say on architectural grounds that any given church, whether pure late-Saxon, pure Norman or in a mixed style, was or was not standing in 1086.

Nonetheless, patterns may still emerge through studying a substantial group of churches within one region. Among churches of roughly similar status, the less stylistically advanced buildings will in general tend to be older than the more advanced ones. They may also reflect closer links with Anglo-Saxon institutions and personnel, just as up-to-date Norman work may reflect the wealth, power and contacts of a new lord. Archaeology has shown that while some churches of this period replace older (though only slightly older) timber buildings, many do not. So when most churches in a social or tenurial category prove to be architecturally similar, the fact may have some broad chronological significance. The exercise of relating such patterns to the Domesday record of churches, and to the tenurial arrangements of 1066 and 1086, seems worth

attempting: a careful over-view may reveal trends which are convincing in their internal consistency, setting a pattern to which obscure areas may be related.

Hence this chapter makes extensive use of physical evidence (whether surviving or, as so often in Surrey, recorded only in watercolours and drawings),[14] and is illustrated with church plans reconstructed to show the earliest visible phases and drawn to a common scale. It is taken as a working hypothesis that such explicitly Anglo-Saxon features as thin, high walls and double-splayed windows, when not associated with any trace of Norman influence, are unlikely to have been built much after 1100; and that features of a rudimentary Norman or Saxo-Norman character, notably single-splayed windows with monolithic or rubble heads, suggest origins no later than c1120–40.

Local churches in the pre-Danish period

With churches, as with estate boundaries and field-systems, the evidence for continuity from Romano-British to Anglo-Saxon society is essentially circumstantial. The cult of St Alban at Verulamium could merely be one instance of a wider pattern: it is *prima facie* likely, if hard to prove, that centres of devotion often survived in areas of residual British settlement.[15] The apparent re-use of Roman buildings at Canterbury and Stone-by-Faversham as the nuclei of early Saxon churches has little real weight in the absence of any evidence for continuous use.[16] It is also doubtful how we should interpret such initially impressive evidence as the proximity of so many Essex churches to Roman sites.[17] Upstanding Roman buildings would have offered architecturally imposing settings for new churches at any stage in the Anglo-Saxon period; even demolished ones were sources of rubble. This may account for the two Surrey instances at Stoke D'Abernon and Ashtead (fig 40), and seems especially likely in the latter case: the church is a 12th-century foundation (below, p124), its walls incorporate flue-tiles from a nearby Roman building,[18] and both church and manor-house stand within a convenient levelled and ditched enclosure of Roman origin.

The place-name element *eccles*, a derivative of late Latin *eclesia*, probably implies contact between the early Germanic settlers and native churches with Latin-speaking priests or worshippers. Though commonest in the north-west Midlands, the element also occurs in Kent near rich concentrations of Roman remains.[19] A new and topographically significant example seems worth adding. The Pyrford charter-bounds of 956 pass around the irregular west end of modern Horsell parish (fig 11A). Unfortunately they cannot be plotted exactly, but at some point between *per leage* (Parley Farm) and *mint byrge* (Mimbridge) was an inclosure or meadow called *eceles hamme*.[20] This must have lain near, perhaps almost adjoining, the medieval church of Bisley some fifty yards from the boundary (fig 29).[21] Bisley is an enclave on the edge of the great Chertsey Abbey estate; the nondescript little church need be no older than the 12th century, though it probably appears in Domesday Book as a chapel of Chobham.[22] Although the area is not one of intensive Roman settlement, this seems a significant association between an *eccles* name and a standing church:[23] it is conceivable that some cult had survived around the church site, or around the nearby holy well of St John the Baptist where parishioners were still being baptised within recorded memory.[24]

Other evidence for pre-Danish local churches amounts to very little. Early origins have been claimed for two small hilltop churches: Chilworth because of its unusual dedication (St Martha, suggested as a corruption of a Romano-Celtic dedication to the 'Holy Martyrs'),[25] and Thursley on the hypothesis that it was the direct successor of a pagan Anglo-Saxon shrine (below, p115). Both suggestions are speculative, and neither is supported by any physical remains. Elsewhere in the county, there are no very early references to ordinary churches, and no extant fabric older
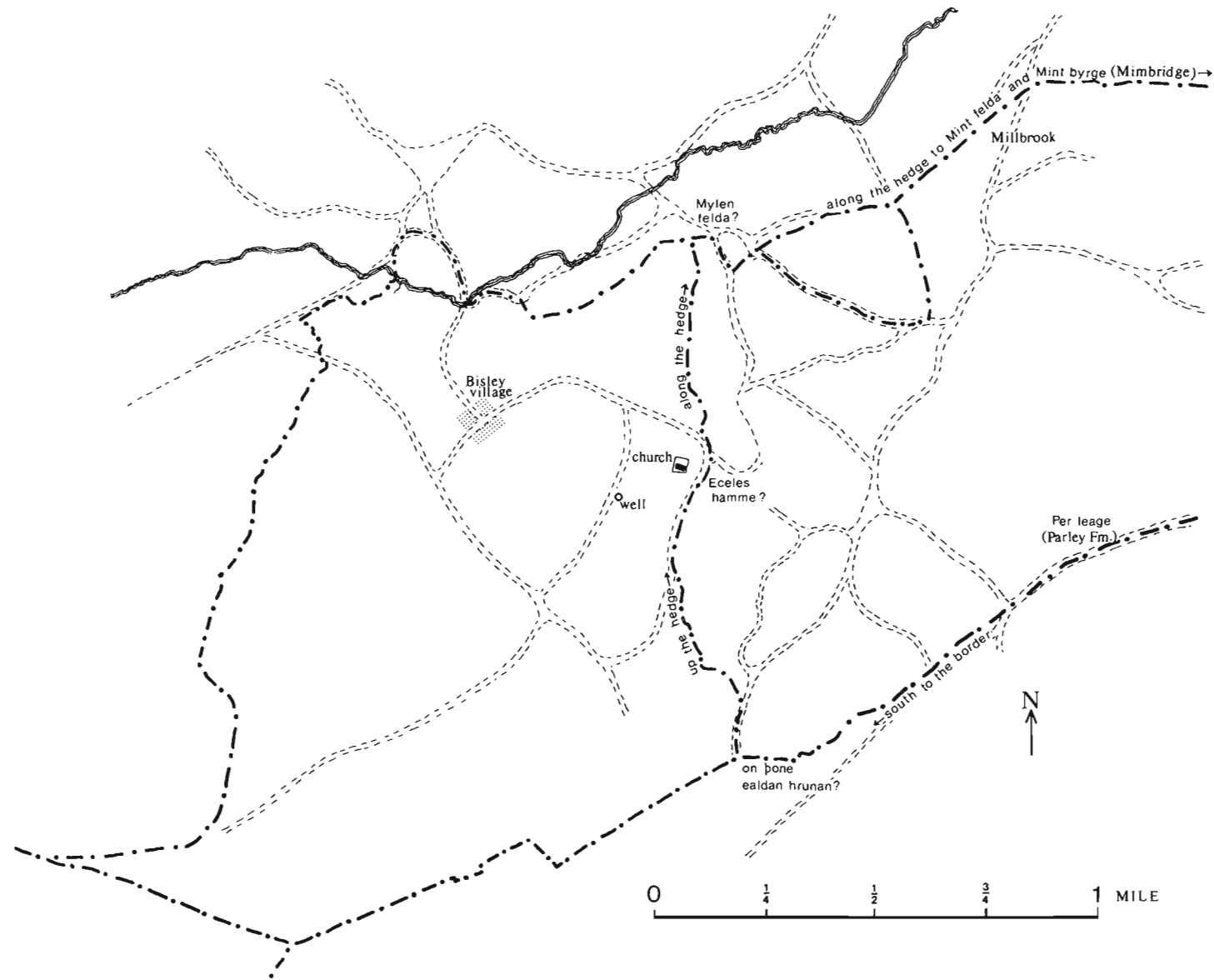
Fig 29   The relationship of Bisley church to *eceles hamme* in the Pyrford charter-bounds (S621)

than Taylor's 'Period C' (950–1100). So Surrey provides no support for those who would claim that private local churches were familiar features in the landscape before the 10th century.

Important pre-Conquest estate churches: the royal demesne

The Domesday churches on former demesne of King Edward have already, with one exception, been identified as old minsters (ch 4). Queen Edith's TRE demesne was a smaller group of manors with further churches which, while less important than the minsters, nonetheless stand out from the main body. With other, mainly Wealden churches they represent an intermediate category, comparable to the 'secondary mother-churches' of Kent recently discussed by Everitt.[26]

Three valuable Wealden estates had belonged to Edith TRE, and all three undoubtedly had churches in 1086. Domesday mentions them at Shere and Dorking, and by the late 12th century both had impressive cruciform buildings which may have reflected an earlier importance.[27] At Reigate, where no church is mentioned by Domesday Book, there survives part of a late Saxon grave-slab or cross-shaft.[28] All three churches originally had parochial jurisdiction over half or more of their respective hundreds. Neighbouring churches, not in royal hands, may have had a similar status. Shalford was the head church of Æthelnoth's great manor of Bramley, already with two subsidiary churches by 1086 at the latest (below, p119). Others in this area, such as Wotton and Betchworth, may once have had wider areas of influence than their definable parishes suggest.

The Queen's ownership of three of these churches suggests a royal origin, and at Reigate, Shalford and Shere the glebes were abnormally large.[29] At Wotton the nave may be pre-Conquest with early Norman additions, and excavation has revealed what appear to be underlying earlier walls.[30] Shalford mother church, with its two daughters (below, p119), can scarcely have been recent in 1086. Just as the old multiple estate economy continued to suit the under-developed Wealden landscape (above, pp25–7), so the churches which served the sprawling Wealden manors resemble, on a small scale, the ancient minsters. A similar response answered a similar need: the primary establishment of the Church in a region of scattered and unstable settlement. As denns gradually gave way to fixed dwellings, the pastoral problem here in the 9th, 10th and 11th centuries must have been similar to that faced by earlier rulers of Surrey on first accepting Christianity. By this time, in the more populous area north of the Downs, the minster *parochiae* were already yielding to a more developed type of ecclesiastical geography.

Extra-Wealden Surrey does, however, contain two churches which fall uncertainly between the categories of minster and local church. One is Wimbledon, the mother church of the archbishop's manor of Mortlake (above, p25), which had chapels at Barnes, Putney and Mortlake; its status as an important late Anglo-Saxon estate church is reflected in the high 1291 valuation of £40[31]. The other case is Walton-on-Thames. It has been suggested (above, p101) that Kingston and Elmbridge hundreds were both served by a minster at Kingston, its *parochia* reduced by 1086 to little more than the hundred in which it stood. Domesday Book only mentions three churches in Elmbridge hundred, of which Walton, with its large parish and valuation of £30 pa in 1291,[32] was always the most important. Of the other two, West Molesey and Stoke D'Abernon, it is significant that the former later emerges as a chapel of Walton.[33] Walton church approaches minster status, dominant in the hundred and with pre-Domesday mother-church rights.[34] But the manor belonged TRE to Earding, a wealthy layman with three other Surrey properties,[35] and it never appears as royal demesne. Possibly the unusual standing of this church reflects the creation of Elmbridge as a 'private' hundred,[36] with minster rights diverted from the old mother church to a new one for the benefit of its owner.[37]

In Surrey the late Anglo-Saxon kings had little need to build churches; their estates were already well-supplied with ancient minsters. Occasionally a supplementary church might be built on a large royal manor. According to a Hyde Abbey chronicle, both Sanderstead and its Wealden denn of Lingfield already had churches when Queen Æthelflaed gave them to the Abbey before 964.[38] The second Domesday church at Godalming (above, pp97–9) may have been built either by the king or by the clerical farmer in Edward the Confessor's reign. But the main initiative in church-building had now passed to landowners with a more immediate local interest.

Late Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical proprietors

It is entirely predictable that abbots and bishops should have been enthusiastic church-founders. The 10th and 11th centuries, the great age of growth for local churches, were also the age of the reformed monasteries. English bishops following in the footsteps of St Dunstan, often of monastic origin and closely associated with the great Benedictine houses, showed concern for the quality of the rural priesthood, the stabilisation of relationships between churches and pastoral care in general.[39] The religious climate must have favoured the building of new churches on episcopal and monastic estates, even though this activity is not conspicuous in the literary sources. Surrey was a county in which two great ecclesiastical institutions – Chertsey Abbey and the Archbishopric of Canterbury – had major interests, and by 1086 the manors of both were abnormally well-endowed with churches.

The preservation of minster rights made the neighbourhood of Chertsey Abbey a striking blank on the ecclesiastical map (above, p107). Equally striking, however, is the abundance of churches on the Abbey's manors which lay outside a six-mile radius from it (fig 38). They are listed on seven of the eleven scattered manors, in addition to nearby Chobham;[40] of the four churchless manors,[41] two were trivial properties of a kind virtually devoid of churches in the Surrey Domesday, while Cobham may have been considered near enough to Chertsey for the maintenance of direct pastoral contact. Expressed another way, churches are listed on eight of the ten manors which fall within a value range of £2 to £20 pa. Comparison with table 12 shows that this provision is well above the average for the Surrey Domesday as a whole. Among these, furthermore, Chobham had a church and chapel, while Epsom and Sutton each had two churches, almost certainly identifiable with the modern parish churches of Epsom and Ewell on the one hand and Sutton and Horley on the other.[42]

The distribution of these buildings suggests pastoral motives extending beyond a simple policy of planting a church on each administrative unit in the Abbey's estate. Chobham church with its chapel (probably Bisley church) served distant regions of the main estate. The pairing of Sutton and Horley churches, together with that of Sanderstead and Lingfield already mentioned, provides our earliest evidence for the secondary establishment of churches in discrete denns of head manors. The small contiguous manors of Coulsdon and Waddington had separate churches, an arrangement which was rationalised (presumably in response to settlement change) in the late Middle Ages by the abandonment of Waddington church.[43] The remaining three churches served scattered properties: the relatively large manor of Great Bookham and the smaller ones of Petersham and Tooting.

Were these churches built before the Conquest? Structural evidence, confined to a possible late Saxon nave shell at Coulsdon (fig 30),[44] is unhelpful.[45] But Wulfwold, the last pre-Conquest abbot of Chertsey, had retained office until his death in 1084,[46] and Norman influence on his habits of church-building seems unlikely. Except for Tooting (below, p122), the Chertsey Abbey churches are best interpreted as the work of English abbots.

The archiepiscopal estate in Surrey, comprising Mortlake (valued at £32 TRE),[47] Croydon

(£12),[48] Merstham (£8),[49] Cheam (£8),[50] East Horsley (£4),[51] and Walworth (£1 10s),[52] was equally abundant in Domesday churches: only the East Horsley entry fails to include one. Conceivably we see here the hand of Lanfranc. But Cheam provides strong evidence for a foundation shortly before the Conquest: Christ Church Canterbury had acquired the manor from a layman in 1018,[53] the existing building is late Saxon in style, and its dedication is to St Dunstan, whose cult was in eclipse during Lanfranc's pontificate.[54] Only a fragment of this church now remains, but an old plan[55] suggests that it comprised a rectangular nave/chancel with a western annexe longer in the north–south than in the west–east dimension (fig 30). If so, the archiepiscopal church of East Horsley, unmentioned by Domesday Book but Saxo-Norman in style (fig 30), is sufficiently similar to suggest a direct parallel for this relatively unusual plan-form.[56] If this architectural relationship is genuine, it may tend to suggest that Cheam and East Horsley churches were both built by the same patron at around the Conquest period.

The Chertsey and the Canterbury churches alike suggest a continuing process of foundation which the Conquest need neither have stimulated nor interrupted. The secondary character of some of the Chertsey foundations (the Wealden church at Horley and the pair serving Coulsdon and Waddington) suggests a context of relatively recent topographical development, and it seems *prima facie* likely that all or most post-date the Abbey's regularisation in 964. Both groups suggest a programme of church-building spread over perhaps no more than one or two generations: not so much a general tendency for religious bodies to found churches[57] as active and deliberate pastoral care on the part of two great institutions. Tenants were either to have ready access to churches of their own or, in the case of Chertsey, to be served from the Abbey itself.

Late Anglo-Saxon lay proprietors

It is above all to late Saxon thegns that the building of local churches should be ascribed. While the prominence given to private lay churches in the law-codes may partly be due to their tendency to become independent, there can be no doubt that thousands of English parish churches owe their existence to 10th- and 11th-century private landowners. The nature of lay patronage has often been discussed, but there are some central issues which can only be tackled in a local context: what were the motives of church-building thegns; how socially restricted was the practice; and was it normal or exceptional for one man to have multiple churches?

The possessions of the house of Godwine collectively overshadowed all other lay estates in the county. Despite their high value in 1066, the manors of Harold, Swein and Leofwine were not particularly well-endowed with churches.[58] Churches are, however, recorded at Witley and Oxted, two large manors of Godwine and Gytha respectively.[59] Both Witley parish church and its chapel at Thursley are stylistically Anglo-Saxon, but in neither case is a pre-Conquest date likely. Both churches have walls over three feet thick; at Witley it has now been demonstrated that the lavish early 12th-century scheme of wallpaintings is almost certainly contemporary with the building (which must therefore have replaced the church mentioned in 1086).[60] Thursley chapel is not mentioned in Domesday; its hilltop site, its dedication to St Michael and the 'Thor' place-name might suggest the conscious replacement of some pagan cult, but they conform equally well to a group of what seem to be relatively late Kentish churches with this dedication.[61]

Half-a-dozen other landowners, each with an estate valued at more than £20 pa in 1086, make up the leading local aristocracy on the eve of the Conquest. Osweard's three manors all lack recorded churches, though at Godstone, the largest, an omission seems likely.[62] Earding held the important manor and church of Walton-on-Thames (above, p113), but his smaller properties seem somewhat deficient in churches.[63] In the cases of Ælfmær and Azur, the names are common and it is not certain in either case that we are dealing with one man; at all events, only two of the

Fig 29a   The destroyed late Anglo-Saxon church at Hascombe: view from the south-east by H. Hussey,
1845. (Bod. Lib. MS Top Gen f 18 f.35ᵛ. Reproduced by permission of the curators of the
Bodleian Library.)

twelve small, scattered estates assigned to Ælfmær have recorded churches.[64] On manors
ascribed to Azur the provision seems good: churches are listed at Beddington, Woodmansterne,
Albury, Warlingham and Henley,[65] comprising all but one of his properties valued at over £5 pa.
The fact that all these manors (except Henley, which Azur gave to Chertsey Abbey after 1066)
were held TRW by Richard fitz Gilbert suggests that the estate of one man named Azur was
transferred *en bloc*. Adopting this criterion for separating him from possible namesakes, we may
say that four of Azur's five former manors, or perhaps five of six, had churches TRW,[66] and of
these Albury retains a possible late Saxon building (fig 30).[67]

The implication of the evidence for Godwine and Azur – that a wealthy man might have
churches in proportion to his tenants' needs – is reinforced by the cases of Beorhtsige and
Æthelnoth. As 'Brixi cild', Beorhtsige appears as a major landowner in the Kent and Surrey
sections of Domesday Book, and occurs also in Hampshire and Essex.[68] Of his four Surrey
manors, churches are mentioned at Compton (valued at £8 pa TRE)[69] West Horsley (£8)[70] and
Stoke D'Abernon (£4),[71] leaving only Hatcham (£2)[72] lacking one. In all three cases there may be
surviving pre-Conquest fabric. Stoke D'Abernon church (fig 30) had an aiseless nave, with a west
gallery approached through a high-level doorway in the south wall, and an apsidal chancel.[73]
Although the great age recently claimed for this church[74] must be discounted, it is certainly a
pure late-Saxon building; the interpretation of its gallery as a mark of lay proprietorship, a
forerunner of the family pew,[75] may still be valid. The nave and possibly tower at Compton,[76]
and the nave at West Horsley,[77] are also early work with no visible sign of Norman influence.

Æthelnoth of Canterbury was one of the most important Kentish thegns of the mid 11th
century. He was among William's leading hostages of 1067, and as 'Alnod cild' he is a frequent
TRE tenant in Kent and neighbouring counties.[78] In Surrey he appears six times, no churches
being listed at Blechingley, which he held jointly with two others (TRE value £13 pa),[79] or at
Chivington (£11) which is now in Blechingley parish.[80] Churches occur, however, at Banstead

Stoke D'Abernon   *Cheam*

Window A (10 X scale)

East Horsley

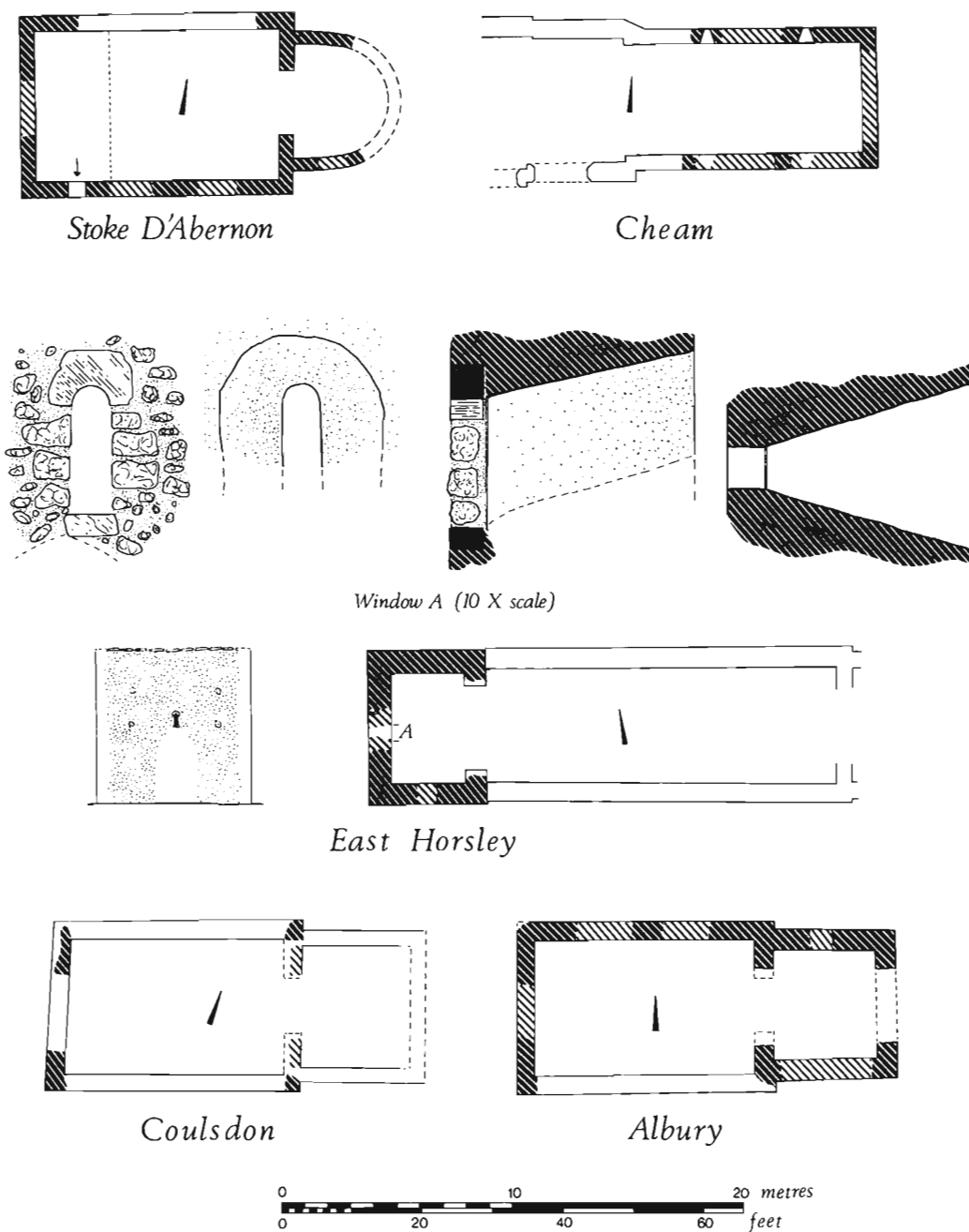*Coulsdon*   *Albury*

Fig 30   Church plans. (For sources see accounts in *VCHSy*, and other sources cited in the present text under
references to the individual churches. The plan and detail of East Horsley church are from a
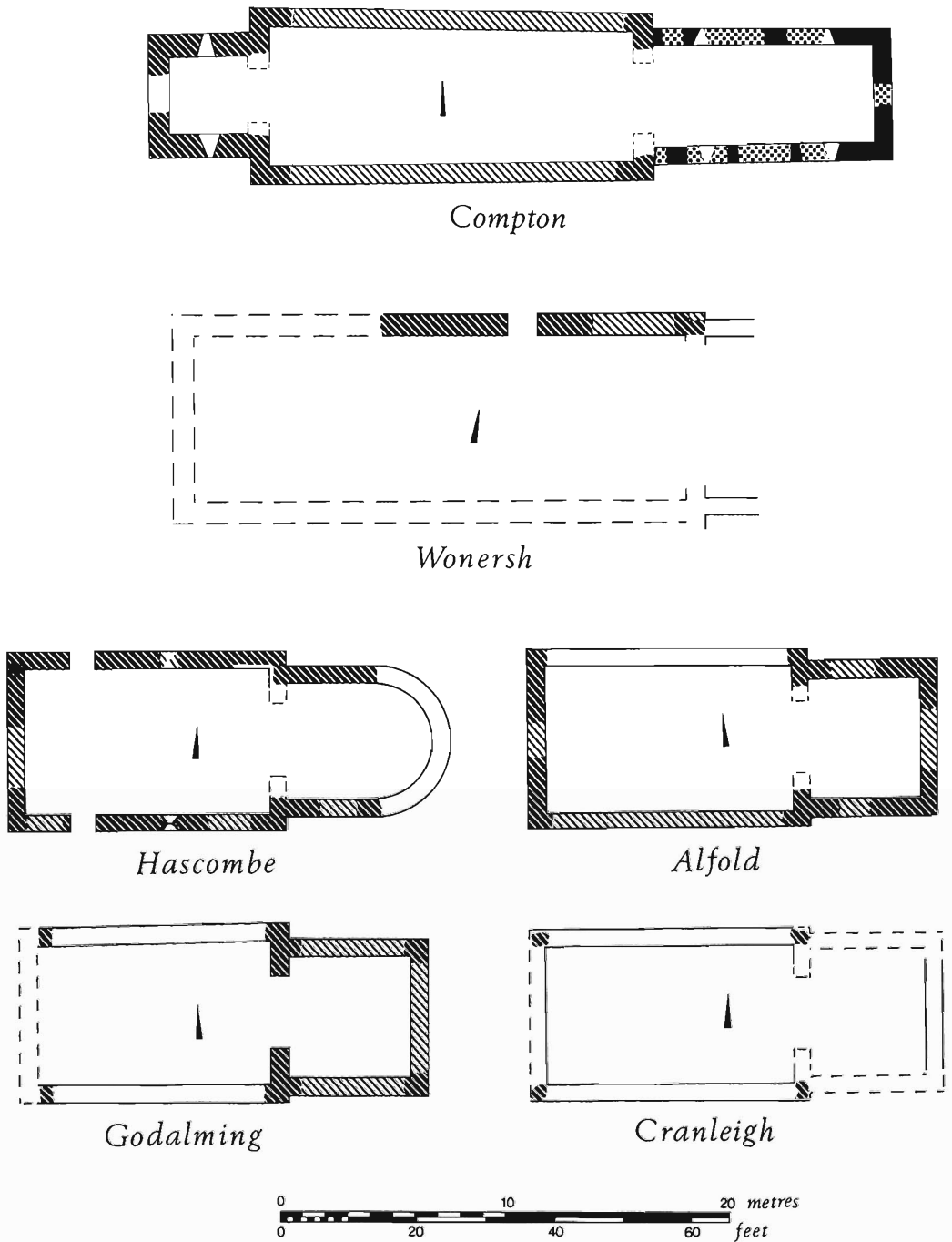personal survey. For key to shading conventions, see px)

Compton

Wonersh

Hascombe

Alfold

Godalming

Cranleigh

0   10   20 _metres_
0   20   40   60 _feet_

Fig 31   Church plans. (For sources see accounts in _VCHSy_, and other sources cited in the present text under references to the individual churches. The plans of Wonersh (surviving portion) and Alfold churches are from personal surveys. For key to shading conventions, see px)

(£10),[81] Tillingdown (£7),[82] and Buckland (£5),[83] while Bramley (£40)[84] had no less than three. Architectural evidence, inconclusive in the first three cases,[85] is helpful where Bramley is concerned. Not Bramley church itself but Shalford church was the mother church of this great Domesday estate; both Bramley and Wonersh are recorded as its chapelries, the former being still subject to Shalford's burial rights in the late 16th century.[86] Also within the area of Domesday Bramley are the parish churches of Dunsfold and Hascombe (fig 9D). Both its site (on the older-settled northern part of the estate) and the normal implications of ecclesiastical dependence suggest that Shalford was the senior as well as the dominant church.[87] Of the other four, there is no reason to think that churches existed at Bramley and Dunsfold before the existing 12th- and 13th-century buildings.[88] But the churches at both Wonersh and Hascombe formerly retained late Saxon double-splayed windows, in the latter case (figs 29a, 31) in a small, lofty nave of distinctively pre-Conquest proportions.[89] Thus the three Domesday churches of Bramley should almost certainly be identified with the modern parish churches of Shalford, Wonersh and Hascombe, and of these both subsidiary churches were Anglo-Saxon in style. Once again, a pre-Conquest origin is suggested: it seems much more likely that these churches were founded by Æthelnoth or a predecessor than by Odo of Bayeux, the tenant in 1086.

The smaller TRE landowners were much less frequently proprietors of churches. A recurring pattern is for one man to have held a small group of manors, at a total TRE value of some £10 to £20 pa, with a church mentioned at one alone. Thus a church appears only at West Molesey among Tofi's four manors,[90] only at Wisley among Osweald's six,[91] and only at Titsey among Godtovi's three.[92] Only Betchworth, the most valuable of Cola's three manors,[93] had a recorded church, and here a late Anglo-Saxon shaft-capital re-used in the early Norman fabric indicates a pre-Conquest stone building.[94] On estates of the humbler *antecessores*, with a total value of £10 pa or less, churches are distinctly unusual and sometimes occur in circumstances suggesting post-Conquest foundation (below, p122).

Overall, the incidence of churches was markedly higher not only on the more valuable manors, but also on individual manors of proprietors who were generally the most wealthy. The structural evidence tends to suggest that post-Conquest foundations have not distorted this pattern very seriously: it is significant, for instance, that the estates of Beorhtsige, Æthelnoth and the archbishop include between them about half of all Surrey churches known to contain stylistically Anglo-Saxon work. There is, of course, no evidence for how the 1066 pattern had evolved: many of the older churches may have changed hands many times with the estates on which they stood. We can only say that the mid 11th-century evidence suggests a correlation between wealth and certain norms of church possession.

R V Lennard successfully refuted the belief that a late Saxon thegn, no matter how numerous his estates, would normally have a church on one only.[95] Nonetheless, the Surrey evidence suggests that church-founding habits varied somewhat according to the standing of the founder. Such cases as Thursley, Wonersh and Hascombe must have been subsidiary 'out-churches' to serve regions within great lords' estates. A single church, however, often seems to have answered the convenience or status of a lesser thegn, even when his properties were scattered. Even this was only normal among men considerably above the lowest ranks of thegnhood: only a minority of TRE landowners with manors totalling five to ten hides in Surrey (and some of course had them in other counties too) have listed Domesday churches. More so, apparently, than during the Norman period, church ownership was still usually accompanied by considerable wealth and extensive local interests.

The Church in Domesday Surrey (Fig 32)

Tables 12–13 show the incidence of Domesday churches in relation to TRW values and population figures. Clearly this incidence is highest on the more valuable and populous manors, a distribution which would be still more marked if the large churchless properties surrounding Chertsey Abbey were excluded. As we have seen, there is a more subtle weighting, within this pattern, towards individual components of the larger TRE estates: great men were more liable than others to build churches on their manors. But equally, as table 13 shows, the manors most likely to acquire them were those with a large body of tenants: such properties afforded both a pastoral need and a handsome yield of tithes.

The TRW data are consistent with the view that where new foundations are concerned, the Norman contribution had so far been slight. Thus subinfeudated manors and the demesnes of tenants-in-chief had churches in roughly equal proportion within each value group: survivals from the past, the churches fail to reflect the tenurial structure of 1086. And while the new style had certainly begun to influence the continuing process of rebuilding, it seems unlikely that it was yet widespread except on estates of wealthy men.

The new aristocracy was rebuilding favoured churches in a way which gave them permanent distinction, with fine masonry and spacious proportions. Perhaps most characteristic of these

TABLE 12   The incidence of churches in the Surrey Domesday in relation to 1086 values

	Above £20	£11–£20	£6–£10	£1–£5	Below £1	Not Valued	Total
Total of listed holdings*	12	30	41	103	25	24	235
Total with listed churches	8	19	21	13	nil	nil	61
Percentage with listed churches	66.7	63.3	51.2	12.6	nil	nil	26.0

* This excludes Guildford and Southwark.

TABLE 13   The incidence of churches in the Surrey Domesday in relation to 1086 listed population

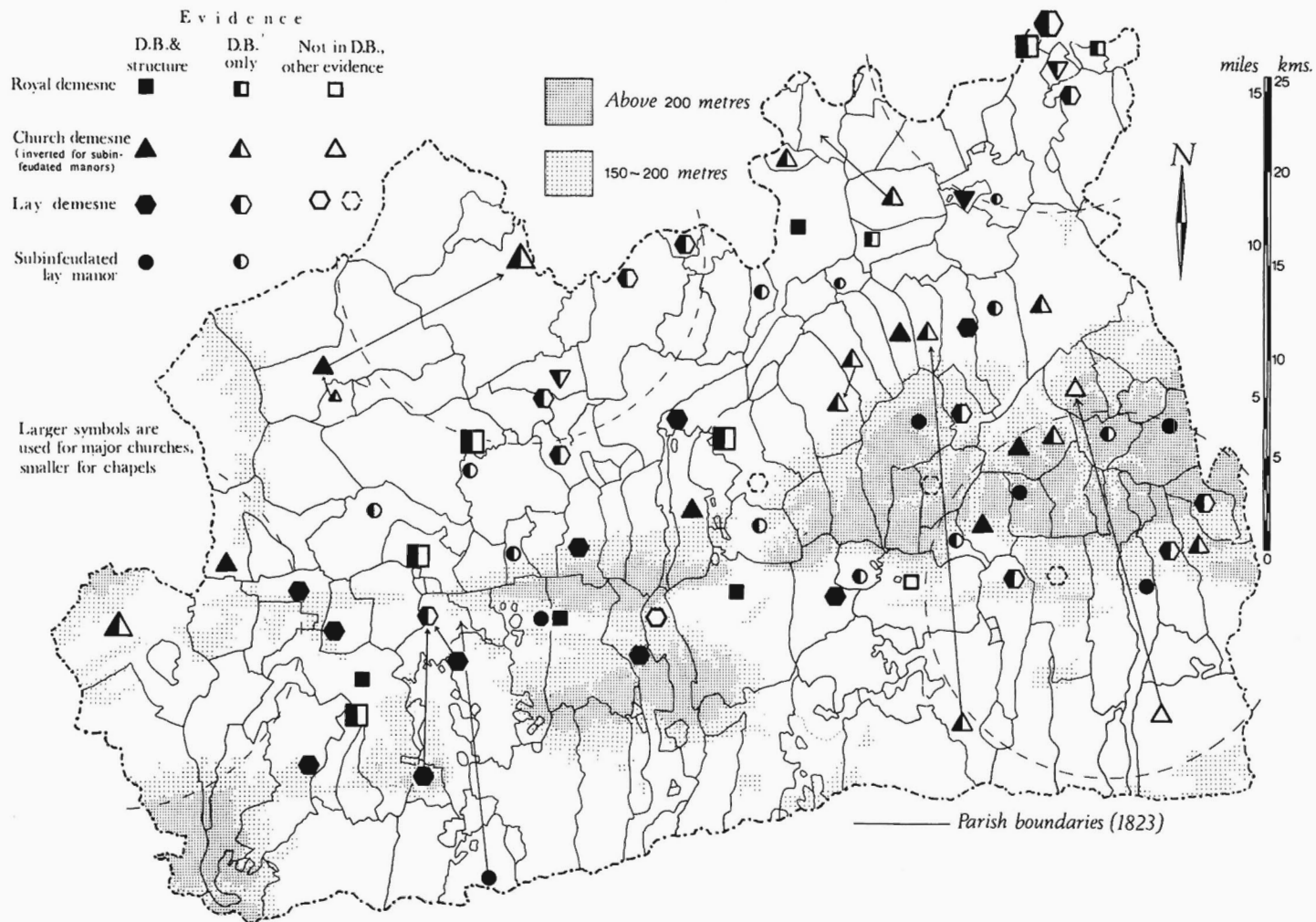|	Above 60	46–60	31–45	16–30	1–15	Nil	Total
Total of listed holdings*	9	12	24	48	110	32	235
Total with listed churches	7	7	16	17	13	1	61
Percentage with listed churches	77.8	58.3	66.7	35.4	11.9	3.1	26.0

* This excludes Guildford and Southwark.

Fig 32 Churches recorded in 1086

greater estate churches is the three-cell axial-tower type, of which Carshalton (fig 33) may provide one of the earliest Surrey examples.[96] The demesne manors of Richard fitz Gilbert still retain more than their share of big early Norman churches (fig 33): at Betchworth, where Cola's stone church was replaced by a fine axial-tower building;[97] at Walton-on-Thames, where there is evidence for a large nave of Norman proportions;[98] at Thorncroft, where the original Norman church (not listed in Domesday) seems to have been very similar in plan to Betchworth;[99] and at Blechingley, where the church with its big west tower (again unmentioned in 1086) was built in or soon after Richard's day to serve the contiguous estates of Blechingley and Chivington.[100] There are suggestions here of a campaign, still uncompleted in 1086, to provide the Clare demesnes with fine new churches and perhaps where necessary to found them *ab initio*.[101]

Although some of the simple early-Norman churches probably replaced Saxon buildings, a handful listed by Domesday Book on small subinfeudated manors may be recent foundations marking the beginnings of a new phase: Chaldon, held by Ralph from the Bishop of Bayeux (valued at £4 pa TRW);[102] West Clandon, held by Hugh from Edward of Salisbury (£3);[103] Chelsham, held by Robert de Wateville from Richard fitz Gilbert (£7);[104] Long Ditton, held by Picot from Richard fitz Gilbert (£2 10s);[105] Gatton, held by Herfrid from Odo of Bayeux (£6);[106] and Tooting, held by Hamo the sheriff from Chertsey Abbey (£3 10s).[107] There is evidence for substantial early-Norman work at Chaldon (fig 34), Gatton and Tooting churches,[108] while the dedication of Chelsham church to St Leonard suggests a post-Conquest foundation.[109] Four of the six manors were exceptionally small and sparsely populated in relation to others with churches in Domesday.[110] These examples conflict with the suggested late Saxon pattern and accord with post-Domesday developments: already by 1086 a new, distinctively Norman element in the pattern of churches had begun to appear.

As we look back over the centuries preceding 1086, chronology remains an intractable problem. Overall, however, Domesday Book and related evidence leave a strong impression that there had been much activity in the recent past. The Wealden 'satellite' churches of Lingfield, Horley, Thursley, Wonersh and Hascombe, founded within larger and older tenurial units, foreshadow the future too closely to be interpreted as anything other than the early stages of an emergent pattern.

Four churches in south-west Surrey provide especially interesting evidence for the intensity of activity during the 'Great Rebuilding'. The primary ground-plans of Hascombe and Godalming churches, daughters respectively of Shalford church and Godalming minster (above, pp119, 99) are identical both with each other[111] and with those of two neighbouring churches, Alfold and Cranleigh (fig 31). At Cranleigh, in the Wealden hinterland of Domesday Shere, the early history of the church is obscure and the structural evidence inconclusive.[112] Alfold church seems to have been yet another pre-Domesday Wealden 'satellite': when first recorded in the mid 13th century it was appurtenant to East Shalford, eight miles northwards, and it is almost certainly identical with the church listed on that manor in 1086.[113] Structural analysis suggests that the fabric is 11th-century, and the font is an early one.[114] So at least three and perhaps four standard two-cell churches, all secondary elements in the ecclesiastical pattern and within a few miles of each other, were built to common dimensions in a late Saxon style. The uniformity of both context and fabric suggests that we are dealing with new foundations; these simple buildings are surely a physical testimony to the rapid expansion of the Weald. The Conquest probably had little direct effect on a process which was of relatively recent origin but had already gathered rapid momentum.
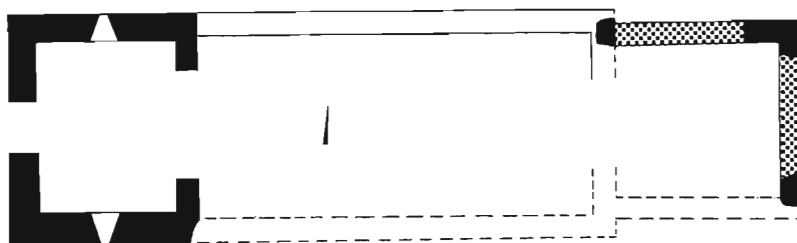
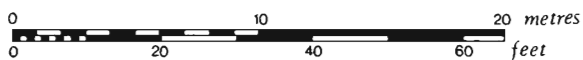*Blechingley*
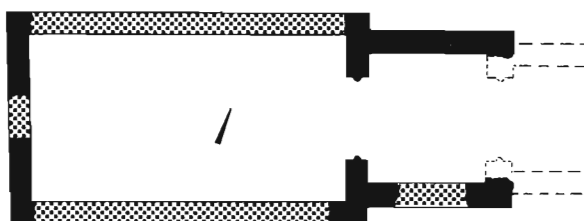
Betchworth
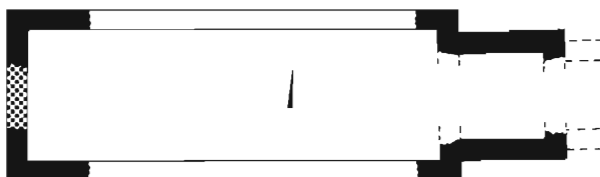
Carshalton

Charlwood

Fig 33 Church plans. (For sources see accounts in *VCHSy*, and other sources cited in the present text under references to the invidividual churches. The Betchworth and Carshalton plans are based on personal surveys of the surviving remnants. For key to shading conventions, see px)

The private churches of laymen, 1086–1140

The conquerors brought with them an attitude to local churches which was probably more anarchic and proprietary than that of their English predecessors.[115] Their disregard of ancient minster rights has already been noted (above, pp107–8), and for two generations the promptings of ambition and status in the matter of church-building had free rein. With the rapid progress of subinfeudation in a developing countryside, the incentives for new foundations were bound to increase. Thus in the last decades of the 11th century the social range of church ownership rapidly increased to include a broad class of minor feudal tenants.

Throughout the Anglo-Norman period, lords of manors continued to build churches for their own and their tenants' use.[116] In Surrey it is very striking that nearly all the churches which first appear between 1086 and 1140 were in lay hands. One exception is Barnes church, which stood on land held of the see of Canterbury by the canons of St Paul's and was presumably built either by the canons or by the Archbishop.[117] Another may be the fine axial-tower church at Charlwood (fig 33), though the tenure of this manor by Christ Church Canterbury cannot be traced before the 13th century. Urban expansion is reflected in the appearance of three churches at Southwark (St Olave, St Margaret and St George),[118] in the enlargement of St Mary's Guildford around its mid 11th-century tower,[119] and perhaps in Norman fabric at Holy Trinity Guildford.[120] Merton church may have been built by Gilbert the sheriff for his community of canons and then assigned for ordinary manorial use when they moved to a new site shortly afterwards, though all the visible details date from much later in the 12th century.[121]

However, it is a group of some sixteen churches on minor lay manors, more evidently private in character than those of any later (and perhaps of any earlier) period, which represent the real Anglo-Norman contribution to church-building. The concentration of these on the Downs and dip-slope, where 11th-century manorial fission seems especially prominent (above, pp33–4), emphasises that the proliferation of churches followed naturally the proliferation of small manors.[122]

The strip manors across the dip-slope of the Downs were established by 1066 (above, pp33–4), but it was essentially in the Norman period that the line of churches serving them took shape with no less than five additions. At Cuddington Ilbert de Lacy (Domesday tenant of Odo of Bayeux), or his successor Hugh Laval, built a church which had passed by c1120 to the king's scribe Bernard; excavation has shown that the standard Saxo-Norman building of c1100 (fig 34) was the first to occupy the site.[123] Ashtead is a clear case: a charter of Bishop William Giffard (1107–29) records the dedication of the church as a chapel of Leatherhead with an endowment given by the lord Laurence de Rouen, and the simple original building (fig 34) is still clearly traceable.[124] Similar in plan was the early Norman church of Little Bookham (fig 34), a small manor already subinfeudated by 1086 to one Hansard whose descendants remained immediate lords until c1300.[125] Fetcham church (fig 34), Saxo-Norman in style but unmentioned by Domesday Book, is of unknown origin; it must have served either the Warenne or the Clare third of this manor, or possibly marks the union of both at an early date in the tenure of the d'Abernon family.[126] Finally, Effingham church, granted to Merton Priory by the *dominus fundi* at some unknown date before 1153 (below, p152), served property held by Osweald from Richard fitz Gilbert in 1086 and subinfeudated soon afterwards to the Dammartin family.[127]

Small Downland estates were also rapidly acquiring churches. Addington church (fig 36) is dated to c1120–40, both by the structure[128] and by its initial endowment by the grandfather of Bartholomew de Chesney who gave it to Southwark Priory in c1180.[129] Early Norman churches remain at Farleigh (fig 34) and Tatsfield, respectively subinfeudated by 1086 to Robert de Wateville and Anschetil de Ros whose descendants retained long-term possession in both cases.[130] Caterham had a little early 12th-century apsidal church (fig 36).[131] The tiny Saxo-Norman
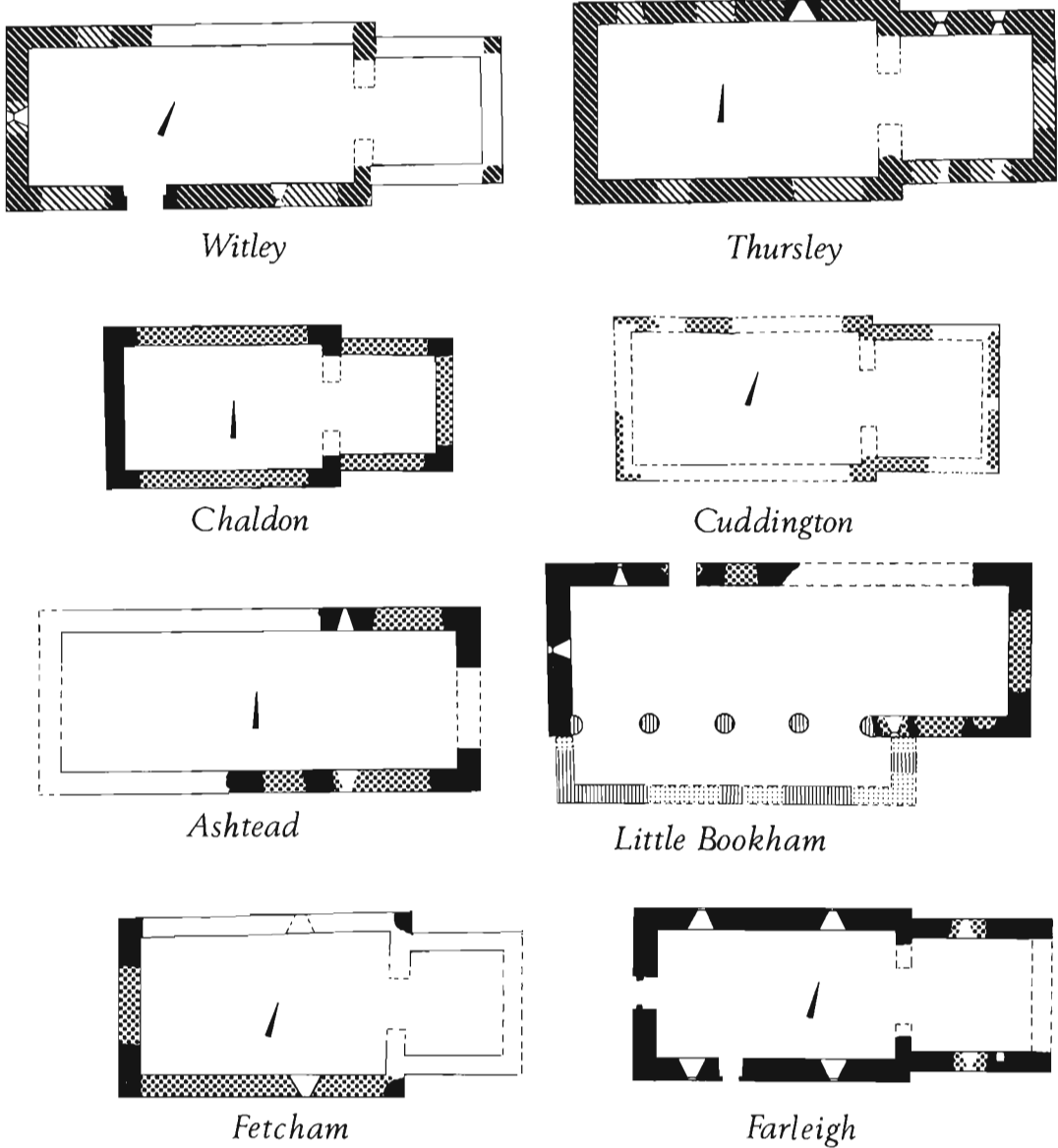
Fig 34   Church plans. (For sources see accounts in *VCHSy* and other sources cited in the present text under references to the individual churches. The footing of the demolished S aisle at Little Bookham is as published by J M G Blair, Excavations at Little Bookham church, 1952–3, *SyAC*, **60** (1963), 83–5). (For key to shading conventions, see px)

church of Headley (fig 36)[132] served a manor which was held by Ralph de Felgeres in 1086 and subsequently passed to the Tilers family.[133] Chilworth church, on a demesne estate of Odo of Bayeux which had been subinfeudated to the local Utworth family by the late 12th century,[134] had a large early-Norman west tower.[135] Walton-on-the-Hill, which may have been held of the Clare honour by the Dammartins during the 12th century, possesses a fine lead font of c1150.[136] Yet another case was perhaps the lost church of Burgh, in modern Banstead parish, given by John de Burgh to Southwark Priory at some date before c1180.[137]

None of these churches appears in Domesday or has pre-Conquest features. The case for a Norman origin seems strong at Cuddington, Ashtead and Addington, while Caterham church bears the characteristically post-Conquest dedication of St Leonard.[138] Fetcham, Headley and Ashtead churches all have (or had) tile-turned single-splayed windows, a feature (otherwise unknown in Surrey) which may reflect local building-practice over a limited period in an area abundant in Roman tile. As a group, these churches should be seen as products of subinfeudation, the work of minor Norman families with some local but little national importance such as the Watevilles,[139] the Dammartins,[140] the Rouens[141] and the Chesneys.[142] The manors, especially those on the Downland, were small: only Ashtead (£12), Cuddington (£9 12s) and Walton (£6) were valued above £5 pa in 1086,[143] and of the remainder only Addington and Headley above £3.[144] As already mentioned (p122), some half-dozen Domesday churches are of a like kind. It seems clear that the incentives created by subinfeudation had given a new impetus to the process of church-building, one which was particularly active among the small estates on the North Downs.

In the Weald these incentives were still stronger, and it is no surprise to find churches appearing in the former denns as they emerged as economic and tenurial entities. Hambledon, where the font (below, p155) shows that a church existed by the early 12th century, was the only one of these manors which had developed sufficiently by 1086 to merit an independent Domesday reference.[145] Leigh church, in Warenne hands before c1135,[146] had presumably been built on outlying Wealden land of either Reigate or Betchworth. At nearby Chivington, the Wealden hinterland which was to become Horne parish was probably already subinfeudated by 1086 (above, p54) and here a chapel, formerly an independent church held by the lay tenant, existed in c1150–60.[147] Another case may be Crowhurst, though its early history is obscure: the nave seems to be early Norman, and the dedication to St George suggests a date of foundation after c1100.[148] The standard two-cell church at Burstow (fig 36),[149] serving an old archiepiscopal denn subinfeudated to a local family by the 1090s (above, pp53–4), existed during St Anselm's reign (below, p147). The dedication of this church to St Bartholomew is interesting in view of the archiepiscopal connection, for his cult grew in England after a relic was brought to Canterbury between 1020 and 1035;[150] this, and the nearby dedications to St Bartholomew at Leigh and Horley, suggest a localised 11th-century cult in the eastern Surrey Weald.

These minor lay foundations constitute a remarkably homogeneous group, which seem characteristic of the fifty or sixty years after the Domesday survey and largely confined to that period. Such rapid proliferation of new fiefs which were independent economic units would never occur again; nor would the men for whom the fiefs were created ever again enjoy such freedom to control the churches on their land. By the years of the Anarchy, we seem to detect a new phase, in which the initiative had passed once more to ecclesiastical landlords.

The 'pastoral' churches of religious houses, 1140–80

There is a striking consistency about the churches which are first mentioned during the third quarter of the century and where the earliest architectural features are of c1140–60. A few are on royal demesne: Bramley chapel,[151] St Nicholas Guildford,[152] Merrow[153] and Puttenham (fig
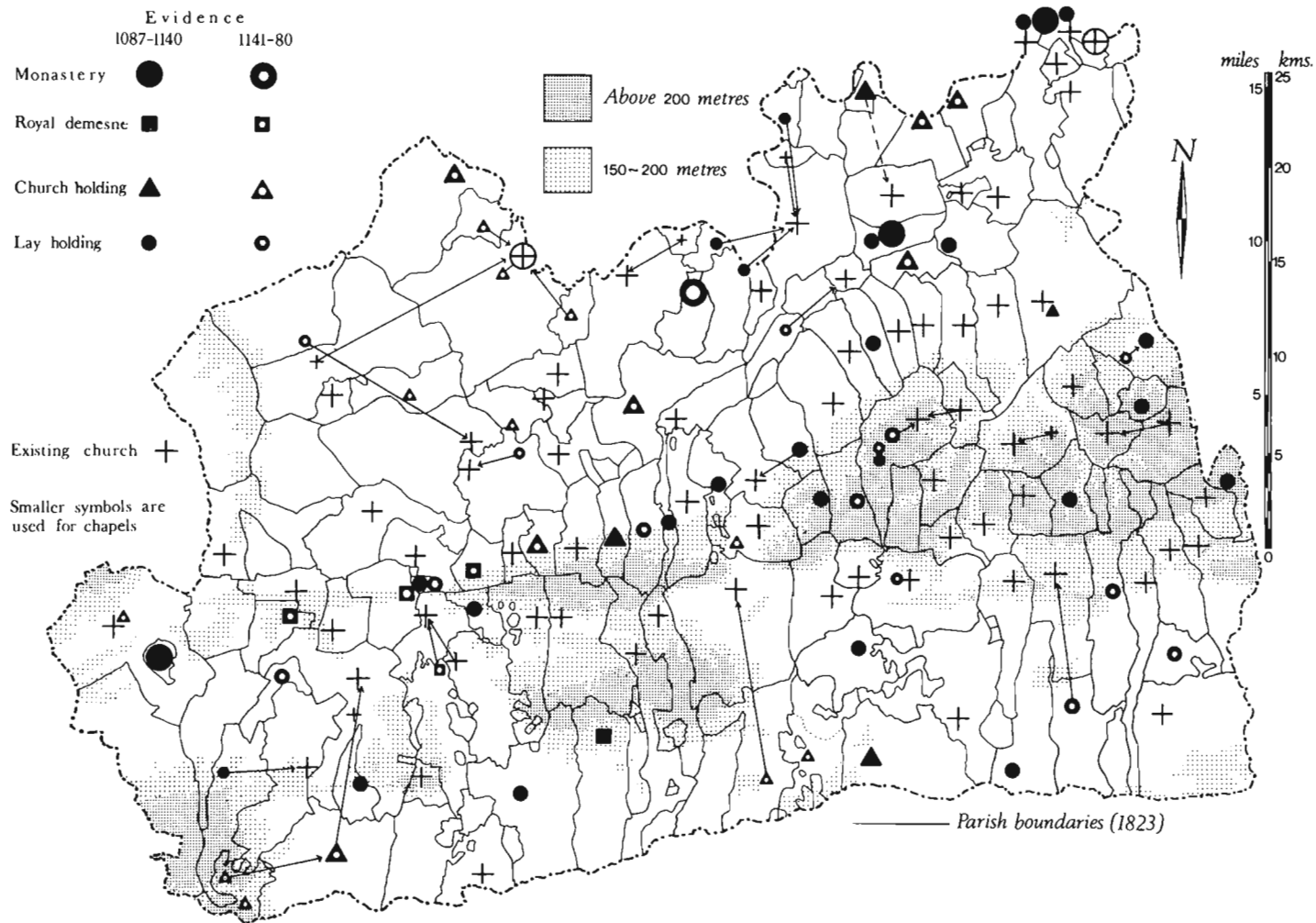
Fig 35   Churches first recorded during 1087–1180

Addington

Caterham

Headley

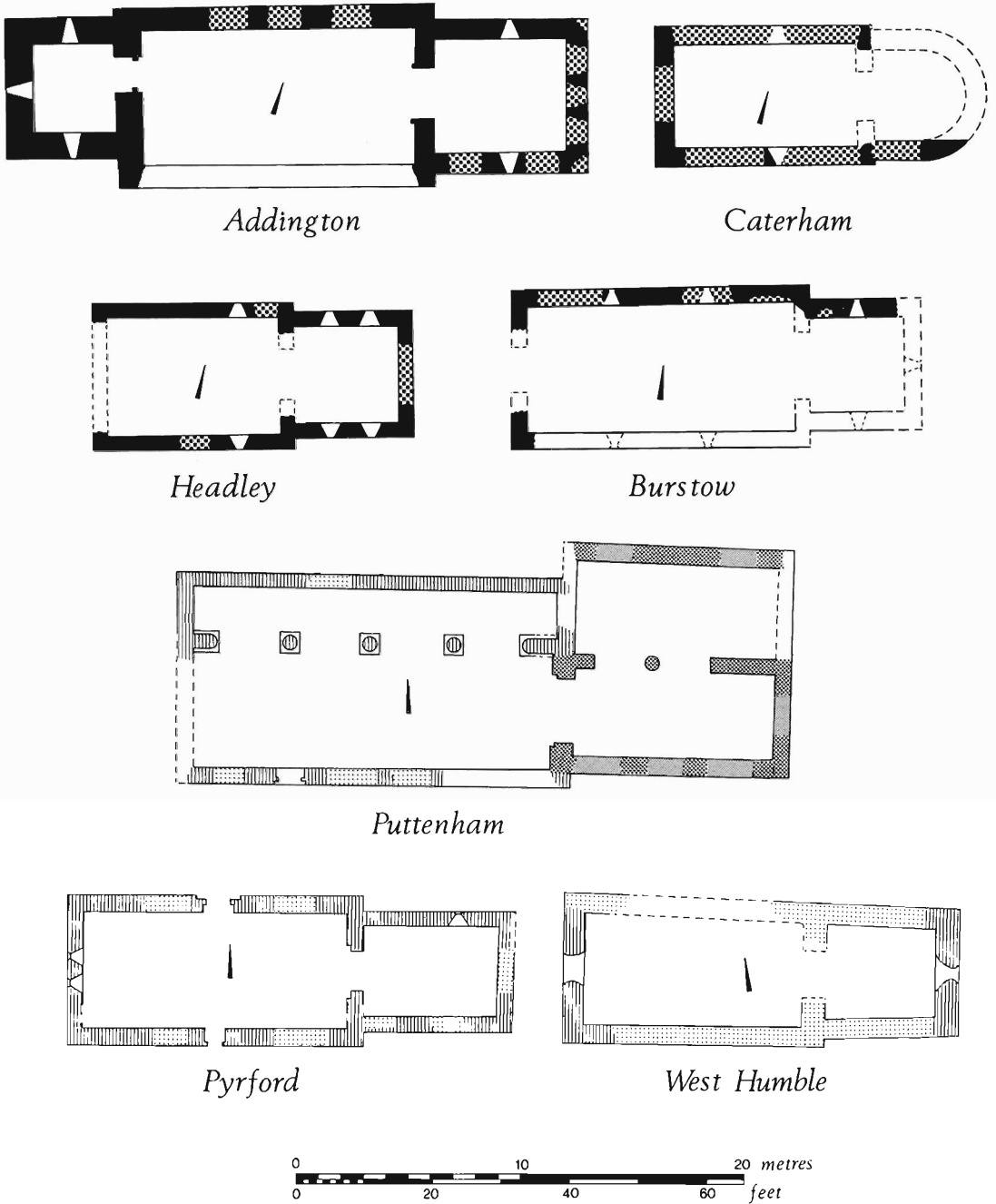Burstow

Puttenham

Pyrford

West Humble

Fig 36   Church plans. (For sources see accounts in *VCHSy*, and other sources cited in the present text under
references to the individual churches. The plans of Caterham and Burstow churches are from
personal surveys. For key to shading conventions, see px)

36),[154] all dated on structural evidence. The majority, however, provide two points of contrast with previous decades: they were founded by monasteries, and they were usually built as chapels to serve fringe areas of larger units rather than as main estate churches.

Religious houses, in other words, seem to have begun providing for the spiritual needs of their tenants with a renewed vigour. The reasons for this are far from clear, and we should probably not look for a single overriding factor. Perhaps a generally heightened pastoral awareness expressed in episcopal advice or pressure combined with a tendency for laymen, in the new religious climate of these years, to sponsor monastic foundations rather than found churches of their own. The prospect and actuality of civil war may have contributed to this process.[155]

Churches and chapels now appear on the main Chertsey Abbey estate, which had so conspicuously lacked them (fig 37): a papal confirmation of 1176[156] lists them at Chertsey, Egham, Thorpe, Cobham, East Clandon and Weybridge, and in all cases except the last two, where there is no evidence, the earliest recorded features are of the mid to late 12th centuries.[157] Westminster Abbey had likewise built churches on its manors at Pyrford, Horsell, Wandsworth, Battersea and Morden by 1157,[158] though the only physical survival is Pyrford church (fig 36),[159] with its characteristic plan of c1140–60 and contemporary wallpaintings. At Capel, in the Wealden area of Dorking parish, a chapel existed in the hands of Lewes Priory by the 1160s; the place-name (ie *Capella*) suggests that the chapel acted as a focus for the emergent settlement.[160] In 1138–47 William de Warenne III had given Dorking church to Lewes Priory,[161] the builders of at least one new chapel in Sussex during the second quarter of the century,[162] and Lewes may well have also founded the Capel chapel soon after acquiring the mother church.

Foundations of monastic origin may occasionally have resulted, directly or indirectly, from lay patronage. Although the evidence is never explicit, such was perhaps the case with the Southwark Priory chapels which were based on small land-holdings and tithe-portions rather than on whole manors. Thus the Priory's right to a chapel at Addington, on a small freehold appurtenant to the nearby archiepiscopal manor of Croydon, was apparently connected with a grant of tithes made in the second quarter of the century.[163] The undocumented chapel of c1140–60 at West Humble (fig 36),[164] in the Polesden area of Mickleham parish, is perhaps associated with a grant to Southwark Priory at about that date of the tithe of Polesden.[165] Hamelin de Warenne confirmed Newdigate chapel to the canons in 1164–86 as 'elemosinam meam et antecessorum meorum',[166] though it seems likely that they had recently built it themselves in the parish of Leigh church, previously acquired from the second William de Warenne.[167] In some at least of these cases, the donors may have envisaged from the outset that their grants would result in new chapels.

The later 12th and 13th centuries (fig 37)

By Henry II's reign the provision of parish churches was largely complete; later foundations were no more than the minor infilling of an established pattern. The area near London, most affected by economic growth, had a tendency to split into smaller parishes requiring new churches at Clapham,[168] Bermondsey,[169] Rotherhithe[170] and Putney.[171] Occasional independent churches which first appear in the 13th century may have developed from earlier chapels. The Wealden church of Dunsfold is an exceptional case, built on the royal manor of Bramley in a sophisticated style of c1270 and clearly a piece of deliberate royal patronage.[172]

But if there were few churches, the period is marked by a proliferation of satellite chapels, continuing the pattern of the 1140s and 1150s. By 1200 Farnham mother church had at last come to share its pastoral duties with three chapels: Elstead, where excavated footings suggest a predecessor to the present building of c1220;[173] Frensham, moved to a new site in 1239[174] but

Evidence

1181-1240   1241-91

Monastery ●   ◉

Royal demesne ■   ▣

Church holding ▲   △

Lay holding ●   ○

Above 200 metres

150-200 metres

miles kms.

Existing church +
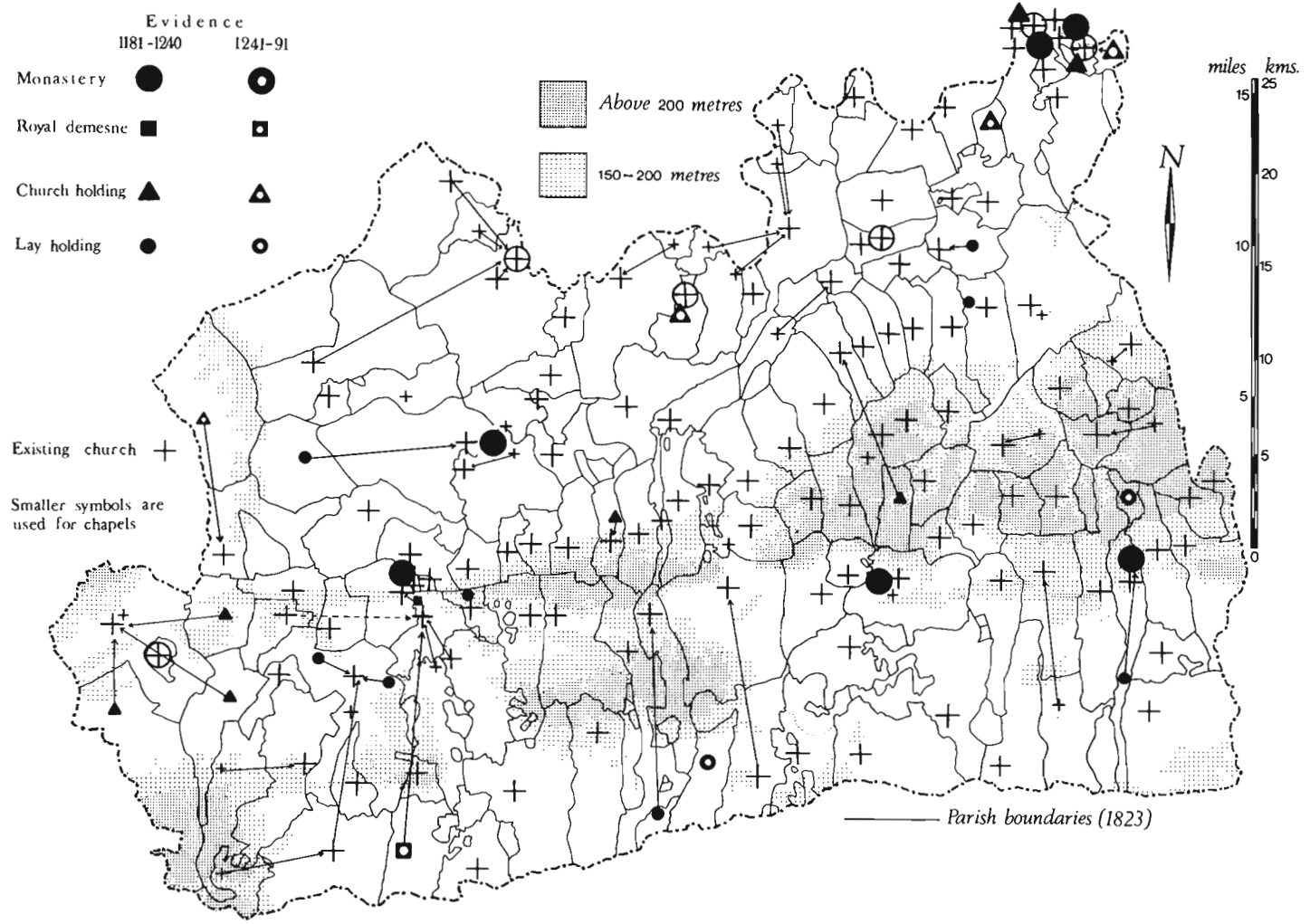
Smaller symbols are
used for chapels

N

Parish boundaries (1823)
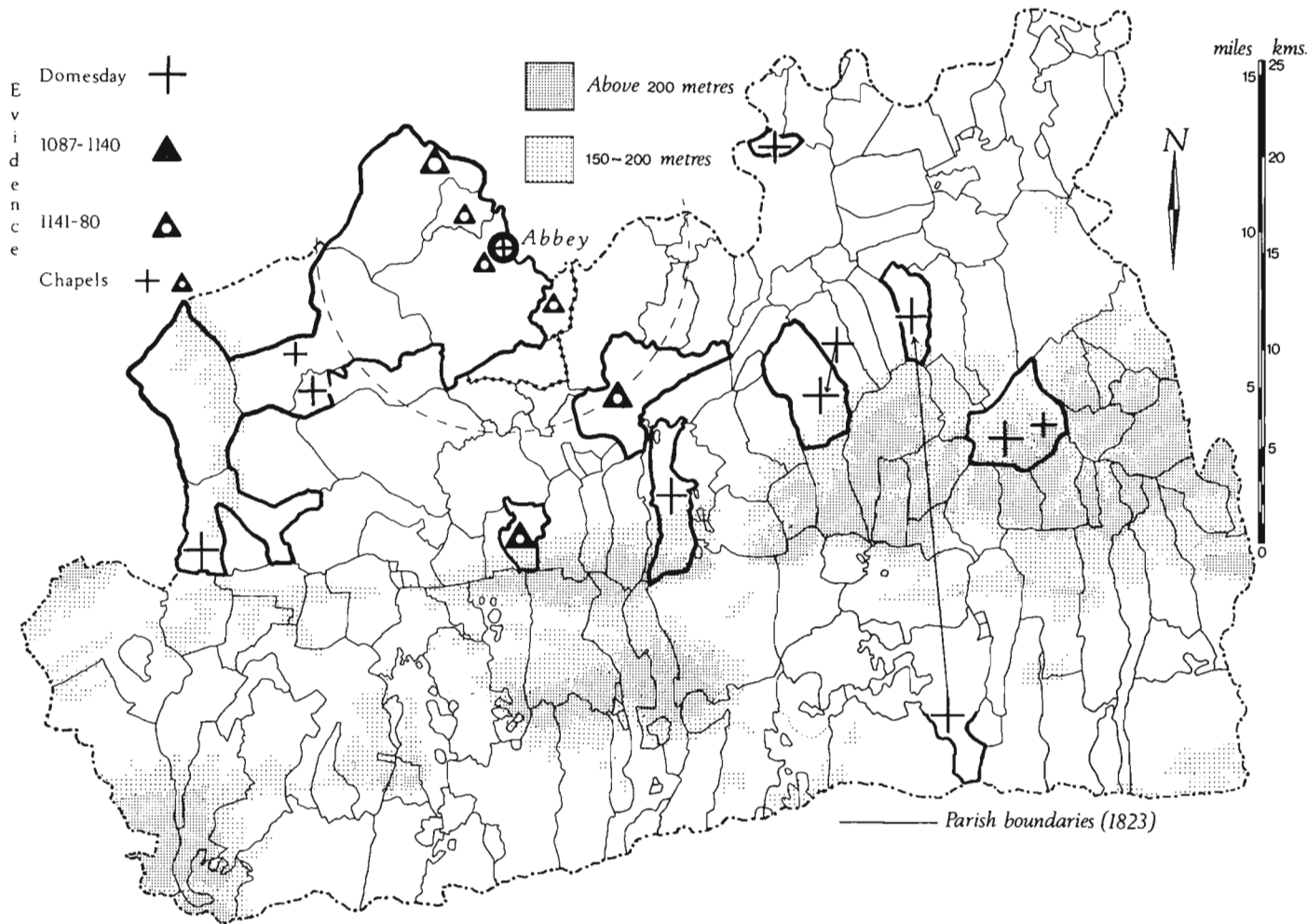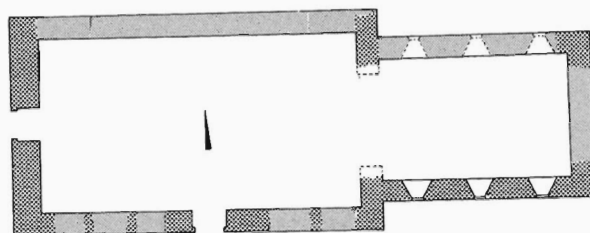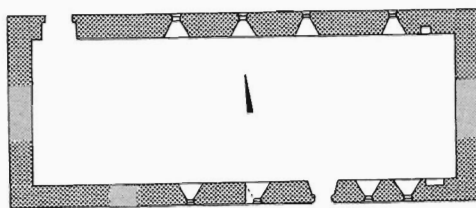
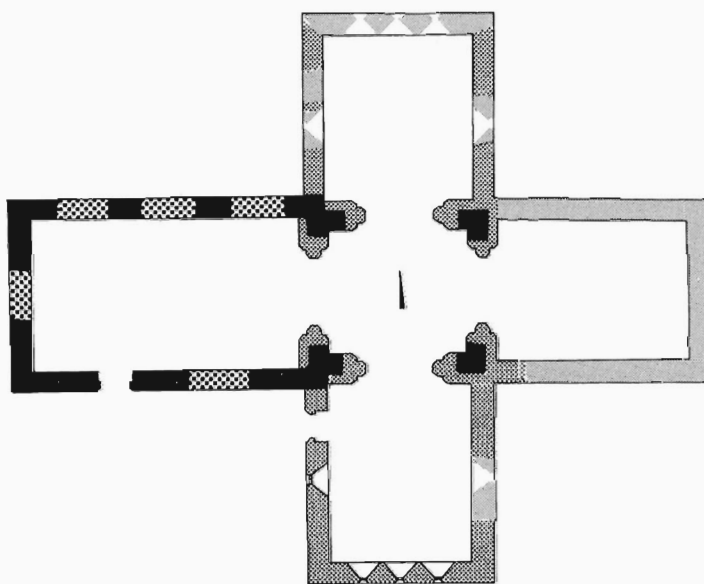Fig 37   Churches first recorded during 1181-1291

Fig 38 Churches on demesne manors of Chertsey Abbey. (The inferred boundaries of 1086 demesne manors are shown in heavy outline.)
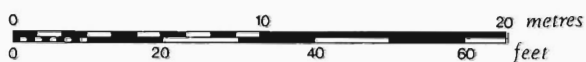
Capel

Oakwood

Ewhurst

Fig 39   Church plans. (For sources see accounts in *VCHSy*, and other sources cited in the present text under references to the individual churches. For key to shading conventions, see px)

retaining its late 12th-century font; and Seale, a fine little early Gothic axial-tower church.[175] Godalming mother church had a chapel at Chiddingfold by c1180,[176] and the foundation of an 'oratory' at Windlesham in response to population growth in the Windsor Forest area is explicitly described (above, p95). Nor was it only ecclesiastical patrons who were active: the lay churches of Malden and Wotton had acquired their chapels at Chessington[177] and Oakwood[178] (fig 39) by c1180 and c1220 respectively.

How new were these developments? To some extent they merely reflect legal changes: within the broad class of religious buildings a firm line now existed between *ecclesia* and *capella*. But there is also a difference in kind: whereas the early Norman churches were built to serve estates, these chapels of the later 12th and 13th centuries generally served peripheral areas. On the other hand, stray references from the mid 12th century onwards reveal the existence of a whole distinct class of chapels, serving manor-houses and individual farms, ill-documented and often mysterious in their origins. The status and function of these chapels is part of a general problem, the Church's role as a rural institution, which must be discussed in the context of the emerging parochial organisation (below, pp155–7).

The most lasting and conspicuous development of this period was the general enlargement of church buildings. Aisles began to be added from c1140 onwards, and Surrey retains numerous late 12th-century nave arcades with their characteristic scalloped capitals. An exceptional work of this period is the magnificent reconstruction, on two tiers, of the chancel at Compton.[179] In the third quarter of the century some aisled churches were built *de novo*, as at Puttenham (fig 36) and perhaps also the destroyed Southwark Priory church of Woodmansterne.[180] Some small two-cell Wealden churches were extended to a cruciform plan by building a tower over the old chancel and throwing out a new choir and transepts, as at Ewhurst (fig 39) and Witley.[181] At the end of the century Lewes Priory rebuilt their little chapel of Capel in an early Gothic style (fig 39).[182] Early in the 13th century some important churches, such as Reigate and Leatherhead,[183] were greatly enlarged, and Southwark Priory must have spent lavishly on extending and beautifying Banstead church.[184] The enlargement of chancels and the addition of western belfries were standard improvements. Some churches in the poorer parishes of the Weald and Downland, as at Hascombe, Tatsfield and Headley, were little affected by this process. Overall, however, the physical presence of the church in the Surrey countryside was transformed between 1150 and 1300, a transformation which reflects not only prosperity but also a fundamental change of status. As the parochial system became firmly established, buildings which had been inconspicuous and private became stately and public.

Conclusion

The chronology which this analysis has suggested can be summarised briefly. By 1086, probably by 1066, some 60 to 70% of the churches which were fully parochial in the later Middle Ages already existed. These mainly stood on manors of two wealthy ecclesiastical proprietors and a handful of leading lay nobility, who not only built churches in areas of established settlement but were also beginning to found them in the Wealden hinterland. Post-Conquest subinfeudation stimulated humbler foundations, notably on the Downs and their northern edge, while the establishment of churches in the Weald continued steadily. The overall impression is that churches were appearing rapidly through the 11th and early 12th centuries, a flood which probably owed much to contemporaneous land clearance and settlement nucleation and which Domesday Book catches in full spate. New foundations continued in the middle years of the century, but these were usually monastic and nearly always of the 'satellite chapel' rather than the 'estate church' type. They represent the last touches to a pattern which was fully established in its essentials by the late Anglo-Saxons and Normans.