

THE EARLY HISTORY OF WALTHAM

told in posters



TONY KIPPENBERGER

This storyboard poster exhibition has been produced by:



**Bishop's Waltham
Parish Council**



Introduction

In its heyday Bishop's Waltham Palace was visited by no fewer than 17 Kings and Queens of England. But this public poster exhibition tells of Saxon settlement, Viking raiders and Norman pillaging and much more beside.

This booklet is a souvenir collection of the posters for the official opening of the exhibition on 30th September 2023 by former Palace House resident Alan Lovell, Chairman of both the Environment Agency and Hampshire Cultural Trust.

Asked about the concept Tony Kippenberger said: "When I was asked, after I first moved to Bishop's Waltham over 20 years ago, whether Henry V had visited the Palace, I said that I doubted it because if he had, we'd have all known about it! How wrong I was! He was just one of 17 monarchs who we now know stayed here but we just didn't know about that at the time.

Waltham has a remarkably long history and I'm keen to give local residents – particularly those new to the town – a real sense of where they live and what its full history truly is.

At school we learn about the Romans, Saxons and Normans, but we are often left with the sense that they 'happened' elsewhere. So I hope that through this public exhibition we can show that these real people, from Stone Age hunter-gatherers to Norman invaders, didn't happen elsewhere. They lived, worked, loved and laughed right here, and we walk in their footsteps every single day."

All storyboard text © copyright 2023 Tony Kippenberger
Specialist advice: Penny Copeland
Local artist: Chris Beardshaw

This A4 size pdf version of the exhibition posters, to read or print, can be downloaded free from:
www.bishopswalthamsociety.org.uk
www.bishopswalthammuseum.com

10,000 years ago

THE STONE AGE

As the ice sheet of the last Ice Age melted, Mesolithic people began to reoccupy the land. Here in **Waltham** these hunter-gatherers made temporary camps beside the River Hamble to fish and hunt game. A 1967 excavation just 100 yards from here (under Sainsbury's car park) found 93 worked flints and flakes from tool making.



Image by Franz Bachinger from Pixabay



Bishop's Waltham Museum
Photo: Anita Taylor

These Mesolithic flint blades were found at Little Shore Lane and on Coppice Hill in the 1980s

6,000 years ago

FIRST FARMERS

As populations grew, communities of nomadic Neolithic hunter-gatherers began to settle down to farm, growing early forms of wheat and barley.

Land was increasingly cleared of forest and woodland to enable basic agriculture to take place.



www.butserancientfarm.co.uk

Adapted from a photograph by Russell Sach

This replica of a Neolithic farmer's dwelling, used by an extended family living together, has been built at Butser Ancient Farm near Petersfield.



Bishop's Waltham Museum
Photo: Anita Taylor

In the 1980s this polished stone axe head was found on Coppice Hill, where there is evidence of seasonal occupation during this period.

4,000 years ago

THE BRONZE AGE

The ability to cast and fashion tools and weapons in bronze, like these axe heads found near Southampton, was a huge step forward from making flint tools.



Photo: Penny Copeland

The Bronze Age brought a more routine family life in a safer community environment. Pottery and other skills became increasingly refined. They also started to use bronze (and even gold) to create metal jewellery – a new luxury!



© Copyright English Heritage

This was a period of large-scale immigration of so-called “beaker people” (based on the type of pots they made) from Europe. The bronze axe below was found at Suetts Farm, off Hoe Road.



Bishop's Waltham Museum
Photo: Anita Taylor

BRONZE AGE BURIAL

There were Bronze Age settlements around **Waltham** and a Great Barrow (a large ritual burial mound) was made where the Jubilee Hall is today. It was 60 metres across with a 4+ metre wide ditch around it. Smaller Bronze Age barrows can still be seen, for example, at Hoe Farm.

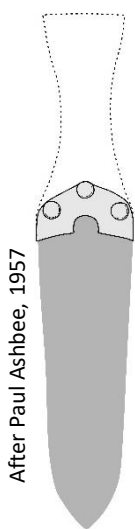
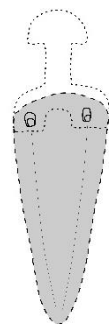
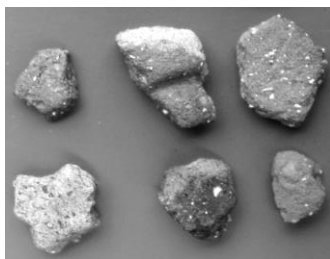


Photo: Bishop's Waltham Museum



This beautiful 23cm high Bronze Age pot, and the remains of two bronze daggers, were found buried in **Waltham's** Great Barrow, alongside two burials (one in a tree-trunk coffin), when it was excavated in the 1950s.



Bishop's Waltham Museum
Photo: John Bosworth

These samples of Bronze Age domestic pottery were found on Coppice Hill in the 1980s.

2,500 years ago

THE IRON AGE

Iron is harder and longer wearing than bronze but it is also more difficult to make. Bronze can be poured into a mould but iron needs a skilled blacksmith to forge it and shape it.



Image by Peter Freitag from Pixabay

So it took several centuries for iron to replace bronze. But once the techniques required had been mastered, production of tools and weapons quickly grew. Meanwhile gold jewellery became ever more intricate. Like this example found not far away, as part of the Winchester hoard, in 2000.



Ian Richardson, The Portable Antiquities Scheme

Samples of simple domestic Iron Age pottery (below) have been found near Little Shore Lane.



Bishop's Waltham Museum
Photo: John Bosworth

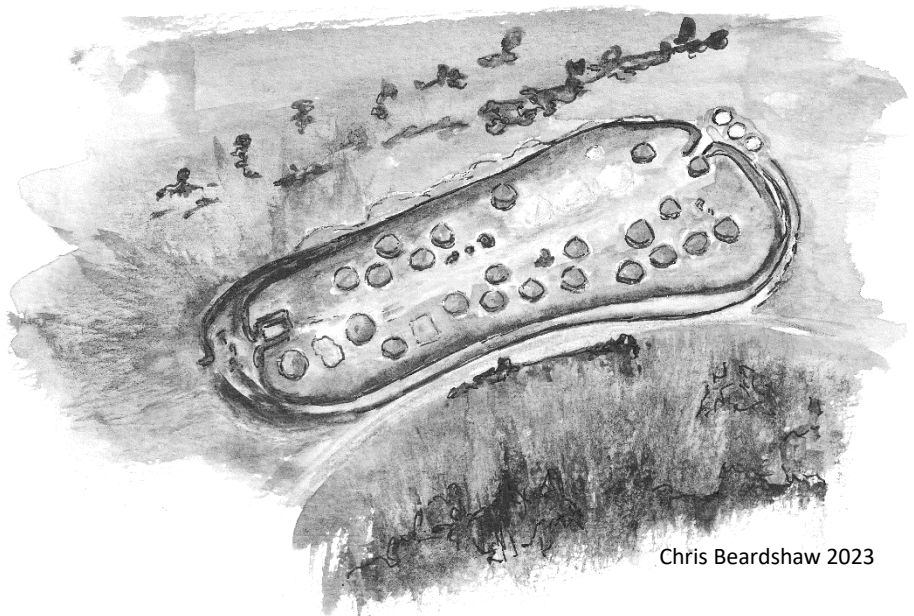
THE RISE OF TRIBES

A growing population needs more resources. Once sharp iron weapons became more readily available, raiding other tribes became more common.



From a painting by Niels Bach

So local groups built huge hill forts like Old Winchester Hill, east of Corhampton in the Meon Valley, as secure environments. There was also a smaller hill fort nearby at Hickley Wood in West End.



Chris Beardshaw 2023

They proved a very successful form of defence against other native tribes.

2,000 years ago

ROMAN INVASION

After the Romans conquered Gaul (France) our local tribes, the Belgae and the Atrobates, began trading across the channel, exchanging slaves for wine and olive oil. So when they were attacked by a neighbouring tribe they asked Rome for help. In 43 AD Emperor Claudius responded by sending four Roman legions (about 40,000 men) to invade Britain.



Image by Wajari Velásquez from Pixabay

The 2nd Augusta Legion, commanded by the future Roman Emperor Vespasian, used Chichester harbour as its base to conquer the West Country.

This disciplined force of 6,000 legionaries, with all their military equipment and attendant cavalry, would probably have crossed the River Hamble at Botley on their march westwards – to the amazement of everyone living around here!

ROMAN ROADS

Once connected to the Roman Empire and garrisoned by some 40,000 soldiers, trade between the continent and Britain grew dramatically.



Roman stone relief. Photo: Johann Jaritz

The main Roman road between Venta Belgarum (Winchester) and the new port of Noviomagnus (Chichester) ran just a mile and a half south of **Waltham** – through Owslebury to Wickham and then Havant. It would have been a very busy road for the next 3-400 years.



Bishop's Waltham Museum
(in the Palace grounds)

This 4th century Roman coin was found near Hoe Road

ROMAN VILLAS

Although there was no Roman town at **Waltham**, there were villas here. For example, there was probably one to the north near Vernon Hill House, another close to Lock's Farm and Brooklands Farm to the south, and another one near Upham.



Photo Anita Taylor

Fine Roman Samian pottery (above) has been found at sites in **Waltham** such as Lock's Farm.

The more everyday Roman pottery below was found at Butts Farm near Free Street in the 1980s. The curved marks on the tile are the finger marks of the maker, as he tested how dry the clay was!



Bishop's Waltham Museum
Photo: John Bosworth

THE ROMANS LEAVE!

As the Roman Empire collapsed the last Roman soldiers left Britain soon after 400 AD – about four centuries after they had arrived. The land and its riches were now there to be plundered by raiding Picts, Irish and Scots, and settled by Saxons, Angles and Jutes.



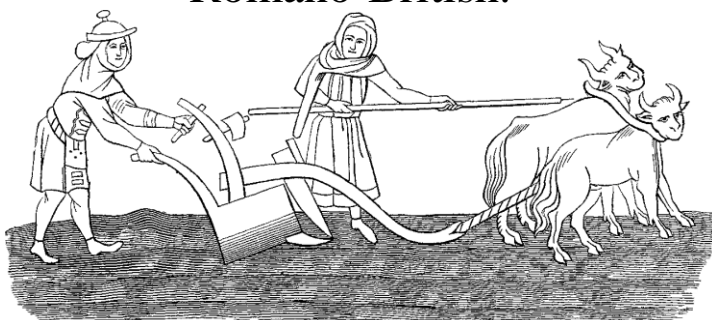
1,600 years ago

JUTES AND ANGLO-SAXONS SETTLE IN BRITAIN

Originally invited in by the Romano-Britons to act as defensive mercenaries after the Romans left, many Jutes and Anglo-Saxons stayed and settled here to farm Britain's rich land. These early settlers were then followed by others from across the North Sea.



Within a few generations they were successfully integrating and inter-marrying with the local Romano-British.

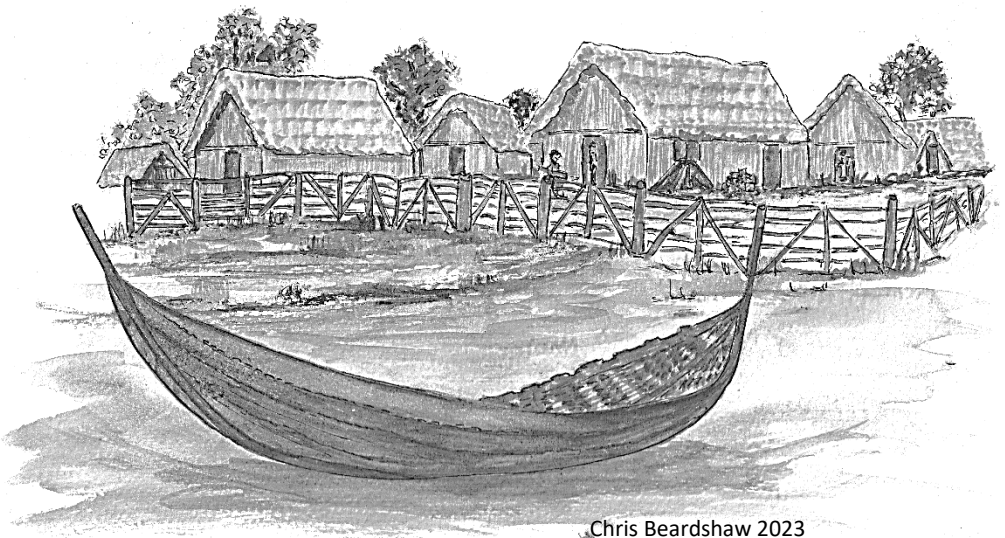


Paul Lacroix and 'the Man in Question God spede ye plough'

EARLY SAXON SETTLEMENTS

These new arrivals landed on the east and south coast – from north of the Wash in Lincolnshire to the Solent in Hampshire. The Romano-British prevented them from settling along the coast – where their own local sea trade was valuable – so the new settlers moved inland, usually by river.

For example, **Waltham** is at the head of the Hamble river.

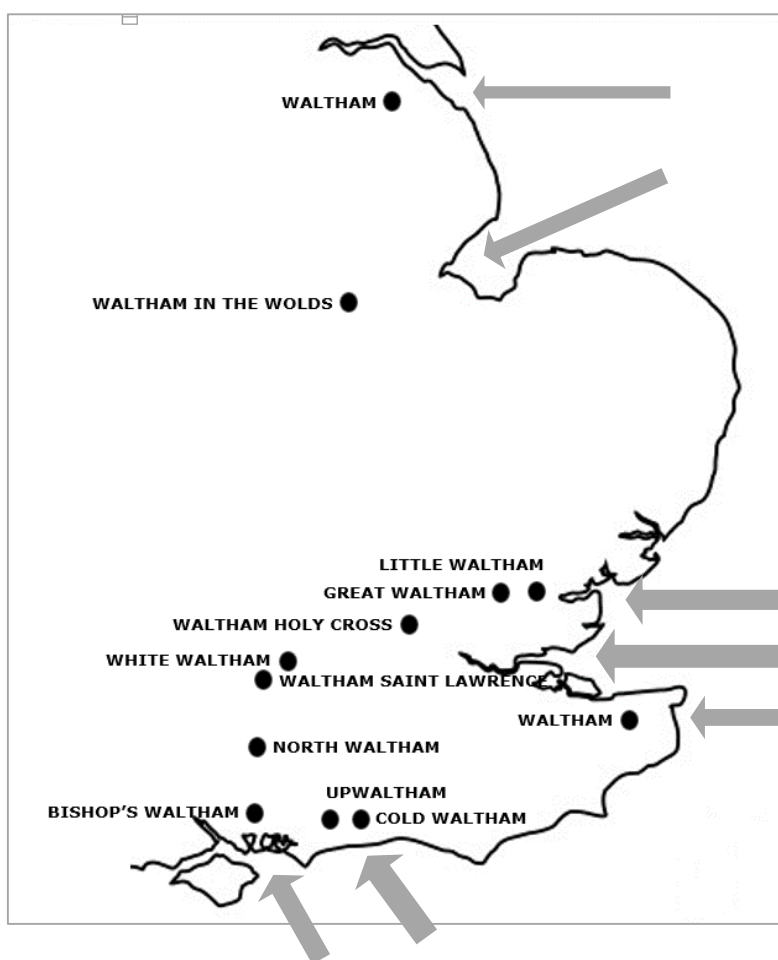


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Arriving in a new land, the immigrants gave their own names to what they found. So a Roman road was called a ‘strete’ (e.g. Watling Street or Ermine Street) and a ‘wickham’ was their name for a Roman marketplace or town. Like Wickham just a few miles south of **Waltham**.

OUR SAXON SETTLEMENT

‘Waltham’ was another specific name. It appears to have meant a “Royal woodland domain”, typically a settlement in a wooded area near both a river with meadowland, and a Roman road. That’s us!



Tony Kippenberger after Rhona Huggins 1975

There were 12 Saxon settlements called Waltham, and all are in the area of early immigration. Then, after 550 AD, the term ‘waltham’ fell out of use.

As the migration moved further west, no more Saxon ‘walthams’ were created/named.

So our **Waltham** was an early Saxon settlement, established within about 150 years of the Romans leaving Britain.

EARLY CHRISTIANITY AT WALTHAM



After Christianity arrived in Wessex in around 650 AD, **Waltham** was the site of a Preaching Cross (example left), a place where itinerant priests could address and convert local people. The base part of this cross (see below) was found at **Waltham** near St Peter's churchyard in 1973 and is now on display at Winchester Museum.



The four sides of the carved base of **Waltham's** Saxon Preaching Cross.

Photo: Bishop's Waltham Museum

The Saxon font in St Peter's church was found in a garden in Basingwell Street in the 1930s.

AN EARLY MINSTER CHURCH

Ine, king of Wessex between 688-726, began to build a number of minster churches (where small religious communities lived) on his royal estates.

The plan was that there should be a place of worship within a day's walk (there and back) for everyone in Wessex.

One was established here at **Waltham** in around 700 to act as the 'mother church' for others being established in the Hamble valley.

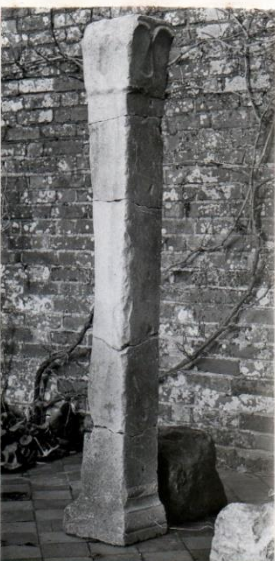


Photo: Bishop's Waltham Museum

The location of **Waltham's** minster church is unknown but it was probably close to the current site of St Peter's.

This original Saxon column (left), almost certainly from the minster, was found during the 20th century near the present church.

THREE SAINTS FROM WALTHAM



In 722 a young Saxon Benedictine monk called Willibald, who was from the **Waltham** minster, left with his father and brother on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. A remarkable feat 1,300 year ago. On their way back through Rome Pope Gregory II asked them to go to Germany and join Willibald's uncle, Saint Boniface, in converting the local pagan tribes to Christianity.

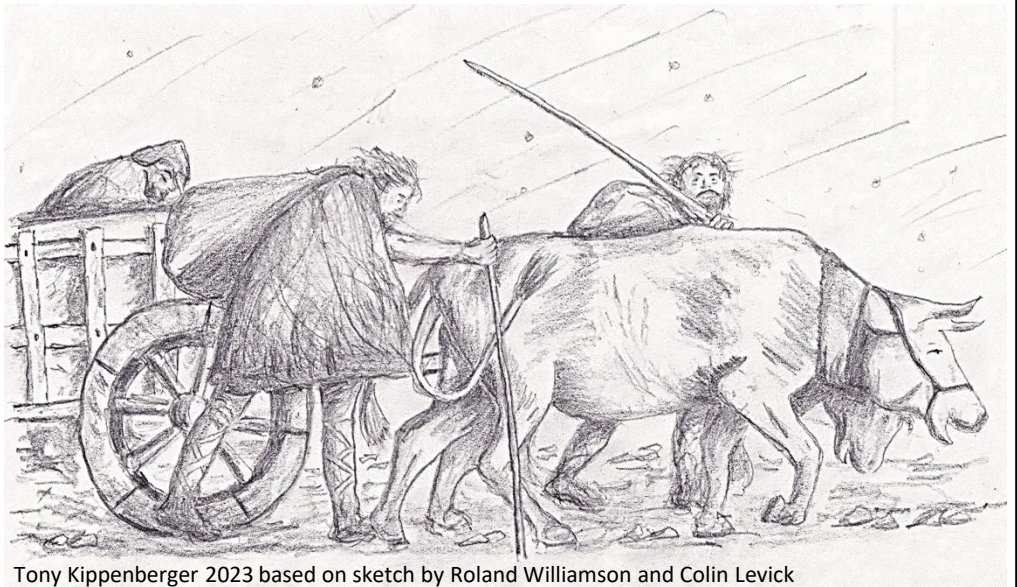


Church of St. Willibald, Mönning, Bavaria. Photographer Dallbri

There Willibald eventually became Bishop of Eichstätt, in Bavaria, and he and his sister and brother, who had joined him, all became German Saints.

OUR SAXON ROAD

While the Saxons continued to use Roman roads as useful highways, they also developed their own pattern of routes and tracks to link their very scattered settlements.



Tony Kippenberger 2023 based on sketch by Roland Williamson and Colin Levick

They preferred ancient ridgeways and higher ground rather than lowland routes. So the Saxon route from Winchester to Chichester now ran through **Waltham** – down Beeches Hill, along Free Street and down Green Lane to the Wickham road near Chase Mill. And this remained the main route until Victorian times.

The steep sides to the road at the top of Beeches Hill show just how long it has been worn away by wagons and carts. These are called ‘hollow-ways’ – a name that comes directly from the Saxon words ‘hola weg’ meaning ‘sunken road’.

WALTHAM BELONGED TO KING ALFRED



Image by Chris from Pixabay

From its early days **Waltham** was a Royal estate, owned by the Kings of Wessex. So from 871-899 it was part of King Alfred's royal domain – just 10 miles from his capital at Winchester.

In 871, against overwhelming odds, Alfred defeated an invading Viking army and saved Wessex. He went on to make peace and bring in many important reforms. As a result his grandson, Athelstan, became the first King of England in 927. For these reasons Alfred is the only English king or queen to be known as “the Great”.

His son, King Edward the Elder of Wessex, inherited **Waltham** and in 908 exchanged it with Denewulf, Bishop of Winchester, for the Bishop's lands and castle at Portchester. Thereafter **Waltham** was a manor held by the Bishops of Winchester – which is why, much later, it got its current name.

A Saxon spearhead found locally.



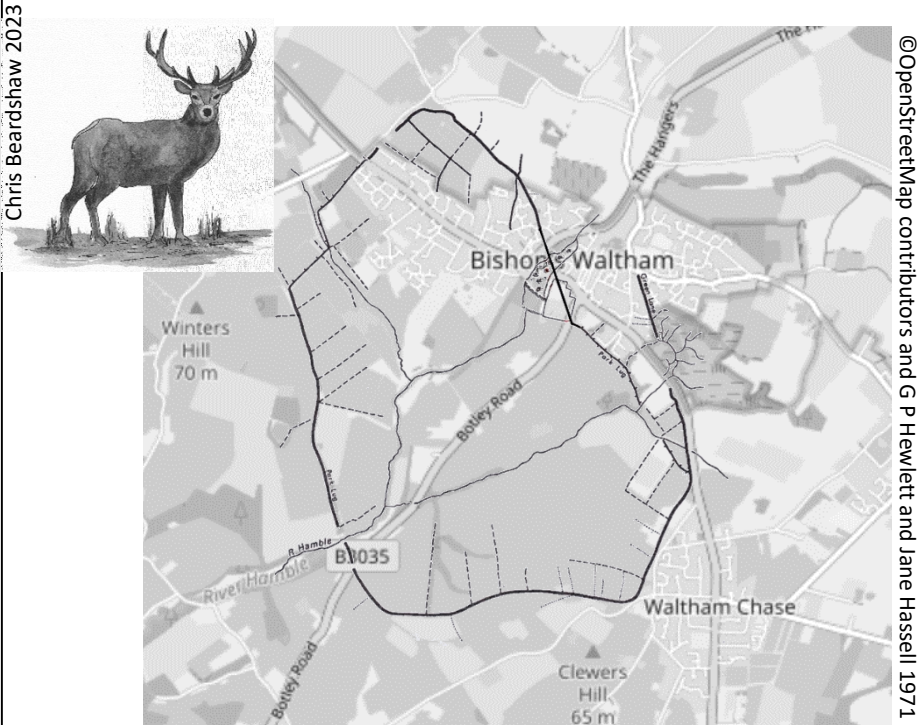
Bishop's Waltham Museum
Photo: Anita Taylor

A SAXON DEER PARK

In the late Saxon period kings and their wealthier nobles began to hunt deer and other animals for sport, exercise and entertainment.

King Alfred's biographer during his lifetime, Bishop Asser, made it clear that the King was "a zealous practitioner of hunting ... and hunted with great success".

In the 1960s, analysis of the hedgerows around **Waltham's** 1,000 acre deer park showed that they do indeed date back to Saxon times.



Site and size of Deer Park shown in black

So **Waltham** had what is likely to have been a royal hunting ground more than a 1,000 years ago. The 'Park Lug' – the high bank that surrounded it to keep the deer in – is regarded as "nationally significant" and, though worn away, is still visible in many places today.

BUT THEN THE VIKINGS RETURNED!

In 1001 a marauding Viking fleet raided along the south coast of England and eventually attacked Exeter. They then sailed back to the Isle of Wight to take up their winter quarters.



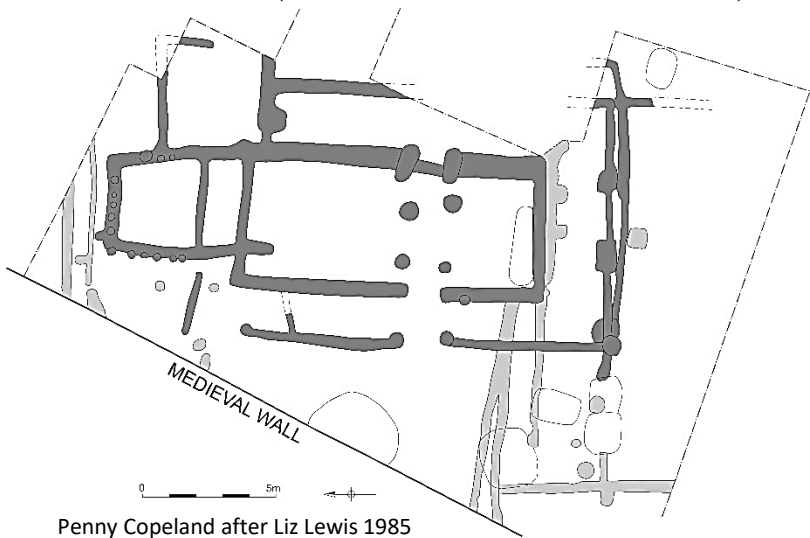
Adapted from image by Gioele Fazeri from Pixabay

But they carried out one last raid. They came up the Hamble river to **Waltham**. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* describe it: “in the morning they burnt the estate at **Waltham** and many other villages”.

There must have been significant treasure, probably at the minster church, to tempt them to raid so far inland and so close to the Saxon capital, Winchester. The whole area would have been devastated!

WALTHAM'S SAXON AISLED HALL

For centuries, the Palace's great barn stood where Sainsbury's store now stands. After the barn was demolished in 1967 to create space for the new by-pass behind you, an archaeological dig took place. Underneath the barn lay a much earlier late-Saxon aisled hall (outlined in black below).



The timber hall was 12.5 metres (38 ft.) long and it would have been an important building. It may have been built by one of the later Saxon Bishops as a new hunting lodge for his deer park, after the Viking raid of 1001.



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1000 years ago AND THEN THE NORMANS ARRIVED!

After the Battle of Hastings in 1066, William the Conqueror tested London's defences but then turned west to take Winchester – which held the Saxon Kings' Treasury.



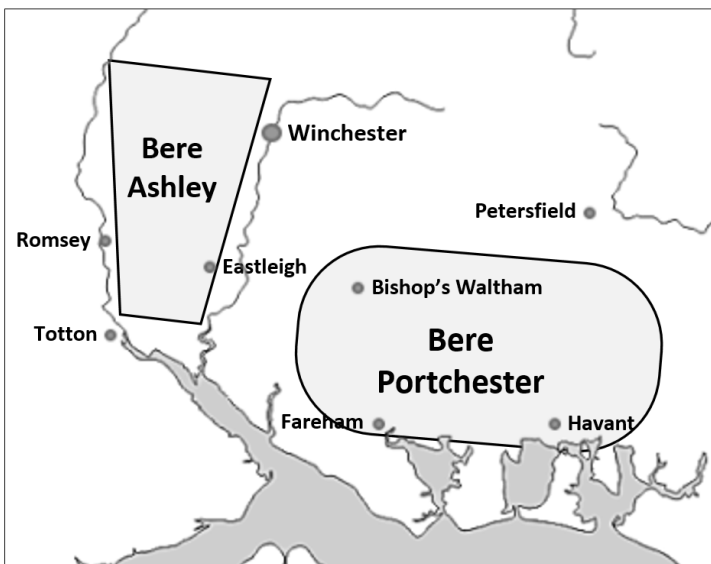
Chris Beardshaw 2023

As he marched his main army west he landed additional forces at Fareham. These Norman soldiers marched through Wickham and then **Waltham**, before going via Droxford up the Meon Valley as far as East Meon and then across to Winchester.

It was November and they lived off the land by slaughtering all the farm animals and plundering winter grain stores. This left a trail of destruction behind them and the manor of **Waltham** was the worst affected. Records show it lost two thirds of its value in just a few, dreadful days.

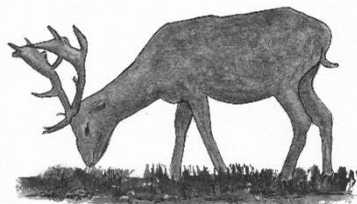
THE FOREST(S) OF BERE

The new Norman kings turned vast tracts of England into Royal Forests where only they could hunt. Two of these were in south Hampshire – ‘Bere Ashley’ and ‘Bere Portchester’ (combined they were about the same size as the New Forest). The present Bere Forest, by the A32 at Wickham, is but one of a few remaining fragments!



Tony Kippenberger 2023

Harsh Forest Laws were imposed: no deer or wild boar could be hunted, even if they strayed onto your land and ate your crops. No trees could be cut nor any new land cleared. All dogs had their front paws maimed to stop them chasing game.



Chris Beardshaw 2023

The Bishop of Winchester's lands at **Waltham**, including Waltham Chase, were exempt – but they imposed similar rules on their tenants anyway!

A ROUTE MUCH TRAVELLED

After winning the Battle of Hastings in 1066, William claimed all of England's lands 'by right of conquest' and rewarded those who had followed him with vast estates. This left less than 10% of England in Saxon hands!



Adapted by Tony Kippenberger 2023

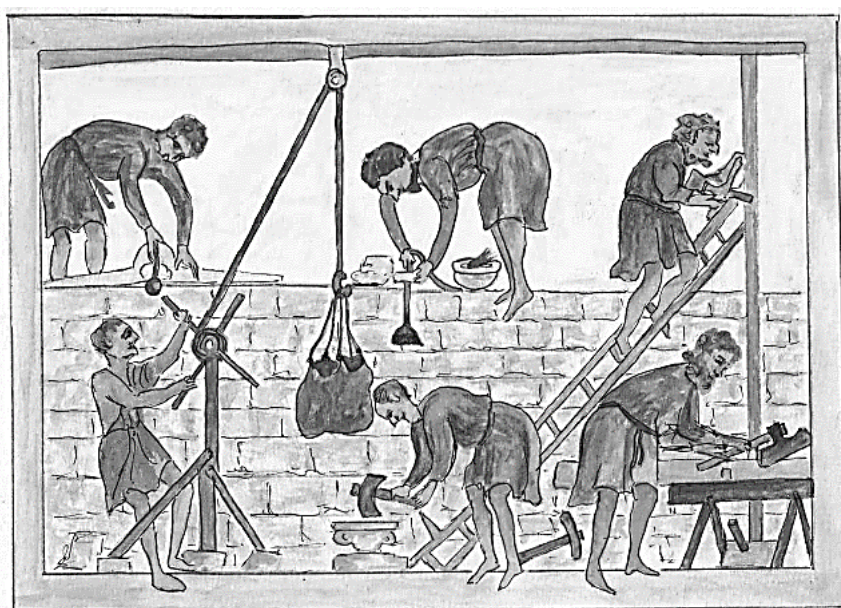
So it was not only William who had to travel between his Kingdom (England) and his Duchy (Normandy). All the leading Norman families now also owned land on both sides of the channel. As a result, cross-channel travel grew dramatically.

A favoured route to and from Normandy was between Portchester and Barfleur. **Waltham** was midway between Winchester and Portchester, and being six times larger than the port, it had the potential to be a useful stopping-off place, before going on to board ship.

A BISHOP'S RESIDENCE

In 1087 William II (William Rufus) became King of England and in 1093 he appointed William Giffard as his new Lord Chancellor.

Seven years later Giffard was with the New Forest hunting party when William Rufus was (accidentally?) killed by an arrow. Leaving the King's body where it lay, he and the future Henry I raced to Winchester to seize the Treasury and secure the Crown. The new King's first act was to make Giffard Bishop of Winchester.



Chris Beardshaw 2023 after Matthew Paris C13th manuscript

Craftsmen using a variety of tools in the Norman period

Giffard built new residences at Southwark in London and at Winchester. Archaeological evidence indicates that he also built a Bishop's residence here in **Waltham** on the site behind you. So, in 1111, Henry I could stay here on his way to Normandy, waiting for the weather to improve, and again in 1129. He was the first of a long list of monarchs to stay in **Waltham**.

HENRY OF BLOIS BISHOP OF WINCHESTER



Chris Beardshaw 2023 after 1380 manuscript

Henry of Blois was one of William the Conqueror's grandsons and was made Bishop of Winchester by his uncle King Henry I in 1129, following Giffard's death.

After Henry I's death his nephew, Stephen of Blois (Bishop Henry's older brother), seized the throne and England was thrust into a 17-year civil war (called the Anarchy) between Stephen and Henry I's daughter Matilda. During the war, Bishop Henry built four castles, one of which was here at **Waltham**. Evidence suggests that he turned Giffard's earlier residence into a defensive castle.

A possible alternative location could have been astride the road at the top of Beeches Hill – near what has been known for centuries as Stephen's Castle Down!

WALTHAM PALACE

In 1158, Bishop Henry began building a Palace at **Waltham**, on the site of this earlier castle.

It developed into a huge complex of buildings (see below) which is why many monarchs, with their entourage of courtiers and large retinue of servants, could stay here.

The Palace dominated the village but provided an important source of income for many inhabitants.

You are standing about here. In the outer courtyard of the Palace!

© English Heritage

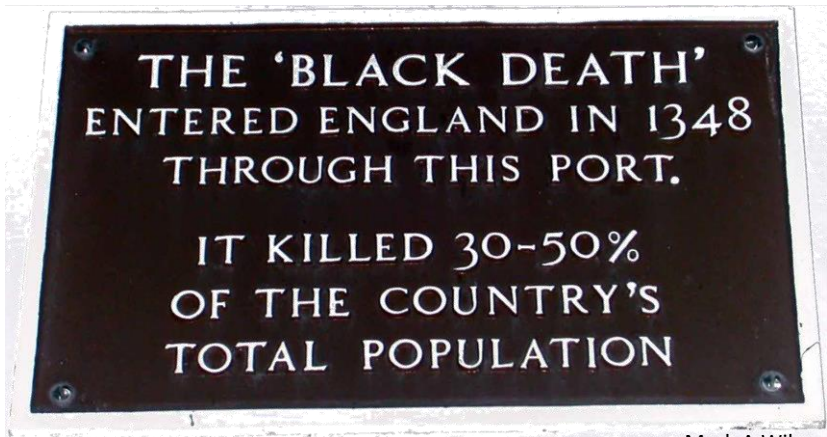


There are only 150 'Magnate's Residences' like this in the entire country!

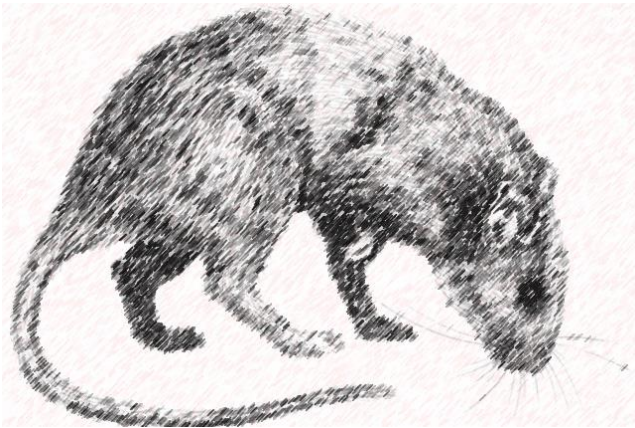
Bishop Henry also had the Hamble dammed to form a large fishpond that would be enlarged in later years to become bigger than the present North and South Ponds combined. This provided the fish for Fridays and Holy Days. He also built St Peter's church on its present site.

THE BLACK DEATH

THIS DEADLY VIRUS is believed to have first reached England, in 1348, through the port of Weymouth in Dorset



Mark A Wilson

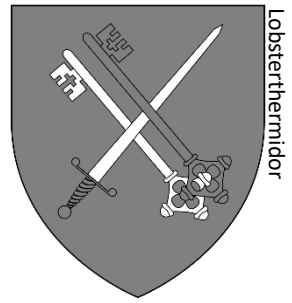


Initially spread by rats' fleas, the virus moved rapidly across England. It is likely that the local source was Titchfield, then a thriving port.

Waltham was quickly affected and the records held by the Bishops of Winchester show that of 404 tenants (householders) in 1348, no fewer than 264 died within 12 months. This suggests that around **TWO-THIRDS of Waltham's inhabitants died** in a single year.

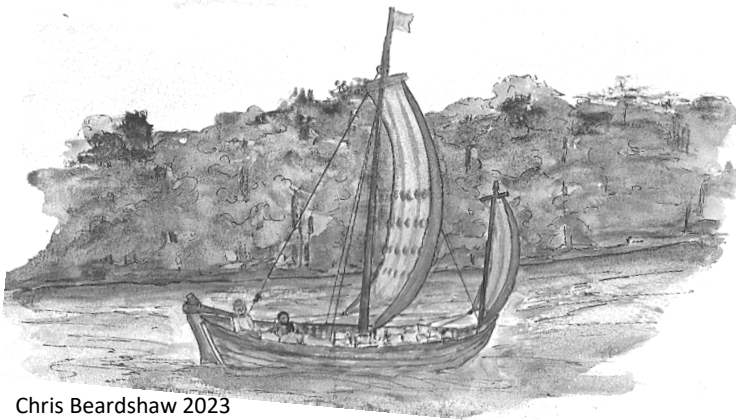
A calamitous loss of life!

POWERFUL BISHOPS



From 904 **Waltham** was held by the Bishops of Winchester. They were powerful nobles who remained close to the kings and queens, usually holding one of the great Offices of State. In the medieval period Winchester was said to be the wealthiest Bishopric in Europe, north of Milan.

They owned more than 20 large residences and around 60 manors. Properties which they continually altered and improved, especially their four palaces: Winchester House in Southwark, Wolvesey in Winchester, Farnham Castle and their country palace here in **Waltham**.



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In the 1400s, when Cardinal Beaufort was Bishop, he made major alterations here using imported Caen stone from Normandy. These were landed at Southampton and then shipped up to Botley by flat-bottomed boats called 'pinks' (above). There the stone was landed at Pinkmead (originally Pynkhaven) before being carried overland to **Waltham**. Pink is still the surname of some families living in the area.

KINGS AND QUEENS OF ENGLAND

Over the 500 year period between 1100 to 1600, some 21 kings and queens ruled England. Of these, no fewer than 17 visited **Waltham**. This is a roll call of those we know stayed here:

Henry I	Henry V
Henry II	Henry VI
Richard I	Edward IV
John	Henry VII
Henry III	Henry VIII
Edward I	Edward VI
Edward II	Mary I
Edward III	Elizabeth I
Richard II	

You are standing on the very ground they would have ridden over to leave by the Palace's East Gate, just to your right. The base of the exposed wall contains Tudor brickwork from the old gatehouse!



Private collection
Photo: T Kippenberger

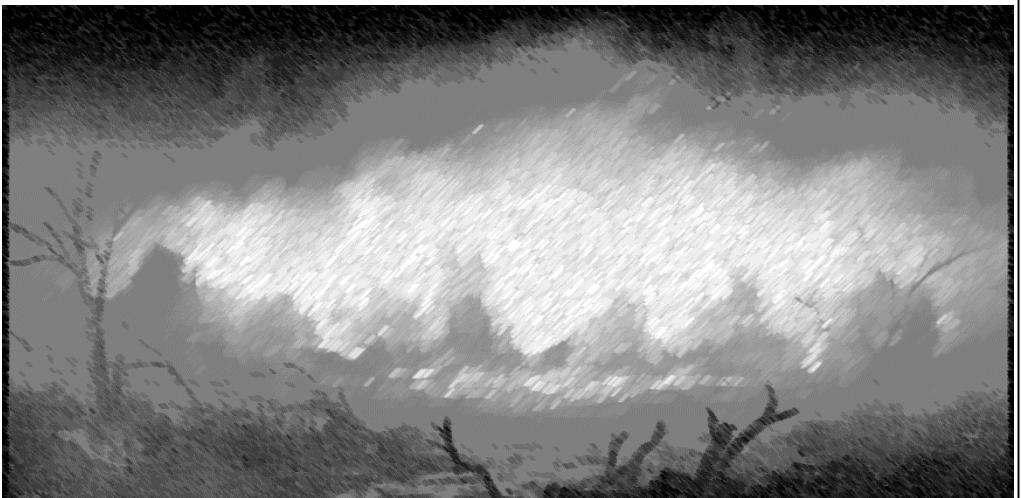
This Henry VI half-groat, minted at Calais in the 1420s, was found in a garden in Bank Street in 2002.

400 years ago

THE PALACE IS DESTROYED

In 1642 England was plunged into Civil War between King and Parliament. During that year **Waltham** was plundered by unpaid and disorderly Parliamentary soldiers. But worse was to come.

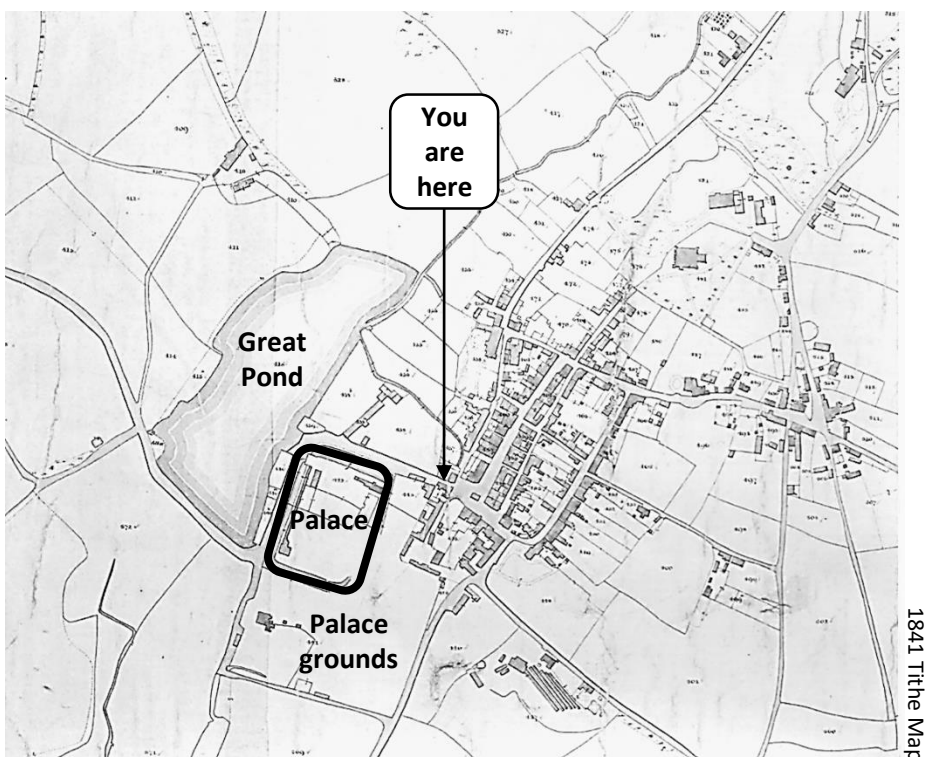
After the Battle of Cheriton in March 1644, Royalist cavalry occupied the Palace. A Parliamentary force, with artillery, soon arrived and probably took up position on Priory Hill. The Royalists quickly surrendered and left. Two days later, after being thoroughly looted by the Parliamentary troops, the Palace was set alight. The only surviving building now houses the Museum.



For **five centuries** the Palace had provided a livelihood for many of **Waltham**'s inhabitants. Its loss was a truly devastating blow to the town and it would take several decades to recover.

BISHOP'S WALTHAM: A QUIET RURAL MARKET TOWN

200 years after the Palace was destroyed, this 1841 map shows that in early Victorian times the town remained small. The map highlights the way the streets were laid out in a grid pattern and how the Palace, its grounds and the Great Pond dominated the town.



Much has changed since then, but that's another story!

This storyboard history is presented for non-commercial purposes to interest and inform the residents of Bishop's Waltham and visitors to the market town.



Bishop's Waltham Museum, in the Palace grounds, is free and opens at weekends between 12-4pm from 1st May to 30th September and 12-2pm from 1st to 31st October.

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Specialist advice: Penny Copeland
Local artist: Chris Beardshaw

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