

-ingas and the Mid-Seventh-Century Diocese

Gavin Smith

Bristol

Introduction

This paper¹ was stimulated by those of James Kemble and Carole Hough presented to the Society's April 2006 Bristol conference, but expands upon the writer's own place-name research focused on Surrey.² Dr Kemble, in the context of the Essex Place-Names Project, raised the question of *-ingas* names, apologizing as he did so for resurrecting the old totem of *-ingas*, investigated so often. I similarly apologize. Dr Hough, in the context of 'commonplace place-names', raised the fundamental issue of who named places like Norton and for what purpose. It seems to me that Hough's question might be equally applicable to regularities of place-name suffix. Why, for example, should there be a raft of *-ingas* places in Surrey, typified by Dorking? Who named them, and for what purpose?

***-ingas* in Essex**

Dr Kemble notes that *-ingas* in Essex is not in conformity with the distribution of the earliest Anglo-Saxon settlements,³ but seems

¹ An abbreviated version of this paper was presented to SNSBI's 2008 Edinburgh conference, and proved controversial. As a result, the writer is obliged to address several issues raised by some of those present, and has attempted to do so in the present version. Debate hopefully will continue.

² J. Kemble, 'Essex place-names: a database at work'; C. Hough, 'Commonplace place-names' (subsequently published in *Nomina*, 30 (2007), 101–20); G. Smith, 'Getinges, Cobham and Surrey's *-ingas* place-names', *Bulletin of the Surrey Archaeological Society*, 369 (2003), 3–6 <www.surreyarchaeology.org.uk>.

³ As Kemble states, this finding agrees with those of J. McN. Dodgson, 'The significance of the distribution of the English place-name in *-ingas*, *-inga-* in south-east England', *Medieval Archaeology*, 10 (1960), 1–29, S. Kirk, 'A distribution pattern: *-ingas* in Kent', *Journal of the English Place-Name Society*, 4 (1972), 37–59, and J. Kuurman, 'An examination of the *-ingas*, *-inga-* place-names in the East Midlands', *Journal of the English Place-Name Society*, 7 (1975), 11–44.

especially prevalent in a broad swathe of central Essex where the population seems never to have been particularly dense. Further, that *-ingas* might be associated with rather large territories perhaps late retaining a British culture. These assessments accord well with the Surrey data, for which I hope to offer an explanation that addresses also Hough's issue of the identity of namers.

Note first a tendency for *-ingas* to name Hundreds: Tendring (if this is indeed *-ingas*) in Essex, but also Happing in Norfolk, Lothing and Blything in Suffolk, and Godalming and Woking in Surrey.⁴ One Essex name where this is not the case is Nazeing, now a parish with a hill-top church. But that Nazeing and its institutions might have influenced a wide area is suggested by the possibly subsidiary name Navestock (*Nasingestoc* 967), ten miles to the south-east.

Another Essex *-ingas* place exhibiting interesting facets is the mid-seventh-century monastery of Barking mentioned in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* (hereafter *HE*) IV, 7. Barking, like Tendring, is coastal, thus modifying Dr Kemble's emphasis on the inland distribution of *-ingas* and perhaps suggesting that *-ingas* may have been a county-wide phenomenon rather than one confined either to accepted early 'Anglo-Saxon' zones or to Dr Kemble's 'British' ones. It is true there seems to be a dearth of *-ingas* names within the archetypical early Anglo-Saxon zone in south Essex around Mucking (itself a name now re-interpreted as a very early Germanic type *-ing* rather than *-ingas*). When looking at the Surrey data, I shall however conclude that the county is not the most pertinent territorial concept, whereas another—the kingdom, or more particularly the diocese—may be.

Surrey distributions

The present writer is a geographer rather than a place-name specialist.

⁴ In many cases the names of Hundreds and Hundred-like areas have changed since the early Middle Ages, so it is not possible to know how many may originally have been named in *-ingas*. Thus note for the Kentish Domesday Hundred of Hoo the record *Culinga gemaere* 'boundary of Cooling', from AD 778 (E. Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 4th edn (Oxford, 1960), p. 121; hereafter *DEPN*), suggesting the Hundred may earlier have been a territory named from the *-ingas* place Cooling three miles from today's Hoo.

What follows therefore is a geographer's-eye-view of a particular place-name element (*-ingas*) and its spatial correlation or otherwise with other perhaps relevant historical phenomena within a limited study area (the historical county of Surrey).

The *-ingas* names of Surrey and of its western neighbours—the counties of Berkshire and Hampshire—have been explained by John Blair as associated with early Anglo-Saxon statelets.⁵ However, Blair's concept of relatively large territories focused on Woking, Godalming and Sonning (for which he adopts a term found in *HE* and some early charters, '*regio/regiones*', a term I shall be re-interpreting) fails to account for the several other *-ingas* names found within this same area.

The Surrey distribution of *-ingas* does show parallels with that of Essex. Surrey again has a recognizable early 'Anglo-Saxon' zone in which *-ingas* scarcely occurs. In Surrey this is the north-east of the county where are fifth- and sixth-century Germanic cemeteries. Surrey's *-ingas* places—with the sole exception of Tooting—lie elsewhere: in the opposite (south-western) half of the county. This disjunction between early Germanic settlement zones and zones of *-ingas* occurrence has been suggested by others as showing *-ingas* to be a marker of the spread of 'secondary' Germanic settlement. As we shall see, my own explanation is rather different; albeit the two views might be brought partially into alignment by substitution of the term 'cultural influence' for 'settlement'.⁶

Take, for example, the name of the Surrey market town, Dorking.

⁵ J. Blair, 'Frithuwold's kingdom and the origins of Surrey', in *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, edited by S. Barrett (Leicester, 1989), pp. 97–107.

⁶ For the established view see for example K. Cameron, *English Place-Names*, new edn (London, 1996), pp. 66–72. The early Germanic cemeteries in Surrey's non-*-ingas* zone, sited close to the Roman roads radiating south from London but not found close to the city itself, have been explained as marking military *foederati*: communities settled by late- or post-Roman British authorities based themselves in the city (see R. Poulton, 'Saxon Surrey', in *The Archaeology of Surrey to 1540*, edited by J. and D. G. Bird (Guildford, 1987), pp. 197–222). In this area is Surrey's concentration of potentially early names in *-dūn*, present also in south Essex. For a wider discussion see G. Smith, 'The adoption of Old English in Surrey', *Bulletin of the Surrey Archaeological Society*, 376 (2004), 2–5.

This *-ingas* place-name is assessed by Ekwall to mean ‘the dwellers on R[iver] **Dork*’.⁷ Within such territories, I shall assert that Surrey’s *-ingas* places represent what geographers call ‘central-places’: that is, sites performing some centralized function (be it market, administrative, military or religious) for their surrounding area. Central-places in the mid-seventh-century—an era I shall concentrate on, for reasons which will emerge—we would expect normally to be perhaps forts, royal estates, embryonic market-towns or ports, or monasteries. I shall identify *-ingas* as a particular type, or phase, of central-place.

One *-ingas* per Hundred

-ingas in the south-western half of Surrey shows marked regularities. One is its distribution by medieval Hundred. In effect, *-ingas* occurs at one per Hundred.⁸

Thus of the eight accepted Surrey *-ingas* names,⁹ Godalming and Woking (both medieval market-towns, though Woking only briefly) are at the core of their respective Hundreds. Dorking (another market-town) was a Roman station on Stane Street and remains the core of Wotton Hundred. An early phase of Farnham Hundred seems associated with *Bitungom* (a name now preserved in Binton Farm),¹⁰ a large estate focused on Seale parish and named in Domesday Book and earlier in

⁷ *DEPN*, p. 148. An interpretation as an Old English personal name is given by J. E. B. Gover, A. Mawer, and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Surrey*, English Place-Name Society, 11 (Cambridge, 1934), pp. 269–70; hereafter *PNSr*, and A. D. Mills, *A Dictionary of British Place-Names* (Oxford, 2003), p. 158.

⁸ Central-places in north and east Surrey, towards London, may display a different regularity of naming. Celtic or Latin elements have been said to be visible in the names of the medieval market-towns Croydon, Leatherhead, Chertsey, Reigate / *Crichefeld* and Kingston / *Waleport* (discussed in Smith, ‘The adoption of Old English in Surrey’; on *Waleport* see J. Wakeford, ‘Two *walh* names in the fields of Kingston’, *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, 75 (1984), 251–56), as well as Dorking. This would replicate the situation claimed for Kent, the first of the well-organised Anglo-Saxon states, by A. Everitt, *Continuity and Colonisation: The Evolution of Kentish Settlement* (Leicester, 1986). Some of these Surrey and Kentish names have been thought more recently not to contain Celtic elements.

⁹ *PNSr*, pp. xi–xii.

¹⁰ *PNSr*, pp. xi–xii and 181.

King Caedwalla of Wessex's founding charter of Farnham minster 685 x 688; Seale is likely to be Old English (OE) *sele* 'hall',¹¹ and thus a superseded central-place. *Getinges*, appearing in a Chertsey Abbey charter of 672 x 674¹² and according to the Surrey Survey an earlier name for the parish and estate of Cobham,¹³ was arguably once the focus of Elmbridge Hundred.¹⁴ Tyting, now a farm name, lies just in Blackheath Hundred below the isolated hill-top parish church of St Martha's (a possible pre-Anglo-Saxon Latin name 'holy martyrs'),¹⁵ and is possibly to be associated with a former focus of the subsequently extra-hundredal area, now the county town Guildford, two miles away. Eashing, recorded as a Burghal Hidage fortress, lies within Godalming Hundred and presumably reflects an earlier hundredal core; the fortress was superseded in subsequent versions of the Burghal Hidage by the royal fort at Guildford.

Each of the above seven *-ingas* sites occupies one of the six Hundreds of the south-western half of Surrey. The exception occurs in Godalming Hundred which contains two (one now an abandoned central-place).¹⁶ A further complication is Blackheath Hundred, with in

¹¹ *PNSr*, p. 180. *DEPN*, p. 409, also gives an alternative derivation from the dative of OE *sealh* 'willow'.

¹² These dates for the Farnham and Chertsey charters are taken from J. Blair, *Early Medieval Surrey* (Guildford, 1991), p. 8.

¹³ The name survives in that of Eaton Farm (*Etynge* 1294) in Cobham; *PNSr*, p. xvi.

¹⁴ Elmbridge is 'bridge over the *Emele*' (*PNSr*, pp. 4–5 and 86–87), the *Emele* being the River Mole. The A3, a suspected Roman route to Winchester, crosses the Mole at Cobham close to a Roman villa (on the status of the A3 see D. Bird, 'Surrey in the Roman period: a survey of recent discoveries', in *Aspects of Archaeology and History in Surrey*, edited by J. Cotton *et al.* (Guildford, 2004), pp. 65–76 (p. 67)). Elsewhere ('The adoption of Old English in Surrey'), I have suggested that the set of north Surrey estates in *-hām*, of which Cobham is one, represent a re-naming during the Mercian era of the 670s; the change from *Getinges* (if Wessex *-ingas*; see later text) to Cobham (if Mercian *-hām*) is perhaps especially instructive.

¹⁵ Poulton, 'Saxon Surrey', p. 215.

¹⁶ On Eashing see Blair, *Early Medieval Surrey*, p. 56. One might expect the early history of the vicinity of this Burghal Hidage fortress to have been politically complex. Godalming parish may indeed contain a further *-ingas* name at Lydling

one corner Tyting and its possible Guildford associations; Blackheath Hundred might rather be associated with a possible lost *-ingas* place *Tillingas* in Albury (whose name may mean ‘old minster’), subsequently transferred a mile away to the sub-minster (and briefly market-town) at Shere.¹⁷

This completes the distribution of *-ingas* in Surrey, with the exception of the eccentrically-located Tooting in the far north-east, to be discussed below.

In suggesting that *-ingas* may occur at one per proto-Hundred, the

Farm (*PNSr*, p. 198; E. Ekwall, *English Place-Names in -ing*, 2nd edn (Lund, 1962), pp. 29–30).

¹⁷ A lost *Tyllingeham* is noted in *PNSr*, p. 6, for Shere parish and presumed associated with surviving names Tenningshook (possibly a late name associated with a Thomas Tylling’ recorded in 1332; *PNSr*, p. 251) and the River Tillingbourne (*Tilleburn* 1279; *aqua de Tyllingeham*, *PNSr*, p. 6). Stream names in singular *-ing* are not a feature of Surrey. A prior place-name *Tillingas* might have originated in Albury, if Shere is ‘clear (spring)’ and its name transferred from the Silent Pool in Albury (*Shirburn Spring* 1719) with its adjacent Sherbourne Farm (*PNSr*, p. 221). That Albury’s ‘old *burh*’ could refer to a lost ‘(monastic) enclosure’ might be inferred from *-burh* names of the type Glastonbury / Malmesbury / Shaftesbury / Blythburgh / Peterborough / Bury St Edmunds / *Paulus byrig aet Lundaenae* (i.e. St Paul’s; *DEPN*, p. 401) and Bede’s statement (*HE*, II, 2) that the Welsh monastery of Bangor-is-Coed is ‘called by the English *Bancornaburg*’. This sense of *burh* is accepted by Michael Swanton (*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* (London, 2000), pp. xxxiii and 117 n. 13) and by John Blair (personal communication). Possibly confined to the seventh and eighth centuries, such usage would be identical to Welsh *llan* and to ‘(cathedral) close’. That some early monasteries were enclosed by substantial embankments or ditches is indicated by findings at Brixworth (N. and M. Kerr, *A Guide to Anglo-Saxon Sites* (London, 1982), pp. 86–89), and by Bede’s (*HE*, IV, 28–29) description of Saint Cuthbert’s hermitage on the Farne Islands. That this followed pagan practice is suggested by Bede’s reference (*HE*, II, 14) to King Edwin’s former ‘temple and its enclosure’, and by the enclosures around Romano-British temples. The date of emergence of the *-burh* naming fashion for monasteries may be gauged from the succession of forms for Glastonbury Abbey (*Glastingaea* 704; *Glestingaburg* 732 x 755; *DEPN*, p. 198) and by Bede’s use in the 730s of a Latin equivalent *urbs* for Malmesbury Abbey in the phrase ‘the monastery known as *Maildufi urbs*’ (i.e. ‘priest Maelduib’s town’; *HE*, V, 18).

writer is adopting a specific and testable geographical model, but may appear to be flying in the face of the place-name student's normal expectations in two ways. Firstly, it is suggested that some types of place-naming were 'top down': i.e. that some names were inspired (or allocated) by a higher power external to the immediate local community in question. Secondly, it is also suggested that the survival of some place-names may be non-random: i.e. that some observable patterns of discoverable place-names may fairly closely reflect the original distribution of such names rather than a possibly small and random subset of the original distribution.¹⁸ The writer pleads guilty on both counts, but is unrepentant—for reasons he hopes to be able to justify.

Royal, monastic central-places?

Let us suppose for the moment that there was one *-ingas* place per south-western Surrey Hundred, and that *-ingas* was associated with these Hundreds' core central-places. Let us further suppose that where *-ingas* does not occur at one per Hundred, then Hundred boundaries have changed.

Rob Poulton (following John Blair) has suggested that Surrey's Hundreds may be coterminous with the territories of its minsters.¹⁹ Minsters were early 'mother churches'—the chief churches of local areas, involved (with the bishoprics) in the conversion from paganism and pre-dating the greater number of parish churches (the majority of the latter being perhaps late Anglo-Saxon in era). Are *-ingas* names to be associated with the first minsters?

Favourable to this possibility are two further regularities. The first is a coincidence between *-ingas* and known minsters.²⁰ Thus minsters

¹⁸ A second Surrey example of a non-random surviving place-name distribution pattern may be that of *-ham* in north-west and north-central Surrey. Most are parish names (an exception being the lost *Hunewaldesham*, apparently an earlier name for the subsequently emparked royal estate of Oatlands; *PNSr*, pp. xvi, 98). For a possible explanation of this phenomenon see G. Smith, *Surrey Place-Names*, (Loughborough, 2005), pp. 32-36.

¹⁹ Poulton, 'Saxon Surrey', p. 218.

²⁰ For the status of some Surrey parishes as originally minsters, I am relying on the work of Blair, *Early Medieval Surrey*, pp. 91-108.

occurred in Surrey at Godalming and Woking, and a sub-minster at Dorking. But it is not unreasonable to suspect that early, subsequently lost minsters once existed at Tyting / St. Martha's, at Peper Harrow (from OE *hearg* 'temple')²¹ a mile from Eashing, and at the postulated *Tillingas* / Albury.²² Both *Getinges* and Tooting might too have been former minsters, if their citing in the Mercian Chertsey Abbey charter of 672 x 674 were to imply the early absorption of their territories by this greater church, the latter at this date seemingly the Mercian pro-cathedral for those Hundreds captured south of the Thames (a situation lasting only a decade).²³ Surrey during the seventh century was controlled sequentially by Kent, Wessex, Kent again, Mercia and finally again Wessex.²⁴ Logically, Blair's later sub-minsters at Walton on Thames and at Wimbledon²⁵ may replicate a former hundredal pattern focused on *Getinges* and Tooting. Similarly, *Bintungom* might have been precursor to Farnham minster (see my discussion on the Farnham minster charter, below). In sum, all Surrey's *-ingas* places could once have been minsters, though some of very brief life.²⁶

²¹ *PNSr*, pp. xii and 207–08. That a *hearg* might simultaneously be a church is illustrated by Bede's condemnation (*HE*, II, 15) of over-king Raedwald's establishment in East Anglia. See also n. 65.

²² See n. 17.

²³ Argued in Smith, '*Getinges*, Cobham and Surrey's *-ingas* place-names'.

²⁴ For the charter evidence for this sequence of hegemonies see *PNSr*, pp. xv–xvii.

²⁵ *Early Medieval Surrey*, p. 113.

²⁶ Lost minsters may not however have been totally forgotten. Although medieval rural monasteries are not normally seen as deliberate successors to former hundredal minsters, this could have occurred at Merton Priory by Tooting, Waverley Abbey by *Bintungom*, and certainly at Newark Priory by Woking. Newark (whose late usage of *weorc* as '(monastery) building' could well be paralleled at Southwark; see nn. 37, 44) was in 1210 '*Novo loco de andebir*' [*sic.*], 'the new site of *Andebir*' (, (*PNSr*, p. 148); *Andebir*' (in 1224, *Aldebyria*) is a name directly equivalent to Albury (see n. 17) and reckoned by Blair (*Early Medieval Surrey*, pp. 95–7) to refer to the lost site of Woking minster somewhere nearby. For a second documented instance note *Liber Eliensis* which says that Æthelthryth (daughter of King Anna) consciously sited her new monastery of Ely beside a ruin of Saint Augustine's (D. Whitelock, 'The pre-Viking age church in East Anglia', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 1 (1972), 1–22). I have postulated elsewhere that

The second further regularity is royal status. Godalming, Woking and Dorking were royal manors. The fortress of Eashing presumably was. *Bintungom* may well have been: its parish name Seale (if ‘hall’) perhaps implies royal status.²⁷ *Tilling* / *Albury* are close to the royal manor of Gomshall in Shere parish. *Getinges*, *Tooting* and *Tyting* are without known royal connection; but if a possible connection between *-ingas* named places and royal manors is admitted, it can be argued that an early loss of minster status would coincide with an equally early relinquishing of royal interest and in all probability the subsequent loss of any corroborative documentation.

In sum, it is possible to erect a model that all Surrey *-ingas* places were, at an early period, hundredal minsters sited on focal royal holdings.

First elements of *-ingas* names

The semantics of *-ingas* place-names perhaps gives comfort to such a model. The present writer is not the first to suggest an ecclesiastical meaning for at least some instances of *-ingas*. Ekwall identifies a group name *Berclingas* based on the place-name Berkeley (*Bercleah*) in Gloucestershire and meaning ‘the monks of Berkeley’.²⁸ *Berclingas* would thus be a monastic community-name. Dodgson has suggested that the term *Guthlacingas* refers to the followers of Saint Guthlac, founder of Crowland Abbey in Lincolnshire c.700.²⁹ Here then is *-ingas* attached to a known abbot’s name and used to signify the monastic community under his rule. In trying to make sense of these instances, I wish to generalize and suggest that the semantic content of the Old English group-naming suffix *-ingas* was either ‘royal (monastic) community’,

Æthelthryth also deliberately retained Augustine’s name for the site (G. Smith, ‘The origins of “Surrey”’, *Bulletin of the Surrey Archaeological Society*, 372 (2003), 2–5).

²⁷ Seale parish contains also a possibly significant local name, Kingston, if not simply a late manorial name (*PNSr*, pp. 181–82). A Sele (*sele*) Priory occurs in Sussex (*DEPN*, p. 411).

²⁸ *DEPN*, p. 39.

²⁹ Dodgson, ‘The significance of the distribution of the English place-name in *-ingas*, *-inga-* in south-east England’.

‘minster’, or ‘people of a Hundred’, that these meanings effectively were interchangeable, but only for the mid-seventh-century cusp between royal paganism and royal Christianity.³⁰

I further suggest that there are three such *-ingas* place-name sub-types. The first, and perhaps rarest, typified by *Berclingas*, embraces an existing place-name as first element. Dorking may be an example; Tendring in Essex (of obscure meaning) possibly another. The monastic name Glastonbury (*Glestingaburg* 732 x 755) would belong to an equivalent *-inga-* sub-group, constructed from a prior place-name *Glastonia*.³¹

The second, perhaps the commonest, involves the personal name of a founding minster priest, typified by Guthlac. Barking may follow this model. So too may most of the Surrey *-ingas* names.

The third, typified by Epping and Nazeing (referring to ‘upland’ and ‘ness’), embraces a signifier for a church site—sometimes formerly a pagan site. In this context note that Blair identifies promontories as the archetypical pagan temple location:³² note then the possible relevance of the repeated *-ingas/-inga-* name types Oving(-) (‘*ufa(n)/over*’, if not a person Ufa), Billing(e)(-) (‘bill/promontory’, if not ‘sword’ or a person Billa), Goring (‘gore/promontory’, if not ‘spear’ or a person Gara) and Twyning (‘between/river confluence’).³³ Some of these may of course

³⁰ Short-lived semantic meanings are common in Modern English and presumably were so (though probably to a far lesser degree) in Old English.

³¹ *DEPN*, p. 198. See also note 17.

³² J. Blair, ‘Anglo-Saxon pagan shrines and their prototypes’; and A. Meaney, ‘Pagan English sanctuaries, place-names and Hundred meeting-places’, *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 8 (1995), 1–28 and 29–42.

³³ Place-names selected from *DEPN*; the interpretations are my own. The suggested typology allows a name like Eashing to be interpreted variously as ‘the (royal, religious) community at Ash’ (another Surrey parish does bear this name), or ‘the community of (the priest) Æsc’, or else ‘the (religious) community by the (sacred) ash-tree’ (as one might suspect for Ashwell names, if ‘spring by the sacred ash-tree’). Evaluation necessarily is based on specific local knowledge or on analogies drawn from elsewhere; it is interesting to note however that sacred ash-trees beside holy springs are a commonplace of folklore. Most Surrey *-ingas* names are interpreted by *PNSr* (p. 346) as having personal-name first elements, but another potential exception is Tooting, if containing **tōt* ‘look-out hill’ (for which an

contain personal names and thus fall into type two, but the frequency of promontoric overtones appears, at least to this observer, telling. Indeed, we may here be feeling our way towards explaining a curious feature of *-ingas*, its repetitions: repetitions perhaps either of the site-generic sort, or else of an ecclesiast sort.

Arguments against

Two problems now arise. What date are we dealing with? And could minster and hundredal organization really have occurred simultaneously, as implied above—or is this not implied?

Taking the last issue first, an argument could be made that Surrey's medieval Hundreds date from the Anglo-Saxon/Danish wars of the ninth century and are a military invention. A 'Hundred' is said to refer to the hundred fighting men each locality owed the king. However, Hundreds also relate to the hearing of civil cases at the hundredal court. In practice, as an historical geographer, I have no problem in squaring a military Hundred with a civil one, or in basing such entities on 'natural' river-basin local economic zones: British before they were 'Anglo-Saxon', but quite possibly Neolithic in origin.³⁴ But nor can I expect all proto-Hundreds to develop neatly into Domesday Hundreds: the 550 years of Anglo-Saxon history and politics were complex.³⁵

As to a lack of evidence for minster status, I must challenge Blair's assumption that Chertsey Abbey's records relating to the 660s are the

alternative meaning '(sacred) barrow' might be supported by the chambered barrow called Fairy Toot in Butcombe, Somerset).

³⁴ Early documentary references to Hundred-like or statelet territories include the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's* (477) *Sussex Andredesleage* ('the *lēah* associated with *Andrescester* / Pevensey'), Bede's (*HE*, IV, 13) Hampshire *Meanuarorum provincia* ('province of the people of the Meon valley'), and Symeon of Durham's (dated 771) *Sussex Hestingorum gens* ('people of Hastings' or 'of the Hastings area') (*DEPN*, pp. 10, 322 and 224). Of these, one is named in Celtic from its river, and two from focal towns, one again in Celtic; Hastings is a Roman town now named in *-ingas*. Each such zone might be expected to generate a medieval market town, as earlier a Romano-British urban settlement; Roman 'small towns' are anticipated by archaeologists at approximately six mile intervals.

³⁵ Surrey has examples of 'late' and possibly privately sponsored Hundreds in the case of Effingham Half-Hundred and the probable royal Kingston Hundred.

first evidence for a minster in Surrey; Chertsey's name itself includes a Celtic personal name.³⁶ In addition, a Kentish minster of *c.*605 is likely at Southwark.³⁷ We further must expect that the relevant documentary records, given Surrey's turbulent seventh-century history (let alone the Danish incursions of the ninth century), mostly have been lost. Nor can continuity of ecclesiastical organization be assumed.

With regard to the date of *-ingas*, there is no documentary evidence for its usage in English place-names prior to 600.³⁸ Cox's conclusions concerning the 'earliest' English names are constrained by his relatively late cut-off date of 731.³⁹ There is no *linguistic* reason why English

³⁶ *PNSr*, pp. 105–07. Chertsey's difficult personal name *Cerot* is said in *PNSr*, p. 107, to be evidenced in a *Cerotus* inscription from Roman London, but this has since been challenged. Conceivably *Cerot* is Irish, giving this Thames-side site (or as likely, the adjacent St Anne's Hill) a parallel to the post-Roman Irish missionaries Maelduib at Malmesbury (*DEPN*, p. 312), Aben at Abingdon (J. Morris, *The Age of Arthur: A History of the British Isles from 350 to 650* (London, 1973), p. 386), Dicul at Dickleburgh (T. Williamson, *The Origins of Norfolk* (Manchester, 1993)), and the monks presumably of Beckery by Glastonbury (Irish for 'little Ireland'; *DEPN*, p. 33). Most such places are likely to have formerly been hill-top pagan British cult centres, Abingdon Abbey being sited originally on Boar's Hill (see Morris, *The Age of Arthur*; cf. *DEPN*, p. 1). A test case might be Bosham in Sussex, where Bede (*HE*, IV, 13) notes a small Irish monastery under an abbot Dicul in the mid-seventh century. Bosham is not 'Dicklesham', but 'Bosa's ham(m)' (*DEPN*, p. 53); arguably this signifies the (monastic) *hamm* ('enclosure', as apparently in Surrey at *eccles hamm* and at Pepperhams the site of Haslemere church; *PNSr*, pp. 132 n. 1 and 206; Blair, *Early Medieval Surrey*, p. 111) or *hām* of Bosa, Bosa being either a subsequent abbot or a secular owner after the monastery disappeared.

³⁷ Perhaps associated *c.*605 with the name Surrey, that is, the minster 'south' of St Paul's Cathedral; argued in Smith, 'The origins of "Surrey"'. See also n. 44.

³⁸ *-ingas* is absent from the early entries of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

³⁹ B. Cox, 'The place-names of the earliest English records', *Journal of the English Place-Name Society*, 8 (1976), 12–66; his data-set closes with Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* of that year. Cox's approach omits an evaluation of which types of place-name may have been prevalent in particular parts of England prior to AD 600, which from St Augustine's day to Archbishop Theodore's reforms of the later seventh century, and which after this but before the 730s. There can be no presumption that name types remained broadly consistent either across these eras or

place-names in *-ingas* have to be earlier than the seventh century.⁴⁰

An ecclesiastical model of *-ingas*

The consistency of appearance of *-ingas* names in west and central Surrey Hundreds might be argued to have one of a number of possible causes. Was *-ingas* used of places or communities, ‘central’ or otherwise, whose names later were used for a whole Hundred? Or, if originally a territory name, did it continue in that guise? Or does it occur mainly at the boundary of such territories (as Laflin has tested inconclusively for East Anglia and Essex)?⁴¹ More radically, and embracing Hough’s issue of namers, was there perhaps some unifying political, cultural or administrative influence on west and central Surrey’s place-naming, accounting at some early date for these regularly suffixed place-names? Let me suggest, with respect to this last possibility, that the only agency likely to wield such influence in the seventh century would be a king or a bishop. Or better still, a bishop (for whom a Roman-style love of consistency is tenable), sponsored by a king (whose control of strategic holdings in every Hundred equally is tenable). Let us see where such an assessment (which may or may not be correct) might lead.

Bishop plus king, equals diocese. Each Anglo-Saxon seventh-century kingdom had one or more diocese within it. Given the south-western distribution of *-ingas* within Surrey, taken together with the county’s complex political history, it seems to me likely that Surrey’s *-ingas* naming phase—assumed to have occurred prior to or overlapping with the first preserved record of local *-ingas* names (*Getinges*, Sonning) in the Mercian Chertsey charter of 672 x 674—is to be associated with the Wessex diocese of Dorchester on Thames. The diocese, founded *c.*635, was preceded by Kentish intrusion into east and north Surrey in the 600s, this recurring by at least the 660s. None of this proves Surrey *-ingas* cannot be earlier than 600; but on the other hand there is no alternative evidence indicating that it is.

across different regions.

⁴⁰ Richard Coates, personal communication.

⁴¹ S. Laflin, ‘Do *-ingas* place-names occur in pairs?’, *Journal of the English Place-Name Society*, 35 (2003), 31–40.

So, did the agency of the bishops of Dorchester on Thames found minsters (some now lost) at the core royal holding in each of the Hundreds under its jurisdiction, and ascribe to them the name *-ingas*? True, *-ingas* names in Wessex (inclusive of Wing, Goring, Reading, Sonning, Basing, Eling) are rare, but as we shall see, they are apparently significant. It is worth noting the perhaps strategic locations of Eling at the head of the Solent, and Goring—with its already-cited interesting first element—on the Thames mid-way between Dorchester and Reading. I will argue that all Wessex *-ingas* places could very easily fit my model and represent strategic royal minsters of the Dorchester diocese *post* 635.⁴²

The Farnham charter

Further circumstantial evidence is available from Surrey. The county is fortunate in the preservation of two important early charters, simultaneously ecclesiastical and royal: those of Chertsey Abbey 672 x 674 and Farnham minster 685 x 688.⁴³ I suggest that both charters illustrate phases in the relation between *-ingas* naming and minster organization.

The Chertsey charters (there were two, the surviving Mercian version stating itself as replicating a similar Kentish one of a decade earlier) were drawn up in the rich Thames Valley by sequential colonial powers conceding the continued and indeed expanded status of an established abbey. In contrast, in the Farnham charter, we seem to be witnessing the triumph of the Church over local paganism in a remote part of the Weald.

⁴² A lack of *-ingas* further west would be expected, since here British monasteries survived until late (see also n. 36). The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that King Ine of Wessex ‘built’ (but in all probability re-built) one of them, Glastonbury, only in 686—a pattern perhaps shared by the mid-Wessex monasteries of Abingdon, Malmesbury and Shaftsbury. Note however that Glastonbury may be a related *-inga-* name; the *-burh* of most of these names is equally relevant (see above and n. 17).

⁴³ Their survival probably reflects the fact that Chertsey Abbey, though early, continued as a major medieval institution, and that the bishops of Winchester (successors to those of Dorchester on Thames) retained the manor of Farnham throughout the Middle Ages.

Chertsey's post-Whitby charters (see below), as we have seen, are perhaps confirming the absorption of the territories of prior *-ingas* (and other) minsters into a new and broader administrative structure covering much of the north of the present county.⁴⁴

In Farnham's case, its post-Hertford charter (see below) grants the new minster control over a more limited territory equivalent to the subsequent Hundred of Farnham. It specifically cites three dependent holdings within it: *Bintungom*, *Cusan weoh* and Churt.⁴⁵ These I would interpret as parish-level holdings: Binton falling in the subsequent Seale parish, *Cusan weoh* (today's Willey, i.e. *wēoh lēah*)⁴⁶ being in Farnham parish, and Churt lying in Frensham parish.⁴⁷ Let me hazard that these three holdings actually were extant religious foci serving parish-equivalent localities, in the process of being made subservient to the new minster. My evidence for this conjecture is that *Cusan weoh* (perhaps 'Cusa's temple') clearly is religious, and pagan. *Bintungom* as an *-ingas* place falls within my model and thus arguably is identifiable with a first set of diocesan minsters dating from the 630s to 660s. Churt, now the name of a common and a Victorian parish, conceivably is identifiable with remains, tentatively interpreted as a Romano-British temple discovered recently on Frensham Common.⁴⁸ The charter might thus reveal Farnham's new minster absorbing both pagan centres and a precursor minster. It suggests also that even after *Bintungom* was named, rival pagan foci survived nearby (a situation of religio-political complexity familiar to readers of Bede).

A brief conjectured history of the Old English element *-ingas*

One has to ask why bishops and/or kings, some of whom may have been

⁴⁴ In the process, Chertsey Abbey may have acquired its 'provincia' name Surrey from a Kentish source, probably a decade earlier under Egbert of Kent, perhaps transferred from a minster at Southwark (see n. 37). Compare also n. 14.

⁴⁵ Blair, *Early Medieval Surrey*, p. 25.

⁴⁶ *PNSr*, p. 175.

⁴⁷ The Hundred's only other subsequent parish, Elstead, looks from the map originally to have been the southern part of Seale.

⁴⁸ D. Graham, 'Frensham manor', *Bulletin of the Surrey Archaeological Society*, 352 (2001), 12–13.

British, should choose the Old English element *-ingas*, and what evidence we have that they did so.

As late as the 680s Caedwalla the ‘usurper’, subsequently king of Wessex—initially pagan but later a sponsor of the Farnham minster charter—had a Celtic name and presumably was British.⁴⁹ Poulton has identified west Surrey culture as British till late.⁵⁰ Wessex was an amalgam of petty states, some British (its first over-king, Cerdic, based by the Solent, had a British name), some Germanic or at least Germanised. Could *-ingas* be a useful indicator of a process of cultural Germanisation: a process in west Surrey I infer to be underway in the mid-seventh century? The Latin-speaking Church, tied umbilically to the increasingly Germanic-identifying royal families of the petty and greater states, probably was a major factor in accelerating the adoption of ‘Anglo-Saxon’ cultural forms in England, and indeed the eventual national adoption of the English language. A significant event in this progression, recorded by Bede,⁵¹ was the arrival *c.*635 of a fresh emissary from the pope, Birinus, leading to the founding of the diocese of Dorchester on Thames at a former Roman town by the then king of Wessex, Cynegils, supported by the over-king from Northumbria, Oswald, who ‘happened’ to be visiting.⁵² Birinus ‘built ... several churches’ at Dorchester.⁵³ Whether he or his successor bishops built them elsewhere in Wessex is not stated, but Cynegils’ successor Cenwalh was re-Christianised, during the period when he took refuge with King Anna of East Anglia, and his bishop Agilbert (‘from Gaul’, but who ‘had been studying scriptures in Ireland’) ‘undertook to evangelize the country’.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Caedwalla, said to have ‘emerged from hiding in the forests of Weald and Ciltine’ (Eddius’ *Life of Saint Wilfrid*), conceivably may have known Liss—a rare instance of post-Roman Welsh *llys* ‘court’—in Hampshire thirteen miles south of Farnham.

⁵⁰ Poulton, ‘Saxon Surrey’, p. 216.

⁵¹ *HE*, III, 7.

⁵² Oswald married Cynegils’ daughter, presumably to cement their political alliance (Swanton, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, p. 284).

⁵³ *HE*, III, 7.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Regarding the usage of *-ingas*, Bede uses it of kingly lines, but also of places; this latter usage, for ‘the district known as *Stoppingas*’ in Middle Anglia and for Barking in Essex, is distinctive.⁵⁵ *Stoppingas* he describes in the context of the activities of Bishop Diuna, while Barking he names as the site of a monastery. Within Wessex, a correlation with Roman-style territorial minsters is suggested by Wing, whose seventh-century minster building survives, by the known early royal monasteries of Sonning and Reading, and by the royal centre of Basing twelve miles west of Farnham.

It is thus not unreasonable to argue that *-ingas* in English place-names refers not to a ‘tribe’ or ‘kingly line’, but to either ‘congregation (of a minster Hundred)’, or alternatively ‘royal (monastic) household’. They could be considered royal and potentially monastic because of the evidence of the *-ingas* sites themselves, and because early ‘Anglo-Saxon’ monasteries were sometimes conversions of extant aristocratic households to monastic status embracing only a limited amount of religiosity.⁵⁶

-ingas seems originally to have been a pagan Germanic suffix with the meaning ‘people of ...’, which could be used of a war-band or small tribal grouping. It is evident in *Beowulf*, an Old English saga making extensive use of Scandinavian references, and thought by some to be associated with the court of over-king and part-pagan, part-Christian Raedwald of East Anglia in the 610s. Its usage for quasi-monastic aristocratic households, whether originally British or originally Germanic, would be a logical progression if it were initiated in

⁵⁵ ‘Oiscingas’ and ‘Wuffingas’ (*HE*, II, 5 and 15) for the royal families of Kent and East Anglia respectively. *Stoppingas*: III, 21. Barking: IV, 7.

⁵⁶ See for example S. Pearce, ‘Estates and church sites in Dorset and Gloucestershire: the emergence of a Christian society’, in *The Early Church in Western Britain and Ireland*, edited by S. Pearce, BAR British series, 102 (Oxford, 1982), pp. 117–38. Such a household is described in the Chertsey Abbey charter, which states that the charter itself was ‘confirmed by Wulfhere, king of the Mercians, for he ... placed his hand on the altar in the residence which is called Thame’ (*English Historical Documents*, edited by David C. Douglas, 12 vols (London, 1953–77), I: *c.500–1042*, edited by D. Whitelock (1955), p. 441). Note the pre-English place-name—i.e. residence and estate name—of Thame (compare n. 8).

Germanic-identifying royal East Anglia in association with Roman-style territorial minsters established by the saintly king Sigeberht (a son of Raedwald), who converted while in exile in Gaul and who sponsored the Burgundian Felix as first bishop at Dunwich in 627, but who was subject also to Irish monastic influence via the Irish missionary Fursey to whom he gave the Roman fort at Burgh Castle for a monastery six years later in 633.⁵⁷ This fusion of Roman and Irish ecclesiastical traditions, occurring within a Germanic ‘royal’ context (as also in Northumbria during this era), goes perhaps a long way towards explaining the semantics of English *-ingas*.

For possible exemplars one might look to Blythburgh, central-place within Blything Hundred in Suffolk and said to have been a monastery of Sigeberht’s equally pious mid-seventh-century successor King Anna; another of Anna’s estates was Exning.⁵⁸ Happisburgh, focus of Happing Hundred, might replicate the situation at Blythburgh / Blything.

Such usage might thence have disseminated across eastern and southern England. Edwin of Northumbria, a refugee at Raedwald’s court in his youth, became by conquest and alliance over-king of ‘all the peoples of Britain ... with the exception of the Kentish folk’.⁵⁹ Under Edwin and his successors Oswald and Oswy, quasi-Roman / quasi-Irish bishoprics were established in Northumbria (627), East Anglia (627), Wessex (635), Essex (653) and Mercia (c.667).⁶⁰ I would argue that it is these dioceses, with their temporary Roman-Irish cultural fusion—brought to a close by the ecclesiastical reforms initiated after the Synod of Whitby (664), but more particularly the Roman-style restructuring of minsters following Archbishop Theodore’s Council of Hertford (673)⁶¹—that explain and largely delimit the occurrence of *-ingas* in English place-names.

Indeed, *-ingas* in English place-names might most succinctly be

⁵⁷ *HE*, II, 15, and III, 18–19.

⁵⁸ Laflin, ‘Do *-ingas* place-names occur in pairs?’, omits Exning from the set of East Anglian *-ingas* names.

⁵⁹ *HE*, II, 5 and 12.

⁶⁰ *HE*, II, 14 and 15; III, 7 and 22; IV, 3.

⁶¹ *HE*, II, 25; IV, 5. On these reforms see D. J. V. Fisher, *The Anglo-Saxon Age, c.400–1042* (Harlow, 1973).

conceived as a parallel to the usage of ecclesiastical Latin *-(i)ensis*, ‘religious community’/‘congregation’, as used of early Church communities. Thus we find Malmsbury Abbey recorded as *Mailbubiensis aecclesia* and Hexham (then a cathedral) in *HE* as *Hagustaldensis ecclesia*.⁶² The ecclesiastical term most directly associated with *-ingas* may however be a territorial one, *regio*, used by Bede for, I suggest, ‘minster territory’.

Conclusions and further research

-ingas has been re-interpreted, applying Hough’s ‘namer question’ to regular place-naming patterns. The namers are proposed to have been ecclesiastics. Outer date limits for *-ingas* naming are proposed: namely, the two or three generations between the 620s and the 680s.⁶³

It cannot be said that *-ingas* has been proven definitely to be associated with the minsters of mid-seventh-century dioceses and the latter’s bishops, though it may be so associated. It can be argued that the shared Gallic, Northumbrian and East Anglian connections of these bishops and their kings are likely to have influenced place-naming, or rather community-moulding and community-naming. We do know that *-ingas* was used by Bede (a near-contemporaneous Northumbrian ecclesiastic writing in the 730s) in both an archaic quasi-tribal royal sense and also a district-naming sense. But we know also that the Church had been re-organized between the mid-seventh century and the time of Bede, and we may legitimately suspect that different institutional naming patterns prevailed amongst the ecclesiastics of

⁶² *DEPN*, pp. 312 and 237.

⁶³ The late 680s date is suggested for Sussex (Oving, Steyning, South Malling, etc.) and west Kent (Cooling, Halling, West Malling, etc.). The royal house of Sussex was converted by the Northumbrian St Wilfrid only in the 680s (*HE*, IV, 13). The churches of the diocese of Rochester were destroyed by Mercian invasion in 676 (*HE*, IV, 12) and seem likely to have been rebuilt only in 686 when Caedwalla, now allied with Wilfrid, also invaded (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*; *HE*, V, 7). Some or all of west Surrey’s *-ingas* could also date from Wilfrid’s time. The east Kent diocese of Canterbury avoided invasion and cultural influence; it has no *-ingas* place-names. The few Greater London *-ingas* names (Tooting, Ealing, Yeading) might date from Caedwalla or the earlier Essex diocese, or from ex-bishop of Winchester Wine’s intermediary Mercian diocese of London (*HE*, III, 7).

these distinct periods.⁶⁴

If the model has merit, *-ingas* should prove useful as a guide to the intersecting processes of the conversion to Christianity, the relation between Christianity and kingship, and of acculturation away from ‘Britishness’ and towards ‘Englishness’. These processes operated distinctively within the different mid-seventh-century dioceses in eastern and southern England, in ways reflecting their historical and political circumstances.

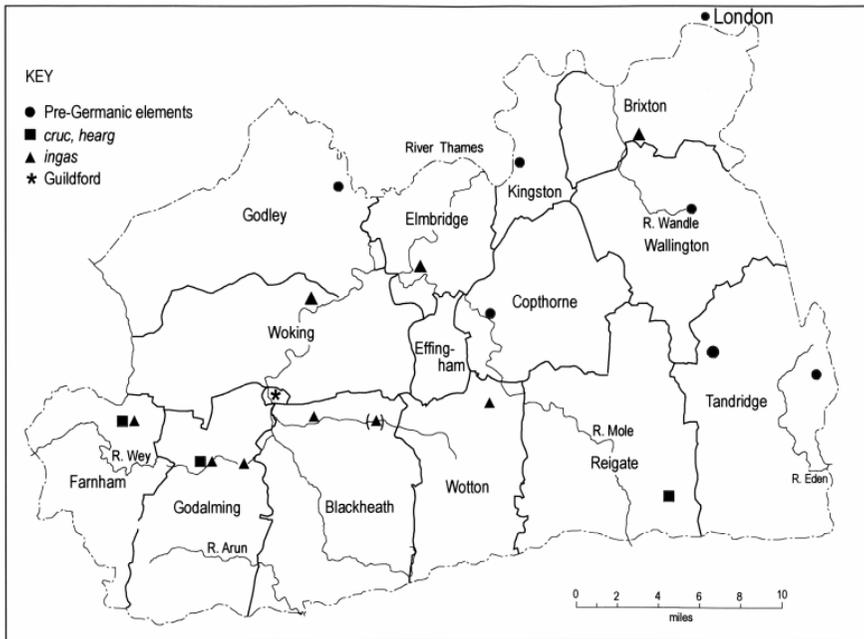
Detailed confirmatory work is now required for other counties, ideally in collaboration with local historians and archaeologists. Many questions remain. Was *-ingas* in English place-names ever used of still-pagan sites?⁶⁵ Does *-ingas* reveal a transitional era, one moving away from Dark Age pagan hill-top cult-sites and rural aristocratic halls, back towards river-side and often former Roman proto-urban foci? Did proto-Hundreds, royal estates, church sites and proto-urban locations influence each other in complex ways, and were *-ingas* names subsequently exchanged between these various entities? Does particular significance attach to the observable place-name sub-sets *-ingaburh*, *-ingaei*, *-ingahearg* and *-ingahōh* in addition to *-ingahām*?⁶⁶

⁶⁴ A lack of *-ingas* names in Northumbria (though Bede cites monasteries at *Laestingaeu* / Lavingham and Cuningham; *HE*, III, 23 and V, 12) is explicable by the dominance of the Irish ecclesiastical tradition of Aiden of Lindisfarne and Hilda of Whitby; some early churches retained British or quasi-tribal names (York, Lindisfarne, Ripon, Jarrow, Tynemouth, Leeds).

⁶⁵ For the potential parallel usage of *hearg* for some of the earliest churches, see my comments on King Raedwald (n. 21). Caedwalla’s Farnham minster charter was signed at a royal place *Besingahearg*, possibly the postulated royal minster at Basing.

⁶⁶ For example Walsingham (Norfolk), Framlingham (Suffolk), Wateringbury (Kent), Wellingborough (Northants), Hertingfordbury (*Hertfordingebur*’ 1240, Herts; *DEPN*, p. 236), *Glestingaburg*, *Glastingaea*, *Laestingaeu*, *Heglingaig* (Hayling Island, Sussex; *DEPN*, p. 228), *Besingahearg* (see n. 65), Ivinghoe (Bucks); some are known monasteries (Hertingfordbury by Hertford conceivably that of Theodore’s Council). Note specially *Gumeninga hergae* (dative, 767, *DEPN*, p. 221), the hill-top church of Harrow on the Hill, Middlesex, and Bengoe (*Beningho*, 1202; *DEPN*, p. 37) in Hertfordshire. Harrow’s *guma* could be interpreted variously as ‘a person Guma / the people / the lord / the Lord’. Bengoe

Whatever the answers, only those *-ingas* names survive that had the good fortune to get into a surviving documentary record, or be transferred upon legal entities (manors, parishes) which themselves survive (as farms, villages, towns, though not necessarily on their original sites). We will never know their survival rates. That for *-ingas* in Surrey I would hazard is high—we have almost run out of eligible Hundreds to fill—but high only because of the diligence of past place-name students.



is ‘the *hōh* of the people of the valley of the River Beane’ and conceivably a moot-mound and ancient hundredal-level central-place; if so, the name is perhaps illustrative of the secular parallel to the minster, these twin strands originating in the ‘local cult centres’ that N. J. Higham, *The Convert Kings: Power and Religious Affiliation in Early Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester, 1997), reckons the focus of post-Roman society.