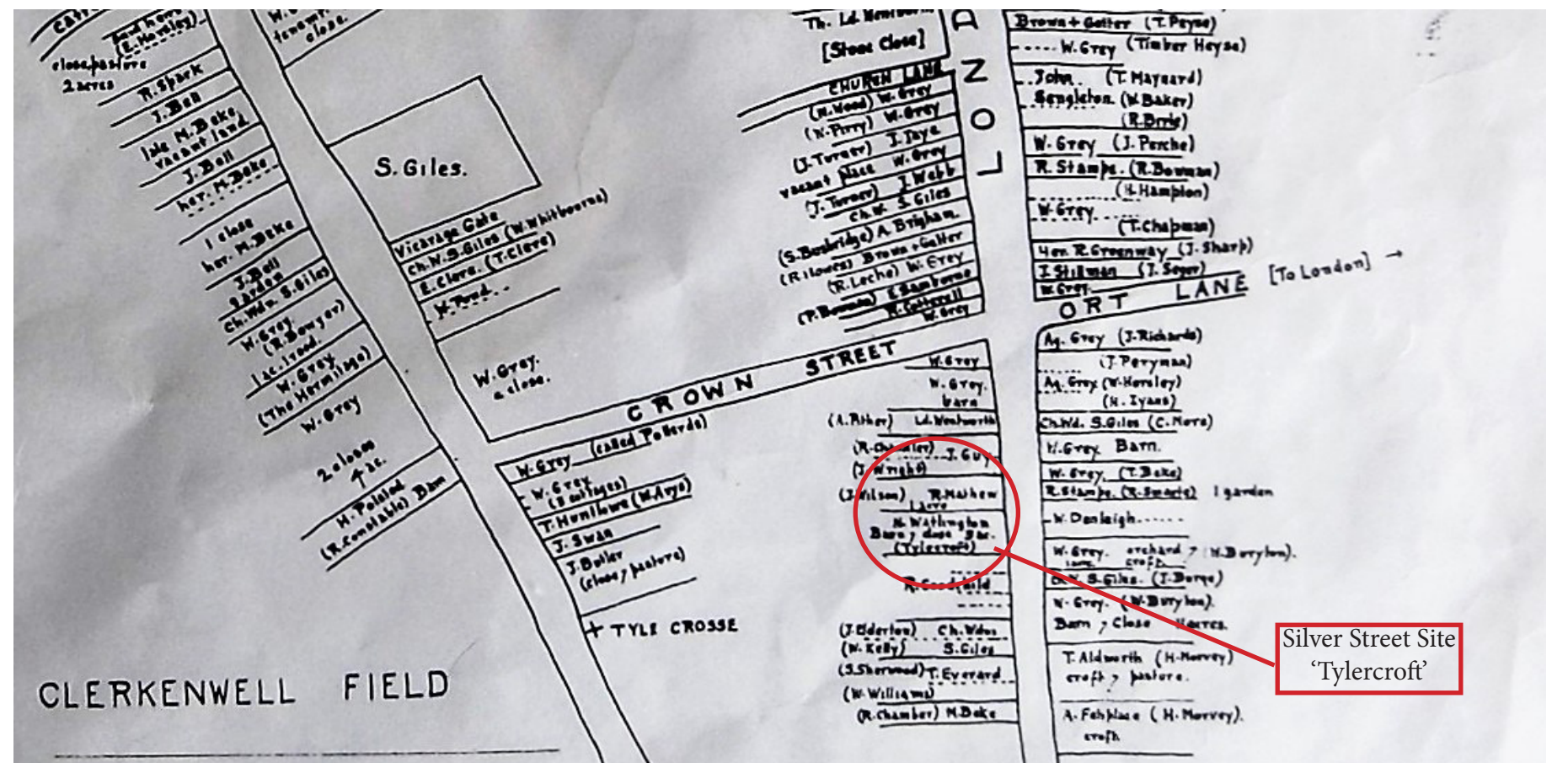
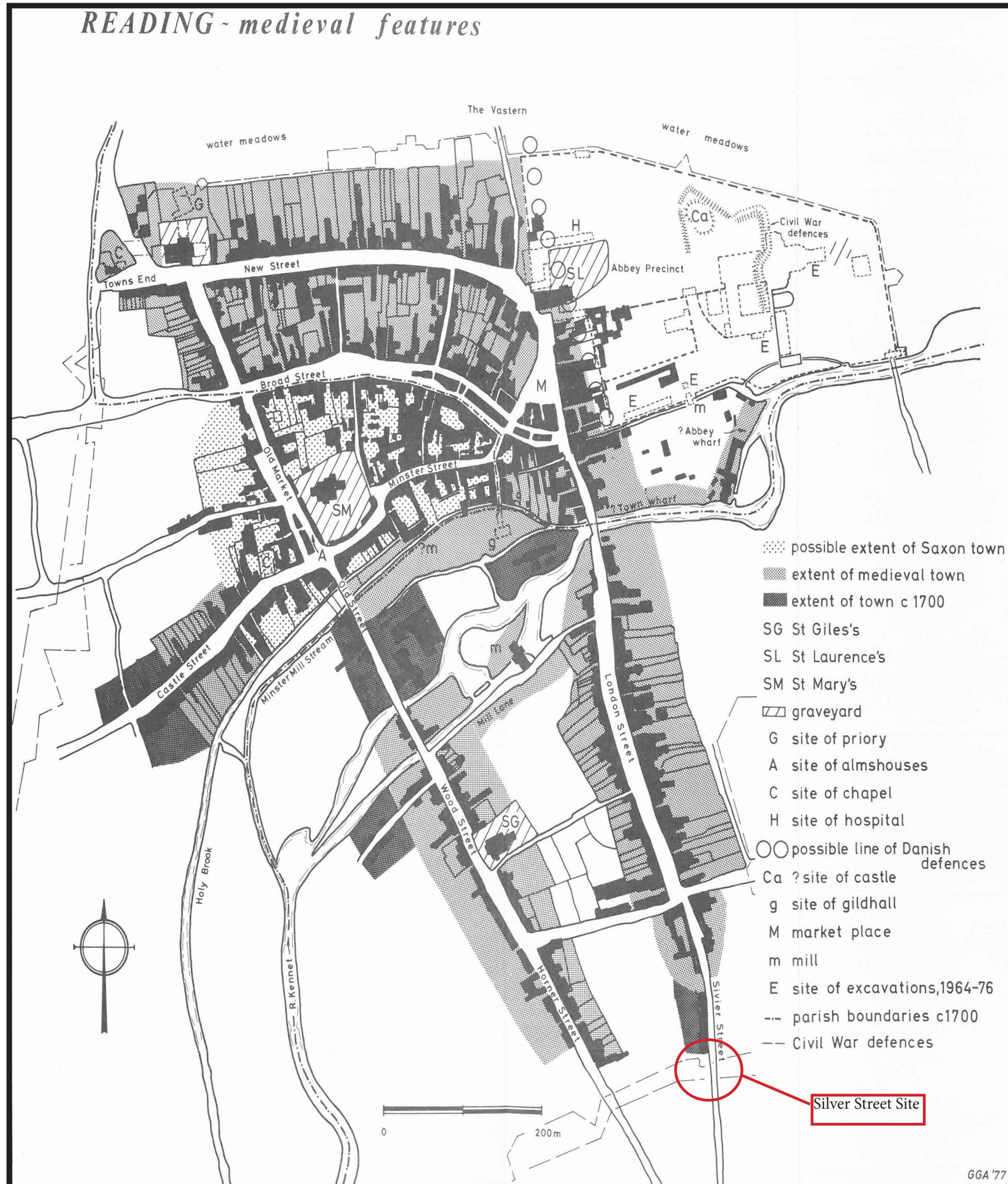


Excavations at the Silver Street site

40 Silver Street, Reading, Berkshire



Map of Reading, 1552 Amyce's Plan.

Reading first appears in documents by AD870 in the **Anglo Saxon Chronicles** and was the base camp of the Viking hordes eventually subdued by King Alfred. However, the town is perhaps most noted for its Abbey, founded in AD1121. At that time Reading was attached to an extensive agricultural estate called Reading Manor, belonging to the Crown. **King Henry I (AD1100-1135)**, chose **Reading to be the site of his Royal Abbey**, cementing the importance of the town. King Henry I was later buried there. Reading was also the site of several sittings of Parliament.

Reading became an area known for its weavers, fullers and shoemakers. With a unique and tumultuous relationship between towns-people and the Abbey, Reading was prosperous

During the **Civil War** the towns prosperity was dislocated. It was occupied by both Parliamentary and Royalist forces between AD1642-1644. The cloth and leather working industries collapsed and a reorientation of the towns economy occurred as a result. Older industries like **Tanning and Brick & Tile Making** underwent an expansion.

With the completion of the **Kennet and Avon Canal** in AD1810, Reading was linked with Bristol cementing Reading as a communications hub, in connection with London and Oxford.



Current Excavations

TVAS is excavating the Silver Street site in advance of the construction of student housing. Overburden was removed by machine under archaeological supervision to reveal a range of features including medieval pits, a well, a post-medieval oven and two medieval tile kilns of great interest.

Astill, G.G., 1978, Historic Towns in Berkshire: an archaeological appraisal, p. 83,

Archaeology

Before any excavation can begin, archaeologists may conduct a **desk-based assessment** of the site and surrounding area. This involves gathering together as many documents relating to the site as possible. This can include **aerial photography**, **historical descriptions** and **archaeological reports** from previous excavations on the site and in the local area.

If a site is determined to have a high chance of surviving archaeology, an **archaeological evaluation** may be requested by the city archaeologist responsible for maintaining the city's heritage. This means that a series of trenches are dug across the site to try and determine how much archaeology is present, and to gain an idea of the kinds of finds, features and age of deposits which are present. An archaeological evaluation was carried out prior to the current excavation taking place.

The Local Area

Reading town does not have a Roman predecessor. This **Anglo-Saxon town** was most likely sited on the cross roads running from London to Bath and Oxford to Winchester. Anglo-Saxon pottery has been found at a number of sites in Reading dating back to AD450-850. Some regionally distinct pottery (Ipswich ware) has been found suggesting that early Reading was involved in the blooming **trade network** of the time.