

Documentary History for  
**The Eight Bells, 51 High Street, Long Crendon,  
Buckinghamshire**

*Site Code:* LON-S

*from*

The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England

*by*

Nat Alcock and Dan Miles



Fig. 1. View from the south. (Photo: Eric Sewell)

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*Oxbow Books*

LON-S: THE EIGHT BELLS, 51 HIGH STREET, LONG CRENDON,  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Grid reference: SP 6967 0897

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Documentary history by Nat Alcock and Eric Sewell, building on the work of John Chenevix Trench†.  
*For court roll and documentary source references, see the bibliography of primary sources.*

*Abbreviations:*

CBS           Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies  
TNA           The National Archives

### SUMMARY ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Eight Bells is a house, probably originally of three bays, that contains one cruck truss. Although the upper part of the truss is concealed, it appears to have a truncated apex (type W).

### DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

#### *Summary*

The earliest firm indication of the ownership of the Eight Bells is as a freeholding in the hands of Edward Wells in 1827 (Fig. 2), though it may have been owned by the Shrimpton family in the later 18<sup>th</sup> century. The topographical evidence strongly suggests that it had been an enfranchised Dormer copyholding, but the size of its landholding is unknown. By 1910 (Fig. 3), the Wells brewing business had become the Wallingford Brewery.

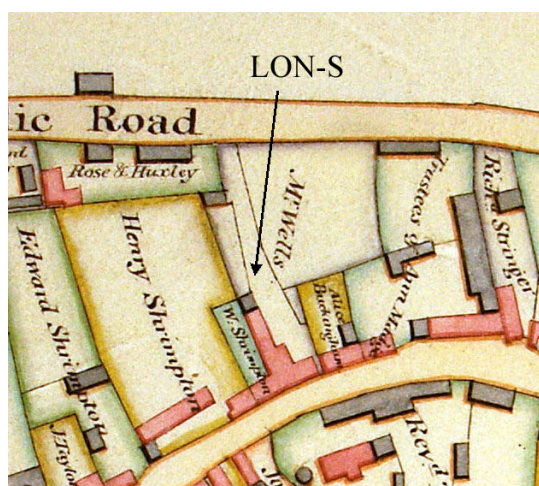


Fig. 2. Part of the 1827 map of Long Crendon (CBS IR/95/Q).

#### *Topography*

The interlocking of this property with that of ‘Alice Buckingham’ (53 High Street, Shepherds Cottage) and the ‘Trustees of Ann Madge’ (55 High Street, Madges Farm) suggests that originally they were in common ownership (see also hereditaments 202 and 413 on Fig. 3). Madge’s Farm can be traced back as a freeholding to the 1617 will of Richard Madge, yeoman of Shabbington, when it comprised the ‘house in Crendon purchased of John Nicholls of Crendon, and the three yardlands purchased of Sir John Dormer’;<sup>1</sup> unfortunately, the house cannot be identified in earlier sources. However, Alice Buckingham’s

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<sup>1</sup> TNA, PROB 11/130.

cottage can be followed back to 1577, as a Dormer copyhold cottage with a small amount of land (see below). Thus, it is a plausible assumption that the Eight Bells originated as an enfranchised Dormer copyhold, although the size of the associated landholding is unknown.

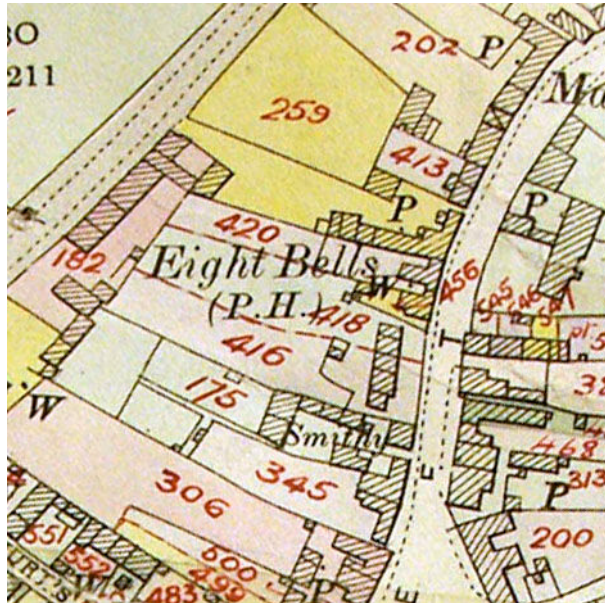


Fig. 3. Part of the 1910 Valuation map of Long Crendon (hered. 259). (TNA, IR 126/1/345).

### **Documentary Sources**

The 1827 map gives 'Mr Wells' against the house and substantial back plot of the Eight Bells. The only specific reference to the ownership of this property come from the 1845 will of Edward Wells of Wallingford. This includes a long list of public houses in Wallingford, London, Cholsey, etc. with names of occupants, but not prior owners. Among them is the Eight Bells in Long Crendon, occupied by George Ing.<sup>2</sup> The ownership is confirmed from the 1833 List of Electors, which gives Edward Wells of High Street, Wallingford, Berks:

Freehold messuage & Garden - The Eight Bells public-house - John Bruce tenant.

The property would have passed from him to the Wallingford Brewery, who were the owners in 1910.<sup>3</sup> The 1826 will of Edward Wells of Wallingford, probably the father of the Edward dying in 1845 does not mention any specific properties.<sup>4</sup> As with most other properties lacking open-field land, the house only appears in the Land Tax in 1826, which lists: Mr Wells, occ. Darvil Shrimpton, house & garden 10s.

More is known of the licensees of the pub, though the main indication that they might be the owners as well as the occupiers is the continuity of the Shrimpton family, and Willis before them. The Sun Fire Insurance policy details generally indicate whether the insurer was the owner or the occupier, and the listing suggests the former, although it is not explicit. It reads:

1787: *Sun Fire Insurance*. John Shrimpton of Crenden in the county of Bucks victualler. On his now dwelling house only (the Eight Bells) situated as aforesaid brick timber and tiled not exceeding one hundred pounds household goods therein not exceeding fifty pounds. Utensils and stock therein and in cellar adjoining stone and tiled not exceeding one hundred pounds. Stable and brewhouse adjoining each other and above (a stone party wall between and no communication)

<sup>2</sup> TNA, PROB 11/2018, proved 8 May 1845. See f. 324.

<sup>3</sup> Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, 1075: 1896-1958: minutes of Wallingford Brewery directors' and shareholders' meetings, includes the 1846 mortgage by Edward Wells of pubs in Oxfordshire & Berkshire (but not Buckinghamshire).

<sup>4</sup> TNA, PROB 11/1716.

Thatched not exceeding twenty five pounds. Barn and pigsty adjoining separate thatched not exceeding twenty five pounds.<sup>5</sup>

The Quarter Sessions records indicate that the Eight Bells and the Five Bells were identical, which allows the history of this building to be taken back securely to 1756 and with fair certainty to 1753, when under the name of the Five Bells it was kept by John Shrimpton.<sup>6</sup> The names of identified licensees are:

1753-1755: Susannah Willis [Sarah Willis, d. William and Susannah, bapt 1737 (Register)]  
1756-1770: John Shrimpton, for Five Bells [1755 m. Sarah Willis (register)]  
1771-83: John Shrimpton, for Eight Bells.<sup>7</sup>  
1795: Charles Dodwell  
1796-1806: Job Shrimpton  
1807-28: Darvill Shrimpton  
c.1830: John Dodwell [occupier for Edward Wells in 1829 LT]  
c.1833 & 1847: John Bruce senior [occupier for Edward Wells in 1832 LT]  
c.1839-1842 George Ing  
1850-1853: George Ing  
c.1859-1891: John Bruce junior  
c.1895: Richard S Cook  
c.1899: William Lay

### **53 High Street, Shepherd's Cottage**

This can be traced through the following series of court references:

1549: [Dormer survey] Thomas Myxbery, for a cottage & an acre.  
1577: Henry BURT died, cottage & 1a (D), to Jas MEADE  
1618: Jas MEAD surr tenement & 1a (D) to use of Thos MEAD, son  
1619: Thos MEAD admitted, tenement & land (D)  
1625: Thos MEADE seeks licence to let for 6 years his tenement (D)  
1660: Thos MEADE decd, cottage (D), Jas MEAD, son, adm  
1662: Jas MEADES adm to cottage late occ Thos MEADES.  
1694: Jas MEADE died, cottage (D). Jas MEADE son & heir.  
1715: Jas MEAD, gent, cottage & 1a (D) surr to John TOWERSEY jun  
1734: Jn TOWERSEY messuage (D) wherein Jn TURNER junior now dwells surr to use of Jn TURNER, junior.  
1738: Jn TURNER jun surr (1737) messuage or cottage & 2 lands (D) to use of his will.  
1754: Jn TURNER, junior, decd. devised messuage or cottage & 2 lands [*or 1 ac*]: to wife Eliz, heir.  
1762: Eliz TURNER, wid, surr messuage or cottage where she dwells & 1a, previously held from Sir Reg Cottrell-Dormer now Geo GRENVILLE, to use of Edw MUNDAY.  
1796: Edw MUNDAY, cottage & 1a (Buckingham manor) to which adm 1763, surr by will to Sarah MUNDAY, wife, adm. Re-surr to use of Wm FRANKLIN shopkeeper.

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<sup>5</sup> Guildhall Library, MS 11936/341/525430, dated 1787; reference kindly provided by Valda Shrimpton]. The similar reference for 1778: MS 11936/261/389265, does not name the property.

<sup>6</sup> CBS, Q/RLV/1.

<sup>7</sup> In 1768, the church bells were recast and increased from 5 to 8. Cocks, A.H. *The Church Bells of Buckinghamshire*, London, (1897), 457.

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- 1814: Wm FRANKLIN shopkeeper, messuage & 2 lands (Buckingham) to which adm 1796 on surr of Sarah MUNDAY and left by 1809 will of Wm FRANKLIN to his wife Hannah since died, now or late occ John REYNOLDS; Alice BUCKINGHAM, devisee in fee in remainder of will of Wm FRANKLIN.
- 1827: Enclosure: Alice BUCKINGHAM
- 1892: Frances DYSON (wife of Revd DYSON), messuage (B) formerly occ by Alice BUCKINGHAM surr to use of Hen HOLLOWAY of Aylesbury.
- 1902: Walter Briaris CROOK decd held cottage from Lady Kinloss.
- 1910: Valuation: Hereditaments 413-4., owner Cozens CROOK. (413) occ. Dora GREGORY; (414) occ. W.J. Henton. Copyhold Lady Kinloss, quit rent 1s (or two rents of 1s).
- 1928: Enfranchised (with plan) Cozens CROOK to which adm 1903 previously Alice BUCKINGHAM used as 2 cottages one lately occ by Mrs TURNER then Mrs GREGORY other by Joh HINTON.

***Building References***

1910. Hereditament 259.  
Owned Wallingford Brewery, occupied Alfred Kingswell. Area 2r 14p. Upstairs: three bedrooms, clubroom; downstairs, tap room, living room, still room, bar; cellar, backhouse; coals.