

**Notes on a Measure of Brass, or Standard Bushel, dated A.D. 1677, and formerly in public use at Ashborne in the County of Derby.**

---

By W. R. HOLLAND.

---



THE accompanying illustration represents a Brass or Bronze Measure, now in my possession, the capacity of which is equal to a Winchester Bushel, and which was anciently chained at the covered Market Cross which formerly stood near the bottom of the Market Place at Ashborne.

The Winchester Bushel was first established as a fixed standard by King Edgar, who reigned from A.D. 950 to 975.

The Ashborne Measure was doubtless used principally as a gauge for testing and authenticating wooden measures of like capacity, pursuant to an Act of Parliament of the 22nd year of King Charles II. (A.D. 1670), entitled "An Act for ascertaining the Measures of Corn and Salt throughout the Realm." The following are extracts from that statute:—

"If any Person or Persons after the Nine and twentieth day of *September* One thousand six hundred and seventy, shall sell any Sort of Corn or Grain, ground or unground, or any Kind of Salt, usually sold by the Bushel, either in open Market, or any other Place, by any other Bushel or Measure than that which is agreeable to the Standard marked in his Majesty's Exchequer,

commonly called '*The Winchester Measure*,' containing Eight Gallons to the Bushel, and no more or less, and the said Bushel stricken even by the Wood or Brim of the same by the Seller, and sealed as this Act directs, he or they shall forfeit for every such offence the sum of Forty Shillings," &c., &c. (*Sect. 2.*)

Section 4 relates to the gauging and sealing of various measures, which are described as a Bushel, Half-Bushel, Peck, Gallon, Pottle, Quart, Pint, and Half-Pint (a pottle is half a gallon).

"And to the End that there may be a just and certain Measure (to determine all Controversies) gaged as this Act directs, be it further enacted, That at the Charge of such Person or Persons respectively, who shall have the Toll or Profit of the Market, &c., there shall be before the said Nine and twentieth Day of *September*, One Measure of Brass provided, and chained in the publick Market Place; upon pain to forfeit and lose for every Person so neglecting respectively the sum of Five Pounds," &c., &c. (*Ibid.*, *Sect. 5.*)

In Derbyshire and the neighbouring counties a bushel is commonly called a "strike," from the immemorial practice, after filling the measure with corn, of striking off all that is higher than the rim with a flat and straight piece of wood. This usage is alluded to by the words, "and the said Bushel stricken even by the Wood or Brim of the same by the Seller." The practice of striking off the superfluous corn is alluded to in a subsequent Act, 22 & 23 of Charles II., which forbade the "shaking of the said Bushel or Measure by the Buyer before it be struck," upon pain of a fine of £5, and the forfeiture "of all Corn, Grain, or Salt," bought or sold contrary to the Act. According to this enactment "good measure" could evidently be given, although not "pressed down and shaken together" (*St. Luke vi. 38*).—Corn of all kinds is now generally sold by weight.

The dimensions, &c., of the Ashborne Bushel are as follows:—Height from ground, 1 foot; depth inside, 9 in.; circumference 5 ft.  $2\frac{3}{4}$  in.; width across, 1 ft. 8 in.; colour, a rich dark green.

It stands on three feet. On the outer circumference are the following words and figures in bold raised characters:—

ASHBORNE : IN : THE : COVNTY : DERBYS : 1677.



THE ASHBOURNE BRASS STANDARD BUSHEL.

Between the words there is a good representation of the Royal Arms of Great Britain and Ireland as borne by the Stuart line, viz. :—Quarterly ; 1 and 4 Grand Quarters, France modern and England quarterly ; 2nd Grand Quarter, Scotland ; 3rd Grand Quarter, Ireland. The supporters, crown, motto, and garter ribbon are the same as at present.