

# BUCKINGHAMSHIRE WINDMILLS

Buckinghamshire County Museum Archaeological Group

Every Buckinghamshire parish, almost without exception, had at some time or another one or more wind - or watermills within it. Apart from church and manor house, windmills would have been among the most outstanding features of the mediaeval landscape. Many were set in open fields at a distance from the village centre and were by no means always sited on high ground.

The earliest windmill to which reference has been found was at Stone. This mill, which was in existence in 1190, was also amongst the earliest in the country. The earliest mention of a windmill in Western Europe is said to occur in a deed of c. AD 1180, and refers to a mill in Normandy, (Singer et al., 1958). Only four windmills of a similarly early date are known in England (Smith, 1978), Stone being the fifth.

Early windmills were of post mill type. They were commonly raised on circular mounds, some of which can still be seen in Buckinghamshire; although, even allowing for denudation by ploughing, the number of mounds which survive hardly justifies the assumption that all post mills were thus sited. Mounds were normally thrown up especially for the purpose, but occasionally pre-existing mounds, such as barrows, were utilised. One windmill mound at Great Linford has recently been excavated prior to its destruction, by archaeologists of Milton Keynes Development Corporation. Stone footings, which supported the timber cross tree and on which the axial post stood, remained. Post mills were completely timber, and were therefore particularly vulnerable to fire and gales. Their structure did, however, enable them to be dismantled and moved from one site to another if necessary.

Windmills as a whole are not generally well preserved in Buckinghamshire, though post mills survive at Pitstone and Brill, a smock mill at Lacey Green, and tower mills at New Bradwell and Quainton. All of these are open to visitors at certain times. Those at Lacey Green and Quainton are in course of restoration. Other mills which survive have been adapted for domestic or other use.

The accompanying list of mills (159 in all) has been compiled by searching a variety of sources. These include basic county and parish histories, many manuscript and printed maps, extracts from administrative documents dating from the mediaeval period, and also field name maps at the County Museum which are currently being compiled from local sources. Despite many months of work on the project, there remain some obvious gaps and this gazetteer must be regarded as a basis for future work. The history of individual mills is one aspect of considerable interest and well worth pursuing. The County Museum would be very pleased to hear of sites which have been omitted from the list. A complementary survey of watermills in Buckinghamshire is in progress.

The first of the three maps which accompany the gazetteer shows the overall distribution of windmills in the county by civil parish. The larger scale maps of the north and south of the county show the actual number of mills in each parish and the

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## WINDMILLS

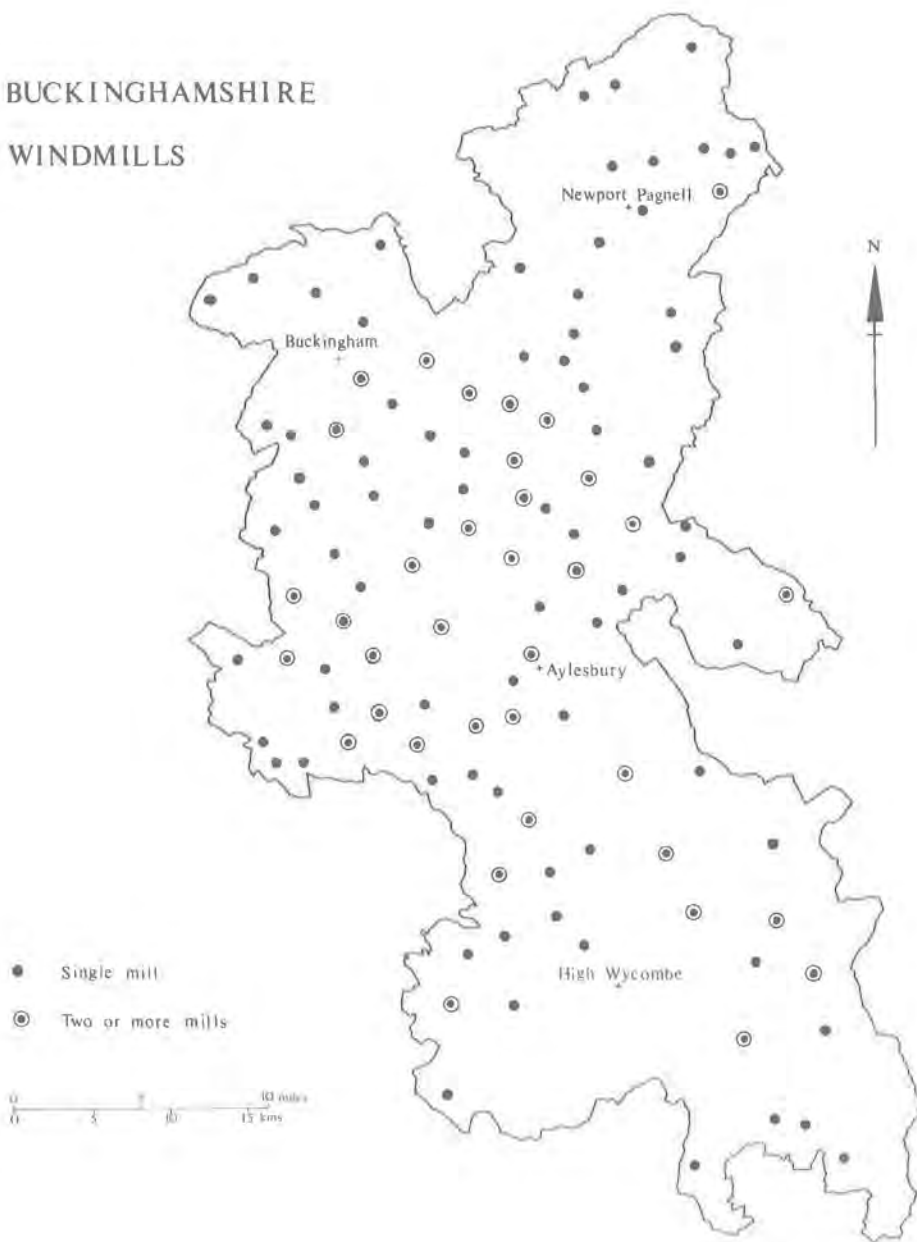


Fig. 1. The distribution of windmills in Buckinghamshire.

nature of the evidence which exists for them, but it is not possible at this scale to show their true position in the parish.

In the accompanying gazetteer the nature of the evidence which has led to the identification of a mill and hence, to some extent, to the validity of that identification, is set out in four categories which are as follows:

1. Site closely identifiable by authority of a printed Ordnance Survey map and occasionally by extant remains.
2. Site whose position is known with reasonable accuracy from maps, other than Ordnance Survey maps, or from documentary sources occasionally supported by field names or ground evidence.
3. Windmill site in parish authenticated from documentary evidence, but location on the ground not known.
4. Probable windmill site deduced from field name or field observation, or combination of both.

Where possible a National Grid Reference is given to each siting: an eight-figure reference where location is precise, a six-figure reference where it is an approximation, as in the case of a derivation from a small scale map such as Bryant's County Map of 1824. A six-figure reference followed by a bracketed F denotes that the NGR is to a field name. The next column gives the category of the information available. The third column refers to a museum index card, and the final column gives a date (or dates) at which the mill is *known* to have been in existence but which, it must be stressed, does not necessarily represent the full span of its life. The letter P denotes that the structure is still extant. Where a mill's existence is known from a field name only, no date is given since whilst the name *may* refer to a mill still standing at that date, it is as likely to record one long since destroyed. Likewise, where more than one mill exists in a parish, the dates available often cannot be related to a specific site, and are also omitted. Some of the earliest dates known unfortunately fall in this category.

Very many hands have been involved in this project, particularly in tracing maps, collecting field names and combing printed sources. The assistance of Gerald Elvey both in providing information and in resolving a number of problems with original material has been particularly valuable. Thanks are also due to staff at the County Record Office for their assistance. The project as a whole was first set on a sound footing by Max Davies but the present format is due to months of careful work by Joyce Mellor and Marjorie Whiteman. Many other members of the Group also assisted, too many to allow individual acknowledgement.

MICHAEL FARLEY

#### REFERENCES

- Singer, C., Holmyard, E. J., Hall, A.R., and Williams, T.I., (eds.), 1958. *A History of Technology II* (1958), 623-8.  
Smith, T. P., 1978. 'The English Mediaeval Windmill', *History Today*, April 1978, 256-263.

Parish		N.G.R.	Cat.	Ref.	Date
Addington		—	4	4266	—
Amersham	A	SU 954 989 (F)	4	4275	—
	B	SU 973 962 (F)	4	4276	—
Ashendon	A	SP 711 146 (F)	2	1023	1641
	B	SP 701 131	4	1027	—
Aston Abbotts	A	SP 8351 1858	3	1048	1601
	B	—	4	4431	—
Aston Sandford		SP 7778 0634	4	2428	—
Astwood		—	4	4267	—
Aylesbury	A	SP 827 145	2	4277	1768
	B	—	3	4278	—
Beaconsfield	A	SU 9480 9009	1	4336	1811 – 1880
	B	SU 941 904	2	4378	1770
Biddlesden		—	3	4268	13th c./14th c.
Bledlow-cum-Saunderton	A	SU 776 017	2	4272	1812
	B	SU 7974 9781	1	4269	1824
Boarstall		SP 6185 1403	4	2171	—
Bow Brickhill		—	3	4432	1208
Bradenham		SU 824 982	4	2436	—
Brill	A	SP 6519 1414	1	2583	1668 – P
	B	SP 6520 1431	1	0581	1768 – 1900
	C	SP 6576 1306	2	0738	16th c. or 17th c.
	D	SP 653 144	2	0797	1824
	E	SP 647 133	2	4248	1818
Buckingham	A	—	3	0594	—
	B	—	3	4288	—
Chalfont St. Giles	A	SU 985 938	2	4249	1768
	B	SU 9933 9160	1	4250	1824
Chalfont St. Peter		SU 999 899	2	4251	1768
Charndon		SP 672 249	2	4252	1824
Chearsley	A	—	3	4270	1822
	B	—	3	4270	1822
Chesham		—	3	4433	1650
Chetwode		SP 635 298 (F)	4	0363	—
Chicheley		SP 896 452	4	2231	14th c.
Chilton		SP 6815 1055	4	4133	—
Cholesbury		SP 9351 0689	1	0015	1863 – P
Coleshill		SU 9483 9476	1	1594	1856 – P
Cublington		—	3	4289	1284
Cuddington		SP 7306 1090	1	4291	1824 – 1885
Dinton	A	SP 763 114	2	4295	1768
	B	SP 778 074 (F)	4	4296	—
Dorton		—	3	4271	16th c.
Drayton Parslow		—	3	4302	1278

Parish		N.G.R.	Cat.	Ref.	Date
Dunton		—	4	4303	
Edlesborough	A	SP 9826 1915	1	2896	19th c. — P
	B	SP 963 185	2	4304	1768
Farnham Royal		SU 961 825 (F)	2	4305	1798
Fawley		SU 742 872 (F)	4	4306	—
Fingest & Lane End		SU 791 922 (F)	4	4313	—
Granborough		SP 7668 2578	2	0109	1768
Great & Little Hampden		SP 8475 0204	4	0012	—
Great Horwood	A	SP 7794 3230	1	0082	1824
	B	SP 7655 2994	1	0787	1886
Great Linford		SP 8554 4208	1	3709	1278
Great Missenden	A	SP 9021 0134	1	2204	1753 — 1874
	B	SP 871 003 (F)	4	2203	—
Grendon Underwood Grove		SP 6820 2136	3	0424	c. 1234
		—	3	4307	1798
Haddenham	A	SP 7436 0849	1	4070	1824
	B	SP 7338 0934	1	4068	1824
	C	SP 723 078	2	4069	1768
	D	—	3	4314	—
	E	SP 7371 1001	4	0856	early 19th c.?
Hardmead		—	3	0477	16th c.
Hartwell		—	3	4315	1798
Hillesden	A	SP 6758 2819	1	0585	19th c.
	B	SP 672 288 (F)	4	4334	—
Hoggeston	A	SP 8080 2591	3	0276	—
	B	SP 8044 2448	4	1858	—
Hogshaw		—	3	0345	1338
Hulcott		SP 854 163	2	1980	1652
Ibstone	A	SU 7491 9393	4	2455	—
	B	SU 7697 9150	1	2445	1768 — P
Ickford		SP 656 089	2	4253	1768
Kingsey		SP 747 065 (F)	4	4292	—
Lacey Green		SP 8192 0079	1	4273	1821 — P
Lathbury		—	4	4316	—
Lavendon		SP 923 528	2	4254	—
Lillingstone Lovell		—	3	4317	1378
Little Horwood	A	SP 7865 3136	2	0485	—
	B	SP 7871 3142	4	0486	—
Little Missenden	A	SU 8921 9740	1	2188	1829 — 1929
	B	SU 898 971	4	1685	1742
Long Crendon	A	SP 6931 0926	1	0600	1878 — 1930
	B	SP 6909 0972	1	4054	1768 — 1878
Longwick-cum-Ilmer		—	3	4274	1306
Loughton		SP 828 377 (F)	3	3678	1361

Parish		N.G.R.	Cat.	Ref.	Date
Ludgershall	A	SP 6507 1774	4	0246	c. 1580
	B	SP 6679 1800	4	2133	—
Maids Moreton		SP 7022 3554	4	0438	—
Marsh Gibbon		SP 648 238 (F)	3	4318	c. 1327
Mentmore		—	3	4319	1284
Middle Claydon		—	3	4320	1308
Mursley	A	SP 8233 2900	4	1075	—
	B	SP 8179 2798	1	4294	1885
Newport Pagnell		—	3	4321	1709
Newton Longville		SP 8422 3053	4	1881	—
North Crawley	A	SP 925 443	2	4255	1798
	B	—	3	4322	1798
North Marston	A	SP 7675 2393	4	1319	—
	B	SP 7655 2220	4	1326	—
	C	SP 7653 2218	4	1327	—
	D	SP 7755 2280	1	2903	1879
Padbury		SP 7208 3017	2	4256	1768 — 19th c.
Pitstone		SP 9451 1567	1	1270	1627 — P
Preston Bissett		SP 6581 2798	4	0238	—
Princes Risborough	A	SP 811 031	2	4324	c. 1823
	B	SP 8049 0504	4	2309	—
Quinton	A	SP 7467 2023	1	4024	1832 — P
	B	SP 7412 1921	1	4293	c. 1805 — 1912
	C	SP 7559 1916	1	0014	1824 — 1899
	D	SP 743 195	2	4297	1768 — 1887
	E	SP 729 192 (F)	4	0333	—
Radnage		SU 789 966	2	4257	1768
Ravenstone		—	3	4325	1724
Shabbington		SP 6662 0661	4	0566	—
Shenley Brook End		—	3	3693	1278
Sherington		SP 883 456	2	4258	1824
Soulbury		—	3	4434	13th c.
Steeple Claydon		SP 7172 2773	4	4134	Late 12th c.
Stewkley	A	SP 851 274	3	4326	1307
	B	SP 8549 2533	1	0638	1839 — P
Stoke Mandeville		SP 842 093	2	4299	1768
Stoke Poges		—	3	4327	c. 1332
Stokenchurch		SU 7530 9626	1	4259	1768 — 1900
Stone	A	SP 7885 1229	1	1568	1190 & 1885
	B	SP 790 112 (F)	3	4328	—
	C	SP 788 121	3	2371	—
Stowe		—	4	4333	—
Swanbourne	A	SP 790 261	2	4290	1600
	B	SP 8080 2594	4	0276	—
	C	SP 8070 2738	4	0541	1600

Parish		N.G.R.	Cat.	Ref.	Date
Taplow		—	3	1566	1227
Tattenhoe		SP 8381 3317	4	3710	1250
Thornborough	A	SP 7416 3307	2	0543	1613
	B	SP 7370 3524	1	2074	1824 – P
Turweston		SP 604 372	2	4260	17th c. – 1824
Twyford		SP 6522 2705	1	2534	1658
Waddesdon	A	SP 7525 1677	1	0708	1824 – 1925
	B	SP 734 158 (F)	4	2065	—
Walton (N. Bucks)		—	4	2786	—
Weedon		—	3	1763	1347
Wendover	A	SP 8670 0819	1	4019	1796 – P
	B	SP 873 078	2	4022	1768
Weston Underwood		—	3	4312	1278
Wexham		SU 9951 8446	1	4337	19th c. – P
Whaddon		SP 789 353 (F)	4	4311	—
Whitchurch	A	—	3	4300	1330
	B	—	3	4300	1330
Wing	A	SP 880 222	2	4261	—
	B	SP 892 211 (F)	4	4301	—
Wingrave with Rowsham		SP 8722 1880	2	1795	1824 – 1841
Winslow		—	3	4298	Late 13th c. or early 14th c. – 1599
Wolverton		SP 8310 4112	1	3937	19th c. – P
Woodham		SP 7157 1872	2	0190	16th c.
Wootton Underwood	A	SP 6820 1698	3	0237	16th c.
	B	SP 702 170	2	4163	1649
Worminghall		—	3	2429	Early 13th c.

# BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

## WINDMILLS

(NORTHERN)

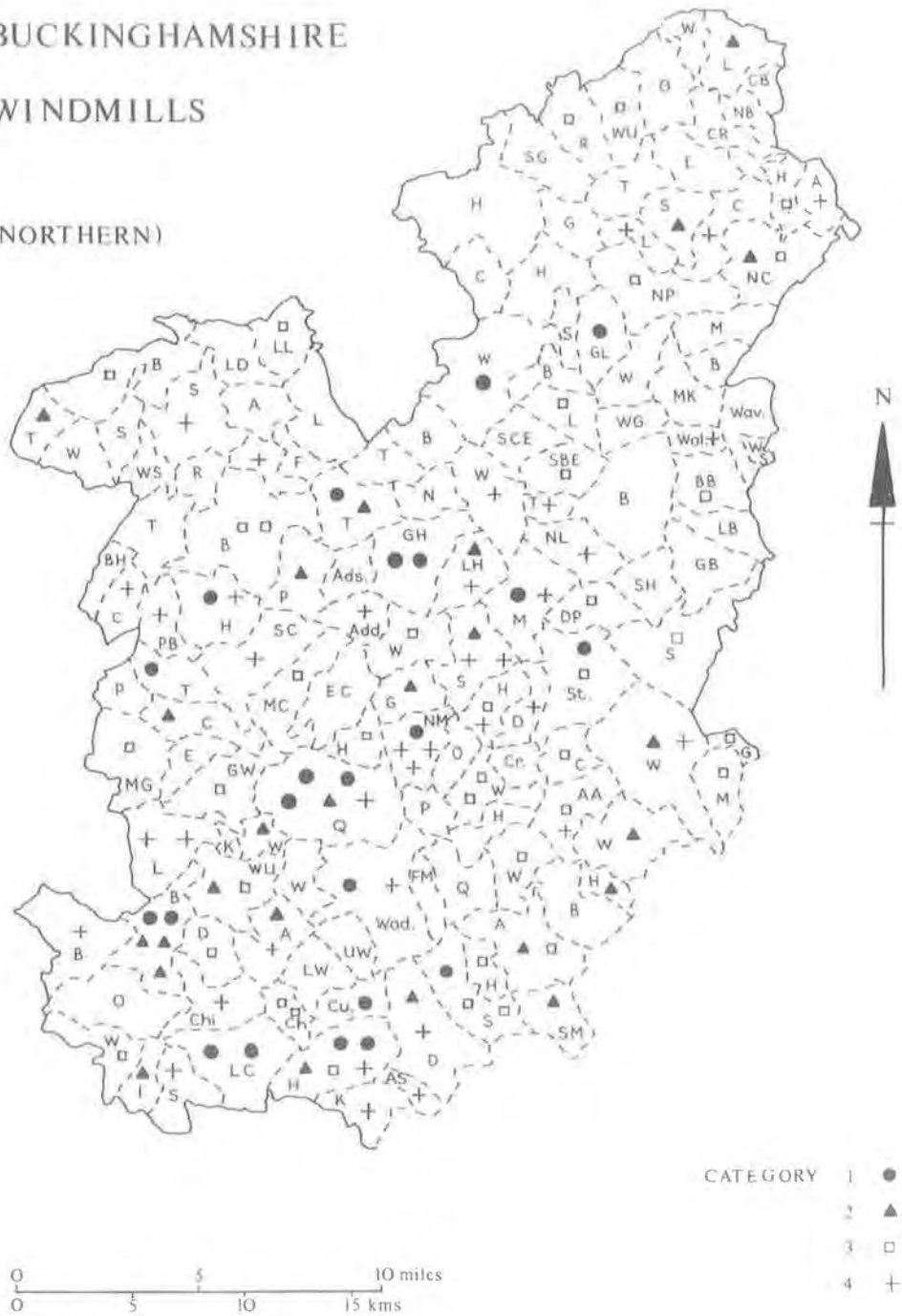


Fig. 2. Buckinghamshire windmills (northern) with parishes indicated.



# BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

## WINDMILLS

(SOUTHERN)

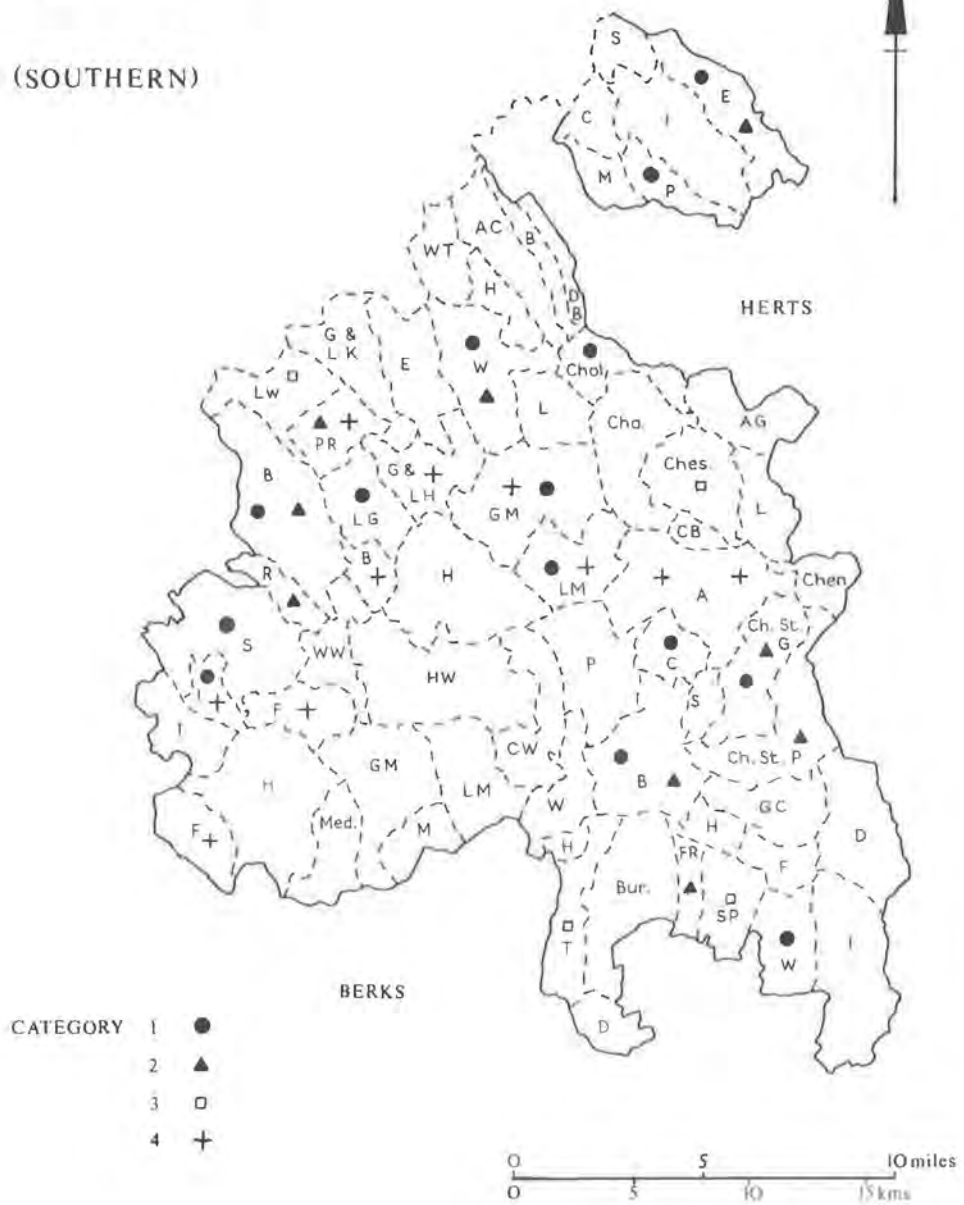


Fig. 3. Buckinghamshire windmills (southern) with parishes indicated.