

# THE HOUSES OF COLESHILL: THE SOCIAL ANATOMY OF A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY VILLAGE

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*The housing stock of a seventeenth-century Chiltern village is described and interpreted, and set in its social and economic context, using both structural and documentary evidence — the latter from many sources. Differences in the pattern of distribution of small, mainly freehold tenements and large, exclusively leasehold ones, are explored. The society revealed is one without serious poverty, where labouring heads of households were freeholders, and 'upward mobility' was within the grasp of a labourer's son. A formula is proposed relating the floor area of a house to the acreage of its holding.*

This paper represents an attempt to give an account of the housing of an entire community at the earliest point in its history at which it becomes possible to do so, and at the same time of the society of which the housing was the physical expression, and of that society's economic resources. The first half of the seventeenth century has been chosen, as being the first period from which both records and structures survive in sufficient numbers.

The area treated is the civil parish of Coleshill, plus Winchmore Hill — the southern part of the historic ecclesiastical parish of Amersham. At the time of which I write the name Coleshill was applied also to an area in the north of Beaconsfield parish, which, together with the southern part of Amersham, formed a detached part of Hertfordshire<sup>1</sup>. North Beaconsfield is excluded from the present survey: the five farms there were socially part of Beaconsfield. Coleshill proper has always been a community in its own right, although a satellite of Amersham and having Winchmore Hill as a satellite of its own; and for the historian it has the merit of being of manageable size.

The Parliamentary Survey of Livings, made in 1649, gave the population of Coleshill as 40 households, 'consisting of 200 persons'<sup>2</sup>. This

yields the demographically acceptable ratio of five souls per household<sup>3</sup>. Excluding the five farms that lay in Beaconsfield, the total of households in Coleshill proper would on this estimate have been 35.

Seventeen houses now standing in Coleshill contain structural work earlier than c. 1650. The existence of a further 21 can be inferred from documentary evidence, yielding a total of 38. The Survey of Livings may have excluded families that habitually attended church in Penn, as the occupants of Hertfordshire Farm (q.v.) did, and of one of the houses in Winchmore Hill<sup>4</sup>. In any case it is possible to feel some confidence that we have material for a complete survey of early seventeenth century Coleshill.

Houses for every level of Coleshill society are represented among those still standing.

Fig. 1 shows all the known houses, standing or otherwise, c. 1640. In the early years of the century the total had been smaller. Five or possibly six of the houses had not then been built, and two houses then standing had gone by 1650. The total c. 1610 was therefore 30 or 31. The expansion indicated by these figures was to continue uninterruptedly to the present day.



CHAPEL FARM, HUNGER HILL,

*near Beaconsfield, Bucks.*

*Formerly the residence of Tho. Ellwood.*

Plate IX. The farm house at Ongar Hill, Coleshill, built c. 1640, (see page 93). The name 'Chapel Farm' derives from its barn having been used as a Quaker meeting house during the residence of Thomas Ellwood.

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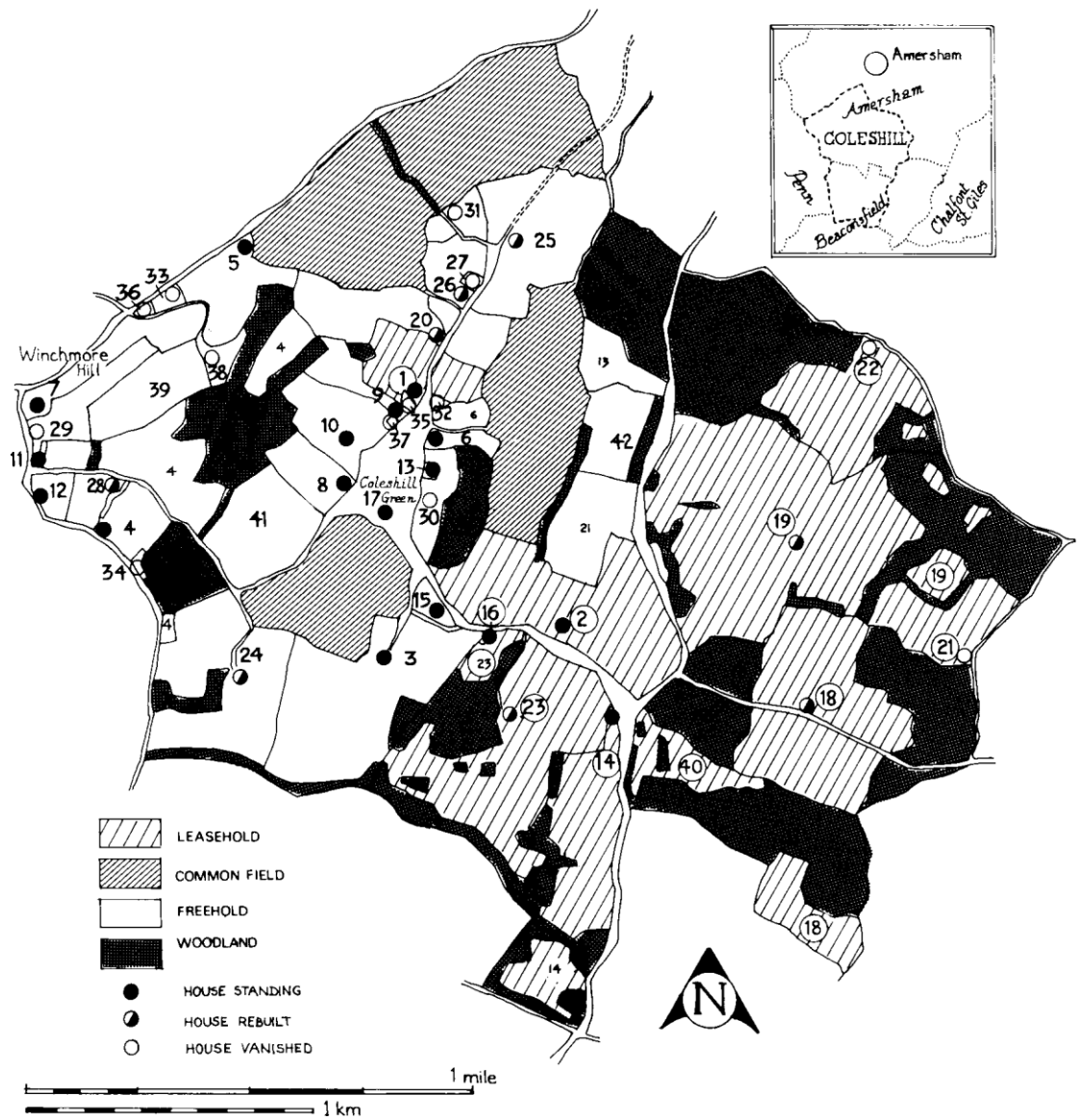


Fig. 1. Coleshill: the settlement pattern. (1) Stock Place. (2) Bowers Farm. (3) Luckings Farm. (4) Fagnell Farm. (5) The Queen's Head. (6) Red Lion Cottage. (7) The Garden. (8) Stock Grove. (9) Friar's Vane (Lands Farm). (10) Littlelands. (11) The Plough. (12) The Potter's Arms. (13) Forge House (The Fleur-de-Lys). (14) Larkins Green. (15) Crosspath Cottages. (16) Lawyer's Cottage. (17) Dell Cottage. (18) Stockings Farm. (19). Brentford Grange (Braynford Barns). (20) Porch House. (21) Whelpleys. (22) Puddefats. (23) Ongar Hill Farm. (24) Hertfordshire House. (25) The Rosary. (26) Coleshill Cottage. (27) 'Meriden's'. (28) Jasmine & Clover Cottages (Fagmans). (29) 'Lawrence's'. (30) Moorey. (31) Downs. (32) Richard Field's House. (33) Hollandean House. (34) 'Nash's'. (35) The Smith's House. (36) 'Henry Child's Cottage'. (37) 'Aldden's'. (38) Millcroft. (39) Collins Fields (freehold of William Bovingdon of the Glory, Penn). (40) Bavins Field (part of Red Barn Farm, Beaconsfield). (41) Cantletts Field (originally demesne of Coleshill Manor, ownership in 1640 unknown). (42) Eldons Fields (ownership in 1640 unknown). Small figures indicate detached portions of the units enumerated.

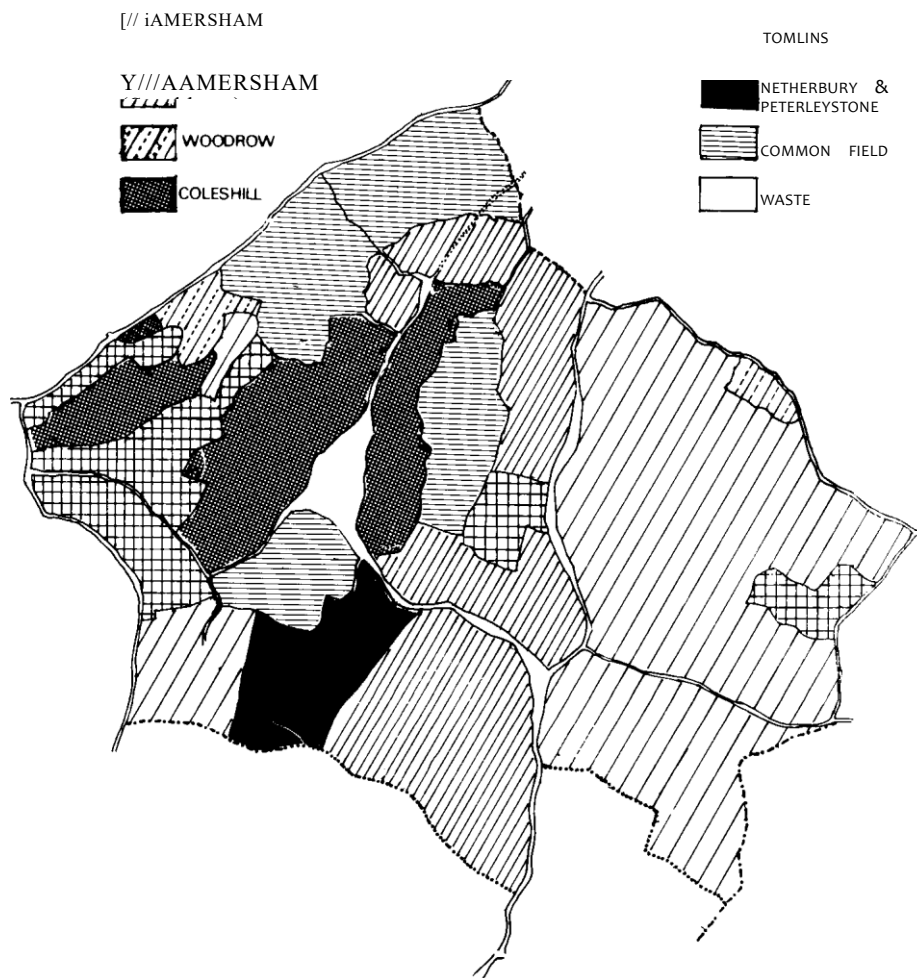


Fig. 2. The Manors of Coleshill. Missenden Netherbury and Peterleystone was the manor under which the scattered land holdings of Missenden Abbey were administered after the Dissolution. Tomlins originated as the Amersham land of the de Agmondesham family. Stockbury was the eastern of the two manors into which Coleshill was divided in the early Middle Ages; it was acquired by the de Bohuns, lords of Amersham, and became merged with that manor.

The map (Fig. 1) shows a mixture of cluster and dispersal in the settlement pattern: a cluster at Coleshill Green (the Common) with a detached group to the north, a smaller cluster at Winchmore Hill, and a wide scatter of single farms. It also shows a tendency for large farms to be concentrated in the east of the township, the west being very much more fragmented. This reflects a complex manorial history, which is summarised graphically in Fig. 2.

The large farms of the east were all leasehold of the manor of Amersham. The small tenements of the west were mainly freehold, and many were owner-occupied. Villeinage was never established in Coleshill; and the Manor of Stock Place, in the west of the township, was One in which lordship had always been weak - a fact that can be seen to work itself out in the structural history of the manor house.

## *Standing Houses*

The following section constitutes a catalogue of all houses of which some part still standing was built before 1650. Their development since 1650 is not discussed, except in so far as it is necessary to understand what survives. A separate catalogue covers houses no longer standing. The numbering relates to the map, Fig. 1, and the houses are arranged roughly in order of economic standing.

### 1. *Stock Place (Fig. 3)*

Stock Place (once the manor house) is briefly described in RCHM South Bucks<sup>5</sup>, but the investigator did not go inside, and he got the orientation wrong: for south we should read east, and so on round the compass.

The 'small rectangular building' he described has been added to since 1911, but is otherwise substantially unaltered. It is of two full storeys, and measures 24'6" x 15'3" (7.5 x 4.7m); both floors are divided by lightly framed secondary partitions, neither of them original. The bearer is a crudely chamfered timber without stops. It is not tenoned into the posts but rests on the lower lips of shallow trenches in their inner sides, and is clearly a replacement. The ceiling joists are laid flat. The southern stack is twentieth century.

Since Stock Place was certainly the manor house<sup>6</sup>, it has evidently suffered loss of status and reduction in size; the present building is in fact only a cross wing of a house of which the hall range and (probably) another cross wing have disappeared.

For the building as a whole the RCHM suggested a date of c. 1550, which may well be right. The arrangement of the archbraces seen in the cut-away view (Fig. 3, 5 as deduced from peg-holes), suggests an opening into the north side of the hall at first floor-level. This pointer to the hall's being chambered over supports the Commission's date.

Documentary evidence makes it possible to date the partial demolition, and to study the origins and social consequences of a property deal.

From the middle of the fifteenth century the lordship of the manor of Coleshill (Stock Place) was with the Brudenell family<sup>7</sup>. They were always absentees. It was not a valuable manor, yielding only 42s. in quit rents<sup>8</sup>, but by leasing the demesne and the house they were able to get £12 a year<sup>9</sup>. Their tenant in 1600 was Edmund Waller, grandfather of the poet, who had inherited a lease from his brother Francis<sup>10</sup>. Francis had died in 1549, and on the expiry of his inherited lease Edmund had negotiated a new one, for 41 years<sup>11</sup>, which expired in 1624<sup>12</sup>.

Before the Waller's lease determined, the manor changed hands. Edmund Brudenell's only child, Etheldreda (Audrey) had married Sir Basil Brook, a Staffordshire squire<sup>13</sup>. The Brudenell estates were elaborately entailed in the male line<sup>14</sup>, and Audrey brought no land with her in marriage, but Sir Basil bought several parcels of their property in the Amer-sham area, including the lordship of Coleshill<sup>15</sup>, and these he proceeded to dispose of piecemeal<sup>16</sup>. In 1616 it was the turn of Coleshill. The purchaser was called, coincidentally, George Coleshill<sup>17</sup>. He was an attorney, described in the deed as 'of Ivinghoe', but a few years earlier known to have been living in Southwark and practising in the Middle Temple<sup>18</sup>. He paid £1,834; Sir Basil had paid Thomas Brudenell £200. George Coleshill obtained vacant possession of the manor house in 1624, and in that year the name of Christopher Hampden appears for the first time in the Coleshill subsidy rolls<sup>19</sup>. He was a considerable figure in the county, Justice of the Peace, and a member of the King's Council<sup>20</sup>. It is suggested that nothing but the manor house would have satisfied him as his own dwelling, and that he became its tenant on the departure of the Wallers. In 1628 he died<sup>21</sup>.

George Coleshill thereupon abandoned any attempt to continue letting the manor, and proceeded to dismember it. (He had already sold off the 'home farm' [Porch House, q.v.] in 1625, as soon as the Wallers had left.) Chauncy records a tradition that 'he demolished the

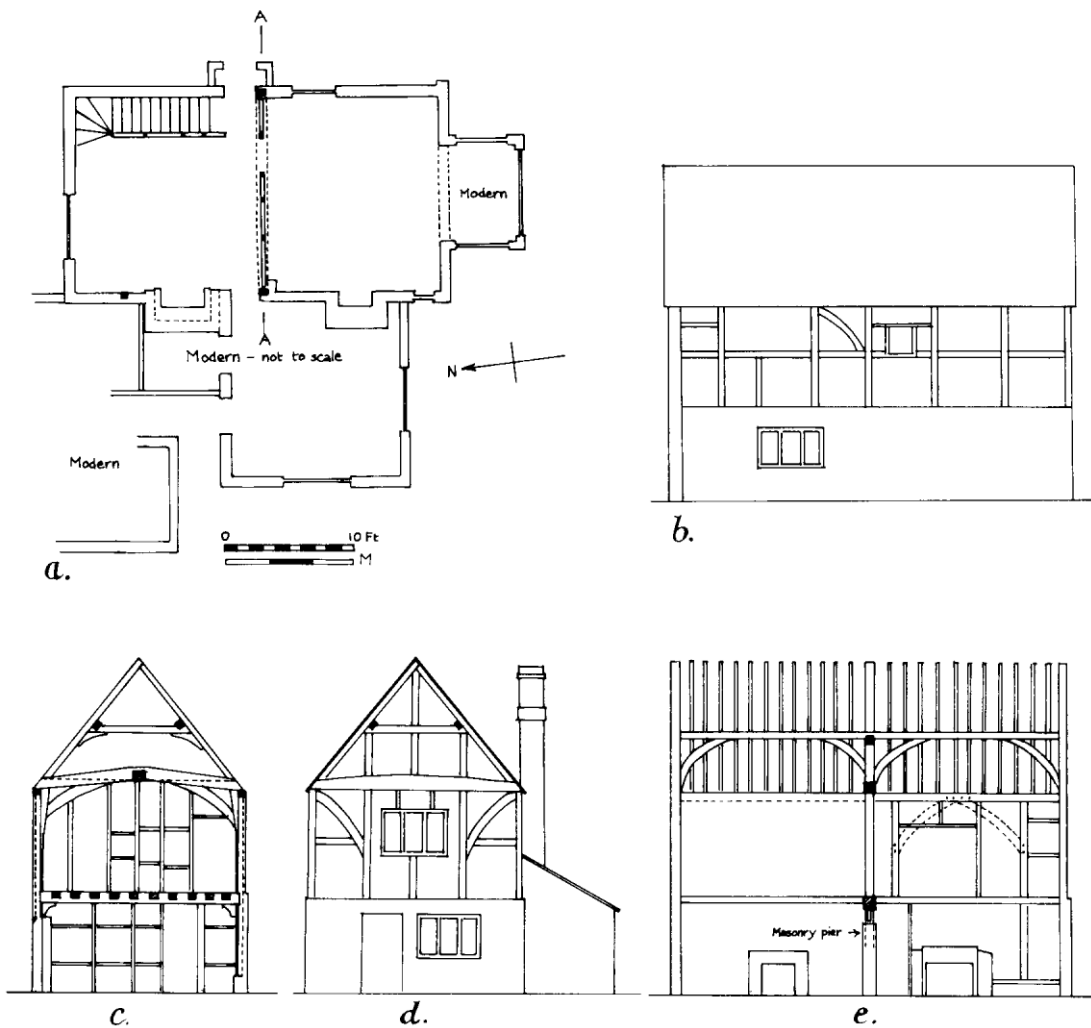


Fig. 3. Stock Place, (a) Ground plan, (b) East elevation, 1912 (from a RCHM photograph), (c) Section at A-A, looking south, (d) North elevation, 1912 (from a RCHM photograph), (e) Cut-away view, looking west.

manor house and built several tenements with the materials<sup>22</sup>. This seems well founded: two farms built about this time on cleared demesne woodland contain re-used timbers from a house of some pretensions (see Lands and Littlelands, below).

The framing of what now remains had to be modified to take a stack (containing bricks of early type), so it was probably not the parlour wing, which in a manor house of this period would have been heated. If so, it probably contains 'the chamber over the buttery

where I do usually lie', mentioned in Edmund Waller's will of 1603<sup>23</sup>, and shows this to have been unheated. The bricks, only 1<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" thick and very dark, would be more at home c. 1550 than c. 1630, and probably came from a stack built for the original house. The re-used timbers from the demolished parts of the house indicate that it was close-studded. The evidence is consistent with the house having been built by Edmund Waller on inheriting the lease in 1549. That his brother Francis built it is also possible, but less likely, since he did not live there.

After its partial demolition in about 1630 the house became that of a small yeoman, farming the rump of the demesne, about 28<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> acres (11.6 ha)<sup>24</sup>, as a tenant. The property, with its rather exiguous manorial rights, was sold in 1641 to a James Perrot<sup>25</sup>, and by him in 1647 to an Amersham yeoman, Henry Child<sup>26</sup>, 'of the towne'<sup>27</sup>.

The first of the yeoman tenants was John Gregory, who was living in Amersham in 1606<sup>28</sup>, and was still at Stock Place in 1647<sup>29</sup>. He had two sons, aged 24 and 18 in 1630, and probably had no need for farm servants, and so no need for a floored roof-space; in fact the upper floor seems to have remained open to the rafters until the nineteenth century (the apparent date of the inserted ceiling).

The stack noted as containing early bricks was probably a rebuild, put up to serve the truncated building; this is indicated by the removal of arch braces to accommodate it. It served only one fireplace, and remained the only stack until the present century. The house does not appear in the Hearth Tax returns of 1662/3, from which — in Coleshill — houses with fewer than two hearths were omitted. (The Act imposing the tax laid down that only houses worth less than 20s. a year were to be exempt<sup>29b</sup>; but it seems that the Coleshill assessors found a rough and ready visual check easier to apply. The only one-hearth house in the returns is one that was downgraded from two hearths in 1663, and none of the surviving one-hearth houses appears.) Eleven years later the occupant was Henry Child junior, a tallow-

chandler by trade<sup>30</sup>, as well as a farmer. Before he could succeed his father as lord of the manor, he sold out to Edmund Waller, the poet<sup>31</sup>, born there 78 years earlier, and in 1683 moved to Coldharbour Farm in Amersham<sup>32</sup>, ultimately emigrating to Pennsylvania in 1699<sup>33</sup>.

## 2. Bowers Farm (Figs. 4 & 5)

The dismemberment of the manor did not leave Coleshill without a gentleman's house — or at least occupied by someone styling himself 'gentleman'. The qualification is necessary because Bowers Farm does not differ in size or plan from the house of a prosperous yeoman (though in other respects it does).

Bowers Farm in fact stands on the site of Coleshill's second manor house, which, though it had long lost that status, was still sometimes called Stock as late as 1586<sup>34</sup>. Bowers, the name that finally prevailed, is of almost equal antiquity, going back via the forms Bowyers (1840)<sup>35</sup>, Bewards (1739, 1689)<sup>36</sup> and Baywards (1662)<sup>37</sup> to John de Bayworth, who was one of the biggest taxpayers in Coleshill from 1294 to 1316<sup>38</sup>.

The house consists of four and a half bays of two full storeys; the half bay contains a stack, serving two fireplaces on each floor and having octagonal shafts like those at Wellwick Farm, Wendover, dated by an inscription to 1616. The position of the entrance is discussed below. Bay IV is perhaps 70 years later than the other three<sup>39</sup>. Outshuts on the west and north were added at three later dates.

In Bays I to III, tie-beam braces, or peg-holes for them, are found on the south side at the outer end of all four trusses. On the north side, apart from the corner posts, the braces are on inner posts set 40" (1.0 m) in from the wall. This secured unobstructed openings at the head of the staircase in Bay I, and between the two upper chambers east of this.

Wherever the frame is intact the bricks of the nogging are (except for two panels on the N side) homogeneous as to dimensions and colour throughout bays I to III; they are also identical

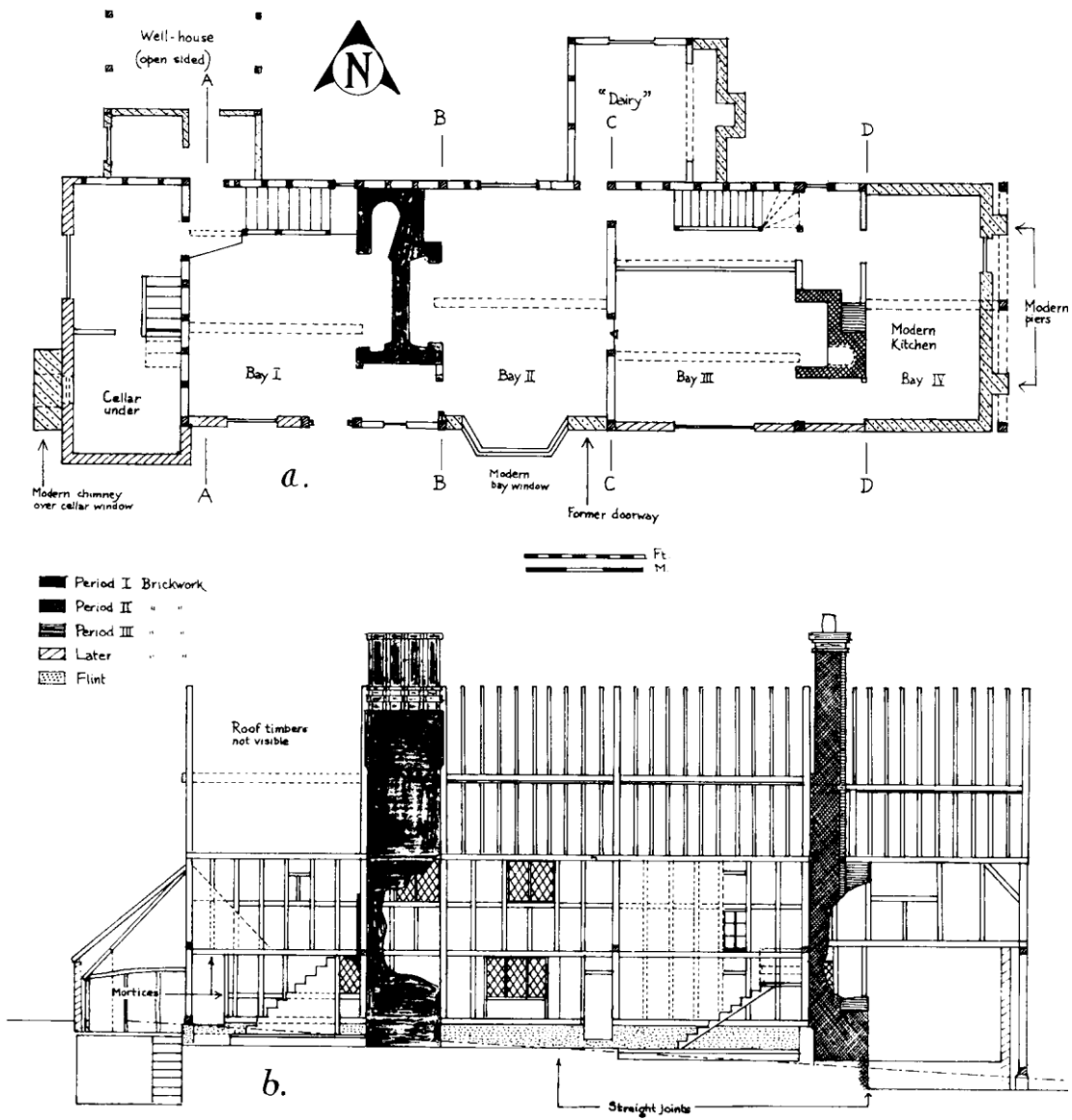


Fig. 4. Bowers Farm, (a) Ground-floor plan, (b) Cut-away view, looking north. Bay IV was added in 1686 as a gate-house over the entry into the farmyard.



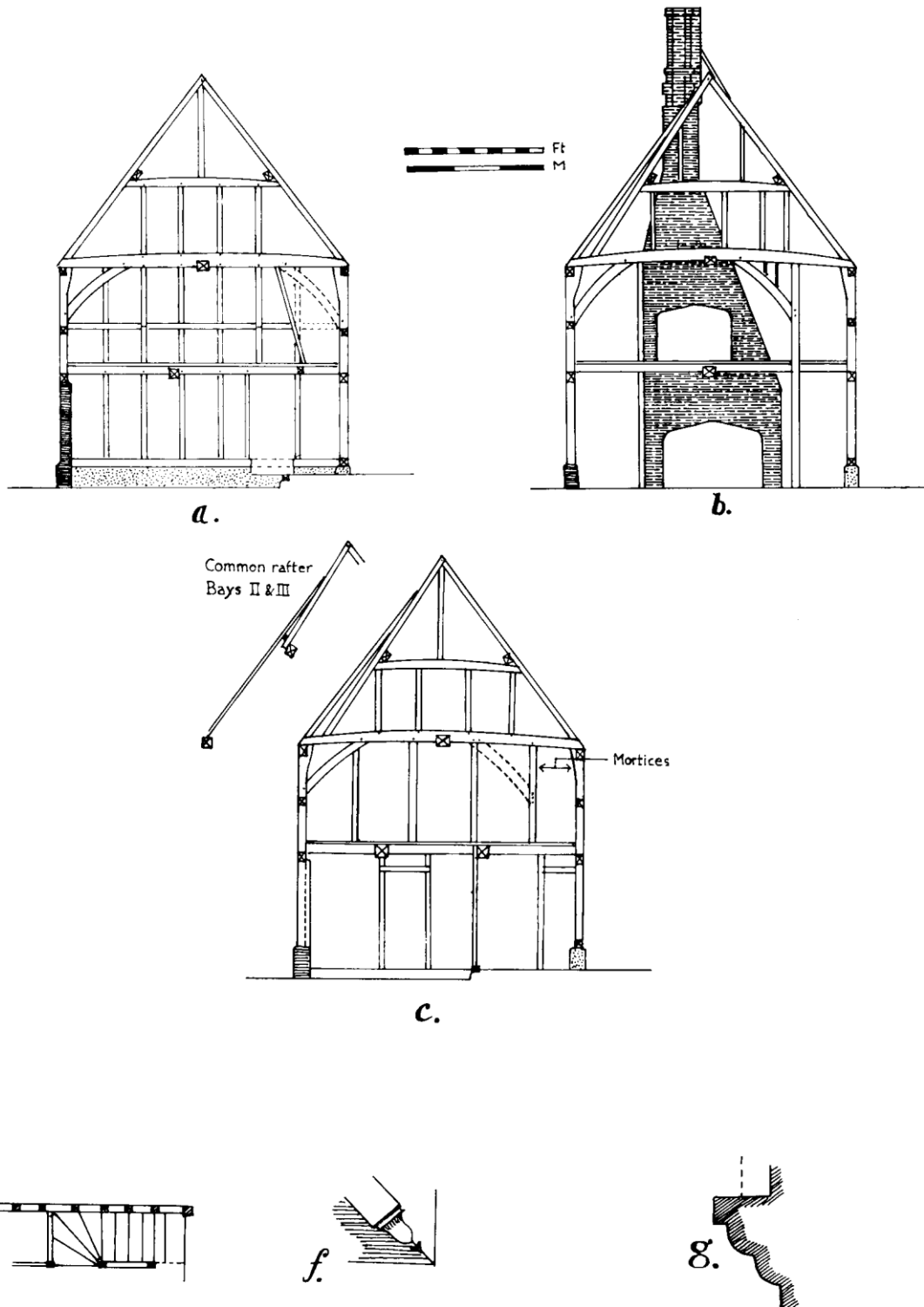


Fig. 5. Bowers Farm, (a) Section at A-A, showing ladder-case in north-west corner of upper floor, (b) Section at B-B. (c) Section at C-C. (e) Original arrangement of staircase, (f) Detail of stop on bearer beams, (g) Section of first-floor fireplace jamb.

with the bricks of the stack. Moreover where a panel has been removed to allow access to the roof-space of Bay IV, there is no sign of any groove or sockets for a wattle panel. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the nogging is original.

The stairs in Bay I have been made into a straight flight, but until recently they turned through 90° round a newel. The bearer in this bay is central to the area south of the staircase, showing that the latter is original. This room is identified as the kitchen by the large oven, of one build with the stack. Bay II contained the hall, and Bay III an unheated parlour.

The roofspace of Bay I was originally reached by a ladder from the kitchen. The ladder passed through the first-floor chamber in a 'ladder-case' (which still survives), so that the servants could reach their sleeping quarters without disturbing the family. It is clad in panelling resembling that in the hall at Dorton House<sup>40</sup> (1626), but here perhaps too fragmentary to be called in evidence.

Two features hint obliquely that a different plan had originally been adopted, or at least contemplated: an asymmetry in the roof, and an anomaly in the footings. The asymmetry is shown in Fig. 5, b and c. In the two intermediate trusses of the older three bays, the principal rafters join the tie beams at a point 18" (0.46 m) in from the wall plate on the south side. Secondary members are laid against them to bring the roof out to the line of the wall. The common rafters on this side come down no lower than the purlin. Timbers are laid across their ends, and on these are laid secondary rafters whose butts rest on the wall plate.

The footings in the middle section of the south side are also anomalous. Instead of being reared on a sill beam, as elsewhere in the house, the principal posts stand on brick piers. These are now incorporated in brick footings, but the darker colour and thinner shape of the bricks are clearly distinguishable. This is the only original gap in the sill: there is none where a lobby entrance would have been.-It is therefore suggested that this, and perhaps the asymmetry

in the roof trusses as well, are connected with the original, or planned, entrance to the house. To go further would be speculative.

The superiority of the house is striking. Its oven and its framed staircase are both the earliest in Coleshill. It is the only house showing evidence of panelling, and of original nogging. The setting of the transverse braces, and the ladder case, show a concern for privacy and convenience matched in no other house in the village.

Its social context is closely bound up with the history of the manor house. When the seventeenth century opened, it had been the property of the Reading family for 50 years<sup>41</sup>. In the second generation, William Reading married the widow of a Chesham yeoman, and went to live at her house at Nashleigh, where the family remained<sup>42</sup>. Bowers was let, after an abortive attempt to sell it<sup>43</sup>, and the tenant in 1600 was probably Richard Wingfield<sup>44</sup>. Wingfield died in 1615, the year in which George Coleshill bought the manor but was unable to live in the manor house because there were sitting tenants. That he lived in Coleshill from this time until his death in 1645 is certain<sup>45</sup>; that he lived at Bowers seems at least very probable. The building is a good match for his status as a member of the minor 'parish' gentry. Its plan may be compared with that of the manor house at Crowell, Oxfordshire (now Ellwood House), the family home of Thomas Ellwood (see Ongar Hill, below)<sup>46</sup>. This had the same number of hearths, and similar accommodation, both as to floor area and arrangement, but shows the conventional 'gentry' feature of lateral stacks.

A date of c. 1615 is therefore proposed for the building of this interesting house. The house did not change hands again until 1657<sup>47</sup> and it is suggested that George Coleshill had a 42-year lease and built Bowers on the strength of it.

The Reading's freehold originally covered 32Vi acres (13.1 ha), of which only 18 V2 acres (7.55 ha) went with Bowers. The rest was let to other tenants<sup>48</sup>. The small acreage in land was

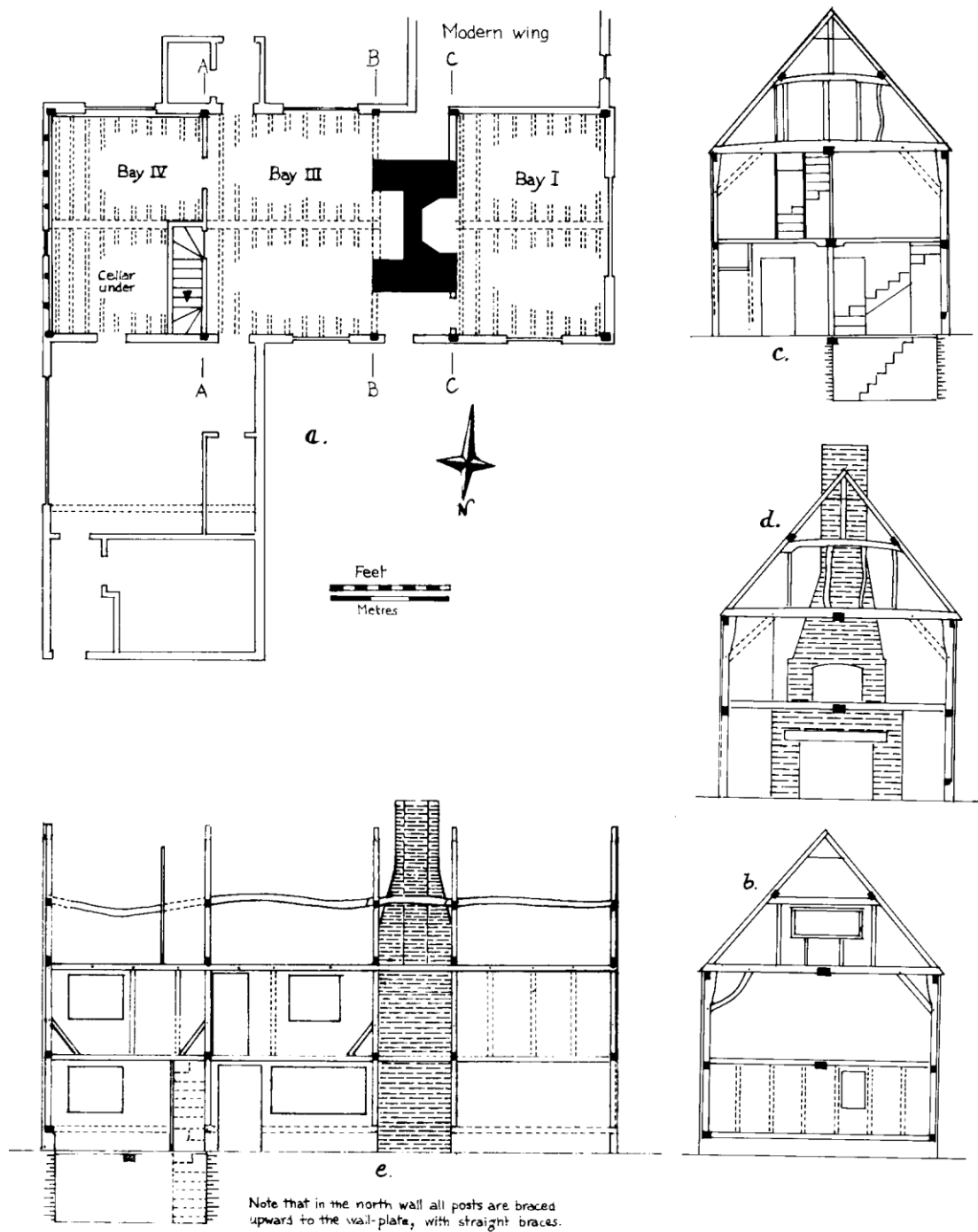


Fig. 6. Luckings Farm, (a) Ground floor plan, (b) East gable, from the east, (c) Section at A-A, looking west, (d) Section at B-B, looking west, (e) Cut-away view of main range, looking south. In the north wall the posts are braced upwards to the wall-plates, with straight braces.

supplemented by a lease of land that later formed Ongar Hill Farm (q.v.); at this date it was demesne of the manor of Amersham Stockbury. This would have brought the farmed acreage up to 136 (31.60 ha).

In 1617 the Readings bought further land; the vendor was Sir Basil Brooke<sup>493</sup>. It can be identified with some confidence as the six fields, totalling 56/2 acres (22.95 ha), surrounding their core holding. In later years this was farmed from Bowers, but it is not clear whether it was let to George Coleshill<sup>49b</sup>.

### 3. *Luckings Farm* (Fig. 6)

The superiority of Bowers is clearly seen by comparison with a yeoman's house. Luckings Farm was almost exactly the same size as the original building at Bowers, and had the same number of hearths, but exhibited no similar concern for convenience and privacy.

The seventeenth century house was the 3 V2 bays of the two-storey east-west range. The original lobby entrance is still in use. On the ground floor the two bays east of the stack formed a single large room, 28' x 18'9" (8.6 x 5.76 m), as is shown by the careful profiling of the midrail in the truss between them. This was a combined kitchen/hall. West of the stack was a heated parlour, 12' 9" x 18' 9" (3.9 x 5.76 m). Two upstairs rooms were also heated; in Bay III the upstairs fireplace has a four-centred arch of moulded brick. The bearers throughout have plain chamfers with roll-and-tongue stops.

There is no evidence for the means of reaching the first floor: the present stair is modern, and elsewhere the joists are uninterrupted wherever they are visible — which is everywhere except in the half bay occupied by the stack. A stair or steps here would have had its head obstructed by a tie-beam brace. The roof-space was divided into two rooms, with the half bay and stack between them. Heads of doorways cut into the collars of the trusses flanking the stack seem to be original, being carefully curved and chamfered. The studs still carry the pintles for hanging the doors. One may postulate a large room for the men and a small

one for the maids; access could only have been by the stair or steps used by the family.

A curious feature is that the posts are braced upward to the wallplate on the north side, facing the farmyard, but downwards to the rail on the south side. The reason for this is obscure. Downward bracing is common in the Chiltern region in the sixteenth century and earlier but (with only one exception known to the writer) always with curved braces. Those at Luckings are straight. (The Coleshill evidence seems to support the view that curved braces had a display significance.) None of the houses datable to the first quarter of the seventeenth century has this bracing, and this may indicate a different date for Luckings. For more light on this it is necessary to turn to the history of the farm and its owners.

The land of Luckings was originally freehold common-field land<sup>50</sup>. In 1275 the manorial dues (customary rents) were granted to Missenden Abbey<sup>51</sup>. There were then nine tenants, but by the time of the Dissolution these had been reduced to six<sup>52</sup>. All the holdings were probably consolidated by this time. The lordship remained in the hands of the Crown until granted to Sir Marmaduke Darrell in 1612<sup>53</sup>. The freehold of much of the land had meanwhile come into the hands of Thomas Brudenell, from whom it was bought by Sir Basil Brooke some time before 1609<sup>54</sup>. There were then only two holdings on Sir Basil's land, each with a farmhouse; but a third can be inferred on the part he did not own. William Child, tenant of Whelpleys (q.v.) held a cottage there<sup>55</sup>, and his second son, also William, referred to Luckings as his 'land of inheritance'<sup>56</sup>. Evidently William senior had acquired part of the Missenden Abbey land and given it to William junior. This was perhaps in 1596, when he is known to have bought land in Coleshill<sup>57</sup>.

In 1617 William junior was described as a husbandman, indicating smallholder status<sup>58</sup>. But in 1618 he bought a substantial parcel of land from Sir Basil Brooke<sup>59</sup>, and this must represent his acquisition of the balance of the 67 1/2 acres (27.55 ha) that made up Luckings

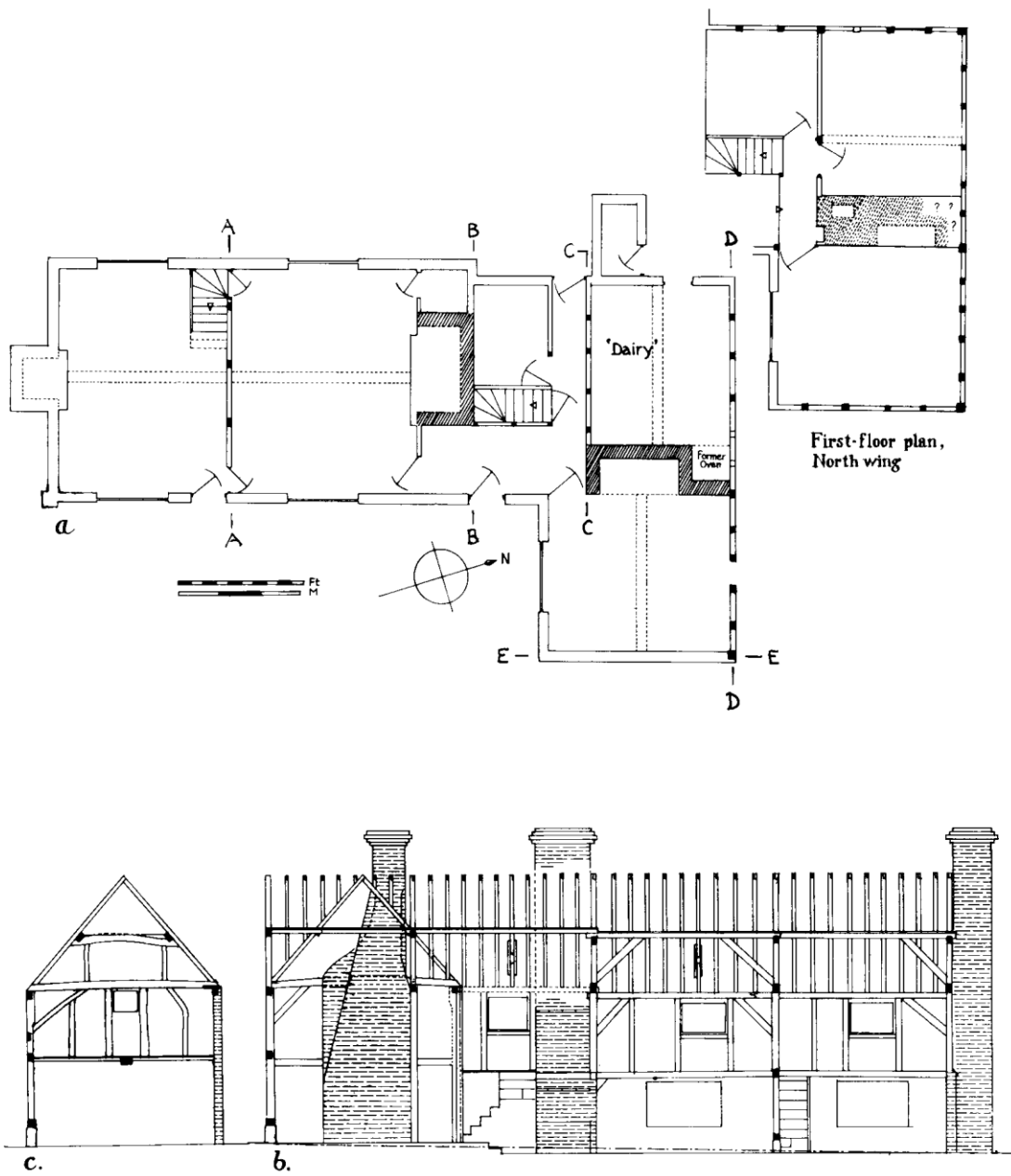


Fig. 7. Fagnell Farm, (a) Ground-floor plan, (b) Cut-away view, looking east, (c) Section at E-E, looking east.

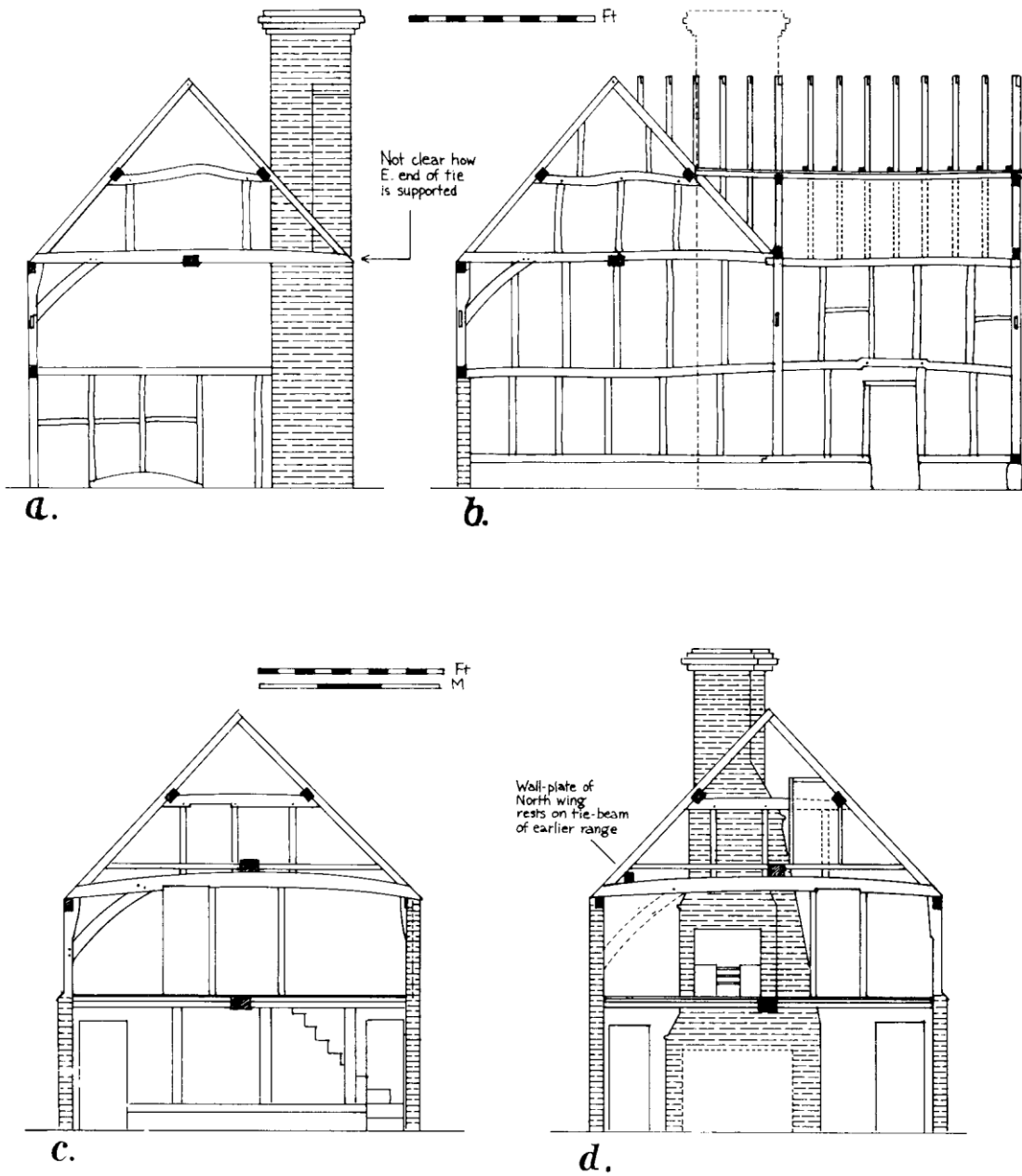


Fig. 8. Fagnell Farm, (a) Section at C-C, looking north, (b) Section at D-D, looking north. These two sections, with Fig. 7c, show the inferior timber used for the north range, (c) Section at A-A, looking south, (d) Section at B-B, looking north. The priority of this range is shown by the wall plate of the north range which rests on the tie of this truss.

Farm. There were no houses on the land he bought: Sir Basil had been engrossing, no doubt helped by the death of one of his tenants, Robert Eeles, in 1617.

William Child had 12 children, but they were born to him by two different wives, and their births were spread over 37 years; his second wife bore children over a span of 22 years. Two of the five boys died in infancy<sup>60</sup>; the eldest, Joseph, was 27 by the time his father consolidated Luckings; the youngest, James, was only three. Joseph married in 1619, and evidently left home, since it was James and not he that inherited Luckings<sup>61</sup>. William died in 1636, so that James took over the farm at the age of 21. He seems not to have married until he was in his forties. On this evidence the house cannot be earlier than 1618, when William was still a husbandman; and after buying the land he would have needed time to accumulate further capital before he can have built a house. It is suggested that Luckings was in fact built by James on coming into his inheritance. The large kitchen/hall suits an unmarried farmer with a need for a number of servants.

#### 4. *Fagnell Farm* (Figs. 7 & 8)

Hard against the boundary of Coleshill and Penn, of what was once Herts (detached) and Bucks, Fagnell presents a number of problems in structural history.

The house is of two builds, the two southern bays of the north-south range being the earlier. This is shown by the fact that the wall plate of the northern part rests on the tie-beam of truss B-B. Moreover the string courses projecting from the southern stack, which can only be decorative, show that the stack was external when built.

The stack has vertical pitches between the string courses (Fig. 8d), suggesting a date towards the middle of the seventeenth century. This has to be reconciled with the fact that one shaft of the stack in the later, northern range is typologically earlier than the southern one. It has sloping shoulders and is built of much thinner bricks. This range is framed with rather poor timber. The original entrance can be seen

on the north side. The western ground floor room has no access from the rest of the house; it is still referred to as the dairy, and probably that is what it has been from the start.

The position of the entrance to the southern range cannot be recovered, as the whole of the ground floor framing has been replaced by brick.

The clue to the problem is to be found in the farm's first appearance in the record: in 1572 Richard and Katherine Bovingdon bought a small property in Coleshill, which can be identified as Fagnell by unbroken descent, and which then had *two* houses on it. Katherine, dying a widow in 1600, left it to her son Thomas<sup>63</sup>, who was probably already living in one of the houses. Thomas was at least 31 when he married c. 1590<sup>64</sup>, and he died in 1611, with all his children under age. The farm was left to his wife Eleanor for 21 years<sup>65</sup>. The eldest boy, Henry, died at 14, and it was the second son, Joseph, who ultimately inherited. Three of Thomas's five sons died young, and one of his four daughters.

It is possible to make sense of the structural relationships of the house if it is supposed that Joseph rebuilt one of the two houses, the southern one, not long after coming into his inheritance in 1632, leaving the other for his mother as her dower house. On Eleanor's death (which is unrecorded, and so probably took place during the years after 1643, when the Amersham parish register was slackly kept), Joseph rebuilt the northern house also, leaving the earlier stack and adding another shaft to it, and at the same time joined the two structures into one (the northern range is of one build with the bay joining the two ranges). He paid tax on four hearths in 1662. Two were in the southern stack; in the northern range the older, eastern shaft served a ground-floor fireplace, the other a first-floor one.

Thomas and Joseph both added to the farm. Its original extent is unknown, but was certainly more than the five (nominal) acres that went with the original purchase. Probably they were the tenants of most or all of the Amer-

sham demesne of the Manor of Tomlins, which they subsequently bought: in 1602 Thomas was paying tax on 20s. worth of land in Coleshill<sup>66</sup>. In the same year he bought the neighbouring Fagnell Field, 9 acres (3.67 ha)<sup>67</sup>, financing the purchase by selling land in Chinnor; Great Tomlins, 16 acres (6.53 ha) was added in 1641<sup>68</sup> and in 1670 9 acres (3.67 ha) in Hersletts, just across the boundary in Penn<sup>69a</sup>. When Joseph died, aged 77, in 1679, he was farming 105 acres (43.5 ha) of freehold land<sup>69b</sup>.

The roof-space was not originally floored, though there will have been a time, before Joseph's four sons reached maturity, when servants would have been necessary. Probably they were accommodated in the northern house.

##### 5. *The Queen's Head* (not illustrated)

At all relevant times this tenement was known as Cokes, from an early sixteenth-century owner. The building is faced in brickwork of the early nineteenth century, but the downstairs bearer beams have ogee stops belonging to the first half of the seventeenth. The upper floor was wholly rebuilt at the time of the refronting. To this period also belongs the northern bay, originally a stable<sup>70</sup>. The north stack may be slightly earlier.

The remaining two bays formed a two-unit house with a stack in the south gable. The two ground-floor rooms were each 15'A' x 13' (4.75 x 3.99 m). Since the house does not appear in the Hearth Tax returns it presumably had only one hearth, and if so was of only 1'A storeys.

This is perfectly consistent with the size of the holding, which was only 20'A acres (8.36 ha), but it is not consistent with the economic status of the man who died there in 1600. This was William Dean, a man of substance. He had other land in Chalfont St Giles, Amersham, Wendover, Stoke (Mandeville?) and High Wycombe; and he left his unmarried daughter Mary £140<sup>71</sup>.

William was succeeded at Cokes by his younger son, Christopher, then aged 41, who

himself died childless in 1612<sup>72</sup>. His place on the subsidy roll is taken by Richard Wilkinson, whose status is unclear<sup>73</sup>. By 1629 Cokes was probably already in the hands of Matthias Carter of Woodrow<sup>74</sup>, who had the freehold in 1650<sup>75</sup>. No doubt he let the place: it certainly had a tenant in 1650. This was Matthew Reading, who in 1634 had been a fourteen-year-old apprentice to Henry Tredway at Stockings (q.v.)<sup>76</sup>.

The explanation for the discrepancy between William's wealth and the size of his house is to be found in his age. He was 81 when he died<sup>77</sup>, and was probably living with Christopher at Cokes, already Christopher's home. While still active he had no doubt lived in a larger house on one of his other properties. The present house may thus be dated to 1613, when Richard Wilkinson took over, or to some other date before 1629 when it became Matthew Carter's property. The former is perhaps to be preferred.

In 1651 the property was bought on mortgage by Francis Hawes<sup>78</sup>, of Moorey (q.v.), who seems for a time to have farmed in partnership with Reading. Reading's tenancy shows that a farm apprenticeship was a means of advancement in the world: his father had been a labourer<sup>79</sup>. He had married in 1641, which may well point to the start of his tenancy, and had two daughters and two sons, the elder boy born in 1648. He was still there in 1660, but by 1663 had been replaced by Henry Birch<sup>80</sup>, a tile-maker<sup>81</sup>. The indication is of a 21-year lease.

##### 6. *Red Lion Cottage* (Figs. 9 & 10)

With Red Lion Cottage we come to the house of one of the smaller yeomen, though the building is not at all typical of its class. It is of two and a half timber-framed bays, and is now flanked by separate dwellings of one bay each, added in the late eighteenth century. It is of two full storeys throughout.

An axial brick stack occupies the half bay of the original house. Its four flues serve two fireplaces on each floor, so that all four rooms were originally heated. A surviving fireplace has a four-centred arch of moulded plaster over



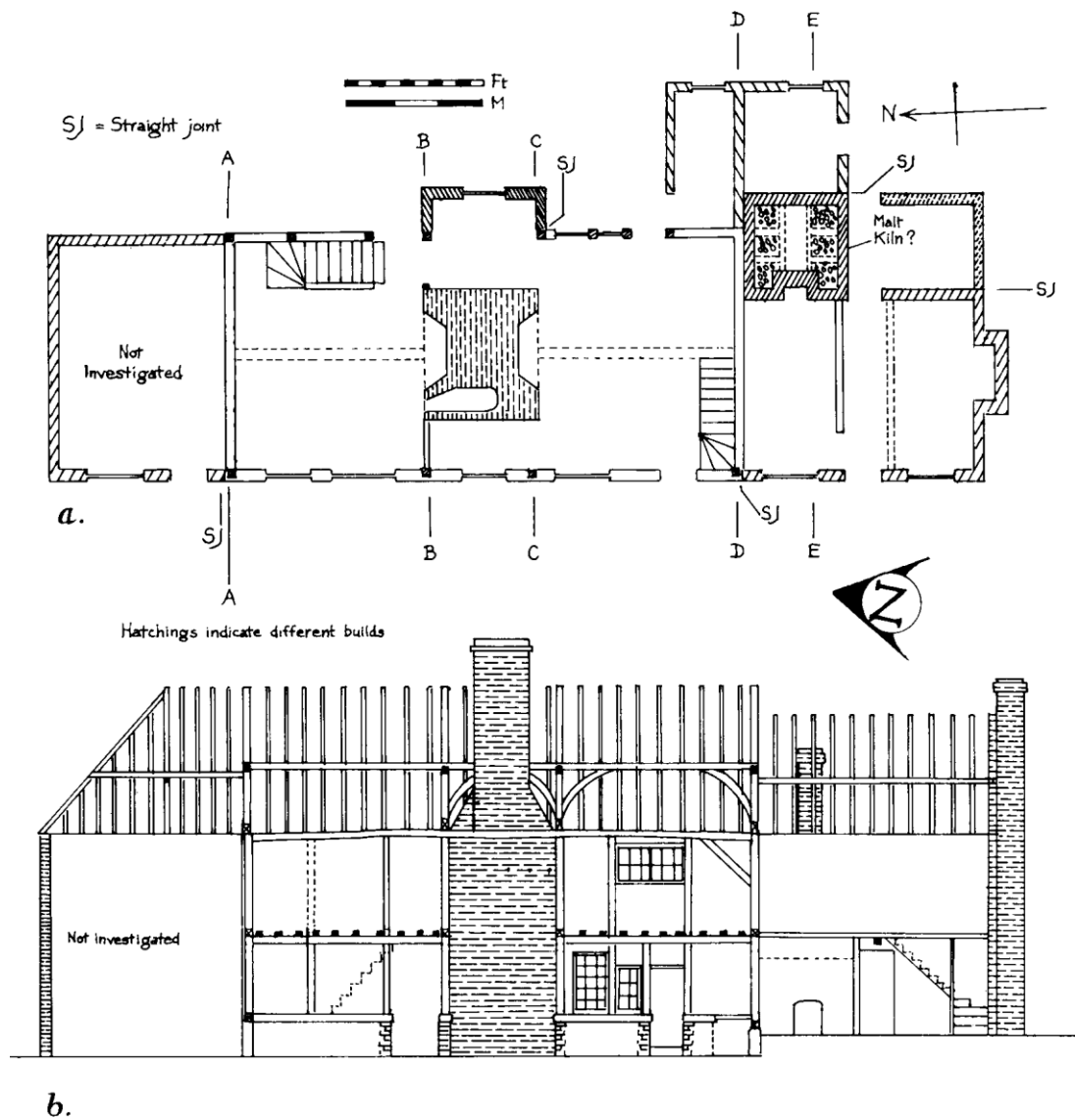


Fig. 9. Red Lion Cottage, c. 1960. (a) Ground plan, (b) Cut-away view, looking east.

chamfered brick. Probably there was a lobby rebuild: there are no windbraces, the posts have entrance, but it has not survived; nor has the original access to the first floor.

If there was ever an unheated bay it has left no trace. Since there are mortices for window mullions in the south gable, such a bay can only have lain to the north. But the north bay is a

A hearth recently found under the floor of the north bay indicates the presence of an earlier open-hall house on the site. It was made of tiles set on edge in a herring-bone pattern.

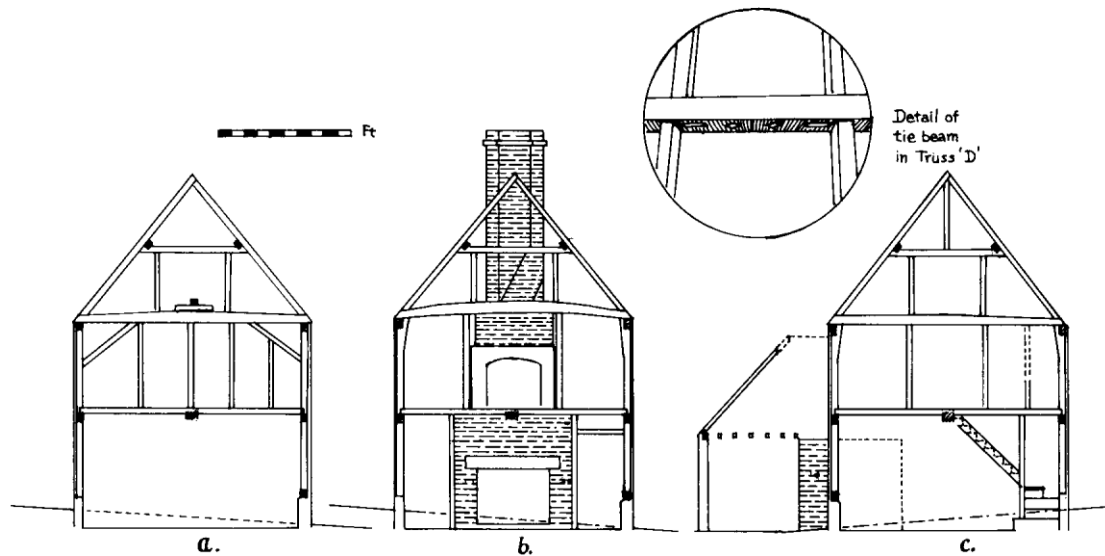


Fig. 10. Red Lion Cottage, c. 1960. (a) Section at A-A. (b) Section at C-C. (c) Section at D-D.

On the south east corner of the older part of the house is a structure of brick, enclosing a six foot cube (1.82 m). At a height of c. 4' within this is a floor of 1' square tiles (0.093 m<sup>2</sup>), resting on a grid of brick walls built so as to leave a clear central passage, with three spaces on either side. These were found to be loosely packed with large flints. A chimney rose from the west end of the central passage; the nineteenth-century occupants of the south cottage inserted a fireplace at its base.

It is suggested that this was a malt-kiln. One of the late seventeenth-century occupants, Thomas Glenister, was a maltster<sup>83</sup>, and there may have been earlier malting here. The evidence for this is a brick-lined conduit running under the house from east to west. Its line, if produced, would run through the site of a filled-in pond in the garden. Malting needs plentiful supplies of water to steep the grain; and since the conduit passes under the stack, it

must be contemporary with, or earlier than, the house.

At the date when it becomes possible to associate this house with an owner, his name is Edmund Ball<sup>83</sup>. From him it can be traced back by an unbroken chain of evidence to his great-grandfather<sup>84</sup>, also Edmund<sup>85</sup>, who was evidently the heir — and probably the brother — of John Ball, who died in Coleshill in 1566<sup>86</sup>. Edmund senior left the property to his son Henry<sup>87</sup>, who died in 1592<sup>88</sup>, leaving a 30 year old widow, Susan<sup>89</sup>, pregnant and with three young children; the eldest, another Henry, was only six.

Susan Ball married again within a year, taking as her husband another Coleshill man, John Monday<sup>90</sup>, who, it can be deduced, had one of the biggest farms in Coleshill (see Braynford Barns, below). When the young Henry is next heard of he is in Hambleton<sup>91</sup>,

where George Monday, John's son by an earlier marriage, was farming<sup>92</sup>. Meanwhile the family holding was let<sup>93</sup>. In 1619 Henry bought 10 acres of common-field land in Coleshill<sup>94</sup>, and early next year, when he was 34, he married. From then on he lived in Coleshill<sup>95</sup>. 1619 or a little later seems, then, the most likely date for the building of Red Lion Cottage.

Henry's patrimony had been a modest one: there was 7 acres (2.85 ha) in closes near the house, plus perhaps 9 acres (3.67 ha) in the common fields<sup>96</sup>. Even with his new purchase of common-field land he cannot have had more than 26 acres (10.6 ha). For a holding of this size his house was very superior, and it seems very unlikely that there was ever a third bay. Possibly he was in business as a maltster, as well as a farmer. Possibly his wife had brought a good portion with her. She was Mary Dean, not the well-dowered daughter<sup>97</sup> of William (see *The Queen's Head*), but the 26-year-old daughter of Richard Dean of Penn<sup>98</sup>, whom the subsidy rolls show to have been a prosperous member of that community<sup>99</sup>. She bore Henry seven children, all boys, and all to survive to adulthood<sup>100</sup>.

In other respects good fortune eluded this branch of the Ball family. During the thirties, Henry was obliged to sell the land he had bought in 1619 to his more successful younger brother, Edmund<sup>101</sup> (see *Braynford Barns*, below), and is also found described as a labourer<sup>102</sup>, although his son, another Edmund, was yeoman in the '70s<sup>103</sup>. The '30s were a time when poor harvests and high prices<sup>104</sup> left many small farmers with no marketable surplus, or even with insufficient grain for their families and stock.

The first floor of his house was open to the rafters, offering no sleeping quarters for farm servants, and it is possible that until his sons reached an age when they could do a man's work he was unable to work the holding adequately. Since the eldest was born in 1623, help will not have been available until about 1638.

In 1662 he was assessed on 6 hearths. This

does not indicate a third bay, with two further hearths in it: a little later there were two cottages on the holding as well as the main house, and these account for the extra two hearths<sup>105</sup>. In 1663 they were evidently assessed separately as Ball's assessment was down to four.

#### 7. *The Garden* (Fig. 11)

This house is now divided in two, and it has only been possible to investigate half of it. It is of two full storeys, but only two bays, one of them 15' 6" sq. (4.76 m sq.), the other 15' 6" x 14' (4.76 x 4.3 m). Unlike Red Lion Cottage it has no half bay for the stack, which occupies a large part of the smaller, south bay. But, as at Red Lion Cottage, all four rooms were heated. The twin bearers represent a later alteration.

The Garden was, for over 150 years, the home of a branch of the Dean family. John Dean is attested there in 1657<sup>106</sup>, and the evidence of wills takes the connection back to Sylvester Dean, who died in 1620<sup>107</sup>, and probably to William Dean 'of Winchmore Hill', who died in 1589<sup>108</sup>. A plausible date for the building of this house is 1620, when William Dean II succeeded his father Sylvester at the age of 50<sup>109</sup>.

The accompanying land amounted to some 35 acres (14.28 ha), and could hardly have been worked by William and his only son, John, but there is no sign of accommodation for farm servants: the first floor was open to the roof. William's nephew Robert received a legacy in his will, and may have lived with the family and helped on the farm.

The will<sup>110</sup> also directed that the widow was to have 'the chamber over the hall' for her lodging. This was presumably the larger of the two upstairs rooms; her daughter Susan was to share it with her. William was a man of some substance, able to leave Susan £140.

#### 8. *Stock Grove* (not illustrated)

The present building, mainly twentieth century, embodies part of the ground floor of an earlier house, which was evidently of two bays with an axial stack. The surviving bay is

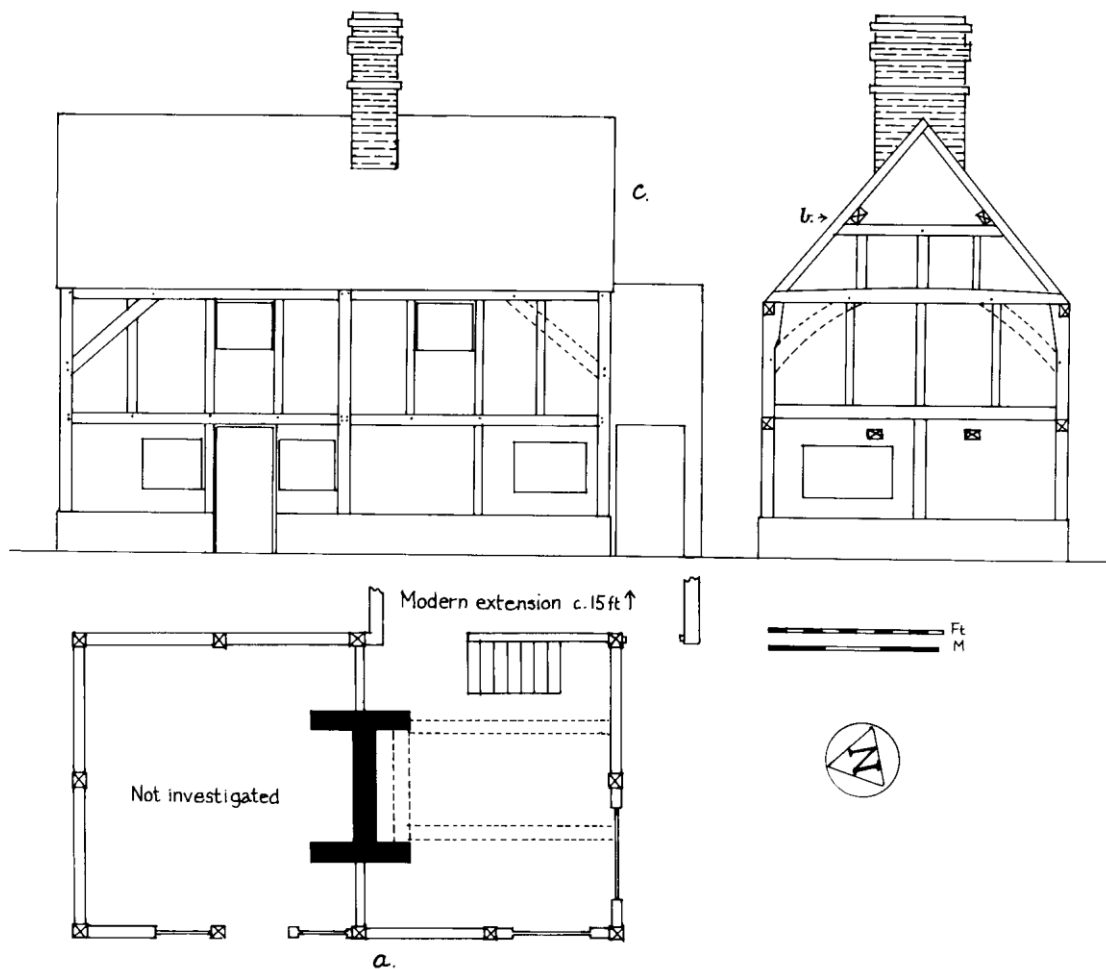


Fig. 11. The Gardens, (a) Ground Plan, (b) Section at B-B. (c) West elevation.

13' x 14' (3.96 x 4.26 m) and has an axial bearer with stepped concave stops. No framing survives, but the brickwork of the gable shows the outline of a 1 1/2 storey house. The house represented by this one room was the first on the site. It can be dated to c. 1630 by the fact that the ground on which it stands was still woodland in 1615<sup>111</sup>, and in 1633 was sold to a High Wycombe charity as a going concern<sup>112</sup>. The farm, in fact, was one of the results of the break-up of the manor after the death of Christopher Hampden in 1628. This dating is also

applicable to the next two houses to be discussed.

The farm was of only 12 1/2 acres (5.1 ha) and the tenant in 1633, Robert Bell, was paying £5.10.0 rent for it yearly. Bell was still there when he died 40 years later, leaving a widow (his second wife) and four daughters, two of them unmarried. But in his old age he had not been without help on the holding: Richard Tockfield, 'that did lately dwell with me', received a sheep under the will<sup>113</sup>. No new lease

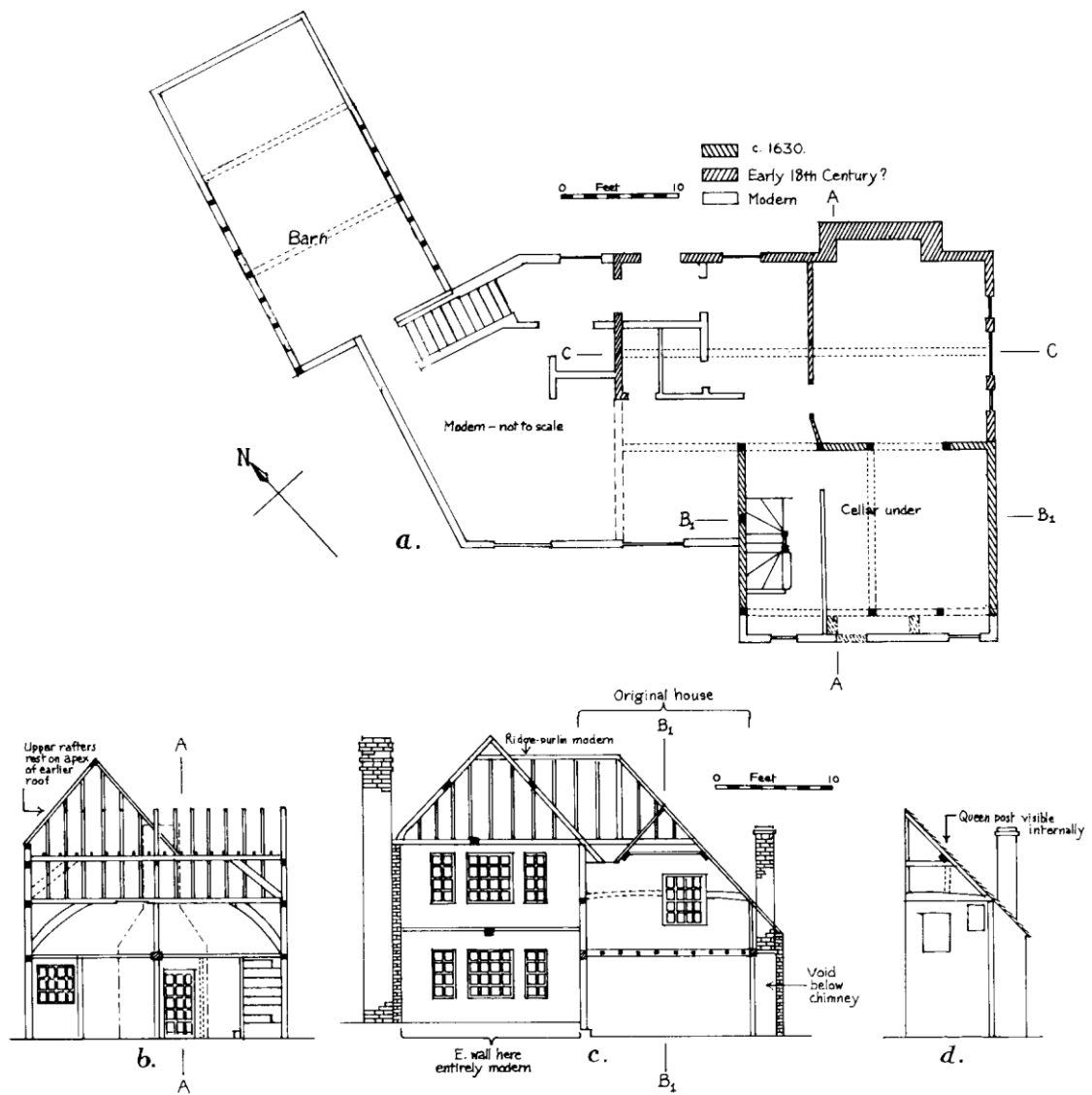


Fig. 12. Friar's Vane (Lands Farm), (a) Ground plan; the original house is bottom right, (b) Section at B-B. (c) Section at A-A; the original house is on the right, (d) Elevation: W end of original house.

was granted until 1691<sup>114</sup> (when the rent went up to £8), so Bell's lease was perhaps for 60 years, or possibly two lives.

#### 9. *Friar's Vane* (Fig. 12)

The historic name for the fancifully named 'Friar's Vane' is Lands Farm, but a previous owner transferred this name to a new house built behind it. Like Littlelands and Stock Grove (q.v.), it stands on what was, in 1615, demesne woodland.

The earliest part of the house is on the south side, a two-bay unit of 1 *Vi* storeys. On the ground floor the bearer is on the line of the central truss, but there is no sign that there was ever a partition under it; a single room, 21' (6.46 m) long, occupied both bays. There was a stack on the south side, in the middle of the long wall, of which only the upper part survives. The upper floor was originally unlit: there are traces of windows where the soffits of the wall-plates have been cut into, but these are clearly secondary.

The rail in the north wall shows not only the mortice for a stud that once formed part of the present frame, but an independent series of smaller mortices at 13" centres. It is re-used from a building with close studding, no doubt the Manor House.

Lands Farm was of W/i acres (5.51 ha). Its barn, one of the very few to survive in Coleshill, is of three bays, 261/2' x 14' (8.15 x 4.3 m). Modern additions now join it to the house.

The house was built, and its land cleared, between 1628 and 1633, as argued under Stock Grove, above. Its first known occupant is Zwinglius Pratt, attested there in 1641<sup>115</sup>. He would have been 45 in 1630, and was presumably the first occupier. In later years his family had the freehold<sup>116</sup>, but whether Zwinglius was a freeholder is not known for certain. His parents, who must be supposed to have been ardent Calvinists, were Amersham people; His brother Thomas was a labourer<sup>117</sup>. He himself had two sons, Richard and Hezekiah; the latter was only 9 in 1630, Richard a few years older, and with this help Zwinglius was

probably able to work this small farm without hired labour.

Zwinglius died during the Civil War or Interregnum. His widow, Olive, was in Coleshill in 1673<sup>118</sup>, but in 1675 was living with her son Richard, who was then a husbandman in Hampstead<sup>119</sup>. Hezekiah married c. 1650 and remained in Amersham; after 1675 the family's connection with Lands Farm ceased altogether, but they had probably moved out long before: it is a reasonable inference that in 1658 the farm was occupied by William Hancock, husbandman (see "Allden's"). By 1681 it was in the hands of William Page, who no doubt built the northern range, and whose family were to remain there for 150 years<sup>120</sup>. This stability may have owed something to their taking over the forge<sup>121</sup>.

#### 10. *Littlelands* (Fig. 13)

Littlelands is the third of the three farms set up on cleared woodland c. 1630. The oldest part of the house is represented by the two southern bays of the east-west range, 1 *!/>* storeys and originally only 19' 3" (3.12 m) to the eaves. The upper floor was within living memory reached by a ladder in the northern bay<sup>122</sup>. Only the south bay was heated (by a gable-end stack), but there was once a third bay, and this too had a hearth. The will of the first owner provided that his widow was to have 'all that bay of howsing adjoininge to my dwelling howse', and a sufficient load of wood each year<sup>123</sup>. This clearly implies a third bay; moreover the occupant in the early 1660s, Thomas Dibberell<sup>124</sup>, was taxed on two hearths. Probably the third bay lay to the north, where there is now late seventeenth and nineteenth-century work.

The bearer in the southern bay is a re-used wall-plate, with rafter housings on one side and mortices for close studding on the other. The lower part of the stack is of brick and flint, the bricks resembling those in the early stack at Stock Place. They are laid in English bond. Here is more salvage from the Manor House. The farm had only 18 acres (7.34 ha) of cultivable land<sup>125</sup>. The first owner was Thomas Eeles, son of the Robert Eeles who until 1612

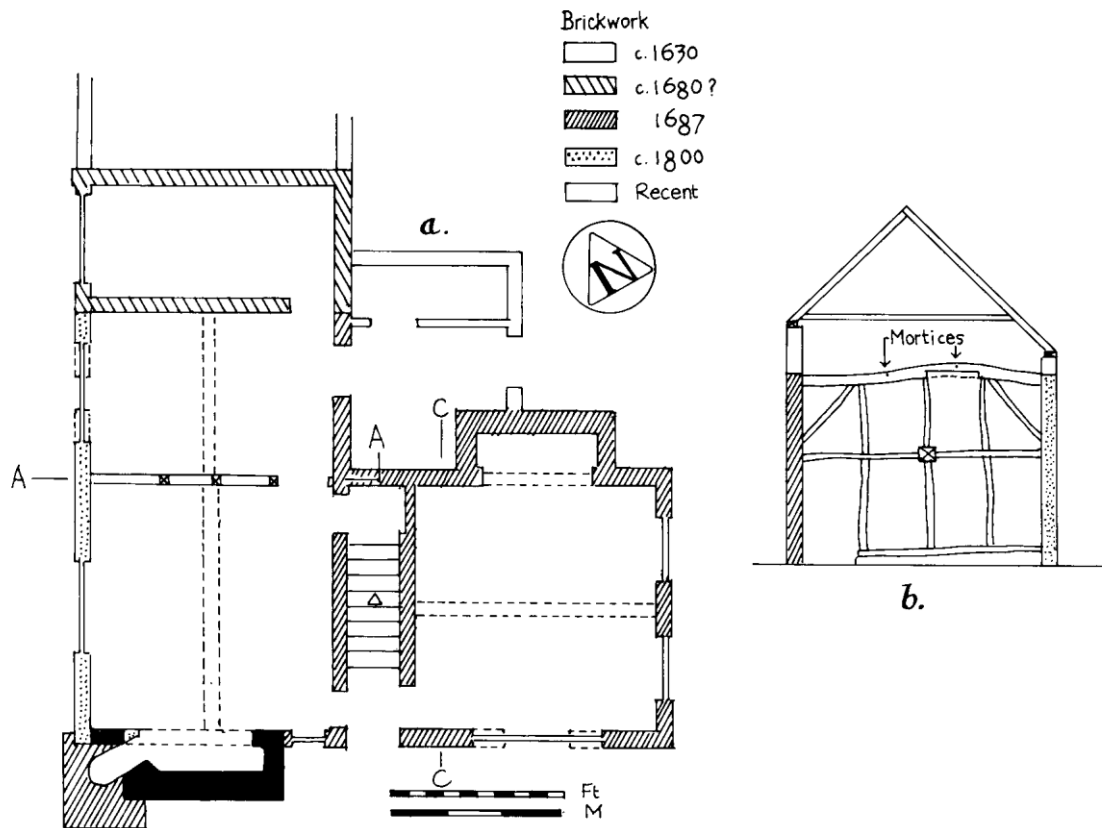


Fig. 13. Littlelands. (a) Ground plan: the original house is to the left, (b) Cut-away view at A-A.

had farmed part of the Luckings land<sup>126</sup>. William's only child, Thomas, was grown up but still a minor when his father died in 1644, aged only 45; he does not seem to have wished to keep the farm on: the grant of probate describes him as 'late of Coleshill', and next year the farm was 'in the occupation of Joan Eeles', his mother<sup>127</sup>. Remainder had been left to the children of Sarah Benning, William's sister, and by c. 1660 the Bennings were in possession<sup>128</sup> as absentee owners (they were a Chesham family).

The wing projecting east from the south end of the house was added in 1687<sup>129</sup>, and the south stack was remodelled at the same time.

#### 11. *The Plough* (not illustrated)

Two bays in the middle of this public house have early seventeenth century ceiling beams to the ground floor. In the southern bay the stops on the bearer are stepped ogees with notch, whose closest analogues in Coleshill are at Bowers Farm (see above), built c. 1615, and Lawyers Cottage (q.v.). The proportions of the

building indicate a 1 *Vi* storey house and do not suggest rebuilding, but no timbers are visible upstairs to confirm this. The two units are each 14' 6" (4.46 x 4.3 m). There was a gable-end stack and apparently only one hearth.

Together with an acre or so of ground in which it stood, this house formed a tenement for which five generations of the Brown family paid the archaic rent of a red rose on St John's day. They were of yeoman status, the land that conferred this being in Penn and Amersham, not Coleshill<sup>130</sup>. Henry Brown, who died in 1597<sup>131</sup>, was there in 15 7 7<sup>132</sup>, and may have come of a Penn family<sup>133</sup>. His eldest son, John, predeceased him<sup>134</sup>, and his second son, George, died in 1600; their mother died in January 1583, and Henry married again in June of the same year<sup>135</sup>. It was Edward, the son of this second marriage, who eventually inherited. (His mother, Helen, was pilloried and spent a year in prison in 1589 for allegedly bewitching cattle<sup>136</sup>.)

The house could have been rebuilt when Edward came of age in 1606, but a more plausible date is that of his marriage, 1619, or a little later. Three daughters and two sons were born over the next 19 years, of whom one girl died in infancy<sup>137</sup>. Edward himself seems to have died during the Civil War or Interregnum, and was succeeded by his son John<sup>138</sup>.

Henry Brown's will, proved in 1597, left the property to his wife Helen for only six years, which points to the expected date of George's majority. Bequests to younger children of 'the best standing bed', 'the great chest', pairs of blankets, sheets and pillow-beres, bolsters and pillows, eight pieces of pewter and eight brass kettles suggest that these could all leave the house without denuding it; a solid standard of comfort and convenience is indicated. It is hard to reconcile this with a two-bay house, but its successor, Edward's house, certainly had only one hearth.

## 12. *The Potter's Arms* (Fig. 14)

The public bar is the ground floor of the oldest part of this house; a two bay 1 *Vi* storey building with straight wind-braces and a stack

in the eastern long wall. All but one corner of the ground floor framing has been replaced by brick. The ground floor area is 13' x 18' 10" (4 x 5.8 m). The ground floor, now one room, was originally divided in two (hall/kitchen and unheated parlour) by a wattle-and-daub partition: mortices for studs and sockets for staves can be seen in the soffit of the midrail. An early seventeenth century date is indicated.

A conveyance of 1604 relating to this property<sup>139</sup> refers to the house as being 'lately built'. It is never easy to know how much weight to attach to this phrase, which could be copied from one conveyance to another over many generations. But this was a sale out of the demesne of the Manor of Tomlins, so the freehold had probably not changed hands before. 'Lately built' can therefore be taken at face value.

The property was at this time known as Hillfields, or alternatively Sansums, the latter probably deriving from Samson deChampneys, who was a Winchmore Hill freeholder in 1275<sup>140</sup>.

The purchaser was George Fryer, a Penn man, who almost at once resold to Thomas Bovingdon<sup>141</sup>, a younger son of the family that held the Glory, in Penn<sup>142</sup>. Thomas, however, seems not to have lived there for long, if at all; on his death in 1643 it was let to Robert Nash<sup>143</sup>, whose father Thomas owned "Nash's" (q.v.). Robert died in 1668, leaving no family. Sansums was left to Thomas's daughter Mary<sup>144</sup>, who, as Mary Briggs, was living in Chertsey when in 1680 she sold to her first cousin William Bovingdon<sup>145</sup>.

Sansums, or Hillfields, was a tenement of only 5 acres (2 ha), at the lower limit of viability, but its tenants had an economic resource denied to others in a similar position: an arm of Wycombe Heath ran up to the door. It provided unstinted free grazing<sup>146</sup> over 2,000 acres of common land, and free firewood besides.

The descent of the title is an instructive warning against assuming that, because people



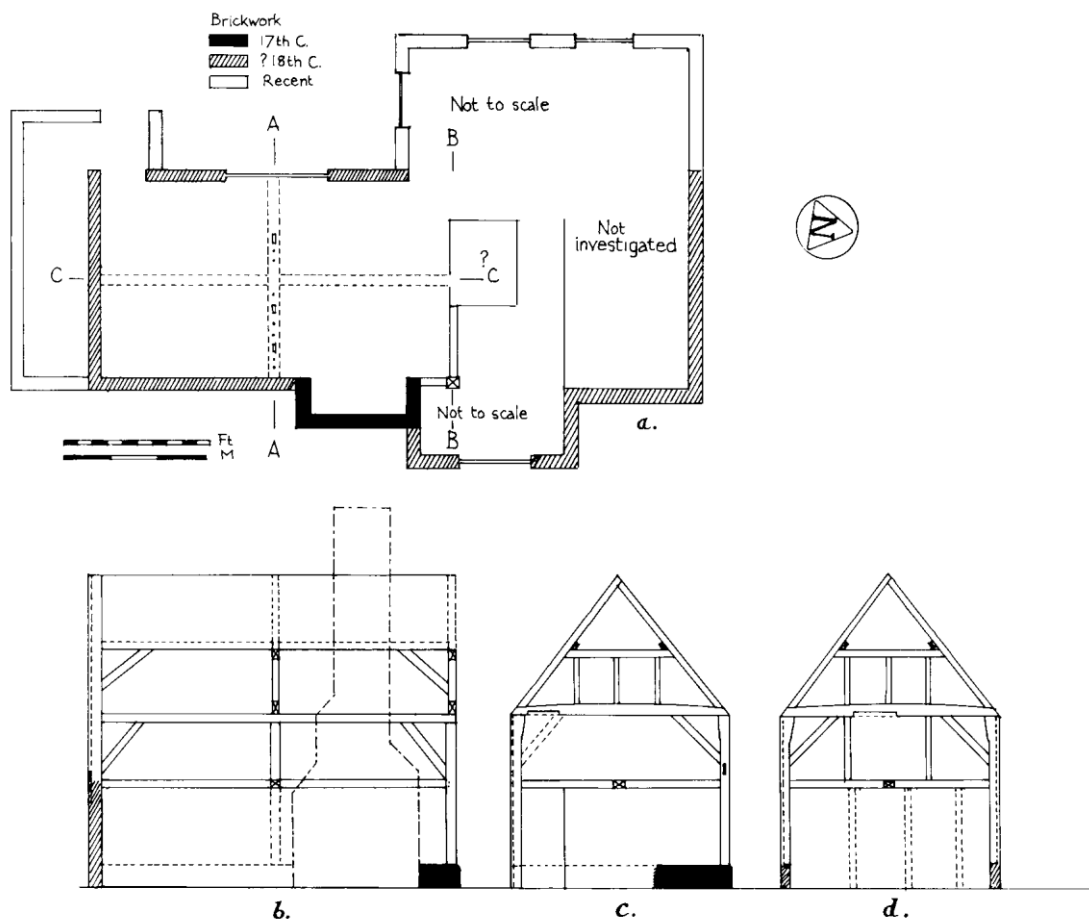


Fig. 14. The Potter's Arms, (a) Ground floor plan: the original house is on the left, (b) Section at C-C. (c) Section at A-A. (d) Section at B-B.

with the same surname are found in possession at the beginning and end of a century, the property must have descended from father to son without a break; or that either of them is also the occupier.

### 13. Forge House (Fig. 15)

Forge House is a recent name; the house is more familiar to local people as 'The Fleur-de-Lys' the name it bore during the two centuries or so when it was a public house.

Externally the house is all brick, and inter-

nally there is little timber framing to be seen. However, the truss between Bays I and II contains the remains of two cruck blades. A large peg-hole at right angles to the plane of the truss is at a level appropriate for a collar, and it is suggested that this was a Type W cruck<sup>147</sup>.

In Bay I the ground-floor bearer and joists are crudely finished. Three of the joists terminate on a trimmer beam in front of the fireplace. In spite of its position it is too small to be anything but a ladder opening, and must therefore predate the hearth. The present

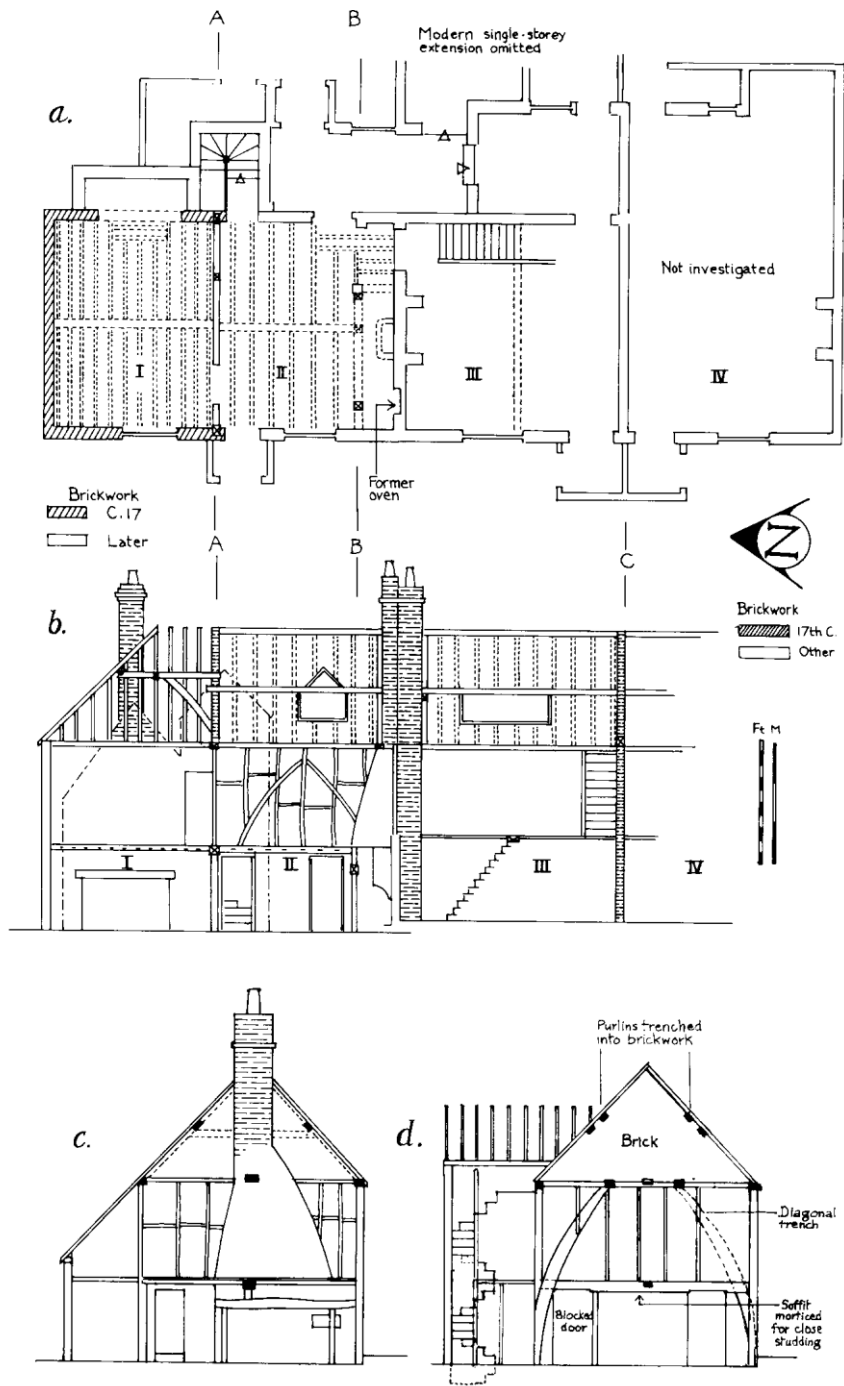


Fig. 15. Forge House (The Fleur-de-Lys). (a) Ground plan: the earliest house is represented by Bays I and II, on the right of the plan, (b) Cut-away view, looking east, (c) Section at B-B, looking south, (d) Section at A-A looking south.

external stack is a late addition to the house: it is not bonded in, and the brickwork is typologically later than that of the cladding at this point. The fireplace lintel is a re-used timber, with a large diagonal trench in the back, near one end; it could have been the lie of a cruck truss at a gable end. There is a blocked doorway in the north wall. The external brickwork is seventeenth century in character.

In Bay II the fireplace, against the south wall, is surmounted by a mud-and-timber firehood. The south end of the bearer rests on a strut supported by the fireplace lintel, and a stop on the bearer proves this arrangement is original. All the joists, as well as the bearer, are neatly squared and chamfered, with well-made step-and-tongue stops. East of the fireplace three of the joists terminate on a trimmer beam, and here too stops prove the arrangement original. This and Bay I furnish the only examples of original openings in ceilings to be found in Coleshill.

Bays III and IV are eighteenth century, but the truss between them includes a massive cambered tie-beam, morticed for queen struts. The eighteenth century brickwork extends over the front of Bay II, which is also roofed continuously with III and IV.

The rail between Bays I and II is a heavy timber, halved across the cruck blades, with a series of small mortices at 13" (0.33 m) centres in its soffit. If these had been for external studing it would be necessary to suppose either that the rail had been moved from a gable end, or that this *was* a gable end; neither is very satisfactory. The simplest explanation is that they were for a plank-and-muntin partition (in which planks are held vertically between grooved studs). This was hardly for a screens passage — the only opening was at the eastern end — and the inference is that Bay II was partitioned from the rest of the house (at least at ground level) from the start, and that its ceiling and the associated firehood are original features of the building. The decorative treatment of the beams suggests a date in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. This is an interesting indication of the late continuance

of the cruck tradition in the area.

The resulting layout would have been exactly analogous to Ashridge Cottage, Ley Hill, Chesham, where smoke-blackening is found on the rafters of one bay only. It may also be compared with the house plans recoverable from two Coleshill probate inventories of about the same period: those of John Ball and Thomas Wingrave.

John Ball's house was on the site of Red Lion Cottage (q.v.). He died in 1566 and his inventory lists only a hall and a chamber<sup>148</sup>. The presence of a kitchen can be inferred, however: the contents of the hall are listed first, then those of the chamber, followed by a list of cooking equipment. Wingrave died in 1571. His inventory lists hall, kitchen and chamber, in that order<sup>149</sup>. Ball's kitchen may have been separate, and his chamber a ground-floor one; for Wingrave an integral kitchen and a first-floor chamber are clearly implied, and the analogy with Forge House is exact. Wingrave's house cannot be positively identified, but his farm was a large one, carrying 60 sheep, 8 horses, 8 cows, 5 bullocks and 10 pigs, and with standing corn worth £20.

Houses with plans like that of Forge House may therefore have spanned a wide socio-economic range at this period. This one may have continued unchanged into the second half of the seventeenth century, but it is not possible to say when Bay I was chambered over. Arnold Harwell, the occupier in 1657<sup>150</sup>, was still in Coleshill in 1673<sup>151</sup>, but his name does not appear on the Hearth Tax returns, and it can be inferred that the house still had only one heated room. By 1686, however, it was in dual occupancy<sup>152</sup>.

The first occupant who can be assigned to the house is Hugh Wingrave, in 1615<sup>153</sup>. He was a tile-maker<sup>154a</sup>, and no relation of Thomas. A period of building activity was about to start in Coleshill, as much of this paper attests.

The 1620s were a peak decade for building in Buckinghamshire, which in fact has more houses dated by inscriptions to this period than

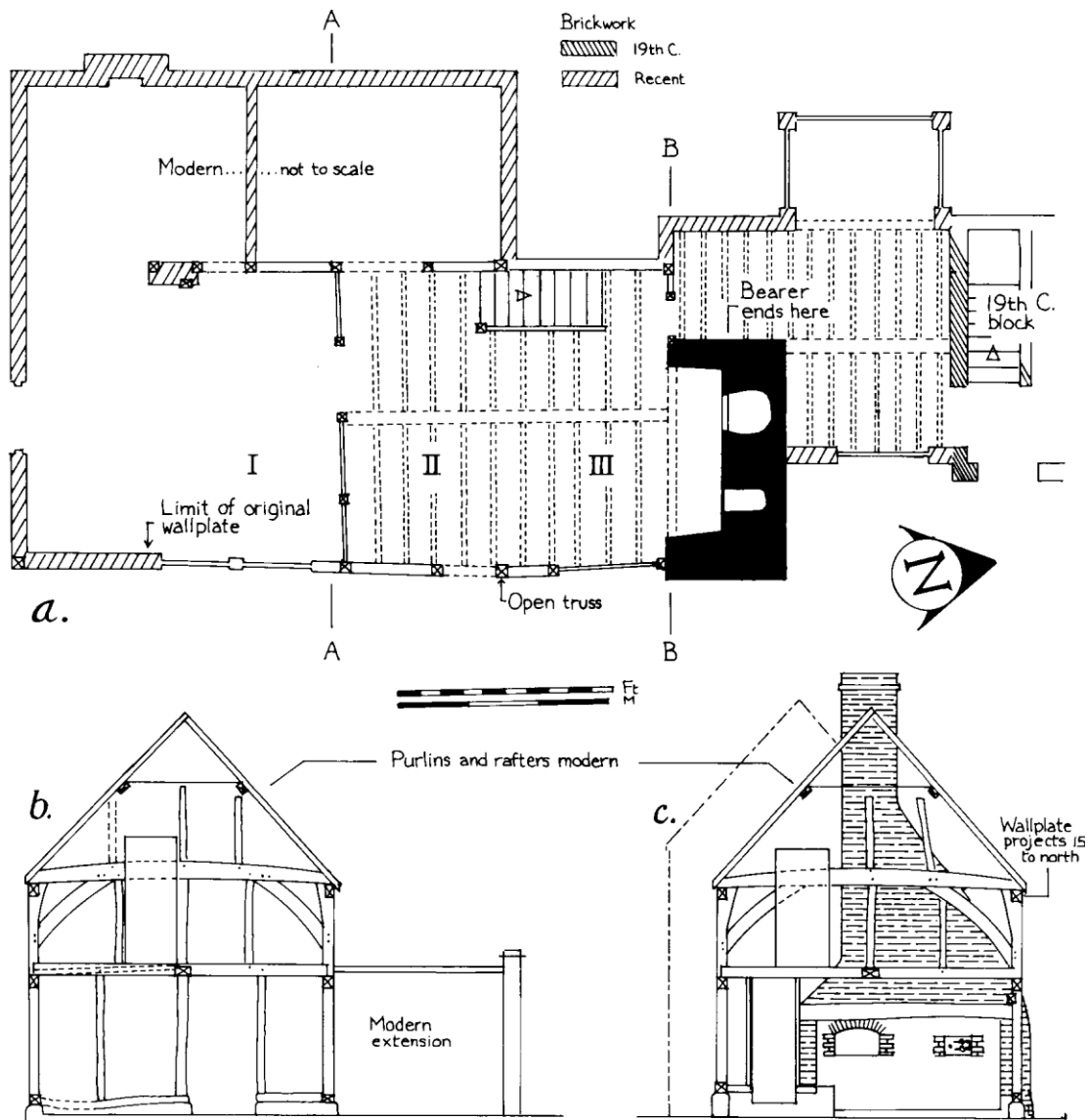


Fig. 16. Larkins Green, (a) Ground plan: the original house occupied Bays I, II and III, its southern end being indicated by a broken line, (b) Section at A-A, looking south, (c) Section at B-B, looking north.

any of the other counties surveyed by Machin<sup>154b</sup>. Hugh prospered sufficiently to be able to buy 10 acres (4.1 ha) and a cottage in Coleshill in 1635<sup>155</sup> (see Downs, below). He also had a 12'A acre (5.1 ha) field, Ridgrove, acquired at an unknown date<sup>156</sup>. 22 1/2 acres would have made him a yeoman if he had worked the land; probably he let it. He married a Penn girl, Jane Playter, who bore him two sons and two daughters<sup>157</sup>; one of the girls died in infancy.

#### 14. *Larkins Green* (Fig. 16)

The house is of 1 *Vi* storeys, and was originally of three or possibly four bays. Only two bays survive intact (II and III). The remains of another can be traced to the south. The bay to the north of the stack is a twentieth century construction, using old timbers, but two features suggest that the original house, too, may have had a fourth bay in this position. One is the presence of a doorway in the north end wall, next to the stack — a most unlikely position for an external door. The other is the fact that the eastern wall plate projects 15" (0.37 m) beyond what is now the northern gable, and has been broken off at that point. Another feature demanding explanation is that the stack overlaps the end wall by 1'. The intact bays formed a single room, 16' x 14' (4.92 x 4.3 m), and the southern bay is shown by a surviving wallplate to have been 10' (3.07 m) long. The two-bay hall never had a tie-beam in its central truss; the downward slope of its joists, from bearer to rail, is not due to any distortion of the frame, but to the fact that the soffit of the bearer is level with the top of the rail. It is clearly an insertion. The joists are chamfered, with step-and-tongue stops, but compared with those at Forge House the workmanship is crude.

A fireplace bressumer has been re-used as a post in the modern rebuild of Bay I, and it is for consideration whether it is from a second stack, or whether this and the re-used timber north of the stack came from Ongar Hill (q.v.). The bearer there would have fitted Bay I, so an on-site origin is to be preferred; this would mean that Larkins Green was a two-hearth

house — though not necessarily at first. If so, it is the one occupied by a John Wingrove in 1662<sup>158</sup>.

The fireplace brickwork contains a number of two-inch bricks, including the voussoirs of a blocked oven opening.

These features can be reconciled by postulating an open-hall house, with a smoke-bay at one end and a two-storey wing at the other; the surviving wall plate shows the latter to have been in line, not transverse. The central truss was perhaps of the arch-braced collar type. Studs surviving above the ties in the other trusses suggest that they had queen-posts and clasped purlins: the total loss of the original roof puts certainty beyond reach. When the smoke-bay was replaced by a stack, the builders respected what was either a closet at the west side, or a doorway to a fourth full bay beyond, and this led to the stack overlapping the end of the house; the gap left for the doorway at the west side was very narrow, which may indicate a closet rather than a passage.

Documentary evidence supports a date consistent with these ideas. The house is built on a wedge of land cut off the side of a large field now called Chapel Field, but earlier known as Horse Leys. It was part of the demesne of Amersham Stockbury; the amputation had certainly taken place before 1637<sup>159</sup>, and possibly before 1625<sup>160</sup>. At that date 54 acres of this part of the demesne were sold; the four fields concerned abut Horse Leys to the south. They already formed an agricultural unit distinct from the rest of the demesne (which was to become the land of Ongar Hill Farm): Walter Tredway, tenant of Coleshill Manor (Stock Place) in the early sixteenth century, had also a lease of this land<sup>161</sup>. During his tenancy there would have been no need for a farmhouse there, but on his death, between 1546 and 1549, when Edmund Waller took the manor, the need for a house at Larkins Green would have been felt at once.

It is therefore suggested that Larkins Green was built shortly before 1550, and modernised and given a second stack around 1600.

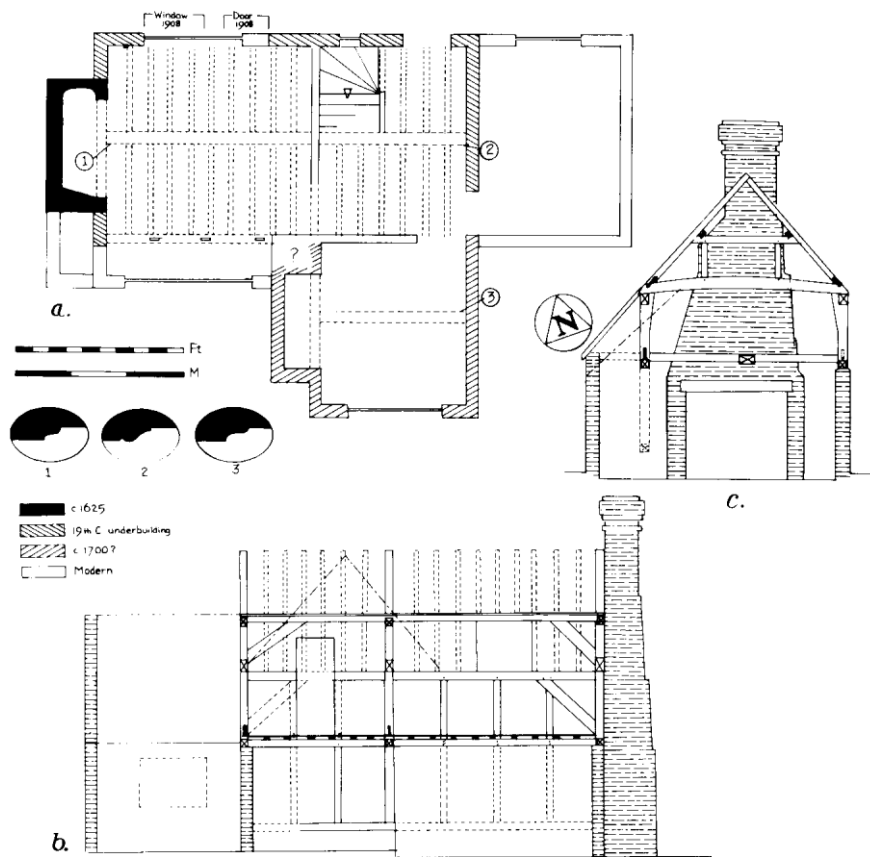


Fig. 17. Lawyer's Cottage, (a) Ground plan, (b) Cut-away view, looking south, (c) Section at A-A, looking west.

Nothing is known of its occupants in the first century of its existence.

#### 15 *Crosspath Cottages* (not illustrated)

Part of this row of nineteenth century cottages embodies the remains of a seventeenth century smallholder's dwelling, though these are limited to the brickwork of a gable-end stack. Nothing can be deduced about the dimensions of the house, except that it was another  $1\frac{1}{2}$  storey building. The holding was known as Merlins or Maudlins, and was tiny, only 3 acres (1.22 ha)<sup>162</sup>. During the first half of the century it formed part of the Reading's estate, based on Bowers<sup>163</sup>. During their ownership the only identifiable tenant is Hugh Bowyer, of whom nothing is otherwise known: later it was acquired by James Child of Luck-

ings, whose wife (presumably estranged) lived there<sup>164</sup>.

#### 16. *Lawyer's Cottage* (Fig. 17)

This  $1\frac{1}{2}$  storey house was extended at the back in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; before that it was a two-room house with a single gable-end stack. The heated hall/kitchen measured 12' 3" x 11' 3" (3.76 x 3.46 m), the unheated parlour 9' x 11' 3" (2.76 x 3.46 m).

It stands on the site of an older house, which in 1574 was let to Henry Wheeler<sup>165</sup>. The owner was Roger Hill, to whom it had been left by the will of his father Robert, an Amersham yeoman. Wheeler was otherwise known as Snell, but it is the former name that has left its mark on Coleshill toponymy: Wheeler's

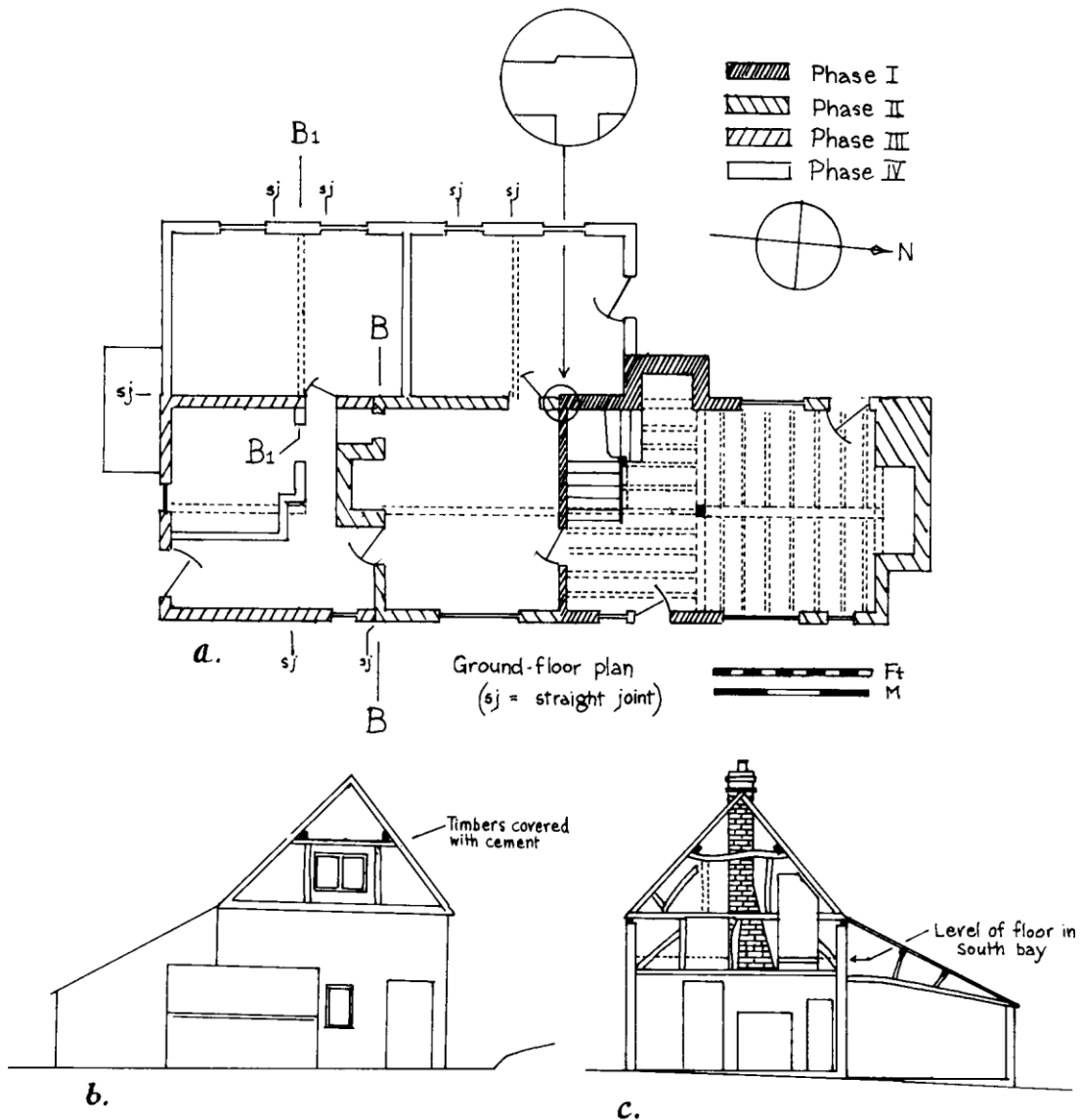


Fig. 18. Dell Cottage: the earliest part has its joists running north-south, (a) Ground plan, (b) South elevation, (c) Section at B-B, B<sub>1</sub>-B<sub>1</sub>.

Orchard was formerly the name of the two-acre field behind the house<sup>166</sup>, though it has now been transferred to the much larger field to the west. Wheeler died in 1605, and his widow (described as 'of Coleshill', under the name of Snell), in 1611. So Roger Hill can never have lived there, and in 1606 he sold the place<sup>167</sup>. The new owner, Christopher Clark of The Rosary (q.v.), probably built the present house after getting vacant possession in 1611.

The sale seems to have severed the Hill family's connection with Coleshill. A 'Richard

Hill, labourer' was living in Coleshill in 1610<sup>168</sup>, but his antecedents are obscure; he started no family and was probably a living-in farm servant. Another Richard Hill was an 11-year-old apprentice to Henry Tredway at Stockings (q.v.) in 1634<sup>169</sup>; his parents were Amersham people<sup>170</sup>.

As well as the two-acre orchard there seems to have been some arable, which must have been in the common fields, but the whole cannot have been more than 3 or 4 acres, and

the holder will certainly have had to supplement his livelihood by labouring or a trade.

After 1611 the occupants of the house are unknown.

#### 17. *Dell Cottage* (Fig. 18)

Lawyer's Cottage may have become a labourer's house soon after being built. Dell Cottage was built for a labourer, and consequently has particular importance in the study of vernacular architecture, for labourers' cottages earlier than the eighteenth century are very rare.

It is possible to claim this status for Dell Cottage because it is built on the waste of the manor, and therefore either by a squatter or by the overseers of the poor, to house a homeless family. The latter is more likely: the Amersham enclosure award of 1816 shows the house in the possession of the overseers. In either case it was for someone of the poorest class.

The house has been added to piecemeal over a period of 200 years, and this has helped its

oldest part to survive (though institutional ownership was no doubt the major factor in this). This earliest part is a single bay, only 13' x 8' (3.9 x 2.4 m), which represents half of a single-cell dwelling no more than 10' (3 m) to the eaves. It is badly built of inferior timber, with only one pegged joint among those surviving, and the later additions are little better.

We are on reasonably safe ground in suggesting that the earliest house was built before the Civil War. The northern extension may also be seventeenth century. The two southern bays seem never to have had timber-framed walls, and the brickwork suggests that they were added successively during the eighteenth century; their queen-posts and clasped purlins show the long persistence of this tradition. The lean-to at the back is nineteenth century.

Building the northern extension involved demolishing half the original house. Since the remaining half, and the new extension, each had a stack, it seems that the surviving half of the first house, a mere 13' x 8' (4 x 2.46 m) must have formed a separate dwelling.

### *Houses Vanished or Rebuilt*

#### 18. *Stockings Farm*

The house at Stockings was built c. 1690-1700<sup>172</sup>. It replaced a large house, probably an improved medieval one, which in 1662/3 had six hearths. This had been the house, at the beginning of the century, of Henry Tredway, whose grandfather had been tenant of the Coleshill manor house and demesne before the Wallers, and who claimed gentry status<sup>173</sup>. He had other land elsewhere in Amersham, altogether 173 acres, all leasehold<sup>174</sup>. He was, however, a working farmer, who took apprentices<sup>175</sup>. Henry, who had a lease for two lives<sup>176</sup>, died in 1634 and was succeeded by his son Walter, to whom a new 90 year lease was granted in 1640<sup>177</sup>. Walter in turn died in 1652, having fathered two sons and three daughters, of whom one boy died. His heir, also Walter, did not live at Stockings. The lease was assigned and the farm was sub-let<sup>178</sup>, the first identifiable tenant being Henry Ball ('junior', to

distinguish him from his uncle at Red Lion Cottage)<sup>179</sup>. He was very soon to move to Braynford Barns (q.v.), but his four children, three girls and a boy, were born during his tenure of Stockings. Here also lived Henry's sister Mary (who died unmarried in 1661<sup>180</sup> at the age of 28), their mother, and their father Edmund, brother of Henry senior; Edmund must have had the lease before his son.

Henry was a leading member of the Quaker community that grew up in Coleshill in the second half of the century, and met at Ongar Hill (q.v.).

#### 19. *Braynford Barns (Brentford Grange)*

The older name is here preferred because the present house does not stand on the same site as the old one. A Victorian house, demolished in 1974, replaced a building of which no trace or memory survives. It may have embodied the



modest dwelling recorded in 1662, which had only two hearths. This is remarkable, because Braynford Barns was then the largest farm in Coleshill, with 169 acres (68.9 ha)<sup>181</sup>. It need not, however, have been a particularly small house: a medieval house plan, including an open hall, is recorded at the Glory, in Penn, as late as 1700<sup>182</sup>; there were only three hearths, but there were two two-storey wings, one of them forming the arm of an L and containing three rooms on each floor.

Braynford Barns is identifiable by its acreage as the 'Ball's tenement' recorded in 1637<sup>183</sup>. The Ball in question was Edmund, younger brother of Henry of Red Lion Cottage, whose mother had taken as her second husband John Monday, a son or grandson of John 'Mody' who was in Coleshill in 1545<sup>184</sup>. The later John Monday died in 1615<sup>185</sup>, and it seems that his widow and stepson kept the farm on until the expiry of the lease. They were followed by Thomas Lane, who moved to Whelpleys (q.v.) in 1663<sup>186</sup>, whereupon Edmund's son Henry returned to Braynford Barns. It is legitimate to surmise a 99 year lease for the Mondays, determining in 1642, a 21 year lease for Thomas Lane, and another very long lease for the Balls. Later they were freeholders<sup>187</sup>, and it is possible that Henry Ball enjoyed this status from the first. The Drakes were in financial difficulties in the 1660s and may have been glad to sell<sup>188</sup>.

#### 20. *Porch House*

The present building is of the early nineteenth century, but it stands on the site of what may be called the 'home farm' of the manor, which like most of the demesne was sold off by George Coleshill<sup>189</sup>. The immediate purchaser was a George Axtell, who does not concern us; in 1626 he sold it to Richard Child of Whelpleys (q.v.)<sup>190</sup>, who next year conveyed it to his nephew, Richard junior<sup>191</sup>, the 28-year-old son of John Child of Deans<sup>192</sup>. Richard's descendants remained in possession for at least 125 years.

Little is known of the house that Richard Child bought, but Thomas Wingrave's inventory, of 1571<sup>193</sup>, probably relates to it; the farm it describes was a large one, evidently lease-

hold<sup>1931</sup>, and of the farms corresponding to this description only the demesne farm lacks independent evidence for an occupier at this date. It lists hall, chamber and kitchen, which suggests a house like Phase II at Forge House, with one bay open to the roof and used as a kitchen, the other, the hall, having above it a chamber used both for sleeping and storage. Richard Child junior is the first occupier with any incentive to improve the house, and it was probably he who replaced it with the four-hearth building on which his successor paid tax in 1662.

Richard was born in 1600, and his first child was born in 1630, so he married before he was 30. All his five sons and two daughters survived to adulthood, but one son died as a young man in 1659/60<sup>194</sup>. Richard died in 1658, leaving £260 in specific legacies. The farm was of only 34  $\bar{v}$  acres (14 ha), but Richard also had land in Penn<sup>195</sup>, a long lease in Hughenden and another of Puddefats (q.v.).

Presumably when this was the 'home farm', its tenant farmed the whole demesne, amounting to 92 acres (37.5 ha).

#### 21. *Whelpleys*

Only a scatter of tiles marks the site of Whelpleys, which takes its name from a fourteenth-century owner, John de Whelpley<sup>196</sup>. The farm was a large one, but most of it lay in Bucks, and only the farmhouse and a few acres were in Coleshill. It was leasehold of the Manor of Tomlins<sup>197</sup>.

Its occupancy is a matter of inference. Of Coleshill's larger farms, only Whelpleys cannot be assigned to a known occupant in 1625. Only one of the township's substantial taxpayers at this date cannot be assigned to a farm. His name was Richard Child ('senior' to distinguish him from his nephew at Porch House)<sup>198</sup>. A process of elimination puts the two together.

This Richard Child was a son of William Child, who died in 1607, having founded a yeoman dynasty. His family had been prosperous in Amersham for at least a generation before 1524<sup>199</sup>, but he himself first appears in

the Coleshill record in 1566<sup>200</sup>. He left three sons. John, the eldest<sup>201</sup>, he had set up at 'Deans' (Bottom Farm, Amersham), whose land marched with Whelpleys. He had acquired it from his grandson George Russell<sup>203</sup>, whose mother Joan, after the death of George's father William<sup>204</sup>, married Henry Tredway of Stockings (whose land marched with Whelpleys on the other side).

The second son, Richard, was charged with the care of his mother<sup>205</sup>; it can be inferred that Whelpleys had been William's home. The old lady also had a £10 annuity out of land held on lease from Sir Francis Cheyne.

The third son, William, we have already met at Luckings. He too had been set up by his father.

Richard died, apparently childless, in 1634/5. He seems to have been succeeded at Whelpleys by his nephew John, a younger son of his brother John Child of Deans<sup>206</sup>. This at least is the most satisfactory explanation of there being two John Childs in Coleshill, senior and junior, each paying tax on four hearths in 1662/3. One was the son and heir of the Porch House Richard, and, though he too had a son called John, the latter was only three in 1662.

#### 22. *Puddefats*

Puddefats is another totally vanished house, as isolated as Whelpleys, and likewise on the extreme edge of the township. It had been held by Osbert Puddefat and his son Peter at the end of the thirteenth century<sup>207</sup>.

The house had three heated rooms. In the seventeenth century it was held on a long — evidently very long — lease by the Child family<sup>208</sup>, and may have been the land that William senior leased from Sir Francis Cheyne. Henry Child, a son of John of Deans, died there in 1634 at the age of 30, to be followed a few days later by his bride of six months<sup>209</sup>. (She was a Ledgingham, perhaps from Wendover.) He left his lease to his brother Richard (see Porch House), who in turn left it to his second son, yet another Henry, in 1658<sup>210</sup>. This Henry was there in 1662, but had left by

1663<sup>211</sup>; from then on he is described as 'maltster'<sup>212</sup>, and had perhaps moved into Amersham to carry on this trade. His family retained their lease of Puddefats<sup>213</sup>.

#### 23. *Ongar Hill Farm* (PI. IX)

Up to at least 1624, and possibly as late as 1637 there was no farmhouse on the land of this farm<sup>214</sup>, which had been the demesne arable of the manor of Stockbury, now absorbed in the manor of Amersham<sup>215</sup>. In 1640 William Drake granted a 40 year lease of the land — 115 acres (46.9 ha) — to one of the widespread Ball family<sup>216</sup>. William Ball, not a near relation of the Coleshill Balls, was an Amersham draper, 68 years old and childless. It can be inferred that his taking the lease was purely an investment, and he certainly sub-let. He built a house, however (there was none in his lease), and we know what it looked like, for it acquired a certain fame as the home, from 1666, of Thomas Ellwood, the Quaker leader, and was recorded in a print of 1836, of which a copy is kept at Friends' House (PI. IX).

It shows a house of two full storeys, with a cross wing and a clasped-purlin roof. The cross wing is approximately half as wide as the main range is long, and a total floor area of 42' x 14' (12.9 x 4.3 m) may be suggested. The entrance is in the traditional cross-passage position, but this seems to be the only feature that in any way looks back to the middle ages; in fact the layout seems to look forward to the last years of the century, when Pond Cottage, Coleshill (SU 948950) was built, in brick, on exactly the same lines, though with a main range only half as long. At Ongar Hill there were windows above the collar in both visible gables, and there is an external loft door to the first floor in the main gable. Servants quarters in the loft, and a first floor partly used for storage are indicated. Only one stack is visible, and this is in the back wall of the main range; the perspective is such that, had there been another attached to the cross-wing, this would have been visible. All houses with two or more hearths appear in the Hearth Tax returns, and all have been identified. Ongar Hill Farm is not among them. It seems inescapable that the visible stack served only one hearth, and that this large farm had a farm

house with only one heated room.

The occupant is unknown. The house was rebuilt c. 1900.

#### 24. Hertfordshire House

Tradition associates Hertfordshire Farm with the Balam family. Tradition is often right, and always to be respected, but the only certain evidence we have links the Balams with Segraves<sup>217</sup>; and there is other evidence that leads onto firmer ground.

In 1682 a John Child was paying poor rate for Hertfordshire Farm<sup>218</sup>. In 1680 his assessment had been on 'Mr Reeve's farm'<sup>219</sup>, and the sum, £0 6s. 10d. corresponds, at Id. per acre, to the 80 acres of Hertfordshire Farm. In 1675 the land of 'Henry Reeve, gentleman' was said to lie west of Coleslett Field<sup>220</sup>. The evidence is conclusive: 'Mr Reeve's farm' was Hertfordshire Farm.

His family had been there many years. Henry Reeve was the grandson of Cornelius Reeve, who first appears in the record in 1586<sup>221</sup>. He was at that time a butcher, late of Thame. His children and grandchildren continued to be baptised at Penn until 1646; after this the family seems to have left the district. They were probably not freeholders: a tenuous but persuasive chain of evidence points to this being the property bought in 1613 by Robert Lee<sup>222</sup>.

The picture is a good deal confused by the fact that another branch of the large Child clan had long been settled in Penn<sup>223</sup>. But the John Child who paid the rates for Hertfordshire Farm was also paying 2s. 10d. for other land in Coleshill; and that sum, at Id. per acre, corresponds to the 34 acres of the family farm, at Porch House. John must have been son or grandson of Richard; probably the grandson. A John Child of Penn had his house registered as a dissenters' meeting in 1689<sup>224</sup>, and the Porch House Childs were Quakers<sup>225</sup>. Anyone living at Hertfordshire Farm would have been described as 'of Penn', owing to its traditional parish affiliations.

A large barn, 51' x 16' (15.7 x 4.9 m),

survives, but the curved struts supporting the purlins point to a building date in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.

#### 25. The Rosary

Abel Clark, who died c. 1720, is firmly located at the farm whose house is now called The Rosary<sup>226</sup>. Through his father's will and other sources the family connection can be carried back to 1600, if not before<sup>227</sup>. Christopher Clark, the grandfather, had married Jane Child, a daughter of William senior. The family ran to daughters. Christopher and Jane had five girls and two boys, of whom one died. Edward, born in 1608, did not marry until he was in his forties, though he had inherited the farm in 1624<sup>228</sup>. He had three girls and a boy, Abel; another child died unbaptised. Abel had only a daughter.

The farm was not a particularly large one in the Clarks' day, perhaps only 46 acres (18.7 ha), though larger later.

The oldest surviving part of the house was added as a south-facing wing to an older north-south range in the late seventeenth century. Nothing remains of this older house except some re-used timber in its nineteenth century replacement. It had four heated rooms.

#### 26. Coleshill Cottage

The house was known to Pevsner as Bottle Cottages, and to an earlier generation as Cold-ridge<sup>229</sup>. Until recently it was four cottages arranged two-by-two as a 'back-to-back'. The southeast unit is older than the others, having curved wind-braces, queen struts and clasped purlins, and is certainly seventeenth century. Whether it is pre-Civil War is doubtful, however; at that time houses for 10 acre holdings (as this was) tended to be of 1 1/2 storeys, and this is two full storeys. The interior has been so much altered that the original layout is not recoverable, but the roof gives the overall size of the house: c. 22' x 14' (6.76 x 4.3 m).

The ring-fence of the ancient 17 acre holding is still traceable on the map, but by 1615 it had already suffered some reduction<sup>230</sup>. The

balance, some 10 acres (4.1 ha) was owned and occupied by John Wigg, who also had land in the common fields<sup>231</sup>. By 1630 he had let it all to Thomas Durrant, who was already living in Coleshill and owned some land there<sup>232</sup> — at this stage only a 2Vi acre (1 ha) close called Hopkinscroft carved out of the Coldridge land, and 2 acres in one of the common fields. In 1625 he bought further land from the family to whom the title to Coldridge had descended<sup>233</sup>; this must have been another part of that holding. Nothing at all is known of the house in which he lived before becoming the tenant of Coldridge.

Thomas married a Bovingdon from Penn in 162 2<sup>234</sup>, when he was 44, and died in 1633, leaving a son and a daughter. The son, Henry, was taxed on two hearths in 1662, and this must have been the Coldridge house. But he was not a freeholder. The freehold had changed hands again in 165 8<sup>235</sup>. He died childless in 1662/3, aged only 38; his widow was still there 20 years later<sup>236</sup>.

#### 27. 'Meriden's'\*

Close to Hopkinscroft — probably next door to it — Thomas Meriden had a house and Vt acre (0.3 ha)<sup>237</sup>. He had other land in Coleshill, enough to incur a poor rate of 4s. 4d. in 16 1 3<sup>238</sup>, the same as John Wigg. We have therefore to look for approximately 10 acres (4 ha), and its whereabouts can in fact be inferred. It was not in the Manor of Coleshill, or it would have shown up in the quit rents; and of the other manors that partitioned the township, only Amersham had land in the northern part. This was all farmed by the Clarks except for the field called Downs (q.v.). Downs, then, was Meriden's land; it amounted to 10¼ acres (4.2 ha). He was tenant of Thomas Playter, of Penn<sup>239</sup>.

After Meriden's death in 1634, Downs was bought by Hugh Wingrave the tile-maker (see

\* Where there is no historic name for a vanished house, it is designated by the name of its mid seventeenth century occupier, set in quotes.

p. 86), but his son, also Thomas, remained in possession of the property next to Hopkinscroft<sup>240</sup>. Whether he also continued as tenant of Downs is not known, but it is likely enough. Some wisps of evidence point to the Meridens having been brick-makers: there is a very large claypit at Downs which by 1617 had already been in use for some time<sup>241</sup>; and Thomas IV, attested in Coleshill in the late seventeenth century, was certainly a brick-maker<sup>242</sup>.

Thomas I married in 1587 and had five children, four of them boys; one of the boys died at the age of 10. Thomas II was described as a labourer in 1610; this seems to have been standard when sons were helping their yeoman or tradesman fathers. He married in 1632, when he was hardly less than 40, and again, his first wife having died, in 1634. He had at least one son, Thomas III, but he was not christened in Amersham.

#### 28. Fagman's

East of Sansum's was a group of fields called respectively Fagman's Garden, Fagman's Orchard, Fagman's Wood and Hillfields. Here lived John Hunt, yeoman<sup>243</sup>, who also had 'divers other lands in Beaconsfield and Penn'<sup>244</sup> and in Coleshill<sup>245</sup>. It had come to him from his brother Thomas, and their father, also John, had been in possession at Fagman's in 1604<sup>246</sup>. John junior died childless in 1639, and his land passed to his widow, who was soon remarried to Joseph Routh, gentleman<sup>247</sup>.

In 1840 one of these closes formed the curtilage of a house<sup>248</sup>, which is still to be seen there. No doubt this was Fagman's Garden. The house is an eighteenth century building, now divided to form Jasmine and Clover Cottages, but the irregular outline of its curtilage suggests that there had been an earlier house on the site. It seems legitimate to call this Fagman's. In the 1660s it was let to, and occupied by, Francis Hull<sup>249</sup>, and had two heated rooms. If the present house, as is often the case, stands on the footings of its predecessor, Fagman's was c. 28' x 14' (8.6 x 4.3 m).

### 29. 'Lawrence's'

When the Wallers left Coleshill in 1624 their small freehold estate there was sold piecemeal, and 14 acres (5.7 ha) was bought by John Hunt (see Fagman's, above)<sup>250</sup>. It had a sitting tenant, Thomas Lawrence, a bricklayer, but there was then no house on it. Nearly forty years later Thomas Lawrence was paying tax on three hearths, and that he had a house before this date is sufficiently likely to justify adding it to the catalogue. He had married in 1642 and no doubt had a house to bring his bride to.

John Hunt had two parcels of land in Winchmore Hill, and by the middle of the century each parcel had a house on it<sup>251</sup>. The one on what had been the Wallers' land must have been Lawrence's. It has quite vanished. A handsome seventeenth century brick house, still standing, is close to where it must have been. This was built by Joseph Routh (see Fagman's, above) in 1663<sup>252</sup>. It did not replace 'Lawrences': both houses were in existence in 1663.

### 30. Moorey

The name Moorey is today borne by a small twentieth-century house, and is not found in any record earlier than 1700, when Moorey Grove was the name of the wood behind the house<sup>253</sup>. But the name is of archaic type, and it is reasonable to use it for the house that stood on or near the site in the early seventeenth century, and the smallholding that went with it.

The holding was 10Vi acres (4.3 ha) and was part of the Readings' estate. The earliest known tenant was William Hawes. He was succeeded by his son Francis<sup>254</sup>, born in 1610, who in 1640 married Jane Clark, daughter of the family at The Rosary. Afterwards he attempted to better himself: by 1647 he had left Moorey<sup>255</sup>, in order to farm Cokes (see The Queen's Head) in partnership with Matthew Reading. In 1651 he bought the place on a mortgage, but later returned to Moorey<sup>256a</sup>. At the time of his death in 1681, however, he was on a holding in Amersham<sup>256b</sup>.

The house had only one hearth.

### 31. Downs

In 1616 there was no house at Downs; it was just a close and a claypit, the property of Thomas Playter of Penn<sup>257</sup>. By 1635, however, there was a messuage there. In that year it was bought by Hugh Wingrave the tile-maker (see Forge House), the vendor being Thomas Playter junior<sup>258</sup>. It can be deduced that it was let to Thomas Meriden (see p. 95), possibly a brick-maker.

Hugh's son, James<sup>259</sup> began as a brick-maker but became a chapman (itinerant trader), and was bankrupted in 1663<sup>260</sup>; at this time Downs was occupied by a father and son called Rusby, of whom nothing is known. Almost certainly they were brick- or tile-makers, like Hugh and James Wingrave before them and George Pluckwell after them. Pluckwell was operating a kiln at Downs by 1679<sup>261</sup>. His family had been in the parish for a generation and George was born there in 1633, but his father's occupation is not known. He himself had no male heirs. He owned the freehold of Downs, but it was heavily encumbered by debt. The croft had by then been divided. The house evidently had only one hearth.

### 32. 'RichardField's House'

Under this name this little tenement appeared in the Coleshill Quit Rent rolls long after Richard Field was dead, and even after the house had vanished.

Richard Field was a tailor, and was in business by 1609<sup>262</sup>, when he was 27. His father, Christopher, was also 'of Coleshill', and probably lived with him till his death in 1615<sup>263</sup>. Richard married twice, in 1630, when he was 48, and again at 53, when his bride was Joan Child, a daughter of William Child of Luckings, who had been in service at Stockings (q.v.)<sup>264</sup>. She was 42, and died childless in 1639. The little house — it had only one hearth — was thus never crowded, though Richard seems to have employed a journeyman at one stage<sup>265</sup>.

Like most tradesmen he supplemented his income by agriculture. He rented four acres in

the common fields<sup>266</sup>, but never acquired the freehold of 'Richard Field's House', or the Vi acre of meadow in which it stood. It remained the property of the Penn family until given as the site of the village school.

### 33. *Hollandean House*

To modern ears the name sounds 'grand'; but there were only 2 acres immediately attached to this house, though there may have been more in the common fields<sup>267</sup>. Its owners in the first half of the century were successively the Wallers, John Reading, John Hunt and Richard Bovingdon of Woodrow<sup>268</sup>, but its occupants are not known (unless the 'Ralph Surman of ColeshilP, who had children born to him in 1633 and 1648, is to be located here). Whoever they were, they must have relied on a trade for a livelihood. In 1669 Richard Nash, a shovel maker like his father (see 'Nash's') was living there<sup>269</sup>, and he was still there in 1688. In 1680 he paid poor rate for 'Bigg's'<sup>270</sup>, and this identifies the house as the one for which William Bigg paid tax for two hearths in 1662.

### 34. *'Nash's'*

Nash's was one of the loose cluster of houses that seems to have shared, with Fagnell Farm and some property higher up the hill, the locality name of Fagman's<sup>271</sup>. The house was occupied in the first half of the century by Walter Nash and his son Thomas. Thomas was a shovel-maker, Walter a labourer<sup>2723</sup>, but he owned his cottage and an acre of land (0.4 ha) with it. An earlier Nash, Robert, had been a shovel-maker in Amersham in 1564<sup>272b</sup>, and Thomas's son Richard followed the same trade<sup>272c</sup>. The shovels they made would have been the wooden kind, used for turning malt.

Walter granted the property to Thomas, his youngest son, in 163 2 <sup>272d</sup>. There was also a John Nash 'of Fagman's' to whom children were being born in the 1620s<sup>274</sup>, and who must have been an older son. Walter's wife died in 163 3 <sup>275</sup>, and Thomas's children, Thomas and Richard, were not born until 1626 and 1637. This does not suggest overcrowding even in a small house. Thomas's wife, Elizabeth, died in 1642. At some point during the third quarter of the century the property was acquired by

Joseph Bovingdon of Fagnell<sup>276</sup>, and disappears from the record, either demolished or allowed to decay.

### 35. *The Smith's House*

The Smith's House, so called for centuries<sup>277</sup>, stood on the site of the village hall, and was originally demesne of the manor<sup>278</sup>, with the smith for the time being as tenant. It was described as a cottage. Edward Wingrave, in 1615, is the first recorded occupant<sup>279</sup>; he had no children, so far as is known. The next known smith, William Cooper, a Quaker, owned the freehold, which had been sold out of the manor before 1647<sup>280</sup>. Cooper was there by 1660, and had three children<sup>281</sup>. In 1678 he sold up<sup>282</sup>, and went to New Jersey, where he became one of the founding fathers of the town of Camden<sup>283</sup>.

It was a one-hearth house; presumably the forge was exempt from tax.

### 36. *'Henry Child's Cottage'*

The cottage, so called in Amersham rentals, stood on the lane running from the Queen's Head to Winchmore Hill, and the Henry Child who owned it was the son of Richard Child of Porch House. Richard had bought the plot of land on which it stood some time before 1629, and in 1661 the cottage seems to have been in existence for about 20 years<sup>284</sup>. It therefore falls just within the terms of this survey. Its interest lies in its post-Restoration occupant, who was not Henry Child (he had moved to Puddefats, and later Amersham), but his father-in-law. Henry married, in 1659, the daughter of Henry Butler<sup>285</sup>, the presbyterian minister of Beaconsfield<sup>286</sup>. When Mr. Butler was ejected after 1660 he was given shelter in the cottage 'by Wickham Heath side', an interesting indication that the authorities did not strictly enforce the Five Mile Act, which forbade ejected ministers to live within five miles of their former cures.

### 37. *'Allden's'*

This cottage stood on 20 rods of land (0.05 ha) formerly part of Stock Grove, the demesne woodland, and was therefore not older than c. 1628. It had evidently been built to rent, perhaps with materials from the manor house,

but in 1645 William Coleshill, George's son, sold it to the sitting tenant. This was Edmund Allden, a labourer<sup>287</sup>.

Edmund, born in 1585, had married by the time he was 24. He died in 1649, and his will sheds some light on his standard of living<sup>288</sup>. His two married daughters got only 2s. and 3s. respectively, but his unmarried daughter was left goods that suggest a modest level of solid comfort: a bedstead and bed, three pewter dishes, a brass potage pot, 'the biggest kettle save one', a little square table, one chair, one 'joyne stool', two barrels, two kieves, and two bowls. His wife Ann was to have all the linen, to 'dispose of it as she pleases'. His son William got the house, but reserving to Ann the use of 'the lower chamber, with convenient firewood for dressing of her meat, washing and the like, during her lifetime'. William was a higgler (or hawker), and possibly only needed a base, rather than a home<sup>289</sup>. Ann was not his mother, being Edmund's second wife<sup>290</sup>.

If Ann remarried, William was to have the house absolutely. This did not deter Ann. She had three further husbands. After her second marriage, to Thomas Mayden, William mortgaged the place to a Coleshill smallholder called William Hancock<sup>291</sup>, who may have been the tenant of Land's Farm next door. Ann countered, as soon as Mayden was dead, by marrying Hancock. In 1685, when she was the widow of John Reade, a turner, of Amersham, she sold to a potter, William Bunce<sup>292</sup>.

The significance of the term 'the lower chamber' is debatable, but, since this contained the building's only hearth, it probably indicates a house in which there was a need to distinguish the ground floor from the upper, but not to make any other distinctions: in other words a 'one-up-and-one-down', probably with a loft for the upper floor. This would make it comparable with the earliest house at Friar's Vane (Land's Farm), which was part of the same 'development'.

It is also interesting to compare it with what can be deduced from the probate inventory of

Jane Harrison, a 47-year-old spinster who died in Coleshill in 1672<sup>293</sup>. Miss Harrison evidently had a house to herself, and her inventory lists a 'lodging chamber' and a kitchen; but there was nothing in the kitchen except 'a little drinck vessell' and four stools, and it was clearly no more than a small service room, perhaps an outshut. It is not entirely speculative to suggest that this house was in fact Allden's. There were not many one-room houses in Coleshill, and this one had the attraction (for a single woman) of a small garden, and was moreover the only one known to have been available for letting, during the absences of its much-married owner.

Ann Biggie, another single woman, who died in 1658, may also have lived here: the witnesses of her will were William Allden, William Hancock and Henry Ball from Red Lion Cottage, 100 yards away. She left £31<sup>294</sup>.

Jane Harrison was a member of an established Amersham family, and was not in want: she slept in a tester bed and left money in trust for her niece, as well as specific legacies of £20<sup>295</sup>.

It is of some interest, too, that the conveyance to Allden refers to the 'great love and charitable good affection' between William Coleshill and the grantee — language found in no other Coleshill conveyance not being from a parent to a child. Legal formality did not require it, and it seems to speak of genuine friendship between men far apart on the social scale.

The cottage had gone by 1716<sup>296</sup>.

### 38. *Millcroft*

Perhaps the most shadowy of the houses in our catalogue, since nothing is known of it except that it was 'lately built' in 1630, probably by Henry Tredway of Stockings, who had bought the land, of 8 acres (3.26 ha), from the Wallers c. 1624<sup>297</sup>. A granary had also been built. By 1647 its ownership had passed to a Francis Graves, but its occupants and subsequent history are unknown.

### *Summary and Conclusions*

The available information about the holdings and the houses on them, and the families they sustained, is consolidated in Table 1. The data is for c. 1640. It will be seen that there are eight houses for which it has not been possible to suggest occupiers. Among these are to be sought the homes of five families so far unseated: Walter Clark 'of Coleshill, husbandman'<sup>298</sup>, Henry Clark 'of Winsmer Hill'<sup>299</sup> (Walter's brother)<sup>300</sup>, John Stocken, a weaver<sup>301</sup>, Ralph Surman, of unknown status or occupation<sup>302</sup>, and 'How of Coleshill'<sup>303</sup>, as the parish register tersely calls him.

The table brings out a striking feature of early seventeenth century Coleshill: the absence of that archetypal rural figure, the landless labourer struggling to support a family in a rented cottage. The only two heads of households identifiable as labourers were both freeholders. Landless labourers there certainly were, but they were living-in farm servants, and they did not marry — or, if they did, they did not set up house in Coleshill. There is no way of estimating their numbers. In Chesham, out of 202 people marrying between 1600 and 1607, 61 were servants; but the proportion may have been higher in towns<sup>304</sup>. A few were the sons and daughters of neighbours and relations: William Child of Whelpleys employed his cousin Ralph<sup>305</sup>; Joan Child, a daughter of William of Luckings, worked for her Uncle and Aunt Tredway at Stockings<sup>306</sup>. But most were without local roots, a drifting population hired by the year and liable to be turned off when the farmer's sons grew strong enough to bear a man's part. Theirs are the stray names that crop up in the parish registers.

This is not to say there was no poverty. It lay in wait for any tradesman unable to work, and for husbandmen on the margin of subsistence. The charitable recognised their obligation to relieve it: virtually all wills include bequests to the poor, and William Child of Luckings established in 1621<sup>307</sup> a charity that produced 20s. a year until the late nineteenth century<sup>308</sup>. But in the whole of 1613 the 'poor of Coltshill' needed only 12d. from the parish<sup>309</sup>.

John Stocken the weaver is perhaps a marginal case. When whipped for stealing barley from the manor house in 1613 he was described as a labourer<sup>310</sup>, and no doubt weaving gave uncertain employment. He is a forlorn figure: his wife died in 1608, leaving him with a small son, the only survivor of three. He married again next year, but the only son of that marriage died also, and his second wife soon after<sup>311</sup>.

Other tradesmen seem to have been prosperous: Thomas Nash the shovel-maker, Richard Field the tailor, Hugh Wingrave the tile-maker, the other Wingrave at the smithy, and Thomas Meriden if he was a brick-maker. Of these only Nash was a freeholder throughout, but Hugh Wingrave certainly and Edward Wingrave probably achieved this status by 1640. Nash's son followed his trade, though not as a freeholder.

By the end of the century the number of tradesmen had increased, but the range of trades represented had shrunk. No weaver or tailor is recorded after 1650, but the number of men in the clay-based industries had increased from one or two to four or five: a potter at Forge House, two tile- and brick-makers at Downs, and another brickmaker at 'Meriden's'. There was still a smith and still a shovel-maker, though not at Fagnell. None of these men's houses has survived.

Another point of interest is the small size of the holdings on which men were able to support a family. It is not at all clear, however, how large a holding was necessary to supply a man's entire livelihood. Below some threshold level he would either have to practise a trade or work for someone else; no doubt the threshold varied from year to year. The enquiry is crippled by ignorance about the occupiers of some of the smaller holdings. About those with 10-12 acres (4-4.9 ha) there is no doubt: they were husbandmen or even yeomen. The tenants of Sansums (The Potter's Arms) had only 5 acres, but had several square miles of heath at their doorstep, and grazing there was unstinted.



Table 1. The anatomy of Coleshill, c. 1640

	HOLDING		HOUSE				FAMILY			Status	Tenure
	<i>Acres (ha)</i>	<i>Rooms</i>	<i>Floor area ft<sup>2</sup> (m<sup>2</sup>)</i>	<i>Hearths</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Age at marr.</i>	<i>Children born surviving</i>				
Stock Place	28½ (11.63)	4	884 (82.6)	1	S	Gregory (John)		(2)	2	Yeoman	T
Bowers	74½ (30.4)	6	1,957 (183)	4	A	Coleshill (Geo)		(1)	1	Gentleman	T(L)
Luckings	66½ (27.14)	5	1,776 (166)	4	A	Child (Wm jun)	27+	12	7	Yeoman	F
Fagnell A	67¼ (27.44)	4	980 (91.6)	2	G	Bovingdon (Jos)	31+	4	4	Yeoman	F/T
Fagnell B		4	898 (84.1)	2	A	Bovingdon (wid)		9	7	Widow	F
The Queen's Head	20½ (8.36)	2 + 2/2	604 (56.5)	1	G	Reading (Matt)	22	4	4	Yeoman	T
Red Lion Cottage	16 (6.53)	4	1,188 (111.1)	4	A	Ball (Hen)	34	7	7	Yeoman	F
The Garden	35 (14.28)	4	936 (87)	4	A	Dean (Wm)		2	2	Yeoman	F
Friar's Vane	12½ (5.1)	1 + ½	415 (38.8)	1	S	Pratt		2	2	Yeoman	F?
Littlelands	17½ (7.14)	3 + 3/2	641 (59.9)	2	G	Eeles (Thos)		1	1	Yeoman	F
Stockgrove	12½ (5.1)	2 + 2/2	546 (51.1)	2	A	Bell		?	3	Yeoman	T(L)
Forge House	¼ (0.1) + 22½ (9.2) tenanted	2 + ½	655 (61.3)	1	G	Wingrave (Hugh)		2	4	Trade	T
The Plough	1 + * (?)	2 + 2/2	525 (49.1)	1	G	Brown (Edward)	34	5	4	Yeoman	F
Potter's Arms	5 (2.04)	2 + 2/2	462 (43.2)	1	S	Nash (Robert)		6	5	Husbandman	F
Larkins Green	54 (22)	2 + 2/2	476 (44.5)	1	G	?				Yeoman	T
Crosspath Cottage	3 (1.22)	?	?	1	G	?				Husbandman	T
Lawyer's Cottage	2 + (0.8 +)	2 + 2/2	362 (33.9)	1	G	?				?	T
Dell Cottage	½ (0.2)	1 + ½	312 (29.18)	1	S	?				Labourer	T

\* A holding of uncertain acreage in Penn.

*Houses vanished (V) or rebuilt (R)*

Stockings (R)	87 (35.5)		6 ?	Tredway (Henry)	5	4	Gentleman	T(L)
Brentford Gr. (R)	169 (68.97)		2 ?	Ball (Edmund)	27	5	Yeoman	T(L)
Porch House (R)	35 ¼ (14.38)		4 ?	Child (Richard)	30-	7	Yeoman	F
Whelpleys (V)	110 (44.9)		4 ?	Child (John)		0	Yeoman	T(L)
Puddefats (V)	28 (11.42)		3 ?	Child (Henry)	32	0	Yeoman	T(L)
The Rosary (R)	46 (18.7)		4 ?	Clark (Edward)	?	4	Yeoman	F
Ongar Hill (R)	115 (46.9)	6?	1,350? (126?)	1 S	?		Yeoman	T(L)
Hertfordshire House (R)	80 (32.65)			Reeve (Stephen)	?	3	Gentleman	F?
Coleshill Cott. (R)	10 (4.08)	390? (32.7?)	2 ?	Durrant (Thos)		0	Husbandman	F/T
Lawrence's (V)	12 ½ (5.1)		3 ?	Lawrence	40+	0	Trade	T
Meriden's (V)	10 ¼ (4.18)		1 ?	Meriden (Thos)	40	4	Husb/Trade?	F/T
Moorey (V)	10 ½ (4.28)		2 ?	Hawes (Francis)	30	1	Husbandman	T
Richard Field's (V)	4 ¾ (1.9)		1 ?	Field (Richard)	48	0	Trade	T
Hollandean Ho (V)	2 (0.81)		2 ?	?			?	T
Nash's (V)	1 (0.4)		1 ?	Nash (Thos)	?	2	Trade	F
Smith's House (V)	½ (0.2)		1 ?	?			Trade	F?
Henry Child's Cottage (V)			1 ?	Butler		(1 d.) (at least)	Clerk	T
Allden's (V)	0.125 (0.05)	1 ½	1 ?	Allden (Edmund)	24	4	Labourer	F
Fagman's (R)	5 ½ (2.24)	578? (49.4?)	1 ?	Hunt (Elizabeth)	?	0	Widow	F
Millcroft (V)	4 ½ (1.83)		1	?				T

*Unlocated families*

Clark (Wm)	?	1	1	Husbandman	T
Clark (Henry)	?	2	2	Husbandman	T
Surman	?	2	2	?	?
Stocken	?	1	0	Trade	T
How	?	1	1	?	?

Key: T - tenant. F - freeholder. (L) long lease. R - rebuilt. V - vanished. Under *Hearths*: (positions of stacks) S - side. A - axial. G - gable. Under *Children born*: figures in parentheses indicate that the births took place before the family came to Coleshill.

Of these very small holdings there were six. Merlins was unique in Coleshill in being copyhold (a relic of its long monastic lordship); the rest were held on leases.

On the next rung of the ladder were the husbandmen or small yeomen, supporting their families wholly on the produce of their holdings. (Apart from Wycombe Heath there was not very much common grazing: only the 14 acres (5.7 ha) of the common and perhaps as much again on the roadside verges.) There were three husbandmen when the century opened, but one of them, William Child of Luckings, was soon to become a substantial yeoman, and three more farms at husbandman level had been established on the former demesne woodland. If we add Thomas Lawrence the total was therefore six. Lawrence was in a somewhat equivocal position: he was the tenant of 14/2 acres (5.9 ha) of arable and pasture, but he was also a bricklayer. Which was the sideline? Similarly John Wigg, sometime of Coldridge, is revealed by his will as a small-scale moneylender. Was it to this that he owed his status as 'yeoman'<sup>1310b?</sup>

Middling yeomen, with *c.* 20-40 acres (8-16 ha), numbered eight at the start of the century, including Robert Eeles and his unknown neighbour on what had been Missenden Abbey land. By 1630 these had been absorbed by Luckings, but two more in this category had been made out of manorial demesne, so the total remained unchanged.

Large yeomen numbered six up to 1615, but had increased to seven by 1640, when Ongar Hill Farm was established on the balance of the Stockbury demesne.

The principal motive power for the multiplication of holdings was thus the break-up of manorial demesnes.

Of gentry in the sense of people with an independent income there was at least one present for most of the first half of the century, and for a while two, but apart from the Wallers and Christopher Hampden there was little in their life-style to distinguish them

from prosperous yeomen. After George Coleshill's death in 1647 there were none until after 1662, when Zachary Allnutt moved into Bowers. Allnutt, like Henry Tredway at Stockings, was described as a gentleman, but was certainly a working farmer. The Wallers were tenants of the whole Coleshill demesne, and had a small freehold estate as well, but they did not work it themselves; and none of the others were large freeholders.

Sixteen Coleshill people certainly, and seventeen probably, inherited their freeholds or long leases. Ten of the remainder came of established local families. Of seven we know little or nothing. Only two were certainly incomers.

On the whole it was the larger holdings that remained long in one family; the nature of the tenure made little difference. Failure of male heirs was the commonest cause of a break. There were two generations of the Hawes family at Moorey, and two of the Durrants at Coldridge; then the line failed (both were tenants). John Wigg, a freeholder with *c.* 10 acres, and Thomas Lawrence, a tenant with 14/2, had no traceable family. The sons of Thomas Eeles (Littlelands, 17 acres) and Zwinglius Pratt (Lands, 12/2 acres) both left the district. These two were both freeholders.

At a slightly higher level, family connections were of longer standing. Five generations of Balls worked the 16 acre holding at Red Lion Cottage; six generations of Deans can be traced at the Garden (35 acres). At Porch House, Richard Child was succeeded by three generations of descendants. At the Rosary only a failure of male heirs broke the succession of Clarks. All these were freeholders.

All the largest farms were leasehold, and on some of them very long leases at fixed rents laid the foundations of dynastic prosperity. At Braynford Barns (169 acres), if we admit a step relationship, the family connection can be traced from John Mody in 1545 to a nineteenth century Henry Ball (gentleman and non-resident). This is at least eight generations; but at some point the Balls had acquired the freehold.

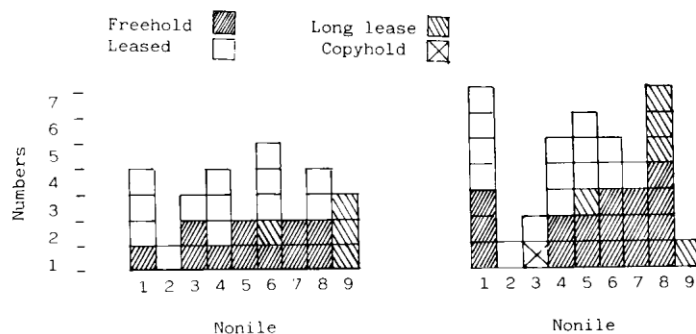


Fig. 19. Distribution of land by size of holding, (a) c. 1610. (b) c. 1640. Noniles represent the following ranges: (1) < 1 acre (0.4 ha). (2) 1-2 acres (0.4-0.81 ha). (3) 2-4 acres (0.81-1.63 ha). (4) 4-8 acres (1.63-3.26 ha). (5) 8-16 acres (3.26-6.53 ha). (6) 16-32 acres (6.53-13 ha). (7) 32-64 acres (13-26.1 ha) (8) 64-128 acres (26.1-52.2 ha). (9) > 128acres(> 52.2 ha).

Two leases, one of them for 90 years, enabled three generations of Tredways to hold Stockings. In the third, Walter Tredway, living in Windsor, assigned the lease. Another very long lease enabled three generations of Childs to enjoy Whelpleys, and found a yeoman dynasty that lasted in Coleshill for two hundred years. Long leases were eagerly sought. In Penn, negotiations for a lease broke down on the unwillingness of the lessor to grant 21 years<sup>312</sup>.

The distribution of land holding at two periods, 1600 and 1640 is shown in Fig. 19. A logarithmic scale has been used, since the difference between 2 acres and 10 is much more significant than that between 20 and 28; and this is divided into nine equal portions (noniles). Shaded units are owner-occupied. More lightly shaded units were held on leases longer than 21 years.

It will be seen that of 38 holdings in 1640, 16, (42%) were owner-occupied, and 5 (13%) were held on very long leases. One, Merlins, was copyhold of the Manor of Peterleystone (ex Missenden Abbey) — the only land in Coleshill on this tenure. Of 29 holdings in c. 1610, 11 (37%), and 4 (13%) on very long leases. The differences between the two distributions are not all one way. There has been consolidation as well as multiplication of holdings.

The floor areas of houses are arrived at by halving the superficial area of half storeys, so

that a 1 *vi* storey house occupying 400 square feet is allotted a floor area of 600 square feet.

On this basis the relationship between floor area and acreage is very regular for acreages below the median of 84.5 acres (35 ha), all but two of the houses lying on or very near a straight line (Fig. 20). The two exceptions are readily explained. Red Lion Cottage (RL), as we have seen, was built by a man whose ambitions exceeded his potential, and probably with the help of his wife's portion. Larkins Green (LG) was built 70 years earlier, in a different climate of opinion. The pattern is sufficiently regular for a formula to be derived:  $FA = (11.1 \times A) + 280$ , where FA = floor area in square feet and A = acreage. The metric formula is  $FA = (5.54 \times A) + 26.1$ .

It would be interesting to know if this has wider application. Further work will surely modify it.

The number of hearths in relation to acreage shows no such regularity, and nor does the figure for square feet (or square metres) per hearth when plotted against acreage. This may reflect the survival of medieval ideas.

Very clearly, in Coleshill, stacks in side walls are not a sign of gentry status. They are found in both of the one-room cottages, as well as in a husbandman's house (Potter's Arms).

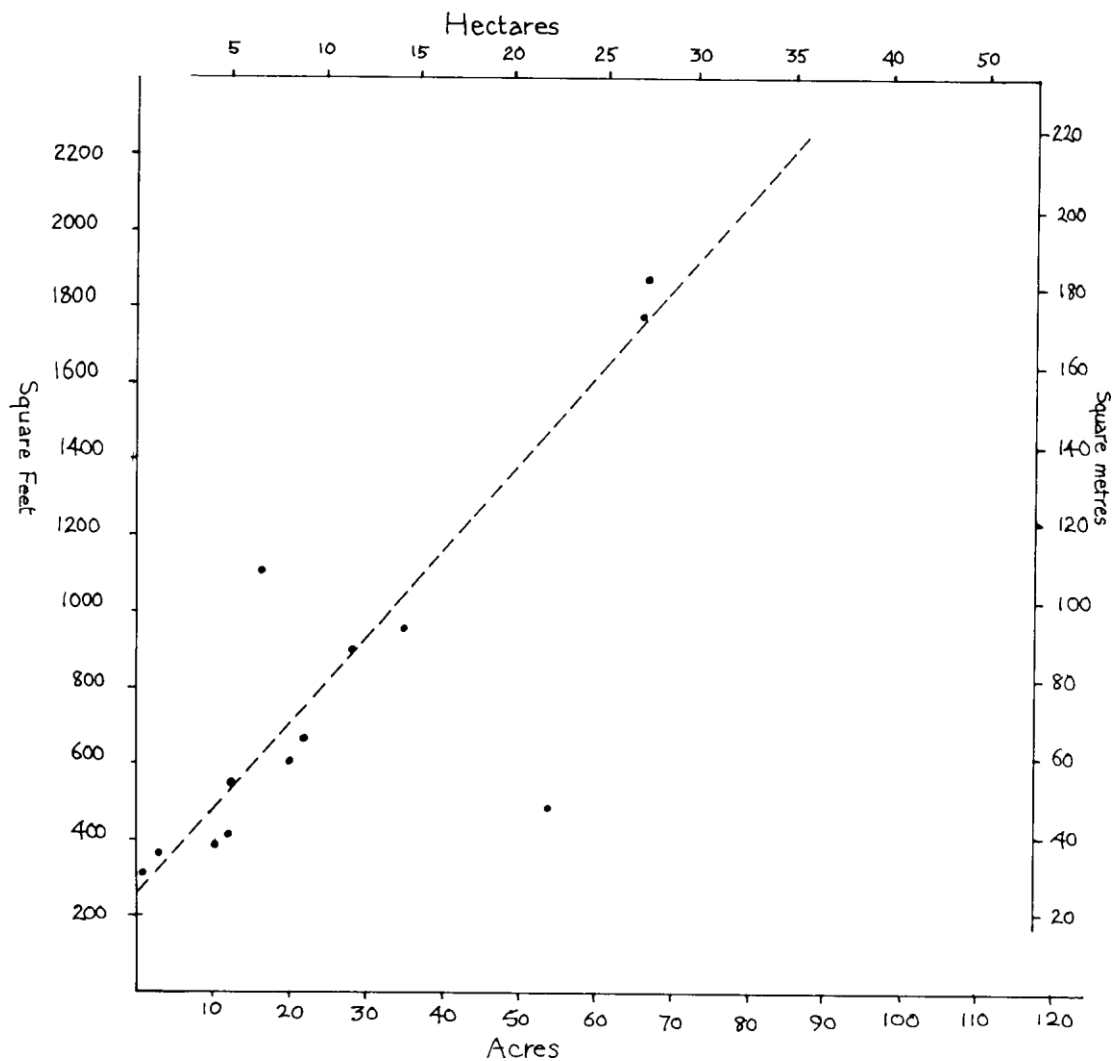


Fig. 20. The relationship between size of holding and floor area of house.

Of the seventeen standing houses it been possible to suggest fairly precise building dates for fourteen. Seven of them fall in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, with a concentration in the period 1615-1620. This somewhat anticipates the national trend, which saw a recovery in agricultural prices and an increase in house-building *after* 1620<sup>312</sup>. But in every case it has been possible to suggest an occasion for building that had to do with family or personal circumstances — a marriage, an inheritance, a coming-of-age, the granting of a

long lease — rather than with macro-economic factors. It is necessary here to beware of circular arguments, but it may well be that while economic conditions provided the means, the immediate incentive for building was familial. Men with long enough leases were as ready to build as freeholders.

Family statistics are disappointingly incomplete. Where the facts are discoverable it appears that the average age at marriage, for men, was 32.9, a figure for which other studies

prepare us. The youngest marriages are near the lower end of the social scale. In the 32 families for which figures are available, the average number of children was 3.1. If the five childless marriages are excluded, the average is 3.66. Of the 99 children born to them, 87 reached maturity (88%). Large families, in fact, though they existed, were not the norm, and infant mortality was not at the levels that the eighteenth century parish registers present to us. Nor was it as high in Coleshill as in contemporary Amersham, where in the first 30 years of the century, 24% of children failed to reach maturity.

The area over which men sought their brides is difficult to establish, as it is often not possible to trace their marriages, and even when this can be done the girls are not always identifiable (cf. Joan Adams, who married Matthew Reading of Cokes). Only 4 Coleshill girls can be identified; there were six from Amersham and three from Penn. If a girl came from a distance, like Susan Ledgingham (see Puddefats), it need not indicate wide-ranging social contacts: she could have come to the neighbourhood as a servant.

Economic links, however, must have been widespread. First-hand evidence from the period under review is lacking, but there is no reason to think that people were less willing to go many miles to market than those described on p. 178 of this issue of *Records*. Corn would have been sold in the great market at High Wycombe<sup>314</sup>, rather than in Amersham. Apart from the field name, Millcroft, there is no evidence for a mill at Coleshill until the nine-

teenth century. Some barley was malted in the village, and the larger farmers brewed for their households<sup>315</sup>. Otherwise Coleshill barley was probably malted in Amersham and brewed by the many innholders for whom it was normal to brew on the premises<sup>316</sup>.

Only a study of building accounts will make it possible to say how far afield the products of Hugh Wingrave and other Chiltern tile-makers went. He would have enjoyed a ready market locally: the early seventeenth century was as busy a time for building in Amersham as in Coleshill. Other trades should perhaps be seen as outliers of the varied industry of Amersham, where glovers and glaziers, pipe-makers and carpenters, weavers and tailors and shoemakers all flourished<sup>317</sup>.

Economic independence was the norm. Even the labourers, if heads of households, would have regarded themselves as independent, since they were not servants. And nearly all seem to have been able to maintain themselves at least in comfort. They should have been happy, and perhaps they were. Only one quarrel between neighbours reached the courts during the period under review, when Thomas Durrant took the Clark family to law for walking through his corn on the way to church<sup>318</sup>. There was a suicide in Hertfordshire Beaconsfield, and the hysterical widow flung accusations of murder broadcast<sup>319</sup>; but the village soon returned to its quiet.

It was not to be immune, however, from the pressures that were building up around it.

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My thanks are first of all due to my kind neighbours, who allowed me to penetrate every corner of their houses: Mr. and Mrs. C. Vince, Mrs. Wand-Tetley, Mr. and Mrs. Grindley, Lady Macleod of Borve, Mr. and Mrs. Hatch, Mrs. R. Gear, Mr. and Mrs. M. Rann, Mrs. Wyatt, Mr. and Mrs. R. Valentine, Mr. and Mrs. S. Ware, Mrs. S. Gow, Mr. and Mrs. M. Parkes, Mr. and Mrs. P. Borck, Mrs. Trotman, Mr. A. Bolton, Mrs. M. Williamson, and Mr. B. Lewis.

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## REFERENCES

Abbreviations used: Am - Amersham; BAS - Bucks Archaeological Society; BRO - Bucks Record Office; BRS - Bucks Record Society; CSPD - Calendar of State Papers, Domestic; PR - Parish Register; PRO - Public Record Office; *Recs* - Records of Buckinghamshire; RCHM - Royal Commission on Historical Monuments; *VCH* - Victoria County History.

The numbering of the Howe papers, now in the BRO, is that which they bore while still in Lord Howe's keeping.

Where particulars of an individual's baptism, marriage or burial are not given a reference, the source is the Amersham Parish Register, under the year indicated. Other information derived from this source, and all material from other parishes, is fully referenced.

All references to numbers of hearths are from PRO E179/24/23 & 24, and E179/375/30.

1. J. Chenevix Trench, 'Coleshill and the Settlement of the Chilterns', *Recs* 19, Pt 3 (1973) 241.
2. Lambeth Palace MS, L III, 179.
3. 4.75 in J. Cornwall, 'An Elizabethan Census', *Recs* 16, Pt 4, 258-275.
4. Penn PR, entries under Reeve and Dean(e).
5. RCHM, *Buckinghamshire (South)* (1911) 108.
6. e.g. BAS 20/56.
7. *VCH Bucks* III, 151. Another name for the manor was Old Stock (BAS 20/56).
8. BAS 917/38 (1615).
9. Northants RO, O xxii 3.
10. PRO, PROB 11/32/41.
11. Northants RO, O xxii 3.
12. *VCH Bucks* III, 158.
13. Joan Wake, *The Brudenells of Deene* (Cassell, 1953) 84.
14. Northants RO, D vii 8.
15. Northants RO, A iv 4.
16. PRO, CP 25(2)/274/East 7 Jas I (three); CP 25(2)/275/East 14 Jas. I.
17. BRO, D/16/1/3.
18. PRO, B/1 15/101/31.
19. PRO, E 179/121/329.
20. CSPD 1622, 405, 406.
21. PRO, PROB 11/154/78.
22. Sir Henry Chauncy, *The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire* (1700).
23. PRO, PROB 11/101/25.
24. Acreages are derived from the Tithe Map of 1840 (BRO, PR 4/27/14R), by aggregating the areas of closes known (or, in a few cases, conjectured) to have formed the holding. Metric equivalents are not given for holdings in the common fields, where the 'acres' were customary ones, not statute.
25. BRO, D/16/1/6.
26. BRO, D/16/1/14.
27. BRO, D/16/1/11.
28. Am PR I, 21.
- 29a BRO, D/16/1/6.
- 29b S. Dowell, *History of Taxation and Taxes in England* (3rd edn, 1965) Vol. III, Bk 3, 153.
30. BRO, D/16/1/14a.
31. BRO, D/16/1/1-3.
32. Friends House Library, Register for the Upper Side of Bucks.
33. W. H. Davies, *History of Bucks County* (Philadelphia). [This is Bucks County, Pa.] I owe this reference to Mr. Ralph Child of Pearl River, NY.
34. PRO, REQ 2/133/48.
35. BRO, PR 4/27/13Q.
36. BAS, 22/38 (BRO); Herts RO, 8375.
37. Am Churchwardens' Accounts IV, 2.
38. PRO, E 179/120/2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10.
39. Date, 1686, picked out in blue-fired headers.
40. RCHM, *Buckinghamshire (South)* (1911) 133-4.
41. PRO, E 179/121/156; REQ 2/133/48.
42. Garrett-Pegge (ed.), *The Parish Register of Chesham* (1904) 187.
43. PRO, REQ 2/133/48.
44. BRO, PR 4/12/1, in which Wingfield appears as the largest ratepayer. Since he did not have the largest farm (Braynford Barns), it is inferred that he had the second largest (Bowers).
45. PRO, E 179/121/356, 329, 336, 331, 333.
46. M. W. Barley, *The English Farm House and Cottage*, 148.
47. BRO, D/X3/1/2.
48. BRO, D/X3/1/2.
- 49a PRO, CP25(2)/304/Hil 14 Jas I.
- 49b Herts RO, 8375.
50. J. Chenevix Trench, 'Fields and Farms in a Hill-top Village', *Recs* 20, Pt 3 (1977) 419.
51. J. G. Jenkins (ed.), *The Cartulary of Missenden Abbey* (BRS) 326.
52. PRO, SC6/Hen VIII/328.
53. PRO, C 66/2021/12.
54. BAS, 51/58.
55. BAS, 58/51.
56. *Report of Charity Commissioners*, 26.
57. PRO, CP25(2)/159/2225/Hil 38 Eliz.
58. Herts RO, HAT/SR 29/103.
59. PRO, CP25(2)/304/Trin 15 Jas I.
60. Am PR I, 50v, 62v.
61. BRO, D/A/Wf/31/163.
62. BRO, Howe 23/43, *passim*-, PRO, CP25(2)/137.

63. BRO, D/A/We/22/114.
64. The Penn PR starts in 1559.
65. Lincoln RO, Wills, F 32.
66. PRO, E 179/121/279.
67. BRO, Howe 23/43/1.
68. BRO, Howe 23/43/6.
- 69a BRO, Howe 23/43/unnumbered.
- 69b BRO, Howe 23/43/9.
70. Pers. comm. Mrs. R. Gear.
71. PRO, PROB 11/96/77.
72. Penn PR I, 2v, 51v.
73. PRO, E 179/121/356.
74. BAS, 9/56; BAS, 44/39 (BRO).
75. BAS, 44/39 (BRO).
76. PRO, PROB 11/154/12; Am PR I, 27.
77. PRO, E 134/Mich 18-19 Eliz.
78. BAS, 45/39 (BRO).
79. Am PR I, 35v.
80. BAS, 47/39 (BRO).
81. BRO, D/X4/4.
82. BRO, D/16/3/12.
83. BRO, D/16/3/14a.
84. Am PR, *passim*-, BRO, D/A/Wf/11/159.
85. He was aged 30 in 1558 (PRO, STAC 4/7/33).
86. Lincoln RO, Inv. 45/89.
87. BRO, D/A/Wf/11/159.
88. BRO, D/A/Wf/12/147.
89. She was Susan Child (Phillimore & Gurney (ed.), *Bucks Marriages IV* [1908] 6).
90. Am PR I, 15v; BRO D/A/We/(1636)/59d.
91. BAS, 925/38 (BRO).
92. BRO, D/A/We/26/250.
93. BAS, 917/38.
94. BAS, 925/38 (BRO).
95. Am PR, *passim*.
96. BRO, D/16/3/1, 12.
97. Born 1579 (Penn PR I, 24v).
98. Penn PR I, 4v.
99. PRO, E 179/79/216.
100. BRO, D/A/Wf/48/4.
101. BRO, D/16/2/1.
102. Am PR I, 34v.
103. BRO, D/16/3/14a.
104. R. Machin, 'The Great Rebuilding: a Reassessment', *Past and Present* 77, 33-35.
105. BRO, D/16/3/12.
106. BRO, Howe 23/43/unnumbered.
107. BRO, D/A/Wf/28/123.
108. Penn PR I, 37.
109. Penn PR I, 15v.
110. BRO, D/A/Wf/28/244.
111. BRO, D/16/1/13.
112. *First Ledger Book of High Wycombe* (BRS, 1956) 124.
113. BRO, D/A/Wf/47/150.
114. *First Ledger Book* 371.
115. BRO, D/16/1/6.
116. BRO, D/X4/4.
117. Am PR I, 12, 67.
118. BRO, D/A/Wf/48/4.
119. BRO, D/X4/4.
120. BRO, Am. Enclosure Award; 'Wheatsheaf' Deeds 121. (courtesy Mr. E. Smith).
122. BRO, D/X4/7.
123. Pers. comm. Mr. S. Ware.
124. BRO, Howe 23/54/1.
125. BRO, Howe 23/54/8.
126. BRO, Howe 23/54/21.
127. Am PR I, 17v.
128. BRO, Howe 23/54/2.
129. BRO, Howe 23/54/6.
130. The date is picked out in blue-fired headers in the gable.
131. PRO, C 142/262/140.
132. BRO, D/A/We/20/164.
133. Am PR I, 8.
134. Penn PR I, 31.
135. He was born in 1577, but does not feature in his father's will (n. 131).
136. Penn PR I, 31.
137. Herts RO, HAT/SR 2.
138. Am PR I, 29v, 62v.
139. BAS, 20/56.
140. BRO, D/16/4/17-19.
141. PRO, C 132/38/7.
142. BRO, D/16/2/5.
143. *ibid.*; Penn PR I, 23v; BRO, D/A/Wf/29/251.
144. BRO, D/A/Wf/35/4.
145. *ibid.*
146. BRO, D/16/4/11.
147. PRO, E 134/18 Ch II/Mich 13.
148. J. T. Smith, 'Problems of Cruck Construction', in N. W. Alcock (ed.), *Cruck Construction*, CBA Res. Report 22, 20-21.
149. Lincoln RO, Inv/45/89.
150. Lincoln RO, Inv/51/71.
151. BRO, D/X3/1/2.
152. BRO, D/A/Wf/47/150.
153. BRO, D/X3/1/1.
154. BAS, 917/38. Identification of tenements in early quit-rent rolls is achieved by matching the quit-rent through successive rolls and manor-court rolls, to a period when the property to which it relates can be identified from other sources (usually 1840 by means of the Tithe Map).
- 154a Herts RO, HAT/SR 29/46.
- 154b R. Machin, *op. cit.* (n. 104).
155. PRO, CP25(2)/430/East 10 Ch I.
156. PRO, C7/87/20.
157. Penn PR I, 55.
158. PRO, E 179/240/23.
159. BAS, 30/65.
160. PRO, CP25(2)/387/East 22 Jas I. The land lay in 'Amersham and Beaconsfield, Co. Herts', and the only land answering this description that was in the Earl's demesne was the Stockbury land. Most of it remained in his hands, however, as can be inferred from William Drake's subsequent lease of what became Ongar Hill Farm.
161. BRO, D/A/We/8/80.
162. BAS, 993/38 (BRO).
163. BAS, 58/51.
164. BAS, 993/38 (BRO); 997/38 (BRO).
165. BRO, D/A/We/17/114.



166. BRO, PR 4/27/13Q, 14R.  
167. BRO, CP 25(2)/303/Mich 3 Jas I.  
168. PRO, ASSI 35/52/3/367.  
169. PRO, PROB 11/154/12.  
170. Am PR I, *passim*.  
171. BRO, Am Enclosure Award.  
172. RCHM, *Buckinghamshire (South)* 108.  
173. PRO, PROB 11/154/12; BAS, 31/56; Am Chwdns Accounts I, 6.  
174. BAS, 31/56.  
175. PRO, PROB 11/154/12.  
176. BAS, 31/56.  
177. BRO, D/Dt/1/56.  
178. BRO, PR 4/4/1; BRO, AR/1112/81.  
179. PRO, E 179/248/23.  
180. BRO, D/A/Wf/39/42b.  
181. BAS, 31/56.  
182. Inventory of William Bovingdon, 1700, in the possession of Mr. R. Bennett.  
183. BAS, 31/56.  
184. PRO, E 179/121/156.  
185. BRO, D/A/We/26/250.  
186. PRO, E 179/375/30; E 179/248/23; Friends House Library, Marriage Cert, of Edward Butterfield, 1670.  
187. BRO, D/Dt/2/15.  
188. PRO, C5/411/182.  
189. PRO, CP 25(2)/304/Trin 16 Jas I.  
190. PRO, CP 25(2)/428/East 3 Ch I.  
191. PRO, CP 25(2)/428/East 3 Ch. I. 25(2)428/Trin 2  
192. Am PR I, 18.  
193a Lincoln RO, Inv/51/71.  
193b A. C. Chibnall (ed.), *The Certificate of Musters for Buckinghamshire* (BRS, 1973) 231-233, where three Child families appear.  
200. PRO, E 179/121/207.  
201. BAS, 58/51.  
202. PRO, E 179/79/237.  
203. BRO, D/A/Wf/10/59.  
204. BRO, D/A/Wf/18/22.  
205. PRO, PROB 11/110/49.  
206. Am PR I, 16v.  
207. PRO, E 179/120/5, 7.  
208. BAS, 9/56; BAS, Am Rental, 1738.  
209. *Bucks Marriages* IV, 1634; BRO, D/A/We/30/29; Am PR I, 65.  
210. PRO, PROB 11/281/480.  
211. PRO, E 179/248/24.  
212. Am PR II, 8.  
213. See n. 203.  
214. BAS, 30/56.  
215. Chenevix Trench, *op. cit.* (n. 50).  
216. BRO, AR 112/81.  
217. Penn PR I, 10.  
218. Am Chwdns Accounts IV, 7v.  
219. *ibid.*, 5v.  
220. BRO, D/16/3/14a.  
221. Penn PR I, 10.  
222. PRO, REQ 2/280/37; CP 25(2)259/Hil 1 Eliz; CP 25(2)/304/Hil 10 Jas I. The identification depends on 'Bachelors and Crouch' being Hertfordshire Farm: ME *crouch* = cross, and there was a boundary cross in the SW corner of Hertfordshire Farm (BRO, Am Enclosure Award).  
223. Penn PR I, *passim*.  
224. J. G. Jenkins, *History of the Parish of Penn* (London, 1935) 133.  
225. Saxon-Snell (ed.), *Minute Book of the Monthly Meeting for the Upper Side of Bucks* (BRS, 1937) 100.  
226. The descent of the property can be traced through quit-rents down to 1840, thus linking with the Tithe Map.  
227. BRO, D/A/Wf/44/18; Am PR I, 13v; Herts RO, HAT/SR 29/46.  
228. Am PR I, 69v.  
229. See n. 220.  
230. PRO, C1/444/33; BAS 917/38.  
231. BAS, 917/38 (1615).  
232. *ibid.* (1630).  
233. PRO, CP 25(2)/305/Mich 22 Jas I.  
234. Penn PR I, 54v.  
235. PRO, CP 25(2)/589/Hil 1658.  
236. Am Chwdns Accounts IV, 5v.  
237. BAS, 917/38 (1630).  
238. BRO, PR 4/12/1 (BAS 735/38).  
239. BRO, D/A/We/26/166.  
240. BAS, 917/38 (1647).  
241. BRO, D/A/We/26/366.  
242. Am PR III, 9v.  
243. BRO, D/A/Wf/33/122.  
244. PRO, C 5/3/36.  
245. BAS, 917/38 (1630).  
246. BRO, D/16/2/5.  
247. PRO, C 5/3/36.  
248. BRO, PR 4/27/13Q.  
249. PRO, E 179/248/23; Am Chwdns Accounts IV, 5v; BRO, D/16/4/11.  
250. BAS, 917/38 (1630).  
251. PRO, C 5/3/36.  
252. PRO, E 179/240/23.  
253. BAS, 917/38 (1700).  
254. BAS, 917/38 (1615, 1630); BRO, D/X3/1/2.  
255. BAS, 917/38 (1647).  
256a BRO, D/X3/1/2.  
256b Am Chwdns Accounts IV, 5.  
257. BRO, D/A/We/26/166.  
258. PRO, CP 25(2)/430/East 10 Ch I.  
259. Penn PR I, 55.  
260. PRO, C 7/87/20.  
261. BAS, 75/31 (BRO).  
262. PRO, ASSI 35/52/3/367.  
263. BRO, D/A/We/26/52.  
264. PRO, PROB 11/154/12.  
265. PRO, ASSI 35/52/3/367.  
266. BAS, 917/38 (1615, 1630).  
267. BAS, 20/56; BAS, 917/38 (1647).  
268. BAS, 917/38 (1615-1647).  
269. BAS, 50/39; BRO, Howe 23/27/8.  
270. Am Chwdns Accounts IV, 5v.  
271. Am PR I, 61v.  
272a BRO, Howe 23/43/4.  
272b PRO, REQ 2/76/18.  
272c BRO, Howe 23/27/8.  
272d BRO, Howe 23/43/4.

273. PRO, REQ 2/76/18.  
 274. Am PR I, 61v.  
 275. Penn PR I, 58.  
 276. BRO, Howe 23/43/9.  
 277. BRO, D/16/1/3; BRO, Am Enclosure Award.  
 278. BRO, D/16/1/3.  
 279. *ibid.*  
 280. BRO, D/16/1/6.  
 281. Friends House Library, Register for the Upper Side of Bucks.  
 282. BRO, D/X4/2.  
 283. Pers. comm. Mrs. G. F. Klein, Haddenfield N.J.  
 284. BAS, 9/56.  
 285. PRO, PROB 11/371/145.  
 286. A. G. Matthews, *Calamy Revised* (Oxford. 1934).  
 287. BRO, Howe 23/54/2.  
 288. BRO, D/A/We/38/48.  
 289. BRO, Howe 23/54/2.  
 290. Am PR I, 67. 23/54/3.  
 291. BRO, Howe 23/54/3.  
 292. BRO, Howe 23/54/15, 16.  
 293. PRO, PROB 2/869.  
 294. PRO, PROB 11/286/16.  
 295. PRO, PROB 11/342/78.  
 296. BRO, Howe 23/54/24.  
 297. BAS, 917/38 (1630, 1647).  
 298. PRO, ASSI 35/52/3/367.  
 299. Am PR I, 19.  
 300. *ibid.*, *passim*.  
 301. Herts RO, HAT/SR 24/69.  
 302. Am PR I, 32.  
 303. *ibid.*, 52.  
 304. Garrett-Pegge, *op. cit.* (n. 42).  
 305. PRO, PROB 11/110/49.  
 306. PRO, PROB 11/154/12.  
 307. *Report of Charity Commissioners* 26.  
 308. Am Chwdns Accounts, *passim*.  
 309. BRO, PR 4/12/1.  
 310a PRO, ASSI 35/55/3/573.  
 310b BRO, D/A/We/32/152.  
 311. Am PR I, *passim*.  
 312. PRO, REQ 2/223/121.  
 313. R. Machin, *op. cit.* (n. 104).  
 314. L. J. Ashford, *History of the Borough of High Wycombe* (Origins to 1880) (London, 19607, 125.  
 315. BRO, D/A/We/59/81.  
 316. PRO, PROB 4/1891, 3233.  
 317. Am Pr I, *passim*.  
 318. Herts RO, HAT/SR 29/103.  
 319. PRO, ASSI 35/52/3/367.