

NOTES

DENHAM: A LOST BOROUGH, OR ONE THAT NEVER WAS?

The ten-hide manor of Denham was acquired around the time of the Norman Conquest by Westminster Abbey, although it had been subinfeudated before the end of the twelfth century to the Capella family.¹ In common with many a contemporary lord of the manor in search of ways to increase his income, Henry de Capella (died c.1248) obtained the right to hold a Monday market and a three-day fair at the Nativity of the Virgin (8 September).² The manor was restored to Westminster in 1292, and was a favourite residence of the abbots.³ Denham fair survived until 1873, albeit moved to 13 May,⁴ but the market is not heard of again. It would have been in competition with the Wednesday markets of neighbouring Chalfont St. Peter (1229) and Iver (1353), and more significantly with that of the town of Uxbridge just across the Colne in Middlesex, first mentioned in 1145 and granted a market c.1170.⁵ The latter grew up on the London-Oxford road, with a Thursday market and fairs. It was a fully-fledged town with burgesses, although it remained part of the ancient parish of Hillingdon, rather than a borough in its own right.⁶

A recent discovery among the field-name material being collected for Buckinghamshire suggests that the de Capellas may have had similar aspirations for their Manor of Denham, which also lay on the main road to Oxford, only two miles from Uxbridge. Thus in 1408, we read of a *campo de Burgage* (Burgage Field), in 1494 of *le campum vocatur Burgage*, and in 1512 of *the Burgage*.⁷ The name occurs more than two centuries later as Great and Little Burgage in 1762.⁸ Burgage was the name given to a holding within a borough, held by a tenure of the same name by burgesses. Its appearance in Denham offers a tantalising clue to a borough whose existence seems to have been completely forgotten, increasing the tally of Buckinghamshire boroughs in the standard list from ten to eleven.⁹ Another field-name may offer some support to this suggestion. *Chequer/Checker* is usually thought to indicate a patchwork effect of

soil, or possibly vegetation, but examples are known where it signifies the collection of market tolls and dues.¹⁰ *Le Chekers* occurs in Denham between 1377 and 1430, and *Little Cheker* down to 1531. Checkers Meade is found in 1620.

The key questions are whether or not a borough was actually founded at Denham in the thirteenth century, and if so, how long it survived. Unfortunately the field-name data do not enable us to answer these questions. The survival of these unusual names for centuries after any possible act of borough creation would tend to support the existence of one. There are no other Burgage-names in the county as yet, and the vast majority of names using Chequer(s) are of inns, or relate to soil type. There is, however, a croft in Iver called *le Chekker* in 1391, which may also relate to the market there, being very early for the name of a hostelry.¹¹ (The best-known example takes its name from Henry de Scaccario, who held land there in 1242, and derived his name from the Exchequer.)

Assuming that one of the de Capellas did obtain a now-lost charter for a borough at Denham about the time the market and fair were established (possibly in the 1240s), it had apparently ceased to exist by the fifteenth century, remembered merely by the name of the field in which it lay. The apparent failure of the market to survive shows that this was not a good choice of location for an urban settlement, especially during the sharp decline in population and economic activity after c.1300. This, and the presence of flourishing Uxbridge close by, probably put paid to the attempt to bolster seignorial income at Denham, although it left an echo for many centuries.¹²

Keith Bailey

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- Buckinghamshire', *Recs. Bucks.* XX (1978), 580.
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 4. *VCH Bucks.*, III, 259.
 5. Reed, *art. cit.*, 580, 581.
 6. *VCH Middx.*, IV, 79.
 7. BL Harley MSS, 85D25; 85E46; 86F26; 85E48.
 8. *VCH Bucks.*, III, 256.
 9. M. Beresford & H.P.R. Finberg, *English Medieval Boroughs: A Handlist* (Totowa, New Jersey, 1973), 70–72.
 10. D.N. Parsons, *The Vocabulary of English Place-Names: Ceafor-Cock-Pit*, (Nottingham, 2004), 48–49.
 11. Court Rolls of Iver.
 12. Harvey, *op. cit.*, 286, refers to Denham as 'the riverside, countrified town that Edward I restored to the monks' possession', but offers no evidence in support of this assertion. She nowhere else mentions any evidence for Denham having borough status in the medieval period, so one assumes that it is the present-day, semi-suburban Denham which is intended. The apparent absence of *any* reference to burgesses or markets in the extensive Westminster archives may indicate that neither survived to be taken over in 1292. There are unfortunately no detailed records of medieval taxpayers or tenants in Denham to provide clues as to possible urban occupations.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FIELD-NAMES 4: SHOT, COCKSHOOT AND WEALD

1. Shot

The most prevalent terms used to describe components of the medieval open field system are, in decreasing order of size: Field, Furlong and Strip or Selion. In addition there are other, more specialised terms such as Gore (OE *gara*, 'triangular-shaped plot') and Butt (ME *butte*, 'short strip of arable, often at right-angles to the main furlong'). Individual strips seldom acquire permanent names, usually being referred to by the name of the current tenant, or by abutments with neighbouring parcels. As units of farming they were of course lost at enclosure, whereas field and furlong names do persist, although not necessarily co-terminous with the medieval areas. In Buckinghamshire, Field and Furlong are overwhelmingly used for the large and medium sized units of cultivation, although many furlongs have names which omit the qualifier as redundant, for example, East Hill, Foxhill and Longcroft.

There are, however, examples of the word Shot being used for the intermediate entity, the furlong, the great majority of them south of the Chiltern escarpment. Old English *scēat*, meaning 'corner of land, angle, projecting piece of land',¹ is clearly related to the verb 'to shoot [forth]', and can also indicate an area of overgrown or cultivated land projecting into a different type of landscape. It later seems to have developed the sense 'strip of land, share of a field', and used as a cognate of furlong. As a place-name element *scēat* is concentrated in Surrey and Hampshire, with sporadic examples in other counties, but none in Buckinghamshire. It occurs in field-names, with a clustering in the area around Essex, Hertfordshire and Middlesex, as well as in northern Surrey.² In Buckinghamshire, the data so far collected have produced the following examples:

Although most of these names are at present only available in eighteenth or nineteenth century forms, it is unlikely that they were being newly-coined at this late date. It is possible, however, that the examples of name changes at Great Hampden (Field to Shot) and Chesham (Dell to Shot) may

indicate that the element survived in places dialectally as a noun, occasionally used in field-naming.

Most of the shot-names are self-explanatory, referring to the location of the land in relation to landscape features, points of the compass, shape and so on. Names such as Pied Horse Shot and Walnut Tree Shot illustrate the use of both ephemeral and more permanent features. Staines Shot in Wraysbury refers to the town in neighbouring Middlesex, rather than to soil quality.

It is the geographical spread which defines the use of *scēat* in local field-names. Excluding those which seem to be dubious examples, forty-six of these names have been noted in Buckinghamshire so far, three in the Aylesbury Hundreds, thirty-six in the Chiltern Hundreds (eleven in Burnham and twenty-five in Stoke), two in the Ashendon Hundreds, three in Cottesloe, none in Buckingham and two in Newport. Only seven occur north of the Chiltern escarpment, so few that they may well owe their origin to migrants from the south-east of the county, or from other shires where the element is more commonplace. Excluding the Marlow, Hampden and Wendover examples, Shot is basically a feature of Chesham and the parishes on or close to the Thames in Stoke Hundred, notably Eton, Upton-cum-Chalvey and Wraysbury.

At the current state of field-name collection, it is impossible to know when these names originated, although many are likely to date from the creation of the open fields between about 900 and 1100. Clearly farmers in the south-east corner of Buckinghamshire were familiar with the element and it is conceivable that this area had once been associated closely with neighbouring parts of Middlesex and Surrey, with Shot-names providing an echo down to the present day. Little is known about the history of this area between the fifth and eleventh centuries, although the link between Burnham and an otherwise unknown minster church at Staines mentioned in Domesday Book provides a tantalising clue. It is interesting that these field-names hardly occur in the southern part of Burnham Hundred, however, suggesting that the

TABLE 1 Shot-names in Buckinghamshire Fields

<i>Hundred</i>	<i>Parish</i>	<i>Name & Date</i>
Aylesbury	Great Hampden Wendover	Stoney Shot 1978 (Field 1839) Grove Shot 1974 Long Shot 1974
Risborough	NIL	
Stone	NIL	
Burnham	Chesham	Ashotts 1843?? Bagshots 1843?? Dell Shot 1843 (Dell Piece 1785) Gravelly Shot 1785 Hollow Shots 1843 Horsepond Shot 1843 Long Shotts c1763 Shot Field 1970 Splay Shotts 1843?? Winding Shot 1840
Desborough	Farnham Hedsor	Hedsor Mead Shot 1838 Redshotts 1840 Meadow Shot 1844
Stoke	Great Marlow Little Marlow Eton	Bird in Bush Shot 1839 Short Edges Shot 1839 Ten Acre Shot 1797 Upper/Lower Tilson Shot 1797 Two Acre Shot 1839 Turkey Shot 1639 Footpath Shot 1869 Layne Shott 1607 Middle Shot 1802 Seven Acres Shott 1607 Stoke Lane Shot 1802 Walnut Tree Shot 1802 Brook Shot 1724
Stoke cont'd.	Horton Iver Stoke Poges	Longe Shott 1607 Pied Horse Shot 1724 Slough Shot 1724 Farther/Heither Shotts of Soutfeilde 1635 Third Shot 1724 Bottome Shott 1639 Caresbushott 17 th Church Way Shott 1639 Rieside Shott 17 th Staines Shot 17 th Stanshott 1639 Warbridge Shott 1639
	Upton Upton cont'd.	
	Waysbury	
Ashendon	NIL	
Ixhill	Long Crendon	Winnayshot 1781/Winnershot 1802
Waddesdon	Pitcheott	Shothill/Shothill Furlong 1635??
Cottesloe	NIL	
Mursley	NIL	
Yardley	Drayton Beauchamp Ivinghoe	Long Shot 1838 Upper Longshot 1977 Winding Shot 1965
Lamua	NIL	
Rowley	NIL	
Stoffold	NIL	
Bunsty	Lathbury	Lower Shot 1841
Moulsoe	Clifton Reynes	Low Shot Leys 1841
Secklow	NIL	

Note: ?? indicates that these are uncertain examples of Shot-names; see below for Cockshot.

apparently arbitrary boundary with Stoke Hundred may reflect a situation long predating 1066. The rich burial at Taplow, probably of the early seventh century, contained artefacts with Kentish connections, while Kentish kings had control of the area around Chertsey in the 660s.³ The minster at Chertsey had estates along the south bank of the Thames as far as Egham, just opposite Wraysbury, and although none are recorded in what later became Buckinghamshire, this would provide at least one conduit for Shot-names to reach the latter.

2. Cockshoot

There are eight examples so far of the name Cockshot in Buckinghamshire. These are not names derived from OE *scēat*, but from OE *coccsēyte*, 'place where woodcocks dart', used for a clearing where nets were used to trap these birds.⁴

Cockshote Close 1620	Wendover
Cockshots 1799	Emberton
Cockshoot Wood	Aston Clinton; Hughenden
Great/Little Cockshoots	Hughenden; West Wycombe
Cockshoot Hill	Stoke Goldington
Cockshott	Biddlesden

There are too few examples to establish any pattern, although the woods of the central Chilterns clearly had several of these features. More of these names probably await discovery as the corpus of field-names grows.

3. Weald/Wold

The OE word *wald* (Anglian)/*weald* (Kentish/West Saxon) denotes 'woodland, a large tract of wood, high forest-land'.⁵ The best known example is of course the Weald in Kent, Surrey and Sussex, along with the Cotswolds and the Yorkshire Wolds. None of these field-names occur in the Chilterns, despite the presence of extensive woodland cover down to the present day. Even in medieval times, the rest of Buckinghamshire was not a well-wooded county, other than the north-western and north-eastern extremities lying north of the River Ouse. In general the distribution of names containing this element are found in areas known to be well-wooded in the medieval period, although there are exceptions, which are discussed below.

Parish	Date	Name
Biddlesden	c1200	Woldfurlong
Calverton	1220×30	Waldmede
Calverton	1920	Weald Leys
Cublington	1607	Nether Weald Gate; Weald Leas Furlong
Grove	1607	Walden Furlong
Hartwell	1358	Waldebrigge
Loughton	c1275	Waldemede
Shalstone	1260×70	Waldefurlong
Shenley Brook End	c1240	Waldmede
Shenley Church End	c1240	Waldweie
Stewkley	1494	Myddilwolde/Higher Wolde/Nether Wolde
Stowe	c1220	Waldas
Thornborough	1313×31	Waldemede
Westbury	c1280	Le Wolde
Wolverton	1465	Woldchetynge
Woodham	1974	Upper Wolds

The complete absence of Weald-names south of the Chiltern escarpment is noteworthy. Despite the appearance of a great forest which the area must have presented in the Anglo-Saxon centuries, *wald/weald* was clearly not considered to be an appropriate element, and neither was it used for fields in areas of clearance. Chiltern itself is a name of pre-Celtic origin, the first element of which signifies a [steep] slope, while the second is a qualifier of undetermined significance.⁶ It appears not to carry connotations of woodland, and a collective name for the extensive wooded area here never seems to have arisen.

Two of the major woodland areas of Buckinghamshire were shared with other counties; Bernwood with Oxfordshire and Whittlewood with Northamptonshire. Weald-names in the former are represented only by Upper Wolds in Woodham, the usual word in this area being OE *wudu*, as in Grendon Underwood. Chetwode is a tautologous compound of the OE and Celtic words for wood. Stotfold Hundred, by contrast, has a scattering of weald-names recorded from the thirteenth century, suggesting that this area was thought of as a wooded landscape.

The cluster of examples between Calverton and Shenley occur in an area for which Domesday Book records little or no woodland. The survival of three hamlets called Weald, when added to the field-name evidence suggests that this absence was more apparent than real, and did not reflect the

ate-eleventh century landscape. This is also true of the weald-names from Stewkley and Cublington, underlined by the presence of other local names indicative of woodland converted to open field arable. Indeed, the majority of these names across the county qualify agrarian terms, notably furlong and mead. At Stewkley, one entire open field was named Woulds Field, and this may once have been a southerly extension of the wooded area of Whaddon Chase, with the Shenley-Calverton Weald forming a similar projection to the north.

Keith Bailey

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4. D.N. Parsons, *The Vocabulary of English Place-Names: Ceafor-Cock-Pit*, (Nottingham, 2004), 148–149.
5. Smith, *op. cit.*, 239–242.
6. R. Coates, 'Remarks on "pre-British" in England', *English Place-Name Society Journal*, 16 (1983–4), 7–15.

SIR ROBERT DORMER'S TOMB IN WING CHURCH, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

The church of All Saints at Wing is rich in monuments of all types and periods, from medieval figure brasses to elaborate wall tablets. However, it is the tomb in the north aisle to Sir Robert Dormer (d.

1552) which attracts attention by its pure Classical composition (Fig. 1 and 2), but it is also the one which poses most problems about its origins and date. Should one take at face value the date of 1552



FIGURE 1 The Dormer tomb.

carved on the tomb chest and attribute all the tomb including the dominating canopy to this early date? Or should one use the clues in the brass inscription plates to assign to it a date after 1567 and interpret it as a monument intended to commemorate at least two generations of the Dormer family? Although there are similarities in the detailing of the chest tomb and of the canopy, there are also subtle differences in treatment, for example the use of dentil ornament and strapwork on the canopy, which would be exceptional if it were as early as 1552, but which would fit far better with a date in the 1570s.

The surface of the tomb lid has not previously attracted attention. There are twelve lead plugs into which copper rivets had been inserted; the rivets were later sawn flush with the lid and a thirteenth cavity has been filled with mortar [Fig. 3]. Each rivet is 5 mm. in diameter. They are sunk into lead plugs between 15 and 20 mm. in diameter. Two plugs have a lead rod at their core and no evidence of rivets. There is now no trace of brass plates nor

any evidence of inserts or matrices. There is no differential wear on the tomb lid, which suggests a short life for whatever decoration the lid supported. Two groups of rivets appear to have held two inscribed plates above the lid's surface, whilst it seems likely that lead rods secured sculptured crests or heraldic devices at the four corners to help identify or proclaim the deceased. (The two southern corners of the tomb lid are exposed; two northern corners are concealed by the later tomb's back wall.) The use of heraldic supporters can be instanced at Framlingham (1557, 1564). Another possibility for the corner emblems would be an alternation of crests and helmets.

The problem of the early date of the monument can be addressed in two ways. The date of 1552 need not refer to the date of the tomb chest's construction but only to the date of Sir Robert Dormer's death. This enables the tomb to be placed anywhere between 1552 and 1575, the date of death of Robert's son William. A corollary would be to suggest that the information about the deceased was originally given on an inscription fixed to the tomb lid and was then to be supplemented by a painted inscription on the black touch rear panel. Only later, post 1567, were the two replacement brass inscriptions and the five shields added; these were inset into the softer white limestone rather than into the harder black surface. Their existing elevated position suggests that there was some good reason for avoiding the black stone rather than fixing the inscriptions in a lower and more easily readable position. The most likely reason is the intention to paint an inscription on the black panel at some later date, probably an inscription to Sir William and his second wife Dorothy; less likely is the intention to fix further individual brass inscriptions to that panel or to the limestone flanking it.

If one accepts the evidence that the tomb is a two-fold composition, the first being the tomb-chest with its lid, and the second being the back wall, the brasses and the canopy, then it is possible to argue that the tomb evolved over three decades. The *first* stage is the ordering of a tomb chest to Sir Robert. This is the classical chest with *bucrania* and the low relief date 1552 carved simultaneously with the sarcophagus. It stood on the aisle floor near the east wall but did not impinge upon the stone altar, newly restored (1554), in the chapel of St. Mary. The tomb's Purbeck marble lid probably



FIGURE 2 Detail of the Dormer tomb.

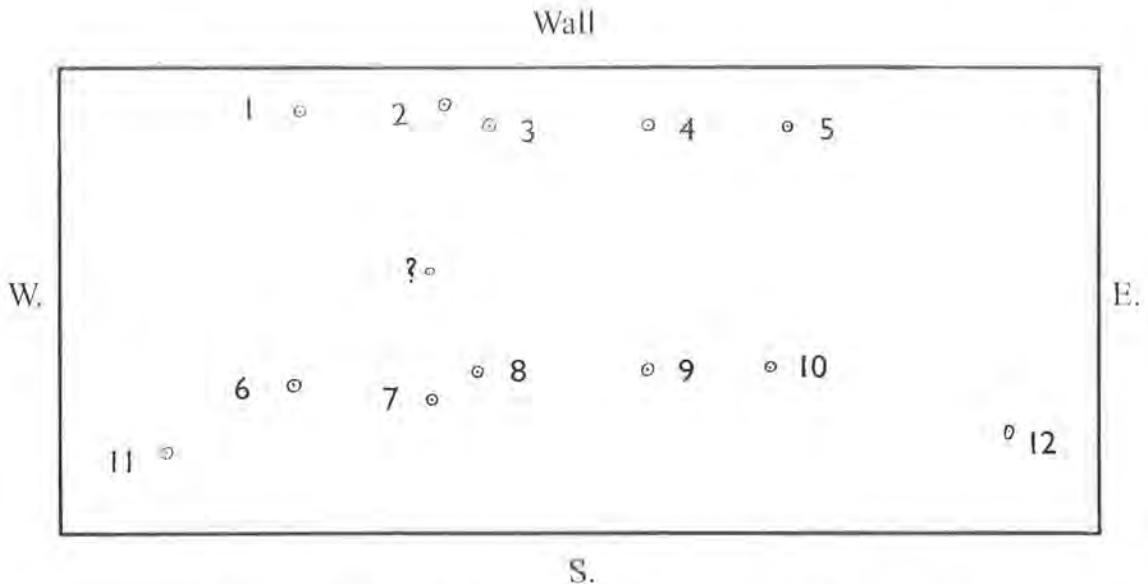


FIGURE 3 Plan of Sir Robert Dormer's tomb lid of 1552 (79 x 35 ins).

carried two inscriptions on brass plates, the longer one to Robert and his wife Jane (with the date of her death to be added in due course) with a shorter one to their daughter-in-law Mary (Sidney), who had died in 1541/2. The lid would also have displayed heraldic crests at the four corners. Early in Elizabeth's reign (1562–3) the stone altar was again removed and the chapel of St. Mary disused for the celebration of Mass.

The *second* stage only followed in 1571 after the death of Jane in Louvain and her burial there. The tomb chest was dismantled and a new raised floor of two steps inserted in the north aisle to accommodate the Dormer burial vault. The inscriptions on the lid and the four heraldic crests were removed. The decision was made by Sir William and his second wife Dorothy to incorporate the earlier tomb chest within the larger monument with columns and a canopy that now stands in the north aisle. This would initially commemorate Sir Robert and his daughter-in-law Mary (née Sidney), both buried in the vault beneath. New inscriptions appropriate to the changed circumstances were then fixed to the rear wall of the tomb (the north aisle's north wall); the Gothic style of lettering may imitate the original inscriptions laid down 20 years earlier. Appropriate shields were added. These indicated a desire to commemorate, or at least acknow-

ledge, four marital unions: Sir Robert and his ancestors (Chobbe and Collingridge), Sir Robert and his wife Jane (Newdigate), Sir William and his first wife Mary (Sidney), Sir William and his second wife Dorothy (Catesby). These four shields reveal an intention to use this monument to record the burials of Sir William (died 1575) and Lady Dorothy in the vault below either by means of additional brass plaques fixed to the back wall or, more likely, by a painted inscription on the black touch panel. This panel may briefly have carried an inscription but no trace of lettering survives nor are there any marking-out lines for such a purpose.

The *third* stage followed upon the decision, made by Dorothy (Catesby) in the late 1580s, to erect a new monument with effigies to Sir William and herself. No further major work was done to Sir Robert's tomb. Sir William's monument was completed in 1590 and placed on the north side of the chancel. No effigy was provided on it for Mary (Sidney) because she was already commemorated on the north aisle tomb, though her heraldry is also carved on the 1590 tomb.

Such a hypothesis provides a plausible explanation for all the observable details upon the earliest Dormer tomb and resolves the stylistic discrepancies.

Lawrence Butler

NOT DROWNING BUT WAVING ...

The accompanying figure shows a porcelain plate found in an antique shop in 2001. As the building looked familiar I purchased it. On the back there were no manufacturer's stamps or other identifying marks beyond a longhand description under the glaze

Dorney Church,
Bucks.

It was certainly not Dorney Church whose appearance is very different. This church is partially hidden by mature trees and a wooden bell turret is clearly visible rising from the roof. The bather raises both arms to a companion who appears to be about to plunge into the river. The scene was hand-painted, like so much of the nineteenth century output of the Staffordshire factories, with considerable, albeit formulaic, skill. The piece's size indicates a dessert plate, and such delicate decoration would not have withstood the more robust use of a knife and fork endured by an entrée plate. My more knowledgeable friends estimated this plate to be early Victorian in date.

Six months later I was browsing through the Bucks prints which belong to the B.A.S. when I recognised the same romanticized scene of the swimmer with upraised arms, again labelled "Dorney Church". The church shown is actually Boveney, which is a mile to the east, being built about 30 yards from the north bank of the Thames. The print came from a book originally published in 1834 (with several later editions) entitled "Picturesque Views of The Thames and Medway". It consisted of 80 views drawn by Tombleson of Paternoster Row, printed by Creuzbauer & Co of Carlsruhe from steel engravings by Sands, with historical descriptions by W.G.Fearenside. Such topographical works were popular as reference books for the artist-decorators of the Staffordshire potteries and, as legislation was less stringent than today, the painter was often tempted to let inspiration degenerate to straight-forward copying.

The Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Boveney, is a small rectangular building of twelfth century origin but most of its detailing is of a later date. It is built of chalk rubble galleted with small flints and

has a tiled roof with a wooden bell turret whose timber framework rises from the floor. It served the small neighbouring settlement but was also popular with passing rivetmen and bargees. However, in 1948 Betjeman and Piper found it locked "because it has been used as a bathing machine", and by the 1970s it had been declared redundant.

Currently it is in the care of the Friends of Friendless Churches on a 999 year lease. This body is carrying out extensive repairs to the two-tier bell tower and the roof in the most expensive conservation project it has ever undertaken. Nearly £250,000 (aided by an English Heritage grant) is being devoted to the building, and the scheme has won the RIBA South Conservation Award for Architects (2005). The overseer of the work, Nicola Westbury, has compiled a record, with meticulous drawings, and deposited a copy with this County's Sites and Monument Record. Samples of timber from the tower and bell chamber indicate trees felled around 1500. Besides the Friends there are loyal local supporters, including Eton College (patron of the living until it was extinguished) whose choir recently gave a funding concert in Windsor. A brass and enamel chandelier of c.1860 has been purchased by the Cottam Will Trust to replace one formerly in Boveney.

It is unlikely that my dessert plate was a one-off, more probably part of a full service. Perhaps every plate had the same scene but a more exciting possibility is that each had a different Tombleson view of the Buckinghamshire Thames. Of course the remaining plates could have had picturesque scenes from different books, perhaps from every quarter of Britain. Many questions lie unanswered: Was it made to order? Why the Thames? Was it for a specific customer? Was it a unique order or were there others? Will I ever find a companion to my plate?

My grateful thanks are due to the staff of The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery (Stoke on Trent), Magna Gallery (Oxford) and the British Library for their kindness in answering my enquiries.

George Lamb



FIGURE 1 The Boveney Plate.



AN EARLY SAXON BROOCH FROM BUCKLAND

A Saxon brooch was recently found by Mr D. Dunks in Buckland parish, whilst searching, with his metal detector. He reported the find to the Finds Liaison Officer, at the County Museum so that it could be recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme's website (www.finds.org.uk), reference BUC-DF45B6. The brooch is in the finder's collection.

The copper-alloy brooch has a sub-triangular head, a small bow and a drawn-out lozenge shaped foot. The head, which originally had two lugs, is decorated with a simple design of cast in lines. The single remaining rounded lug has a roughly executed circle on it. The linear design follows on over the bow and on to the foot. This part of the brooch also has similar circular lugs, three of the original four surviving. The surviving foot of a similar, more complete brooch from Dinton (Hunn et al 1994, Fig 21, no 16) suggests that the Buckland brooch may have ended in a rounded point. Traces of gilding were noted on the brooch from Dinton but none are visible on this example. On the reverse of the brooch, part of the perforated lugs, which held the pin and the catch-plate, survives.

Barry Ager suggests (pers. comm.) that a conti-

mental origin for this brooch seems likely, however, as there appear to be only two close parallels, the local Dinton example and one from Germany, it is difficult to say much more about derivation of the form at present. The Dinton brooch was found at the hip and had been reused, perhaps as part of a chatelaine, so would have been quite old when buried. Also in grave (11) is a late 5th – 6th century applied brooch, following Welch's dating of the general early applied – brooch type (Welch 1983, 39–42), with what looks like a late version of 'floriate cross' decoration. The 'broad parallels' for the form given in the Dinton report (p. 133) are of little help, as they belong to an entirely different type and omit the only published parallel which is from Bremen-Mahndorf, Germany. This is closely similar with a rounded, ribbed head-plate, although the head-plate knobs have triple roundels and those on the foot are joined by curved struts (Kühn, 1981, Taf. 13, 72). As it was unique when catalogued, Kühn was able to date it only '500–600 AD'. Ager offers a further link with a fragmentary brooch from Shelfanger, Norfolk. Only the bow and half of the head-plate survive. It is decorated with a human face rather like those on many button brooches, but the head-plate is of rounded form with knobs similar to the Mahndorf brooch.

Grateful thanks to Barry Ager of the British Museum for his comments, to Derrick Dunks for reporting the find and David Williams for his illustration

Ros Tyrrell

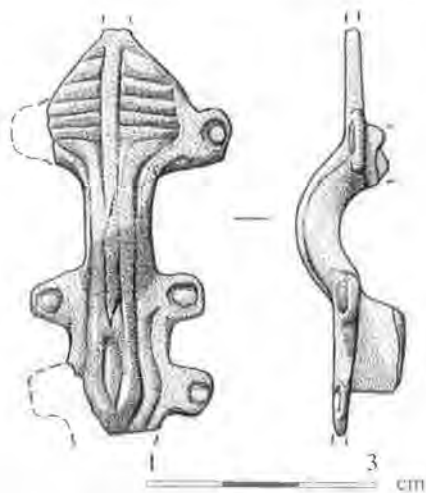


FIGURE 1 Brooch from Buckland.

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AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AYLESBURY POET: ALEXANDER MERRICK (1689–1759)

Included in *The Oxford Book of Garden Verse*, published in 1993, is a long poem entitled *Hartwell Gardens* by a certain 'A M[errick]' who is otherwise unknown to fame; no dates are given but from style and content it can readily be assigned to the first half of the eighteenth century.¹ Avowedly inspired by similar lays in praise of the gardens of 'famed Stowe', it is a well-crafted piece of work demonstrating a more than passing acquaintance with the Greek and Latin classics, but its particular significance lies in the detailed description it gives of the long-since-vanished formal gardens at Hartwell depicted in the well-known set of eight paintings by Balthazar Nebot, now in the County Museum.

It is possible to date the poem more precisely from the personal account book of Sir Thomas Lee (1687–1749), 3rd Baronet, of Hartwell, covering the years 1736–1749, a comparatively recent acquisition by the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, which contains the following entry dated 5 January 1737:²

Gave Mr Merrick of Aylesbury for his Poem on
Hartwell Garden [£]10 10 0

Comparing this payment with the payment to Nebot of £42 for all eight of his pictures (unframed) recorded in the same volume in August 1739, it is clear that Merrick's reward was a generous one, indicating that Sir Thomas was well pleased with his efforts.

Who was Alexander Merrick? There is no record of his baptism in the Aylesbury parish registers but the published Quaker minute book for the Upperside of Bucks, 1669–1690, has numerous reference to an earlier Alexander Merrick of Aylesbury, 'salesman', who married Hannah Bridges in 1683.³ This suggests a possible Quaker background and further delving in the registers of the Upperside meeting has revealed the birth at Aylesbury on 18 August 1689 of Alexander son of Alexander Merrick of Aylesbury, 'salesman', and Hannah his wife.⁴ From the same source we learn that Alexander and Hannah had two other children,

Hannah, born in 1692 and Mary, born the following year. The Aylesbury parish register also has the baptism of Thomas, son of Alexander Merrick (mother's name not given) in December 1697. This seems to indicate that Alexander had disobeyed the rules of his community, but he was nevertheless buried in the Quaker burial ground at Weston Turville in December 1702, when Alexander junior would have been thirteen years old.⁵

Alexander is next met with in 1717 when he stood surety for William Prince when the latter was licensed to keep an alehouse in Aylesbury. The following year he is described as 'of Aylesbury, woollen draper' in the title deed to a cottage which he had purchased in Waddesdon.⁶ In 1720 the records of the Sun Fire Company identify him as a woollen draper and mercer (dealer in fabrics, etc.) insuring property located 'against the market place'.⁷ The early accounts of William Harding's Charity (founded in 1719) confirm that he was in business as a draper in Aylesbury between 1719 and 1733, when he was replaced as supplier of the coats required by the Charity for its annual distribution by Matthew Eeles, another Aylesbury draper. This cessation could mean that he had either failed in his business or had given it up. The Charity's accounts contain a possible clue to the circumstances. They show that Merrick had become involved with a fellow draper, Henry Pettipher, who had married Sarah Harding, the founder's sister-in-law and a beneficiary under his will, in January 1720. Following Pettipher's bankruptcy in 1722 Merrick, together with another local tradesman, had provided credit in the form of notes of hand and they had also acted as trustees for Mrs Pettipher's property under the founder's will. But Pettipher was bankrupted a second time in, or around, 1731 and it is not unlikely that Merrick suffered financially as a result through no fault of his own.⁸

After 1737 information about Merrick continues to be scarce, but his name appears in the surviving parish rate books, which commence in that year. His property was evidently of the smallest for he

was being assessed at only a penny halfpenny in the early 1750s, when the rate set was a halfpenny in the pound.⁹ His name is also included in a list of persons who voted for Thomas Potter, the Whig candidate, in a parliamentary election held for the borough of Aylesbury in December 1756.¹⁰ A few years later the burial of Alexander Merrick, described as ‘Surveyor of Windows’ (a minor government appointment for which he would have been well qualified by education) is recorded in the Aylesbury parish register on 24 July 1759. He was a few weeks short of his seventieth birthday. Also relevant is a reference in the Aylesbury churchwardens’ accounts to the application, in part, of the annual income of Hickman’s [almshouses] charity in 1758–60 to ‘the payment of Dawney’s and Merrick’s rent’, once again suggesting relative penury in his old age.¹¹

Hugh Hanley

REFERENCES

1. This is an expanded version of a note that appeared in the Spring 2004 issue of *The Newsletter of the Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust*, together with the text of the poem and a reconstruction drawing of the gardens as they were c.1738 by Eric Throssell FRIBA.
2. Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies (CBS) D/X/12/3. The paintings are illustrated in Roy Strong, *The Artist and the Garden* (Yale UP, 2000), which also contains comments on Merrick’s poem (pp. 224–232).
3. Beatrice Saxon Snell (ed.), *The Minute Book of the Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends for the Upperside of Buckinghamshire 1669–1690* (Bucks Record Society, vol. 1, 1937)
4. Microfilm of non-parochial registers in CBS.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Buckinghamshire Sessions Records*, vol. iv (1712–18), p. 202; CBS D/X/527/8.
7. Copy index to Sun Fire entries for Bucks, 1714–31, in CBS.
8. Hugh Hanley, *Apprenticing in a Market Town. The Story of William Harding’s Charity, Aylesbury, 1719–2000*, pp.43, 46–7, 61.
9. CBS PR11/11. There is a gap in the series between 1742 and 1750. In 1737 and 1742 Merrick’s name appears with no amount stated and in 1740 it is omitted altogether. No details of properties are given.
10. CBS D/AF/263.
11. Quoted in R. Gibbs, *A History of Aylesbury* (Aylesbury 1885), p. 391.