

Notes

AN IRON SOCKETED AXEHEAD FROM THE RIVER THAMES, BUSCOT, OXFORDSHIRE

An iron socketed axehead of prehistoric date, from the River Thames at Buscot, is now in the possession of Oxfordshire Museums.¹ The axehead was found in dredgings by the edge of the River Thames by Mr Mark Maillard.

The axehead is of looped socketed form; it is 113 mm. long with a blade width of 46 mm. and a socket 27×37.5 mm. It fits into Rainbow's type A,² with a symmetrical profile and convex cutting edge. The loop has slightly raised edges to give the cross-section a channelled effect. There is no moulding around the rim of the socket and the socket hole is slightly splayed. The axe is in a fair condition, although part of the cutting edge is missing and it is covered in corrosion products. It is not possible from its condition to tell whether it was ever used. Part of the wooden haft, identified as *Fraxinus* sp. (ash), is preserved within the socket. The resilient and elastic properties of ash make it an excellent hafting material which is in common use today.³

The axehead would have been forged from wrought iron, similar to the method of manufacture described by Manning and Saunders.⁴ The X-radiograph of the Buscot axehead clearly shows that the loop was made separately and then hammer-welded into position. It may have been attached before the socket was formed. Metallographic examination of a sample from the cutting edge revealed carbon-free (wrought) iron of the relatively low hardness of 148 HV (0.2). There is no evidence for the edge having been hardened by surface carburization or by hammering.

DISCUSSION

At least twenty-three socketed axeheads of varied form are known from the British Isles, although very few of these derive from secure contexts.⁵ The Buscot axehead is of Bronze Age form and typologically could be of a 7th–6th century BC date. Its form is similar to the slightly larger axehead from Traprain Law, East Lothian.⁶ Manning and Saunders have argued for an early date for this axehead on the grounds that it could have been associated with late Bronze Age metalwork. If the Buscot axehead is of a similar late Bronze Age/early Iron Age date then it is interesting to note that broadly contemporary settlement, land divisions and pottery have been found in the immediate area.⁷

¹ Oxfordshire Museums accession number OXCMS: 1994. 131.1.

² H.N. Rainbow, 'Socketed and looped axes of the British Isles', *Archaeological Journal*, 85 (1928), 170–5.

³ Maisie Taylor, pers. comm., and M. Taylor, *Wood in Archaeology* (Shire Archaeology 17, 1981).

⁴ W.H. Manning and C. Saunders, 'A socketed iron axe from Maids Moreton, Buckinghamshire, with a note on the type', *Antiquaries Journal*, 52 (2) (1972), 276–93.

⁵ Ibid. 276. Manning and Saunders list twenty-one examples. In addition is the axehead from the Fengate Power Station Site: D. Coombs, 'Flag Fen platform and Fengate Power Station post alignment – the metalwork', *Antiquity*, 66 (1992), no. 251, 504–18.

⁶ Manning and Saunders, op. cit. note 4, 287, Fig. 4.

⁷ A. Barclay, 'The Prehistoric Pottery', in A. Boyle, D. Miles and S. Palmer, *The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Butler's Field, Lechlade, Gloucestershire* (Oxford Archaeological Unit Thames Valley Landscapes: The Cotswold Water Park, Vol. 2, forthcoming); R. Hingley, 'Early Iron Age pottery', in T. Allen, T. Darvill, S. Green and M. Jones, *Excavations at Roughground Farm, Lechlade, Gloucestershire: a prehistoric and Roman landscape* (Oxford Archaeological Unit Thames Valley Landscapes: The Cotswold Water Park, Vol. 1, 1993); information from J. Timby.

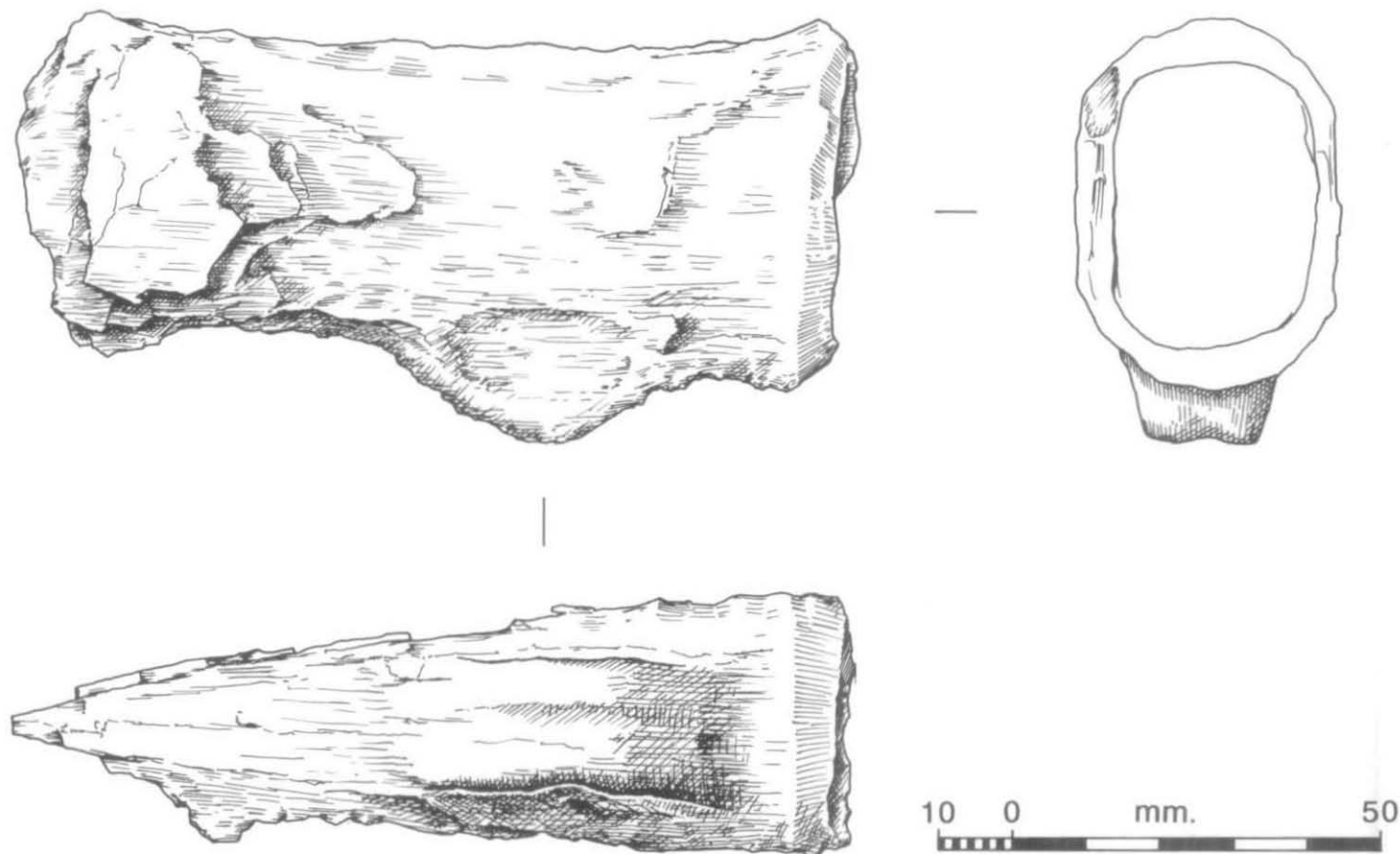


Fig. 1. Iron socketed axehead (Illustrated by Paul Hughes.).

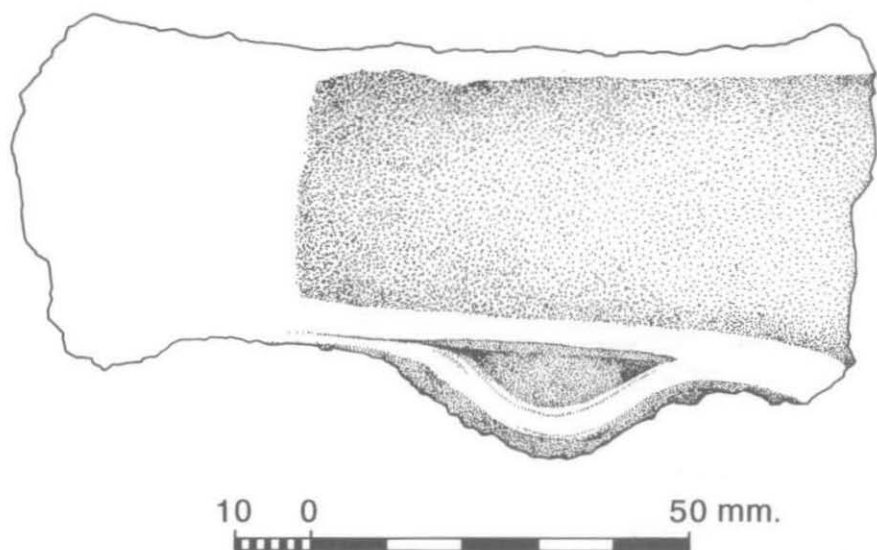


Fig. 2. Cross-section through the axehead showing welded loop. (Drawn from X-radiograph by Paul Hughes.)

The Buscot axehead appears to have been deposited as a hafted implement. Four of the axeheads listed by Manning and Saunders had wooden haft material preserved within their sockets, although the identification of the species is not given.⁸ The deposition of the Buscot axehead in a watery context may have been the result of casual loss, or perhaps a votive deposit. The deposition of stone and metal axeheads in watery contexts is a long-term practice which can be traced back to at least the start of the Neolithic.⁹ At least five other iron socketed axeheads have been recorded from the River Thames.¹⁰

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⁸ Manning and Saunders, *op. cit.* note 4, catalogue nos. 3, 7, 8 and 9.

⁹ R. Bradley, *The Passage of Arms: an Archaeological Analysis of Prehistoric and Votive Deposits* (1990).

¹⁰ Manning and Saunders, *op. cit.* note 4, catalogue nos. 5, 6, 7, 8 and 17.

SOME ROMAN AND PRE-ROMAN SETTLEMENTS AND ROADS BY THE CONFLUENCE OF THE CHERWELL AND THE RAY NEAR OTMOOR

The confluence of the Ray and the Cherwell at Islip has not been systematically investigated, even from the air. Review of published material, and of unpublished material on Islip Roman villa, suggests that the hill south of the confluence and its slopes – west to the Cherwell, but more especially north to the Ray and east to Otmoor – were continually, even if not continuously, used from Mesolithic times and were strongly exploited by the Romans at an early date. These conclusions are now being tested and extended by systematic field research and the purpose of this note is to present an initial overall picture of the area and its major features. In particular, there is evidence for pre-Roman tracks via Islip ford, and that these were used by the Romans at an early date. Understanding the later Roman roads has led to discovery of new Roman sites. The present village of Noke is located where a track of pre-Roman origin crosses a Roman road near where Roman pottery-scatter is found.

GEOLOGY

The dominant geology comprises a hill south and north of the confluence, Islip ford and Otmoor. The hill is a cornbrash inlier surrounded by the flood plains of the Cherwell and the Ray, split at Islip to provide fords of both those rivers. It is so sited as to form a stepping stone on a NW-SE route to a Corallian outlier at Beckley, at right angles to the normal lie of land in the county. The River Ray originally flowed through Otmoor, and the flat, wet moor must then as now have acted like a broad river, impassable in winter and providing pasture at its margins in summer.

Otmoor itself, and the area to the south-west of Islip, are on the flood plain close to the 58 m. OD level. The area east of Islip is regularly flooded, and was flooded in January 1995 with the water level 58.38 m. OD at Islip sluice, but a slight cornbrash ridge 1 mile east at SP 5435 1432 kept both banks still visible. This continues south as a ridge or ledge which runs parallel to the main street of Lower Noke, about 50 m. closer to the moor, and thence as a broader ledge as far as Beckley; it represents the last habitable ground above a contour at 60 m. OD before the descent onto the alluvial plain of the moor below about 59 m. OD.

PRE-ROMAN

Mesolithic material has been found mainly in the west – on the Cherwell's east bank south of the confluence, close by the fords (especially PRN 14346–56).¹ There is also a site of uncertain attribution in the west near the Cherwell (PRN 5181–3). East near the Ray, there are traces of possible barrows (PRN 9406) and Bronze-Age ring ditches (PRN 11610). Flint and bronze tools have been found on the hillsides below Woodeaton temple (PRN 11631, PRN 11633, PRN 14354), near Islip ford (PRN 1321, 11634) and in the centre of Noke (PRN 15436: the find locations were actually centred on SP 546 131, rather than as reported). From c. middle 1st millennium BC, there was an Iron Age community on the hill, near a presumed Celtic shrine which became Woodeaton Romano-Celtic temple.²

I have now also found evidence of (a pair of?) ring ditches³ at SP 5458 1311 (in the same area as PRN 15436). I have found worked flint including cores, parts of several blades and scrapers, a large coarse arrow head, and a fine barbed and tanged arrow head c. 2 cm. long, at locations along or just below the ledge round Otmoor already described, especially between SP 5471 1310 and SP 5492 1294 in the field known as Back of Town, and in the large field known as Moat Field centred on SP 5512. I also report a late Bronze Age looped and socketed axe, about 12 cm. long, found in 1971 by Harold Righton at SP 552 124 in Moat Field. Finally, I report preliminary conclusions from recent excavation of the contents of a well at SP 5423 1347, by Geoff Henman, Jim Wood and myself: in a rock cleft by the underlying spring were some animal bones and several score of flakes of worked flint, embedded among stones just by the main spring, and pottery including some dating to late Bronze Age.⁴

ROMAN

The frontier between the Catuvellauni and the Dobunni is supposed to have followed either the Cherwell, or, possibly, by AD 43, a line further west, perhaps at Challow Hill Glympton, where there are 'Belgic' fortifications.

Woodeaton 'frontier' temple, however, looks out SE over Otmoor and not, as one might be led to think by Kirk's report,⁵ SW over the Cherwell, which, though passing closer, is only just visible two

¹ Principal Record Numbers cited are all in the Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record.

² D.W. Harding, *Excavations in Oxfordshire 1964–66* (Edinburgh Univ. Occasional Paper No. 15).

³ Aerial photograph held by RCHM, ref. US 7PH GP LOC 303 no. 8048 (22/4/44).

⁴ Paul Booth, pers. comm.

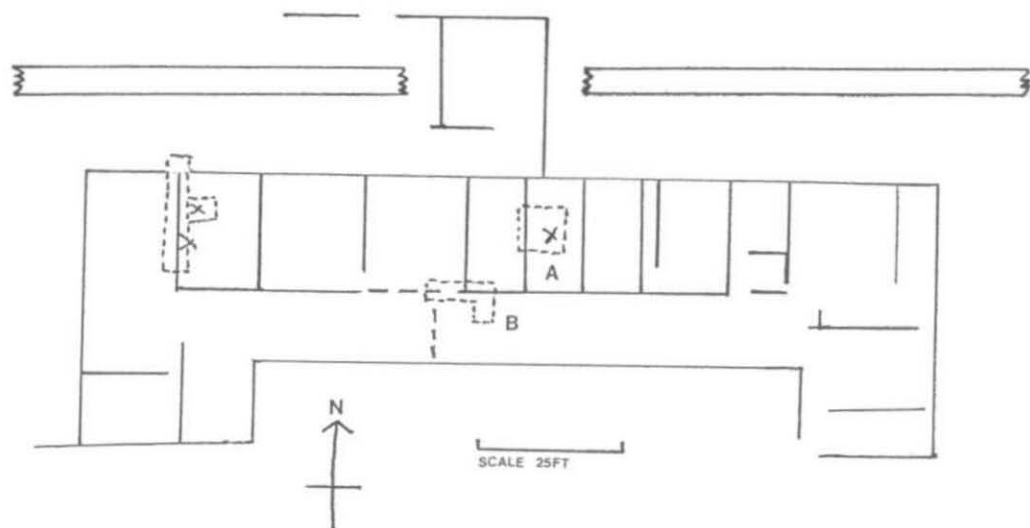


Fig. 1. Scale Plan of Islip Roman Villa.

miles away from the temple site. Nor, as the display in the Ashmolean might lead one to think, does it face west towards the Cherwell Valley. Location of a 'Samian bowl . . . of early-middle 1st-century' form under the floor of the *cella* of Woodeaton temple, and of coins of Agrippa struck in the time of Gaius and Tiberius, indicate a surprisingly early date for the first rebuilding in stone:⁶ Lewis⁷ suggested c. AD 65, which would be about as early as any English temple outside Colchester.

Near the temple is Islip Roman villa. This impressively large villa is unusually sited, facing south but up a north slope: this does, however, give it a fine view of Otmoor, from which it is conversely very visible. It was first identified by Aitken in 1962,⁸ and pottery (not previously published⁹) excavated by him is of mainly 2nd-century forms, some being just possibly earlier.¹⁰ The plan (Fig. 1) is one he made in 1962 from ground level measurements of crop-marks, with some slight additions from my own 1995 ground level observations, and differs from later plans drawn from aerial photographs.¹¹ Aitken located a circular hearth at point A at some 18 in. above ground level, and found the villa wall to be three ft. thick at point B on the plan. His collection of twenty-four unpublished aerial photographs from 1962 shows many interesting features: the unusual double enclosure and field system; two circular shapes in the inner enclosure; enclosure walls two to three times thicker than those of the villa itself (confirmed by 1995 ground measurement); a possible gateway in the south wall of the inner enclosure;¹² a section of wall of the outer enclosure close to and parallel to the present B4027; and tracks and other possible anthropogenic features in the associated fields. Aitken's magnetic recordings

⁵ J.R. Kirk, 'Bronzes from Woodeaton', *Oxoniensia*, xiv (1949), 1.

⁶ R. Goodchild and J.R. Kirk, 'The Romano-Celtic Temple at Woodeaton', *Oxoniensia*, xix (1954), 22-3.

⁷ M.J.T. Lewis, *Temples in Roman Britain* (1966).

⁸ D.R. Wilson, 'Roman Britain in 1962', *JRS*, liii (1963), 125.

⁹ I am very grateful to Prof. M.J.A. Aitken for making his material (pottery, plan and photographs) available to me and for allowing me to include a short summary in this publication.

¹⁰ Paul Booth, pers. comm.

¹¹ S.S. Frere and J.K.S. St. Joseph, *Roman Britain from the Air* (1983), 196; D. Miles, 'Confusion in the countryside', in D. Miles (ed.), *The Romano-British Countryside* (BAR 103, 1982), 74.

¹² Better shown by another unpublished photograph in the possession of the farmer, Mr J. Sherrell.

also suggest a structure, presumably earlier, at 45° to the one on the plan,¹³ as do some of the photographs. St. Joseph's photographs (especially BCJ 17) show occupation features in the south-east of the outer enclosure.

I have made a preliminary analysis of coins from Woodeaton temple which shows it was in use throughout the occupation, while strong 3rd- and 4th-century context is indicated both by specific Constantinian hoards and a significant excess of Constantinian coins in the general finds. Some of the pottery from Islip villa excavated by Aitken, and pottery found by field walking in 1976,¹⁴ date either to the 3rd or 4th century, as do other pottery finds near the route of the modern B4027, at Great Forest Ground (PRN 14294), Druns Hill (PRN 1327) and Forest Farm (PRN 11258).

I have found scatter of Roman pottery in most of the fields I have searched, indicating probable agricultural use. In Back of Town field, especially on the ledge, I have found a more dense scatter with pottery distribution consistent with common domestic use, and including some pottery which could be of either late Roman or early medieval date. North of there, I found an area dense with whiteware mortarium sherds. In the large field centred on SP5512, I found not only a general predominance of Roman pottery in the scatter, but also five specific discrete sites where densities in a 9 m. grid square ranged from significantly above field average to over 50 gm./sq.m., with a high proportion of mortarium fragments. Iron slag at a sixth location may be Roman. The total area of dense scatter is at least two hectares, but the area of iron slag and two of the areas of pottery scatter form part of a larger area of five hectares, not yet thoroughly searched, which seems to contain dense scatter throughout.

A well at SP 5423 1347 is known locally as the 'Roman' well, possibly because it consists of large, well-dressed stoned of a type not otherwise found locally. As noted above, the underlying spring source has yielded pre-Roman material, but only a single shard of Roman pottery has so far been found.

Roads (Fig. 2)

The Roman road from Alchester to Dorchester (Margary's R160b¹⁵) crosses Otmoor. Plot¹⁶ found another road 'whereof there is a part still remaining about Noke, whence it passes through the fields to the purlue grounds, where it cuts the Worcester road and so into Drunshil' (ABCD in Fig. 2). It leaves the modern Islip-Merton road near Oddington, passes through the centre of Noke very close to the location of PRN 15436, and cuts a District boundary just north of the modern B4027 near Drun's Hill, after passing close by what were still known in 1843 as the Purley Lanes.¹⁷ A second road (FEH), located by Plot, Hussey,¹⁸ and Jewitt,¹⁹ seemed to them a *diverticulum* from R160b (PRN 12728). Hussey found the connecting section (CE),²⁰ which runs along the modern District boundary. Many people have suggested the B4027 is ancient: this now seems more definitely confirmed by the route of Plot's road, together with the evidence that at one point the road appears to form the boundary of Islip villa. It has also often been suggested there is a road (IK) beyond Islip to the Kirtlington Portway.

These conclusions hopefully resolve a long, and increasingly unprofitable, history of debate over roads in this area. Plot's brief descriptions left considerable subsequent doubt and uncertainty. Unfortunately Hussey, having reported (rather than observed first hand) a section in Log Field Noke,²¹ connected it with another reported section nearby to give a false line, which subsequent commentators

¹³ Tony Johnson, pers. comm.; from replotting Aitken's original recordings.

¹⁴ Major Roberts, pers. comm.; the pottery is in the county museum.

¹⁵ I.D. Margary, *Roman Roads* (1967).

¹⁶ R. Plot, *The Natural History of Oxfordshire* (1705), 326.

¹⁷ Oxon. Archives, Islip tithe map and award (1843).

¹⁸ D. Hussey, *The Roman Road from Alchester to Dorchester* (1841), 32.

¹⁹ L. Jewitt, 'Excavations in Headington', *Jnl. Brit. Arch. Ass.*, vi (1851), 53.

²⁰ Hussey, op. cit. 31.

²¹ Hussey, op. cit. 30.

accepted. In addition, Hussey and others seemed intent on forcing Plot's two sections to be a single road, even though Plot clearly showed them to be distinct.²² Not surprisingly, Hussey had difficulty tracing the roads, while Parker, who neither made personal observations on the ground nor read Plot carefully enough, concluded that 'Plot imagined roads all over the place and assumed that they were a single road',²³ and V.C.H. Oxon. thought his road 'a very wandering line'.²⁴

Plot's road through Noke can in fact routinely be observed almost continuously throughout its length, both on the ground and from aerial photographs. The section in Log Field is regularly observed by the present farmer from crop marks and as a different feel while ploughing,²⁵ and is said to be 'curving to the south hedge' (away from Hussey's line). It was visible long enough to be recorded (in a crop of rape!) in July 1995 and, if not curving, at least changes direction twice. That section, and almost the whole route, can be seen in aerial photographs,²⁶ most as sections of hedge line but also some as double ditch, with some short sections of hedge at otherwise inexplicable angles and some long sections accompanied by the line of the second ditch. Manor Farm, Noke, contains a short section of what looks like an agger, and in several places there seems to be incompletely ploughed out agger, especially where the road crosses or runs along hedge boundaries.

The crossing of the Ray at SP 5435 1432 is near pre-Roman occupation sites on both sides of the river. I cannot find any continuation north of the T-junction with the Islip-Merton road, and suggest therefore that it heads from there to Alchester along the line of the Islip-Merton road (line AY). I speculate the latter was initially a pre-Roman track round NW Otmoor, not necessarily ever metalled. It is on a fairly straight line following a line of cornbrash inliers, but avoiding multiple crossings of the Ray. The very straight section on raised 'agger' beyond Merton to Ambrosden was built in 1741 or 1744 (I cannot decipher the source),²⁷ but houses in Ambrosden show it to be on an existing line, and there are Roman or earlier remains where it crosses R160b, east of Merton and in Ambrosden.

The fact that Plot's road through Noke does cut the B4027 at C in Fig. 2, rather than going direct from B to E as the ground would allow, suggests both that C to E was part of a separate road, and that ABC does continue across it as Plot reported. In addition to the many sites close to the line of the modern B4027, there is specific evidence (as at Islip villa: see above) of a road running very close to the modern line. It has in the past been implied that the B4027 was a metalled road from Islip to Wheatley and beyond (ICEG), and speculated that it is a pre-Roman track,²⁸ but there is no specific evidence for the former, and hitherto no precise evidence for the latter.

Finally, I also note that the final alignment of R160b at Cowley, before the road turns east, is on point E in Fig. 2; in fact the 'Dorchester to Alchester' road points closer to Islip than to Alchester.

Interpretation of roads

The concentration of sites occupied in the 3rd or 4th century along the line of the B4027, from R160b past Druns Hill, Woodeaton temple and Islip villa to Islip ford, thence to the Kirtlington Portway, forms a self-consistent picture which needs no interpretation.

The other roads, and the early date of Woodeaton temple, are more problematic. Plot thought that both roads he observed were alternative means of getting from Alchester to Oxford, but Hussey thought it more likely that they made a single road by-passing Otmoor. The case for the latter conclusion was strengthened recently when the bridge of R160b across the Ray at Fencott was found to date from no earlier than AD 95.²⁹

²² Plot, *op. cit.*, enclosed map.

²³ J. Parker, *Early History of Oxford* (O.H.S. iii), 66ff.

²⁴ *V.C.H. Oxon.* i, 279.

²⁵ Geoff Henman, *pers. comm.* (1994).

²⁶ Including RAF, Ordnance Survey (1947) and that cited at footnote 3 above, among others.

²⁷ Oxon. Archives, Merton Enclosure Award (1763).

²⁸ *V.C.H. Oxon.* i, 279.

²⁹ R.A. Chambers, 'A Roman Timber Bridge at Ivy Farm, Fencott with Murcott, Oxon.', *Oxonensia*, li (1986), 31.

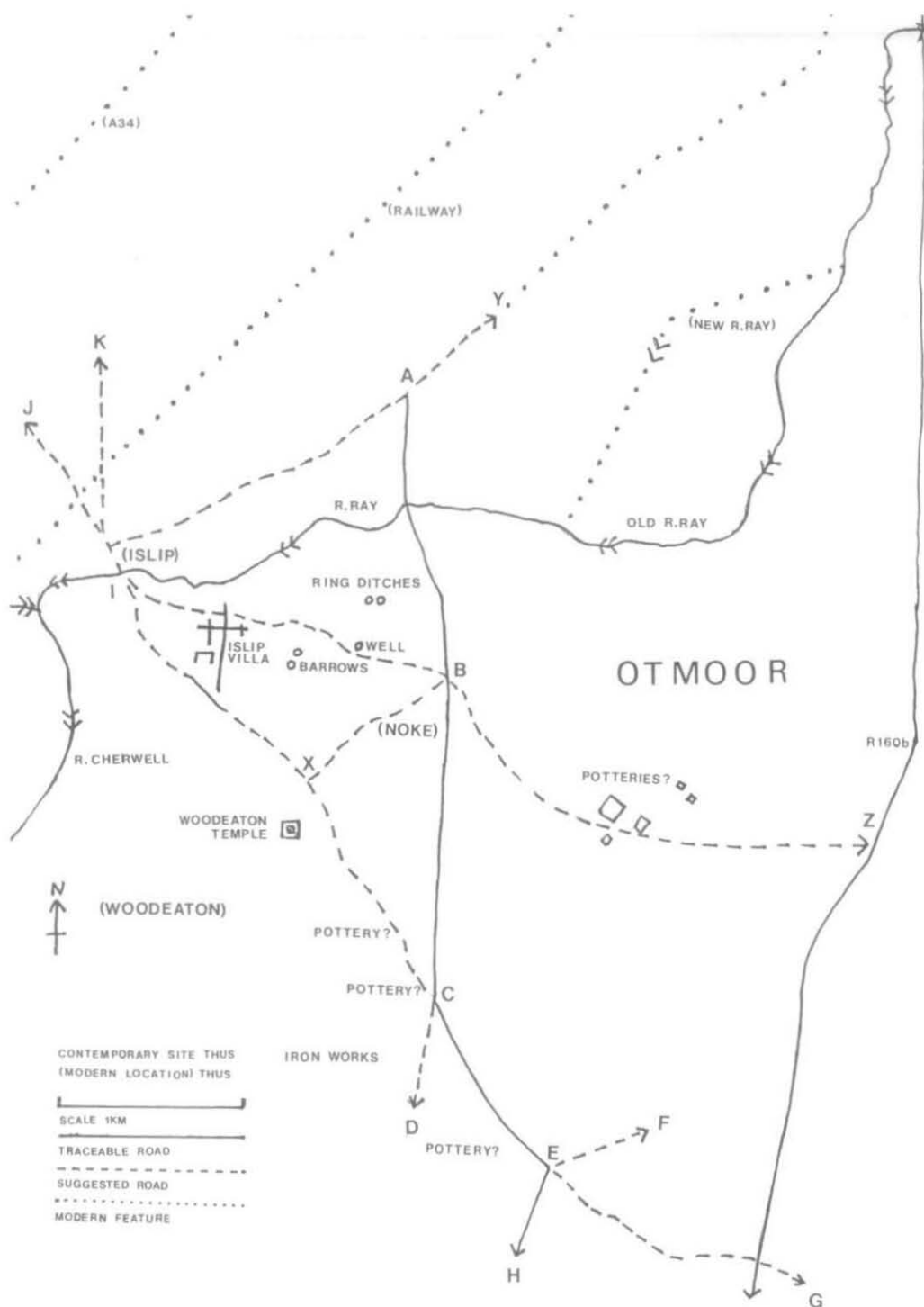


Fig. 2. Map of area and main features.

I suggest, however, that the key to understanding the area lies in evidence that Islip ford enables a SE–NW route so unique that it has been important for over 6,000 years. The presence of much archaeological evidence in the vicinity of a ford suggests it was used from earliest Mesolithic times through to the end of the Roman occupation.

Later, there was an important medieval road from London to Worcester and Wales via Islip. 'London to Islip' is Plate 1 in Ogilby's *Britannia* of 1675. Cromwell fought an engagement in 1645 to control Islip Bridge. The B4027 remains an important secondary route; the M40 was originally proposed to be routed nearby.

It is possible the B4027 was a Roman road or pre-Roman track extending east beyond R160b (EG in Fig. 2), but I suggest it is improbable that there was not a Neolithic track between the major Neolithic sites SE of Islip at Dorchester, and N and W of Islip at Rollright, Cornbury and Ascott-under-Wychwood, on the unique SE–NW route through Islip.

Although metalled Roman roads are often assumed to have early military origins, I question whether Roman generals were any more inclined than their modern successors to make improvement of supply routes a priority rather than rapid advance, and I see little specific evidence for early dating. It seems more likely that, during their expansion NW in AD 44–47, the XIVth Legion would have used an existing track, and Dorchester to Islip is an obvious candidate. Indeed, either Islip, or even the 'Belgic' fortifications at Challow Hill, Glympton, might have been garrisoned in AD 43, depending on how far west one takes the frontier of the Catuvellauni to have been. There are, moreover, signs of continuing later use for such a route (XII), not only in Islip Roman villa, but in earlier, 1st-century villa sites at Sansom's Platt, Ditchley and Challow Hill, where a defended villa site lies near the Belgic fortifications, and in a camp at Cornbury. Although Ditchley and Challow Hill have often been explained by general proximity to Akeman Street, in practice there must have been a nearer road.

Having conquered in AD 43 by successfully dividing, the Romans should have felt an immediate need for a route north from Calleva and Dorchester, to ensure that legions advancing north remained in contact with and could be supplied from south coast ports and other friendly bases in Atrebat territory. I suggest that the road NW from Dorchester to Islip quickly became a road round Otmoor to the west, using pre-Roman tracks, years before Alchester became a settled town.

Plot's road through Noke, then, probably is part of an Otmoor bypass, albeit a short tactical diversion over metalled road to replace pre-Roman track east of Islip that flooded in winter, rather than a wholly new road through virgin territory. It should therefore have been metalled before the completion of R160b across Otmoor, and excavation might confirm or refute this, but the section to R160b at Cowley (EH) might have been metalled much later. Indeed, the configuration shown in Fig. 2, and the fact that the route to Cowley itself makes several changes of direction, do suggest piecemeal metalling of a well-established road system serving several functions, rather than the building 'de novo' of straight roads.

The probable continuance of road ABC south of the B4027 does, moreover, suggest that Plot was right to speculate on a road to Oxford, albeit to the Iron Age sites of N Oxford rather than the mythical pre-Roman city in which he believed, and this would also provide the route that Stevens suggested, between Frilford and Woodeaton via Oxford.³⁰ I cannot yet trace a definite route, but there is a suggestive line past possible potteries at Forest Farm (PRN 11258) and Elsfield (PRN 11408) which connects with a former straight 'green lane' in Marston at Peasmoor Brook just where there was a pottery (PRN 6142). There are signs of pre-Roman occupation (PRN 9166, PRN 12588) along Peasmoor Brook to the Cherwell at Parson's Pleasure, at which point Simms claims there was an Anglo-Saxon bridge.³¹ In January 1995, I observed Peasmoor Brook to offer the best approach to the Cherwell in flood, and in June I found a hard and shallow bar across the river from the north bank of the Peasmoor Brook. Although sticking to the high ground, rather than going through Woodeaton at 58 m. OD, this route is far from wandering.

³⁰ C.E. Stevens, 'The Frilford Site – a Postscript', *Oxonienia*, v (1940), 166–7.

³¹ G. Simms, 'Some Historical and Antiquarian Notes on Holywell Parish, Oxford', *Proc. Ox. Arch. & Hist. Soc.* v (1889), 209–10.

In conclusion, an early date for Woodeaton temple certainly becomes more understandable if, in AD 44, it was situated next to the supply route of an army near its frontier with potentially unfriendly territory, and thereafter until after AD 95 near to a main S-N road. Further work is needed to establish when Islip villa was first founded, and whether it is at a prior settlement site as aerial photographs can be interpreted to suggest.

NOKE BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE ROMAN OCCUPATION

The route shown from Islip through Noke (IBZ in Fig. 2) is still mostly track and road rather than hedge, and is almost continuous: the double ditches of a track of the Islip villa field system appear across the only missing section. Near the route lie ring ditches, barrows and pottery and flint finds, while the 'Roman' well (which seems to be some 1,500 years older than that in origin) is next to it. There is Roman pottery in Back of Town and it was in searching for a possible continuation beyond Noke (BZ) that the large area of Roman pottery-scatter was found east of Noke. In short, there seems to have been a *pre-Roman* track from Islip ford round Otmoor, which was in use during the Roman period. Its exact line possibly followed the cornbrash ledge between Noke and Otmoor, rather than the present main street. When the Roman road was built though Noke, it formed a cross-roads with this previously existing route near to the centre of the modern village. Moreover, the modern road into Noke (XB) starts close to Woodeaton temple and comes down to the same meeting point: it seems likely there was a Roman-period track at least for summer use along such a line, to give a short route (XB, BZ) to Alchester via R160b. Noke church, whose foundations are potentially Saxon, was sited near the cross-roads and there is an early medieval village which ran from there along the line of the modern road through Lower Noke. To this day some forty-five houses stretch over more than a mile along two roads (XB, BZ) at right angles.

C.J. CHEETHAM

PLOT ADJACENT TO 4 HETHE ROAD, HARDWICK, OXON.

Introduction (Fig. 1)

Hardwick is situated in the north-east of the county, lying on Great Oolitic limestone overlain by flint gravel. Minor roads connect Hardwick with Stoke Lyne and the Oxford-Brackley Road, and with Hethe and the Bicester-Aynho Road. The name Hardwick probably derives from Old English *herdwick* (sheep or possibly cattle farm, or dwelling place for flocks and herds), suggesting that a settlement formed here because the drift gravel of the uplands provided fine pasture. As the church at Hardwick was a chapelry of Stoke Lyne in the mid 12th century, it is possible that the *herdwick* belonged to a Saxon estate there.¹

Hardwick was one of the least populous places in Ploughley Hundred. The Compton Census of 1676 records twenty-three adults, while subsequent documents record two houses and three cottages in 1738, a farmhouse and six cottages in 1759, eleven houses in 1771, and a peak year in 1821 of seventeen houses and ninety-eight inhabitants.² The Manor Farm (formerly the manor house) and the church stand on relatively high ground which falls away to a stream on the west. Today the farm buildings lie mainly in the village, on either side of the Hethe Road.

Consideration was given to the development of a plot of land adjacent to 4 Hethe Road (SP

¹ *Victoria History of the County of Oxford*, vi, 168.

² *Ibid.*

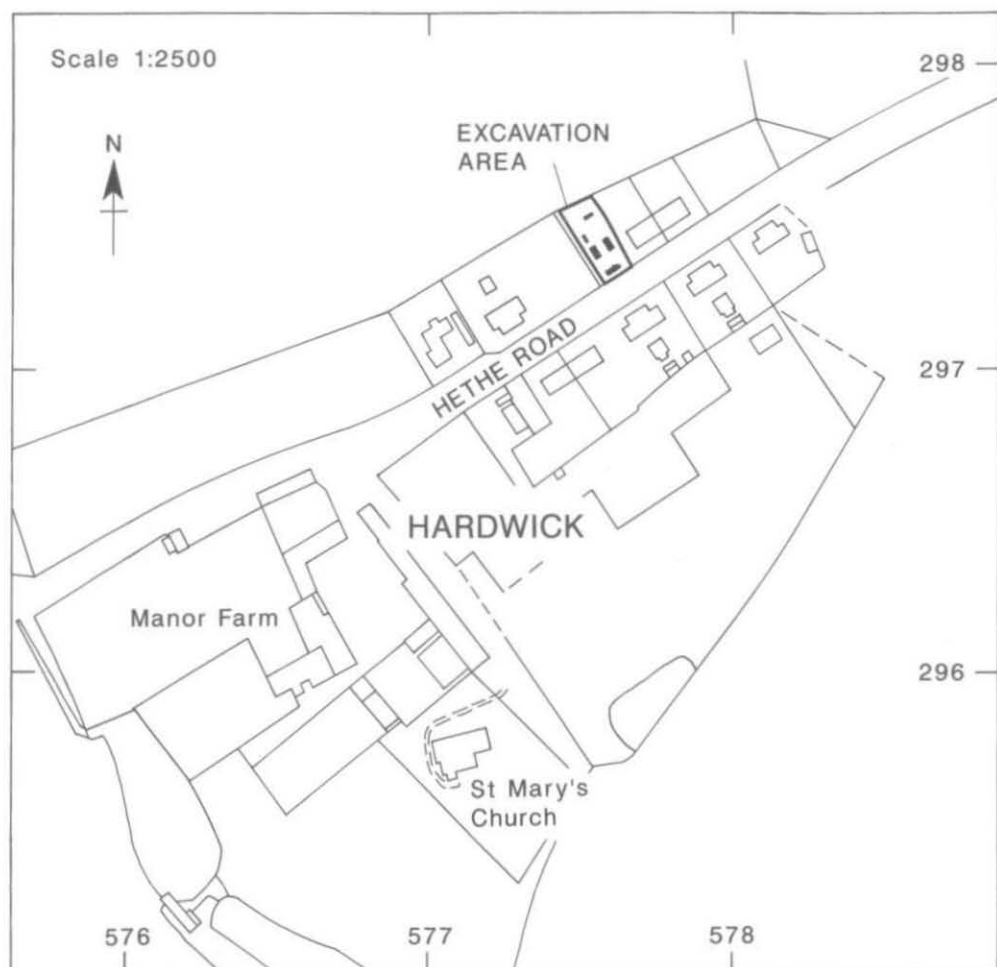


Fig. 1. Hardwick: location of the evaluation.

57762974). The area (Fig. 1) lies immediately south of earthworks of the shrunken medieval village (S.M.V.) of Hardwick,³ approximately 160 m. north of the church. In early 1992, Oxford Archaeological Unit undertook an evaluation to ascertain whether remains of the S.M.V. were present on the site proposed for development. Five trenches were excavated by JCB with subsequent hand-cleaning of deposits. This revealed remarkably well-preserved remains of two buildings fronting onto Hethe Road (Fig. 2). No excavation of the remains was undertaken, other than cleaning.

³ Oxon. County Sites and Monuments Record, PR.N. 971.

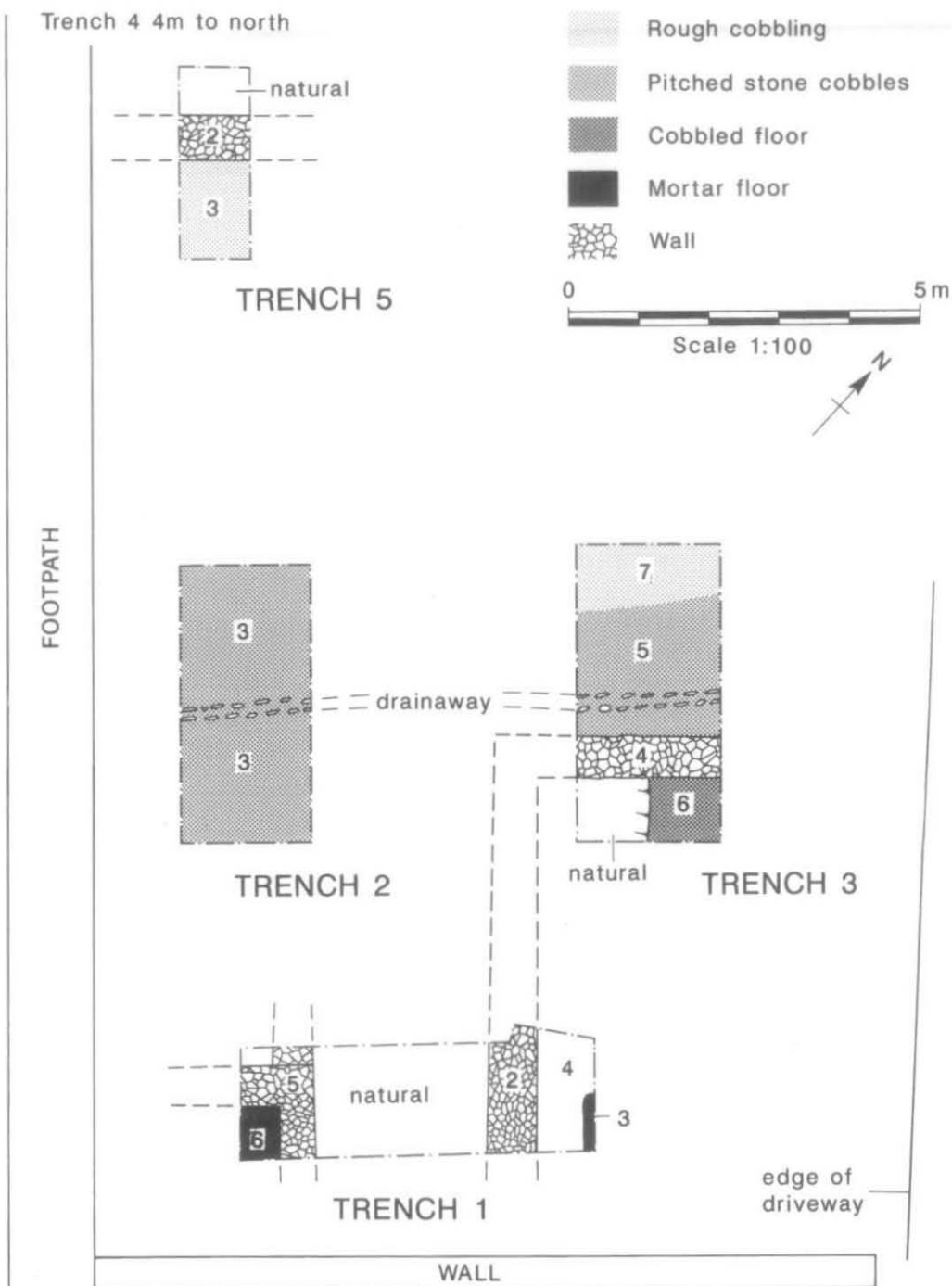


Fig. 2. Plan of the major features found in Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 5.

Results (Fig. 2)

The eastern building contained a pale yellow/white mortar floor towards the front of the buildings (Trench 1, 3) overlying a make-up layer of sandy gravel (Trench 1, 4). A cobbled floor (Trench 3, 6) lay in the rear of the building. The rear wall of the building (Trench 3, 4) was constructed of limestone blocks bonded with a yellow/white mortar, and a doorway was apparent through this wall.

The western building did not extend as far back from the road as the eastern building. It contained a partition wall (Trench 1, 5), with a mortar floor (Trench 1, 6) in the 'front room'. The wall constructions were similar to those of the eastern building.

To the rear of the buildings was a cobbled yard, with neatly-arranged pitched stone immediately adjacent to the buildings, separated from a slightly less neat arrangement (Trench 2, 3 and Trench 3, 5) by a narrow, open drain. This in turn gave way to rough cobbling (Trench 3, 7 and Trench 5, 3) extending c. 8 m. from the rear of the eastern building to a wall (Trench 5, 2).

The make-up layer to the mortar floor in the eastern building contained a sherd of 11th- to 12th-century pottery, although due to the limited investigation this dating cannot be relied on, since the sherd may well be residual. The only other dating evidence was a second sherd of 11th- to 12th-century pottery from a layer overlying the natural gravel to the rear of the enclosed cobbled yard in Trench 5.

Since the well-preserved remains lay only c. 0.2 m. below the present ground level, the development was not carried out.

JOHN MOORE

BELL LANE AND NORTH STREET, THAME

Introduction

The developments for the new Police Station and the Waitrose Store were cases of lost opportunities for gaining a full understanding of this part of Thame, which lies to the east of the old town centre and north of the burgrave plots which make up New Thame (Fig. 1).

Thame was already a settlement of some importance before the Domesday Survey, being the centre of a bishop's estate, and having a minster church. This early settlement was centred around St. Mary's church. The focus of the town shifted to the south-east from the mid 12th century onwards, so that New Thame lay north and south of the High Street and Cornmarket. The status of the town as a market centre meant that it continued to flourish until the 19th century.¹

Evaluations comprising the excavation of a number of trenches were carried out by Oxford Archaeological Unit in November 1988 and August 1991, prior to both developments. No further archaeological investigations were required as part of the consent for planning permission for the Waitrose store, while a watching brief was a condition of the consent for the Police Station. However, the timetable and practices of the main contractors did not allow a meaningful recording exercise to be undertaken.

Results

The limited results are summarized here. In Area A (Fig. 1) an evaluation trench located a wall, set about 35 m. back from North Street, which apparently formed part of a tile-roofed structure. Between it and the road was a concentration of pits, ditches and small gullies which were of similar date to the

¹ *Victoria History of the County of Oxford*, vii, 160 sqq.

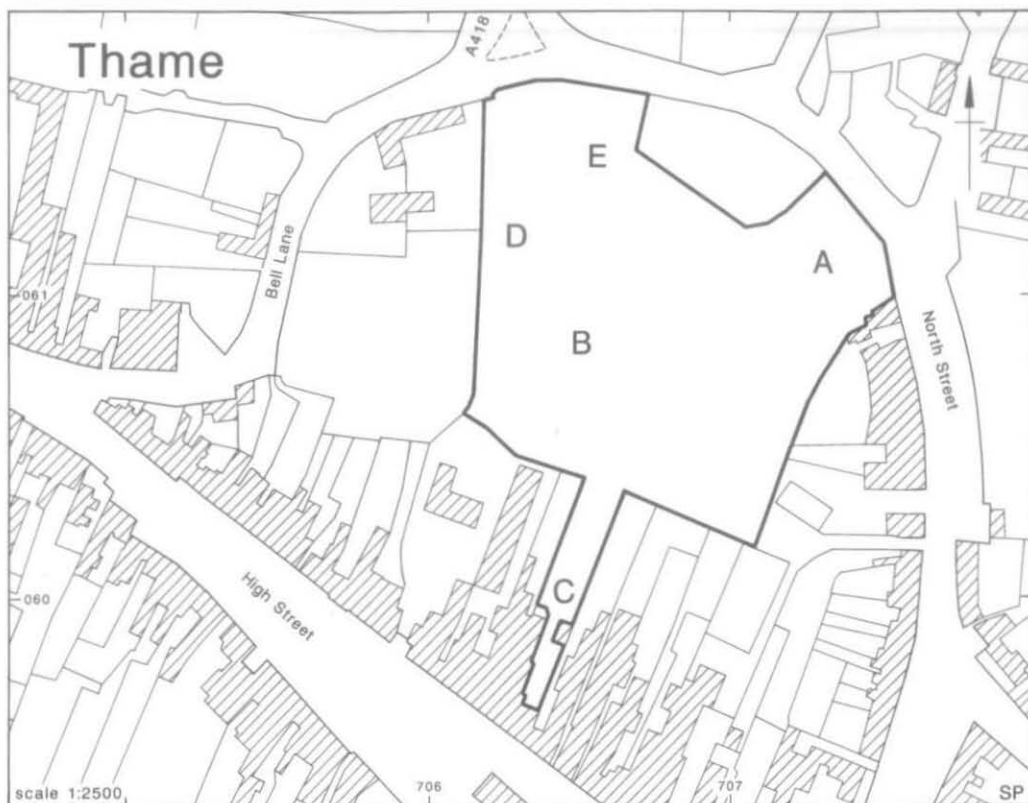


Fig. 1. Thame; location of development areas A to E.

building, mid 12th to mid 13th century. Some of the features were reasonably substantial, including pits up to 1.5 m. in diameter and ditches 0.8 m. wide and 0.6 m. deep.

In Area B a ditch was found, which appeared to form the rear boundary of the properties fronting onto Bell Lane/North Street. A further medieval ditch in this area contained a sherd of Bronze Age pottery, and an unstratified flint flake was also recovered. An isolated small medieval pit was found south-east of Area B.

In Area C, a trench was hand-excavated in the garden of 105–106 High Street and therefore within the burgage plots of New Thame. This trench proved to lie just north of a stone building (15th century or later), the north wall of which was partially revealed. It survived to a height of 0.9 m., with the top of the wall lying 0.3 m. below modern ground level. The remainder of the trench was taken up by a complex of deep, intercutting pits, mainly of 16th- to 19th-century date. These pits were up to 1.8 m. deep and had evidently destroyed nearly all, if not all, traces of earlier activity.

The evaluation and subsequent watching brief for the Police Station site revealed evidence for 13th- to 17th-century remains. Area D contained a sequence of ditches and pits dated to the 13th century, overlain in part by rubble from a tile-roofed building (dated 14th to 15th century) of which a north wall was located. The earlier pits contained a considerable quantity of iron slag. A hearth consisting of small stones set on their sides appeared to be outside the building. One large pit of 17th-century date was excavated in this area.

Area E contained numerous undated features which were mainly gullies parallel to Bell Lane. Other features included two pits and a brick wall. All these remains could be relatively modern.

Property boundaries of 13th-century date were found, aligned at right-angles to Bell Lane; the alignment of these boundaries was similar to that of the modern property boundaries existing at the time of the investigations. These probably turned eastwards to link with the rear boundary found in Area B.

Comment

Although the investigations only hinted at the range of archaeological evidence contained on this site, some conclusions can be drawn. The south-east side of North Street is still lined with houses, and it seems likely that in the medieval period houses continued round the curve of the road, which was formerly part of the main route linking Thame Abbey (now Thame Park) with the Oxford to Aylesbury road; this roadside development may be at least as early as the mid 12th to 13th century. The quantity of iron slag found in Area D suggests that some of this development may have had an industrial character.

JOHN MOORE

THE SHRINE OF ST. MARY, CAVERSHAM

In 1981 an article was published in *Oxoniensia* by C. Haigh and D. Loades entitled 'The fortunes of the shrine of St. Mary of Caversham'. In it they attempted to discover, amongst other things, the site of St. Mary's chapel.¹ This, following the Dissolution of the monasteries, appears to have disappeared completely. The chapel may originally have belonged to the manor of Caversham, as Walter Giffard, the lord of Caversham, gave it to Notley Abbey in Buckinghamshire in 1164. It appears to have been an important shrine with many relics apparently rivalling Walsingham.²

During the last two years three members of the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group have been attempting a landscape survey of the old parish of Caversham, and during this have tried to find the lost site of the shrine. This we think we may have accomplished.

Sarah Markham's book on John Loveday of Caversham (1711-89)³ quotes from his journal, in which he records that he was told by an Alderman Watts of Reading that the 'Chappel of Our Lady was at Benwells Caversham farm'. The Benwells owned the farm now called Deans Farm in the 16th and the beginning of the 18th century. It is also thought probable that the site of Deans Farm was that of the old manor house, although there is no proof. The manor house was already ruinous or pulled down by 1493, and the moat had also been drained.⁴ Deans Farm is by the side of the Thames on a dry gravel spit above the surrounding flood plain; this would have made provision of a moat easy, and as the only access, even now, is by a causeway, it would have been defensible. The farm is away from habitation (although the flood plain to the east is being built on at the moment), and this would agree with Dr. John London's statement that 'St. Mary's standeth so wildly'.⁵ London was given the task of removing the valuables and clearing the building, and was remarking that he was not worried about lead being removed from the roof. Standing outside Deans Farm and looking across the river, the site of Reading Abbey, also the focus of pilgrimage, can be seen opposite. Henry III gave the canons of

¹ C. Haigh and D. Loades, 'The Fortunes of the Shrine of St. Mary of Caversham', *Oxoniensia*, xlv (1981), 62-72.

² Ibid. 63.

³ S. Markham, *John Loveday of Caversham, 1711-89* (Salisbury, 1984), 49.

⁴ M.T. Pearman, *Historical Notes of Caversham* (Oxford Archaeological Society, 1894), 26-7.

⁵ Haigh and Loades, op. cit. p. 68.

Notley two oak trees for the building of a boat to ferry pilgrims across the river to the shrine of St. Mary.⁶ In 1306 there is mention of passage money for the use of barges at the ferry at 'Estthorpe' or Lower Caversham.⁷ This ferry would have served both the pilgrims and the inhabitants of Lower Caversham. It is thought that East Throp was the oldest part of the village, which equates with the manor house being near. It therefore seems possible that the chapel was originally part of the manor complex.

The field name evidence was now examined. In a royal survey for Francis Knollys in 1551-2,⁸ half a virgate called Popes included one close [called] St. Mary croft and a half acre in Reyley. These lands, by their position in the survey, were down by the River Thames. (Several pieces of land at Caversham were given to Notley Abbey by William Marshal the elder, including one of unspecified size 'inter capellum & aquam Tamaisie'⁹ - could this be the croft?) A list of property in 1633 included '... all that parcel of land called Capull alias Riley';¹⁰ Capull can therefore be equated with chapel, and Riley is a corruption of Reyley. The tithe award of 1846¹¹ shows, to the west of Deans Farm, two fields called Left-handed Ray and Right-handed Ray. Ray means meadow next to a river, and Ley can also mean meadow,¹² so it seems possible that Reyley is the same as Ray.

The possible site of the shrine may now be under water as there are huge gravel workings to the east of Deans Farm. A Romano-British font was found when digging the gravel in this area, which may indicate that this has been a Christian centre for a long time. That we are making bricks without straw is possible, but we are convinced of the position of the shrine.

P. PREECE, M. KIFT, and M. FALLOWFIELD

⁶ *Close Rolls* 1237-42, p. 108.

⁷ Pearman, op. cit. p. 15.

⁸ P.R.O., LL 2/189.

⁹ Haigh and Loades, op. cit. p. 65.

¹⁰ Oxon. Archives, Misc. Ri. 1/1.

¹¹ Berks. R.O., D/D1/162/1A/B (tithe award 1846).

¹² John Field, *English Field Names* (1982), 125, 180.

42A HIGH STREET, MILTON, OXON.

In his article on 'Larger Houses in the Vale of White Horse' (*Oxoniensia* lvii, 1992), Christopher Currie includes details of 42A High Street, Milton (pp. 171-3). As a preliminary to works of repair a survey was carried out late in 1992, the repairs being carried out early in 1993. This survey, together with the repair works, have provided additional information which lead to a slightly different interpretation of the building from that reached in the article.

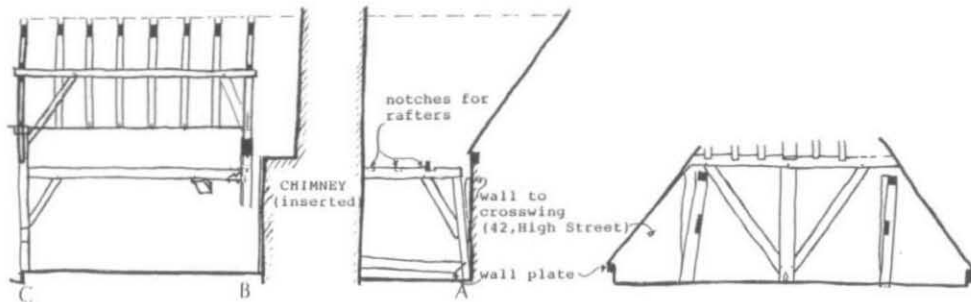
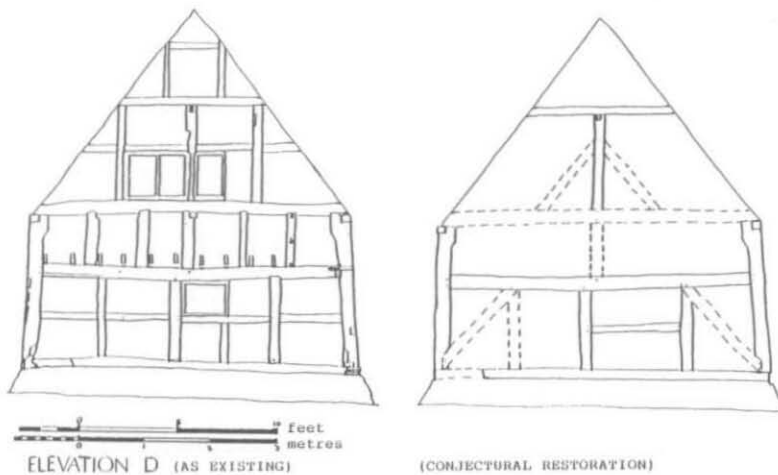
42A High Street is the hall and high end chamber to a house with a two-storeyed cross wing at the low end. This cross wing is a separate dwelling and did not form part of the survey. In his article Dr. Currie suggests that hall and cross wing are of one build, but he remarks on the peculiarity of the construction of the hall at the junction between the two elements. The survey gave the opportunity to look more closely at this junction, as well as at the roof over the high end chamber.

Carpentry throughout the building is of high quality with little sapwood and well made joints.

The hall has two bays with a central base cruck truss, arch braces supporting a cambered tie-beam, crown post, braced four ways, and collar purlin. There are also two roof plates clasped between the base crucks and the tie beam. The bay at the low end, between this truss and the cross wing, has been altered to include a chimney, rafters close to the cross wing being replaced and the collar purlin cut off by the chimney.

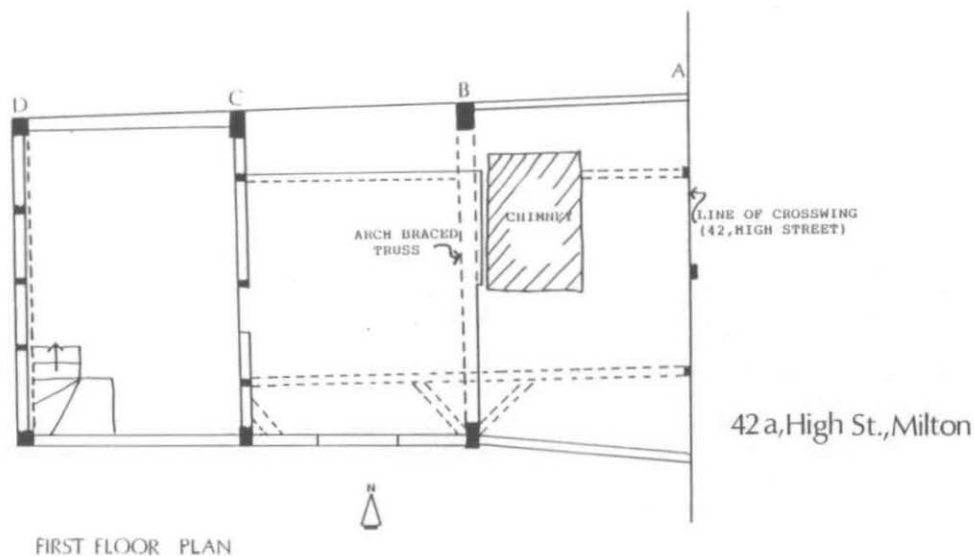
At the side wall of the cross wing the roof plates are supported off the floor beam of that wall on short posts. These posts lean outwards from the cross wing wall and appear to have always done so, for the thick daub which forms the infill to the panels of the cross wing wall filled the gap between post and wall face, and remains in position today, even though the posts have moved sideways during later alterations.

There is no evidence for the early support of this end of the collar purlin. If, as at the high end, it

SECTION A-C (first floor level)
looking NSECTION AT A (first floor level)
looking E

ELEVATION D (AS EXISTING)

(CONJECTURAL RESTORATION)



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

42a, High St., Milton

Fig. 1. 42A High Street, Milton.

was held up on a high collar, a couple of principal rafters would have been necessary to support that collar. To fill the gap between the two roofs, these would need to have been close beside the cross-wing wall. There is no evidence on the wall or roof plate for this.

On the upper side of the roof plates, 500 mm. (1 ft. 7 1/4 ins.) from the cross-wing wall, are notches for rafters, with further notches at regular intervals along the plates westwards towards the central truss. All notches are similar in size.

Fixed horizontally between the roof plates, at the first rafter notches, is a smoke-blackened timber, acting as a strut against lateral movement. This is re-used, for it does not fit the notches and has other notches on its east face bearing no relation to its present position.

The ends of the wall plates, near the cross-wing, are not jointed into its frame as one might expect if the two were of the same build, but are cut off at arbitrary angles before meeting the wing.

This all suggests that the cross wing is an early addition to a rectangular building, replacing the former low end, rather than part of the first build.

When the ceiling in the high end bay of the hall was removed, four central rafters on the north side had mortices on their inner sides 30 mm. (1 1/4 ins.) wide by 120 mm. (4 3/4 ins.) high at the level of the 20th-century ceiling structure. Three rafters on the south were of smaller cross section, with mortices similar to those on the north but at a slightly lower level.

There is no structural reason for these mortices as the building stands today, nor for the difference in sizes of the rafters. If they were turned upside down, the rafters would fit with the fixing of collars at the present level. It seems, therefore, that this area of roof may have been rebuilt, with some of the rafters replaced by re-used rafters turned top to bottom.

The west bay which formed the high end chamber has clean rafters all of a regular scantling. Each rafter couple has a collar above the present ceiling with a vertical peghole in the centre for fixing to the collar purlin. This has been removed by cutting it off close to each cross wall of the bay. It was much lower than that of the hall and the crown post at the high end of the hall stops at the lower purlin. The upper purlin is supported on a further, high collar with a long brace from the crown post to the higher collar purlin.

The crown post remains in the west end wall with joints for downward braces similar to those on the crown post at the east end of that bay. The bases of the main wall posts at the west end also have notches for braces just above the sill beam and corresponding notches in the cross beam just below the present inserted floor.

The building, therefore, appears to have extended further to the east at first, this end being removed and a cross wing added at an early date. The roof above the high end of the hall was altered, rafters being removed and re-used possibly when the chimney and floor were inserted. Despite these alterations considerable amounts of early framing survive.

JOSEPHINE M. CORMIER

OLD CHAPEL COTTAGE, EAST HENDRED, OXON.

Old Chapel Cottage adjoins Champ's Chapel, an early 15th-century stone chapel built to serve the Carthusian monks who received King's manor, East Hendred, from Henry V in 1414. The 'Priest's House' was constructed on the north side of the chapel later during the 15th century, and forms the west half of Old Chapel Cottage. According to A.L. Humphreys in his *History of the Parish of East Hendred* (1923), the eastern half was added in 1690.

After the reformation the chapel and cottage had a chequered history, with the ownership of chapel and manor becoming divided in the late 16th century (Humphreys). By 1719, when Ashmole described the chapel in his *Antiquities of Berkshire*, it was owned by the Champ family and was used partly as pigeon loft, wash house and bake house. In July 1901, the chapel and cottage were purchased by George Dunn, whose photographs, dated 1902, now in the chapel museum, give a good record of the state of the building at that time. They show the east end of the cottage with three floors, straight flight stairs linking them and doors formed through the chapel window to ground and first floors in the chapel.

In 1993 a record survey of the cottage was commissioned as the first stage in a sequence of repair



North Elevation

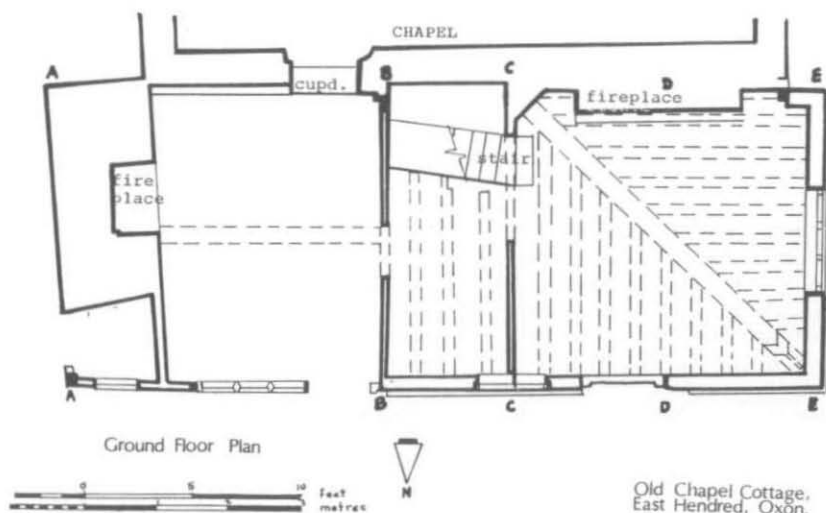


Fig. 1. Old Chapel Cottage: N elevation and ground floor plan.

and alterations. In 1994 recording continued while work was carried out in the building. The programme of work consisted of removal of a lean-to shed, which postdated the 1902 photographs, stripping and retiling of the roof, removal of two internal partitions, and removal and replacement of the staircase and bathroom.

Conclusions of the survey

The east end

This is a single bay 4,200 mm. (13 ft. 10 ins.) long, with a roof structure of simple coupled rafters and side purlins, much altered and repaired. The walls were first constructed of thin timber framing, which has been replaced piecemeal by brick on the south and chalk rubble on the east. The two upper floors, one at the present first-floor level and one at eaves level forming an attic, have floor beams 200 mm. \times 200 mm. (8 ins. \times 8 ins.), with chamfers and scroll stops, spanning the length of the bay.

The west end

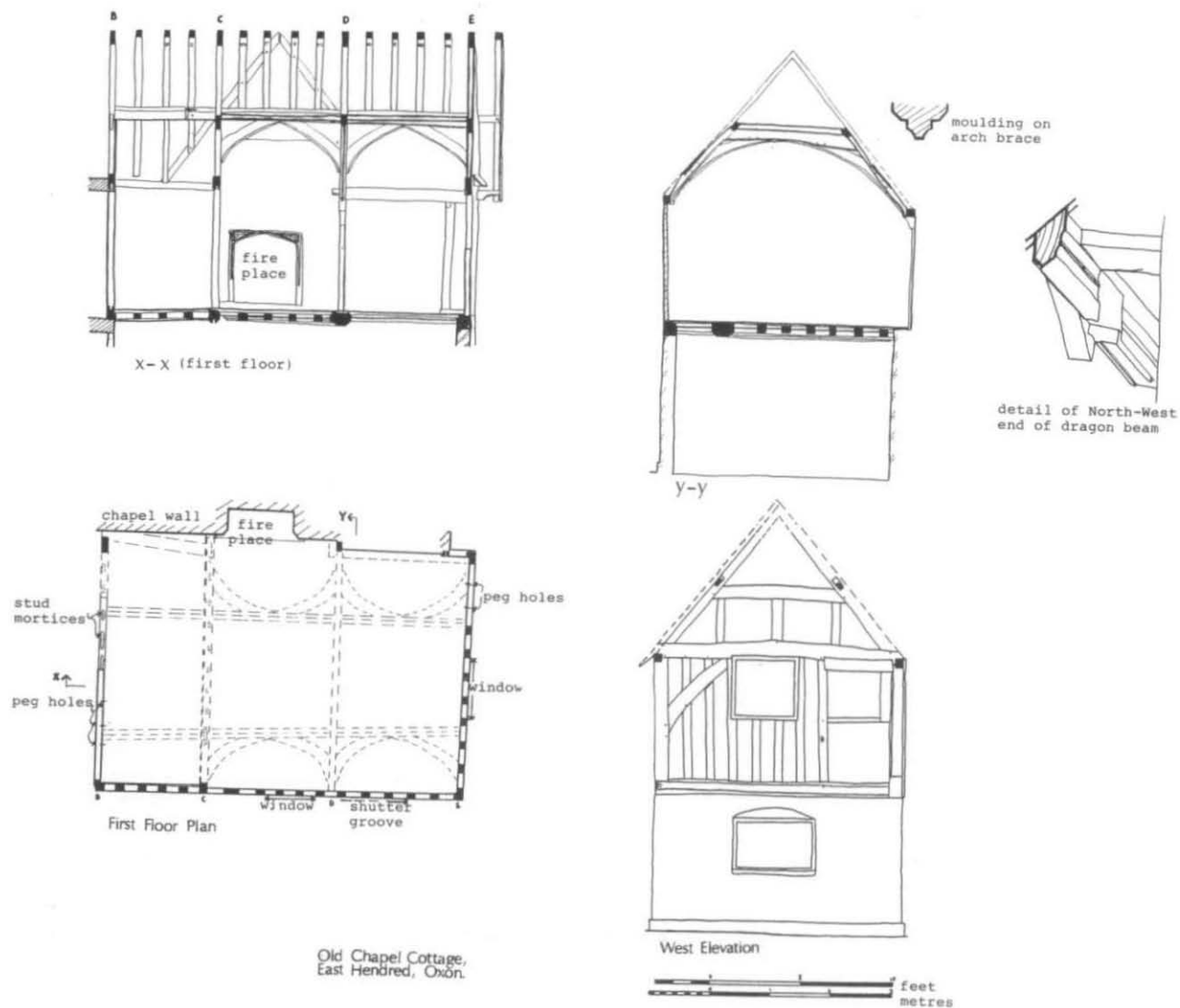
This part of the cottage consists of three bays of timber framing (B-E), much of the upper storey of which still remains with close studded external walls to west and north. The bays are short, B-C being only 1,700 mm. (5 ft. 7 ins.), while C-D and D-E are each 2,100 mm. (6 ft. 7 ins.) long. It was jettied on the west and north, with the jetty breaking forward from the chapel wall on the west and the ground floor lining through. The jetties have been underbuilt in brickwork in flemish bond with grey/blue headers typical of the late 19th century. Humphreys describes this as modern in 1923. Most of the early ground floor structure has been removed where the underbuilding has taken place.

The main rooms of Old Chapel Cottage are two bays long and on the west side. At first floor, there is a delicately moulded arch-braced truss across the centre, supported by a slender post to the south and the wall plate to the north. A window with sliding shutter (shutter groove in wall plate), adjacent and to the west of the truss, takes up the space where one might expect a post. There is also a window in the centre of the west wall, which appears to have had a hinged shutter. Beside this window are taper and candle burns on the northern stud, and below it across the whole wall are peg holes and mortices suggesting a fixed bench or shelf. The corner posts on the west wall (E) are rebated to give a square corner to the room. On the east side of the room (C), there is no evidence of a substantial post below the north end of the truss, but there is a 250 mm. (10 in.) wide stud immediately to the west of this. Stave mortices under the tie beam indicate the line of a former partition with a door at the north end. Neatly curved and chamfered wind braces meet at the centre of each bay to echo the shape of the arch-braced truss. The room is completed by a moulded stone four-centred arched fireplace at the east end of the south wall. This and its chimney, now cut off below roof line, are built into the chapel wall.

The floor structure is of the early build, with a 250 mm. \times 250 mm. (10 in. \times 10 in.) dragon beam, with double hollow chamfer mould, spanning the space diagonally. The floor beams across the east (C) and south sides are similarly moulded, beam C having mortices on its lower side for a partition. At its north-west end, the dragon beam is trenched for the jetty plates of the ground floor external walls and morticed for a bracket springing from the now-removed dragon post. The post which must have supported the other end of this beam no longer survives and it now rests on a rough brick pier. Across the south side of this room there is an inserted 17th-century fireplace, the flue for which now rises beside the remains of the flue to the first-floor fireplace.

The jetty continued along the full length of the north side of the early building, but there was some difference between the short, eastern bay and the rest. The distinction of a hollow chamfer on the short bay side of floor beam (C) may suggest that this bay included a ground floor entrance to the building. Since the ceiling below the joists in this bay was not disturbed, it was not possible to investigate the corresponding floor beam (B) at the east end of the early build.

The floor structure of the bay B-C has joists spanning north-south and forming part of the jetty along the north wall. Floor beam C, west of this bay, is cut to a rough curve at its south end, and the floor joists are cut back to an angle, suggesting the insertion of a newel stair turning anti-clockwise to reach the upper floor. This seems to fit with the 17th-century alterations. Wall B, east of this bay, was probably the early external wall. It is now underbuilt with a thin brick and timber wall, typical of



Old Chapel Cottage,
East Hendred, Oxon.

Fig. 2. Old Chapel Cottage: W elevation and first floor.

internal walls of the 18th-19th centuries. At its south end is the only remaining full height post of the early build, cut to sit up against the plinth to the chapel wall. It has a large, iron staple in its west side at the height for a lock or bolt housing. A door in this position must have predated the inserted newel stair, so this may be the position of an early ground-floor entrance. The post is joined with a squinted butt scarf just above this. To scarf the post here seems strange, but it may have some link with the need to build up against an existing stone wall. The post has mortices for a beam supporting the floor joist on the south side of the bay and a large mortice for the main floor beam of the end wall. This beam is still *in situ*, but has been cut off to accommodate the straight flight stair which replaced the newel stair in the early 20th-century alterations. The partition above it is probably part of the same alterations. Where it was removed, mortices for the early studding were revealed in the top of the floor beam and, behind the skirting on the west side, peg holes at regular intervals, showing that this wall was close studded along its whole length. Similar mortices were also found under the tie beam, where it was exposed.

Apart from the arch-braced truss mentioned above, the roof structure consists of queen strut trusses and side purlins. The truss at C clasps the purlins, while they pass through the principal rafters at B and D, reducing in cross section outside the building on the west, projecting to support barge rafters and bargeboards. These bargeboards, now much weathered, still show the remains of a carved flowing line. During the 17th century, the area over the older part of the building was ceiled and floored at collar level to produce a cock loft. The structure of this ceiling and some of the floor boarding, much decayed, still remains.

The present external walls of the early building at first-floor level are relatively unchanged, apart from the windows which are all 20th-century replacements. On the north elevation the bressumer is covered by a board which was not removed, but measurement shows that it must be fixed to the ends of the joists rather than passing over them. The studs appear to meet the bressumer at the same points as the joists. Infill between the studs consists of riven laths, 35 mm. x 10 mm. average, sprung into grooves in the sides of the studs. The outer coat of the daub averaged 40 mm. thick and was gauged with chopped straw. The corner post and bressumers at the north-west corner have a sophisticated joint, with the post tapering for the bottom 600 mm. (2 ft.) of its length to a square tenon, clasped between the two bressumers which are cut to a mitre at the outer edge of the corner.

On the west elevation there is only one brace. No evidence was uncovered for a matching brace, but pegholes and mortices for two further studs were found at the south end of the wall. The present central window, while using the early window opening, is recent. The 1902 photographs show a blocked four-light window with curved heads to the lights and a two-light window with square leaded lights at the south end of the wall. A postcard of c. 1935 shows a two-light window with square leaded lights in the centre and the southern window blocked as it is today. Along this wall the cover board was removed from the bressumer for inspection. There was a gap between the timber and wall filled with mortar and rubble, suggesting that the outer edge of the bressumer may also be moulded.

One of the questions posed by the building is the whereabouts of its early entrance, and of access to the upper floor before the insertion of the newel stair. Two possible positions for a ground floor entrance have already been mentioned. The Victoria County History, describing the chapel, mentions a blocked arch of brick at the west end of its north wall, and above it a 'stone-headed' doorway at first-floor level. These would have given access from the chapel to the house. The lower of these is no longer visible, having presumably been plastered over, but there are dressed stone jambs to a narrow opening in the wall at the first floor, which would have entered the priest's house in the centre of bay D-E. Any ground floor doorway must lie behind the 17th-century fireplace and chimney breast.

With regard to the early stair, the first-floor structure would need to be complete, without any holes, in order to support the jetties. This suggests an external stair, but the evidence does not confirm this, for the east and north walls appear to have been close studded along their whole lengths. It therefore appears that access to the upper floor of the priest's house was by a stair within the chapel.

The construction and detailing of this frame is of a high quality and of a style unusual in small buildings in this area at this time. There is a possibility that an imported carpenter or at least imported ideas were used, for it belonged to the monastery of Sheen in Surrey. When consulted, the Domestic Buildings Research Group (Surrey) suggested that the building would sit happily alongside other buildings in their area, but that it is not really typical.

JOSEPHINE M. CORMIER

A 17TH-CENTURY CAVALIER'S COSTUME FROM STANTON HARCOURT

Introduction

In 1992 Oxfordshire Museums marked the 350th anniversary of the beginning of the English Civil War with an exhibition exploring the course and effects of the war in the City and County.¹ An appeal was made to institutions and to the public for exhibits relating to this period. Among the objects borrowed as a result of the appeal were eight items of costume from All Souls College, said to have been found together at Stanton Harcourt, and described as Cromwellian.² The source at Stanton Harcourt, a village some ten miles west of Oxford with a long history of royal, aristocratic and college connections, was Parsonage House, a fine late 17th-century house belonging to the Rectory estate, which All Souls finally sold in the 1960s.³

The pieces (Figs. 1–6), an embroidered saddle and two matching pistol-cases, an embroidered baldric, a buff coat, two round felt hats with silk ribbons and a fashionable leather shoe, all items of 17th-century male attire and appropriate to a gentleman or cavalier, represent an unusual survival of associated costume elements of this period, and a rare opportunity to study the provenance and survival of such a group.

Part of the collection has been catalogued on a previous occasion: the buff coat, saddle and pistol-cases (but not the baldric, hats or shoe) were listed, and the saddle and coat illustrated, by Charles Ffoulkes in his catalogue, published 1912, *European Arms and Armour in the University of Oxford*, where all four items are described as in the ownership of All Souls College, the saddle and buff also being described as being located at Parsonage Farm, Stanton Harcourt;⁴ this must have been the location of all the pieces until 1937.

The lease of Parsonage House to the Arnatt family, the College's tenants from the late 18th century,⁵ ended in 1937, and as the College prepared to clear, refurbish and re-let the house, the bursar noted that 'the only things left as college property are exhibition pieces the identity of which would have been preserved because they were never in practical use. These pieces of 17th-century armour and some 17th-century hats and other things are in a very bad state of preservation and the sooner we can get them away the better'.⁶ Presumably the 'hats and other things' refer to the present collection, suggesting the late 1930s as the time when these objects were transferred to the College and mounted in the two wooden display cases from which they were taken in 1992; restoration of the baldric (see below) may have taken place at the same time. The 'pieces of 17th-century armour' are probably to be identified with the 'breast and back, open burgonet, pauldron and pair of brassards' listed by Ffoulkes, and illustrated resting upon stone paving at Stanton Harcourt;⁷ their present whereabouts are unknown.

Following the Arnatts' departure, a campaign of clearance and refurbishment of Parsonage House

¹ 'The Civil War in Oxfordshire, 1642–46,' September to December 1992, Museum of Oxford; December 1992 to March 1993, Banbury Museum; October to December 1993, County Museum, Woodstock; December 1993 to February 1994, Vale and Downland Museum, Wantage; photos by Joan Brasnett. At the time of writing the collection described below was at the Centre for Textile Conservation, Hampton Court Palace, London, for assessment; the author is grateful to the Director, Nell Hoare, and staff members for useful observations. Thanks should also be recorded to Arthur MacGregor, Ashmolean Museum, for many useful comments on the text.

² Personal communication, The Bursar, All Souls College, to whom I am grateful for advice and for permission to display and publish the collection.

³ *V.C.H. Oxon.* xii, 280–81.

⁴ C. Ffoulkes, *European Arms and Armour in the University of Oxford* (1912), 53; 59, nos. 166–8. I would like to thank Dr. Simmons, All Souls Librarian, for drawing this publication to my attention.

⁵ *Archives of All Souls' College*, i, 236.

⁶ All Souls College Library, file relating to the final tenancy and sale of Parsonage House. These records were kindly drawn to my attention by Miss Norma Auberton-Potter, to whom I am particularly grateful.

⁷ Ffoulkes, *op. cit.* 57, 59–60. Ian Eaves, Keeper of Armour, Royal Armouries, has kindly examined Ffoulkes' photograph and suggests a date of c. 1600 or earlier for the close helmet, while the remaining pieces would date to about 1620–50; all appear to be of a good quality, appropriate to a gentleman.

by both the College and the new tenant ensued, the success of which was marked by illustrated articles in two consecutive numbers of *Country Life*.⁸ Of the contents of the house prior to 1938, Hussey says merely that they 'would have furnished a folk museum',⁹ a tantalizing taste of what must have been discarded at the time of the clear-out.

Catalogue

The Saddle (Fig. 1)

The saddle is composed of two principal elements, nailed and glued together: a canvas-covered wooden frame or 'tree' strengthened with very heavy-gauge canvas and extremely strong fabric strips, to which a series of leather fittings and fastenings is nailed or tied; and the seat, consisting of a single piece of leather, with linen interlinings of several gauges, to which have been sewn silk-lined linen sections, braid-embroidered and fringed, of various shapes. The central embroidered section has also been padded with wool wadding.

The saddle is 53 cm. long at the apex, and the maximum width (under the rider's thighs) is about 48 cm. The greatest thickness, centrally where the thickest portions of the wooden frame and most padded parts of the seat are superimposed, is about 4 to 5 cm. – not particularly thick.

Attached to the pommel end of the frame are two roughly semicircular, padded and embroidered wooden members. Projecting from the ends of each and fixed into the pommel end of the frame are four iron brackets, apparently to secure the pair of pistol-cases.

The wooden frame or tree, shaped to the horse's back, is 47 cm. long, 30 cm. wide and approximately 2 cm. thick. A buff-coloured tabby-woven linen canvas of medium gauge has been stretched over and around the frame.

A series of iron fittings has been nailed to the underside of the frame, including a shaped yoke-piece, 25 cm. long and 3.5 cm. wide at the centre, with twenty-one nails; a shaped tail-piece 24 cm. long and 3 cm. wide, with ten nails (there are traces of a companion piece on the upper surface of the frame, under the seat); along the two arms of the yoke, two trapezoidal buckles, each 3.5 cm. long by 3.2 cm. wide with loose hook-ended tongues, secured by looped leather straps 2.8 cm. wide and about 12 cm. long which are fixed by two nails; down the sides of the frame, three opposed pairs of buckles, including a pair of trapezoidal buckles 4.4 cm. by 2.4 cm. with no pins, each secured by an iron attachment piece rectangular at one end and spatulate at the other, wrapped round the saddle frame and fixed with a single nail; and two pairs of smaller buckles 4 cm. by 2 cm., similarly fixed to the saddle with iron attachment pieces, each carrying a leather strap about 38 cm. long and 2.4 cm. wide and punched with twelve holes (the fourth from tightest on each proper right-hand strap has been stretched through use). The straps are sewn around the buckle with rough twisted cord.

Four sets of purely leather fittings are also attached to the frame. Through pairs of holes pierced through the wooden frame at either end of the yoke are looped 0.5 cm. wide narrow leather thongs, forming a loop on the underside of the frame and a twisted knot and tie above the frame. Through a single hole at each end of the tail piece a similar leather thong was looped of which only the proper right is preserved, fastening a fragmentary tatter of fine chamois leather glued between saddle tree and seat. A 1 cm. wide twisted leather thong about 26 cm. long is nailed in two places to the tail-piece; perhaps when complete it ran under the horse's tail. Along the sides of the saddle frame adjacent to the buckles, 1 cm. wide leather straps each 12 cm. long are folded over and nailed to the frame as attachment loops. The leather straps are of two standard thicknesses, about 0.5 cm. for the four longer straps, and 0.2 cm. for the shorter straps.

⁸ C. Hussey, 'Parsonage House, Stanton Harcourt, Oxon. I: The Property of All Souls' College', *Country Life*, 19 July 1941, 112–15; 'II: The Residence of Mr Leonard Huskinson', *ibid.*, 26 July 1941, 160–3. I would like to thank Dr. Malcolm Graham of the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies for drawing these articles to my attention.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 160.

The wooden framework has been 'sprung' by stretching four lengths of heavy-duty linen bands across the upper surface of the central gap, two running parallel with the back of the horse, and two running across it, all about 5.5 cm. wide. The two lengthwise bands are of very heavy, coarse three-shed twill, with buff-coloured warp and russet-coloured weft in a zigzag pattern. The two transverse lengths of band are also heavy and coarse, and are tabby-woven in stripes of beige, brown and green. The transverse bands are sewn down to a piece of coarse, buff, tabby-woven linen backing canvas; the lengthwise bands are secured under each edge of the frame but are not sewn down to the backing canvas.

The saddle seat consists of a single piece of tanned leather, the underside of which is visible from underneath the saddle, but the upper surface of which is completely covered by layers of textiles which have been effectively quilted onto it using a very strong, pale linen thread which runs through the multiple thicknesses. Uppermost is a fine, turquoise-blue silk, once a velvet (very small vestiges of the nap remain close to the embroidered lines) over a medium-gauge linen canvas backing. Where these two have decayed, various intermediate layers of linen canvas of various grades are visible. Seen from above, a distinct apex piece and two side pieces have been cut separately, and the apex piece is distinguished by a thick layer of wool wadding.

The quilting is picked out with lines of braid approximately 0.3 cm. wide, of multiple twisted strands of green silk in a simple plait. The designs used are straight double lines, double zigzag lines, alternating straight and zigzag lines, a pattern of opposed low arcs, and a freeform filling pattern at the bottom of the apex piece. Underneath the saddle the linen stitching may be seen to follow the surface pattern precisely, but on the upper surface the stitches are skilfully hidden within the braid, seen as a regularly occurring lighter fleck perhaps imitating gold thread.

Sides, back and neck of the upper surface of the saddle are all edged with a thick fringe of turquoise-blue cotton, green silk and gold threads formerly about 2.5 cm. wide but now worn to the quick along the proper right-hand side of the saddle.

One further textile, a band or tape of fine silk twill about 0.7 cm. wide, may be seen protruding from between the other layers at the junction of the semicircular pieces; no doubt further textiles exist within the depth of the quilting and padding.

Preservation of the wood of the saddle tree, the fittings, and the linen textiles is good considering the saddle's age. Most of the leather fittings are intact, but hard, cracked and discoloured. The fine blue silk-velvet covering is largely wasted (practically all the nap of the velvet has disappeared) and visibly disintegrating; the braid and fringe are still intact.

There are signs of heavy use particularly on the right-hand side, where the leather straps were stretched, the blue silk velvet surface completely worn away, and the fringe virtually shaved off.

Only a very small number of 17th-century saddles survive, and they are not closely dated. However the embroidered motifs of the textile elements of the saddle are comparable in design to English decorative motifs of the Restoration period.¹⁰

A fringe of colour and design comparable to that edging the saddle (and the pistol cases) appears trimming the rich silk chair and curtain in a portrait of about 1630, of Charlotte, Countess of Derby, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.¹¹

The Pistol-Cases (Fig. 2)

The two pistol cases (only the better-preserved is illustrated) are identically designed albeit as mirror images, the two main elements of the design being a leather case and a decoratively embroidered pouched flapped cover. The embroidery on the outer flap of the proper left-hand case is better preserved; this suggests the gun on that side was removed less frequently and that the wearer was

¹⁰ Comparable motifs are common on the highly decorated slipware chargers of Ralph and Thomas Toft, for example a charger in the Ashmolean Museum signed by Thomas, 1986.45 (Medieval Gallery, case 8, no. 6), where a male and a female bust in Restoration fashions and hairdoes are surrounded by a border of opposed double semicircles drawn in dark brown and picked out with yellow dots. A gazetteer of surviving examples, by the present author, will appear in *Jnl. Brit. Arch. Assoc.*

¹¹ Victoria and Albert Museum 565-1882.



Fig. 1. The saddle.



Fig. 2. The pistol-cases.

right-handed. Neither the leather strap and buckle at the upper rim of this case, nor the leather thong at the lower end of the flap, is preserved.

The second pistol-case is evidently the right-hand one. The seam of the leather case would, in that way, run down the side towards (and the leather thong fastened to the lower end of the flap would point towards) the hindquarters of the horse, both as shown in equestrian portraits.¹² The buckle fastening of the upper leather strap would point towards the forequarters of the horse where it would be more accessible to the rider. Seen from above, the opening of the leather case has been more relaxed towards the front of the horse by the pressure of the top of the gun, as fired, being withdrawn and replaced. As already mentioned there is considerably greater wear and tear of the embroidered flap, almost half the embroidery being absent and the surface layer of fabric rubbed away as well as some of the lining layers.

The length of this right-hand leather case is about 38.5 cm., the diameter at the base of the leather case about 4 cm., the dimensions of the opening at the top 6 cm. by 16 cm., and the dimensions of the embroidered pouch, 29 cm. in length, 22.5 cm. in width, and 13.5 cm. in depth.

The leather case is made from a single piece of dark brown, very thick and rigid, smooth-surfaced leather, stitched along one side with two rows of coarse, even stitches in a heavy linen thread. A strip of soft, thin chamois leather binds the rim of the case; a roughly round-sectioned bent strip of ferrous metal used to stiffen the rim may be seen where it has worn away. Another piece of chamois leather has been pressed into the hollow of the opening at the bottom of the case, and attached with stitching around the outside. Just under the rim of the case on the inner face (next to the horse), a thick piece of leather stoutly sewn to the case carries a leather strap about 50 cm. long, with a rectangular buckle and pin at one end, the other end, punched with twelve holes, being threaded tightly through the buckle; this presumably fastened the case to the saddle, possibly through the staples at the front of the saddle.

The pouched cover is composed of several layers of very heavy linen canvas between a decorative surface and a backing of leather inside; finer linen canvas is also visible on the left-hand example. The backing is composed of two similarly sized and shaped pieces of leather, squared off at one end and semicircular at the other, stoutly stitched together with overcast stitches in linen thread, around the semicircular edge to form the pouch, opening horizontally in the centre of the cover. The leather backing, thick, flexible and granular, is in a state of decay.

The decorative exterior consists of braid and fringe like that on the saddle, sewn in curvilinear patterns on a surface layer of blue half-silk.

There are possibly even fewer examples of extant pistol-cases of the 17th century than of saddles, but pistol-cases of this form are shown in a number of portraits of the second half of the 17th century, while the embroidered decoration is identical with that of the saddle, for which a Restoration period date is suggested.

The Baldrick (Fig. 3)

The baldrick is 123 cm. long and 59 cm. wide overall, the shoulder-strap being 112.5 cm. long and 6.5 cm. wide on average; the expanded terminals each 16 cm. long and 11 cm. wide; the front extension 34 cm. long and 6 cm. wide, and the waist-brace 39 cm. long and 6 cm. wide. The split lower end of the shoulder-strap has been sewn overlapping the expanded terminals; waist-brace and front extension have been inserted between the layers of the shoulder-strap and expanded terminals respectively and tacked, and the proper right-hand end of the waist-brace has been sewn stoutly underneath the front extension near the proper right-hand end close to the button-hole using a heavy linen thread.

While these five constructional elements vary in shape and size, all are similarly constructed of two

¹² For example, of Cromwell: 'Oliver Cromwell on Horseback' by Albert Haelwegh, c. 1653-8, Victoria and Albert Museum Gallery 55.

principal elements, a canvas linen backing, and a tough leather layer covered with a finer suede leather. The suede leather is finely finished, very thin, and buff coloured (to white where unexposed), and has been folded on all sides around the tougher leather, the two being held together by the embroidery. The tough inner leather as glimpsed here and there in section appears to be about 0.2 cm. thick and resembles boot leather. Between the two leathers, a pale brown fabric seen especially at the edges and curves represents a modern repair. A light-coloured tabby-woven linen canvas backing, with uneven, coarser weft threads has been folded under at the edges and tacked as unobtrusively as possible to the back of the leather elements as backing; each element was individually backed before assembly.

The decorative embroidery running along the length of the various pieces is uniform and is similarly elaborated in both places where the width expands: the expanded terminals, and the split end of the shoulder-strap. Small holes are punched through all the layers in continuous lines at intervals of about 0.2 cm. Two parallel rows of holes edge all the pieces, and two parallel rows run down the centre of all the straps. About halfway along the shoulder-strap, this central line divides into two, each of these becoming a central line for the divided lower end of the shoulder strap. Double rows of holes run round the edges of the expanded terminals at a distance of 3.5 cm. from the edges.

A green thread twisted with a single strand of gold has been sewn through the holes, the alternate holes carrying tacking stitches of buff linen.

Running between the double rows of holes, a complicated pattern repeating at intervals of 14.5 cm. consists of opposed undulating lines, opposed palmettes (on the outside closest to the centre), opposed inverted palmettes (on the inside closest to the edges), and raking palmettes both inside and outside on the oblique curves. Again the embroidery thread is of green silk twisted with a single strand of gold, the tacking of buff linen being carried out in the field. Where the central rows split and diverge and a triangular field is formed on the shoulder-strap, a quilted pineapple is formed with semi-circular fanning palmettes and with additional leaves above and below. This is extended by a line of diminishing almond-shaped leaves and six-, eight-, and ten-point stars. Similar elements fill the central polygonal fields of the expanded terminals.

The baldric fastened over one shoulder and under the other by buttoning the end of the shoulder strap into the right-hand end of the front extension. The button-hole is a slit, 2.2 cm. long, hemmed with overcast stitches of very fine buff silk thread; the button has disappeared leaving a small rough tear centrally at the end of the shoulder strap.

The baldric was evidently designed (like the great majority of extant baldrics)¹³ to carry the sword at an angle pommel upwards to the right, over the left hip; the shoulder-strap lay vertically along the left side of the chest, passing over the left shoulder, across the back at an angle, under the right arm and across the stomach at an angle to join the proper right-hand expanded terminal. The sword would then be withdrawn with the right hand; the waist-brace would steady the sword in movement.

A number of repairs may relate to the working lifetime of the baldric, specifically the heavy stitching to either side of the button-hole; an additional lining to the button-hole edge of the front extension; strengthening cross-stitching in fine thread where the end of the shoulder strap divided; and additional stitching and lining at the bottom end of the shoulder strap. Regarding preservation, the fine leather surface is yellowed and worn away at some edges, being extremely worn along the narrower part of the shoulder-strap. About one-third part of the embroidery, especially of the palmettes, has disappeared. Rust-coloured patches associated with decay of the leather are dotted about in about fifty places.

An English embroidered picture of the mid 17th century in the Victoria and Albert Museum¹⁴ provides a close comparison for the detail of the embroidery on the baldric, in which palmettes are composed of sequences of long feathery stitches.¹⁵

¹³ Numerous examples of the mid and later 17th century are drawn from surviving collections and portraiture, by C.W. and P. Cunningham, *Handbook of English Costume in the Seventeenth Century* (London 1955/72), including those on 132, 140-1, 149.

¹⁴ Textile Study Room G37, T110-1922.

¹⁵ The delicately elongated, swirling designs embroidered in silver and gold thread onto a silk mule of 1660-80 in the Museum of London are comparable: Zillah Halls, *Men's Costume 1580-1750* (HMSO 1970), 46, Pl. 10.

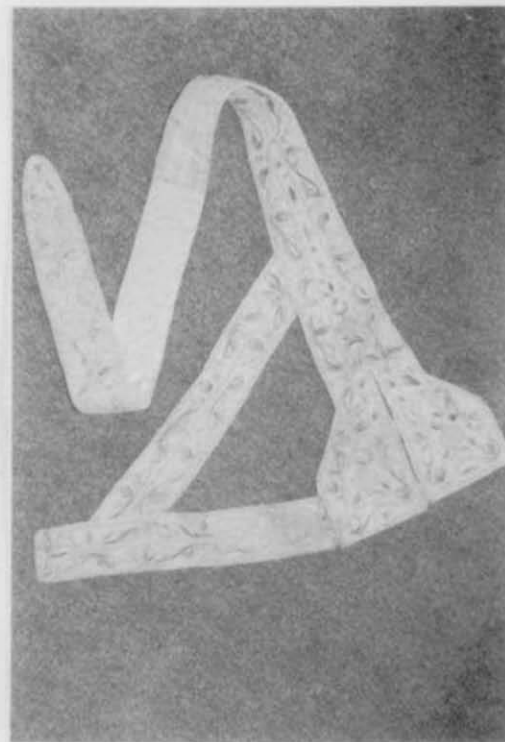
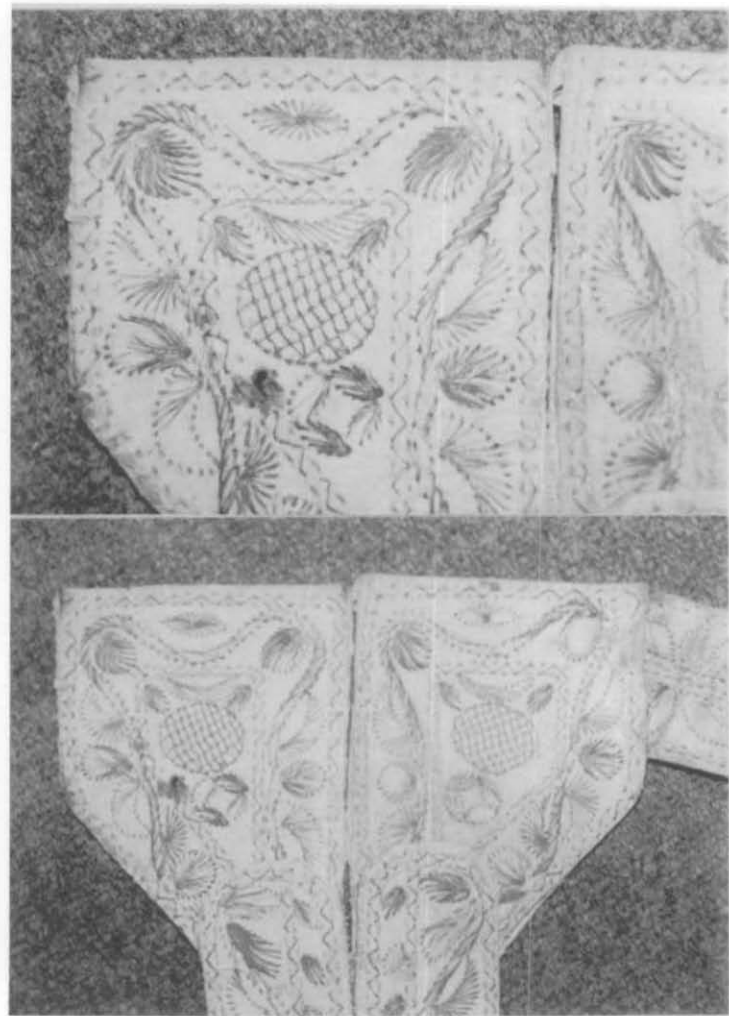


Fig 3. The baldrick.



Fig. 4. The shoe.

The Shoe (Fig. 4)

The shoe is made a 'straight' (designed to be worn on either foot) and is complete apart from the fastening. There are nine visible elements: the sole and heel extension of the sole, the heel-covering in two pieces, the front upper and back upper in two pieces, and the inner sole in two parts. At its greatest length, from the back of the heel where heel and upper meet, to the tip of the toe, the shoe measures 24.4 cm., and at its widest along the bottom of the sole, 5.2 cm.

The sole and the heel extension to the sole are cut of roughened leather about 0.5 cm. thick where least worn, dyed a deep red-brown and knife-trimmed to follow the line of the inner sole and heel, to which they are stitched deeply with natural coloured linen. Two mirror-image pieces of very fine, soft leather have been stretched over the heel (hidden, but some worm-holes indicate that it might be of wood) which is 6.5 cm. in height and 4.3 cm. wide; these pieces are stitched all around the base of the heel and up to the sole, and tucked in at the top. The front upper has been artfully stretched over a double-pointed toe extension; over the arch is a soft flap perforated by four 0.35 cm. wide holes 1.4 cm. apart, forming a square (two of these perforations, in combination with those of the two-cross straps, would have secured the fastening; the other two probably supported a quite decorative lace). Of the back uppers, which are mirror images vertically butt-joined and invisibly stitched from the inside, only one preserves the perforated strap for the fastening; both sides, inside, preserve rows of stitching invisible from the exterior, for extra strengthening. The leather of the uppers is thin, about 1 mm. thick, and is a pale golden tan where still fresh. The inner lining has a heel part and a main sole part and is of soft, fine, dark reddish-brown leather, turnsole sewn to the uppers.

Even allowing for shrinkage through dessication, it is difficult to see how the shoe could have accommodated a foot more than eight or nine inches long and three inches wide, roughly equivalent to a modern English shoe of size 5. It clearly was worn, as indicated by the

discolouration of the leather externally, the roughening of the sole leather, the penetration of the stitching under the heel and the ball of the foot, wear around the fastening perforations, and straining of the stitches. Considering the delicacy of the materials, however, wear may have been only brief and light.

Concerning the date of the shoe, specialists agree on a date of 1660–80,¹⁶ the same date as the embroidered mule in the Museum of London already cited as a parallel for the embroidery of the baldrick;¹⁷ the double-pointed termination of the toe is identical to that on the All Souls shoe.

The Felt Hats (Fig. 5)

The two broad-brimmed, low crowned hats are closely similar despite some differences in form and manufacture; consequently only the finer is described in detail.

The first hat (Fig. 5, top) consists of felt crown and brim, side crown lining, top crown lining, ribbon, lace braid, braided string. Crown (interior measurements, 18 cm. by 17 cm.) and brim (38 cm. wide, 11 cm. deep) are moulded in a single piece; a lighter-coloured line marking the division between crown and brim has been etched into the felt by a thin string, now gone, the shadow of which preserves the original lighter brown colour of the material before dyeing. The dark brown stain on both surfaces, faded to olive-brown at the crown, has not penetrated to the core of the felt, which remains tannish-grey. Viewed from above the crown is ovoid within the triangle of the rim which has been bent or cocked in three places; a narrow light brown plaited cotton string threaded in and out of the crown catches the brim in three places to achieve this shape.

About 150 cm. of very fine, faded chocolate-brown silk ribbon 6 cm. wide with looped weft-threads along both selvages, encircles the brim and forms a double-looped floppy bow held tightly together with a length of lace braid. The braid, a complex silk plait about 1.8 cm. wide, has been drawn to the inside of the hat and knotted.

An 8 cm. wide band of smooth natural-coloured tabby-woven linen, cut on the bias over the forehead, lines the sides of the crown inside; a circle of identical material to line the top of the crown has been sewn on.

Curiously the whole surface of the lining was originally coated with a dirty, light grey substance which has largely flaked away but remains in a band on the underside of the felt brim. The coating appears deliberate (and not the residue of a powdered wig); perhaps its function was to increase comfort, or friction, or to reduce wear or limit the damage of sweat; this substance is planned to be the subject of closer examination and analysis in the course of conservation treatment at the Centre for Textile Conservation, London.

Although the felt is dry and brittle and the silks are deteriorating, the hat and its trim are still intact. The second hat (Fig. 5 bottom), by contrast, appears to have been worn, mended, and worn again almost to extinction, unlike the first which was better cared for. This second hat, although the mate of the first in materials and construction, is more stretched and relaxed and was possibly designed as a 'boater' form (brim 40 cm. wide and 12 cm. deep, crown internally 19 cm. by 19 cm.), has a self-knotted silk bow of coarser silk with shorter loops achieved without the fancy braid, was not coated with a substance inside, and may have been intended as the everyday member of the pair, the other being the dress hat.

Both hats are capacious even by modern standards; but comparison of the internal measurements with present head sizings seems unrealistic given the bulk of 17th-century gentlemanly hairstyles as compared with current masculine fashion.

¹⁶ The author would like to thank Avril Hart, Textile and Costume Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum; Fiona Pitt, Northampton Museum Boot and Shoe Collection; and Miles Lambert, Gallery of English Costume, Platt Hall, Manchester, for examining photographs of the shoe and commenting in detail.

¹⁷ See above, n. 14.

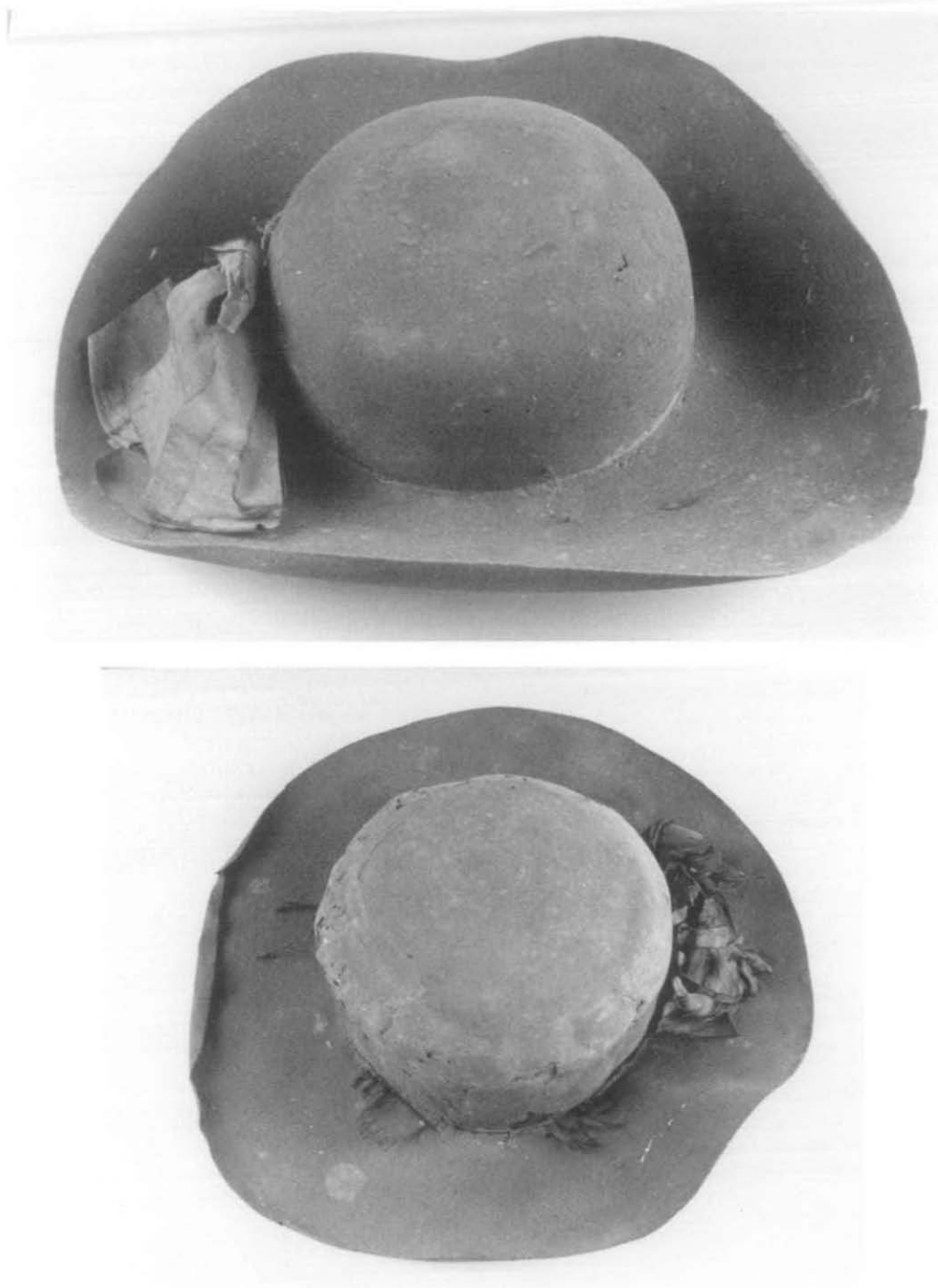


Fig. 5. The felt hats

While broad-brimmed felt hats were fashionable throughout the 17th century, hats with low, round crown cocked into various positions held with buttons and loops were typical of the Restoration period, and trim of ribbon or braid was popular between the 1660s and 1690s, while the 'boater' shape was most fashionable between 1665 and 1675.¹⁸

The Buff Coat (Fig. 6)

The buff coat is made up of twenty separate pieces of buff leather of a mustard-coloured yellow-brown. The four skirt and six bodice pieces are of the thicker leather (between 6 and 7 mm. thick), the four sleeve pieces of a somewhat thinner leather (about 4 to 5 mm. thick).

The buff measures 64 cm. down the front from neck to hem, 69 cm. down the back, 1.20 m. from wrist to wrist over the shoulders, 92 cm. around the chest just under the arms, 93 cm. around the waist, and 1.45 m. in circumference at the hem. Thus it seems unlikely that an adult male could have worn it; given the underarm chest measurement of 36 ins. around the outside of this thick garment, the wearer can only have been adolescent.

All the pieces have been sewn together with a pale yellow linen thread. Except for the join of sleeves to bodice, all the seams are butt-joined using a simple stitch that returns inside the thickness of the leather to appear as straight running stitches on either side of the join. Inside, the two shoulder-seams, the two skirt side-seams and the two back sleeve-seams have been finished in the same manner, while other seams were joined more cursorily by rough overcast stitching (the seam joining the sleeves to the bodice; the seam joining the skirt to the bodice, along the front), and still others left gaping (sleeve front-seams, bodice vertical seams, and the waist-seam along the back).

Twenty-six holes were pierced through the right and left bodice apparently for a lace; a further six holes through right and left skirt front; and one hole in each of the four curving sleeve tabs. Lack of wear to these holes confirms that their function is decorative. On the inside of the bodice ten groups of two or three tight linen stitches are visible down each side of the front opening, at a distance of 1.5 to 2 cm. from the edge, and at irregular intervals; about half the groups can be seen on the outer surface as faint tufts; presumably these carried iron hooks for fastening, as on other extant buffs. A larger tuft remains inside the left hand upper skirt, just opposite the corner formed by the top of the right hand skirt inside, but this has no trace of a corresponding fitting.

Under each arm (although asymmetrically – further round toward the back on the left side) two small holes have been pierced one above the other on either side of the waist seam, about 4 cm. apart. The right-hand pair of holes still carries a double thickness of plaited thread forming a loop (although no trace exists of the outside of the loop), secured inside by more overcast stitches. Possibly the loops carried fittings to steady the baldric and musket-belt.

There is discolouration around the neck edge and shoulders, especially around the back of the neck, down the sleeves along the upper fold line, and around the sleeve edges. Splashes of what appears to be blood speckle both the inside and outside, especially inside at the top of the right shoulder and also the left shoulder and back of the neck, and outside on the front and skirt. Mends exist in the form of small groups of stitches internally where the leather has been breeched or weakened on the outside.

Externally preservation is virtually complete, apart from the original fastenings for sleeves and the front opening. Internally, a series of tufts of linen thread on the sleeves along the line of their join to the bodice, at a distance of 0.5 to 0.8 cm. from the seam, are the remains of tacking carrying a lining for the sleeves, presumably a lining of finer leather in the form of the sleeve of a tunic as in many preserved examples. There are no signs at the neck edge of tacking for a bodice lining or of additional detail; the buff is most unusual in the lack of a collar of any sort.

Miles Lambert of the Gallery of English Costume, Platt House, Manchester dates the buff to c. 1640. A buff coat of apparently very similar, although slightly more elaborate, design is shown in the Civil War period portrait of Nathaniel Fiennes at Broughton Castle.¹⁹

¹⁸ Op. cit. n. 13, 140–1, 162.

¹⁹ D. Blackmore, *Arms and Armour of the English Civil War* (1990), 54, Plate 2.



Fig. 6. The buff coat.

Conclusions

A review of the dating evidence for the individual items suggests that apart from the buff coat, which is comparable to buffs of the Civil War period, the pieces may all fall within a close chronological range. The item capable of closest dating is the shoe which is unlikely to be earlier or later than 1660–1680; this date range is also appropriate for the embroidered textiles and felt hats.

The buff coat of the 1640s, on the other hand, forms a more natural grouping with the lost armour illustrated by Ffoulkes.²⁰ Possibly they were worn together by an individual of the Civil War period, associated either with Stanton Harcourt or with All Souls College; should the armour come to light it might be possible to determine whether they could have been worn by the same person, who in the case of the buff we know to be extremely slight, perhaps an adolescent.

²⁰ See note 7 above.

Documentation cited in the Introduction for the earlier history of the collection is scant, and non-existent for the period prior to the end of the Arnatts' tenancy at Parsonage House. But the 20th-century observations made of the Arnatts' extraordinary retention of the clothes and effects of previous inhabitants raise the possibility that the costume and caparison described here may have spent the entire period of that tenancy in the house. As Parsonage House was itself built for Robert Huntington in or soon after 1669, and as Huntington died in 1685,²¹ Huntington himself seems at present the most obvious candidate for ownership of the costume.

LAUREN GILMOUR

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²¹ *K.C.H. Oxon.* xii, 281.

THE OXFORD ALMANACK FOR 1724

A large Almanack was published by the University Delegates for Printing in 1674. It was engraved on copper plates with an elaborate allegorical design symbolizing Time, the descent of the British monarchy from Brute, and the naval might of the Realm. No almanack was published for 1675, perhaps because the Stationers' Company was trying to deny the University the right to sell almanacks. However, in that year the Delegates agreed with the Stationers' Company 'to print a broad Almanacke with a large border conteyning a large sheet of paper to be engraven upon a Copper plate and to be wrought of at the roleing press not exceeding Five thousand . . .',¹ and from 1676 Oxford Almanacks have been published annually.

Until 1723 the Almanacks were illustrated with allegories of Time, the University, and national politics. They were planned by scholars, notably Dr. Henry Aldrich, Dean of Christ Church, and Dr. George Clarke, Fellow of All Souls, and from 1676 for nearly fifty years they were engraved by Michael Burghers. He was succeeded by George Vertue who engraved views of the colleges with portraits of their founders and benefactors. From the middle of the 18th century most of the Almanacks have been illustrated with topographical subjects, many of them reproduced from watercolour drawings by eminent artists.

The early Almanacks proved so popular that a large printing run was required, and as only a limited number of prints could be taken from a copper plate more than one was needed; six plates were engraved for the Almanacks of 1706, 1711, and 1722. They would have been in great demand on account of their controversial subjects which were alleged to have pro-Jacobite meanings. Both Burghers and Vertue engraved plates for 1722, 1723, and 1724, and though the designs were similar the treatment varied, reflecting the engravers' differing styles and ability.

Michael Burghers came from the Netherlands at the age of twenty-one and settled in Oxford where he worked for David Loggan, the engraver of the plates of *Oxonia Illustrata* which was published in 1675. He signed plates for the Almanacks from 1677 to 1724 and Vertue said he engraved the one for 1676 and designed one for 1675 which was not accepted. In the Bodleian Library there is a drawing for an Almanack signed MB which is based on the 1674 design, simplified and reduced in size. This may be the design for 1675.

Burghers also engraved illustrations, title pages, and chapter headings and tailpieces for Oxford books. He succeeded Loggan as Chalcographer (copper engraver) to the University in 1692. He was a skilled engraver but a poor draughtsman with little education. His engravings were signed with his

¹ J. Johnson and S. Gibson, *Print and Privilege at Oxford to the Year 1700* (1946).

name or initials followed by *sculp.*, *sculpt.*, *sculpsit* or *sculp.* *Univ. Oxon.*, inferring that they were engraved by him or by an assistant approved by him as the engraver to the University. When he made the drawing as well as engraving the plate he added *delin.* and the one Almanack which he designed as well as drawing it and engraving some of the plates for it (that for 1722) has one plate, actually engraved by Vertue, with *M. Burghers Oxon inven* on it. Strangely, '*Raph. Vrbin inv.*' is inscribed on one of Burghers' own engravings, for the fishermen in the boat come from an engraving of Raphael's 'The Miraculous Draught of Fishes.' Two drawings in the Bodleian Library signed by Burghers (G.A. Oxon. a 88a, pp. 9, 11-12) appear to be preliminary designs for this Almanack, which was the last one with an allegorical subject. He died in 1727 aged about eighty years. Hearne, who knew him well, said Burghers was the best engraver in England and, being very industrious, he made a great deal of money. He adds, 'the old man was, in many respects, a great Villain, and a very debauched person'.²

George Vertue was born in London in 1684 and studied engraving from the age of thirteen. He also studied drawing and he set up on his own at the age of twenty-five, engraving plates for Michael Vandergucht and other artists. From 1722 until 1751 he signed all but four plates for the Oxford Almanacks. On Burghers' death he applied for the post of Engraver to the University, calling himself the most eminent engraver in the country. He proposed to live in London where most of his work was centred, and he asked for a salary of £5 a year and was paid for the plates he engraved. He said he would employ a deputy at 20s. a year 'which is what they allow (and not enough)' who would live and work in Oxford and also engrave illustrations for University books.

Vertue was patronized by the 1st Earl of Oxford, by Edward Harley, the 2nd Earl, and by other noblemen with whom he travelled to houses all over the country, copying portraits of the owners and their forbears. He visited Oxford frequently and records that he was obliged to the Vice-Chancellor and other members of the University 'for their civilities there' (Walpole Society XIII). He copied portraits of members of the University and he illustrated books, including portraits of kings for Rapin-Thoyras, *History of England* (1725 *et seq.*). He collected material for a history of the arts in England; his notes for this and for his autobiography have been published by the Walpole Society. His notes formed the basis of Horace Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting in England* (1762). He was appointed Engraver to the Society of Antiquaries in 1717 and died in 1756.

The Almanack for 1723 illustrating Hawksmoor's unbuilt design for a quadrangle for Brasenose College was the first one with views of college buildings and portraits of the founders and benefactors. The following year the subject was a bird's-eye view of Christ Church with two groups of figures facing each other in the foreground (Fig. 1). Most of them were identified by Dr. Ducarel, an Advocate in Doctors' Commons and Librarian to the Archbishop of Canterbury. His notes on the Almanacks were published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* (vols. 61, 62, and 63) by LL (Michael Wodhull), who at that time owned Dr Ducarel's collection of Oxford Almanacks. He identifies in the group on the left Henry VIII, in 1532 the second founder of the College, and behind him Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, Henry Guildeford, Comptroller of the King's Household, and lastly Sir Thomas More. On the right Cardinal Wolsey, the original founder, faces the king with five Deans of Christ Church behind him, Drs. Samuel and John Fell, Aldrich, Atterbury, and Smalridge.

A copper plate for this Almanack signed *G. Vertue Sculp* beneath the title is preserved at the Oxford University Press; Vertue was paid for a plate in 1723.³ His engraving is more accomplished than Burghers' and the figures are well drawn and are convincing portraits. He had engraved paintings of Henry VIII, Dean Aldrich, the Duke of Suffolk, and Sir Thomas More, and he may also have copied the others from paintings. The poses are lively; Wolsey is shown looking arrogantly at the King and holding, or rather withholding, a scroll. The buildings are drawn in careful detail and show that much had been rebuilt or designed since Loggan's *Oxonia Illustrata* was published, including Wren's Tom Tower, Aldrich's Peckwater Quadrangle, and Clarke's Library. Peckwater was built in 1706-14 but the Library, designed in 1716, was not yet built in 1724, suggesting that Clarke was responsible for the design of the Almanack.

² *Remarks and Collections of Thomas Hearne*, ix (Oxf. Hist. Soc. lxxv), 255.

³ University Archives, W.P. b21.

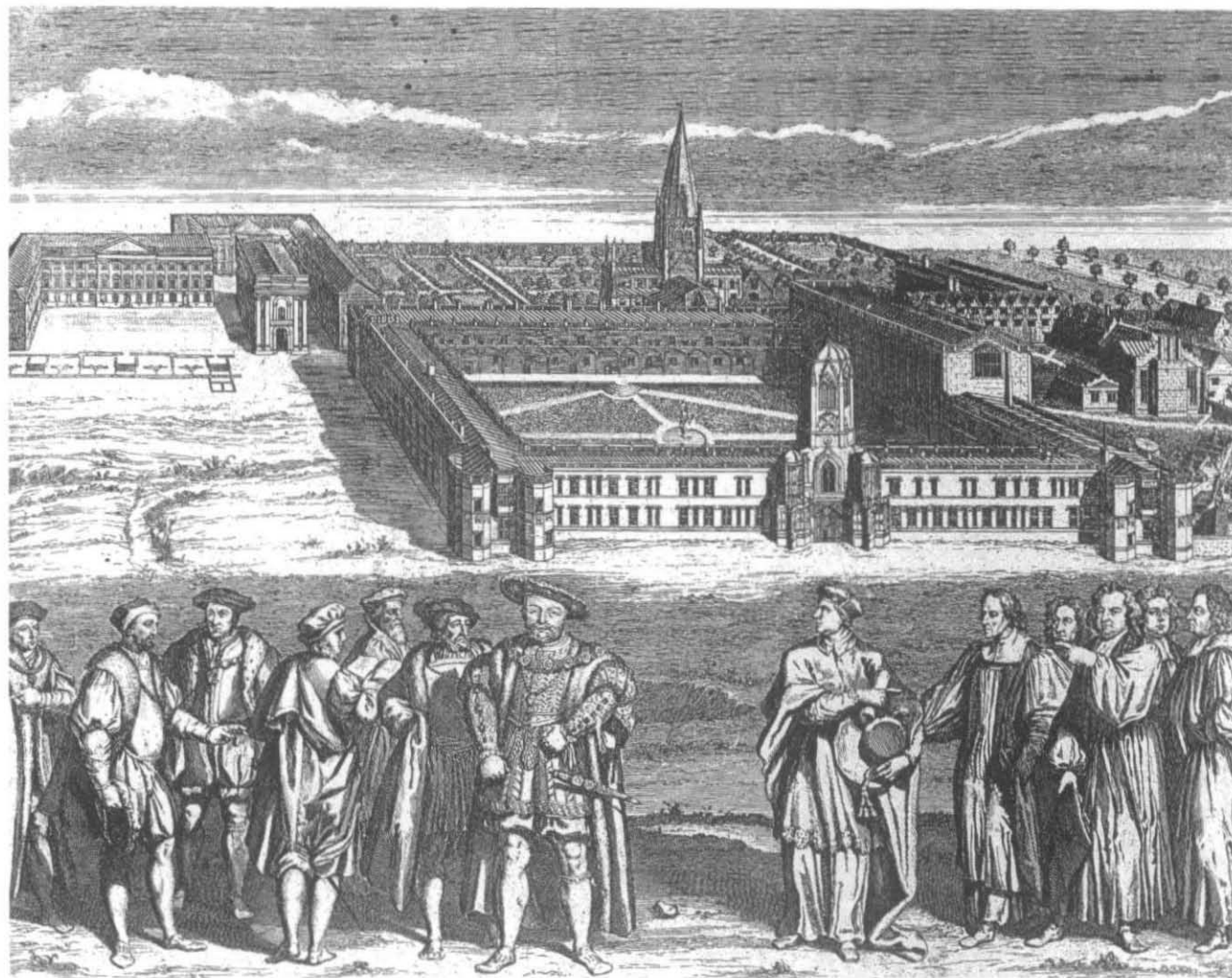


Fig. 1. The Almanack for 1724, engraved by George Vertue.

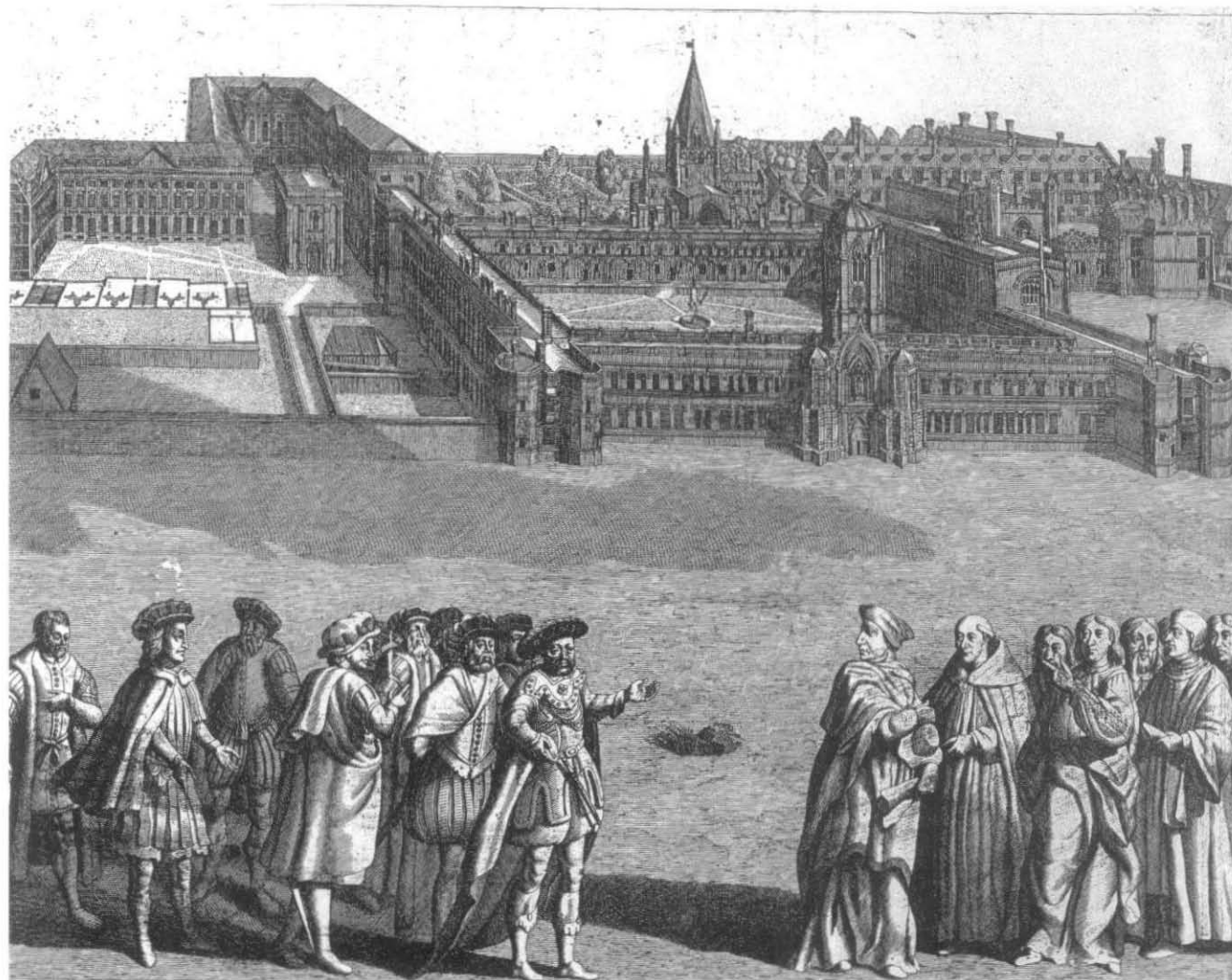


Fig. 2. The Almanack for 1724, engraved by Michael Burghers.

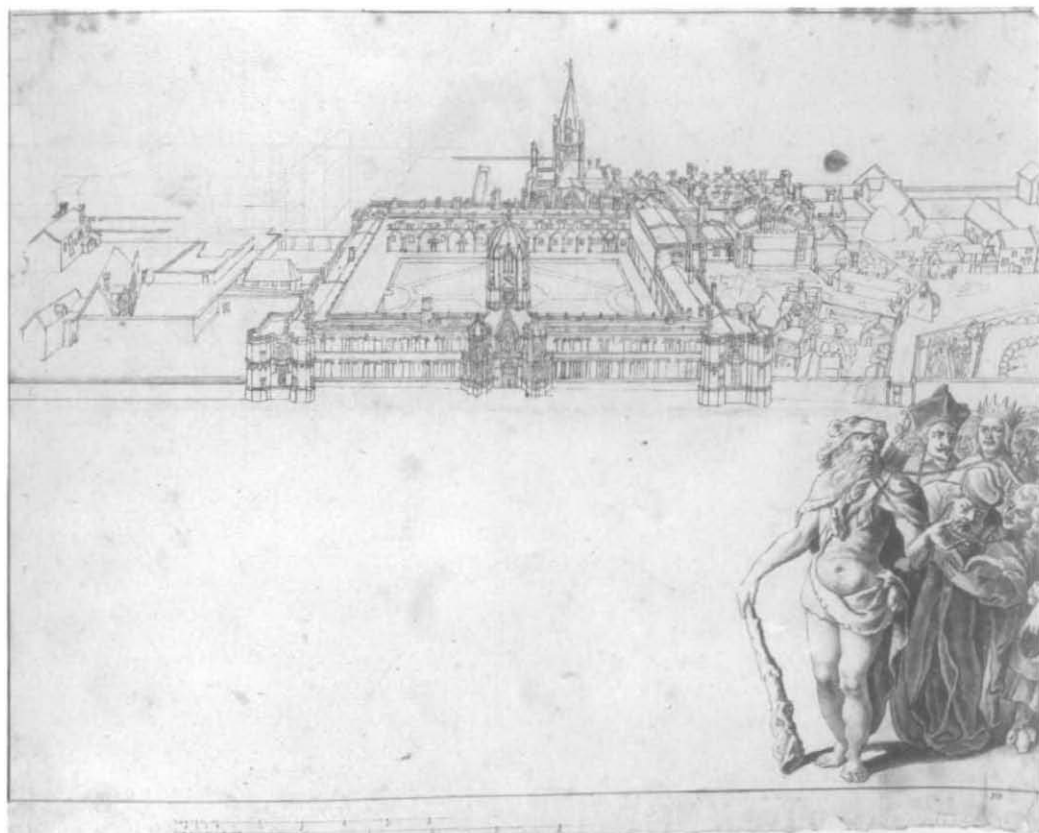


Fig. 3. Drawing by Burghers (by permission of the Curators of the Bodleian Library).

There are gardens on either side of the Cathedral and the Meadows can be seen on the far right behind the Hall and other buildings. There is open ground to the left of the Great Quadrangle.

Burghers' plate (Fig. 2) is more coarsely and mechanically engraved and the portraits are crude and the figures ill-proportioned. By this time he was in his late seventies and probably failing as Hearne suggests. The king is accompanied by nine figures, six full-length and three heads fitted in behind them. There are three full-length figures behind Wolsey and three or perhaps four heads behind them. Wolsey turns angrily towards the king while the king points complacently at his new College. The buildings in the two plates vary in detail; the Hall in Vertue's engraving has no lantern but Burghers' shows one which Hearne said had been destroyed by fire in 1720, and to the north where Vertue's has open ground Burghers' has walls and two small buildings. Burghers signed one print below the calendar *delineavit et sculpsit Michael Burghers sculp. Univ. Oxon* but there is no signature on another, perhaps a proof, and in another, a proof in Worcester College, Peckwater Quadrangle is only indicated by faint lines.

A drawing in the Bodleian Library (G.A. Oxon. a 88a) in ink and wash is signed MB and may be a design for this Almanack (Fig. 3). The Great Quadrangle and Cathedral are drawn in detail with centralized perspective and there are sketchy drawings on either side, on the left a house and gardens with Peckwater Quadrangle indicated in pencil. In the foreground on the right Hercules leads a scholar, a king, a knight and other figures by chains which he holds in his mouth. This group is adapted from an illustration in Cartari, *Le Verie nove Imagini degli dei delli Antiqua* (1615), which is in Worcester College and belonged to George Clarke. It is described as Hercules leading eloquence, military might, oratory, and other virtues; Burghers' drawing may have been intended to symbolize the virtues of Christ Church, but a note in the volume of Almanacks in the Bodleian Library refers to

this drawing thus: '1724. this appears to (be a) Caricature for instead of Wolsey etc. there are men led by the nose with cords etc. in this way the last that MB engraved then perhaps it might be done in Revenge for giving Vertue the Preference'. Another note, also in an old but different hand describes the Deans in the Almanack as Wolsey's Satellites; perhaps referring to the contemporary political and High Church sympathies at Christ Church. One of the Deans, Francis Atterbury, then bishop of Rochester, was arrested for his part in the Jacobite conspiracy and exiled in 1723. It is he who is pointing an accusing finger at the king.

The two plates for 1724 show not only the difference between the two engravers' work but also the change from the earlier allegorical Almanacks to the architectural subjects that followed, reflecting the differing interests of the designers. Dean Aldrich, a classical scholar, owned a large collection of engravings by Renaissance artists which were the source of many of the details in the Almanacks and in some the inspiration for the allegorical subjects, and Dr George Clarke was an architect interested in the buildings and the history of the University. The engravers were sympathetic to their employers' ideas, Burghers bred in the emblematic tradition of the 17th century and Vertue an antiquary and biographer. The earlier Almanacks illustrate the philosophical ideas of the University, the later ones its buildings and achievements as well as the founders, patrons, and benefactors, at one of the most important periods of college building.

The calendars beneath the pictures were also engraved by Burghers and Vertue respectively; Burghers' signature is beneath the calendar and Vertue's below the title. There are small differences between the two; for instance the Praelector of Arabic, Jn. Wallis B.D., is recorded by Vertue but not by Burghers. The compilers of the Almanack calendars seem to have had difficulties over the numbering of the Sundays in Advent. The 1724 calendars are a case in point; Advent Sunday is followed by 1, 2, 3 Sundays in Advent. In 1791 the same error occurs and in addition Christmas Day, which fell that year on a Sunday, is also called the fourth Sunday in Advent. The compilers of the calendars were not alone in this confusion: in the Table of Proper Lessons in a 1720 edition of the Book of Common Prayer there is a similar mistake; the Sundays for Advent are numbered The first, 1, 2, 3, 4, the first four being allotted the lessons for the four Sundays in Advent and number four left blank. Not only can mistakes of various kinds be found in hand-engraved calendars but when, in 1832, copper plates were replaced by steel plates and the calendars were printed, errors inevitably continued to creep in.

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