

THE ORIGIN OF THE BOROUGH OF NEWPORT PAGNELL

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Newport Pagnell, a Domesday borough and market-town, is exceptional in having been in the hands of a mesne lord even before the Norman Conquest. The relationship of the borough to the lord's demesne is discussed, and its legal and fiscal privileges, its status as a tenth-century mint and its medieval constitution are reviewed. It is suggested that the town originated as a checkpoint and trading post on the Danish frontier during the reign of Alfred the Great; otherwise it could hardly have held its ground against Buckingham. Its privileges were those of its lord, and it failed to achieve autonomy and corporate status.

'There is no evidence as to the origin of the borough of Newport Pagnell. Burgage tenure existed in 1086, and the name of the vill shows that at that date a market was already in existence.' Thus Dame Myra Curtis in her invaluable but severely factual account of Newport in the last volume of the Victoria County History.¹ The documentary record of Newport, as of many of our smaller towns, begins with Domesday Book,² and from that unique survey we can follow it with varying but generally increasing clarity for the succeeding nine centuries; but Newport was not very new in the Conqueror's time, and from the later evidence we can perhaps draw some inferences concerning its earlier history. 'The Beyond is still very dark: but the way to it lies through the Norman record. A result is given to us; the problem is to find cause and process'.³

Newport was both a market-town (*port*) and a borough (*burh* or *burg*, Latin *burgus*). During the tenth century these terms became almost synonymous, but their original meanings were quite different. *Burh* meant a stronghold, not necessarily with a permanent population. An Iron Age hillfort such as Cholesbury was a *burh*; so was a walled Roman site, whether still inhabited (Canterbury) or deserted (Richborough). The term was applied to the house of a person of noble rank, protected by some form of stockade or entrenchment, the

breach of which was punished according to the standing of the occupier.⁴ A ceorl's defended curtilage was a *tūn* but not a *burh*. The paradigm of *burh* is irregular, and the mutated dative singular *byrig* (used as locative) gave rise to the place-name element *bury*, which is frequent in the northern Home Counties in the sense 'manor, manor-house'.⁵ In the first half of the tenth century, say between the last years of Alfred the Great and the time of Edgar the Peaceable, the primary meaning of *burh* shifted from a stronghold to a defended town, recognized as a sanctuary of peace in violent times, the more so as its inhabitants (*burhware*), not yet comfortable *bourgeois*, were ready to defend it. A borough enjoyed the king's peace,⁶ which only he could give, and therefore became a centre where merchants and craftsmen gathered.

The word *port*, from Latin *portus* 'harbour',⁷ originally related to a trading centre on the coast or on a navigable river, but came to be applied to any place where trade or manufacture was regularly carried on and where services were provided for the surrounding area. During the tenth and early eleventh centuries a *burh* needed to become a *port* if it was to survive at all, and usually a *port* acquired at least symbolic and legal defensive limits, within which men could live, work and trade in safety. Those who were authorized and

encouraged to occupy town-houses within burghal limits became burgesses (Latin *burgenses*). Instead of agricultural services, they paid a fixed and usually small *gafol* or rent to the king, some other lord, or both.⁸ Their tenure soon became secure, and their tenements could be assigned or mortgaged. The essential features of borough-right, which made it highly prized, were fixed money rents in lieu of all or most services, heritability and ease of transfer. In 1086, and indeed before 1066, wherever there were burgesses they held by burgage tenure and there was a borough.⁹ The idea of fortification had been replaced by legal protection of tenurial privileges.

The Domesday Commissioners recognised only three towns in Buckinghamshire: Buckingham, Aylesbury and Newport Pagnell. Of these, the first-named was the county town and a royal borough, half of whose burgesses held directly of the king while half were men of other magnates who had estates in the neighbourhood, within a day's return journey.¹⁰ The Conquest had transferred most of these estates to new lords, without severing the connection between particular burgages and rural manors.

Aylesbury was a *burh* in the oldest sense; the second element in its name refers to its Iron Age earthworks, which were renewed in the Middle Saxon period¹¹ and were perhaps reasserted for legal and commercial reasons after it once more became a king's manor in 971.¹² Aylesbury had a market, the tolls of which yielded £10 a year in 1086,¹³ but it had no burgesses and is not a 'Domesday borough'. Indeed, there is no evidence of burgage tenure in Aylesbury at any later date, though the privileges enjoyed by tenants on ancient demesne of the Crown may have been invoked and extended to serve much the same purpose.¹⁴ The manor of Newport was not a royal estate in the Conqueror's or the Confessor's time, but it included a market-town which was a borough. Before the Conquest its lord was Ulf, a king's thegn and a housecarl of King Edward, with a Danish name; he and his men also held Tickford, Caldecote and other estates in Bucks.¹⁵ In Norman terms, Newport was the *caput* of his

honour, and he probably had a timbered manor-house (*heafod-botl*) on what became the site of a small castle by the church, where the Ousel or Lovat joins the Great Ouse.¹⁶ His successor in 1086 was William fitz Ansculf, who held over a hundred hides in the county. William's successor (probably his son-in-law¹⁷) was Fulk Paynel, who gave his name to the place. The late Miss Cicely Baker always pronounced it Panel, but this authentic and traditional pronunciation has been replaced by the Latinized form (from Paganellus).

The Domesday entry for Newport is exceptionally interesting, but needs elucidation; it may be translated as follows:

Manor. William himself holds Newport. It answers for 5 hides. There is land for 9 ploughs. In the demesne are 4 carucates of land, and on it are 4 ploughs; and 5 villeins have 5 ploughs. The burgesses have 6½ ploughs, and of other men outside the 5 hides (there are) those who cultivate (for them?). There are 9 slaves, and 2 mills worth 40 shillings, meadow for all the plough-teams and worth 40 shillings besides, woodland for 300 swine and worth 2 shillings besides, and, in addition, 4 shillings come from men who dwell in the woodland. And in all other rents paid yearly it renders 116 shillings and 4 pence. In all it is and was (when received) worth 20 pounds; in King Edward's time 24 pounds. This manor Ulf, a thegn of King Edward, held.

William fitz Ansculf also held the contiguous vill of Tickford, valued at 100 shillings, and Caldecote, valued at 40 shillings; but these, though they became parts of the ecclesiastical and civil parish of Newport Pagnell, were treated as separate manors.

The surprising feature of the borough of Newport is that even before the Conquest it had a single lord who was not the king. This was quite usual on the Continent, where towns and cities were often held by feudatories of the Emperor or the King of France; but in England, outside Kent, nearly all the boroughs were in the king's hands in 1066, and were administered by officers directly responsible to him. The only exceptions allowed by Tait¹⁸ were Durham,

where the bishop had exceptional powers because of the proximity of the Scots, and the herring-port of Dunwich, where royal rights were exercised by Edric of Laxfield before the Conquest and by Robert Malet after it, until he forfeited them to Henry I. Maitland¹⁹ would include Taunton, which had borough-right before 1066,²⁰ though it had been held for centuries by the Bishop of Winchester;²¹ this may, however, be a development of tenth-century privileges which treated Taunton as if it were still demesne of the Crown.²² Maitland and Tait both overlooked Newport, which was clearly a mesne or seignorial borough. Two related questions arise; whether it had once been a royal borough, and what were the circumstances of its foundation. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the lord of a village could make it a free borough by granting burghage tenure to some of his villeins, or to newcomers, in order to create a new urban centre and so increase the revenue of his estates as a whole.²³ If Newport were such a manorial borough, it would probably be the first; but in any event it had privileges which only the king could have given. The Domesday entry indicates that the burgesses paid no geld for their tenements or their 6½ ploughlands. For this particular tax, which was no trifle, they occupied an exempt area. This strongly suggests that the Crown had fostered a small borough within the manor. Such total exemption from geld was exceptional, but there were several boroughs in Devon which (like Buckingham) had only nominal assessments and retained this privilege when they were later mediatized.²⁴

The lord of Newport enjoyed some other regalian rights. In the early twelfth century the Paynells exercised royal jurisdiction both in their yearly view of frankpledge and in their fortnightly portmote.²⁵ Their borough was free from suits of counties and hundreds and sheriff's aid.²⁶ Pillory, tumbrel and gallows were ancient customs of the borough, and the gallows was in use by order of the lord's court in 1262.²⁷ It had, however, been a rule of Old English law that places of execution pertained to the king alone: *omnia qual[m]stowa i. occidendorum loca, totaliter sunt regis*.²⁸ Professor A. C. Chibnall has pointed out that

there was a *qualmstowe* at Astwood on the county boundary (*syremere*).²⁹ Until the late twelfth century Astwood was part of the Newport demesne, and the gallows there might well go back to a time when the manor was in the king's hands. In the thirteenth century it would have been useful to the king's justices on circuit; when there was little business from Buckinghamshire, they would only have to ride from Bedford along the Newport road to deal with it on Bucks ground. The Saxon word *cwealmstow* seems to have become obsolete after the late twelfth century; it occurs in the *Ancren Riwe*,³⁰ written in what by then must be called the Wessex dialect.

Although the lord of the manor maintained full control of the borough, there was a clear distinction between the lands of the burgesses and the rest of the manor. On the modern map we find Portfields adjoining the Bury Field. The manor was in effect divided into six parts:

(i) The manor of Newport, or rather that part of it which was subject to geld, was assessed at 5 hides. It had 5 villein households with 5 plough-teams, a very ordinary small settlement or group of family farms which may well go back to the late sixth or seventh century, though its original name is lost, if indeed it had one. With the 5 hides of Tickford it would have made up a 10-hide unit of the usual type, supporting two half-time armed men in rotation when the *fyrð* was called out. Other local 10-hide groupings were Chicheley with Little Crawley, Clifton Reynes with Newton Blossomville, Emberton with Petsoe, Hardmead with Great Crawley, and Tyringham with Filgrave, while the very ancient settlement of Sherington was large enough to constitute a 10-hide unit on its own.³¹

(ii) The lord's demesne included 4 carucates or ploughlands, on which were 4 plough-teams (each of 8 oxen). The use of an agricultural unit rather than a fiscal one implies that the land was not subject to the burdens implied by hidation. These *terrae carucatae* with no hidage were interpreted by J. H. Round³² as 'inland', exempt from geld as at Turweston, Hanslope and Tickford; in fact the 2 carucates at

Tickford can be linked with the 4 at Newport, under the same lordship, to make up the 6 carucates which one might expect in the Danelaw. It looks as if a Viking warrior had been placed in control of the sites where the road from Northampton to London crosses the Great Ouse and where the old Roman road crossed the Ousel. He did not displace two small groups of English husbandmen south of the Ouse, but he appropriated a large area of woodland and waste, together with the slaves needed to work it. One may surmise that they were swineherds of British descent. The term 'inland' for ungeldable demesne is frequent in Northamptonshire,³³ and the four villis for which the institution though not the name is recorded in Buckinghamshire are all near the Northants border. For Newport and Tickford, it will be argued that a special arrangement may have been made at the time of the treaty of 886, which fixed the Danelaw boundary along the Great Ouse, leaving these two villis on the English side.³⁴ For Hanslope, such a concession could well date from the treaty of Tiddingford in 906; for Turweston, from the Buckingham campaign of 914. In each case the English king would be consolidating his hold on newly recovered areas by special favours to Scandinavian occupiers whom it was prudent to conciliate. The immunities would have lasted until the late twelfth century, when carucage was levied on ploughlands.

(iii) The town of Newport lay within narrow bounds, defined by four boundary crosses in Fulk Paynel's time,³⁵ and probably long before. The burgage tenants numbered 53 in 1245,³⁶ but only 34 in 1543,³⁷ so that if their claim to be a corporate body had succeeded it would have been a fairly close corporation, not including non-burgess households within the borough.

(iv) The townlands, amounting to 6½ ploughlands, were held by some (perhaps all) of the burgesses, individually rather than collectively. As with the lord's demesne, no hidage is mentioned, and the ungeldability of the burgesses' land may also be inferred from the elliptical phrase which follows: *aliorumque hominum extra .v. hidas laborantes*. These are

other men outside the five hides, and in the context this indicates that the burgesses themselves are not on the geldable land. This would have happened naturally enough if the town were planted on part of the demesne and retained its immunities.

The sense 'cultivate' for *laborare* is quite classical; it occurs in Tacitus,³⁸ and is found in Domesday Book in the entry for Totnes,³⁹ a royal borough mediatised by the Conqueror. There, besides the 95 burgesses within the borough, there were 15 out-burgesses said to be *terram laborantes*. At Newport, however, the implication is that the labouring men were not burgesses, though they had some relationship with them and their land. Morris would translate 'the burgesses have 6½ ploughs of other men working outside the 5 hides'⁴⁰ but this ignores the *-que*. The translation adopted above 'and of other men outside the 5 hides (there are) those who cultivate' implies that the burgesses and the other men are outside the geldable land, but leaves their relationship vague. One could take *laborantes* as accusative, a second object of *habeunt*, so that the burgesses have the other men as well as the 6½ ploughlands, but *laborantes* could not qualify a genitive plural; we should have to agree with F. W. Ragg⁴¹ that the text is defective, and supply *illos* or the like. On balance, it would seem that the other men (or some of them) were working on the burgesses' land, probably as subtenants rather than as landless labourers. Since neither they nor the burgesses rendered any direct payment or service to the king, the Domesday Commissioners would have no direct interest in their numbers or status. The burgesses were busy traders or craftsmen, who needed men to till their holdings. At Huntingdon the burgesses had bordars under them (*sub eis*),⁴² and the addition of these words would have clarified the Newport entry.

(v) The meadows by the river were more than sufficient for all the plough-teams, namely those of the lord, the villeins and the burgesses or their subtenants. The surplus, which realized 10s a year, presumably went to other villis, such as Tickford and Caldecote, where the meadow was insufficient for the ploughlands.

(vi) Finally, there were the woodlands. Professor Chibnall has emphasized that the 1550 acres of Newport Pagnell proper, excluding Tickford and Caldecote, would not suffice for 15½ ploughlands as well as the meadow, the burgages and other necessary enclosures.⁴³ He has pointed out that the manor of Newport included a large detached woodland area east of Hardmead, comprising Ekeney, Astwood and Alizwood, which were being developed as part of the demesne. Ekeney 'oak island' was assigned to a steward of Newport between 1135 and 1166;⁴⁴ Alizwood 'Alice's wood', later Astwood Bury, became a separate estate by 1187, subject to fealty and a rent of 18*d* to Newport;⁴⁵ Astwood 'east wood' was alienated in 1195-7.⁴⁶ In 1086 the main use of the demesne woodland was for swine-pasture, but there was also a small surplus, which is distinguished from the rents paid to the lord by men who had settled in the woods (as bodgers or the like?).

Thus William fitz Ansculf, like Ulf before him, was lord of a manor which started as a normal open-field estate, but which had come to include a small borough, whose burgesses had their own fields, with common rights in the Bury Field. The untaxed demesne, on which the borough had been planted, included further arable and extensive woodland, which was being progressively assarted. It remains to consider how and when the exceptional features of this manor arose.

Professor Chibnall considered in 1965 that Newport was founded, or rather refounded and renamed, after the Danish devastation of the Ouse valley in 1010;⁴⁷ but in 1979 he concluded that the town and its name could have been much older than this.⁴⁸ Evidence can be adduced in support. First, the grouping of the hundreds of Bunsty, Moulsoe and Seckloe into what became the Three Hundreds of Newport is the kind of arrangement presupposed by the ship-levy of 1008,⁴⁹ which was not without precedent; assessment on a grouping of three hundreds is taken back to 964 by Edgar's charter in favour of St Mary's Abbey, Worcester.⁵⁰ Second, it appears to be generally accepted that the mint-signatures *Niwanpo* and

Niwu can be assigned to Newport Pagnell. According to Dolley and Metcalf⁵¹ the former even antedated the recoinage of 973, though elsewhere they place Newport among the mints established to facilitate that reform.⁵² There are seven other medieval Newports,⁵³ but the North Bucks town is the only strong candidate. 'A network of mints was part of the plan of the reform of 973, and it was the intention that men should not have to travel an unreasonable distance to reach a mint'⁵⁴ when they were required to exchange their old coins every sixth year (later every third year). Fifteen miles was quite as far as a man could walk to the mint and return the same day without having to seek a night's lodging. This may be on the high side; it has been shown that the 'urban field' of Buckingham extended no more than 12 miles from the town.⁵⁵ Newport is some 15 miles from Buckingham, 15 miles from Northampton and 13 miles from Bedford, so that the maintenance of a mint there would be justifiable under the general policy that the great majority of people should not suffer hardship or serious inconvenience on each recoinage.

A mint is the best evidence of urban status; legally, it could exist only in a *port*, and it involved royal protection and supervision. The evidence of the mint-signatures carries Newport back at least to the third quarter of the tenth century, and makes its urban development more or less contemporary with that of Buckingham. There is, however, one other line of inference which may even give Newport priority, namely its medieval constitution. In addition to the view of frankpledge for the whole manor in Whitsun week⁵⁶ and the fortnightly portmote, which punished breaches of the peace and settled minor civil disputes,⁵⁷ there was an administrative body which was the principal court of the borough, though not of the manor. This was the quarterly *unbodmot*, which all burgesses were bound to attend, and where the lord's officers made ordinances for the government of the borough.⁵⁸ The word *unbodmot* is unknown to the dictionaries; *bod* is 'precept, order' and *mōt* 'meeting, court', but the prefix is obscure. *Un-* is almost always negative, privative or reversive, and this gives

no good sense. The key may be that *unb-* is a spelling convention for *umb-*. In Middle English texts *-nb-* is frequently found for *-mb-* even when the latter would represent the actual pronunciation.⁵⁹ If a purely Old English derivation is sought, one might suggest **ymbbodmōt* 'meeting concerned with commands or orders' on the analogy of *ymspræc* 'comment, speech about a subject'. *Ymb* 'about, concerning' could be *um* by the mid-twelfth century; the idiom *æfre ymbe hwile* 'every so often' is *ævre um wile* in the famous account in the Chronicle of the miseries of Stephen's reign.⁶⁰

It may, however, be otiose to postulate an unrecorded Old English compound when an Old Norse derivation gives even better sense. *Umbod* could be from *umbod* 'charge, commission, administration by delegacy' (*boð* 'command'). This survived unchanged until the sixteenth century in the Orkney and Shetland dialects of English as *umboth*, the office of an *umbothman*, 'commissary, procurator'.⁶¹ In Dano-Norwegian the meaning was generalized; *ombud* is 'civil position, office'. In Swedish *ombudsman* 'commissioner' acquired a special sense 'commissioner to supervise the observance of laws'. In this form the word returned to standard English c.1959 with the meaning 'commissioner for administration', and entered the Oxford Dictionary in 1982.⁶²

An *umbodmot* would thus be a court held under a (royal) commission. The use of a Scandinavian term for an administrative court at Newport Pagnell would be appropriate if the officer in control of the *port* when it originated was a Dane. The earliest possible date for this is the autumn of 877, when a large section of the Great Army shared out and settled in eastern Mercia, including the territories of what became the Five Boroughs, as well as around Northampton and Bedford. The rest of the Army remained in arms under Guthrum with a view to a third campaign against Alfred; if the whole Viking force had remained united, it could probably have conquered Wessex and made England a Northern kingdom. The events of the first half of 878 are the best known in Anglo-Saxon history. During the spring and

summer of that year Alfred took refuge in Athelney, organized the West Saxon resistance, defeated the Vikings at Edington, accepted their capitulation at Chippenham, stood sponsor to Guthrum at his baptism at Aller and concluded peace with him at Wedmore. There followed a year's delay, during which Guthrum's army left Wessex but remained in Hwiccian territory around Cirencester. Asser, Alfred's biographer, says that a Viking army from foreign parts came up the Thames and made contact with the army upstream,⁶³ but after wintering at Fulham they returned to Ghent, Guthrum having finally decided to keep his word. During 880 his forces withdrew into East Anglia, where they settled and shared out the land. There must have been an agreement with their former comrades now settled in Danish Mercia, and it is suggested that the Great Ouse upstream from Bedford may have been taken as a simple and convenient boundary. Meanwhile the Mercians had lost no time in disposing of their puppet king Ceolwulf, and Alfred claimed to be his legitimate successor, *rex Anglorum*.⁶⁴ Alfred's overlordship had certainly been accepted in English Mercia by 883,⁶⁵ and probably a year or two earlier, when he had intervened to settle a conflict between the Mercians and the kings of Gwent and Glywysing (Glamorgan).⁶⁶ He was *in expeditione* in 882,⁶⁷ and not against Guthrum. During these years there must have been an agreed frontier between the English and the Danes of East Anglia, and it is suggested that the boundary adopted was Watling Street, following the precedent set by the Five Boroughs, or at least by the army of Leicester. The East Anglian kingdom kept the peace until 885, but after Alfred's siege and capture of London in 886 Guthrum had to withdraw further, ceding to Alfred whatever he still held in Buckinghamshire south of the Ouse, together with the adjoining parts of Bedfordshire west of a line drawn from the source of the Lea to Bedford. The significant point is that the treaty boundary ends where Watling Street crosses the Ouse. To the west and north of this, Alfred had to deal with Viking armies for whom Guthrum could not answer.⁶⁸

The implication seems fairly clear; between

880 and 886 the Great Ouse had been the boundary between Guthrum's kingdom and Danish Mercia, with the paved ford at Stony Stratford as the triple boundary point of both these realms and English Mercia. Under these circumstances trade between Northampton and London, both of which were in Danish hands, could hardly have been routed along Watling Street, since this formed the frontier in Buckinghamshire. A new route would be needed further north and east, in Danish territory. At Newport such a route crossed the river, and met the road from Bedford to the south. It was a very natural site for a new *port*, and Guthrum would be likely enough to station one of his leading men there to establish a trading post, if indeed that had not been done already in 877-9. Vikings made the transition from raiding to trading quite readily. The existence of this new thoroughfare may explain why the stretch of Watling Street in Buckinghamshire remained almost uninhabited until the twelfth-century 'colonization of the main roads'.⁶⁹

Clause 1 of the treaty of 886⁷⁰ placed Newport on the English frontier, but under clause 5 trade in cattle and goods across the border was allowed, provided that hostages were given as a pledge of peace and as evidence 'that one has a clean back' (i.e. intends no fraud). Under clause 4 of the treaty, anyone involved in the purchase of slaves, horses or oxen was to have a warrantor to the sale. These provisions would entail the appointment of officials at designated checkpoints, of which Newport was sure to be one. It is suggested that the new *port* was a small area controlled by a royal officer who was in charge of movements over the North Bridge and of trading arrangements in a market-place⁷¹ adjoining it. It would seem natural for a Danish leader who had accepted English rule to be commissioned by Alfred and his son-in-law⁷² Ethelred, ealdorman and under-king of Mercia, to undertake these functions. Any privileges which such a magnate already enjoyed would be continued, and perhaps increased. Immunities granted to his demesne would apply to the incipient new town, and freedom from courts administering English law would be as welcome

to him as freedom from hidation. Under the circumstances one might expect that he and his office should have Danish designations. His base would be his residence, and at first he would probably have a small body of men quartered under arms there. When times were quieter, they would have become the first burgesses. Between the treaty of 886 and the establishment of the borough of Buckingham in 914, Newport was likely to develop in view of its position on the trade routes. The provision that subjects of one ruler should not settle in the territory of the other was intended simply to reduce the risk of renewed hostilities, and clauses 2 and 3 of the treaty made careful and realistic provision as to future man-slaughters and thefts involving Englishmen and Danes; but the frontier did not long remain an iron curtain, and within 25 years at most Englishmen were purchasing land in Danish territory at Ethelred's instance.⁷³ After the treaty of Tiddingford in 906, Newport was probably near rather than on the Danelaw boundary,⁷⁴ but this would if anything strengthen the Crown's interest in promoting a trading community there. However, if this *port* had not been established before the war of reconquest (911-18) it would probably not have arisen at all, because of the policy of fostering one borough in each of the incipient counties of the recovered Midlands. Buckingham was preferred to Newport because of its strong defensive position and its strategic importance in the campaign against Northampton, once Edward the Elder was sure that Bedford was not hostile; but it would seem likely that Newport already possessed the urban status which Buckingham had to secure. It was perhaps because Newport was not hidated that Buckingham, unlike most county towns, was given a nominal assessment of one hide.⁷⁵

When a man such as Ulf controlled the neighbourhood, it was to be expected that he would become the king's representative in the borough. In the early Middle Ages there was a constant tendency for office to become property, and at Newport this stage had been reached before 1066. Thenceforward the privileges of Newport were those of its lord, who received the profits of the market and

fares, the pleas and perquisites of the courts, the rents of the burgages, fines on succession or alienation, and the best beast as a heriot on the death of a burgess as well as of a villein,⁷⁶ Newport Pagnell (the affix is recorded from 1220⁷⁷) was near the lower limit of burgality. The burgesses had no property or income in common until they became responsible as a community for the upkeep of the bridges in the late fourteenth century.⁷⁸ For this purpose they formed themselves into a guild of St Mary, which acquired the Saracen's Head as its headquarters in 1484, but which does not seem connected with the other governing bodies of the town.⁷⁹ At least six other gifts of property for public purposes were made between 1483 and 1558.⁸⁰ These Town Lands endowments survived the Reformation, and by a scheme of 1898,⁸¹ with rough justice, the income from them was divided equally between four objects; the maintenance of the parish church, the benefit of the poor, the repair of the highways and the repair of the bridges. During the

fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the burgesses made valiant efforts to establish a communal identity. They elected their own bailiff to farm the market dues and to represent them in dealing with the lord's bailiff, and eventually they claimed to be a corporation by prescription, consisting of bailiff and burgesses; but in the absence of any royal or seignorial charter the burghal institutions were suppressed by a series of adverse legal decisions in 1615–33.⁸² The burgesses retained their individual rights, but the town had a merely manorial and parochial constitution until 1897, when it acquired an urban district council. This was lost in 1974, when Newport became part of the borough of Milton Keynes; it remained without a locally elected body until 1985, when a local council was constituted,⁸³ almost nine centuries after the town had been recognized by the Domesday Commissioners as the only borough in Buckinghamshire besides the county town, and (on the present view) eleven centuries after its foundation.

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4. Laws of Ine c. 45; Laws of Alfred c. 40.
5. A. H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements* (1956) i. 59.
6. IV Ethelred 4. 1; Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle, 1903) i. 234.
7. Less probably from *porta* 'gateway'.
8. J. Tait, *Medieval English Borough* (1936), especially 100–2, 355.
9. The converse is not quite true; a declining borough might still be recognized in 1086, even though it had no burgesses (e.g. Frome, Milverton).
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11. M. E. Farley in *South Midlands Archaeology* xvi (1986) 37–8: 'In the Middle Saxon period . . . a ditch was dug into the fill of the Iron Age ditch, demonstrating that although already infilled, its course remained apparent.'
12. M. E. Farley, 'Aylesbury—a defended town?', *Recs. Bucks* xix (1974) 424–48.
13. D.B. i. fo. 143.
14. *V.C.H. Bucks* iii (1925) 6, 8 nn. 75–9, 89.
15. D.B. i. fo. 148b, 149, 149b.
16. See *Hist. Mon. Comm. Report North Bucks* (1912) 209. The capital messuage of the manor was later called Waterhall.
17. References in *V.C.H. Bucks* iv, 414 nn. 51–2.
18. Tait, *op. cit.*, 58–9, 140.
19. Maitland, *op. cit.*, 258; D.B. i. fo. 87b.
20. Record of the dues pertaining to Taunton in 1066, in A. J. Robertson (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (2nd edn., 1956) 236–9.
21. Before 737, if Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (1968) no. 254 (cited as S254) can be taken as authentic in substance. Ine's fortifications at Taunton had been dismantled in 722.
22. Maitland, *op. cit.*, 326; S373, S806.
23. Cf. Ramsay Muir, *Hist. Municip. Govt. in Liverpool* (1906) 15: 'Not much is involved in being a Free Borough. Any little rural township became a Free Borough as soon as its lord turned the holdings of his serfs into burgages, abolished villein services and took money rents instead.' Examples of such manorial boroughs which failed to develop include Mursley and Whitchurch.
24. Tait, *op. cit.*, 127–8.
25. *V.C.H. Bucks* iv, 412. The independence of the lord's view of frankpledge was confirmed following a plea of Quo Warranto in 1286.
26. *Cur. Reg. R.*, 76 m.7; *Rot. Lit. Claus.* (Rec. Com.) i. 520; Madox, *Hist. of Excheq.* i, 418.
27. *Hund. R.* (Rec. Com.) i. 28, 40; *Chan. Inq.* p. m. 29 Hen. III no. 50; *Assize R.* 58 m.28d.
28. B. Thorpe, *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*, i. 519.
29. A. C. Chibnall, *Beyond Sherington* (1979) 61.
30. *Ancren Riwele* 106: 'þe munt of Calvarie . . . was þe

- ewalmsteou'. Cf. *Corpus Gloss.* (c. 725) 'Calvariae locus, cualmstou'. *Cwealm* 'violent death' is to be distinguished from *cwalu* 'torment'; both are from root **kwal* 'to die'. 'Quell' in the sense 'kill, cause to die' occurs as late as Cowper and Byron.
31. *Beyond Sherington*, 208.
 32. *V.C.H. Bucks* i. 225.
 33. Northamptonshire Geld Roll in A. J. Robertson, *op. cit.*, 230-6.
 34. *Corpus Christi Coll.* Cambridge ms. 383; trans. D. Whitelock, *Engl. Hist. Docs.*, i. 380-1.
 35. Dugdale, *Monasticon* v. 202; Ct. R. (Gen. Ser.) portf. 155, no. 20.
 36. Chan, *Inq.* p. m. 29 Hen. III no. 50; so dated on endorsement, but Dame Myra Curtis (*V.C.H. Bucks* iv. 412 n. 80) gave reasons for dating this survey of the borough not earlier than 1270.
 37. *Mins. Accts.* Hen. VIII no. 6071.
 38. C. Cornelius Tacitus, *Germania* 45.
 39. D.B. i. fo. 108b; Tait, *op. cit.*, 68.
 40. J. Morris (ed.), *Domesday Book; Buckinghamshire* (1978) 17. 17.
 41. *V.C.H. Bucks* i. 255 n. 10.
 42. D.B. i. fo. 203a; Tait, *op. cit.*, 69.
 43. *Beyond Sherington*, 14.
 44. *Ibid.*, 14, 39, 130.
 45. *Ibid.*, 62, citing a lost charter noted by Browne Willis (*Bodleian Lib.*, MS Willis xxiv, fo. 8).
 46. *Ibid.*, 56, 234-5, citing an uncalendared charter of Lincoln College, Oxford.
 47. A. C. Chibnall, *Sherington* (1965) 16.
 48. *Beyond Sherington*, 14. Lipscomb, *Hist. Antiq. Bucks* (1847) iv. 270 mentions a tradition of Danish ravaging; but if Newport was a Danish town, might not this equally be a folk-memory of the St Brice's Day massacre in 1002 by English neighbours? Cf. R. S. Downs, *Recs. Bucks* v. 260; Sir Frank Markham, *Hist. Milton Keynes and Dist.* (1973) i. 36. The district was spared by Sweyn in 1013.
 49. A.S. Chron. s.a. 1008; probably least corrupt in D-text, which is emended and translated by G. R. Garmonsway, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (1953) 138. References to the ship-levy and to groupings of 3 hundreds to form ship-sokes are collected by F. E. Harmer, *Anglo-Saxon Writs* (1952) 266-7.
 50. S364, which exists in 33 manuscripts (runner-up to Ely's S779, with 37?) and has been discussed by at least 14 scholars. It seems to be authentic in substance, though interpolated in favour of the monks; but they would hardly have fabricated the clause 'ut ipse episcopus cum monachis suis de istis tribus centuriatibus, id est hundredis . . . constituent unam naucupletionem, quod Anglice dicitur scyppfyled odde scypscocne'.
 51. R. H. M. Dolley and D. M. Metcalf, 'The Reform of the English Coinage under Eadgar', in R. H. M. Dolley (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Coins* (1961) at p. 145.
 52. *Ibid.*, 150-1; cf. H. R. Loyn, *Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest* (1962) 123.
 53. S. Lewis, *Topog. Dict. of England* (4th edn., 1840) iii. 350-4.
 54. Dolley and Metcalf, *op. cit.*, 148.
 55. See n. 10.
 56. Ct. R. (Gen. Ser.) portf. 155 no. 20, and other refs. in *V.C.H. Bucks* iv. 412 nn. 86-93, 413 nn. 3-6.
 57. Chan, *Inq.* p. m. 29 Hen. III no. 50 (cf. n. 36 above), *Ld. Rev. Misc. Bks.* ccx fos. 350-4.
 58. *Ld. Rev. Misc. Bks.* cxvii fo. 277, and other refs. in *V.C.H. Bucks* iv. 413 nn. 7-11.
 59. Instances in *Oxford Engl. Dict.* (1933) U 17-23.
 60. A.S. Chron. (E) s.a. 1137; but this closing section of the *Chronicle*, with which Old English literature ends, is not annalistic and could not have been written before 1154-5. Cf. Plummer, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel* (1899) ii. 309.
 61. *Oxford Engl. Dict.*, U 21; *Engl. Dialect Dict.*; Edmaston, *Shetland Glossary*, 135.
 62. *Suppl. Oxford Engl. Dict.* (1982) iii. 56-7.
 63. Asser, *De Rebus Gestis Ælfredi*, c. 58: 'Eodem anno [879] magnus paganorum exercitus de ultramarinis partibus navigans in Tamesin [for A.S. acc. sing. Tæmesan?] fluvium venit, et adunatus est superiori exercitui, sed tamen hyemavit in loco qui dicitur Fullanham, iuxta flumen Tamesin.' In view of cc. 60, 61 *adunatus est* means no more than 'made contact with' not 'joined up with'.
 64. Evidenced by a coin with the royal title *Rex Anglo* (BM *Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Coins* ii. 34, type 4) which can be dated 880-5 (*Anglo-Saxon Coins*, 95). Alfred is *rex Anglorum et Saxonum* in S346, dated 889, a grant to Worcester of land in London. The title *rex Angul-Saxonum*, regularly used by Asser, writing in 893, is evidenced by charters of 891 (S347) and 892 (S348) which are accepted by Finberg, *Early Charters of Wessex* (1964) as authentic. W. H. Stevenson (*Asser's Life of Alfred* (1904) 148) associates the change in style with Alfred's triumph in 886.
 65. S218.
 66. Asser, *op. cit.*, c. 80: 'ut in omnibus regiae voluntati oboediens esset, sicut Æthered cum Merciiis'. In relation to Alfred the Welsh kings and the Mercian ruler were equally *subreguli*; but they could call each other *rex*.
 67. S345.
 68. Cf. R. H. Hodgkin, *Hist. Anglo-Saxons* (3rd edn., 1952) ii. 579: 'To the north there is no word about the continuation of the line beyond the point at which the Ouse met the Watling Street. It is to be presumed that the English made other agreements, verbal or formal, delimiting the frontier through the northern Midlands.'
 69. R. H. Britnell, 'The origins of Stony Stratford', *Recs. Bucks* (1977) xx. 451-3.
 70. See n. 34.
 71. A. H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements* ii (1956) 71, suggests that *port* sometimes means 'market-place' rather than 'market-town'. The street-name Newport outside the walls of Lincoln supports this; K. Cameron, *Place-Names of Lincolnshire* (1985) i. 30.
 72. S217 shows that Æthelred, *dux et patricius* of Mercia, had married Alfred's daughter by 887.
 73. S396, dated 926 but referring to events not later than 911; cf. S397.
 74. Cf. *Recs. Bucks* xxi (1979) 183 n. 63, xxv (1983) 127-9.
 75. D.B. i. fo. 143 (facsimile on cover of Morris, *op. cit.*).
 76. *Ld. Rev. Misc. Bks.* ccx fo. 350.

77. A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Buckinghamshire* (1925) 21.
78. *Cal. Pat.*, 1377–81, p. 562 (grant of pontage to a group of named inhabitants), 1391–6, p. 372 (grant to 'bailiffs and good men').
79. Refs. in *V.C.H. Bucks* iv, 412 nn. 97–100.
80. Particulars in *V.C.H. Bucks* iv, 420.
81. Scheme of Charity Commissioners of 22 March 1898 regulating the Town Lands Charities.
82. Refs. in *V.C.H. Bucks* iv, 413 nn. 22–6.
83. The Milton Keynes (Parish of Newport Pagnell) Order 1985, S.I. 1985 no. 1233.