

# THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SAINTS RECONSIDERED.

## 3: ST RUMWOLD (RUMBOLD) OF BUCKINGHAM

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*The legend of St Rumwold is so preposterous that few have ever considered what historical reality, if any, may have given rise to it. Dr Hagerty here suggests some circumstances in which the story, of a new born infant who demanded to be baptized and preached a sermon on the need for a good life, could have been put about.*

In the very full list of the resting places of the saints in England in the twelfth-century chronicle of Hugh Candidus, obviously based on a careful study of contemporary and earlier lists, we read '*Et in Buckingham sanctus Romuoldus trium noctium puer*'.<sup>1</sup> The same location was recorded in the list of resting places dating from well before the Norman Conquest contained in the *Liber Vitae* of Newminster and Hyde Abbey.<sup>2</sup>

Several post-Conquest Bishops of Lincoln attempted to suppress what Bishop Sutton in the late thirteenth century described as superstitious pilgrimages being made on account of miracles which had not been accredited. These were often to places associated with obscure Saxon saints such as St Rumwold and, indeed, the cessation of pilgrimages to his shrine at Buckingham was ordered around 1280.<sup>3</sup>

These attempts were obviously unsuccessful. Richard Fowler, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to Edward IV, in his will dated 1477, directed: 'Item, I wolle that the aforesaid isle of St Rumwold, in the aforesaid Church Prebendal of Bucks, where my Body and other of my Frends byen buried, the which Isle is begonne of new to be made, be fully made and performed up perfittely in all Things att my Costs and Charge; and in the same Isle that there be made

of new, a Toumbe or Shrine for the said Sainte, where the old is now standinge, and that it be made curiously with Marble, in Length and Breadth as shall be thought by myne Executors most convenient, Consideration had to the Rome; and upon the same Tombe or Shryne, I will that there be sett a Coffyn or a Chest, curiously wrought and gilte, as it apperteynith for to lay in the Bones of the same Saint, and this also to be doon, in all Things, at my Cost and Charge.'<sup>4</sup>

In 1522, the Fraternity of St Rumwold at Buckingham had assets in Buckingham, Hillesden, Nash, Padbury, Preston Bissett and Twyford.<sup>5</sup> Two and a half centuries later, there was no mention of any trace of the shrine or coffyn in Buckingham church as described by Browne Willis. He did write that there had anciently been an inscription indicating that the works directed by Richard Fowler's will had been carried out by his widow, Joan. The church, which was the second largest in the county after that of High Wycombe, was demolished in 1776, after earlier collapse of the spire and later of the tower, and the materials were used in construction of a new church built on a different, the present, site.<sup>6</sup>

According to modern compilers of the lives of the saints, the name of St Rumwold was

associated with more than six pre-Conquest ministers in Mercia and Wessex. Churches were dedicated to him in Kent, Essex, Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire, Dorset and Yorkshire.<sup>7</sup> He was mentioned in the Bosworth Psalter dated to about 1000, but did not figure in monastic calendars compiled after 1100.<sup>8</sup> His miracle-working statue at Boxley in Kent was burnt during the Reformation, while it was recorded in Bishop Kennett's additions to Camden that St Rumwold was still invoked as patron by the fishermen of Folkestone in the sixteenth century.<sup>9</sup> His name was given to streets in various towns. Of those places immediately associated with him, Buckingham still has a St Rumwold's Lane and one remaining well named St Rumwold's. There was formerly at least one well bearing his name in Brackley, while there is another one ascribed to him at Astrop adjoining King's Sutton.<sup>10</sup>

Who was this saint who attracted pilgrims to his shrine in Buckingham, and to other places with which his cult was associated, over so many centuries until the Reformation finally swept him and so many other saints into official oblivion? His story was summarized in a few lines copied by Leland in about 1536 from a document, available to him in Exeter cathedral, ascribed to the mid-fourteenth-century Bishop Grandison.<sup>11</sup> This runs, in translation:

Rumwold's father was king of  
Northumberland,  
Rumwold's mother was a daughter of Penda,  
king of Mercia,  
Rumwold was born in the district of King's  
Sutton<sup>12</sup>,  
Rumwold was baptized at Sutton by Bishop  
Widerin,  
Rumwold's godfather was the Presbyter  
Edwold,  
Rumwold lived only three days,  
Rumwold died three days before the nones  
of November,  
Rumwold was buried by Edwold in King's  
Sutton,  
The next year his body was carried by  
Widerin to Brackley,  
The third year after his death his remains  
were carried to Buckingham.

Penda was the undisputed king of the mid-land kingdom of Mercia from 626, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, or from 632, according to Bede, to 655<sup>13</sup>. As the warrior leader of Mercian expansion, he led a vigorous life and, at an advanced age, fell in battle against the Christian king Oswy of Northumbria (the battle is now dated to November 654). Although a pagan himself, he did not forbid the preaching of the Faith to his subjects, but hated and despised any whom he knew to be insincere in their practice of Christianity once they had accepted it, and said that any who failed to obey the God in whom they professed to believe were despicable wretches. Despite his paganism and his fighting against the Christian kings of neighbouring kingdoms, Middle Anglia under his son, Peada, had already been proselytized from Northumbria in 652/3. The rest of Mercia became officially Christian under the overlordship of Oswy after Penda's death.<sup>14</sup>.

The seven existing medieval sources for the legend of St Rumwold are reproduced or annotated in the *Acta Sanctorum*.<sup>15</sup> Consideration will be concentrated on the earliest which is a manuscript of the eleventh century, possibly pre-Conquest, now in the library of Corpus Christi College in Cambridge. The others are considered to be derivatives and add nothing significant. Besides the lengthy hagiographical content, this earliest source adds some pertinent circumstantial details to Leland's simple summary.

The manuscript states, incorrectly, that Penda was a Christian and, almost certainly equally incorrectly, that the Northumbrian king was a pagan. Hence the source got things awry in describing the conversion of the Northumbrian king before marriage to the Christian daughter of Penda. It has been remarked<sup>16</sup> that the account of the conversion echoes Bede's account of the conversion of Peada before his marriage to the Christian daughter of Oswy in 652/3.<sup>17</sup> Extracting the circumstantial details from the source, the couple were on a journey to visit Penda for the birth of their first-born when the wife's time drew near, so their company made camp in a meadow near a place later called by the inhabitants Sutton. Pavilions were

set up for the royal pair and the king's companions, who included two priests, Widerin and Edwold, along with tents for the servants. A boy was born, 'desired by many and sanctified by God'.

Hagiography then takes over. At birth, the baby said three times 'I am a Christian.' During his three-day life, the child asked the two priests for baptism and Holy Communion. He was duly baptized Rumwold in a suitable cup-shaped stone he detected in the vicinity and had transported miraculously to his place of baptism.<sup>18</sup> He then professed faith in the Holy Trinity and the Athanasian creed and, citing the Scriptures, preached a sermon on the need for virtuous living.

There are further circumstantial details in hagiographic disguise. He directed that his body should rest for a year at the place of his death, which would be called Sutton, and then for two years at a place which would be named Brackley and finally, for all time, at a location that would be known as Buckingham. At none of these places at the time was there a township, but when the source quoted, or an original predecessor, was compiled, they were thriving townships set in fertile fields, with many ploughs, and densely inhabited. On his third day of life, 3 November, Rumwold died.

To most minds today, the idea that it could be believed that a baby of a few days should have said or done any of these things is quite preposterous. The source material is so meagre that there is little meat for scholarly study and most modern commentators have merely repeated each other. One suggestion has been that the legend referred to an adult convert who died three days after being baptized (born into the Faith).<sup>19</sup> It is doubtful, however, whether adult death-bed baptisms were so uncommon in the early days of conversion of the English as to give rise to a legend clearly describing the protagonist as a new-born child, with accompanying mundane details. As to the hagiography, this is stock medieval Christian embroidery—the pronouncements put into Rumwold's mouth are simply statements of contemporary Christian doctrine.

It is the circumstantial details that provide a more fruitful study since they point to a date for an original compilation of the legend earlier than the eleventh century date of the earliest extant source. In the eleventh century, a royal party including a heavily pregnant queen travelling in midland England would have enjoyed accommodation in royal lodges, manors or monasteries, not have had to erect transported pavilions (although some of their followers might well have had to make do with tents). The statements about the contemporary non-existence of the three townships also have an authentic ring pointing to an earlier date than the eleventh century. Finally, there is the lack of the names of Rumwold's father and mother, sometimes given as indicating that the whole story was a priestly fabrication. Surely, if that were the case, the author would have been at pains to provide names in order to add credibility? To all appearance, there was an earlier original from which the earliest extant source was derived, an original compiled by a local priest not well informed of historical facts and lacking the imagination, or perhaps too honest, falsely to fill the gaps.

Modern scepticism of the capacity for belief of people in the seventh century in Anglo-Saxon England ignores the fact that very tall tales were integral to contemporary paganism, while conversion to Christianity meant acceptance of beliefs recited in the Athanasian creed—beliefs beside which the talking of a child less than three days old pale into insignificance. As the Christian apologist, Tertullian, wrote: 'The Son of God died, it is incredible because it is foolishness; buried, He rose again, it is certain because it is impossible.' The rapid and painless turning of the English to Christianity, evidenced by early writings, demonstrated that the people, when led by their kings and nobles, were ready to accept the message brought by Christian missionaries.

In the case of Rumwold, the birth and three-day life took place in an isolated encampment and nobody outside the entourage of his father and mother would have come into contact with the baby. The people in the region were almost certainly still mainly pagan and the message

brought by Widerin and Edwold would not have been helped by the untimely demise of the first royal Christian child to have been born there. What is more likely than that the two Christian priests disseminated the story of the miraculous doings of the baby Rumwold, remembering that Jesus had quoted to the chief priests and scribes in the temple at Jerusalem, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise'?<sup>20</sup> Perhaps also the priests knew the tale of the setback to the conversion of the pagan Clovis and his Franks by the death while still in his white baptismal robe of his first child by his Christian queen, Clotilda.<sup>21</sup> In their sorrow, what would be more human than that Rumwold's parents should have accepted that their child had been someone special? As Julius Caesar wrote in *De Bello Gallico*, expressing what is still true, 'Men willingly believe what they wish'.

The legend yields no solid clue as to the names of Rumwold's father and mother. Nor does tradition throw further light on these questions, leaving us only speculation. As to the father of Rumwold, there were certainly a number of Northumbrian kings in exile in Mercia from time to time during the reign of Penda. This was a period of conflicts between the rival royal families of the two Northumbrian provinces of Deira and Bernicia, not to mention the conflicts between fathers and sons, uncles and nephews within the same families. It must be remembered too that all members of English royal families were liable to be described in contemporary records as kings.

Some of these dissident kings sought sanctuary in exile with Northern British rulers who were Christian, or with other Anglo-Saxon kings, Christian or pagan. During the whole of the reign in Northumbria of Edwin of the Deiran family (617–33), the sons of his predecessor Ethelfrid of the Bernician family, together with many young nobles, lived in exile among the Scots or Picts and received the grace of baptism into the Celtic church.<sup>22</sup> Oswy, one of the seven legitimate sons of Ethelfrid and later king of Bernicia (642–51) and then of all Northumbria (to 670), was so baptized. He married as his first wife Rieinmellt, daughter of

Royth, son of Rhun, ruler of a northern British kingdom,<sup>23</sup> From 642 to 655, during the reign of Oswy, it was to Penda of Mercia in particular that Oswy's enemies, Northumbrian or otherwise, turned for shelter and support.

Confining consideration as Rumwold's father to otherwise recorded contemporary members of the Northumbrian royal families, the choice is perhaps not so wide open as might first appear. Oswy, during the first thirteen years of his reign from 642, was repeatedly attacked by Penda and his Mercians, who had killed Oswy's elder brother and predecessor as king, the sainted Oswald. In many of these attacks, the Mercians were allied with Alchfrid, Oswy's eldest son, by Rieinmellt, and also with the former's cousin Ethelwald, whose rightful kingship, as son of Oswald, had been seized by his uncle Oswy on the grounds of Ethelwald's youth.<sup>24</sup>

The fashion among commentators has been to name Alchfrid as Rumwold's father and Cyneburga, daughter of Penda, as his mother.<sup>25</sup> The only reason for this identification seems to have been that Alchfrid, a Christian, is the only Northumbrian king recorded as having married a daughter of Penda. Cyneburga herself was worthy of record as having later been sanctified. When in dispute with his father Oswy, Alchfrid spent some time in Mercia under the protection of Penda and he was married to Cyneburga probably for political reasons. At some time before the battle in November 654 in which Oswy defeated and killed Penda, there must have been a reconciliation between Oswy and Alchfrid, since the latter fought alongside his father.<sup>26</sup> Under the overlordship of Oswy, Alchfrid was sub-king of Deira after Penda's defeat until his own death in about 664/5.<sup>27</sup> Cyneburga became a nun after the death of her husband, founded a *monasterium* at Castor, died herself around 680, and was later sanctified.<sup>28</sup> It seems likely that if she had been the mother of Rumwold she would have been remembered and recorded not only as a saint but as the mother of a saint, however small.

Another possibility is that Rumwold's father might have descended from one of the six sons

of a concubine or concubines of Ida of Bernicia. This line later provided several kings of Northumbria. A possible candidate is Egwulf (Ecgwald).<sup>29</sup> If a disaffected member of the Bernician royal family, he could have been in exile in Mercia at about the same time as Alchfrid and been married to another daughter of Penda.

Perhaps the most likely candidate, however, as father to Rumwold, would have been Oswald's son, Ethelwald, who was passed over as too young to succeed his father as king of Bernicia after the defeat and death of Oswald by Penda in 642. The kingship was grasped by Oswald's brother, Oswy.<sup>30</sup> Like Alchfrid, it was recorded that Ethelwald, also a Christian, sought the protection of Penda during his early years, after 642, and might well, for the same political reasons as applied in the case of Alchfrid, have been married to a daughter of Penda. We have no record of Ethelwald ever having had a wife, but wives do not figure largely in surviving contemporary sources. A possibly significant phrase in the legend of St Rumwold is that his birth was 'desired by many and sanctified by God'. A son born in Christian wedlock to Ethelwald would have been grandson to the sainted Oswald and would have been desired by many as continuator of the Saint's noble line in opposition to Oswy whom many must have regarded as an usurper.

That Ethelwald had support in Northumbria was demonstrated in 651 when he became king of Deira after Oswy had treacherously murdered the previous king, Oswin of the Deiran family and relation of Edwin.<sup>31</sup> In conjunction with Mercians and British, Ethelwald continued his attacks on Oswy<sup>32</sup> and was still an ally of Penda in the campaign of 654 against Oswy that ended in Penda's defeat and death. Ethelwald played an ambiguous role in that campaign. His forces had been fighting in Penda's army, but during the final battle he withdrew and awaited the outcome in a place of safety.<sup>33</sup> After this, Deira was taken over by Oswy who appointed his son, Alchfrid, as sub-king. What happened to Ethelwald is unknown. Presumably, in the unlikely event of his being left alive, he went again into exile.

Two dates, 626 or 662, have been suggested, on unknown grounds, for the birth (and death) of St Rumwold. According to the legend, the birth occurred when his parents were on the way to visit Penda, placing the event in Penda's lifetime. One commentator has doubted that Sutton could have been on the way to anywhere Penda might have been.<sup>34</sup> This ignored the fact that Penda's writ, after at latest 632, ran over virtually the whole of midland England, from the Upper Thames to above the Lower Trent. However, the date of 626 appears definitely too early to fit into either what we know of the career of Penda or the general political situation or the implanting of Christianity in Middle Anglia and Mercia. Foundation of the three churches implied in the legend, at Sutton immediately after the death of Rumwold, Brackley a year after that, and then Buckingham two years later, could only have occurred under the patronage of lords who were prepared, with the consent of their overlord, Penda, to make land grants for their maintenance. This was unlikely as early as 626. That Penda, later in life, was prepared to permit such grants is exemplified in the story of SS Edith and Osyth and the founding of the minster at Aylesbury, probably in the early 650s.<sup>35</sup> Against the date of 662, besides being after Penda's death, there is the record that Diuma, first bishop of the Middle Angles (also of Mercia and Lindisfarne), who died about 656/8, was buried at Charlbury,<sup>36</sup> not too far from King's Sutton which the story of St Rumwold suggested was in a pagan area. A less notable indication against 662 is the fact that Widerin, described by some of the sources (but not the earliest) as a bishop, is otherwise unknown amongst recorded Anglo-Saxon bishops.

If Ethelwald was St Rumwold's father, the date of the birth and death of the saint would have been in the span 642 to 654, during his father's alliance with Penda. Ethelwald's age when passed over in 642 as too young to inherit the kingship was not recorded. However, the passing-over does suggest that he was not old enough to marry until several years later, late in the 640s. Dating St Rumwold to say 650 would fall in well with what is known of the implantation of Christianity among the Middle Angles

and Mercians. The extinguishing of St Oswald's line with the disappearance of Ethelwald could explain the obscurity evident in the eleventh-century manuscript, which appears to have been derived from a yet earlier source.

Confirming St Rumwold's Northumbrian connection, there are a hamlet called Romaldkirk near Barnard Castle and Rombalds Moor near Ilkley. These place-names suggest that his name was early known in the region. The existence of a village named Rumboldswhyke near Chichester and the fact that the fishermen of Folkestone long celebrated 'Rumbal night' can be understood when it is remembered that the pagan South Saxons were proselytized, in the late seventh century, by St Wilfrid, who was closely involved over the relevant period with Northumbrian royal personages.<sup>37</sup> Incidentally, dating St Rumwold to 650 could have allowed St Wilfrid to have learnt about Rumwold from Ethelwald during the latter's reign in Deira from 651 through 654. Similarly, the church dedications scattered in counties south of the Humber may have been linked to the widespread missionary activities of St Wilfrid who founded churches in all the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.<sup>38</sup> Stoke Doyle, where the church is dedicated to St Rumwold, is a mile from Oundle where St Wilfrid had founded a *monasterium* and where he died in 709 during a tour of *monasteria* in the region.

St Rumwold's place of birth was located by Leland as a mile or so south of King's Sutton and by Baker at the present-day Walton grounds where there was formerly a chapel dedicated to him.<sup>39</sup> It is noteworthy that the site lay on a Roman road running north-south which met an east-west Roman road between modern King's Sutton and the Romano-British settlement a half-mile further north.<sup>40</sup> The royal travellers would have been using Roman roads where they still existed as usable routes in the seventh century. The church at Sutton, presumably founded by Widerin and Edwold to house the body of the saint during that first year in accordance with his dying instructions, was located close to the Roman crossroads. Such early missionary churches or minsters, from which the priests went out preaching in the

surrounding regions, were always well placed with regard to communications which, at the time, usually meant on or near navigable rivers or Roman roads.

The story of the subsequent move by Widerin, after the death of Edwold, of St Rumwold's body to what is now Brackley for two years, and then the move by one not named to the place now called Buckingham, can be explained as a memory of the expansion of early missionary efforts among the southernmost Middle Angles. At King's Sutton and Brackley, the churches are dedicated to St Peter (there has been some suggestion that the original dedications were to SS Peter and Paul) and at Buckingham to these two Saints, suggestive evidence that each was an early missionary establishment or minster.<sup>41</sup> Both Brackley and Buckingham lie on the river Great Ouse and both were close to Roman routes. Buckingham was, indeed, near to a Romano-British temple site located near the crossings of several Roman roads.<sup>42</sup> At all three places, these factors could have led to their selection as the sites of minsters and, subsequently, encouraged the growth of townships.

After the Norman Conquest, Buckingham, like King's Sutton, was a vicarage of the prebend of King's Sutton and Buckingham. There is no hint of this link in Domesday, although it is probable that there had been some connection between the churches of Sutton, Brackley and Buckingham arising from the circumstances of their foundations as set out in the legend of St Rumwold. According to a charter of William II dated 1090, the value of the prebend of Buckingham at Lincoln was enhanced by combination with King's Sutton. By 1203/6, the prebend of King's Sutton and Buckingham was the richest in the country.<sup>43</sup> Buckingham continued to have its archdeacon, who was sometimes also the prebendary, and became an independent vicarage in 1445.<sup>44</sup>

Whatever we today may think about the credibility of the legend of St Rumwold, the fact is that his cult endured in many places and his shrine at Buckingham was a focus of devotion for nine hundred years. As St Augustine wrote

in *The City of God*, 'If the thing believed is incredible, it is also incredible that the incredible should have been so believed.' But is the story of our saint really so much more incredible than some of the things many people in the world, even in the so-called civilized world, are ready to credit today? As a modern essayist, John Burroughs, wrote, 'It is always easier to believe than to deny. Our minds are naturally affirmative.' Those two seventh-century priests, Widerin and Edwold, if it was they who originated the story of St Rumwold, were shrewd in their knowledge of their contemporaries and, indeed, of men of all times.

Addition to R. P. Hagerty, 'The Buckinghamshire Saints Reconsidered. 1: St Firmin of North Crawley', *Records* 27 (1985) 65ff.

The place-name 'Wicherce' in Domesday indicates that there was a church at Whitchurch in 1086. It seems unlikely that the place-name originated after the Conquest, so that there was probably a church there in Saxon times. The location of the church on a commanding eminence remote from the site of the post-Conquest Bolebec castle is also suggestive of the existence of the church before the building of the castle. There is no trace of Anglo-Saxon work in the church, dedicated to St John the Evangelist.

## REFERENCES

1. Hugh Candidus, *Chronicle*, ed W. T. Mellows, OUP (1949) 61: 'And in Buckingham St Rumwold boy of three nights.' In various publications one encounters the differences in transliterating Anglo-Saxon names. Rumwold may be encountered also as Rumweald, Rumwald, Rumbold, and Rumbald.
2. W. St G. Birch, *Liber Vitae of Newminster and Hyde Abbey*, Hants Record Society (1892) 90.
3. R. Gibbs, *Bucks Miscellany*, Bucks Advertiser and Aylesbury News Office (1891) 208f.
4. Browne Willis, *History and Antiquities of Buckingham*, London (1755) 58ff.
5. A. C. Chibnall, *Certificate of Musters for Bucks in 1522*, Bucks Record Society 17 (1973) 30, 34, 44, 46, 52, 54, 200.
6. V.C.H. Bucks, III (1925) 487; J. T. Harrison, *Leisure Hour Notes on Historical Buckingham*, Buckingham (1909) 48, 56 and photo. Describes the recovery from a cottage near the site of the old church of a piece of wood with decoration carved in relief featuring a wreathed heart in the centre flanked by outward-facing identical winged beasts with forelegs and tails on backgrounds of foliage with flowers and berries. The proportions of the piece are length to width 4:1, but the dimensions are not given. The finder, father of the author, thought this was part of the 'coffyn' ordered by Richard Fowler. The present location of this relic is unknown.
7. D. H. Farmer, *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, Clarendon Press (1978) 350.
8. Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, ed. H. Thurston and D. Attwater, Burns & Oates (1953/4) 4.247. At Brackley and Buckingham, the translation of St Rumwold's remains from the first to the second was remembered on 28 August. The Bosworth Psalter gave St Rumwold's day as 2 November.
9. V.C.H. Kent, III, 428. Camden, *Britannia*, ed. R. Gough (1789) 1.320 n.2.
10. Church Street in Buckingham was formerly St Rumbold Street and one of his wells gave the name to Well Street. The ascription to St Rumbold of the spring so marked on Ordnance Survey maps at Astrop near King's Sutton is not certainly ancient.
11. John Leland, *The Itinerary* (1535–43), ed. L. Tolmin-Smith, G. Bell & Sons (1907) I–III, 229, IV–V, 37f.
12. The Latin has 'pagus', usually erroneously translated as 'village', but here more correctly as 'district'. 'King's' is obviously an anachronism. St Rumwold's story implies that Sutton grew up as a township round the church founded to house the body. The name Sutton probably denoted that it was the Anglo-Saxon *tun* to the south of the Romano-British settlement known about a half-mile to the north.
13. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, trans. G. N. Garmonsway, Dent (1965) s.a. 626 and 655. The battle which led to Penda's death is now dated to November 654. Bede, *History of the English Church and People*, trans. L. Sherley-Price, Penguin (1955) II, ch. 20, III, ch. 24. W. G. Searle, *Anglo-Saxon Bishops, Kings and Nobles*, CUP (1899) 293ff. Penda met his death after he had reigned for 50 years, making him either 80 years of age (as stated in the A-S Chronicle) or around 72 (as perhaps derivable from Bede). He may well, in the course of a long and active life, have had the many daughters ascribed to him, by his recorded queen Cynwise (Cyneswitha), by a possible earlier wife and by concubines (he was a pagan). He had at least one recorded 'illegitimate' son. I incline to think several daughters were born to him before his marriage to Cynwise, whenever that marriage took place, probably after Penda had established himself as undisputed king of Mercia in 626 or even as late as 632. Their eldest son, Peada, was not married until 652/3. Cynwise must have been a deal younger than her husband, whom she out-lived.
14. Bede, *op. cit.*, III, ch. 21.
15. *Acta Sanctorum, Novembris*, Tome I, Paris (1887) 682ff.
16. Sir George Clark, *Northants Past and Present*, Northants Record Society (1963) 131ff.
17. See n.14.

18. See n.16 for the suggestion that the cupped stone now serving as the font in the church at King's Sutton, after peregrinations outlined, may have been the original in which St Rumwold was baptized.
19. See n.16.
20. New Testament, Matthew 21:16.
21. Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, trans. Lewis Thorpe, Penguin (1974) II, ch. 29.
22. Bede, *op. cit.*, III, ch. 1.
23. Nennius, *British History and the Welsh Annals*, trans. J. Morris, Phillimore (1980) para. 57.
24. Bede, *op. cit.*, III, ch. 14.
25. See n.14. Cyneburga was the elder of the two recorded daughters of Penda by Cynwise, but her date of birth is not known. She was already married to Alchfrid in 652/3.
26. Bede, *op. cit.*, III, ch. 24.
27. Searle, *op. cit.*, 302f. Bede, *op. cit.*, III, ch. 28.
28. Butler's Lives, *op. cit.*, 1.500.
29. Nennius, *op. cit.*, para. 61. Searle, *op. cit.*, 302f.
30. Bede, *op. cit.*, III, ch. 14.
31. Searle, *op. cit.*, 322f. See Also n. 30.
32. Symeon of Durham, *Historia Regum*, Rolls Series (1885) 2.379: 'Nevertheless, Oswald's son, Ethelwald, who was reigning in Deira, often vigorously attacked his uncle, Oswy, in company with men of Mercia and the British king, Cadwalla.'
33. See n. 26.
34. See n. 16.
35. R. P. Hagerty, 'The Buckinghamshire Saints Recon sidered. 2: St Osyth and St Edith of Aylesbury', *Recs. Bucks* 29 (1987).
36. W. St Ge. Birch, *op. cit.*, 89.15. See also n. 26.
37. Bede, *op. cit.*, III, chs 25 and 28.
38. Eddius Stephanus, *Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, trans. B. Colgrave, CUP (1927). Bede, *op. cit.*, IV, ch. 13, V, ch. 19.
39. G. Baker, *History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton*, London (1822–30) 1.708ff.
40. *Ibid.*, 558f. Ivan D. Margary, *Roman Roads in Britain*, Phoenix House (1957) I, Road 56.141–2, Roads 161 and 161A.152–3. G. H. Hargreaves, R. P. F. Parker, A. F. W. Boarder, *CBA 9 Newsletter* 4 (1974) 10f., *CBA 9 Newsletter* 5 (1975) 16, *CBA 9 Newsletter* 11 (1981) 45ff.
41. There is no recognizable vestige of Anglo-Saxon fabric in the churches at either King's Sutton (except for, possibly, the font bowl, n.16) or at Brackley. At Buckingham, it would be interesting to excavate the site of the old church in the old churchyard, still consecrated ground and, therefore, not disturbed since burials ceased in the last century.
42. Viatores, *Roman Roads in the South-East Midlands*, Gollancz (1964) Roads 162, 166, 171, 174. C. W. Green, 'A Romano-Celtic Temple in Bourton Grounds, Buckingham', *Recs. Bucks* 17/5 (1965) 356–66. A. E. Johnson, 'Excavations at Bourton Grounds, Thornborough 1972–3', *Recs. Bucks* 20/1 (1975) 3–56.
43. G. Baker, *op. cit.*, 696ff.
44. Browne Willis, *op. cit.*, 79ff.