

FIELD-NAME EVIDENCE FOR LOST SETTLEMENTS IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

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Virtually every parish, village and hamlet in Buckinghamshire has a name of Old English (Anglo-Saxon) origin. An earlier paper discussed the meanings of parish-names, most of which combine personal names with elements that describe the type of settlement or some prominent natural or man-made characteristic, such as streams, woods, or fortifications.¹ Many settlements abandoned since the mid-fourteenth century had similar names. Buckinghamshire field-names reveal an earlier stratum of 'lost' places, however, and these are the subject of the current paper. The discussion is necessarily provisional since the evidence to dates is patchy, and other examples will almost certainly come to light as the field-name database grows. The identification of the precise location of such lost places is often problematic, since the names are only on record long before the earliest detailed mapping like Inclosure and Tithes maps. Where these places can be identified, it is possible that field-walking and excavation could reveal the nature of these early settlements.

INTRODUCTION

The English Place-Name Society's Buckinghamshire volume of 1925 contains little information on names below the level of farms and occasional woodland, but collection of field-name material has produced a small but highly significant group of names that throw light on the formative period in the development of settlement and agricultural practice in the period c.850–1100. These names derive from the Old English (OE) words *wīc*, *tūn*stall/*tūn*stede and *coft*/stow. *Wīc* generally denotes a subsidiary or outlying settlement/farm, or one specialising in specialised agricultural or trading activity.² *Wīc*-names usually have a qualifying element, whereas the other two groups appear only in simplex form.

*Tūn*stall/*tūn*stede names denote settlement sites subsequently abandoned, whose sites were still identifiable in medieval times, and which may relate to either the Anglo-Saxon or earlier periods.³ (Surprisingly, Dunstall/Tunstall and Tunstead/Dunstead occur as settlement-names down to the present day, ranging from Tunstall in the Potteries, population c.6500, to Tunstall, Suffolk, population c.650; Dunstall Lodge Padbury appears to be the sole survivor in Buckinghamshire.) The OED deals with OE *tūn* under its modern derivative 'town'. The original sense was one of enclosure, for example a field, garden, yard or court, which

survives in modern cognates in other Germanic languages. In OE, however, the word developed to refer to the dwellings within such an enclosure, ultimately to villages and urban settlements. (Many post-medieval sources refer to villages as 'Town'.) The words Town/Downstead or Town/Downstall do not appear in the OED nor in Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary*, indicating that such names recorded in medieval and later sources almost certainly refer to Anglo-Saxon or earlier settlements.

*Cot*stow occurs much less frequently than the other elements, and so far none of the local examples is on record since the fourteenth century.⁴ This raises the possibility that they were hamlets abandoned in the aftermath of the Black Death and subsequent pandemics. Wick- and Tun-names occur widely across Buckinghamshire, but *costows* are restricted to the north-west.

WICKS

The OED has four groups of meanings for *wick*: (1) abode, dwelling, dwelling-place; (2) town, village, hamlet; (3) farm, specifically a dairy farm, on record from the fifteenth century, and (4) enclosed piece of ground, a close, from c.1300. In other words, there is every possibility that the occurrence of a wick-name does *not* denote a lost pre-Conquest settlement, as we shall see. Today, there

are almost a dozen settlements across Buckinghamshire with wick-names, ranging from the parish of Tingewick through small villages and hamlets such as Tetchwick, Longwick and Owlswick. Some, like Eton Wick and Kimble Wick are named directly from their parent village, while others such as Longwick, Prestwick and Ankerwyke are named from their physical characteristics or former owners. A few include the names of pre-Conquest owners, for example Collett (originally Colwick) in Waddesdon from Cola, and Owlswick in Monks Risborough from Anglo-Scandinavian Wulf/Úlfr. Only two local *wīcs* appear in Domesday Book: Tetchwick in Ludgershall and Tingewick, and both are combinations of a group-name with *wīc*, respectively ‘the people of Tōta and Tīda’. The origin of Terrick in Ellesborough has yet to be elucidated.

Excluding surviving settlements noted above, 135 Wick-names have so far been identified in sixty-three parishes. Most clearly relate to fields and landscape features rather than past or present settlements. They are generally only on record from the seventeenth-nineteenth centuries, meaning that in most cases it is impossible to be certain when they originated. There are some distinct clusters, indicative of localised naming fashion: Chesham has fourteen wicks, Edlesborough eight, Chalfont St. Peter six, and Marsworth, Stone and Wendover/The Lee have five apiece. Field-names like Applewick (Beaconsfield 1763), Pond Wick (Milton Keynes 1418; Amersham 1607) and Pound Wick (Marsworth 1635) seem unlikely to represent settlement sites. Less straightforward are the Chapel Wicks (Amersham 1837; Edlesborough 1980 and Ivinghoe 1821). Such names might indicate the site of a vanished chapel, or merely that the profits from agricultural activity there were used for the upkeep of a chapel, possibly a chantry in the parish church. The same is true of *Preistwicke* (Aston Clinton 1639) and Priest Wick Farm (Langley Marish 17th cent., now Prestwick Farm, Fulmer), where the land may have formed part of the glebe, rather than settlements associated with priests. *Ankerwicke* (Stone 1602) and *Ankerwycke* (Eton 1565) are identical with the surviving Ankerwyke by the Thames in Wraysbury, first recorded in 1194 and the site of a Benedictine nunnery (OE *ancor*, ‘ anchoress’). There is no record of such establishments in the vicinity of the other names, which presumably denote ownership by religious houses.

Although the name *Wickham Hole* (1639)/*Wickcombe Furlong* (1798) in Wingrave (centred on SP 877 194) is potentially important, the absence of early spellings makes it problematic. The 1639 Glebe Terrier name suggests a possible origin in OE *wīchām*, a compound considered to derive from ‘settlement by a *vicus*’ (one of the handful of borrowings from Latin).⁵ There is no evidence of a Roman road in the vicinity, although the site is close to the line of the Viatores’ 169A, between Pitstone and Leckhampstead.⁶ Wykham Bottom Ground in Waddesdon/Westcott is so far only on record from the late-19th century. It lies close to the line of Akeman Street, but much earlier records are needed to provide convincing evidence that it is a *wīchām*-name.

Given the wide range of dates and possible meanings associated with wick-names, is it possible to identify any which may represent genuinely lost medieval settlements? Documentary evidence from the medieval period is scanty but there is a key group of names derived from OE *eald wīc*, ‘former [outlying] farm or hamlet’. This usually appears as Aldwick and there are six Buckinghamshire examples so far. Before considering them in more detail, it is appropriate to consider the name Aldwych in central London, where excavation in recent decades has demonstrated that it represents the seventh-eighth century trading centre known as *Lundenwic*, mentioned by Bede as being an *emporium* of many nations.⁷ (This use of *wīc* is paralleled across the North Sea in Dark Age trading centres like Quentovic near Boulogne, Wijk-bij-Duurstede near Utrecht and Schlewig near the Baltic coast of Holstein.) If this meaning of *eald wīc* relates to other trading sites, temporary or permanent, then some of the Buckinghamshire names may fall into this category. Aldwick in Shalstone/Biddlesden, lies on the important medieval route known as Welsh Lane, while the Shenley example is close to Watling Street, and that in Weedon is close to the Portway between Aylesbury and Buckingham. The proximity of the Shalstone Aldwick to Lampport, ‘the long trading-place’ in Stowe, located on the Roman road between Towcester and Dorchester is noteworthy.⁸

Since these names seldom survive into the era of detailed maps, it is generally impossible to pinpoint their precise location. It is probable that *Leholdewic* in Biddlesden and *Aldewic* in Shalstone are the same place, given the complex way in which the parish boundaries are intermeshed locally

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Date</i>
Biddlesden	Leholdewic	1317
Shalstone	Aldewic	1220s
Shenley Brook End	Aldwycks Cl	1676
Stewkley	Wiclonda	1203
Stone	Aldewyk	late 13th
Weedon	Aldick	1549
Wendover	Aldwyk	c.1225

(Fig. 1). The settlement was centred on SP643383. Oldwick House, demolished between 1900 and 1925, was at the south-east corner of Whitfield Wood, Biddlesden (SP 644 386). *Aldewic* may have been the predecessor of the hamlet of Wood Green. The VCH suggests that Oldwick may represent the land held by Luffield Abbey in this area, it having once been extra-parochial.⁹ It may have been the three virgates at Biddlesden held by Alric, a man of Alwin son of Goding in 1066.¹⁰

Aldwycks Close in Shenley Book End lay on the north side of the present-day Chaffron Way, at c.SP 843 361. The locations of *Aldewyk* in Stone and *Aldwyk* and *Wichcroft* in Wendover are yet to be identified. Both parishes have several surviving settlement nuclei, most on record from the thirteenth century or earlier, and it seems probable that these ‘old outlying farms’ represent lost early-medieval sites. So far only on record from 1549, Aldick in Weedon is probably an *eald wīc*, located at c.SP815186, just north of Lillies Farm.

Wiclonda in Stewkley in 1203 is the earliest record in this group to a possible pre-Conquest settlement site, and probably means ‘land pertaining to/site of a *wīc*’. On the draft Stewkley Inclosure map of 1811,¹¹ shows the Wicks adjacent to Grange Farm (SP 843 273), which may or may not have any connection with *Wiclonda*. (Woburn Abbey’s moated grange lay further west, across the Mursley Road.¹²)

Other early records of wick-names are more difficult to interpret, since they may well refer to settlements postdating the Anglo-Saxon period, the result of rapid population growth in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This is especially true of wick-names that contain a surname such as *Cheniswyk* (Hartwell 1490; Simon Cheyne occurs in 1457), *Reynolde Wyke* (Bishopstone 1499) and

Drewswyke (Penn 1426). Other names relate to the activity taking place in these fields. Examples include *Chepecote Wyk* (Chalfont St. Peter 1329), ‘sheepcote’; *Notbemwyk* (Aston Clinton 1279), ‘nut tree’; *Millewyk* (Bishopstone 1411) and *Melnewyke-shende* (Thornborough 1329), ‘milling/mill-site’; *Shepherdswyk Croft* and *Wodewyk* (Chalfont St. Peter early-14th), and *Oxewyk* (Salden 1252). The underlying sense of specialist agricultural or other activity inherent in OE *wīc* clearly survived across the county in medieval times, although other names suggest that ‘wick’ was simply another word for field, probably always an enclosed one.

TUNSTALLS & TUNSTEADS

These names and their variants are much less common than wick-names, with eighteen examples in seventeen parishes. Most of the discrepancy reflects the fact that *wick* remained in use as a name-forming element throughout the medieval period and beyond, as discussed above, developing a range of meanings, many unrelated to possible early settlement sites. Local names derived from OE *tūnstall/tūnstede* are relatively straightforward, surviving only in simplex form without qualifying elements. In the absence of archaeological evidence it is impossible to tell the period and nature of settlements commemorated by such names. The local tunstalls and tunsteads are listed below, together with an indication of their location, where identifiable. In passing it should be noted that there is also a group of names combining OE *tūn* with furlong.¹³ This could indicate erstwhile settlement sites, but it is much more likely that they indicate the proximity of the furlong to a medieval village.

Setting aside for the moment the unique *Tunstow* in Thomley (a hamlet divided between

Worminghall [Bucks.] and Waterperry [Oxon.]), there are three Tunstalls and nine Tunsteads, recorded between thirteenth and late nineteenth centuries. (The very late records reflect the state of field-name data collection, rather than implying that the names themselves were very late creations.) The spellings indicate that OE/ME *tūn/ton* became voiced in Buckinghamshire and elsewhere as *dun-*, though virtually all surviving place-names from Kent to North Yorkshire are Tunstalls. (A compound of OE *dūn*, ‘hill’, with *stall/stede* would be meaningless, as shown by the local Dunstead/Dunstall Hills.)

COTSTOWS

OE *cot-stōw*, ‘a group of cottages’ is a rare compound, occurring occasionally in charter bounds. It is one of a group of name-elements based on *cot* (for example *cosetla*, ‘cottager’ and *cottere*, ‘cottar’, a class of minor tenants found in Domesday Book and later sources, also known as *bordars*). The pre-Conquest references all come from Berkshire boundary perambulations, at Hawkridge in Bucklebury (956 *cuðulfes cotstowe*, personal-name Cuthwulf) and Harwell (956/973 *ealdan cotstowe*).¹⁴ The latter is especially interesting, indicating as it does the site of an erstwhile hamlet, and possibly hinting at a relocation resulting from the introduction of open-field

agriculture, the elements *furlang*, and *ealdan fyrh* ‘old furrows’ occur elsewhere in the same perambulation.

To date, five examples *cotstows* have been noted in Buckinghamshire, at Boarstall (*Costowod* c.1440; *Costow Wood Hill* 1697), Shalstone (*Costow[e]* from 1240), Shenley Brook End (*Costowe* 1369), Thornborough (*Costowebroc/Costoweplas[h]* from 1240, the latter from OE *plæsc* ‘a [marshy] pool’) and Westbury (*Costowefurlong* 1305). The Westbury example clearly records the replacement of an earlier settlement site by open-field strips. The Boarstall example, located in the vicinity of Honeyburge and New Arngrove Farm, shows the reverse. Here, a former settlement amid farmland had reverted to woodland by the mid-fifteenth century, only to be cleared again subsequently.

There are also a few local examples of names derived from *cotman* ‘cottager’: *Cotmanfield/end/slade* and *Cotmanfurlong* (all Bletchley from c.1510); *Cotman Furlong* (Long Crendon from c.1450); *Cotmanhamme* (Stone 14th-cent). It is probable that these names, along with *Cotland* (e.g. Haddenham 1649) denote land reserved for cottagers, rather than settlements associated with them. Manorial documents are generally unhelpful when it comes to identifying the precise location of the various types of tenant houses within villages and hamlets.

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>NGR</i>
Chicheley	Tunstale Slade	1350	SP 912 463
Edgcott	Dunstall Hill	1639	
Great Kimble	Dunsteads, Lt./Gt.	1805	SP 810 065
Great Linford	Tun Stude	13th	SP 863 407
Hoggeston	Dunstead	1789	SP 799 248
Padbury	Dunstall Furlong/Hill	1591	SP 719 312
Stewkley	Tonstede, Nether/Over	1494	SP 855 276
Stoke Goldington	Dunstead	1881	SP 836 486
Stoke Hammond	Dunstead Hill	1881	
Swanbourne	Dunstead Hill	1639	SP 795 264
Thornborough	Tunstedewelle	1240x51	
Waddesdon	Dunstead Furlong	1714	
Worminghall	Tunestowe [Thomley]	13th	

CONCLUSION

This paper has provided an interim overview of a group of Buckinghamshire place- and field-names which has the potential to reveal lost settlement sites. More local wicks, tunstalls and cotstows will no doubt be discovered as work proceeds on collecting material for incorporation into the eventual revision of the *Place-Names of Buckinghamshire*. Many of the names discussed here appear only in medieval and post-medieval contexts, however, and have subsequently been lost or renamed so that their precise locations can no longer be identified and investigated by field-walking or other means. Equally, it is impossible in the case of those which *can* be located with reasonable precision to be certain what kind or period of settlement they might represent. Thus the stone footings of Roman buildings would doubtless have indicated previous human activity to those living nearby in the pre-Conquest centuries, not to mention folk memory of abandoned sites.

On balance, it is probable that the at least some local Aldwicks, Dunstalls/Dunsteads and possibly the Cotstows *do* represent potential 'Dark Age' sites, possibly examples of those lost when the 'mid-Saxon settlement shift' occurred from the eighth-ninth centuries onwards, as scattered hamlets and farmsteads were replaced by new, planned villages surrounded by communally-farmed open fields.¹⁵

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5. M Gelling, *Signposts to the Past* (1978), 70–74.
6. Viatores, *Roman Roads in the South-East Midlands* (1964) 300–5, maps 409–12.
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9. *VCH Buckinghamshire* IV (1927), 225.
10. *Domesday Book*, fol. 146c.
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13. Examples include Tunforlong (Bradwell 1275–1350); Tun Furlong Close (Chilton 1850); Tun Furlong (Ivinghoe Aston 1693); Tunsfurlong (Shenley Brook End <1248); Tunfurlong' (Thornborough c.1256).
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15. C Arnold & P Wardle, 'Early Medieval Settlement Patterns in England', *Medieval Archaeology* **25** (1981) 145–149; H Hamerow 'Settlement mobility and the "middle Saxon shift": rural settlement and settlement patterns in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England* **20** (1991), 1–17.