

The Lucy Crest
gules three luces dor

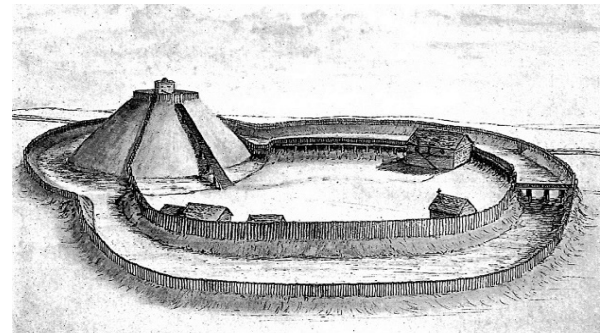
Cublington.... *the village that moved.*

I have often been told that Ridings Way where I live, was once locally known as the “East End” as it was originally at the east side of the old village, even though it is now to the west of the current one! I always promised myself that one day I would research the old village and publish what I found, so here it is. The article below is reproduced from many different sources and I hope you can work your way through it and it all makes historical sense.

Several surveys of the old village have been carried out but sadly, little original documentation survives. I have tried to source all the relevant facts and hope the following is of interest to you who live in Cublington.... *the village that moved.*

Researched by Gary Brazier, with grateful thanks to Andrew Pike and to Julia Wise, Historic Environment Record Officer of Bucks CC

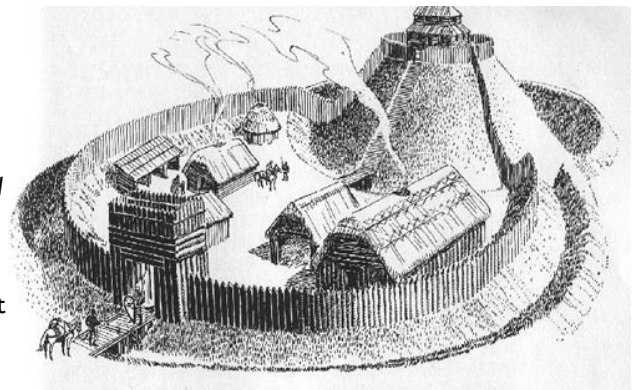
Cublington is an uncommon example of a village which moved. The original village, with its parish church stood in the field now known as Home Ground, 500 yards or so, west of the present village centre and dominated by the mound or motte of a small Norman castle, probably built by Walter de Chesney (b. 1128, d. 1174), in the twelfth century or possibly Geoffrey Lucy in the thirteenth. Perhaps a clue to it being the former, is Cheney Close - Cheney being derived from De Chesney. It was possibly a moot hill of Cottesloe Hundred. Similar motte-&-bailey castles can be seen at Whitchurch (Bolebac castle) and Wing. It follows therefore that the village developed as a site between 1066 and 1348 and then declined, having moved by 1410 (see evidence of the first rector in the current church below).



Various illustrations are reproduced opposite that perhaps give an impression of what this might have looked like at this time.

There follows a brief history of that time:

The Manor of Cublington before the Norman Conquest in 1066 was held by Edward the Confessor as two manors of 8 hides (from the Anglo-Saxon word meaning “family”, was a land-holding that was considered sufficient to support a family, roughly equivalent to 30 modern acres) and 2 hides respectively by Torchil and Godmin. By 1086 these 10 hides were held of the king by Gozelin the Breton, but by 1283 they formed part of the honour of Gloucester, to which they were still appurtenant in 1615. (Perhaps why the first excavation of the site was by a rector from Gloucester - see later).



Gozelin the Breton was succeeded by his son Hugh, on whose death Cublington descended to his son Walter, who bore the surname of de Chesney. Walter de Chesney appears to have been at first succeeded by his daughter Mabel, the wife of Aumary le Despencer, with whom she is mentioned in connexion with the church of Cublington in 1186. The Despenchers seem, however, to have conveyed their interest to Maud, another daughter of Walter de Chesney. Maud's daughter Juliana is mentioned in 1218 as the wife of Geoffrey Lucy, and Cublington was held by their descendants for many generations. It was probably their son, another Geoffrey, who joined the barons against Henry III and therefore forfeited the manor. It had been restored to him by 1276, when he claimed to have a gallows, assize of bread and ale and view of frankpledge (a system of compulsory suretyship. Its essential characteristic was the compulsory sharing of responsibility among persons connected through kinship, or some other kind of tie such as an oath of fealty to a lord or knight.) in Cublington, and was accused of obstructing the king's bailiffs in the performance of their duties. He died in 1284, leaving a widow Ellen, who was living as late as 1317, and a son Geoffrey Lucy, aged sixteen, who settled Cublington on himself and his wife Desirée, with the remainder to their son and heir Geoffrey, aged seventeen at his father's death in 1305. Desirée Lucy died some time after 1323, when the manor passed to her son Geoffrey, who held it until his death in 1346. His son, another Geoffrey, in 1363 made a false claim in respect of the manor against the feoffee (in feudal law - a person to whom a grant of freehold property is made) of his grandfather, and died in 1400 leaving a son Reynold, on whose death in 1437 Cublington descended to his son Walter.



Richard II 1367 -1400

What a lot of Geoffrey's !!.... For more information see www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/bucks/vol3/pp338-341

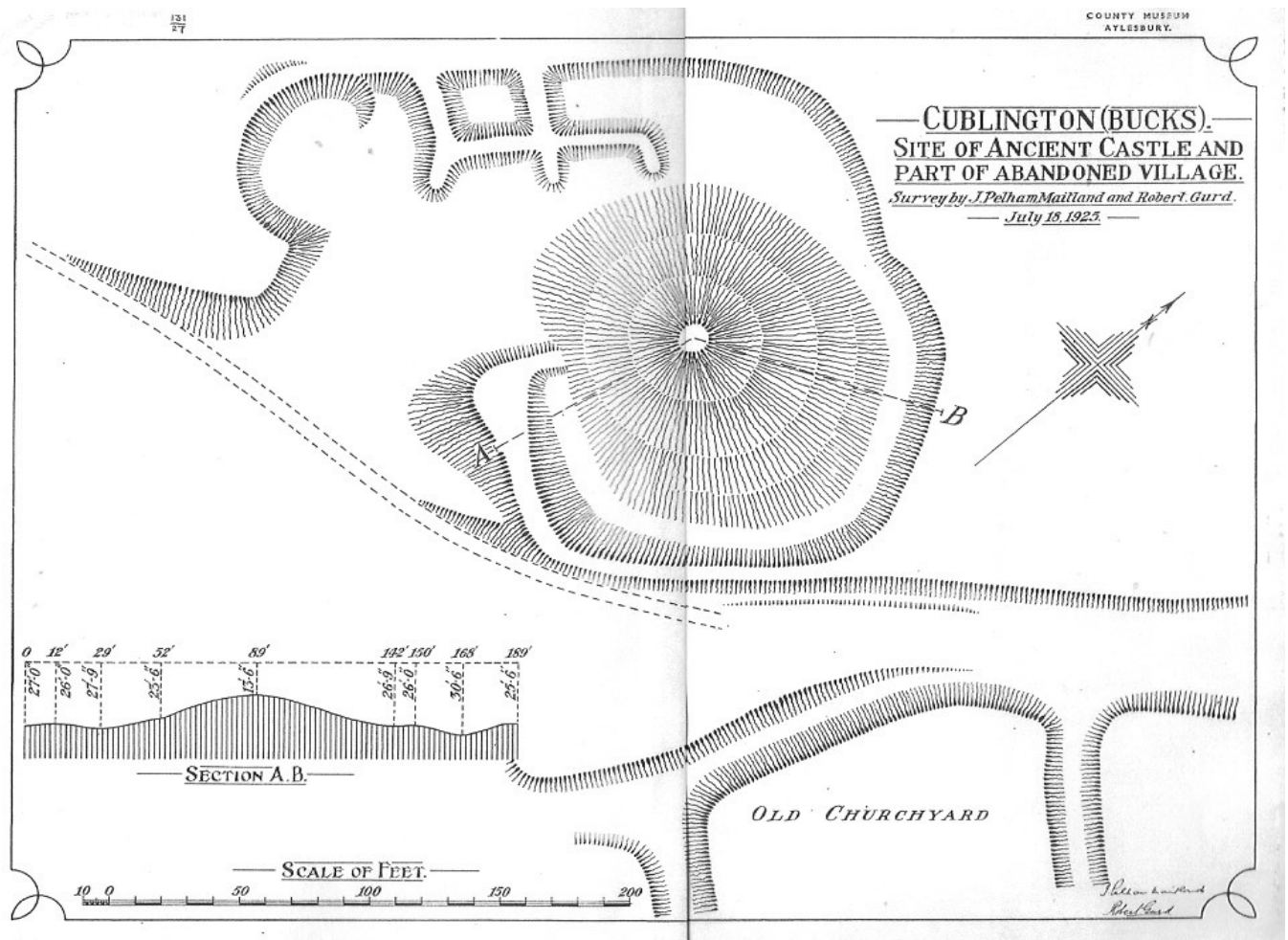
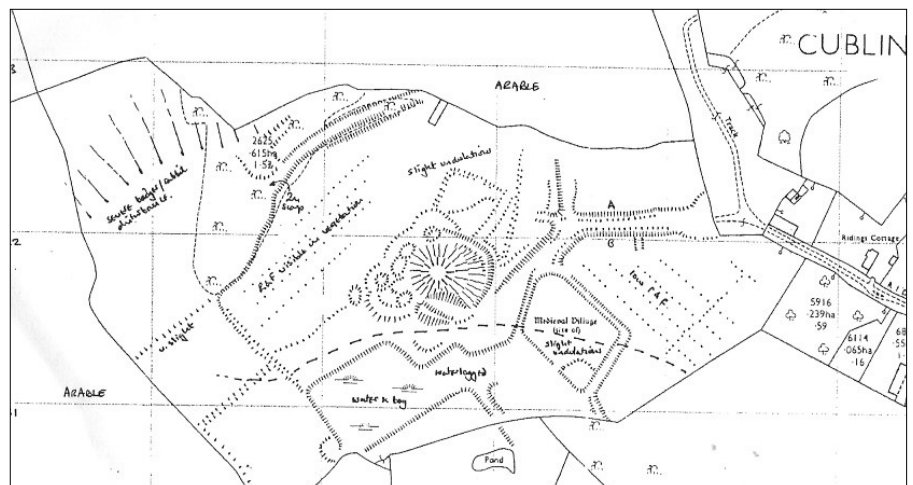
It is not known definitively why the village moved, but sometime around 1400 it did, lock stock and barrel just 500 yards up the hill to it's present day site. It is reported that it could have been due to the Black Death in 1348 or perhaps later. It is about midway between the culmination of the effects of that plague and the substitution of grass-farming for plough farming, which resulted in great shrinkage in the demand for rural labour, and therefore a starting of a rural exodus into towns. Many a village was emptied outright by the plague, from many more survivors melted away for lack of employment, or were forcibly ejected by those who desired to extend their sheepwalks. What had been common land of the village was now enclosed and given over in whole or part to grass, and in this way a skelton-outline of a few villages of the fourteenth century have been preserved. Other causes were of course possible fire, flood or storm, but perhaps these are unlikely. Indeed, documents (? I can find no evidence) of the mid fourteenth century paint a picture of increasing poverty and decay in Cublington, only reversed with the move of the village and its church to a new site.

The present parish church, dedicated to St Nicholas was built in about 1400, so we assume the village centred around it, did too. This fact can be deduced both from its architectural style (early perpendicular) and from a brass in the chancel floor to the memory of John Dervyle, described as *PMI RECTORIS ISTI ECCLIE* (*first rector of this church*), dated 1410. Previous incumbents therefore were, by inference, rectors of the old church down the hill. For more church history in a pdf leaflet contact gary@cublington.com

The church, has always had a rectory, and was assessed at £4 6s 8d in 1291, at 20 mark (?) in 1317 and at £10 6s 83/4d in 1535. In 1450-52 Thomas Alford, rector, said he could not reside without fear of death at his church, so great was the animosity against him”...

The remains at Cublington are of significant interest as they not only preserve a portion of the plan of the old village and a considerable part of it's enclosure, but also a moated mound some 20 feet high, evidently of Norman type. It is marked on the Ordnance Survey as “tumulus” and locally known as The Beacon, the flames from which doubtless signalled victories and moments of national rejoicing through the years.

Of it's original character there can be no doubt, as it stands in the centre of a village enclosure. Excavation in the 1800s by Rev. B.R. Perkins of Wooton-under-Edge, Gloucester brought to light some sixty interments all lying east to west, marking the site of the church as slightly south west of the Beacon, although this is disputed in a later survey.



In 1519, the Bishop of Lincoln, in whose diocese most of Buckinghamshire lay, was shocked during one of his visitations to find the former graveyard desecrated and ordered that "the graveyard where the parish church of this place formerly stood" should be fenced off from the animals and perambulated with the glebe lands on Rogation Days.

Very distinct traces of the ring fence remain about the site of the old village of Cublington and the course of the old fence may be traced right round the neighbouring village of Hoggeston. (Really!? Not sure where!) It is known that the village was transferred to a new unfenced site about 1400, and it can be inferred therefore, that by the end of the fourteenth century, such stockades were deemed no longer needed at least in the Midlands! (p548, *Earthworks of England*, by Hadrian Allcroft - 1908)

The Beacon field (Home Ground)

In July 1925, J. Pelham Maitland and Robert Guard produced a limited survey map of the Beacon mound or motte and immediate surrounds only. They placed the old church in a rectangular ditched area to the east of the mound. (previous page bottom left). Distinct house platforms can be seen on this survey.

The last survey of the old village was carried out in 1973 and is also shown opposite, but appears contradictory when compared to Pelham Maitlands limited survey in the 1920s, who placed the old churchyard where the later map says is the old medieval village?!

Extensive quarrying, presumably after the village moved, for agricultural chalk and latterly badgers, have destroyed a lot of the mound and surrounding remnants of the old village platforms. But the old main street and village fishpond can still be clearly seen. Standing atop the present mound, you can imagine what a view of the surrounding landscape one would have had, especially atop a wooden tower some twenty or thirty foot taller!



Early medieval dress

The site is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument and excavation is strictly prohibited, though I would have loved to have got Time Team here to investigate, but sadly programmes are no longer being made.

In 1930 or thereabouts, one of the Biggs sisters., Alice I believe, found shards of Roman and medieval pottery and a Saxon bronze ring, shown bottom left (apparently now in Aylesbury Museum if you want to see it) in badger scrapings around the mound, and these were sent to the British Museum for analysis. Copies of the text of the letters relating to these finds are reproduced here - from A E.Hollis in Aylesbury, to the British Museum and a reply to Miss Biggs.

Oct 1930

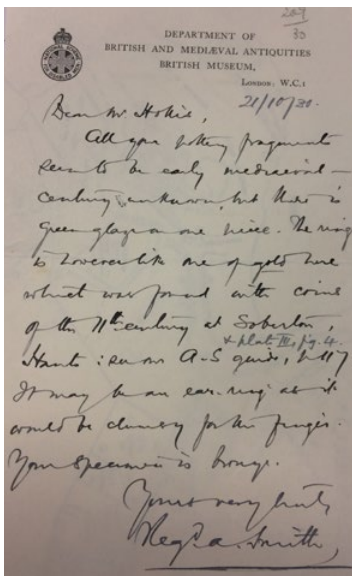
RA Smith, British Museum

Dear Mr Smith, with this I am sending a few fragments of pottery and a bronze ring which have been scratched off by rabbits or badgers from the mound shown on Ordnance Survey as tumulus about 1/4 mile west of the church of Cublington.

I shall be much obliged if you will let me know what you think of them. The pottery appears to be either Roman or Medieval but I'm not sure which. I do not remember seeing a tapered brooch like this.

I think it is a site where we might get permission to dig if it was considered worthwhile.

Yours E.Hollis



22nd Oct 1930

Miss Biggs, Cublington

Dear Miss Biggs,
The British Museum has today returned the pottery and ring which you left with me and report:

"All the fragments of pottery seem to be early medieval (century unknown) but there is a green glaze on one piece. The ring however, is like one of gold wire, which was found with coins of 11th century at Soberton, Hants. It may be an ear ring as it would be clumsy for the finger. Your specimen is bronze.

Yours very truly E.Hollis

Some of the finds associated with the Cublington area for full descriptions, see the Bucks County Museum website <https://finds.org.uk/database/search/results/q/cublington+ring#>

This is presumably the ring described above:



Early Medieval bronze pin, faceted head with ring and dot decoration. The main pin is lost with only the head and a very short stub section of the pin remaining. Identified by the British Museums Department of Prehistory and Early Europe with a reference to The Saxon Monastery of Whitby, *Archaeologia* 89 (pp.27-88)

Study of aerial photos taken just after the war with ex RAF reconnaissance cameras by St Joseph - an expert of the time, seem to show more ditches and ground hollows and bumps extending much further into the next field under what is now the Vale's farmyard. I have tried to map these by hand on top of the picture and again reproduce both these opposite.

What do you think? If you want me to send you the photo digitally for your own closer inspection, just let me know at gary@cublingtoncrier.co.uk

I personally haven't seen a better picture of the old village site with clearer definitions of the old bumps and hollows, roads and building platforms than on this picture shown opposite.

Letters exchanged with local historians and The British Museum suggested a further archaeological dig, but none was ever sanctioned, the site eventually being made a Scheduled Ancient Monument precluding any further investigation.

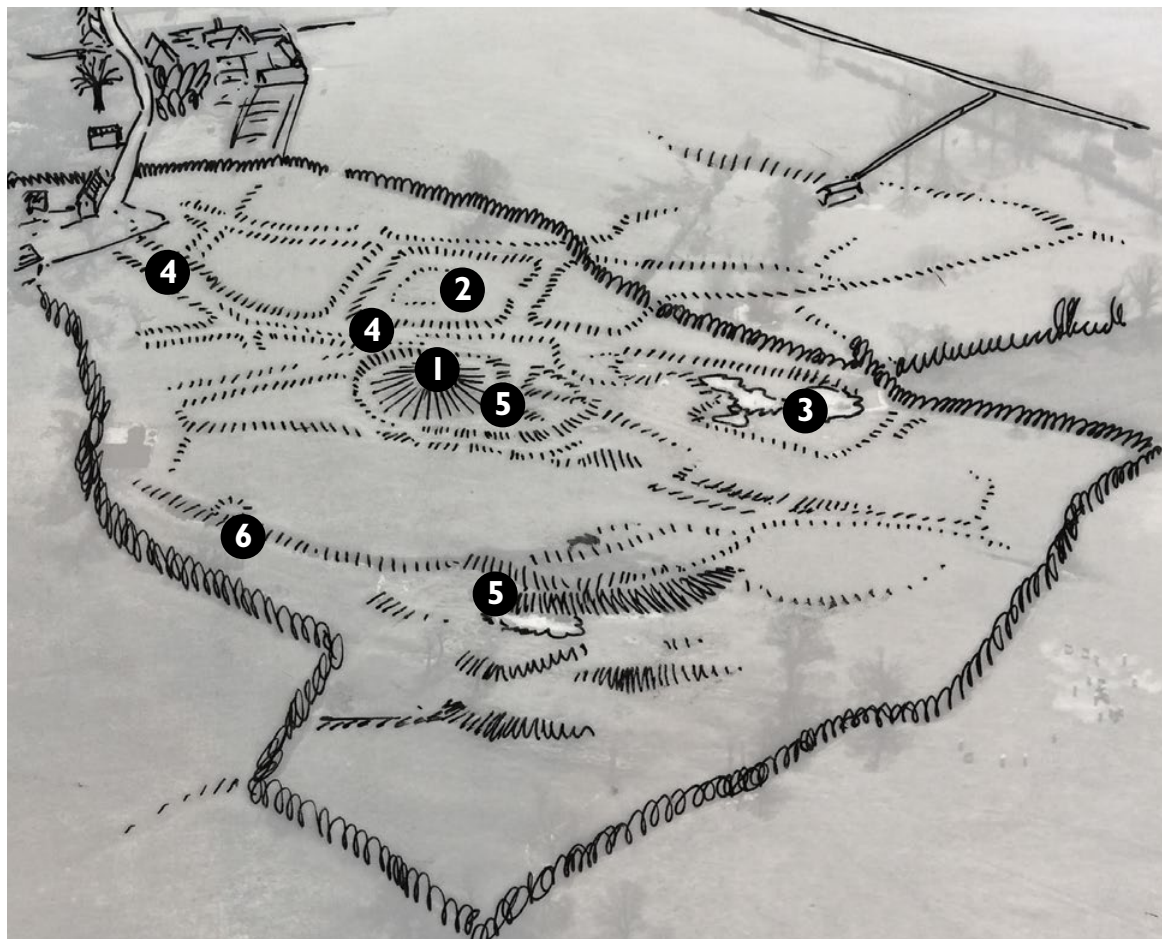
I hope you have enjoyed this article, explaining in some way perhaps, the early history of our truly unique village.

With grateful thanks for helping me with my research to

Julia Wise, Historic Environment Record Officer, Bucks CC

and to Andrew Pike on whose earlier researches, this is mostly based.

Gary Brazier



1. Motte and moated enclosure. 2. Old churchyard 3. Fish pond 4. The Main street 5. Evidence of excavation 6. Enclosure boundary?