

## BRASS BUSHEL MEASURE

THE OFFICIAL BUSHEL MEASURE FOR THE TOWN OF COWBRIDGE.

WEIGHTS, MEASURES AND QUALITY WERE STRICTLY LAID DOWN IN THE TOWNS ORDINANCES. OVEN KEEPERS HAD TO KEEP TRUE AND LAWFUL WEIGHTS.

MALT MAKERS WERE FORBIDDEN TO BUY WHEAT OR CORN FROM THE MARKET.

CORN COULD NOT BE SOLD IN THE MARKET BEFORE 12 O'CLOCK IN THE SUMMER AND 11 O'CLOCK IN THE WINTER.

BREWERS MUST BREW GOOD AND WHOLESOME ALE. BUTCHERS MUST ONLY SELL MEAT AT THE SHAMBLES AND THEN ONLY ON TUESDAYS AND SATURDAYS.

IN 1831 THE TOLL ON CORN WAS ONE PINT BOWL OF CORN FOR EVERY BUSHEL BROUGHT TO MARKET.

OTHER EXAMPLES OF TOLLS OF THE SAME DATE ARE, EVER BACON PIG KILLED 1s. FOR WEIGHING 4d TOTAL 1 s-4d. SMALL PIG KILLED 6d FOR WEIGHING 2d TOTAL 8d. EVERY LIVE HORSE SOLD 6d.

PITCHES WERE LET AT 1d FOR A BASKET AND 1d FOR A STALL.

THE COLLECTING OF THE TOLLS WAS LET YEARLY TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER. IN 1831 THEY WERE LET FOR £82-10-0.

24th MAY 1769 JOHN GRIFFITHS, A CLERK OF THE MARKET CERTIFIED THAT THE PRICE OF WHEAT ON THE LAST MARKET DAY WAS FROM 17s TO 18s THE BUSHEL, COMPUTING TWO WINCHESTER BUSHELS AND SIX GALLONS TO EACH BUSHEL.

*IF ANY ONE CAN EXPLAIN THE LAST STATEMENT I WOULD BE VERY GRATEFUL. CURATOR.*

*The above is a copy of the notice relating to the Bushel Measure when it is on display in the Council Chamber - Resulting in the donation of the following four pages by Mr. S. Hayward.*

Hantsweb

[www.hants.gov.uk](http://www.hants.gov.uk)

[Hantsweb home](#) | [Search](#) | [Contacts](#) | [A-Z index](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Help](#)



Hampshire County Council.

## Hampshire Trading Standards Service

### **CONSUMERWISE - *Weights and Measures of the City of Winchester***

**Information on *Trading Standards* is available from *Hampshire Regulatory Services Advice Service***

See also article on History of Trading regulation in Hampshire

Text from booklet published by Winchester Museums Service, Author Maurice Stevenson. Copyright Winchester City Council

For a full copy of the illustrated booklet contact Winchester Museums Service, Historic Resources Centre, Hyde Street, Winchester, SO23 7DW Price £1.10

The City of Winchester is fortunate in having in its keeping the oldest surviving set of standard weights, the oldest standard yard measure and a fine collection of other ancient measures and weights. These bear witness to the historic association of the name 'Winchester' with English measures of capacity.

**'Winchester measure'**\* To trace the origin of the term 'Winchester measure' it is necessary to go back to Anglo-Saxon times when, during the reign of Alfred the Great, Winchester became of increasing importance in the government of the Kingdom and as a centre of trade. In the succeeding reign of Edgar the Peaceful, from AD 959 to AD 975, it was decreed that all measures must agree with the standards kept in Winchester and in London. From that time onwards the bushel, and its parts (peck, gallon etc.) became known as 'Winchester measure' and were used for the measurement of all grains and agricultural produce. As late as 1881 corn rents in England were still being fixed by 'Winchester measure' although this had been superseded by Imperial measure (some 3% larger) by an Act of 1824. In the USA however, the old 'Winchester' bushel continued and survives to the present day. Another use of the term 'Winchester' is its application to glass vessels of various shapes and sizes found in chemists' shops, also by chemists in the expression 'Winchester quart' to denote half a gallon. Research has failed to find the origin of these uses and it can only be assumed that they evolved from the early relationship between Winchester and measures of capacity generally.

**Medieval controls.** Throughout the ages continuous efforts were made to ensure that measures and weights agreed with the national standards and clauses were included in the Magna Carta of 1215 to that effect. In the 14th century during the reign of Edward

III, the trade in wool was of great importance. Several laws were passed concerning the units of weight in which it should be sold and the method of weighing.

Steelyard or aunsel weighing was wholly 'put out' in favour of weighing by 'even balance' and the weight of the sack was fixed at 26 stones of 141b, ie. 3641b. Examples of fourteenth century steelyard weights have been found in Winchester and the surrounding area.. In 1357 it was ordered that certain balances and standard weights be sent to all the Sheriffs of England. These should have included weights for the sack, half-sack and quarter-sack and it has been assumed that the set of Winchester standards which include a quarter-sack (91 Ib) date from 1357. They may in fact, date from 1353 when the town's weigh-beam, or trona, was moved to a new site and administered as part of the wool staple. Fees for weighing increased considerably at that time and support the suggestion that a new set of weights would have been provided when the new staple was set up. These standard weights are embellished with the Royal arms quartering old France, in use from 1340 to 1405, and are impressed with the official stamp of a crown over a Lombardic 'E'. In addition to the quarter-sack the series continues with a 56 Ib (half-hundred weight), 28 Ib (tod), 14 Ib (stone) and a pair of 7 Ib (cloves). Apart from being the earliest set of standard weights in England they are also the oldest example of weights in the avoirdupois or 'heavy goods' series.

## **Tudor reforms**

Towards the end of the following century Henry VII carried out, amongst many other reforms of central and local government, an assessment of the country's weights and measures. New standards were made according to the old standards remaining in the Treasury and were dispatched c.1497 to 37 county towns and 5 other important cities or ports. From this issue the bronze bushel, gallon and quart, inscribed Henricus Septimus and with Tudor badges of a rose, greyhound and portcullis, are preserved at Winchester. Unique to Winchester is the hexagonal standard yard a bronze bar with a crowned Lombardic 'h' at one end and a crowned E at the other. The latter was added when an adjustment to the bar was made in Elizabeth's reign, probably in 1571 at a cost of two shillings. By tradition, the yard was based on the length of Henry I's arm and at one time it was believed that the Winchester standard dated from his reign. But, as generations of housewives have known, it is possible to estimate the length of a yard of fabric fairly accurately by holding it out from the nose to the fingertips of an outstretched arm.

## **Elizabethan standards**

Elizabeth was the next monarch to show concern over the nation's weights and measures and the lack of uniformity. In 1574 she appointed a jury to inquire into all aspects of the subject and on this occasion attention was also given to the troy system of weighing. This was originally based on the weight of the silver penny and consisted of 20 pennyweights to the troy ounce, which was nearly 10% larger than the avoirdupois ounce, although there were only 12 ounces to the troy pound as against 16 in the avoirdupois pound. Troy weight was used for weighing precious metals and drugs and also for bread. Under the ancient Assize of Bread procedure, the weight of loaves sold for a farthing and later a penny was fixed according to the price in each locality of a bushel of wheat. Assizes of Bread were an important feature of English local government from the 12th to the 19th centuries. In Winchester the Assize was carried out weekly by a jury of 12 men and there were fines for non-attendance.

For determining the true size of the new troy standards Elizabeth's jury referred to an ancient pile of troy weights belonging to the Goldsmiths' Company of London. In the

case of the avoirdupois standards, the Winchester Edward III set was referred to along with London, Exeter, Norwich and Worcester standards from the Henry VII issue. Even so, the first sets constructed were condemned in 1582 as 'not agreeable to the old standard'<sup>1</sup>. Eventually in 1588 satisfactory sets were ready for distribution to 57 towns and cities, those for Winchester being dispatched to Thome Belfyld (Thomas Belfield) the Mayor. The set of cup\* or 'nesting' weights in the troy series of 256 troy ounces in binary progression down to 1 ounce and the bell shaped weights (56 Ib and 7 Ib) plus the 3 of flat-round shape (8 Ib, 2 Ib and 1 Ib) in the avoirdupois series are from this issue.

After the 1588 successful distribution of standard weights, which incidentally, remained as local standards in most localities right up to 1826, attention was given to measures. New standards were issued from the Exchequer in 1601 and the three Elizabethan ornate bronze measures of gallon, quart and pint are of that date. There is no bushel measure, as in other collections, but as the Winchester bushel of Henry VII is restamped on the rim with crowned E's it was obviously reverified in Elizabeth's reign and found satisfactory for further use. In the case of the Elizabethan standards authorities were charged with their full cost, which depended largely on the weight of metal used. Winchester would, therefore, have avoided having to pay for a new model.

*(The booklet at this point continues with the history of the Stuart and 18th century history of the weights and measures of Winchester)*

## **Imperial system introduced**

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the impact of the metric system, introduced at the time of the French revolution, and increasing industrialisation, created a demand for the rationalisation of the traditional English weights and measures. After a series of Parliamentary Commissions the Imperial system was introduced by the Weights and Measures Act of 1824. A set of standard measures of quart, pint and half-pint engraved 'R.G and 'Winchester' was accordingly obtained. They were verified by City of London officials and stamped on the top rim with a crowned G for George IV and the dagger from the City arms. The new Imperial measures were approximately midway between the old 'Winchester measure' and 'Ale measure' in size. 'Wine measure', which was some 1 7% less than Imperial, was abolished in Britain but remained as the legal standard for liquids in the U.S.A. And so after almost a thousand years when it had been the legally recognised medium for all transactions in corn and other agricultural produce, Winchester measure was officially laid to rest. But, as mentioned at the beginning of this review, the name 'Winchester' in its association with 'measure' was too much a part of the national heritage to be extinguished by official action and continued to be used in contracts and by succeeding generations for many years to come.

This page produced by Andrea Sawyer of Hampshire County Council Regulatory Services Advice Service

. Tel: In the UK: 0845 6030081: from overseas: +44 845 6030081

Comments on Hantsweb should be sent to the Hantsweb Manager . For more information on our services please contact Hampshire County Council Information Centres

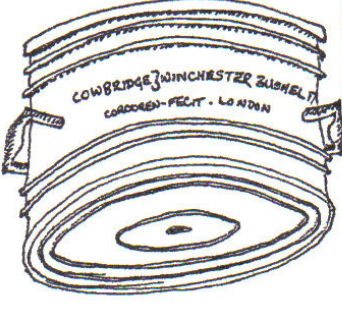
This page last updated on 28 April 1999. Copyright Hampshire County Council 2003. Disclaimer and Privacy Statement.



AMGUEDDFA WERIN CYMRU - MUSEUM OF WELSH LIFE

ADRODDIAD CADWRAETH CONSERVATION REPORT

Taflen Sheet 1

Rhif derbynodi Acc. No. PRO 55.2	Rhif cadwraeth Conservation no. S.H. 435	Darlun Drawing 
Enw'r gwrthrych Object title Bushell measure	Dyddiad imewn Date in 11th September 2000	
Cyfnod Period 1793	Rheswm Reason For loan.	
Marciau gwneuthurwr Makers marks CORCORN-FECIT. LONDON	Lleoliad arferol Normal location Red Block - Wts+measures	
Defnyddiau Materials Brass	Safle Position	
	Statws Status	Dimensiwn Dimensions H x Dia. 221mm x 482mm

Disgrifiad Object description

Solid brass bushel, cast and then finished by turning (surface covered in turning lines). The moulded and foiled handles have a higher copper content (more like bronze) and are lead soldered into holes in the measure itself.

On the rim above each handle is a stamp:



The inscription on the front reads: "COWBRIDGE & WINCHESTER BUSHEL 1793 CORCORN-FECIT. LONDON"

On the rim, between the George III marks are 2 chequered patterns, opposite one another:



Cyflwr Condition

The surface of the bushel is oxidised inside and out. There is minor corrosion pitting apparent in the base of the bushel. There are casting flaws apparent particularly on the external surfaces, sides and base. There appears to be one area with iron corrosion on the bottom, probably due to an associated nail. There are various spots of white paint. There are various scratches and accretions on the external base. The handles are solid in their holes.

Cyflwr cyffredinol General condition

Good

Sefydlogrwydd Stability

Stable



AMGUEDDFA WERIN CYMRU - MUSEUM OF WELSH LIFE

ADRODDIAD CADWRAETH CONSERVATION REPORT

Taflen Sheet 2

Tystiolaeth o driniaeth blaenorol Evidence of previous treatment

Traces of old cleaning fluids apparent in indentations and around ridges.

Ffotograffau Photographs

Dadansoddiad Analysis

Triniaeth Treatment

The internal and external surfaces were cleaned with cotton wool moistened with water containing a few drops of symperonic N.

The whole bushel was then degreased with acetone before applying a layer of Renaissance microcrystalline wax.

The small spots of white paint on the exterior were removed prior to the above treatment by picking them off with a scalpel.

12-9-00

Storio/argymhellion trafod Storage / handling recommendations

Store @ 15-18°C and below 40% RH

HANDLE WEARING GLOVES.

Swyddog cadwraeth Conservator

Dyddiad allan Date out

Dychwelwyd i Returned to

*S. H. Evans*

14th Sept. 2000

These last two pages were scanned from Nat Museum report when the measure was first displayed by Cowbridge Museum in the Town Hall.-----V.W.E. 7/3/04.