

## 17th and 18th Century Wine-Bottles of Oxford Taverns

by E. T. LEEDS

IN 1914 I published in *The Antiquary*, r.s.X, 285 ff., a short note entitled 'On the Dating of Glass Wine-Bottles of the Stuart Period,' the purpose of which was to establish that the earliest glass wine-bottles made in England were not, as their varying forms might suggest, designed to contain different kinds of wine as in modern usage, but to replace flagons of Rhenish stone-ware and, to a lesser degree, of the brittle Lambeth Delft tin-glazed fabric as decanters for the service of wine alike from public taverns or private cellars. Furthermore it was shown that the date of any bottle in the early series could be very closely determined by its shape, inasmuch as between the termination about 1647 of the monopoly of glass-making long held by Admiral Sir Robert Mansel and the middle of the 18th century, when the cylindrical shape became almost universal, there was a gradual evolution in form from a tall-necked bottle with globose body through a squat, short-necked type to a thick, short-necked, cylindrical bottle, the immediate parent of the modern elongated form. This last form was necessitated by the growth of the practice of laying down wine in bottle in large quantities, for which obviously the older shapes were entirely unsuited.

The evidence was provided by the unrivalled series of bottles bearing stamps of the Oxford taverns of the 17th and early 18th centuries, most of them now in the Ashmolean Museum, supported by an equally unsurpassed volume of evidence derived from University and City records bearing upon the history of the acrid disputes over the right to license, which for the greater part of the period concerned raged between the two authorities.

Since 1914 the Oxford series in the Ashmolean Museum has been augmented by numerous additions not only of complete bottles but also of stamps from broken bottles. These, together with some external evidence serve to corroborate the original thesis and at the same time throw fresh light on other points, in particular on the quantity of bottles that the tavern-holders had made for their service.

## 17TH AND 18TH CENTURY WINE-BOTTLES OF OXFORD TAVERNS

### THE TAVERNS

With a few exceptions nearly all the Oxford bottles which bear stamps are connected with five taverns, the Salutation, the Mermaid, the Crown, the Three Tuns and the King's Head.

During the early part of the period in question there were four taverns, from 1663 to 1687 there seem to have been three, and from 1687 to 1709 there were again four, but the demolition of one at the latter date in order to enlarge the market at Carfax again reduced the number to three.<sup>1</sup> This was the statutory number allowed to Oxford by the Statute 7 Edward VI, but the perpetual squabbles between the City and University as to who was the chief officer of the City (in whom according to the Statute the power of licensing was to lie) did not conduce to a rigid observation of the statutory number. For some part of the 17th century there were five taverns, and there is reason to believe that for a short time there were six, but here we are primarily concerned with five.

1. *The Salutation.* The tavern had only a short existence under this name, but has contributed what is probably the earliest bottle from the taverns. In the history of the Crown tavern one Thomas Wood working under Jane Hallam's licence obtained in 1647 a licence 'to hang out the sign of the Salutation in St. Martin's parish.'<sup>2</sup> In 1651 he obtained from Katherine Edwards a lease of a tenement (No. 104, High Street) in St. Mary's parish together with a licence to sell wine.<sup>3</sup> This house belonged to Oriel College and behind it and No. 105, High Street, lay a tennis-court (now lecture-rooms of the college).<sup>4</sup> This tennis court was run by Thomas Wood in conjunction with the tavern, to which, as Wood the diarist infers, he had transferred his licensed sign of the Salutation from No. 3, Cornmarket. In 1652 he issued a token with the following device: O. THOMAS WOOD = a racket: R. VINTNER. IN. OXON. 1652. = T.M.W., for Thomas and Mary Wood. The stamp on his bottle bears the initials T.W. and two tennis-players. He died in 1663.<sup>5</sup>

2. *The Mermaid.* This was formerly and contemporaneously known as the Swyndlestock or Swynstock, its mediaeval name. It stood at the south-west corner of Carfax, and, though it was demolished above ground in 1709 to make room for the Butter-bench as shown in a view of Carfax of about 1750, its labyrinth of cellars only succumbed quite recently to the building of Marygold House. The tavern was the property of the City.

<sup>1</sup> Both University and City issued three licences, but two of the University's were held by booksellers and were liable to be hawked round, when the University temporarily succeeded in suppressing those issued by the City.

<sup>2</sup> Oxford City Ledger Book 1637-1675 (D 5/6), fol. 555.

<sup>3</sup> Rec. Cur. Canc. Univ. Oxon., 15 Aug. 1651.

<sup>4</sup> Shadwell and Salter, *Oriel Records* (O.H.S. LXXXV), 212 and 215.

<sup>5</sup> Williamson, *Boyne's Trade Tokens*, Oxfordshire, no. 187; Salter, *Surveys and Tokens*, (O.H.S. LXXV), 377, no. 112 and 451.

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3. *The Crown.* The tavern which stood on the site of No. 3, Cornmarket Street, was best known under this name. It must not be confused with the Crown Inn which still exists on the opposite side of the street (No. 59A). The tavern belonged to New College.

4. *The Three Tuns.* This tavern has long since been demolished to make space for the western block of the High Street front of University College to whom it belonged. In the college's lease-books it is always called by its mediaeval name of Staunton Hall; elsewhere it is often described as the tavern 'over against All Souls College.'

5. *The King's Head.* The history of this tavern admirably illustrates the personal character of the wine-licence and its non-attachment to a particular house. On 2nd August, 1687, a licence was granted to Richard Walker, vintner 'to hang out the Garland and Bush in St. Michael's parish,'<sup>1</sup> the site of the tavern being at Nos. 24 and 25, Cornmarket Street. Wood records 'Sept. 17, T., at the new tavern, called the King's Head, by North Gate, with Dr. <Robert> Plot, 7d. It was set up about a fortnight before.'<sup>2</sup> About 1696 Richard Walker acquired a messuage in All Saints parish at No. 12, High Street, to which he removed his tavern. It continued there until the middle of the 18th century.<sup>3</sup>

## THE BOTTLE-STAMPS

The chronology of the bottles can be established on the evidence of the name-initials, date (where present) and style of the stamps, and secondly on the form of the bottle itself.

The stamps (PLS. IX and X) have been arranged in five groups:—(i) The Salutation and the Mermaid; (ii) the Crown; (iii) the Three Tuns; (iv) the King's Head, and (v) Oxford and external bottles, mostly unconnected with taverns.<sup>4</sup>

### GROUP I (PL. IX). THE SALUTATION (No. 1) AND THE MERMAID (Nos. 2-8)

1. T.W. and two tennis-players. (A.M. 1896-1908, M. 68 and London Museum, A. 12112).

Thomas Wood, 1647-1663, but only from 1651-1663 in High Street.

2. A.H. above a mermaid; on right, a ship (A.M. 1915. 7\*).

Anthony Hall, senior, c. 1660-1675. Mayor, 1673. Ob. 11 May, 1675. Tablet on S. wall of Kirtlington church.

<sup>1</sup> Oxford City Ledger Book, 1675-1696 (D. 5/6) fol. 860.

<sup>2</sup> A. Clark, *Wood's Life and Times*, III (O.H.S. XXVI), 225.

<sup>3</sup> H. E. Salter, *Oxford City Properties* (O.H.S. LXXXIII), 350 and 378.

<sup>4</sup> The Oxford tavern-stamps are numbered consecutively in the schedule; external stamps and Oxford examples not connected with taverns are designated by letters. The same numbering and lettering is employed in the diagram of shapes. Unless otherwise stated all the Oxford material has been found in Oxford or in its immediate vicinity, in the latter case probably recovered from soil dumped from excavations within the City. Where only the stamp is preserved, the museum-number or other designation of collection is marked with an asterisk. Dates after the names are those of their period of tenancy.

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3. A.H. above; mermaid to l.; on r. a ship. (A.M. 1882. 145).
4. A.H. on r.; mermaid to l.; a date 16 . . . <6?> 7 divided by the figure. (A.M. 1932. 62\*). Found at Alvescot, Oxon.
- 5 and 5a. A.H. on r.; mermaid to l. (A.M. 1914. 453 and 1939. 2).

Nos. 3 and 4, and possibly No. 5 must also belong to Anthony Hall senior's tenure.<sup>1</sup>

6. A.H. on r.; mermaid to r.; below, 1682. (A.M. 1924. 512).  
Anthony Hall junior, 1675-1691. Buried in St. Martin's church.<sup>2</sup>
- 7 and 7a. ANTHONY \* HALL \* IN \* OXFORD \* 1686 (the last figure is doubtful; it appears to be a 5 altered to a 6, cp. No. 13 of the Crown *infra*); mermaid to l. (A.M. 1896-1908, M. 72\* and C.K. Mason collection).
- 8 and 8a. D.A.P. above; mermaid to r.; on l. an open book=arms of Oxford University; on r. an ox gradient to r., facing front, for the arms of the City of Oxford. (A.M. 1874. 46 and 1924. 53\*).

Daniel and Anne Prince. Prince occurs in a lease of the Mermaid, dated 1 March, 1692-3.

All the above were occupiers under leases from the City held first by John Whicker and later by John Whicker Moreton both of Tackley, Oxon.<sup>3</sup>

### GROUP II (PL. IX). THE CROWN (Nos. 9-22)

9. W.A.M. above; crown with rounded cushion and coronet with fleur-de-lys at the middle; plain frame. (A.M. 1921. 1444\*).
- William and Anne Morrell, licensees 1660-1679.<sup>4</sup>
- 10 and 10a. W.A.M. above; crown with wider cushion, indented at the top; coronet and circlet as on no. 9; immediately below the crown a curved, hatched surface possibly intended to indicate the underside of the crown. Beaded frame. (A.M. 1916. 6 and 1937. 266\*).
  - 11 and 11a. W.A.M. above; crown wider than on no. 10, and with indented cushion; coronet as before; circlet without (?) jewels. (A.M. 1913. 925 and 1937. 975\*).
  - 12 and 12a. Cipher of William and Anne Morrell; above, crown with low, indented cushion; coronet with Maltese cross at the middle; circlet jewelled; to l. and r. OX . . . ON; below the cipher, 74 for 1674. Beaded frame. (A.M. 1915. 8\* and 1937. 555\*).
  - 13 and 13a. Stamp identical with No. 12, but on the stamping-iron the 4 has been altered to 5 for 75=1675. (A.M. 1910. 309 and 1937. 278\*).
  14. Cipher of Anne Morrell; above a crown with full cushion; jewelled strap above Maltese cross at the middle; to l. and r. OX . . . ON; below the cipher 1680. No frame. (A.M. 1896-1908, M. 70\*).
- Anne Morrell, widow, 1679-1696.

<sup>1</sup> He issued a trade-token:—O. ANTHONY . HALL . AT . THE = A mermaid between A and H. R. IN . OXON . VINTNER = A.A.H. H. E. Salter, *Surveys and Tokens* (O.H.S. LXXV), 373 (no. 46) and 405.

<sup>2</sup> A. Clark, *Wood's Life and Times*, III (O.H.S. xxvi), 373.

<sup>3</sup> H. E. Salter, *Oxford City Properties* (O.H.S. LXXXIII), 23 and 158: Oxford City Ledger Book, 1675-1696 (D. 5/7, fol. 261).

<sup>4</sup> Cp. the trade-token (Williamson, *Boyne's Trade Tokens*, Oxfordshire, no. 156: O. WILL. MORRELL . AT . Y<sup>E</sup> = a crown; R. CROWNE . IN . OXFORD = W.A.M.

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15. Cipher of Anne Morrell; above, crown, as on No. 14; to l. and r. OX . . . ON; below, the cipher 1683. Plain frame. (A.M. 1934. 199\* and 1937. 279\*).
  16. Cipher of Anne Morrell; above, crown, wider and more indented, showing also underside in perspective; coronet and circlet as before; to l. and r. OX . . . ON; below the cipher 1685. No frame. (A.M. 1916. 19).
  17. Cipher of Anne Morrell; crown as on No. 16; to l. and r. OX . . . ON; below the cipher 1686. No frame. (A.M. 1938. 139\*).
  - 18 and 18a. Cipher of Anne Morrell; above, crown as on No. 14; to l. and r. OX . . . ON; below the cipher 1688, the last figure malformed. Beaded frame; stamp of smaller module. (C.K. Mason collection and 1937. 270\*).
  - 19 and 19a. Cipher of Anne Morrell; above, crown similar to that on No. 18, but with smaller opening to cap; to l. and r. OX . . . ON; below, 1701. (A.M. 1896-1908, M. 185\*. 1913. 927 and 1934. 200\*).
- Anne Morrell's executrix, Joan Turton, her daughter-in-law by marriage to a son by her first husband, 1697-1706.
20. A.K.R.; above, a crown, smaller and less ornate than the above, but with full cushion and the opening shown in perspective. Beaded frame. (A.M. 1874. 45).  
Alexander and Katherine Richmond, 1711-after 1730.
  - 21 and 21a. A.K.R.; with six-pointed star on each side of the R.; above, crown indented, but with quite simple details. Beaded frame. (A.M. 1940. 17 and 1940. 223\*).
  22. A.K.R. in rather ornate lettering; below, crown with garbled details. Beaded frame. (A.M. 1934. 261\*).

### GROUP III (PL. x). THE THREE TUNS (Nos. 23-34)

- 23 and 23a. H.B. on either side of a vintner's bush; below, three tuns. Plain frame. A.M. 1874. 44 and 1937. 272\*).
- Humphrey Bodicot or Bodicott, first licensed in 1627; at the Three Tuns from 1639 to 1660.<sup>1</sup>
24. R.E.P. above and to l. and r. of the arms of the Vintners' Company, a chevron between three tuns; shield with square top and blunt base. No frame. (A.M. 1937. 536\*).
- Richard and Elizabeth Pont as sub-licensees, 1666 to 1671.<sup>2</sup>
25. R.E.P. and the Vintners' arms as on No. 24, but with elongated tuns; wide, square-topped shield with triangular base. No frame. (All Souls Library).
  - 25a. R.E.P. and the Vintners' arms; shield taller than on No. 25; thin chevron. No frame. (A.M. 1896-1908, M. 74\*).

<sup>1</sup> Compare his token: O. HUMPHRY BODICOTT = a vintner's bush; R. VINTNER. IN. OXON = three tuns. His widow, Judith, *née* Potter, occupied the tavern down to 1666. (Cp. H. E. Salter, *Surveys and Tokens*, 371 (no. 27) and 385).

<sup>2</sup> Compare Pont's token: O. RICHARD PONT = the Vintners' arms; R. IN. OXON. 1668 = R.E.P. (*ibid.* 375 (nos. 77-78 and 427)). He was buried in St. Mary the Virgin, where a tablet to him and his wife hangs on the west wall. Pont was evidently favoured by Anthony Wood, who often mentions him. Thus: '22 July, 1665, at the Mermaid Tavern with Mr. Curteyne, 1s. 6d., of which I gave 6d. to Dick Punt, when we drank wine in the cellars,' and '28 March, 1666, at Dick Pont's new tavern, *viz.* :—at Bodicot's where he began to sell wine the 26 day . . . 1s.' (A. Clark, *Wood's Life and Times*, II (O.H.S. XXI), 40 and 74).

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26. R.E.P. as before, but wide, short shield with flatly splayed chevron and bluntly triangular base to shield. No frame. (A.M. 1915. 5).
- 27 and 27a. R.E.P. as before, but large, tall square-topped shield with slightly ogee base, Plain frame. (A.M. 1915. 4 and S. Gibson collection).
28. R.E.P. as before, but shield of smaller module with ogee top and base. No frame. (A.M. 1896-1908, M. 63).

Of the above Nos. 24, 25 and most probably 26 belong to Richard Pont's lifetime; Nos. 27 and 28 are assignable to his widow, 1671-1687. Mrs Pont's will, P.C.C. 6 Exton, dated 3 August, 1687, was proved 4 January, 1687-8.

29. G.I.B. above and to l. and r. of the Vintner's arms; shield with square top and blunt base; splayed chevron. No frame. (A.M. 1874. 47 and All Souls Library).

George and Joan Brown, 1689-(?) 1693 (see below and under next entry). By her will Elizabeth Pont bequeaths 'to my servants, George Brown and Joane Richardson to each of them Tenne pounds . . . and alsoe all the partiçions that are mine in my now dwelling-house and also Twelve leathern chaires a round table Two paire of large flaxen sheetes and all my implements belonging to the Trade in my Cellars equally.' George Brown was buried in St. Mary the Virgin on 1 February, 1693, his wife surviving him until 24 November, 1701 (St. Mary the Virgin register).

30. W.A.T. above and to l. and r. of the Vintners' arms; tall shield with faintly ogee top and ogee base; very thin chevron. No frame. (A.M. 1896-1908, M. 78).

William and Anne Taylor, (?) 1693-1695. William Taylor is mentioned by Hearne; '4 May, 1719. Yesterday . . . died very rich Mrs. Tomlins of the Three Tuns Tavern, Oxon. . . . Her first husband was one Taylour.'<sup>1</sup> His burial is registered at St. Mary the Virgin on 17 May, 1695.

- 31 and 31a. C.A.T. above and to l. and r. of the Vintners' arms; shield with ogee top and base. Plain frame. (A.M. 1915. 6 and British Museum).

Culpepper and Anne Tomlinson, 1695-1712. In the University College leases of the tavern occurs the entry: 'Jan. 10, 1703 Mr. Tomlins, vintner.' On 20 July, 1711, he is, as Culpepper Tomlinson (written Tomlins at the end of the indenture), granted along with John Freeman and Alexander Richmond a joint licence to sell wine. (City Ledger Book, 1696-1730 (D5/8, f. 81 b). Part of the entry in Hearne's diary already quoted under No. 30 reads; 'Her husband who had been her drawer Mr. Tomlins died 5 or 6 years ago.' He was buried in St. Mary the Virgin on 12 January, 1712, and his will proved in the Chancellor's Court (Univ. Oxon Cur. Canc., 26 Jan., 1712).

32. C.A.T., the T. flanked l. and r. by OX . . . ON; below, shield with square top and ogee base with the Vintners' arms, the tuns of which have slings on their upper side; on each side a bunch of grapes. Below, 1709. No frame. (A.M. 1913. 928 and private).

33. A.T. with OXON below; below, a shield of the Vintners' arms (the tuns with slings) with square top and ogee base. On each side a formal spray misinterpreting the bunches of grapes of the 1709 stamp. Below, 1713. Beaded frame. (A.M. 1896-1908, M. 65).

<sup>1</sup> D. W. Rannie, *Hearne's Collections*, vi (O.H.S. XLIII), 338. Letters of Administration granted 30 May, 1695 to Anne Taylor (P.C.C. Adm. Act. Book, 1695, f. 97 v).

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Anne Tomlinson, widow, 1712-1719; died 3 May, 1719, and buried in St. Mary the Virgin, where at the east end of the floor of the south aisle is a slab, 'Anne Tomlinson, 1719.' Of her long will, proved on 12 June, 1719, a copy exists in the University archives. She was a sister of Richard Walker (see below).

34. A.T. above a shield, square-topped and with ogee base, bearing the Vintners' arms (the tuns with slings); on either side a formal spray still farther divergent from the original bunches of grapes as portrayed on No. 32. Below, 1715. No frame. (A.M. 1896-1908, M. 64).

### GROUP IV (PL. X). THE KING'S HEAD (Nos. a, b, 35-41)

At the head of this group are placed for comparison two stamps with this device from 'foreign' bottles of Group V, earlier than any of the Oxford examples.

- a. R.M.P. and 16 . . 57 flanking a king's bust in the style of Charles I, in profile to l. (Northampton Museum, found at Wellingborough).<sup>1</sup>  
b. Bust of Charles II, full front; on l. crowned C.R., below, 1661. (Francis Berry collection).<sup>2</sup>  
35. R.W., and 16 . . 93 flanking a king's bust, full front and robed. No frame. (All Souls Library and A.M. 1937. 267\*).

Richard Walker, 1687-1704. This is the only known bottle that can date from his occupation of the tavern in Cornmarket Street (p. 46). A native of Tysoe (Warwicks.), he was apprenticed to William Morrell on 6 November, 1668;<sup>3</sup> he was buried on 10 November, 1704, in St. Michael's church, where in a long inscription on his tombstone he is described as 'oenopola notissimus'.<sup>4</sup>

36. R.W. and 16 . . 96 flanking a king's bust, as last (C. K. Mason collection).  
37. R.W. and 16 . . 97 flanking a king's bust in profile, robed. Beaded frame. (A.M. 1938. 138\*).

38. Date 16 . . . 99 flanking a king's bust in armour, in profile to r. Beaded frame. The stamp is repeated in the next. (A.M. 1910, 313).

- 39 and 39a-c. R.E.W. and 1699 to l. and r. of a king's bust as last. The initials have been added to the stamping iron employed for No. 38, *i.e.* for Richard and Elizabeth Walker (A.M. 1896-1908, M. 66; 1913. 926; 1928. 502 and Mrs. Ragg collection).

The burial of Elizabeth Walker of the parish of St. Michael appears in the register of All Saints church under the date 7 March, 1693. If this was Richard Walker's wife, it must be a first marriage, but if so, he would appear to have moved from St. Michael's parish to High Street before 1696 (see p. 46). He is described on his epitaph as 'bis maritus.' The E. of 1699 then stands for a second wife more than probably of the same name.

40. I.M.F. to r. of a king's bust in profile to r.; well executed head in a beaded frame. (A.M. 1873. 255, and Guildhall Museum, found in Southwark\*).

John and Margaret Freeman, 1704-1724 (death of John Freeman). He was a nephew of Richard Walker. No licence in his name appears in the City records

<sup>1</sup> *Wine Trade Loan Exhibition of Drinking Vessels, also Books & Documents etc., Held at Vintners' Hall, London. June-July, 1933*, p. 60, no. 214, pl. LXXXVII. How a bottle, presumably connected with a tavern, comes to bear a king's head as its device in 1657 is a problem which opens up many lines of speculation.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60, no. 215, pl. LXXXVIII (A).

<sup>3</sup> City Muniments, Hannisters (L. 5/4), 6 Nov., 1668. He was matriculated by the University 30 March, 1691 (Archiv. Univ. Oxon., Pyx, F. 20).

<sup>4</sup> C. E. Doble, *Hearne's Collections*, I (O.H.S. II), 88.

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before that of 1711 (see p. 49) to be held conjointly with Culpepper Tomlinson and Alexander Richmond. He first appears individually, when on 27 April, 1713, the City Council agree; 'that Mr. freeman at the King-head shall renew his wine-licence'; but he certainly succeeded to the tavern at the death of his uncle. He died 27 December, 1724.

41. I.M.F. to r. of king's bust robed in profile to r.; below, 1713. No frame. (A.M. 1921. 271\* and Northampton Museum).

I have mentioned the criterion of style (p. 46). In several cases only stamps are preserved and as yet no evidence is available in regard to the shape of the bottles from which they came. The stamps, however, even when without a date, often afford a clue to their age. In the Mermaid series the mermaids on Nos. 2, 3 and 4 are less sophisticated than the later examples; in addition Nos. 2 and 3 have a ship in the background. This is omitted later. The stamp placed at the head of the Crown series is so adjudged on account of the crown which is of the same shape as that worn by the king on the bottle in Northampton Museum dated 1657. Also in other cases the disposition of the ornamentation of the coronet has to be taken into consideration, or the addition of a jewelled strap below the orb. The Three Tuns stamps where no other part of the bottle is present are less easy to judge, because the device remained radically unchanged for over 21 years during Richard Pont's tenancy and during his widow's life. It would seem that the employment of an ogee-shaped base in the shield and certainly of an ogee-shaped top are useful criteria. The King's Head stamps speak for themselves in their reproduction of the peculiarities of regal dress at different periods, and in a certain measure also of the portraiture of the monarchs themselves. Charles II on Mr. Berry's bottle is unmistakable and, though not flattering, the 1699 stamp has evidently seized upon a striking feature of King William's face.

The above stamps represent all the Oxford vintners or their assignees who were in occupation of the five taverns for the existence of which between 1650 and 1740 documentary evidence is available. Identifications which were still somewhat hypothetical in 1914 have since been established beyond question. Applying this evidence and that of bottles bearing dated stamps, it at once becomes possible approximately to fix by their form the date of bottles which have no date on the stamp. This method, originally employed in order to arrive at an identification of unknown initials, can be carried farther in cases like that of the long series of bottles stamped with R.E.P. and the Vintners' arms, some of which obviously were made after Richard Pont's death, or to determine the assignment of undated bottles to the two vintners Anthony Hall, father and son.

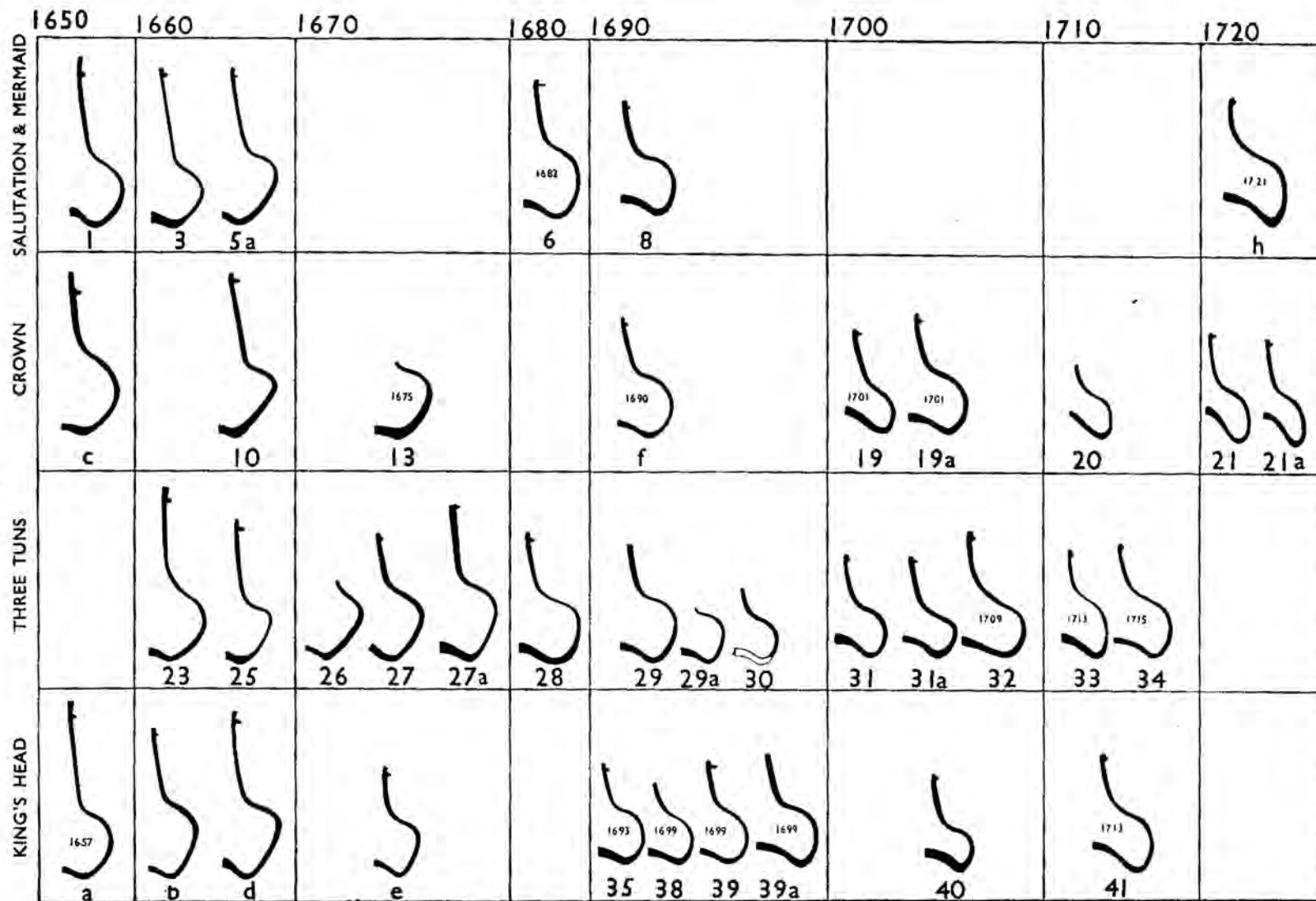


FIG. 11

Sections of 17th and 18th century glass wine-bottles to show changes in their form by decades.

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The results of this application of the evidence can be most easily demonstrated by the accompanying diagram (FIG. 11) in which half-sections of perfect or imperfect bottles are arranged in four lines, corresponding to groups I to IV above. Other examples from various sources, Oxford and external, dated and undated are interspersed in the diagram. Two of these have already been listed under the King's Head (Group IV), others (for c, d and g, see PL. X) are :

- c. **RICHARD <BI>LLINGSLEY** within line borders around a castle with five domed turrets, the middle one over a portcullised gateway. (A.M. 1882. 144).  
It is not certain that this is an Oxford bottle. The name however does occur in Oxford, once in a list in the City muniments entitled 'Alehouses licensed and unlicensed 1640' under 'Hollowell (*i.e.* Holywell) Richard billingslee,' and again in Archiv. Univ. Oxon. Cur. Canc., 6 Oct. 1676, 'Richard Billingsley cook Wadham A(dmited).' I have however been unable to find a Castle Inn in Oxford in the 17th century which would fit; it may therefore come from some external tavern. If it belongs to Oxford, it should be connected with the first-mentioned, since its date is certainly earlier than 1660.
- d. **R.I.F.** above a bear gradient to r. (Lent to the Ashmolean Museum by the Council of the Presbyterian Church).  
This is identifiable with Ralph and Joan Flexney of the Bear Inn, Oxford on the site of which it was discovered.<sup>1</sup>
- e. **CAMBRIGG** above a dolphin; below, 1684. The Dolphin tavern at the Bridge Street end of All Saints Passage, Cambridge.<sup>2</sup>
- f. **Cha : Turnor** above 1690. (Northampton Museum).  
A less perfect example has been found in Oxford, where the name is well known at the date concerned.
- g. **Thomas Swift Oxon** in three lines. (A.M. 1937. 992).<sup>3</sup>  
This is possibly connected with Swift's mentioned by Anthony Wood in 1692. For details see *Oxoniensia*, III, 156. Not figured in the diagram.
- h. **Jno Haines Chankton 1721**, in three lines. (British Museum).

### THE BOTTLES—THEIR DATE AND USE

It now becomes evident that the form of the bottle (FIG. 11) depends entirely on the date at which it was made and that a gradual change took place during the period covered by the bottles here described. Beginning between 1650 and 1660 with a tall shape with high rim, long neck, globose body and small narrow kick, by 1720 we arrive at a wide squat form with roughly fashioned rim, short neck curving down gently to a body with almost vertical wall and with a wide deep kick in its base. Almost more striking than any other feature is this gradual enlargement in the width and depth of the kick, evidently due to a desire

<sup>1</sup> *Oxoniensia*, III, 155, pl. XII, A2 and C6.

<sup>2</sup> *Country Life*, 30 March, 1935.

<sup>3</sup> *Oxoniensia*, III, 156, pl. XII, A3 and C9.

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to improve the stability of the bottle. Though it appears to be narrower between 1660 and 1670 than in the preceding decade, this is largely due to the development of the pronounced angle at the shoulder which accentuated the inward slope of the lower part of the wall.

In the decade 1720-1730 there is a definite break away from the regular evolution in shape of the previous eighty years. It is now that new shapes appear in some numbers, even if their introduction is of earlier date. These novelties are either octagonal or flatly oval in section. One of the most recent additions to the list (No. 22) is a stamp of Alexander Richmond with crude draughtsmanship both in the crown and the lettering. Only small portions of the wall of the bottle are still attached to the stamp, but they are sufficient to show that the bottle was of the new oval shape, and so is the latest bottle in the Oxford tavern series known up to the present time.

In spite of small aberrations, and these more apparent than real, the evolution of form advances consistently forward, so much so that no hesitation need be shown in dividing the diagram by vertical lines into sections representing decades. This serves to emphasize the points at which the more marked changes make their appearance. The evidence for the decade 1670-1680 still remains unfortunately sparse, but for other sections corroborative material is available, though I have not included it here.

It has already been said that these bottles served rather as decanters than for storage. Interesting confirmation of this is supplied by three bottles, one dated so late as 1713, in the collections of the late Mr. Francis Berry and of the Guildhall Museum. These have handles.<sup>1</sup>

It is nevertheless true that the increased number of stamps now recorded might suggest storage, but is there not another explanation? King's Head bottles have, I believe, been found in some numbers in the former cellars of the King's Head under No. 9, High Street, but tavern-bottles have been found intact all over Oxford; especially perhaps in the excavations on the north side of the Radcliffe Camera in 1910, but also on the site of the Schools, in King Edward Street, Broad Street, Clarendon Quadrangle, All Souls College, the Masonic Hall and even Pusey Street. Additions to the list of stamps bear witness to the replacement made necessary not only by bottles unreturned by customers in colleges, inns and elsewhere, but also by the inevitable tale of breakages in those hard-drinking days. It is only necessary to bear in mind the quantity of Rhenish stone-ware flagons which emerge from excavations in Oxford, to estimate what the glass bottles too must have suffered.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Wine Trade Loan Exhibition Catalogue*, Nos. 222, 223a and 223b, p. 61, pls. xciii (A) and xciv.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Wine Trade Exhibition Catalogue* they are all given the apt name of serving bottles.

## 17TH AND 18TH CENTURY WINE-BOTTLES OF OXFORD TAVERNS

There is an interesting document of a slightly earlier period preserved in the Bodleian Library (Rawlinson MSS. D 321). It is a ledger, somewhat mutilated, kept at the Mermaid tavern between 1636 and 1639 and contains numerous entries for wine sent out to colleges, inns and private houses. Thus for 'Denis mersor' (? Thomas Dennis, mercer) 'pottle of Cla : (claret) to ye Howse (i.e. Town Hall) xvi d'; for 'Mr. Stampe of pem : coll : 1638, June 2 : pottle Cla : qrt sacke to the half mone'. Again 'pottle sacke in a stone bottle—11s vid'; for 'Mr. Procktor Corbutt,' among numerous entries, 'pottle sacke pottle white wine pt Clarett to Mr. Viz. Chanslors'; 'pottle white wine brued with ale to Doct : Glenham chamber' and 'pottle Jerycombounce' (I interpret this as *Jerez combusto* = burnt sherry) 'pottle sacke, pottle white wine all bournt 0-7-10.' For breakages mention is made of '3 Crystall glases.' Doubtless many of the stoneware flagons were not returned and many suffered the fate attested by the masses of broken specimens that have come to light. Little wonder then that the more fragile glass bottles which from 1650 steadily ousted the foreign stoneware should have suffered a like fate and called for constant replacement, such as the long list of discoveries already goes far to prove. Indeed in the case of the Crown between 1680 and 1690 the list seems to point to an annual replacement against wear and tear.

### NOTE

By way of postscript I am able aptly to include a quite recent discovery made during excavations in the inner quadrangle of Pembroke College. Part of the shoulder of a bottle bears a well-preserved stamp : within a linear frame three tuns, a floret above, and the date 1707 below. May this be assigned to the Three Tuns tavern ? If so, the omission of the customary initials suggests urgent need for haste on one occasion in the replacement of broken stock. It is, however, possible that it belonged to some member of the Vintners' Company plying his trade as a wholesale merchant in Oxford, but was employed of course not for sale of wine by retail, only for private service.



FIG. 12

Sc.  $\frac{1}{2}$

PLATE IX



STAMPS ON 17th AND 18th CENTURY WINE BOTTLES FROM OXFORD

1, The Salutation Tavern (p. 46); 2-8, The Mermaid Tavern (p. 46 f.);  
9-22, The Crown Tavern (p. 47 f.)

Sc.  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

*Ph. Ashmolean Museum.*



23-28

29-34

a, 35-38

39-41

c, d, g

PLATE X

STAMPS ON 17th AND 18th CENTURY WINE BOTTLES FROM OXFORD AND WELLINGBOROUGH  
23-34, The Three Tuns Tavern (pp. 48 ff.); 35-41, The King's Head Tavern (p. 50 f.); a, King's Head stamp from  
Wellingborough (p. 50); c, d, g, various stamps from Oxford (p. 53)

Sc.  $\frac{1}{2}$

Ph. Ashmolean Museum.