

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 A Thousand years

Buckland was well established at the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086, and there is every reason to suppose that the Parish existed at least 86 years earlier in the year 1000. We are about to enter the year 2000, and this seems worthy of some effort to mark the occasion. This history of the village is the first that has been published as a stand-alone book to the knowledge of the author, though Buckland gets a passing mention in numerous books on the history of Surrey and in more local volumes on Reigate and Dorking.

However, Buckland is a small parish, containing only 240 households (1991 census) and few events. This may have prompted the comment about Buckland which the Rector of the Parish in 1725 returned to Bishop Willis: 'there is no chapel, no lecturer, no curate, no Papist, no Nonconformists, no school.' Recounting this story in 1911, Malden retorted that 'the history of the parish seems as uneventful as might be expected, before and since'.

I hope that this volume can help celebrate the existence of Buckland from the years 1000 to 2000, by outlining the history of Buckland, its people and its environment.

We can wonder if the village will live to celebrate another millennium in the year 3000. I hope that it can - there is magic about the village that should be conserved.

1.2 The Name of Buckland

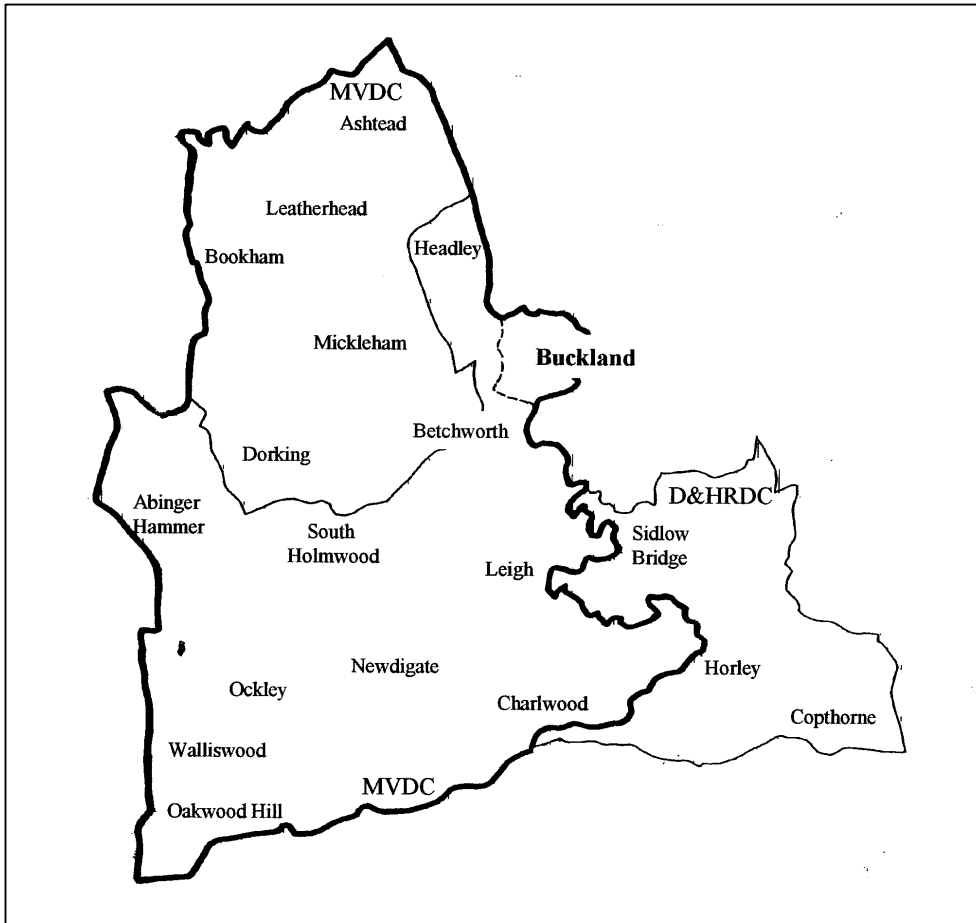
The name of the village has evolved from Bochelant in the Domesday Book, through Buckelond, Bocland (1216) and Bucklande (1593). The origin of the name refers to the type of land use - namely 'boc' land. This could have two alternative meanings:

- land held by 'book' or charter (as opposed to land held by service, known as Folk land).
- reference to Beech trees (boc).

Buckland is a relatively common name, with eight other parishes of the same name and spelling in the UK, and seven others that have boc/buck plus some other word.

1.3 Location

Buckland is situated approximately two miles west of the centre of Reigate and four miles east from the centre of Dorking. Reigate, being the nearest town, carries the closest association with the village. Indeed, until the early-twentieth century, Buckland was in the Reigate 'Hundred' (administrative district) and described as a 'village outside Reigate'. Buckland continued its Council association with Reigate, as part of Reigate Rural District Council until 1932.



The boundaries of Dorking & Horley Rural District Council – D&HRDC - (1932-1974) shown in the lighter line, and Mole Valley District Council – MVDC – illustrated by the bold line (1974-present).

Local government organisation changes in 1932 placed Buckland within Dorking & Horley Rural District Council (D&H RDC). In the 1960s, Reigate Council made a claim to return Buckland to Reigate, but this was unsuccessful. In 1974 The Mole Valley District Council was formed, expanding D&H RDC to the north-west to include Dorking and Leatherhead, but dropping the south-east part of the old area around Horley. The local press also associates Buckland with Dorking. Buckland news is covered in the *'Dorking Advertiser'* rather than the Reigate-based *'Surrey Mirror'*, though both newspapers are printed by the same group.

Buckland is also closely associated with the similar-sized village of Betchworth on the south-western boundary. The parishes share a Rector, and the 'Betchworth & Buckland Society' meets a few times a year for talks on items of local interest and to represent residents' views on environmental and planning matters. Betchworth has a single shop, a Norman church, the Dolphin public house (the most southerly outlet of Young's Brewery of Wandsworth, London), and an active first school - The Acorns. Betchworth House, the seat of Sir James Hamilton, is listed Grade I and has been the subject of an excellent restoration. The River Mole and a number of attractive large houses make Betchworth a very pleasant neighbour of Buckland.

Buckland's postal district is Betchworth RH3 (Redhill 3), probably due to the historical association with Betchworth Station when post was delivered by rail at Betchworth Station.

To the north of Buckland parish is Walton-on-the-Hill, though the physical barrier of the North Downs escarpment separates Buckland such that the association with Walton is considerably less than with Betchworth, Reigate and Dorking.

Buckland comprises an area of 1,362 acres. It measures about 1.5 miles from east to west, and barely 2 miles from north to south.

From Domesday times until Council boundary reorganisation in 1932, Buckland had a detached 'outlier' parish called Hartswood, an additional area of 514 acres. This extended from Flanchford Bridge and Flanchford Mill in the west, to Sidlow Bridge in the east. The history of Hartswood is outlined in Chapter 3.

Hoskins (1984) notes that the boundaries of the Manor do not always coincide with the parish boundaries and in many cases the inter-relationships are very complex. Buckland has the benefit of the greatest part of the parish coinciding 'more or less' with the Manor boundary for several hundred years. However, there are exceptions when the edges of the parish have been owned by adjoining estates, and where known about, these have been referenced.

An unusual feature of Buckland is that there are only two public roads in the parish that link with outside the parish: the A25 running east west, and the 'Old Road' going into Betchworth. All the other roads in the parish are 'cul-de-sacs' and stop within the parish boundary. In 1958, the Buckland Parish Council ordered four 'No Through Road' signs (for Dungates Lane, Rectory Lane, Lawrence Lane and Tranquil Dale - BPC Minute Book). As explained later, many of the roads that now terminate in the parish, used to extend and connect to neighbouring parishes. The Guildford to Redhill railway, built in 1847, also crosses the parish east- west.

Buckland has grown only slowly and steadily over the years, which has helped to preserve its character. The population of Buckland has grown from 35 heads of household in 1086 (Domesday), to 269 in 1801, 497 in 1891 (Census Records) and to a total population 580 in the latest 1991 census.

We should not ignore the fact that Buckland is only 25 miles from Central London, and many villagers commute into London daily, either by driving to the railway stations at Reigate, Redhill or Dorking; or to the most southerly London Underground station at Morden. The definition of Buckland as a 'dormitory commuter village' cannot be denied, though there is also plenty of employment in the neighbouring towns of Reigate and Dorking. The combination of rural peace, medieval history and being so close to the job opportunities of the capital all serve to enhance the attraction of the village.

1.4 Village Life in the Year 1000

It is unlikely that any documents mentioning Buckland - other than the Domesday Book - survive from the 11th century. However, a picture can be built up from other sources of what ordinary life was like in England in the year 1000. This theme is explored in the book by Lacey & Danzinger (1999) from which the extracts below have been interpreted.

The view of Buckland from the top of the Downs would probably have been of a similar landscape to that we see today. It is frequently supposed that medieval England was clad in thick forests, but Neolithic Britons had started cutting down trees and growing crops as early as 5000 BC, and the Romans were major land managers laying down farms and roads across the countryside.

Village houses were made of a framework of sturdy wooden beams fastened with wooden pegs. The framework was then covered with either planks or cob (a mix of clay, straw and cow dung). Straw or reeds would be used for the roof. It was common for the barn-like houses to be shared with animals.

Village communities were contained within clear territories owned by the Lord of the Manor. Very few people would have travelled and the average villager would know everyone - and could probably recognise every duck, pig and chicken and know to whom they belonged. The same Christian names were often passed down traditionally inside families but there were no surnames. There was not yet any need for them.

Slavery was still common and the 'bondmen' of the time were those who had surrendered themselves into bondage at times of famine and distress, when they could simply no longer provide for their families. In later centuries came the poor house and bankruptcy law, but in 1000 there was no option but to kneel before the Lord of the Manor and place offer themselves as bondmen for the rest of their lives.

Sheep rearing was common place and England had almost certainly developed an international trade in wool. It was also known that British monks, who made record of their life in the 11th century, were growing chestnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, celery, radish, carrots, garlic, shallots, parsnip, cabbage, parsley, dill, chervil, marigold, coriander, poppy and lettuce. (Crops such as potatoes, tomatoes, spinach, broccoli, runner beans and Brussel sprouts were all introduced to England at in later centuries]. Tea, coffee, sugar and cocoa still awaited discovery by English palettes.

Common freshwater fish were also a part of the diet, including eel, pike, trout, minnows, burbot and lamphreys. Both burbot and lamphreys were eel-like and when cooked they were a rich and oily delicacy.

The wheeled plough with an iron blade was available to farmers in 1000, typically worked with a team of four or six oxen. Wheat and Barley grain was ground into flour in one of the recently constructed water-mills. At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086, over 5,624 water mills were recorded, including one in Buckland. Mills were a communal facility that provided each village operated collectively. The mills were a catalyst in forcing ordinary people to use money to buy flour and trade their other produce. Bread was baked from the milled flour, but it would have been

baked in round, coarse flat cakes rather like pitta bread, rather than today's loaves containing yeast.

Money was made in a network of over 70 licensed regional mints, giving England one of the most advanced coinage systems in the year 1000. Alloy pennies contained 92.5% silver, and were hand cut and stamped with a die containing codes for who made the coins, but not the date.

Boys of twelve years old went through a ceremony to swear allegiance to the King, marking their manhood. Teenage girls were married often to much older men. Most adults died in their 40's or 50's. No-one 'went out to work' as we understand it - most worked in hard manual labour, largely on the land.

There was little understanding of the need for hygiene and the need for cleanliness. Open latrines were made, often by the entrances to houses for convenience. Smells and the accompanying flies would have made day-to-day life quite unbearable by today's standards.

Having set the scene, the following chapter focuses on the early history of Buckland, beginning with the Domesday Survey of 1086.

