

# FROM THE ARCHIVES

## of Romsey Town Council

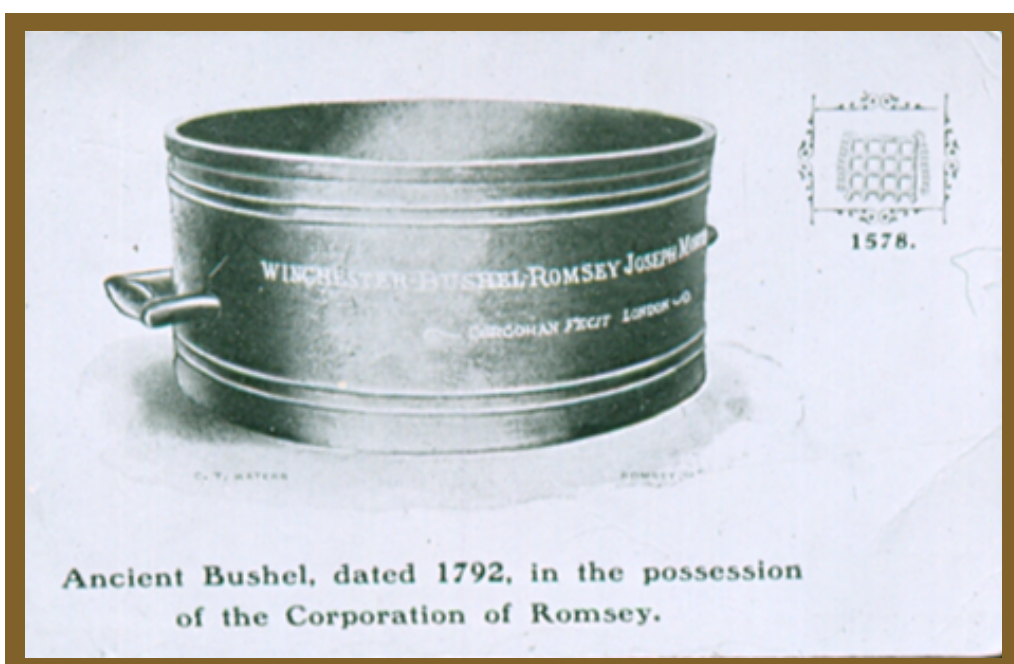


## Winchester Bushel: The Romsey Dry Measure

Weights & Measures Acts for the country date back to Saxon times but there are many gaps in known details and it is doubtful if any had national impact. It was Henry VII, first of the Tudor dynasty, who, for 1495 onwards, introduced a series of legal acts that set national standards for weights and measures.

The word 'bushel' started as the term for the container itself. It came from the Old French for a little box. Refinement of the regulations for weights and measures continued through the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries with units of dry measure. But there seems to have been little control over the size of these bushel containers and they may have varied from region to region. Nor was there any clear definition of the means and style of construction. So, early ones were probably made of wooden bases with basket weave surrounds, needing constant replacement.

It was not until 1670 that there was specific mention of the dry measure of the bushel 'as kept at Winchester'. Thereafter, the Winchester bushel was to be the nationally recognised standard. It was defined as a low cylinder with internal measurements set at 8.5 inches height and 18.5 inches diameter.

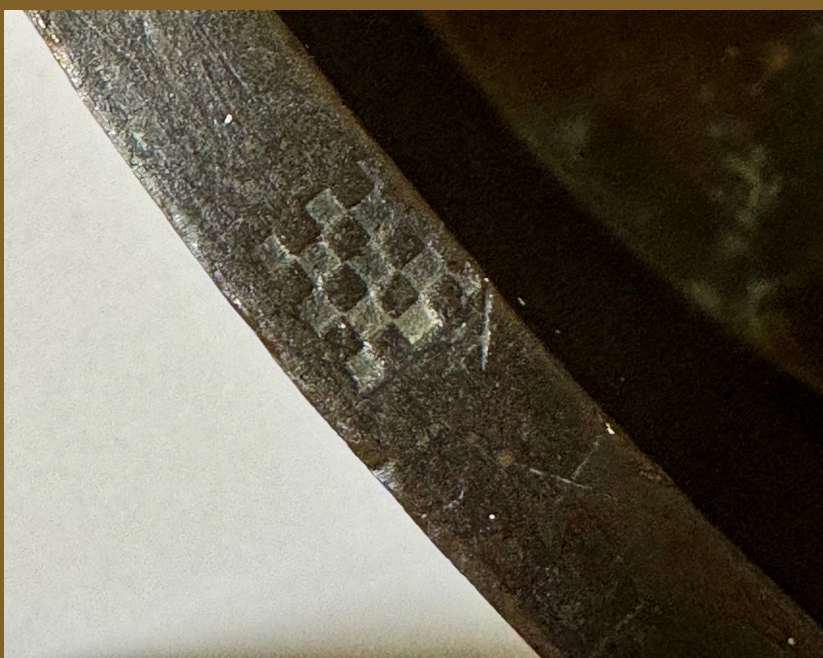


The royal charter of 1607 which incorporated Romsey Infra as a borough also included some minor but significant clauses and responsibilities. Among these was one that made the mayor of Romsey Infra clerk of the market and responsible for weights and measures.

This explains why it was the then mayor of Romsey, Joseph Mortimer, who was co-sponsor of the metal bushel that survives today. His fellow sponsor was the second Lord Palmerston (father of the Victorian prime minister).

It was only in 1834 that yet another act defined the bushel in terms of its contents. A bushel content was set at eight imperial gallons.

# Winchester bushal filled with grain



The chequered mark and the royal stamp of King George III guarantee the accuracy and authenticity of the measure.