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## SHORTER NOTES:

# BELL-GUTTAE AND THE WOODWARDS OF CHIPPING CAMPDEN

Howard Colvin

The favourite motifs by which the work of some English 18th-century architects can often be recognised are well known to architectural historians. Among Baroque architects, the great cleft pediments favoured by Archer, or the blocked architraves beloved by Gibbs, are obvious examples. With the advent of Palladian rules and later of neo-Classical simplicity, the scope for such individual mannerisms was somewhat reduced, but a bow window by Sir Robert Taylor is quite different from one by James or Samuel Wyatt, and the architectural works of Sir John Soane are as full of characteristic idiosyncrasies as anything of earlier date.

One such motif that has hitherto escaped notice is Doric *guttae* in the form of bells. *Gutta* means "a drop", for example of water, and *guttae* are, of course, the drop-like members that hang beneath the triglyphs in a Doric frieze. Probably representing wooden wedges, they are in Antiquity invariably cylindrical or conical in form, but *guttae* of square section and pyramidal profile are found in European architecture from the late 16th century onwards, and were often used by English Baroque architects. To see the *gutta* in its conical form as a bell was no great flight of fancy, and in his *Regole delle Cinque Ordini* of 1563 the Italian architect Vignola calls the *guttae* in the Doric Order of the Theatre of Marcellus at Rome "Gocce overe campanelle", that is "drops or little bells". In Leeke's English translation of Vignola of 1669 this is rendered as "Guttae, dropps, or smal bels", in Moxon's version of 1673 as "The Props (*sic*) or litle Bells". So far as I am aware no Italian architect ever took Vignola's description literally by giving a *gutta* the shape of a bell, and it was not the sort of deviation from Classical correctitude that would have appealed to a French one. However, there are three country houses in Warwickshire where *guttae* take the form of bells, complete with tiny clappers (Fig. 6).

The houses in question are Foxcote House (Fig. 3), Honington Hall, and Radbrooke Manor (Fig. 3), all in the south of the county. Foxcote is in the parish of Ilmington about four miles west of Shipston-on-Stour, Honington a mile and a half north of Shipston, and Radbrooke near Preston-on-Stour, roughly half-way between Shipston and Stratford. There is no documentation of the appropriate period for any of these three houses, but Foxcote was probably built by Francis Canning, who died in January 1733/4, aged 67, and Radbrooke has in its pediment the arms of Thomas Lingen (d.1742), impaling those of his wife Anne Burton, whom he married before 1725, when their son Robert was born. At Honington it was in the quadrant screen walls flanking the forecourt (of which only the northern survives, Fig. 5) that the bell-*guttae* were used, and these walls were probably added to the 17th-century house by Joseph Townsend soon after he acquired the estate from the Parker family in 1737, for they do not appear in an engraved view of 1731.<sup>1</sup>

All three buildings are obviously likely to have been designed by the same person. According to *Burke's and Savills Guide to Country Houses* (volume 2, 1980), Foxcote has been



Above: Fig. 1. Above. The east end of St. John's Church, Gloucester, designed and built by Edward and Thomas Woodward, 1732-4.



Right: Fig. 2. Right. The east end of St. Swithin's Church, Worcester, designed and built by Edward and Thomas Woodward, 1735-36.



Fig. 3. Foxcote Hall, Warwickshire, the garden front.

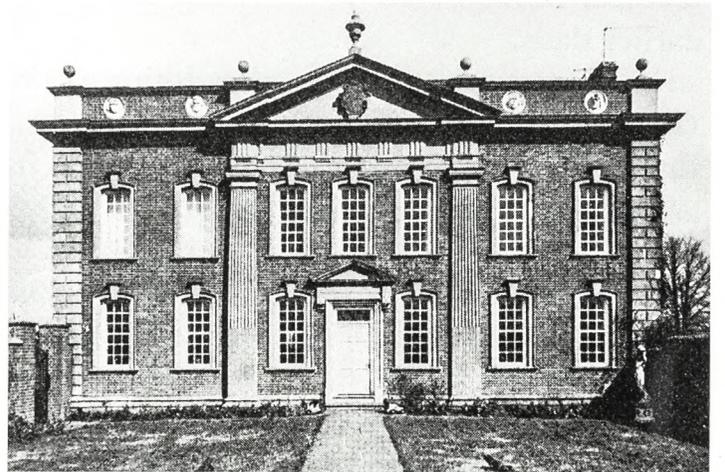


Fig. 4. Radbrooke Manor, Warwickshire, the principal front. The solid parapet with roundels is a modern replacement of the original balustraded parapet.

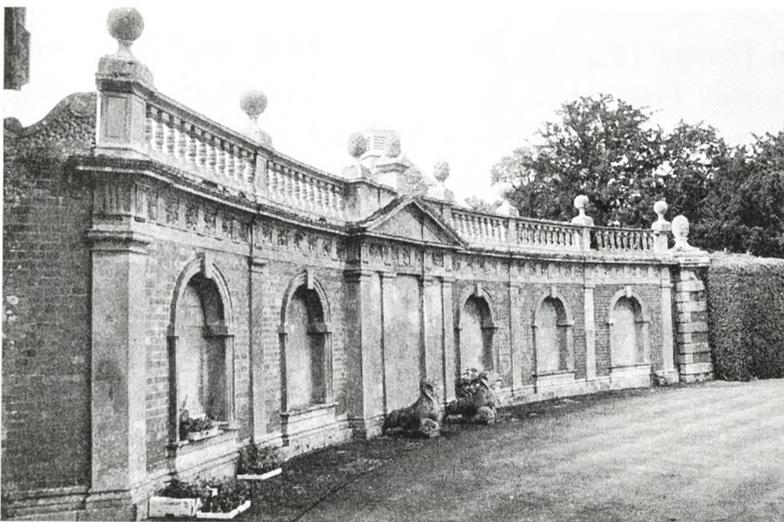


Fig. 5. Honington Hall, Warwickshire, the surviving quadrant wall on the north side of the forecourt.



Fig. 6. Honington Hall, detail of the quadrant wall, showing the *guttae* in the form of bells and the rusticated metopes.

attributed to Edward Woodward of Chipping Campden by Mr John Harris. As Foxcote is little more than three miles from Campden and is faced with the fine local freestone the attribution has much to commend it. The Woodward brothers, Edward (d.1766) and Thomas (d.1761), are better known as church architects than as builders of country houses. They designed and built churches as far away as Gloucester (1732–34), Worcester (1735–36), Swansea (1739) and Bewdley (1745).<sup>2</sup> Apart from Foxcote, no country house has hitherto been attributed to them, although Rushden, in his *History of Campden*, says that they are “believed” to have built Bedfont House in the main street of that town, and in the 1750s they built Alscot Park to Gothic designs provided by Messrs. Shakespeare and Phillips. It is, however, the churches that support the attribution of Foxcote to the Woodwards. For the Doric frontispieces which adorn the east ends of St John’s at Gloucester and St Swithin’s at Worcester are essentially the same as those which emphasise the centres of Foxcote and Radbrooke (Figs. 1–4). They are of the same bold Doric order supporting a pediment with a single break back. The fenestration is naturally different, but the basic architectural formula is identical. The only other difference is that at Foxcote (where stone was readily available, no doubt from the Woodward’s quarry), the order is one of half-columns instead of pilasters, and that in the two churches the *guttae* take their normal form. It is, therefore, possible to confirm Mr Harris’s attribution of Foxcote to the Woodwards and to add to it that of Radbrooke and presumably also of the screen walls at Honington.

One question remains. Was the use of the bell-like *guttae* a sophisticated conceit or a literal following of Vignola’s words by provincial mason-architects who did not realise that they were not intended to be taken *au pied de la lettre*? At first sight the latter seems the more likely. But Honington the *guttae* form part of an entablature in which the metopes (the spaces between the triglyphs) are rusticated (Fig. 60). This is by no means a standard treatment of what is normally either a neutral space or the setting for a *paterna* or other ornament. To rusticate it is a Mannerist device of the kind associated with Giulio Romano and other designers of garden architecture such as Francini<sup>3</sup> and was quite appropriate to a screen wall which opens out towards the rural beauties of a park. Whoever designed it is likely to have appreciated the little architectural joke that it has been the purpose of this paper to elucidate.

## NOTES

1. *Country Life*, November 13, 1920, 633, fig 6, and see John Cornforth in *Country Life*, September 28, 1978, 892.
2. Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840*, London, 1978, 912–16.
3. Among the designs for gateways in Serlio’s *Architettura* (originally published between 1537 and 1551) there is one with rusticated metopes.