

**[Newspaper clipping (Sunday Times, 10 August 1939) of a brief history of the Siamese Twins Chang and Eng and Elizabeth and Mary Chulkhurst, the 'Biddenden maids'. Written by Ernest A. Ebbelwhite].**

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### Siamese Twins

Sir,—The two children Eng and Chang were born of Chinese parents in Siam in 1811.

An Englishman, Robert Hunter, a merchant of Bangkok, saw the boys boating, stripped to the waist, in 1824. He persuaded their parents and King Chow-pahji to allow them to go away for exhibition to the various countries of Europe.

After realising a competence by this, they settled on a farm in North Carolina, taking the name of Bunker, and when forty-four years of age they married two sisters, twenty-eight and twenty-six years old. Chang had six children and Eng five. Ruined by the Civil War in America, they again made the tour of Europe, exhibiting themselves in London in 1869.

MURIEL HAMILTON-SCOTT.  
Upper Addison Gardens, W.14.

Sir,—The freaks Eng and Chang, the Chinese conjoined brothers, who were discovered in Siam and frequently exhibited under the title of the "Siamese Twins," died on January 17, 1874, aged about sixty.

They were followed by the "Orissa Twins" of Barnum, the "Two-headed Nightingale," and the Bohemian "Josepha and Roza," who died at Chicago in 1922, all similar freaks. All these were loosely referred to as "Siamese Twins," and the expression crept into our language as a figurative description of inseparable friends.

In case the initials "B. F. N." of your Nottingham correspondent are used as a pen-name to indicate that he is of *British Freaks Nescient*, I should like to show that England started her "Twins" before Siam.

According to tradition, there was born at Biddenden, Kent, about 1100, a *lusus naturae* consisting of two girls attached at the hips and shoulders, which lived as Elizabeth and Mary Chulkhurst for thirty-four years, one-half surviving for six hours. The effigies, names, and ages of the twins have appeared, as benefactors of the parish, on the commemorative Easter rolls of bread (known as "Biddenden Cakes") since at least 1710.

The eighteenth-century newspapers often gave reports of the birth of such "monsters," but I have not seen a record of conjoined twins who survived, or were allowed to survive, infancy until 1821, when the surgeon to the British Factory at Canton reported that "A-ke," a boy attached to a partly formed brother, was then alive, aged sixteen (London Medical Repository, 1821, p. 138). This was some eight years before the discovery of the "Siamese Twins."

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