• EDITORIAL

This is volume 1, number 1, of the newsletter of The Sussex Place-Names Net, a group of people having an active scholarly interest in the place-names of Sussex, major and minor. "Having an interest" means collecting names, making databases, constructing and publishing explanations of names, identifying the sites named by names no longer current, and putting specialist knowledge from other disciplines at the disposal of place-name scholars. The "owners" and copyright-holders of Locus focus are the Net; the editor is Richard Coates. The editor has provided most of the copy for this first-flowering, but does not intend to monopolize each issue. We are not a mindlessly exclusive body, and would be happy to welcome new members to the Net, with the sole condition that anybody wishing to join should be active in research, on however small a scale, anxious to make their findings widely known, and keen to join in semi-public discussion. Contributions to Locus focus, queries, notes, short articles (500 words maximum), notices of events, are welcomed from members of the Net and non-members alike. Notes and short articles will be subject to editorial control in a friendly and constructive spirit.

Our aim - a rather general one - is to make further information available to a future Editor in Sussex of the English Place-Name Survey. The Survey covered Sussex nearly 70 years ago, but published very little in its two-volume work The place-names of Sussex (1929/30) about the minor names of the county. Such a distance also makes it possible for new views to arise about the origin and meaning of the names that were actually surveyed. We hope to contribute to all aspects of the enterprise, in both collection and correction.

We expect to publish two newsletters a year, in Spring and Autumn. For the time being, this will happen thanks to the good offices of the School of Cognitive and Computing Sciences at the University of Sussex.

The normal size of the newsletter is expected to be smaller than this. The launch issue is unusually fat, because it includes a list of all publications relevant to Sussex place-names that have come to the editor's attention since he published his Classified bibliography on Sussex place-names, 1586-1987 (Yousmere Press, 1987). No attempt has been made to classify them; but then the classification scheme adopted in the original book was pretty inept. O for hindsight before the event!

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Residents of Lewes could not dissuade their council from calling a new relief road Mayhew Way (I think I’ve got that last letter the right way up) after certain (ex-)councillors, despite making such suggestions as Not Wanted Road and Eyesore Avenue (Sussex Express (Lewes edition), 22/7/1994). Does anyone know of more names of this interesting sort that have got past planning committees - or more realistically, that have continued in use in defiance of the official ones?

Jan Kurrels notes in the Sussex Express (Lewes edition), 4 October 1996, that Lulham Close in Telscombe was named after the last Englishman hanged for sheep-stealing. Even wickeder than the posthumous pardon for so awful a crime is the fact that this violated the local authority’s stated policy not to name Telscombe streets after people. So that’s all right: a uniquely law-abiding name.
PERSONAL STATEMENTS AND WORK IN PROGRESS: A SELECTION

John Bleach

I am interested in many aspects of local naming, including the names of houses and streets, church and altar dedications, and occupations or trades. I have worked recently on names in Ringmer and Lewes, with an investigation in progress relevant to the name of Lewes itself.

Richard Coates

I am editor of the English Place-Name Survey in Hampshire, and a member of the Council of the English Place-Name Society. I have written numerous articles on place-names in general, including several on names in Sussex, as well as compiling the place-name bibliography mentioned elsewhere. In Sussex, I have been working on the field-names and other minor names of Rottingdean and West Thorney. A booklet on West Thorney names is within sight of publication. As a linguist, I am interested in the survival of Celtic place-names, and also in local dialect; I am just completing *A companion guide to Sussex dialect*. I shall soon (1997) embark on a project on words for inhabited sites used as place-name elements in Anglo-Saxon times.

Pam Combes

I am interested in assessing the value of the contribution that the interpretation of minor place-names and field-names (especially) can make to our understanding of the settlement pattern within parishes, and eventually, as the data builds up, within wider areas of the county. I would like to explore the possibility of creating a computer database and a standard methodology for recording the distribution of names.

Mark Gardiner

I have a twofold interest in place-names. Firstly, I am concerned with the relationship between the place-name and the subject of that name. That may seem a simple matter, but the subject of a name may change over time. The name of a hill, for example, may later be applied to a farm in its vicinity. I am currently examining the changing uses of the river- and place-name *Limen* applied to the River Rother from between the 12th and 16th centuries. The name has a longer and very interesting history. My second concern is closely connected with this. What do place-names indicate about perceptions of the landscape in the past? The geographical focus of my research remains the eastern area of Sussex and adjoining areas of Kent.

Michael Leppard

I am a recently retired schoolmaster, East Grinstead born and bred. I have studied the town’s history for three dozen years and published numerous articles about it, its local lore and its dialect, building up a four-drawer card-index of local place-names within the ancient parish boundaries. I am editor of the East Grinstead Society’s twice-yearly *Bulletin*, which contains much place-name material with detailed reference to sources of spellings, and references to place-names in which I have plans to publish in a future number. I am currently working on the identification of local entries in *Domesday Book* and the Lewes Chartulary and the correlation of holdings mentioned in both.
Diana Sanders

I am studying sites in Sussex with place-names in Saxon -tūn with a view to assessing (1) the extent to which these sites share a consistent set of characteristics, and (2) to analysing the spatial relationship of these sites to one another and to other place-name types. My findings suggest that the generic tūn was being applied to specific types of site through much of the Saxon period: that is, that the -tūn sites were distinguishable functionally and economically - and possibly visually - from other contemporary sites. Many are likely to have had antecedents in earlier (and presumably other-named) sites.

The idea for this research grew out of a more general interest in habitative place-names, in particular their potential use in tracing settlement patterns and distribution networks in the earlier Saxon period. I hope in due course to start testing some of my Sussex findings against a wider area, but I believe that Sussex, because of its geographical and historical integrity, must remain a key area for investigation.

Liz Somerville

I am an archaeologist by trade, if not by training, working on the environmental side. I would be very interested in working with anyone on aspects of place-names which may link to environmental change. I am happy to burrow into the environmental literature if I don’t know of any relevant data. My other interest relevant to the group is to try to put together data for past land-use on Malling Down and environs.

Heather Warne

My degree was in Classics. In the early 1960s, the syllabus was 95% Latin and Greek with a bit of ancient history thrown in. Through my mother’s influence (as a keen walker) I had also studied Ordnance Survey maps as a recreation from a tender age. Though I abandoned Classics to become an archivist, I retained an interest in the structure of language, while my career enabled me to develop skills in topography. I find place-names exciting, a mystery to be unravelled or a logic to be worked through. From the perspective of detailed fieldwork, I enjoy challenging accepted generalizations about local names.

I have worked in Sussex, in archives or in archive research, since 1965, barring the years when I was a full-time mother. I currently work as a self-employed archivist with ongoing contracts at Arundel Castle and at Surrey Record Office.

Jan Kurrels appears to suggest in the Sussex Express (Lewes edition), 4 October 1996, that Sunset Close in Telscombe was so named because of a resident’s complaint that new building would block out his view of the sun setting over the Tye.
• RECENT LITERATURE

For this issue alone, this section is taken up with a pre-prepared catalogue supplementary to Richard Coates’s *A classified bibliography on Sussex place-names, 1586-1987* (Younsmere Press, 1987; out of print but available in all good libraries). It contains quite a few ancient items missed the first time round. Normally, it will contain only recent publications about Sussex, and also briefly annotated mentions of works likely to prove illuminating about place-name study in our region more generally. If you spot anything suitable as you read around, let the editor know.

The *Classified bibliography* included material on dialect. The present list does not, as dialect is the topic of separate bibliographical work in hand at the moment. The system of abbreviations used (for names of journals, etc.) is that of the earlier work. Items alluded to in author-date format which are not in this catalogue are in the earlier work. Items marked with a double asterisk (**) are mentioned in the earlier work, and they appear here if including corrections or further publication details. The list is uncensored, and includes material a very wide variety of quality and importance. It does not include items in the present issue of *Locus focus*. But the (possibly superfluous) device of putting the author’s given name, where known, instead of an initial, is used to draw special attention to a recent piece of work (1993 onwards).


anonymous (1871) [Query on the date of origin of the short form of *Brighthelmston.*] *N&Q* 7, 3, p. 347. [Correspondence continued: J.K.L. (7, 3, p. 347); Q.V. (7, 3, p. 303; H.G. Griffinhoofe (7, 3, p. 303, who cites the *Mirror* 19 (1832), p. 89 as dating the short form to 1660); anonymous (8, 10, p. 216); E. Walford (8, 10, p. 325); W.C.B. (8, 10, p. 325); H. Malet (8, 10, p. 402); E. Marshall (8, 10, p. 504); C.P. Hale (8, 11, p. 255) - i.e. in two bursts in 1871 and 1897.]

anonymous (1987b) Owzat! Legends live on ... *BEA* 15/7/1987, p. 4. [Cricketers commemorated in street-names in Burgess Hill.]

anonymous (1987c) Beach bid is left high and dry. *BEA* 10/12/1987, p. 13. [Bid by Ramada Renaissance hotel, Brighton, to get beach named after itself. The hotel was itself renamed the *Hospitality Inn* in 1989, and is now the *Brighton Thistle*. Cf. anonymous (1979).]


anonymous (1988c) Brickyard Close revolts! *BEA* 8/7/1988, p. 3. [Row over proposed change from The Ridings (Horsham). See also 21/7/1988, p. 10.]


anonymous (1989a) Hobby horse attracts a wager. *BEA* 26/1/1989, p. 11. [About the official name of the many-named road at Ditchling Common. Resolved in favour of St Helena Lane, see "PC gets answer to lane mystery", *BEA* 27/1/1989, p. 9; but see also "Signs that spell out a right rural rumpus", *BEA* 23/7/1990, p. 5 - the solution apparently did not please everyone.]

anonymous (1989b) Crest is a nice name, but ... *BEA* 30/5/1989, p. 7. [... Crest Way, Portslade, enshrines the name of a major competitor of the developers, Persimmon.]


Anscombe, A. (1923) Early kings of Sussex. Port and his sons. *Herald Magazine* (supplement to *SCH*), 20/10/1923. [Most of Anscombe’s philological work may be safely ignored.]


Ashton, K. (1988) *Sussex and America*. Shoreham: the author. [Chapter 2 (pp. 5-16) details some Sussex place-names transferred to the U.S.A. and Canada; sometimes misleading, sometimes inaccurate.]


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Booker, J.M.L. (ed.) (1975) *The Wiston archives; a catalogue*. Chichester: West Sussex County Council. [Calendar of documents relating to many places in West Sussex; field-names and other minor names mentioned.]


Budgen, W. (1912) [Address to the Annual Meeting of the SAS identifying this *Mearcredeshbarna*.] Reported in *SAC* 56, p. xvi. [Cf. also *SAC* 63, p. 243.]


Carder, T. (1990) *The encyclopedia of Brighton*. Lewes: East Sussex Library Service. [Section 16 on the name of Brighton; section 151 on Roads: (e) street-name derivations, (f) street-name changes; some individual entries on localities and streets.]


** Coates, R. (1987b) Harlot’s Wood. *SJC* 125, p. 251. [In Northiam.]

Coates, R. (1988a) *Toponymic topics*. Brighton: Younsmere Press. [Collection of essays including:

** Ecclesden Manor, West Sussex (pp. 49-51)
On personal names in the genitive singular with "ford" (pp. 71-3)
Virgins and haws: the progeny of Germanic "*hag-*" in Old English (pp. 74-80)
** The term "forrēpe" in various south-eastern documents (pp. 81-8)
** Mischief with two names in the Old English Chronicle (pp. 99-101) and others not directly relevant to Sussex.]


Coates, R. (1990b) *Some place-names of the downland fringe. Seven Sussex essays of 1990*. Brighton: Younsmere Press. [Collection of essays, mentioned individually elsewhere except: Some notes on Danny; The name of The Marlipins, New Shoreham, West Sussex. See also Coates (1990c, 1991a,b,c,d).]


Cox, Barrie (1994) *English inn and tavern names.* Nottingham: Centre for English Name Studies (vol. 1).


Dick, A.M. (1987) Evidence for early Saxon settlement in the valleys of the rivers Ouse and Tyne. Dissertation for the degree of BA, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. [The Ouse is the Sussex Ouse.]


the spellings of names; discusses some difficult Sussex material.]


Duckett, Sir G. (1894) Hastings and Senlac. SAC 39, pp. 28-30. [Argues Senlac not a place-name but a descriptive term ‘bloodbath’; wrong.]


Farrant, J.H. and S. Farrant (eds.) (1975) Preston in the 17th. and 18th. centuries. UOS CCE OP 3. [Esp. ch. 2.]


Green, Kenneth (1996) The street names of Chichester: when and why they were named. Chichester: Verdant Publications.


Henshall, S. and J. Wilkinson (1799) Domesday: or, an actual survey of South-Britain. London: Bye and Law, for the authors. [Only one part, covering Kent, Sussex and Surrey, of the projected ten was ever published.]


** Holgate, M.S. (1930-1) Notes on some Sussex place-names [second part of article]. *SNQ* 3, pp. 90-1. [Cf. Straker (1930-1).]


Kitson, P.H. (1990) On Old English nouns of more than one gender. *English Studies* 71, pp. 185-221. [Data taken from charter boundaries and hence consists of topographical words.]


Leppard, M.J. (1972a) Names - again! BEGS 8 (January), p. 8. [On the candidate names for this district. For readers’ responses, see BEGS 9 (May), p. 4, and 10 (September), p. 4.]


Leppard, Michael J. (1993a) Final stress: a closer look. BEGS 52 (Spring), pp. 4-8.


Mansfield, J. (1987) Old map explains mystery [of Court Ord Road, Rottingdean; = first story in "Diary"]. BHL 31/10/87, p. 13. [It doesn’t really explain it.]

** Mawer, A.H. (1926-7) Sussex place-names. SNQ 1, pp. 259-60.

Mawer, A.H. (1936) The Droke. SNQ 6, pp. 62-3. [Note the runic character wynn is misspelled as b in this note.]


Mee, J.H. (ed. by L. F. Salzman) (1913) Bourne in the past: being a history of the parish of Westbourne. Hove: Combridge’s. [Chapter 7 is a large catalogue of local minor names.]


Salzmann, L.F. (1901) *The history of the parish of Hailsham*. Lewes: Farncombe. [Chapter 1 contains material on surveys and bounds.]


** Saunders-Jacobs, S. (no date (?1975)) *West Chiltington in Sussex* [second edition]. Privately printed. [Includes a concordance of present property names with earlier ones and surnames represented in the area; esp. pp. 33-6; this is absent from the first edition of 1965.]

Sawyer, F.E. (1880a ?)) *Index of names of places in Domesday survey of Sussex*. Privately
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printed. [Undated.]


Sawyer, F.E. [authorship attributed by J.G. Bishop] (date uncertain, after 1889) History of Brighton streets, I-XV. [Cuttings from a newspaper (almost certainly *BH*), bound as pp. 16-74 of a scrapbook by J.G. Bishop titled *Historical memoranda relating to Brighton and Sussex*, housed at the library of the SAS. The occasional apparent self-reference may be an interpolation by Bishop, who was editor of *BH* at the time.]


Spittal, J. and J. Field (1990) *A reader’s guide to the place-names of the United Kingdom*. Stamford: Paul Watkins. [The essential bibliographical source on this topic, covering all the major works published since 1920.]


** Stevens, L. et al. (1975) *The Eastbourne tithe schedule*. Eastbourne: Eastbourne Local History Society. [With notes on names by V. Hodsoll. Also 1982 version by V. Hodsoll and M. Lewis.]

** Straker, E. (1930-1) Notes on some Sussex place-names [first part of article]. *SNQ* 3, pp. 89-90. [Cf. H[olgate] (1930-1).]


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Note also a recent (1996) MS. by Hume Wallace, Sealevel and shoreline between Portsmouth and Pagham for the past 2500 years. This is potentially of very great interest to students of names in and near the Manhood, and of Saxon settlement history, but it is not yet in its final form.

• NEWS ITEMS

The foundation meeting of the Ashdown Forest Project took place on 23 September 1995. We look forward to close and fruitful relations with the Project, a topographical survey directed for the Sussex Archaeological Society by Dr Richard Jones. We draw attention to its twice-yearly Newsletter, and especially to the contributions to no. 2 (February 1996) by Pam Combes and Richard Coates.

The SAS Autumn Conference on the rapes of Sussex took place on 12 October 1996. Papers with some interest for place-name scholars by Katherine Keats-Rohan and Kathleen Thompson will appear in due course in Sussex Archaeological Collections.

• FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Lewes Archaeological Group is sponsoring a lecture on Sussex place-names by Margaret Gelling, president of the English Place-Name Society, with a contribution by John Bleach, on 21 March 1997, from 7.00-10.00, at the Friends’ Meeting House, Lewes.

Richard Coates is to talk to the Shoreham Society about local place-names at its April 1997 meeting.
COLLECTING SPELLINGS OF NAMES

This is the crucial preliminary activity in place-name research. For those collecting by traditional methods - by eyestrain and slip of paper - a suggested standard format is illustrated in the Ashdown Forest Project Newsletter 2 (1995). In practice, no-one should be discouraged from collecting information in whatever shape or form they wish; but standardization makes the long-term task of information-collators easier.

Much thought needs to be given to standardizing a format for the collection of place-name spellings and related evidence, principally using laptop computers at the place of collection, in libraries and archives. We hope to report on this in Locus focus 1, 2 (Spring 1997).

Net members will be pleased to receive lists of names, e.g. Tithe Award transcripts, from any member of the public kind enough to donate them. Place-name study is enormously collaborative where it is most successful, as revealed in the acknowledgements sections of the English Place-Name Society’s survey volumes.

NOTES

This section is for minor observations and suggestions; this time it is much larger than is likely in the future - but who knows? Richard Coates recently passed on to the Director of the English Place-Name Survey, Victor Watts, a few counters to the etymologies proposed for some Sussex names in The place-names of Sussex (PNSx). (The numbers beginning each entry are page-references to that work.) Electronic editing allows him to reproduce them with ease here, for further comment or counterblasts.

27 MIDHURST This is better interpreted as ‘middle of the wood’ than as ‘middle wood’. Maybe it is for a prepositional-phrase-name *(on) middum hyrste*, which would account for the persistent medial vowel. Midd in Old English never appears to signify ‘central one of a row of like objects’, as is demanded by the explanation in PNSx.

33 CHITHURST (and cf. 271 CHIDDINGLY WOOD) The word kite is of unknown origin; could there have been, alongside OE cyta, a form *cita*? If so, CHITHURST would be a parallel for 162 KITHURST. This solution is made more appealing by the existence of CHIDDINGLY WOOD, referred to in 765 (c.1300) Sawyer 50 (however dubious this document may be) as Citangaleahge, and in the same document is Hafocungaleahge, whose root word is ‘hawk’. Neither name has any instances of medieval -tt- which would suggest derivation from some such personal name Cetta or a relative. The frequent medial vowel speaks against a compound like *Cę̄d-hyrst.*

It is interesting that Welsh words for various birds of prey contain both cud and cid, but that cuts both ways. Some words have persistent early -i- till grammarians stick their oar in and start saying “rectius” -u-. But Welsh -d- does not give OE -t- between vowels, as required by cyta. The writer doesn’t know enough yet about medieval Welsh spelling practices to work out what the vowels tell us about which direction of borrowing is more plausible.

46 BINDERTON The solution in PN Sx is ingenious but not compelling. How about *bén-drinc* for the first element, making the name ‘farm whose tenant would do the lord’s reaping at request (later by custom), i.e. bén-rīp, in return for which liquid rewards were provided”? Or is the name too early to allude to such aspects of feudal society?
74 RUNCTON First element perhaps *hruŋing, a singular--ing derivative of hruŋ ‘rung, staff, pole, beam’. ‘Farm with a building of such, or whose function was to provide such’?

130 WISBOROUGH GREEN The explanation from wisc is unsatisfactory, in view of the modern pronunciation and the bulk of the record. First element wīsa or Wīsa ‘wise; leader’ or person called this: ‘leader’s or Wīsa’s barrow’. There is a preponderance of medial vowels to support this view over a one appealing to a bare-stem compound.

151 GREATHAM The etymology in grē‘big’ is supported by the fact that the village is on a large promontory between the Arun and the Amberley Wild Brooks. It is not strictly in a river-bend in the sense of being near-enclosed by a definite watercourse. It is on sandstone, which to my mind is not grē‘gravel’.

152 PULBOROUGH and 159 SLINFOLD If they contain the (supposed) topographical words pōl, pull, *slind, appear to require them in the strong genitive plural in -a to account for the spellings.

168, 289 HANGLETON The proffered derivation from hangra depends on two parallels where the l can be seen as due to dissimilation from a further r in the name. Really there is no escaping derivation of the Sussex names from hangelle ‘pendant’ in some extended sense. Both places are on conspicuous long smooth slopes, 168 at the foot, the church at 289 half-way down. Maybe that is the sense.

194 WORTHING This may simply be a singular--ing derivative of worð, wyrð. Compare the proposed *stelling and *wering in English place-name elements for the structure.

197 SALVINGTON A much better etymon for the first element than Salāf would be Sæwulf, as suggested by Ekwall in DEPN.

207 TRULEIGH The range of forms suggests not trēow ‘tree’, but alternation for the first element between trōsa and trēowa, both meaning ‘good faith, covenant’. Whatever the ultimate origin, the name has developed accordingly and the (obsolete) modern pronunciation /truːlai/ is the one expected given such an origin.

221, 234 STEYNING Coates discusses this fully in his forthcoming paper for the Dodgson memorial volume, concluding that it is the plural of a singular-ing derivative of stān.

227 HORNBROOK The first element may be the genitive plural of a singular-ing derivative of horn that Coates missed in his Dodgson memorial volume article whilst discussing horning.

279 TWINEHAM The proximal etymon should be something like betwīon ēam. The "Kentish" phonology required in the first element needs flagging as noteworthy so far west, but betwyne for ‘between’ is found in c16 accounts from Chichester.

287 PYECOMBE Ekwall (DEPN) was surely right to postulate as the first element pēo, ?better pēxe, ‘midge’.

289 PORTSLADE Even if Margaret Gelling, in Place-names in the landscape, is right that names like this contain gelād, the phonology of the second syllable needs commentary; -lode is expected.

299 EAST CHILTINGTON, as discussed by Coates in JEPNS 16 (1983-4), 7-15; contains a pre-Celtic word for ‘steep slope’.
308 FALMER The colour-term involved is surely ‘fallow’, however that is to be glossed in today’s colour terminology.

310 TENANT LAIN etc. The note in PN Sx is wrong; laine in parishes round here means ‘open field’, and The Lanes in Brighton are just that: lanes.

312 STANMER is probably ‘pond marked by (large) stones’, and not a stony-bottomed pond.

318 LEWES Some recent work (watch this space!) - suggests that after all ‘mounds’ is correct, but the linguistic arguments against (JEPNS 23 (1990-1)) don’t go away.

349 MARESFIELD Still problematic - perhaps one might throw into the melting-pot (ge)mærsod ‘extended, increased’ as a possible first element?

353 MOUNT CABURN There is a good sequence of forms proving origin in cald, burg (SNQ 15, 43-4).

392 FRAMFIELD No-one appears to have thrown in fremede ‘strange, foreign, alienus’ as a first element, despite the spelling recorded in 1265. It was within the Archbishop’s huge peculiar, i.e. was outside the rape of the Count of Mortain, where it was situated geographically.

395 HADLOW DOWN Modern form influenced by hadlow ‘hare’ (Notes and Queries 237 (1992), 39)?

404 RIPE Why not Latin rīpa rather than a Germanic relative? The place is well-known for its evidence of centuriation.

412 WILMINGTON Probably includes the male personal name Wīghelm, plus -ingtūn.

431 MEADS Coates, Toponymic topics (54-5), suggests the name refers to an eddy below the cliffs.

• QUERIES

1. Devils Race

On behalf of a member of the public, Richard Coates would like to know of any further instances of the field-name Devils Race, and would welcome suggestions about its origin. He knows of examples on or near the Bishopstone/Alciston boundary, and in Eastbourne, Rodmell and Rottingdean. Any beyond Downland?

2. Spirit, etc.

On his own behalf, and in relation to work by Michael Leppard, Richard Coates would like to hear of any instances of spirit/spart/spart/spirk/spark and the like in Sussex minor names.

3. Gilpin Close, Fishbourne

Ken Green would like confirmation of the origin of this name.
Mark Gardiner has been researching problematic names in Domesday Book and has sent the following observations about Basingeham. Other interesting recent Domesday-related work may be found in the Bulletin of the East Grinstead Society 58 and 59 (1996). A few new identifications were made in the recent Alecto edition of DB (1990).

Basingeham

The identification of Domesday Basingeham was made by Sir Sylvanus Vivian in his discussion of the manor of Etchingham-cum-Salehurst. Since his identification has been missed by recent editors of Domesday Book, it seems useful to draw attention to it here. He showed that as late as the 19th century the name was applied to a tenement lying near to Higham in Salehurst (not to be confused with the place in Northiam). The following place-name forms may be cited from the references given by Vivian and with further additions:

Basingeham 1086 DB
Besingham 1200 FF
Besingham (p.) c.1205 Pens
Besigkehamm early 13th-c. charter (College of Arms, Misc. Deeds 112)
Besyngeham (p.) 1296 SR
Bezingham 1597 Survey
Bassinghams 1816 Ct

(The abbreviations follow those in A.H. Mawer and F.M. Stenton, The place-names of Sussex.)

The only remaining problem is to attempt to trace the descent of the manor of Basingeham. In 1086, the manor was held by a tenant called Osbern who held other lands in the Rape of Hastings, including part of Wellhead on the opposite side of the Rother valley, one hide and three virgates at Bodiam, and land at Penhurst. It was presumably this Osbern who granted to Battle Abbey 30 arpents of meadow at Bodiam. In 1200 William de Bodiam exchanged land at Basingeham with his daughter-in-law, Margaret, and at about the same time granted land nearby to Robertsbridge Abbey. There is little difficulty in connecting these events, for it seems very probable that Osbern was the progenitor of the de Bodiam family. It is, however, notable that among the lands held by Osbern in 1086, was not only Bodiam, but also Penhurst, and both were held later in the Middle Ages by the Wardedieu family. The most likely suggestion is therefore that the manor Basingeham was absorbed into Bodiam manor; it did not form part of the manor of Salehurst as Vivian implies.

Reference

Richard Coates recently received a query about the origin of the word *rape* from a member of the public, via the Sussex Record Society. What follows is based on his reply; the editor judged it to be of some relevance to place-name studies. Interested parties should be aware of the Sussex Archaeological Society Autumn Conference on the rapes of Sussex which took place on 12 October 1996. (See also under News items above.)

**On the administrative term rape**

The word *rape* has proved a well-known philological puzzle, and each early attempt to explain it ran into difficulties. An eighteenth-century scholar, Edward Lye, connected it with Old Norse *hreppr* ‘tract of land’ (which gives Icelandic *hreppur* ‘poor-law parish’), but this cannot, for philological reasons, be directly related to *rape*. In any case, and despite occasional claims to the contrary, the Sussex word cannot be of Scandinavian origin - there is no evidence whatever for Scandinavian culture or administration in Sussex. Others, first of all William Somner in the seventeenth century, proposed a connection with Old English *rǣp* ‘rope’. The catch here is it should have developed into *rope*, not *rape*.

I take it for granted that the application of the term *rape* to a territory is a pre-Conquest innovation; the use in the Anglo-Saxon period of the term *forrǣpe* to land outside some jurisdiction appears to confirm this (Coates 1988). This assumption is without prejudice to the outcome of debate about whether the modern rapes of Sussex date from before or after 1066 (Salzman 1934, Mason 1964). The simplest account of the term’s history is that *rape* descends from *rāp*, but with a multilingual twist which is not made fully clear even in the best discussions of the term. As we have just noted, one would expect this Old English word actually to become modern *rope*, and not simply to share the ancestral meaning of this word. The likeliest sequence of events is that *rāp* was done into administrative Latin, before or immediately after the Conquest, as *rapum*, before the vowel-change in the English word had set in. The English word then went its own way. Its vowel changed during the period c. 1150-1250, by which latter date it was consistently written *o* in most of England. The Latin word stayed in the administrative language without, obviously, undergoing the change that the English word suffered, as the administration was at the crucial time in the hands of French speakers. They would have used *rapum*, and frenchified it when necessary as *rāp*. When English took over again as the language of some aspects of legal business in the later Middle Ages, the fact that the divisions had once been called ‘ropes’ in English was almost forgotten. Arundel rape is called *le Rope d’Arundell* in 1380 (Rolls of Parliament), alongside *le Rape* in 1376, and Hastings rape similarly in 1326 (Patent Roll) and 1452 (unpublished Court Roll), but these are the only three instances discovered by the time of the publication of *The place-names of Sussex* (Mawer and Stenton 1929/30: 8-10, 99, 450). They do, however, leave open the probability that *rope* was still a current SPOKEN English term for the division in the later Middle Ages. The legal words *rapum/rāp* were then simply re-anglicized as *rape* in the WRITTEN record and given a new pronunciation appropriate to the spelling when they were said out loud. This new pronunciation then crowded out the virtually-lost older *rope*, since the main context for its use would have been in the (now English-language) legal-administrative business in which it had arisen.

There is plenty of evidence supporting the application of a word for ‘rope’ to a slice of territory in the Germanic languages, and it is laid out in James Tait’s note published by Mawer and Stenton (1929: 8-10).
References


• BOOK NOTICE


This 46-page booklet is the first work specifically on Chichester street-names. The author has done some excellent detective-work, especially on members of that often-neglected category, names of recent origin, and he catalogues names that have gone out of use. A few mysteries remain, but creditably few. There is little for a philologist to dispute. The author provides an index, thank goodness.

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Ken Green notes in correspondence with the editor:

"I have discovered since writing that Armadale Road was built on land owned by a Mr Pullen who lived in a house called Armadale in Spitalfield Lane, Chichester; most probably that name was derived from one of the Scottish towns of that name. Baffin also appears in [Portsmouth and] Havant and I feel that the theory I put forward about [its relation to the surname] Biffin may be incorrect. Pouke Lane was also known as Goblin Lane at one time. I now have the solution to Mount Lane: an early principal of the theological college. Franklin Place seems to be named after the Arctic explorer rather than the USA politician."