LOCUS FOCUS

newsletter of the Sussex Place-Names Net

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Passing interest

There are so many complaints these days about the commercial pressures and phoney Irishism that are changing so many of our pub-names. We appreciate the reinterpretation of the traditional Queen's Head in Steine Street, Brighton: it shows the head of Freddie Mercury on its sign, a fine many-levelled pun.

• CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

offcentre I

The nearest thing to current guidelines available to the OS, the Harley-Walters Directives of 1982, require that, as to names, "[r]espectable inhabitants of some position should be consulted. Small farmers or cottagers are not to be depended on, even for the names of the places they occupy, especially as to the spelling, but a well-educated and intelligent occupier is, of course, a good authority." "Place names rarely change or become obsolete ...." .... ".... names of features .... should not be considered obsolete merely because they are no longer generally known ...." [Thanks to Janet Pennington for sending on these social, factual and logical fantasies.] We look forward to the restoration of Brighthelmston to sheet 198.

Why is the Ordnance Survey always busy re-surveying to keep pace with administrative reorganization, new roads, coastal erosion, vanishing field-boundaries, etc., yet so angst-ridden about onomastic variation or change? Their position might be useful for filing or archival purposes, but it's about as coherent as refusing to mark the Brighton bypass on the grounds that some traffic still uses the old A27.

• EDITORIAL

References in articles and notes take up a lot of space, so I propose to save a little by introducing some standard abbreviations for crucial books, and not fully referencing them each time they are cited. Mawer and Stenton will in future appear simply as *PN Sx.* The other EPNS volumes will be treated accordingly, using the Survey's own county abbreviations, but standard books outside the EPNS series, like those by Wallenberg on Kent (1934), Coates on Hampshire (1989) and Mills on the Isle of Wight (1996), will continue to be fully referenced. The other Sussex place-name books by Roberts (1914) and Glover (1975, 1997) will be *PN Sx (Roberts)* and *PN Sx (Glover)-1* or *(Glover)-2.* Ekwall's *Dictionary of English place-names* will be *DEPN (Ekwall)*, and references will be to the fourth and final edition (1960) unless stated otherwise. A.D. Mills's book of the same title (1991) will be *DEPN (Mills).* The forthcoming Cambridge dictionary edited by O.J. Padel, A.R. Rumble and V.E. Watts will, when it comes out, be *CDEPN.* Kenneth Cameron's *English place-names* will be *EPN* with an edition-flag (latest *-5*). Margaret Gelling's much-cited books will be *STP (Signposts to the past)* and *PNIL (Place-names in the landscape).* Their second editions will be flagged by *-2*.

The main relevant local periodicals will also be abbreviated as follows:

SAC   = *Sussex Archaeological Collections*
SASNL   = *Sussex Archaeological Society Newsletter*
SFH   = *Sussex Family Historian*
SH   = *Sussex History*
SNQ   = *Sussex Notes and Queries*
SPP   = *Sussex Past and Present* (successor to *SASNL*)
SRS   = *Sussex Record Society* volume
WSH   = *West Sussex History*

Apologies for the editorial blip which left odd and even page-numbers on the wrong side of the leaf in *Locus focus* 1 (2). Perhaps this offends me more than it offends others! Also for the dirty platen cover on the photocopier which left the text besmirched. These things WON'T happen again.

This number completes volume 1 of *Locus focus*, which will be the only volume with three published numbers. Future volumes will be calendar-annual, and be of two numbers each. Copy deadlines will need to fit round the requirements of the academic year, and will therefore be 15 March and 15 September; publication usually within six weeks of these dates.

With the present volume of material being submitted, it seems possible to sustain numbers averaging 16-18 pages, nearly twice the original anticipated size. That is very gratifying, and a tribute to the **Net'**s vitality, but it carries a cost. To continue at this rate will require a subscription of £5 per annum as opposed to the present £3. Are members willing to pay this, or shall we cut back to a fixed maximum size of 10-12 pages? Any excess will be devoted to increasing the size still further.

Also, please let me have your views on *Locus focus.* Are you happy with things as they are? Should the content change in any way? I have only limited scope for changing the appearance - e.g. by varying typefaces and print size and spacing. I can't do anything flashy to make it look nicer, e.g. like *Sussex Past and Present*, with the severely functional software which I know how to handle.

Richard Coates
Editor

• PERSONAL STATEMENTS AND WORK IN PROGRESS: A SELECTION

ANNE DREWERY

My three great interests - medieval history and agriculture, palaeography and the English countryside - are brought together by the study of place-names. My current research project - a transcription and analysis of the 13th-century account rolls of the Honour of Pevensey, funded by a Sussex Archaeological Society Margary Grant - is producing a wide variety of forms, both Wealden and coastal, which I would be happy to communicate to other members of the **Net.**

GWEN JONES

I am Editor of the *Sussex Archaeological Collections.* My degree was in French language and literature, and the course involved pretty extensive study of the development of the language plus medieval texts, some of them in Picard and Anglo-Norman. Once I'd left university and taken up an interest in archaeology and local history, it was a short step to interest in place- names and trying to use their archaeological, ecological and topographical content in reconstituting the development of the local landscape. For a number of years now, I have been collecting the early names of the Ewhurst area and exploring their relationship to the pattern of footpaths in the parish.

JANET PENNINGTON

My abiding interest is in applying documents to buildings and landscape. I am a member of the Wealden Buildings Study Group and past chairman of the West Sussex Archives Society. I have undertaken documentary and field research in the Adur valley and Steyning, and worked extensively on the Wiston Estate Survey and its archives. Joyce Sleight (of Steyning) and I have a large card-index of place and personal names for Steyning and Wiston extracted from inventories, wills and other documents. I have an ongoing relationship with maps and probate inventories and have published eight articles (four co-authored with Joyce Sleight) utilizing these sources. Documentary research frequently introduces me to long-forgotten house- and place-names. I am at present examining the architectural and social history of the inn in west Sussex, 1550-1700 and have recently been mapping inn-names.

I work part-time at Lancing College as their archivist where I hope eventually to catalogue about 15,000 letters of the Woodard Correspondence, much of which relates to people and places in 19th-century Sussex. I also work as a local history tutor for Sussex University's CCE, the WEA, lead walks for WSCC and give talks on many aspects of Sussex history.

Passing interest

A Berkeley Castle manuscript, no. 1124/124 of 1766, mentions *Thorney Castle*, suggesting that the Earl of Berkeley's interest in his Thorney Island manor did not amount to first-hand inspection at that date.

Passing interest

Some of the more interesting house-names in Sussex include The *House Opposite* and *The Other House* in Rye, both of which define themselves in relation to The Mermaid.

• RECENT LITERATURE

Coates, Richard (1997) Comps Farm, Beddingham. *SPP* 82, 2. [The first in a regular series of popular-interest pieces/ requests for information. The heading "What's in a name?" was not the author's choice!]

Field, John (1994-5) Indexes to the field-name sections of *The place-names of Surrey* and *The place-names of Essex. Journal of the English Place-Name Society* 27, 50-5.

Glover, Judith (1997) *Sussex place-names: their origins and meanings.* Newbury: Countryside Books. [Essentially a new edition of her book *The place-names of Sussex* (Batsford, 1975).]

Hough, Carole (1995) OE *græg* in place-names. *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 96, 361-5. [Argues this = 'wolf', as opposed to the standard view 'badger'.]

Hough, Carole (1995) OE *īsern* in place-names. *Studia Neophilologica* 67, 145-7. [Argues this = 'kingfisher' wherever not likely to be 'iron'.]

Leppard, M.J. (1997) Domesday Book and the origins of settlement in East Grinstead. *Bulletin of the East Grinstead Society* 61 (Spring), 5-10. [Continues work featuring in numbers 58 and 59.]

Spector, David (1987/8) Brighton Jewry reconsidered. *Jewish Historical Studies* 30, 91-124. [There is an appendix of street-names in Brighton and Hove with Jewish associations, larger than that by Spector appearing in *SASNL* 60 (April 1990), 12.]

• NEWS ITEMS

Net member Michael Leppard has been commissioned to write a new town history of East Grinstead. He would be very grateful to receive any information which might help to elucidate the place-names of the town.

South Heighton parish council has approved the name *Forward Close* for a new development. This commemorates HMS Forward, the World War II underground naval intelligence headquarters in the village (*Lewes Leader*, 29/5/97, 4).

• FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland is organizing a day-conference at the University of Sussex on Saturday 1 November 1997. It is anticipated that there will be five 45- minute papers, all on themes having some relevance to the study of Sussex place-names. Contact address of SNSBI: Miss Jennifer Scherr, Queen's Building Library, University Walk, Bristol BS8 1TR. Confirmed speakers are **Net** members Sanders, Combes and Coates, the topographer Ann Cole, a geographer who is a frequent contributor to place-name journals, and Tania Styles, a researcher on the Leverhulme place-name elements project at Nottingham University and its British Academy-funded successor.

• NOTES

John Bleach establishes the whereabouts of the *mere*(s) in Ringmer:

N1.3.1: "*There is no pool now on the map*" *(*PN Sx *355).*

When Gilbert White visited his aunt in Ringmer in the autumn of 1778, he noted in his journal:

> The distress is this place for want of water is very great:
> they have few wells in this deep loam; and the little pits
> and ponds are all dry; so that the neighbours all come
> for water to Mrs. Snooke's ponds.

> W. Johnson (ed.), *Gilbert White's Journals* (Routledge, [1931]
> 1970), pp. 155-6 (26 Sept 1778)

Mrs Snooke lived at Delves House which is situated adjacent to both Ringmer Green and the parish church. The 1875 edition of the 25" Ordnance Survey map (sheet 54/7) shows two ponds in the grounds (plots 496 and 497a). 496 is in the north-east corner of the garden, about 100 yards from the church, and survives today. 497a was on the south of the house and only some 50 yards or so from the church. It was filled in recently prior to a housing development on the site. 497a is depicted in a watercolour dated to 1787 by one of the James Lamberts of Lewes as a well maintained pond within a landscaped garden (illus. in J.H. Plumb, *Georgian Delights* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), p. 66, 'A garden at Lewes').

Given their proximity to the church (cf. the meres at Falmer, Stanmer and, before the chapel was destroyed, Balmer), and their evident capacity for supplying water at all times (presumably a pre-requisite for ponds forming place-names), are 496 and/or 497a the mere(s) of the place- name? They are not round on the Ordnance Survey map, but may well have been landscaped.

Richard Coates writes, originally in response to a query from a member of the public:

N1.3.2: Isfield

According to *PN Sx*, Isfield is 'open land of Isa (male personal name)'. This personal name is not 100% secure - it's not on the record, but other names exist which appear to be regular derivatives of it and there may be a continental parallel. But there is an opening for the possibility that the first element is OE *īsen* 'iron', a specifically south-eastern form of *īsern* and that seems preferable in the light of the evidence for the parish's ironworking history. If Hough (see RECENT LITERATURE) is right that this form may mean 'kingfisher', that offers a further possibility for this name, but with *feld* (and noting the side-channel of the Ouse here called *Iron River*) 'iron' seems preferable. Over to WIRG!

Richard Coates returns wet-shod to:

N1.3.3: Itford

In my anxiety to cram a note on this name into the modest amount of space left on p. 6 of *Locus*

focus 1 (2), I left my account without enough substance. The OE *gyte* 'flood' which I mentioned should give a modern reflex **Git-*, not *It-*. What I had in mind was that *gyte* should develop like its related verb *gēotan* 'to pour (out), flow', in which the <g> is uncontroversially pronounced /j/, i.e. that /gytə-/ should have changed by analogy to /jytə-/. Such a form would regularly yield a modern pronunciation *It-*. A word *gyte-strēam* is found in OE glossaries, equated with *ebbe.*

By the way, I am aware of the 'sea-ford' nearer the sea, but stand by my assertion that Itford is the lowest point at which the river-valley itself - i.e. the gap - may be forded.

Michael Leppard drew the Editor's attention to the following note, which was submitted by **Colin Hobbs** to the *Danehill Parish Historical Society Magazine* 5, 6 (1996), p. 28, and which is reprinted here by permission of its Editor.

N1.3.4: The lost Inwood: in Goldbridge Farm, Fletching

The *Domesday Book* gave [*Inode*: *DB* 10, 116 -Ed.] under the Hundred of Rushmonden [as] 1 virgate which lay in the lands of the New Minster. It never paid tax, i.e. its parent manor was liable.

It has been suggested that Inwood subsequently evolved into the Maresfield/Fletching sub-manor of Marshalls, but on the strength of what evidence I am not aware.

[The] New Minster in Winchester founded by King Edward *c.*900 later became the Abbey of Hyde in the same city. Some time in the 960s King Edgar gave the Manor of Southease to the New Minster. Southease held 30 acres, a virgate, in the north of Goldbridge Farm in Fletching. The evidence would seem to be overwhelming that this represents the site of the long lost Inwood, a colonisation of Southease that failed to develop into a manor in its own right.

Richard Coates muses inconclusively, originally in response to a query:

N1.3.5: Worge in Burwash

I suspect this may be a local development of *worth* 'curtilage'; *Worger* is found as a surname in Rottingdean, where it appears to be associated with one of the local places Court Ord and Tenant Ord, the source of which is indeed *worth.* We also get the famous *Norgem* for Northiam ("O rare Norgam, thou dost far exceed ...." - too embarrassingly insular to continue, but cf. the title of the booklet by Winifred L. Davis (Rye, 1965)). But if the /ʤ/ in this is East Sussex /ʤ/ from /d/ + /j/, that would leave *Worge* isolated and still unexplained.

There is a way out that has no exact formal parallel that I know: perhaps *Worge* represents *Worth's* with East Sussex // >> /d/ (seen also in the Rottingdean foms), and /dz/ >> /ʤ/, encouraged by the tongue-tip reversion of the Sussex /r/. But this does not happen across morpheme- or word-boundaries in Sussex, so far as I know. There are still, therefore, mysteries in this name, and its exact formal relationship, if any, to *Worger* is unknown *(worth-yer* like *lock-yer* or *saw-yer* ??).

Richard Coates probes the Lavant valley:

N1.3.6: Pine Pits, Singleton, and Hat Hill, West Dean

Joy Ede, National Trust archaeologist in West Sussex, describes this place as "a steep-sided but small area at the top of the valley holding a seasonal spring leading to the Lavant". She notes the following spellings for it:

Pinte Pitt 1678/9 WSRO Add MS 142
Pinepits Field and *Mead* late c18 map
Pine Pitts 1846 Tithe map

The first of these makes it pretty certain that the name contains the word for cuckoo-pint *(Arum maculatum).* I have never met an allusion to this plant in a place-name before.

She also notes Hat Hill mentioned in a rental of 1640 and a plan of 1630x70 as *The Hatt.* In Hampshire, especially in the New Forest, such names often attach to hills or knolls surmounted by a clump of trees, and that is more likely here than the account in *PN Sx* (49) involving the shape of the hill.

Janet Pennington is needled by administrative ignorance and intrigued by genteel euphemism:

N1.3.7 (a): Buncton Crossways

A large WSCC sign has gone up at Buncton Crossroads, where the A283 between Washington and Steyning crosses a south lane to Chanctonbury Ring and the northern Water Lane to Wiston village (which is really Buncton village). The sign reads *Buncton Crossways.* This might look all right to the passer-by, but it has, from time out of mind (well, nearly back to 1189), always been known as Buncton Crossroads. The owners of the Wiston estate, the Goring family, call it so and Mr John Goring (1907-1990) who lived at the south-west quadrant for much of his life, wrote *Buncton Crossroads* on one of his estate maps early this century. The Gorings married into Wiston in 1743. I understand that there is some annoyance on the estate about this misnaming by WSCC.

N1.3.7 (b): Fagge's Barn and Gay Cottage, Steyning

The converted barn, formerly owned by the Wiston Estate, is a near neighbour to the cottage, both situated in Dog Lane (formerly Brewhouse Lane), Steyning. Gay Cottage became *Bay Cottage* a few years ago, and some time later *Tagge's Barn* reared its strange head. Steyning inhabitants still unselfconsciously refer to *Fagge's Barn* in conversation, though for how long, I wonder. We have to be careful when directing American tourists. The Fagges seem to have appeared in Rye in the 16th century. Sir John Fagge bought the Wiston estate cheaply in 1649 after Civil War depredations. His great-grandson Sir Robert died in 1740 with no male heir, so Robert's sister Elizabeth Fagge inherited and married Sir Charles Goring of Highden House, Washington, in 1743. Their son planted the trees on Chanctonbury Ring in 1760. I bet they all said *Buncton Crossroads.*

• QUERIES

If readers respond directly to the person making the enquiry, please would they also send a copy of their message to the Editor?

Q1.3.1 The Quaker Way in Sussex

John Bleach would like information about some number-name streets in Sussex, and submits this note-query:

Naming streets by number, First, Second, Third, etc. is common practice in many parts of the English-speaking world. For example, a street directory of Greater Melbourne (1993) lists no fewer than 24 First Avenues and 9 First Streets. The quantities gradually diminish until Twelfth Avenue, of which there are two (streets only reach eighth). That is not the end of the story, however, for the suburb of Eden Park continues in isolate state to reach Twenty Second Avenue - though, rather disturbingly, there is no Twenty First.

Similar examples are to be found in Canada and, of course, the United States where the number-naming system originated. It was first used there in Philadelphia by William Penn, Sussex emigrant and Quaker - George Stewart, doyen of American place-name studies, tells the story:

> With what seems almost another echo of Revelation, Philadelphia was laid four-square, like the heavenly Jerusalem. With Quaker honesty, the streets crossed at right angles, and since they were fixed and regular from the beginning, they called for names. Even on the original plan the two axial thoroughfares were written in as Broad and High. So matters stood officially until Penn himself came there in 1682. Already many houses had been built, and since most of the streets had no official names, people had naturally begun calling each after the most important person who lived there and had built the largest house. But this would never do in a Quaker town, where there was to be no respecting of persons. Thereupon Penn established a system of naming which was to sweep across the continent.
>
> Beginning at the eastern boundary he simply called the first street, First Street. And so he went on successively, making the numbers into names. This was in harmony with the customs of the Quakers who even called Sunday, First Day.
>
> George Stewart, *Names on the land* (New York: Random House, 4th ed., [1945] 1982), p. 105.

Disliking self-aggrandizement, Penn, no doubt, would disapprove wholly of Penn Crescent in Ringmer, named after his somewhat tenuous association with the parish (he married Gulielma Springett of Broyle Place), as also of a Close apiece in Crawley and Middleton on Sea, a Gardens in Ashington just along the lane from his Sussex home at Warminghurst, and a Gate in Steyning. By the same token he would delight in the spread of number street-names in Sussex from the 1870s as evidenced by the information set out below. [But he wouldn't like the eccentric scattering of the names in Lancing -Ed.]

One wonders whatever happened to First Road in Peacehaven and Sixth Avenue in Lancing. And are the Hove number-names amongst the earliest examples of such a use in England? John Field, *Place-names of Greater London* (London: Batsford, 1986), pp. 158-9), cites numerous examples from the capital but gives no dates. Can **Net** members:

a) throw any light on the naming anomalies;
b) supply examples from England which pre-date those at Hove;
c) confirm or supply dates of first use for places listed below?

Street names by number in Sussex ('Avenue' unless otherwise stated)

Note: the attribution of streets to places in the *Ordnance Survey street atlas* (OSSA) can be historically misleading.

First:
ALMODINGTON [parish of Birdham; Birdham, OSSA]; BEXHILL, pre-1972; BROADWATER [Worthing, OSSA], pre-1958; CAMBER; FELPHAM [Bognor Regis, OSSA], post-1966; HOVE, c.1875; LANCING, pre-1958; MIDDLETON ON SEA; NEWHAVEN, c.1927; SOUTHBOURNE; WITTERING, EAST.

Second:
ALMODINGTON [parish of Earnley; Birdham, OSSA]; BEXHILL; BROADWATER [Worthing, OSSA]; CAMBER; FELPHAM [Bognor Regis, OSSA]; HOVE; LANCING; NEWHAVEN; PEACEHAVEN (Road); SOUTHBOURNE; WITTERING, E.

Third:
ALMODINGTON [parish of Earnley; Earnley, OSSA]; BEXHILL; BROADWATER [Worthing, OSSA]; FELPHAM [Bognor Regis, OSSA]; HOVE; LANCING; NEWHAVEN; PEACEHAVEN (Road); WITTERING, E.

Fourth:
BROADWATER [Worthing, OSSA]; FELPHAM [Middleton on Sea, OSSA]; HOVE; LANCING.

Fifth:
BROADWATER [Worthing, OSSA]; LANCING.

Sixth:
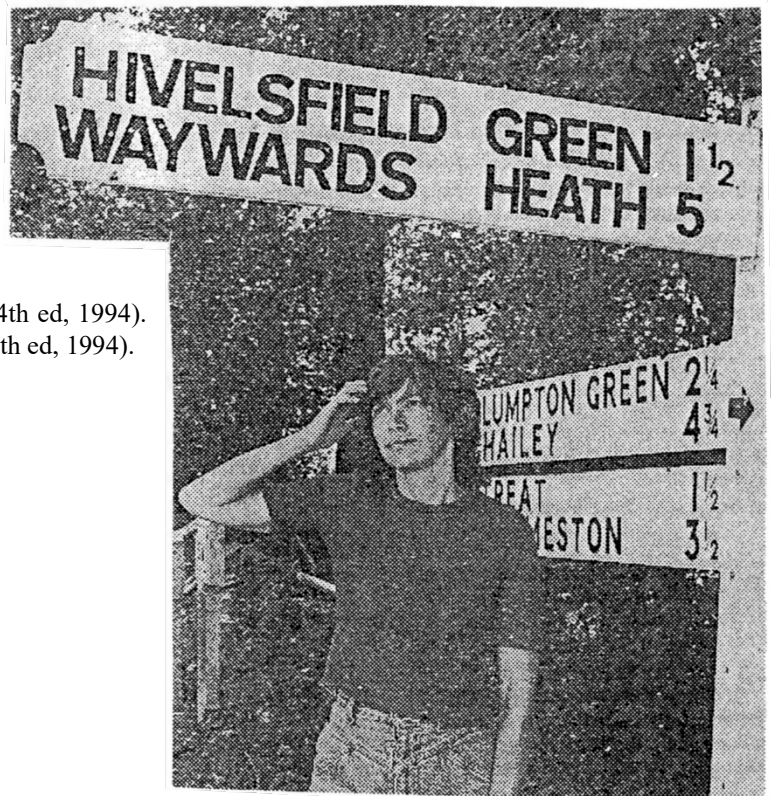Nil.

Seventh and Eighth:
LANCING.

Sources for places:
Ordnance Survey street atlas: East Sussex (1988; 4th ed, 1994).
Ordnance Survey street atlas: West Sussex (1988; 4th ed, 1994).

Sources for dates:
Various local directories and street maps.

Q1.3.2 Knockhundred Row, Midhurst

Richard Coates would be interested in any theories about *Knockhundred Row*, Midhurst (? pinched in the guise *Knock Hundred Lane* by Bramshott Common (Hants.)).

Q1.3.3 Cucumber Farm, Singleton

Joy Ede, archaeologist, National Trust, West Sussex Downs Office, Slindon, Arundel BN18 0RG, would like to know what circumstances might be responsible for the probably mid- eighteenth-century *Cucumbers* (now *Cucumber*) *Farm* in Singleton.

Q1.3.4 Twittens

Michael Leppard and Richard Coates would be interested in any evidence tending to support the idea that the word *twitten*, as applied in minor names or as an ordinary vocabulary-word, is spreading beyond localized dialect usage, both in Sussex and elsewhere. W.D. Parish thought it was a West Sussex word that had even by his day come to be used all over the county.

Q1.3.5 Tom Tiddler's Ground

This appears to have been a ready-made name for a derelict plot of land (e.g. one in late- nineteenth century Rottingdean). Does it originate with Dickens's *Christmas story* with that title (1861), or does it occur earlier? [RC]

Q1.3.6 Gossops Green

Is there any connection between this Crawley New Town neighbourhood and Mrs Henry Dudeney's novel *Gossip's Green* (1907)? Was the name on the map before the town planners stepped in? A letter from Charles Burgess in *SCM* 15 (1941), p. 332, refers to *Gossips Green* in Ifield. [RC]

Q1.3.7 Smalls: any suggestions?

Gowrer Furlong (Rustington/Goring): Janet Pennington
Grith Furlong (Rustington/Goring): Janet Pennington
Poet's Grave (Balsdean, Rottingdean): Richard Coates

• QUICK RESPONSES TO QUERIES AND ARTICLES

R1.3.1 Rapes and ropes

In response to Richard Coates's article on the term *rape* (*LF* 1, 1, pp. 22-3), Janet Pennington draws attention to rent in kind in the shape of a circle of rope (Beeding manor rental (1558), ESRO AMS 26605).

Carole Hough, lecturer in English Language at Glasgow University and a former research fellow of Nottingham University, throws a Cnutian light on the subject of an earlier discussion:

A sidelight on Binderton

In *Locus focus* 1 (1), Richard Coates makes a number of interesting suggestions concerning etymologies of Sussex place-names. With regard to Binderton, interpreted in *PN Sx* (46) as 'farm of a woman named Beornðryð', he proposes an OE **bēn-drinc as* the first element, giving an interpretation 'farm whose tenant would do the lord's reaping at request (later by custom) i.e. *bēn-rīp*, in return for which liquid rewards were provided'. I am writing to draw attention to a possible parallel with the attested compound OE *drynce-lān*, defined in the Toronto *Dictionary of Old English* as follows: "drink-reward, perhaps related to O[ld]N[orse] *drekkulaun* 'grant of land by a lord in recompense for a vassal's hospitality', or the customary entertainment offered by a lord to his tenants, or the purchase of a drink to mark the closing of a contract".

The idea of 'customary entertainment offered by a lord to his tenants' is closely similar to the meaning suggested by Coates for the proposed **bēn-drinc*, and may offer some support for his interpretation of the place-name.

Coates concludes by asking, 'is the name too early to allude to such aspects of feudal society?' Since Binderton is first recorded in Domesday Book, whereas OE *drynce-lān* is attested in the law-code issued by King Cnut between 1020 and 1023 (II Cnut, ch. 81) as well as in the Law of the Northumbrian Priests (ch. 67,1) also dating from the early eleventh century, the answer would appear to be: No.

Reference

Amos, A.C. and A. diP. Healey (1986-) *Dictionary of Old English.* Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies.

□□□

Passing interest

Longest pub name in Sussex and most interesting name change? The *Golden Cross*, Southover Street, Brighton, now *The Geese have gone Over the Water.*

offcentre II

The University of Sussex has been renaming some of its buildings, and has come up with *Arundel*, *Pevensey* and *Chichester.* What an opportunity missed! And this from the organization that gave us the honest and helpful *Boiler House Hill* and the mouth-wateringly austere *North- South Road ....*

Pam Combes explores some nominal difficulties surrounding a medieval manor.

Now you see it now you don't: Firle in Domesday Book *and beyond*

The most valuable of the several manors of Firle recorded in *Domesday Book* proves to be an enigma when attempts are made to trace it in later documentary sources. This note is in the nature of a working hypothesis on the reasons for this peculiarity, and the views of other **Net** members regarding the problem would be very welcome.

The village of Firle lies beneath the downs to the east of Beddingham in an area dominated by Mount Caburn to the north and enclosed by the curve of the downs to the south. The village and church are tucked in to the north-east of Firle Park the home, since the 15th century, of the Gage family. A study of the field-names of the parish which led in turn to consideration of the manorial structure revealed that despite the record of a major Domesday manor called Firle, and the survival of the name applied both to a medieval vill and to the principal holding in the modern village, no records survive of an early manor of Firle in the parish.

The centres of several manors recorded in Domesday Book are associated with the parish of Firle although much of their land lay elsewhere. Compton, Charleston and Heighton were recorded in 1086 but Heighton appears only in Hastings Rape as an outlying holding, probably of Tilton.[1] All these majors lay, together with the former royal demesne manor of Beddingham and also Preston, Iford and Sherrington [now in Selmeston parish], in the hundred of Totnore in 1086.

Other manors were recorded in Firle later: *Amyes*, *Hosyers*, *Lyvets*, *Mestede*, Preston Poynings and possibly Ewelme.[2] Some of these majors undoubtedly represent part of the fragmented land of the *Domesday* manor, but where the rest of the land associated with this substantial holding lay is open to question.

Two significant sub-tenancies of the *Domesday* manor are identified. Two and a half hides were held by the clerks *(clerici)* of St. Pancras and three hides and 20 acres were held by the Castle Wardens *(custodes castelli)*. The use of the term *clericus* and the association of a substantial landholding with a church in *Domesday Book* implies that it was a minster. Arlington was not named in the Pevensey Rape section of *Domesday Book*, but an outlier of Arlington lying in Hastings Rape was held by Wilton Abbey, suggesting that Arlington and possibly its church were held within Wilton's manor of Firle. Later records confirm that the church at Arlington was endowed with land.[3] The evidence suggests the possibility that Arlington was the holding recorded within Firle in 1086.

The land of the castle wardens in Firle has occasioned much debate over the years. Salzman noted that the land had been in the hands of the descendants of Alured, the Count of Mortain's butler, until 1165 when it escheated to the crown, and Budgen recorded the fact that castle guard rents were collected by the holders of a manor of Endlewick. He concluded that the right only became associated with Endlewick in the 14th century. It is possible, however, that this date reflects only the survival of records and that the manor of Endlewick always had been the administrative centre for the land of the castle wardens.[4] Endlewick lies in the parish of Wilmington, but the parish boundary projects into Arlington to include the farm, suggesting the possibility that it was originally associated with Arlington.

If it can be accepted that these two holdings were indeed the two described in Firle, it appears that the intention was to set up an administrative centre there. The castle guard rents were due from

holdings scattered across the rape and this central site was more convenient for suitors to a court than the castle that lay on the south-eastern boundary of its rape. Indeed the intention may have been that the clerks of the minster should serve the administration of the rape. Later the sheriff's tourn was held on Berwick Common, not far from Arlington, a site which also appears to have been chosen for the convenience of its central position within the rape.

The name *Firle* is applied to several other manors recorded in *Domesday Book.* A Firle (of 8 hides TRE, 5 hides TRW), possibly an outlier of her major manor of Ilford, had been held by Queen Edith, but by 1086 was in the hands of the Abbot of Grestain together with one hide that had been held there by Earl Godwin. Heming, one of the few landholders who survived with a least part of his landholding intact, also held two hides there, and two hides in Lewes Rape (Rottingdean) had also been held as part of his manor of Firle. A further four hides in Firle had been held by two sub-tenants from King Edward. The Abbot's manor, or part of it, can be identified from later documentary evidence as Frog Firle. But it is unlikely that Frog Firle represents all of the twelve hides of Firle recorded in Flexborough hundred in *Domesday Book.* The rest of the land has not yet been identified.[5] The personal name *Piggeferle* is later found in Berwick.[6] Berwick too must have been held within another manor in 1086; it is only recorded because outlying holdings in Hastings Rape were named.

The text of *Domesday* does not differentiate between the places named Firle, suggesting the possibility that the name was being applied as a descriptive term rather than a specific name. The places identified with the name have some common characteristics. They lay on the borders of two significant royal manors, Iford and Beddingham.[7] In addition, Arlington lies on Weald clay, and although the other identifiable holdings of Firle do not they may have had some Wealden characteristics. The wooded nature of West Firle now is probably the result of modern emparking, but the choice of land-use may reflect the unsuitability of the soil for intensive agriculture. Frog Firle lies close to an area where there was residual clay-with-flints on the downs, suggesting the possibility that a significant area of woodland could have survived on the downs there.[8]

The name Firle is unique. Could this unusual name be a generic term for land lying on the boundary of an early estate?[9] Or should we be inverting the traditional view of Firle and suggest that West Firle was an outlier of a manor centred on the Cuckmere valley?[10]

Notes

1 J. Morris (ed.) (1976) *Domesday Book: Sussex.* Chichester: Phillimore, entries 10, 20; 9, 43, 116-118. It is possible to suggest an association between parent manors and differently named outlying holdings by matching the names of pre-Conquest holders and the hidage recorded as lost from the original manor. In this case one of the Tilton holdings in Pevensey Rape was held by Godwin in the time of King Edward (henceforward TRE). The geld valuation had been reduced from 4 hides to 2 hides 1 virgate, a loss of about 1 hide 2 virgates. The Heighton outliers had also been held by Godwin and were valued at 4 virgates, and an additional virgate in Tilton had been held by Earl Godwin - a total of 1 hide 1 virgate; a reasonably close match. Tilton farm now lies contained within a curiously shaped protuberance of the parish boundary of Selmeston, but Tilton wood lies within the parish of Alciston. Tilton was divided between several tenants after the Conquest and this curiously split holding appears to reflect the allegiance of the various owners after the division of the rape in 1106.

2 M. Clough (ed.) (1963) *The Book of Bartholomew Bolney.* Lewes: Sussex Record Society (vol. 63), 32-7. It is not certain that the Ewelme recorded in Sussex inquisitions is indeed the Ewelme in Firle. However the association of Ewelme with a family called Levett (see *Lyvet* manor in Firle)

makes it a tempting possibility.

3 M. Gardiner & C. Whittick (1990) Some evidence for an intended collegiate church at Pevensey. *SAC* 128, 261-262.

4 L.F. Salzman (1916) Some Sussex Domesday tenants *SAC* 57, 164-166; W. Budgen (1935) Pevensey Castle Guard and the Endlewick Rents. *SAC* 76, 125-134.

5 J.H. Farrant (1993) The history of Frog Firle farm, Alfriston. In D. & B. Martin, *Frog Firle: an archaeological and historic landscape survey.* London: University College, Appendix A.

6 W. Hudson (1910) *Sussex subsidies.* Lewes: Sussex Record Society (vol. 10), 186, 315.

7 The only major manor held by Queen Edith before the Conquest was Iford in Lewes Rape, part of which had been transferred to Pevensey Rape. Only two holdings in Pevensey Rape are associated by name with Queen Edith, Frog Firle and Parrock. It seems reasonable to suggest that they formed a part of the holding of Iford lost to Pevensey.

8 Farrant, History of Frog Firle farm (see note 5).

9 Many friends patiently listened to and corrected my ill-formed ideas on this and other related topics. I would like to thank Christopher Whittick, John Farrant and Richard Coates in particular. The views expressed here remain, however, entirely my responsibility. [Relevant here is the article by R. Coates, A surviving Latin place-name in Sussex: Firle, forthcoming in *Journal of the English Place-Name Society* 30 (1997/8). -Ed.]

10   A "Ferles in Can" is recorded in the Charter Rolls (Historical Manuscripts Commission), held by Theobaldus de Englechevill in *c*.1246/7. It is attributed there to Devon. However, since de Englechevill gave Compton to the Templars, I am inclined to think *Can* is a misreading of some abbreviated form of Compton, and that the holding should be recorded in Sussex. Since much of Compton lay in Berwick, this is another interesting association.

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Richard Coates examines some names from our Sussex city. These analyses arose out of correspondence with **Ken Green** in the wake of his recent book *The street-names of Chichester.*

Some notes on minor place-names in Chichester

THE HORNET

The name is absent from *PN Sx.* It is most likely from Old English *hyrne* 'angle, corner, point of land' (or its Middle English development *hürne*, *herne*), with the French diminutive suffix -*et* that is also found in *Westhampnett.* For technical reasons, the earliest spellings quoted by Green (1996: 6) support this: *Hurnett* and *Harnett* in the seventeenth century are quite consistent with earlier **hyrnet*. Green quotes a local etymologist's view that it refers to the point of land bounded by St Pancras and The Hornet itself. That may be right, but *hyrne* could apply to a bend, and I suspect the place is really so called from the marked angle at which Stane Street (St Pancras) meets

the East Gate, the name being then applied "outwards" from that spot to the street that developed there.

The name must be older than its first record in 1563 (*Hornet in the Parish of Week*; Morgan 1992: 175), and must have been informally used alongside *Newick Street* (i.e. New Wyke Street- which it displaced) before that date.

LITTLE LONDON

This is a frequent minor place-name, but the Chichester one is interesting as the oldest instance of it yet discovered (first record 1454, Escheators' accounts, reported to the editors of *The place-names of Sussex* by L.F. Salzman). Surprisingly, it turns up as *the Little London* in 1786 in the Common Council minute book (*SRS* 62, minute 27). Room (1992: 108) appears to say that it is a name of the nineteenth century.

PARIS LANE

Paris Lane is an old name of Chapel St (Morgan 1992). The north-south street now called Chapel Street, if projected across West Street, is aligned on the eastern edge of the existing Paradise (the cloisters) in the cathedral close. Although the word meant 'enclosure; garden (i.e. of Eden)', a paradise was not necessarily the same as a cloister, and we can probably explain the street-name if we surmise that the original cathedral's paradise was not at precisely the modern place, but perhaps embraced the eastern end of the old church. Paris Lane would then have appropriately taken its name from it because it was aligned on it. There is a similar name in Exeter (Room 1992: 52). The surname *Pareis* recorded in Chichester in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is presumably from the Paradise, as this word in Old French is regularly *pareis*, and Paris is what we would expect as the modern development of this. There is an alternative form in Old French *parevis*, which gives the modern word *parvis(e)*, which modern Chichester chooses not to use, preferring the more obviously Latin-derived form.

SCUTTERY LANE

Parts of an area outside the Westgate of Chichester and to the north of the Portsmouth road were known for many centuries by names including the word *Scuttery*. This area was traversed by the old course of the Lavant, which skirted the south side of the city, turned north through commons and fields here, abruptly turned west at *Scuttery Bridge* and then south before recrossing the Portsmouth road and following its present course to the sea. The massive loop so formed was bypassed by the creation of a new cut for overflow water, entirely south of the Portsmouth road, in around 1810, and the old channel, largely culverted, was regarded as defunct by J.E. Greatorex in his *Report on the Lavant course* of 1874 (Johnston 1970).

The area in general is known as *Scetery* (probably misread for *Scotery*), *Scotery*, *Scuttry* in the White Act Book (*SRS* 52) in the 16th century (tenements are said to be "in Scuttery"). The bridge is *Scutterith bridg* in 1607, *Squitry Bridge* in 1610 (Speed's map), *Scuttery Bridge* in 1788 (*SRS* 62, minute 35). The field in the loop was known as *Little Scuttery* and is generally *Scutt(e)rith(e)* in entries in the Chapter Acts of the 17th century (e.g. *Scutterithe feild* 1603). The area north of Scuttery Bridge was known as *Scuttery Common Field*, which was partly enclosed by 1677. Between the city wall and the river ran a lane connecting the Westgate and the Northgate, now Orchard Street but regularly *Scuttery Lane* in older documents (Green 1996: 40), notably twice

(1787, 1803) in the Chichester Common Council minute book (*SRS* 62).

All these names clearly share a common origin. The base-form looks suspiciously like what in a modern form would be *scutter-rithe.* As such, it would originally have been applied to the river itself, the expression meaning 'filth (esp. diarrhoea) stream'. *Squitter* 'diarrhoea' is on record as a verb and a noun in the 17th century (and in the 16th if one regards some of the mentions glossed 'squirt' by the *OED* as metaphorical uses of it), and it is known from the dialect of the Isle of Wight and elsewhere. It is found in the form *scutter* in an anonymous play printed in 1565 called *King Daryus*; and in Sussex there are other early instances of the sound- sequence /kwi/ developing to /ku/, the most obvious being *Cuckmere* for "Quick-mere", so to speak, and possibly *Cotchford* Farm in Hartfield if this contains *queach* 'thicket'. *Rithe* is of course a well-known word for 'stream' in the Chichester and Langstone Harbour area, especially a slow-moving marshland one; its most frequent modern form is *rife.* There are other names in England of the type 'shit stream', often sanitized into something more dignified. Examples are: *Shutwell* (Warw.), *Shutbrook Street* in Exeter, *Skidbrook* (Lincs.), and, with OE *scitere*, a well-known place-name element meaning 'open sewer', *Sharford* (Somerset), *Shatterford* (Worcs.), the various Scandinavianized *Skitter*s in north-east Lincolnshire, and the lost stream-name *sciterlacu* (Devon).

The oldest known mention of one or the other location is of the field *Scutterreridere* (1275; WSRO MS. CapI 15, no. 5, cited Morgan 1992: 188). This elaborate form is unfortunately not fully interpretable - it seems to have far too many <r>s and <e>s in, but might suggest an original *Scuttery Rithe*, which would complicate the explanation offered here. I am inclined to distrust it, as there are two extra sequences of <re> in the word to explain, not just one. In any case, it seems to suggest that the word *squitter/scutter* is far older than previously suspected.

John Speed, on his map of 1610, clearly interpreted the name as if including the newly-modish word *squitter*, amply recorded in Jacobean stage plays; he prints *Squitry Bridge*, and this is the first clear use of *Squ-* as opposed to *Sc-*. Morgan (1992: 187) says that *Squittery* appears in documents, but I have not been able to verify this.

The Lavant was certainly the town's only means of sewage disposal for centuries (its 19th- century charms are described by Johnston 1970), and although cesspools were provided in a sanitation scheme in 1856 the river was still described as "the main sewer" in 1865 (Morgan 1992: 27). Before that it had been cleaned from time to time (e.g. 1810; *SRS* 62, minute 241; this event may be connected with the provision of the diversion referred to above). Scuttery Bridge crossed the river at the point where it turned sharply west, where no doubt raw sewage was likely to be stranded at times of reduced flow in the summer, or to overflow at maximum flow in the winter. These considerations are sufficient to explain the name, which was evidently transferred to the adjacent field and common, as described above.

SICKLEASE STREET

A lost street named after a plot of land recorded in the 13th century in St Mary's chartulary (see *SAC* 51). The place gave its name to Robert *Sekelese* (1232x41), *de (la) Sukelese* (before 1241, 1251). *Sicklease Lane/Street* is recorded as so named in 1379 (Morgan 1992: 150). The variation in spelling suggests an origin in an OE *sicol-læs* 'sickle meadow', i.e. a meadow held at a rent of iron payable in the form of a sickle (for which there are parallels (Vinogradoff 1911: 329)) or held for reaping-services; or, strictly, the Middle English equivalent of this. The spellings with <e> and <u> can be explained as follows. *Sicol* would be **siocol* in Kentish OE by back-mutation, which would ultimately yield *seocol* and become **sökel* in ME. The ME spellings <e> (predominantly), <u> and <i> are found in Sussex for /ö/ from back-mutated *i*, in the words for 'milk' and 'seven'

(Rubin 1951: 193-4). This is sufficient to confirm the suggested etymology.

SNAG LANE

This ran southwards from Eastgate Square. Recorded in 1818 (*SRS* 62, minute 308). It almost certainly incorporates the Sussex dialect word for 'snail' (Parish 1875). Why is a matter of conjecture, but cf. *Snailgate,* later *Snackgate*, in Norwich, which the editors of *PN Nf* (I: 94) tentatively, but not convincingly, explain from a surname. I know of no such surname on record in Sussex.

SOMERSTOWN

Almost certainly named after the original Somers Town in the former Borough of St Pancras, London, developed for working-class housing from 1786 onwards on the estate of the former Lord Chancellor John, Lord Somers (1651-1716). It was a byword for poverty at one stage, before recent urban renewal. (Cf. Room 1992: 113.)

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Janet Pennington records one of the more tortuous relations between history and administration in a West Sussex parish (or whatever it is).

Botolphs

I lived at Botolphs in the Adur valley from 1977 to 1993. It was unavoidable that I became interested in the Saxon saint after whom the place was named. How I wish I had kept the various

spellings on letters received during those 17 years. A peep at some of the 16 surviving probate inventories (1621-1697) reveals *Buttells*, *Buttolls*, *Buttholes*, *Buttophs*, *Buttles* and *Buttolphs*. Only 4 <o>s between them.

At my request, sometime in the 1980s, WSCC erected a *Botolphs* sign at the southern boundary of the old parish (the former civil parish of Botolphs was combined with Bramber in 1933), to complement the much larger sign on the A27. This took some persuasion, as WSCC would not believe that they had indicated Botolphs on the main road but not alerted people to its actual site. As ours was the first southernmost house in the parish, lost drivers and walkers knocking on the door became routine. The sign was stolen soon afterwards, but another took its place. WSCC were unwilling, for some reason, to erect a sign at the northern boundary, by Annington Mere (boundary/lake? topographically it could be either I suppose) Farmhouse, though I sent the map reference for this.

However, not long after we had moved to Steyning in 1993, a notice inscribed *Annington* appeared at this spot - just the right place for the old Botolphs northern parish boundary and with a name that was certainly right for the area. So far so good (or not). Two further signs were erected, showing a southern boundary for an invented parish of Annington, placed just too far west for this settlement, and a sign for a northern boundary for Botolphs placed in the middle of the old parish. Are you following me so far?

The northern *Botolphs* sign now stands at the entrance to Annington Farm, too far west for the probable secondary settlement of Botolphs (son of Annington), which sits with its feet in the former marshland, unsung and unsigned, except on its southern boundary which, of course, is where it all started - the signing saga, and Botolphs.

So does this really matter? Yes, I feel it does. What is the point in being historically accurate with a placename at one end, but not at the other or in the middle? And was I correct in the first place to ask for a Botolphs sign rather than a Bramber sign? In 1933 Bramber swallowed the old civil parish of Botolphs; their ecclesiastical parishes were united in 1526. Did I start WSCC on a downward spiral of mis-naming? Apart from interfering local historians, from whom do planning departments take advice when setting up place names, if they do so at all? Thanks to me and, I suspect, an ex-mayor of Worthing who resides on the "new" Botolphs/Annington boundary, one now bumps through Botolphs from the south (tight corners and salterns) and exits at Annington to the north into a no-man's land where Bramber parish is not signposted at all. Suddenly St. Cuthman pushing the wrong sort of wheelbarrow indicates that one is in Steyning - though it is actually still Bramber. Confused? Try it and see. Just don't ask me to draw a map.

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• BOOK NOTICES

On the day this issue was finalized, the Editor discovered the new book by Judith Glover, *Sussex place-names* (Countryside Books). A fuller notice will appear in the next issue.

Passing interest

The Gribble pub, Oving, from a (? defunct) variety of yellow apple.

Locus focus, newsletter of The Sussex Place-Names Net