LOCUS FOCUS

forum of the Sussex Place-Names Net

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• ABBREVIATIONS OF FREQUENTLY-CITED WORKS

CDEPN	V.E. Watts, *Cambridge dictionary of English place-names* (forthcoming)
DB	*Domesday Book*
DEPN (Ekwall)	Eilert Ekwall, *Dictionary of English place-names* (-4 (1960) unless other edition flagged)
DEPN (Mills)	A.D. Mills, *Dictionary of English place-names* (1991)
EPN	Kenneth Cameron, *English place-names* (-5 (1997))
EPNE	A.H. Smith, *English place-name elements* (EPNS vols. 25/26) English Place-
EPNS	Name Society
JEPNS	*Journal of the English Place-Name Society*
Lf	*Locus focus*
OED	*Oxford English dictionary*
PN X	*The place-names of county X*; EPNS volume
PN Sx (Roberts)	R.G. Roberts, *The place-names of Sussex* (1914) Judith Glover, *The place names*
PN Sx (Glover)	*of Sussex* (-2 (1997))
PNIL	Margaret Gelling, *Place-names in the landscape* (-2 (1998)) Margaret Gelling,
STP	*Signposts to the past* (-2 (1988))
VCH X	*Victoria history of county X*
VEPN	D. Parsons, T. Styles, with C. Hough, *The vocabulary of English place-names* (1997-, appearing by fascicle)
-0	an edition-flag (e.g. *STP*-2, second edition of *STP*)

Main relevant local periodicals and series:

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 0	*Sussex Record Society* volume, with volume number
WSH	*West Sussex History*

• EDITORIAL

I have to begin by admitting to the worst sin an editor can commit - a misattribution. The note N2.2.5 in *Lf* 2 (2), page 10, appeared under David Padgham's name instead of that of its true author, Pam Combes. Apologies to both **Net** members. Janet Pennington notes also that the name of Nathaniel Woodard, founder of Lancing College, was misspelt in note N2.2.7. In my own note on Dumpford (N2.2.3), I promised that a less soberly-titled version of the piece would appear in *SPP* 86 (December 1998). Well, the piece duly appeared in *SPP*, but shorn of the agonized-over sub-title "Out, dammed spot". I just thought it might appeal ....

Contributors may consider sending their work for inclusion in *Lf* on disk. The preferred form for receiving them in is *plain-text*, i.e. without formatting or font-selection of any kind, i.e. using only QWERTY characters (including numerals and punctuation marks) and spaces. If you have written something using Word or WordPerfect or some other widely-used editorial system, your operating system will probably allow you to make a plain-text version in a couple of keystrokes. I work within the UNIX operating system, and plain-text files submitted to me by email attachment, or even sent as an email message, can be processed with ease.

Richard Coates
Editor

• PERSONAL STATEMENTS AND WORK IN PROGRESS: A SELECTION

RICHARD COATES

I have submitted a proposal to the Arts and Humanities Research Board for funds to put on a database (to be accessible via the Internet) part of the English Place-Name Society's collection of place-name spellings, including as a first goal the whole of the material in the published *PN Sx* volumes. This first step should make it possible to add to the Sussex collection as new material be- comes available and to put that new material in the public domain immediately. This obviously has implications for the form of any second edition of the book-format work. I should know in late May whether the application has been successful. Even if it is not, this sort of work is the way of the future, and will need to be done at some stage.

offcentre I

Accidentally coming across Richard Coates's note in *SAC* 125 (1987), 151, on the derivation of *Harlot's Wood* in Northiam, I was reminded (remarks **Janet Pennington**) of a list of field-names that I spotted recently in the West Chiltington land tax for 1780 (WSRO MF 630). Grouped together were: *East Brothels*, *West Brothels* and *Whorelands*, with, perhaps but not necessarily incongruously, *Gayes*. In later years *Brothels* became *Bothels*; so was this just a Freudian slip of the pen before Freud, or was it the type of place alluded to in *Smock Alley*, also in West Chiltington (*SAC* 114 (1976), 334)?

[Excitable folks in West Chiltington. -Ed.]

• RECENT LITERATURE

☐   Abbreviations in references: see *Locus focus* 1 (3), 2. Past numbers of *Locus focus* itself are not analysed in this section.

Coates, Richard (1998) Dumpford Hundred. *SPP* 86 (December), 5, 7.

Coates, Richard (1998) Place-name suggestions wrong. *SPP* 86 (December), 14-15. [Letter responding to one about *Ewhurst* in previous issue.]

Coates, Richard (1999) *The place-names of West Thorney.* Nottingham: EPNS (supplementary series 1). ISBN 0904889 52 1.

Coates, Richard (1999) Box in English place-names. *English Studies* 80, 2-45. [Some place-names in Sussex are discussed.]

Coates, Richard (1999) Wick. *SPP* 87 (April), 5.

Elmevik, L. (1997) Did OE *stede* 'place' also have the meaning '(enclosed) pasture'? In H. Ramisch and K. Wynne (eds) *Language in time and space. Studies in honour of Wolfgang Viereck on the occasion of his 60th birthday.* Stuttgart: Steiner, 82-5. [Special number of *Zeitschrift für Dialektologie und Lin- guistik*, 97 of the continuous series.]

Faith, R. (1996) "Hyde farms" and Hyde place-names: summary report of work. *Medieval Settlement Research Group Annual Report* 10 (for 1995), 19.

Gardiner, Mark (1998) The characterization of medieval Wealden settlements. *SAC* 136, 95-110. [Contains note by Richard Coates, The place-name *Ivenden* (at 99-100).]

Martinet, André (1996) Comment les Anglo-Saxons ont-ils accédé à la Grande Bretagne? *La Linguistique* 32, 3-9. [Discusses names in *-thun* (cf. *-ton*) and *-inghem/-inghen* (cf. *-ingham*) between Boulogne and Béthune as possible evidence for this region as an Anglo-Saxon crossing-point.]

Parkinson, Justin (1999) A trip to Brighton the long way round. *[Brighton] Evening Argus* 15/02/1999. [About namesakes of Brighton worldwide. Some even within Britain are omitted.]

There are letters concerning the house-name *Bergen-op-Zoom* in Ashurst in recent issues of *West Sussex Gazette*; see query Q3.1.3 in this number of *Lf.*

From the newspapers

The oak which gives its name to Mile Oak in Portslade may be targeted for preservation by Brighton and Hove Council if the advice of Councillor Bob Carden is followed. This modestly renowned tree - famed almost as far away as Southwick - is commemorated in an inscription on the wall of the house whose garden it adorns, which was originally the home of the foreman of the waterworks (*Evening Argus* 27/02/99, p. 5).

• NEWS ITEMS

Public Record Office Tithe Maps Collaborative Project Workshop, December 1998

The idea for this project emerged from a seminar organized by the PRO to which a number of archivists from local record offices were invited. The aim of the seminar was to encourage archives to pool their resources, skills and knowledge on joint activities. The possibility of utilizing Heritage Lottery Funds was a major spur to such an approach.

Tithe maps are a class of archive that is subject to intensive use. While preservation treatment can help to alleviate the current poor condition of these records, a more long term, radical solution is required.

The PRO proposes to apply for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to enable them to make surrogate copies of tithe maps. The copies would be raster maps produced by digitally scanning the originals. The copies could be made available to researchers by means of CD-ROM (or their successors) or over the Internet. The maps could then be viewed on screen or printed images produced if required.

The original PRO proposal excluded copying the accompanying schedules. However consumer astonishment ex- pressed forcibly from the workshop floor will, no doubt effect a change of mind about that extraordinary idea!

A pilot project using the Rutland maps (for obvious reasons) will be undertaken this winter and the reports on that should be completed in the spring of 1999. Local rumour has it that West Sussex could be high on the priority list if and when the full project is undertaken.

The idea is visionary and has the potential to revolutionize the use of this source by researchers. But the eventual success of the scheme depends, to a large extent, on the ability of local record offices to provide not only substantial support and space for searchers in the future but also to harness the willingness of amateur volunteers to input data from the schedules and other sources. A further application to the Heritage Lottery fund would be required to finance this local initiative. This application could be made by individual local record offices or by regional groups.

The copies produced are raster images and cannot be manipulated immediately within a conventional G(eographical) I(nformation) S(ystem). However they can be linked indirectly with specifically designed software that does allow the relevant information from the schedule to be attached to individual fields (the farming variety!) identified on the map. Data from other archive sources can also be added; given the right choice of computer programme this can include pictures. Information from the Sites and Monuments Record could also be incorporated.

Your mole at the workshop considers that the scheme requires a massive co-operative effort, not only from the local authorities but from all local interest groups, genealogists, place-name researchers, historians, building experts, geographers and archaeologists (yes - archaelogists) to ensure that it comes to fruition here in Sussex.

The idea is, as I said, visionary, and opens up almost unimaginable possibilities for researchers in the future; but the hurdles to be overcome are huge. Don't hold your breath!

Pam Combes

Richard Coates

N3.1.1 Firle - some further thoughts

I should no doubt have said something in my article on Firle (Coates 1997/8) about the possibility of its deriving from a Latin word akin to *ferrāria* 'ironworks', rather than the proposed **ferālia* 'wild places', if only to reject it vigorously. The main objection to the interpretation from *ferrāria* is the absence of any ironworking remains there. Such remains are frequent in the Weald, and I feel quite confident that some would have shown up at Firle by now if there had been any. Not only are there no finds; in the present state of our knowledge it is inconceivable that any ironworking could have taken place in this parish or in any adjacent area that might ever have shared its name. The geology offers no ironstone. The only slag found in downland or part-downland parishes (small amounts in Newhaven, Bishopstone and Shoreham) has in each case been explicitly evaluated by the excavators, in published articles dating from well before mine (*SAC* 114: 293; 115: 290; 116: 91-2 (1976-8)), as not providing sufficient evidence for local forging activity. Of course, I must back down and reassess the proposed etymology if geology or archaeology forces me to. It is not inconceivable, in theory, that some kind of depôt could have been meant rather than an actual works site.

But the phonology is also difficult. The many place-names in Romance-speaking countries that descend from *ferrāria* always show *r(r) ... r* rather than *r(r) ... l*. The few names with *r(r) ... l* are etymologically insecure, for instance two examples of *Ferrals* in the French *départements* of Aude and Hérault (both *Ferrales* in first-millennium Latin sources and *Ferrals* in older Occitan texts) and *Férolles* in Seine-et-Marne (*Ferreolis* in Latin in the eleventh century, perhaps containing the known personal name *Ferreolus* in the dative plural, like *Anicetis* in Roman Britain from *Anicetus*). This gives us no strong basis to believe in a name enshrining a word **ferrālia* or the like meaning 'ironworks'. A word of this form in fact exists in late Latin, and has derivatives in the Romance languages (e.g. Italian *ferraglia*), but the sense is always 'scrap-iron' and it is not a topographical word. But as far as Firle is concerned, there is no cast-iron *phonological* objection to *ferrālia*. Firstly, a geminate before the Latin stressed syllable can be simplified in OE, which means that names deriving from **Ferālia* and **Ferrālia* would be indistinguishable on that score. Secondly, sequences of *r ... r* may occasionally be dissimilated to *r ... l* or *l ... r* in *English* as opposed to Romance. However, there is no instance in the record of this happening where the second *r* follows the Latin stressed vowel, as would be required in the name of Firle. The appearance of OE *l* is exclusively associated with adjacent vowels which are unstressed in Latin, and therefore seems to be due to English interpretation of perceptually weak syllables (Campbell 1959: § 541 (3)). With reasonable confidence we can therefore say that this makes the derivation of *Firle* from *ferrāria* improbable phonologically, but not quite impossible.

Against my position, it is true that there is a striking lack of further instances of the name **Ferālia*, and that this is troublesome. But I see no easy alternative to this solution grounded in the topographical and land-use facts I advanced in my earlier article: that the name appears to apply to a fairly wide area, rather than a single inhabited place, and that it really is on the margin of one or more villa-estates.

I should point out that I was wrong in asserting (1997/8: 8) that place-names such as *Placentia*, which I took to be grammatically analogous to my proposed source-name, are neuter plurals of a participial form. They are in fact feminine singulars, like the *Copia* 'abundance' in Gaul which is unambiguously so: it is an application of a familiar lexical word. Many of the names of a participial appearance such as *Placentia*, *Valentia*, are rare as lexical words where they can be paralleled at all (except *Constantia*). Broadly, however, my argument survives this error, as the neuter plural status of the name is not crucial. The phonological aspects of my solution would survive intact whether the base name was **Ferālia* or the corresponding

singular *Ferāle.* Neuter plural names do in fact occasionally appear in Latin *(Ostia)* but are more frequent in Greek *(Stagira, Plutonia).*

o   *References*

Campbell, Alistair (1959) *Old English grammar.* Oxford: Clarendon.

Coates, Richard (1997/8) A surviving Latin place-name in Sussex: Firle. *JEPNS* 30, 5-15.

Pam Combes

N3.1.2 Money Mound in Piddinghoe, an earlier name?

Money Mound is the name given on modern OS maps to a long barrow lying on a low spur of chalk downland north-west of Deans in Piddinghoe. The tumulus is depicted on *The Bullock Hill* on the Piddinghoe tithe map of 1840 (ESRO TD/E 57) and the OS 1st edition 6" map of 1873 identifies a tumulus, but neither map names the feature. When the name *Money Mound* was first used and indeed whether it was always the name applied to the barrow in impossible to determine. However, Money Mound is clearly visible from another spur of downland in the adjoining parish of Southease called *Rooklow furlong.* Margaret Gelling considers that in the south of England the element *hlāw* (often giving *low* in modern names) is normally applied to tumuli (*STP*-2: 134-7). That there may have been another tumulus, now ploughed out, in the vicinity of Rooklow furlong cannot be ruled out, but consideration should be given to the possibility that the furlong was named from the distinctive tumulus that it overlooks.

Michael Leppard

N3.1.3 Cuthman, Chidham and a stone

Michael Leppard draws attention to the fact that relicta atte Stone was taxed in Chidham in 1326 and Alic' atte Stone in 1332 (Subsidy Rolls, *SRS* 10: 118, 125). Although this surname is not uncommon, its significance in Chidham parish is for the light it may throw on the *Life of St Cuthman*, recently edited and published by John Blair (1997). In chapter 2 of this *Life*, we find: "In the pasture was a stone on which the holy shepherd was in the habit of sitting, which the locals still hold in great veneration today, for God brings many blessings through it by his merits" (Blair's translation). A fifteenth-century tradition puts Cuthman's birthplace at Chidham. Alice's surname may suggest the continued existence of Cuthman's stone in the fourteenth century.

o   *Reference*

Blair, John (1997) Saint Cuthman, Steyning and Bosham. *SAC* 135, 173-92.

Michael Leppard

N3.1.4 Corrections and additions to PN Sussex *327-31*

The object of this note is not complete rewriting of the relevant entries, but the correction of error and the addition of earlier or significantly different forms of names already recorded.

- 327 ASHURSTWOOD (more often written ASHURST WOOD)

Foresta de Esseherst and *boscum de Aisherst* are irrelevant here. The former does not refer to a wood; the latter does not belong in this area or elsewhere in Sussex (see *SAC* 57: 168).

    It is important to distinguish four different contexts for the name Ashurst:

        (i) the manor: *Hashurst c.*1230 (Lewes Chartulary, *SRS* 38: 83)

        (ii) the tithing: *Aschurst* 1285 (Hundred Roll, in Rev. W. Budgen's unpublished notebook 110, Barbican House, Lewes)

        (iii) the common: *Esherst* 1317 (Lewes Chartulary, *SRS* 38:86)

        (iv) the village: *Asherst Wood* 1561 (parish register, *SRS* 24: 29)

It is impossible to tell to which of these the 1248 and 1279 citations in *PN Sussex* belong, without recourse to the original assize rolls.

- 331 WALLHILL FARM

Walhill 1508 (will of John Payne, *SRS* 42: 232)

    The first element, *Wald, is also found alone referring to the same property* (1546, will of another John Payne, papers of W.H. Hills, WSRO). *Waldhyll* occurs in the same source. It occurs earlier in the surname of the man to whom the manor of *Hashurst* was leased in *c.*1230, William *de Waux* (in its French form). The family name is also found in Latin *(de Waldis)* and English *(atte/de Welde)* forms. This element *wald* (originally 'woodland') is the word which gives us modern *weald*.

    The manor acquired alternative names as a result of the lease: *Greinstedd Weild al. Walhill* 1553 (foot of a fine, cited in *PN Sussex* 331), *Ashurst Wold alias Walhyll alias Wylde c.*1560 (Chancery proceedings, *SAC* 44: 44) and a host of variant spellings thereafter. *Brokhurst in Walda* 1337 (*PN Sussex* 331) is another reference to this property, not to the Weald as taken by *PN Sussex*.

    All this is is argued with full supporting references and additional citations in Leppard (1998).

o *Reference*

Leppard, M.J. (1998) The origins of Ashurst Wood. *Bulletin of the East Grinstead Society* 65, 4-8.

Pam Combes

N3.1.5 Pigfirle - a hitherto unnoticed reference

An indenture made in 1371 between the Abbot and Convent of Grestain and the Rector of Alfriston records the names of acres in Alfriston, then held by John de Dene, in which Grestain enjoyed half the tithe; among the many names listed is *1 acre called Pigeferlacr'* (Peckham 1943: 213-4). The acre must have formed part of the landholding of Gervase de Pygeferle recorded in the *villat' de Brewyk/Berewyk* in 1327 and 1332 (Hudson 1910: 186, 315).

o *References*

Hudson, William (ed.) (1910) *The three earliest subsidies for the county of Sussex in the years 1296, 1327, 1332*. Lewes: SRS 10.

Peckham, W.D. (ed.) (1943) *The Chartulary of the High Church of Chichester*. Lewes: SRS 46.

Michael Leppard

N3.1.6 Unparalleled spellings in non-manuscript sources

Attention is drawn in *Lf* 2 (2) (Autumn 1998), p. 21, to the unique spellings of Bramber (partly in mirror writing) and Brightford on the reputedly late-13th century seal of Brightford Hundred. Unparalleled spellings are often found on coins also, and taken as important evidence when interpreting place-names.

Similar phenomena can be found in other non-manuscript sources. At Homestall in East Grinstead an early-16th century coat of arms on a screen of the same period includes part of the motto of the Order of the Garter in reverse, *tios ynoh* (Stenning 1903: 236; cf. also *Bulletin of the East Grinstead Society* 46 (Autumn 1989), 7). Several mid-17th century iron graveslabs have words with letters missing or reversed (Willatts 1987: 104-5, where examples are given). A colleague has told me of the words "NO PARKNIG" among the white lines and lettering on the road by his former place of work in London. All these can easily be accounted for. The road-letterer, using stencils, was probably dyslexic. The casters of the graveslab, working with ready-made movable wooden blocks of words or letters, were barely literate. The heraldic artist, copying a stained-glass original was insufficiently literate to realize he was looking at one of the pieces from the wrong side.

It is not unreasonable to suggest that some, perhaps many, of the early engravers of seals or makers of dies for coins were copying what had been written for them but were themselves illiterate or perhaps dyslexic. They owed their jobs to their technical skills at a time when literacy was a privilege of the few. Even if this is accepted in principle, however, we can never be in a position to state as a fact that any given unique name-form is attributable to an illiterate craftsman. The unparalleled spellings still remain and must be taken seriously as evidence, but perhaps ac- corded slightly less weight that those in manuscript sources.

o *References*

Stenning, J.C. (1903) An old stone house at Homestall, Ashurst Wood. *SAC* 46, 235-6.

Willatts, Rosalind M. (1987) Iron graveslabs: a sideline of the early iron industry. *SAC* 125, 99-113.

Michael Leppard

N3.1.7 Brambletye field-names in Chailey parish

A map, now in my possession, of that part of the manor of Brambletye that lay in Chailey (full details *SRS* 66: 7) in 1651 names the following fields:

The forty acres, Upper seuerall, Furzyfeild, The 6 acre peece, Long feild, Holmbush feild, Rye feild, ye Slag, barly feild (possibly some letters worn away at the start of this name)*, Strawbury feilds, Limekell feild, The Mead, Relgie feild, House plot* (with house on) and a wood: *Cops.* Part of *Chailye Common* is also included.

Pam Combes

N3.1.8 Differing viewpoints: a group of field names in farm and parish maps

Field-names recorded on two maps provide interesting evidence for the variation in names that could be generated by the differing viewpoint of the individuals who gave evidence to commissioners or cartographers.

A map of Bishopstone and Norton farms of 1770 (ESRO AMS 5579) records three fields held by Norton farm (in Bishopstone parish) that lay across the parish boundary in Denton. The field-names recorded there were *Denton Brook*, *Denton Piece* and *Denton 6 acres.* The same fields in the Denton tithe award (ESRO TD/E 131 1938) are recorded as *Brook*, *North Laine* and *Cramplands.* All three fields appear to represent Norton manor holdings in the common lands of Denton and all lay adjacent to the parish boundary. The reason for the variation in the first two names in obvious. The third lies in *Cramplands Laine*, probably one of the common fields of Denton manor, lying in the vicinity of what is now known as Poverty Bottom. In the medieval period the manors of Bishopstone (which included Norton) and Denton were both the property of the Bishop of Chichester, a tenurial link that might account for manorial holdings that cross the parish boundary.

John Briggs

N3.1.9 Thorney Island street-names: Hornet Road and Sabre Road

John Briggs of DERA, Farnborough, points out a mistake on p. 45 of Richard Coates's monograph *The place- names of West Thorney* (EPNS, Nottingham (1999); see Recent literature). The McDonnell-Douglas (now Boeing) F/A-18 Hornet did not enter service with the US Navy and Marine Corps until 1980 and so could not account for the origin of *Hornet Road* in the former RAF station, which closed in the mid-1970s. We should be looking instead for a British aircraft of the 1940s or 1950s, and he suggests the De Havilland Hornet, a twin-engined fighter.

He also notes that the Sabre commemorated in *Sabre Road* was the aircraft manufactured under licence by Canadair of Canada for the Royal Canadian Air Force and used by the RAF in the mid-1950s. It was thus technically the Canadair Sabre Mk 4 rather than the North American F-86 Sabre as stated; but this is the same aircraft!

• QUERIES

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

Q3.1.1: The Blatchen in Littlehampton (Tim Hudson)

I wonder if anyone has any explanation for the common-field name *The Blatchen* which occurs in Littlehampton. John Field's *English field-names* (Longmans, London (1993)) and W.D. Parish's *Dictionary of the Sussex dialect* (Farncombe, Lewes (1875)) are no help, but the *OED* seems to indicate a connexion with *black.* Any ideas gratefully received.

[Editor's note: I wonder whether whatever it is might be the first element of the two Sussex *Blatchington*s. It is perfectly possible for this form to represent an earlier *Blatching* in Sussex.]

Q3.1.2 (Le) Windbeache on Ashdown Forest (Dorothy Balèan)

Mrs Dorothy Balèan of The Old Hall, Crailinghall, Jedburgh TD8 6LU, draws attention to a place on Ashdown called *Wyndebeche* (1229, document unspecified), "later" *Wyndebeach(e)*, and finally *le Windbeache* (1608). Linguistically the name is not easy. *Beach(e)* might be for OE *bēce* 'beech-tree' or *bece* 'stream', but the latter is un- common in the South Country. However, if *winde* is for OE *(ge)wind* 'something winding', the sense 'winding stream' might emerge.

In 1608 the name *le Windbeache* was equated by inquisitors *post mortem* with *Vachery*, the original *Wyndebeche* having been the Prior of Michelham's vaccary. Through the past years this Vachery has become equated with *The Vetchery*, a property purchased in 1925 by Mrs Balèan's father F.J. Nettlefold, who created a small home farm and changed the name to *Chelwood Vachery.* In Mrs Balèan's view the connection between the Prior's land and The Vetchery is founded entirely on speculation.

The special archaeological and historical interest of The Vetchery is that Mrs Balèan believes it to have been the location of the lost palace of Edward II built in about 1300, and which, by tradition, lies within the bounds of this estate, which presumably therefore was not monastic land but royal land. (No transfer is known.) Although no trace of walls reported as still standing in the early 19th century, a medieval settlement is clearly defined on a plan of The Vetchery dating from 1799. She considers that the only alternative for the Prior's vaccary, and therefore for *le Windbeache*, is the adjacent estate called *The Isle of Thorns.*

Both The Isle of Thorns and The Vetchery appear in the record for the first time within a few years of each other in the mid-16th century (1564 and 1546 respectively). Today they are in separate parishes (Maresfield and Danehill (earlier Fletching) respectively).

She notes that the Isle of Thorns fits the following description: two brooks which rise within a short distance of each other on the narrow northern side form the other three sides of its boundary, and during heavy rains it is completely islanded. Maybe one of the streams mentioned is describable as a winding one. The streams concerned feed the Medway. But the name *Windbeache* is of further philological interest because the ancient name of the Ouse, *Midewinde*, appears to contain another instance of the rare element *(ge)wind* or a closely related term.

Does anyone have further information bearing on the identification?

Q3.1.3 Bergen-op-Zoom, Ashurst (Janet Pennington)

Cedric Baring-Gould wrote to the *West Sussex Gazette* (08/10/1998) to suggest that this house, which is on the edge of the Adur flood plain not far west of Bineham Bridge and New Inn Farm (NGR TQ 180152), was built by a Dutchman who had been brought over for his expertise in canal-building, but expressed surprise that it should apparently commemorate the site of a battle in which the Dutch were defeated by the French (1747). John Townsend of the Ashurst History Group replied in *WSG* on 15/10 saying that the cottage was built illegally on the waste around 1679, but that the name was first found in 1841. the original builder did not remove it as ordered, and it became a copyhold of the manor of King's Barns.

The name has intrigued me for some time. It is translatable from the Dutch as 'hills on the edge'. I wrote to *WSG* on 22/10 to record some of the history of the place in Holland and its English connections prior to 1700, and recalled the locally current story that a Dutch engineer had been working on the Adur valley drainage in the nineteenth century. This story is also related by Bob Copper in a slightly different guise in his account of following Belloc's trek across Sussex (1994).

Mr Townsend wrote to me again on 25/11 after I had suggested he searched through the 18th and 19th century Land Drainage Records for the Adur Valley at WSRO - they are a fascinating and underused source. He had discovered a Holland Sewer and a Holland Sluice, referred to in 1779 by John Muzzall of Henfield, but that was the only Dutch-sounding connection. Holland was also a well known local surname. He looked for Dutch surnames in the Ashurst parish registers without success.

He wrote to me again on 17/12, commenting that the archivist at Bergen op Zoom had expressed surprise at receiving two enquiries in one month about the house-name and saying:-

> "I'm becoming more and more convinced that the Dutch engineer line is leading us astray. I spent a day last week in the University of Sussex library. I went through the Dutch history shelves, and land drainage books (both historical and geographical), the Sussex collection (*SAC*, *SNQ*, *SH*, *SCM*), and not one sniff of any Dutch connection whatsoever, at any time, with Sussex. I have nearly finished the Land Drainage records at Chichester, and have the Inland Navigation ones to go through, but again a total blank.

> "The fact is that there was no need for an expert Dutch engineer to work on the Adur. It seems to have been a "simple" river - no locks, no tunnels, no difficult drainage problems. It did need constant maintenance - cutting weeds and osiers, strengthening the banks, removing mud - but nothing that could not be done by locals. When the knowledge of a civil engineer was needed, there were plenty of British ones to step in - Rennie and Cater Rand, for example. There are no Dutch names amongst them. So where do we look next?"

The first documented occurrence of the name *Bergen op Zoom* is the 1841 Census Return. A descendant of the occupant contacted me to say he had no idea why the cottage should have been so called. His ancestor, an agricultural worker, apparently had no Dutch connections.

My childhood home in Hove was named *Goodleigh* by my parents in 1938 (it was newly built) on their return from honeymoon at this village in Devon. I suppose a similar event, or a recollection of one of the wars, could be responsible for Bergen-op-Zoom, and the story of the Dutch engineer may have grown up locally to "explain" it after the original reason was lost. Any other suggestions?

○ *Reference*

Copper, Bob (1994) *Across Sussex with Belloc: in the footsteps of "The four men"*. Stroud: Alan Sutton.

Q3.1.4 Kent Street (David Padgham)

Kent Street is a length of the A21 north of Hastings between Baldslow and Blackbrooks (Sedlescombe) which was turnpiked in 1836. Local historians have tried to link the *Street* to Margary's nearby Roman road which runs south through Sedlescombe, but I have found no references earlier than the 1841 census and I assume it arose because the turnpike terminated at Hawkhurst Moor just over the Kent border. However, the current OS Explorer map shows another *Kent Street* as a hamlet and long lane in Shermanbury and Cowfold (TQ 230213) and not mentioned in *PN Sussex* - can anyone say how this arose?

• QUICK RESPONSES TO QUERIES AND ARTICLES

R3.1.1: Quickbourne in Northiam [ref. Q2.2.1 (David Padgham)]

Paul Cullen advises: treat Witney (1976) with caution! Many of his identifications of early spellings with later names are extremely implausible, and his philology is often highly unsound. On such a matter as connecting Quickbourne with *Benequyke* he must be considered a far from trustworthy authority. A reversal of elements is very unlikely (indeed, without a parallel?)

Given Witney's (undated) form *Quickbean*, it may be suggested that Quickbourne derives from OE *cwic-bēam* '?the juniper' (dialect *quick-beam*, cf. *OED*), as does Quickbeam Hill in Ugborough, Devon. *PN Devon* (286) notes the south-western dialect use of this term for 'mountain ash'. The ambiguous 1498 spelling *Quykbonecrouche* (*PN Sussex* 524) looks a better fit for original *bēam* than for *burna.* A remodelling of the second element to *-bourne* seems plausible.

o *Reference*

Witney, K.P. (1976) *The Jutish Forest - a study of the Weald of Kent from 450 to 1380* A.D.. London: Athlone Press.

R3.1.2: St Rumbold [ref. Locus focus 2 (2), 2 (Ken Green's personal statement)]

David Padgham notes a 10-page exposition of St Rumbold in Hollington and other English locations in Rev. F.W.B. Bullock *A history of the Church-in-the-Wood, Hollington* (St Leonards-on-Sea: Budd and Gillatt (1949)).

R3.1.3 More on the South Harting Bohemia [ref. note in SPP 84 (April 1998), 5 (Richard Coates)]

David Padgham notes that in Rev. H.D. Gordon's *A history of South Harting* (London (1877); reprinted Petersfield: Frank Westwood (1975)) there are three references to the Bohemia in that parish: *Bohemia Hill* (geological drawing, p. 1), *Bohemy or Bohemia Hill* on the Malm rock [Greensand] (p. 7), and "in the vale, 'Bohemia' or 'Bohemy hol- low' sacred to the gipsies" (p. 222). There may be other mentions, but the book is unindexed. This is an improbable spot for fashionable picnics. It is not on early 1" OS maps, but it must be around Turkey Island or to the north of it.

R3.1.4: The Trippett, Bosham [ref. Q2.2.4 (Ken Green)]

Paul Cullen notes that Hall (1957), quoting Parish (1875), gives *tripet* 'a wicket gate' as a Sussex dialect word (from the west of the county).

○ *References*

Hall, Helena (1957) *A dictionary of the Sussex dialect.* Bexhill: Gardner's. [Expanded edition of Parish (1875).]

Parish, W.D. (1875) *A dictionary of the Sussex dialect.* Lewes: Farncombe.

R3.1.5: Mecket Pen, Camber [ref. Q1.2.4 (Richard Coates)]

In reply to my own query: this may somehow be related to the word *micket* 'short fishing-line', mentioned by
W. Ruskin Butterfield in an article published in 1913 in *The Hastings and East Sussex Naturalist* and republished by Juliet Millican (Old Hastings Bookshop) in 1982 in a pamphlet entitled *Old folk names used on the Hastings Stade.* If so, the suggested connection with *The Mackett*, Hayling Island (Hampshire), becomes more doubtful.

Passing interest

Doris Williams, in the "Parish pump" column of the *Sussex Express* (Lewes and Ringmer edition), 26/02/99, p. 48), gives the origin of the name *The Looes* in Falmer, which currently attaches to the churchyard extension. This extension was the site of the village pound, and Mrs Williams explains the name as meaning 'a place where animals are kept', i.e. OE *hlōse* 'shelter, sty'. She has an amusing account of the way the place was used by smugglers.

Passing interest

There were local protests as the historic pub The Friar's Oak in Hassocks was renamed *The Pilgrim Goose* by Vintage Inns, the owners. Judy King, the clerk of Clayton Parish Council, was reported as saying: "It's not just the name of a pub. It's a place. People who live in Friar's Oak are annoyed they haven't got a pub any more" (see *Evening Argus* 15/12/98 and 19/01/99). Vintage Inns had previously transformed The Sergison Arms at Haywards Heath into *The Dolphin.* No such dis- sent about the name-changes undergone in its time by The Pedestrian's Arms (13-14 Foundry Street, Brighton: *Evening Argus* 17/01/99, p. 3); this was first *The White Horse*, then *The Labour in Vain*, then *The Lamb*; popularly known as *The Post- man's Pub* because it is near the main Brighton sorting office; and it is usually known as *The Peds.*

David Padgham

Where was Westfield Roman villa?

(With some thoughts on other Westfield place-names)

Richard Coates (1997: 2) wrote: "Place-name scholars are now unanimous that *comp* in place-names is an OE adaptation of Latin *campus* 'level ground, "field" suitable for drill or agriculture', applied to land standing in some relation to a Roman villa estate It is sometimes said that it may denote the uncultivated, but cultivable, land on the margin of such an estate." Beddingham is the most recently-discovered of a number of such sites in Sussex and elsewhere. He asked for reports of other *comp*s, and I drew attention to a group of field names in Westfield.

The discovery of the *Classis Britannica* Roman bath-house and a vast ironworking at Beauport Park, close to the point where Westfield meets Battle and Hollington parishes, and of a habitation site nearby, led to the suggestion that a villa/farm might be expected in the neighbourhood - but not too close to the industrial site which would have been quite noxious, and the soil unsuited to cultivation.

4.5 km east, on the present Pattletons Farm, are a group of three field-names: *Comp Shaw*, *Comp Field* and *Comp Field Shaw* (respectively 806, 807 and 814 on the Tithe Award map of 1840, in all about 11 acres) and it happens that we have earlier documentation of the names in a survey of the manor of Robertsbridge, dated to 1567 (*SRS* 47). Holding no. 237 includes "two closes lying together called Compfeild and Compwishe"; the first-named can be identified, from the abutments, with the Comp Field of the TA - on rising ground rather than level - while Compwishe is now *Oak Brook* adjacent. There is reference in the text back to "a deed remayning in the lord's Evidence Howse dated 12o Junii Ao H.6 38" [1460], but this is not thought to survive.

Assuming that a name **Compfeld* was bestowed by the first Anglo-Saxon settlers to see the abandoned estate, can we deduce they were describing "the field on their own land nearest the *comp*", just as Church Field is near, but not the actual site of the church? The site abuts the Doleham Ditch - a name to which we shall return - across which in Guestling parish is Great Maxfield - on a level alluvial valley floor.

Maxfield was purchased by Battle Abbey in the 12th century, and became the country retreat and farm of the monks; could it occupy the site of the country retreat of the naval commandant of Roman Beauport, or of the farm supplying him with produce? If the proposed eastern bypass of Hastings is ever built, we may find the evidence as it cuts through the area.

Other Westfield place-names in the Robertsbridge Survey

The parish name *Westfield* itself presents a problem - what was it west of? Maxfield is the logical answer; Ekwall suggested that this was originally **Meox-feld* 'dung open land', and ample dung is surely indicative of good land. Westfield is *Westewelle* in *DB* (assumed to be a scribal error) but the whole of the present centre of the village was, until enclosure at various dates up to 1810, an area of open downland shared by three manors converging in the centre (Crowham, Lankhurst and Westfield, the latter being the dominant manor with the church adjacent). Gelling (*PNIL*-1: 237) says: "As a term employed in naming villages *feld* probably means 'open land previously used for pasture'; it might be suggested that the land covered by [such] parishes was at a very early period reserved for communal pasture by the people of surrounding villages." Here, for "villages" read "estates".

The Pattletons Farm of the TA (see map on page 16) has been assembled from smaller holdings, principally of Robertsbridge Abbey, which were in several hands in 1567. There never was a Farmer Pattleton owning Compfield; *PN Sussex* traces it to *Pertlingetun* (*c*.1215) comparing it with *Peartingawyrth* in West Firle's Selsey charter of *c*.790 (on which name see Coates 1997/8: 13-14, fn. 12). In 1567 two parcels are *Sowthins/Buckland als. Partlington*, but *Compfeild* was "sometime parcel of the tenement of Sowthins", while abutting it to the east were *Knockfeild* and *Knockwishe.* These are no more of a *cnocc* 'hillock' than adjacent fields, but the large estate to the south was *The Oke*; could *Knock-* be another example of OE *āc* 'oak', as in *Knockholt* (Kent)?

The major part of the present farm was *Castrets als. Sowthins.* Southings survives as a separate farm nearer the village, now pretentiously calling itself a manor. The editor of the Survey equates Castrets with *Castrete*, i.e. Cade Street in Heathfield, but Robert Castrete was a local esquire, and a feoffee of Sir William Etchingham VI (d. 1412) (Cooper 1950: 63). He no doubt took his surname from the place in Heathfield.

A minor holding was called *Lucas*, which can be equated with the *Luckhurst Wood* and *Field* of the TA; the mutation is explicable if what passes for "Lucas" was originally pronounced "Luckers", a reduction of the original *Luckhurst.* Gotways Farm, on the other side of the parish, was *Gotwey al. Lucas* in 1625; and Lucas was a common local surname, which must have assisted the transformation to the present form.

The land abutting Lucas to the south was *Glynde Wish*, then held by John Avery. *PN Sussex* (352-3) mentions this as "unidentified" - not under the entry for Westfield but when discussing Glynde in Ringmer Hundred and else- where: "Gilbert atte Glynde de Westfeld"; the source reference is omitted.

The abutment to the east, the parish boundary, was in 1567 *the common Sewer* but is now *Doleham Ditch.* I cannot find any early references to this, though *Dolhambregge* over it was noxious in 1392. There are "dykes" on Pevensey Marsh but ditches rarely give rise to place-names in Sussex apart from at county boundaries - the Kent Ditch near Hawkhurst, or Ditcham in Buriton on the Hampshire border. It certainly has the appearance of a straight artificial watercourse, and linked Maxfield with the River Brede.

The two final components of Pattletons, to the north-east, were held of Wilting manor: one, *Parsonage Field*, had become *Bishop's Field* in the TA - not through ecclesiastical promotion but having been held a century earlier by Thomas Bishop. Lastly *The Dandies*, part of the *The Little Dolehams*, is unexplained, though the Dolehams deserve study on another occasion.

○ *References*

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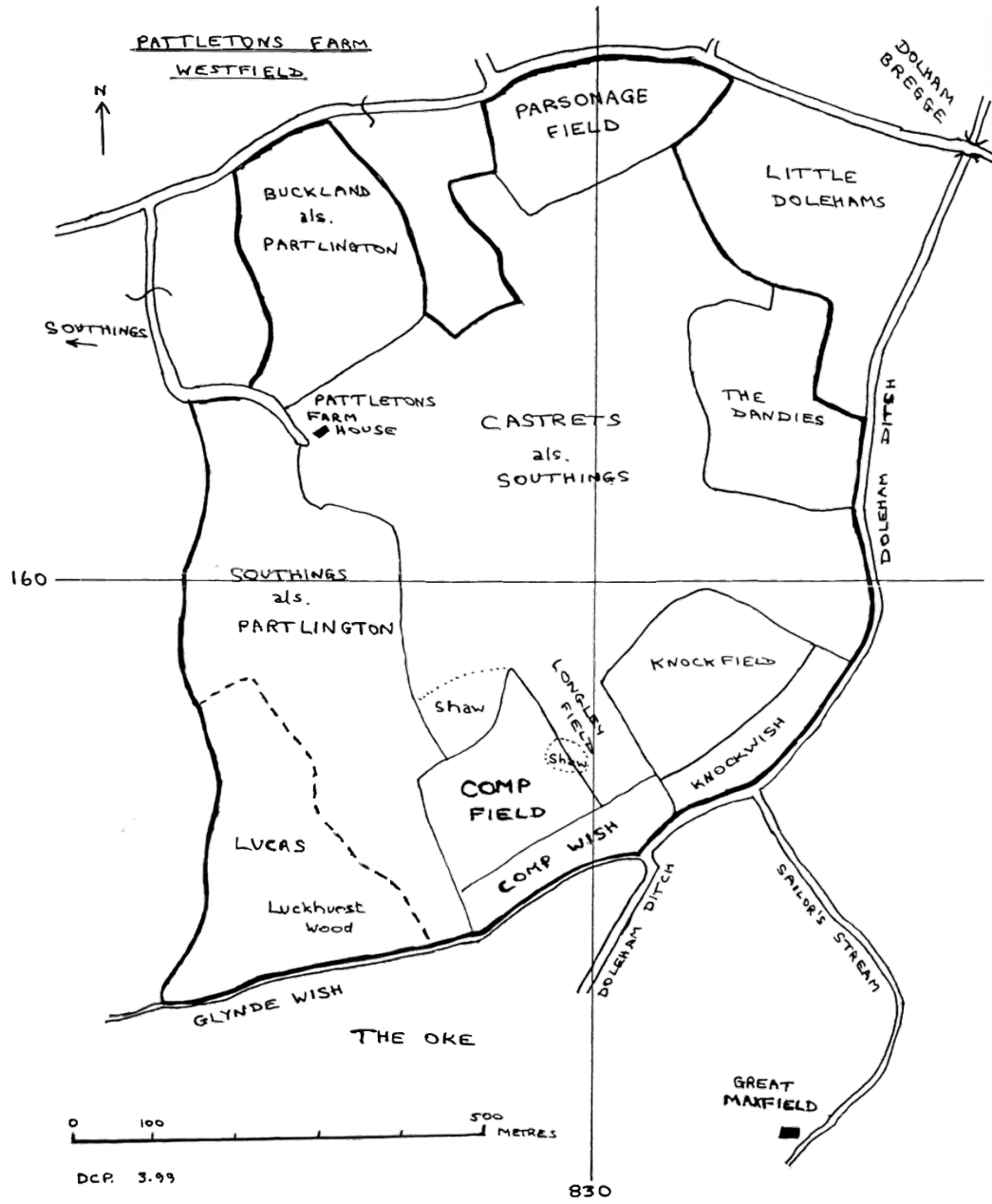
Map of Pattletons Farm, Westfield (© David Padgham)

Pam Combes

Wildetone *and* Wildene *in* Domesday Book - *settlements in the wilderness?*

Wildene in Hartfield hundred and *Wildetone*, of which *sperchedene* in Grinstead hundred was an outlying holding, are both recorded in *Domesday Book.* Neither name survives; either the settlements are lost or their names have changed. It has been suggested, rather enticingly, that the name *Wildetone* might be a form of Willingdon (*Wilen- done, Willedone* in *DB*). Attractive as is the idea the manors in Pevensey Rape held land in Grinstead Hundred be- fore the conquest, the association is unlikely.[1]

Sussex *DB* only recorded manorial outliers when they were transferred to a rape *other than the one* in which the manorial centre lay. Substantial holdings in Willingdon had been lost in Hastings Rape but all the other land associated with the major (and the valuation of 36 hides suggests that it was a substantial area) lay within Pevensey Rape and would be expected to remain hidden within the main manorial entry. Other holdings in Grinstead hundred were associated with manorial centres in Lewes Rape and the predominant association of outliers in Hastings Rape with manors in Pevensey Rape suggests that a south to north or north-east orientation was normal for manorial centres and their wealden outliers in this part of Sussex.

Before the Conquest *sperchedene* and *Wildetone* must have been associated with manors in what was to become the Norman rape of Lewes. The outlier, *sperchedene*, was recorded because it was transferred to Pevensey Rape. *Wildetone* was probably a sub-manor of another greater manor in Lewes Rape since it is not recorded elsewhere in the text.

Although it is dangerous to speculate when the only surviving forms of names are those recorded in *DB*, it is possible that both these names share the same first element; *wilde* 'waste, desert, desolate; uncultivated or uninhabited'. Such a description would have been appropriate for settlements both in the dense woodland and on the poor soils of the open heathland of the Weald or before the 11th century when the names were first applied.

Wilde is not a common element in parochial names anywhere in the but it does occur in minor names in Sussex. The Wildbrooks in Hamsey and Arundel, Wildbridge and *Wildemere* in Yapton, and *Wildecumbe*, *Wildelonde* and *Wyldemersshe* (in unidentified parishes) are recorded in *PN Sussex* (145, 147).

Situated as it was in Hartfield hundred *Wildene* (*wilde denu*) lay either adjacent to or on Ashdown Forest, which remains one of the few traditionally managed open forest areas in south-east England. The village of Hartfield over- looks the upper reaches of the Medway valley, any part of which could have constituted the *Wildene* of *DB*.

The combination of the names *Wildene* and Hartfield (*heorot feld*) suggests that this area was perceived in the 11th century as something resembling a true wilderness (*wild(d)eornes*, cf. *OED*-2, *s.v.*).

Wildetone presents more of a problem since the specific element *wilde* is not recorded with a habitative element anywhere else in England (cf. *EPNE* 265-6). In addition, the place cannot be located since the manorial centre may have been situated some distance from its outlier in Grinstead hundred. However, despite the problem created by the lack of other names with the same form, an estate centre or *tūn* administering an area of uncultivated land would be a particularly appropriate name for a settlement in the relatively unexploited 11th century Weald.

Both these names are now lost. Possibly they were considered obsolete when settlement became commonplace and the land was no longer perceived to be *wilde*. Such a development might also account for the overall lack of habitative names containing this particular descriptive element.[3]

○ *Notes*

1 Cf. Leppard (1996: 6-7). The name *sperchedene* is not treated as other place-names in the *Domesday* text. Most names are written in capitals and rubricated. *Sperchedene* is written entirely in lower case and not rubricated. Other holdings in the same section of test are treated similarly: *inode* (possibly an outlier of Southease (Hobbs 1997)), and *halseeldene* which has a superscript note "vocatur". The form of these entries suggests that the names were descriptive terms for land areas and possibly not yet associated with specific locations.

2 *Wilde* possibly occurs in Wilden Grange (YNR), certainly in Wildmore (Lincolnshire) and Willand (Devon) (*DEPN*-4).

3 I would like to thank Richard Coates for his helpful comments on an earlier version on this note. My thanks also to Christopher Whittick for allowing me the permanent use of his Alecto edition of *Domesday Book*. The use of it has opened my eyes to the minutiae of textual variation which cannot be appreciated in black and white versions where, on occasions, early editors have silently amended the text.

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□□□

Richard Coates

On the later history of the name of Lewes

The origin of the name of the county town has been debated recently (Coates 1990/1, 1997, 1998; Forsberg 1997). Some of the support for my own view - that the name is probably, but not certainly, of Brittonic Celtic origin - comes from the modern disyllabic pronunciation of the name, which is unexpected in an English name of an origin like that postulated by Forsberg or by earlier commentators. If the second <e> represented the vowel of a normal inflectional suffix such as the plural, it should have been lost in around the fifteenth century in the South Country. In this particular name, the vowel could have been lost somewhat earlier, as it met the phonological conditions for the Middle English loss of the second vowel were after a /j/ or /w/ and before a consonant (Luick 1914-40: §453). *Lewes* should therefore have developed like ME *trewes*, modern *truce*, and therefore be pronounced like *loose* /luːs/, or perhaps /luːz/ if *truce* is regarded as an aberration and the word *news* (first found in the fifteenth century in its current sense) as a better analogy. The disyllable is unexpected, then, since the second vowel has exceptionally been maintained, for whatever reason.

A new perspective is placed on the whole question, which cannot at present be resolved finally (Coates 1998), by the possibility that *Lewes* has indeed been pronounced as a monosyllable at some stage in its history. There are traces (though remarkably few, and sometimes equivocal, it must be said) of a one-syllable pronunciation, possibly from the fourteenth century onwards. *Lews* appears in an inquisition *post mortem* of 1359, but the escheator who produced this report need not have been a local man, and this form is counterbalanced by *Lyewes* in a foot of a fine dating from 1388 and the aggressively disyllabic-looking *Lewis* in

the PRO's *Catalogue of ancient deeds* in 1519 (*PN Sussex* 318). Michael Leppard (in correspondence) notes some further secure-looking evidence for a disyllabic pronunciation in Tudor times. In 1600 we find "Grinstead Town in Sussex wch is 14 miles from Lewis" (letter of Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, quoted in Sutton (1902: 208)).

The later evidence known at present in favour of a monosyllable is as follows. Hooker's continuation of Holin- shed's *Chronicles* (1586, I, iii, 15: 245) mentions "Tuesday in Whitsunweek at Lewse". But this may be a simple transposition error by a compositor, and the book itself is of course by a non-local author; as Michael Leppard has noted (in correspondence), long-standing and often-reëdited reference-books like this are prone to perpetuate errors. The earliest possible definitely local evidence - though its interpretation is uncertain - is *Lux* (1541; ESRO MS. ASH/L 1600, a court roll of the manor of Wartling, drawn to my attention by Christopher Whittick). John Colbrond of Lux held a croft called *Beldyvefeld* in Wartling. He is given a place to distinguish him from a man of the same name from Bodle Street, Herstmonceux. *Lux* is not necessarily Lewes, but Judith Brent has noted that there were Colbronds in Southover at the relevant time, and there are apparently no places or persons of the name *Lux* in Herst- monceux or Wartling. Much hinges on the degree of local detail enshrined in such designations. If the parish of origin or residence is normally given, then Lewes is clearly a possible interpretation; if some lesser place is admissible, then *Lux* could be for Luck's Farm in Heathfield or the one in Wadhurst, both parishes being the abode of persons called *Luck* before 1541. But there are no clear strictly linguistic grounds for identifying *Lux* with *Lewes.*

The first - and at present only - truly unambiguous piece of post-medieval evidence for a monosyllable is in a letter from Elizabeth Chambers of Hastings addressed to "my friend Mr Harison at his house in Lews", dated 26 March 1657. Christopher Whittick informs me that this letter is currently slipped into the front of the Lewes Archdeaconry act-book (ESRO MS. W/B9), with which it has no connection. At present this datum is isolated in seventeenth-century sources. I have heard unsubstantiated reports of an obsolete local monosyllabic pronunciation in the twentieth century, and it is regularly heard from ignorant outsiders.

If a monosyllabic pronunciation really did exist, it is possible that it was deliberately avoided by the fastidious because of its similarity to *lewze* 'pigsty' (now a West-Country word but formerly much more widespread, cf. instances of *Looes* in Saltdean (Rottingdean) and Falmer (see *Passing interest*, p. 13 above) and the parish of *Loose* (Kent), which all contain it; this had previously meant 'shed, shelter' (cf. the remarks in *DEPN*-4: xxxi).

We cannot therefore decide at present whether the monosyllable was an authentic alternative local pronunciation in the fourteenth century or subsequently, or if so what currency it has ever had. It appears certain that it was never the universally-used form. But the significance of its possible existence for the debate about the origin of the name cannot be ignored.

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□□□

Richard Coates

A remarkable coincidence: The Caprons*, Keere Street, Lewes*

In recent editions of the *Sussex Express*, John Eccles ("The Lewes Rouser") has asked for and received information about the Georgian house called *The Caprons* in Keere Street, Lewes (see e.g. 12/03/1999). This, or rather its predecessor and plot (former customary land), was mentioned by name from 1603/4-12 in the rolls of Lewes court baron, and in the *Book of John Rowe* (*c.*1624) thus: "pro tenemento et gardino voc' Caprons garden iac' in infima parte de keerestreate" 'for a tenement and garden called Caprons garden lying in the lower part of Keere Street'. It is fairly clear that the first element is the surname of (northern) French origin *Cap(e)ron* '(person associated with a) hood', 'hoodmaker', which, as McKinley (1988: 276-7) observes, is found in Sussex in the Middle Ages, is notable in the Midhurst area, and is more common in Sussex than in other parts of the country. There were Caperons in Berwick in the 14th century (Hudson 1910: 186, 315-6), but no family of this name has been traced in Lewes to date; in particular, none is found in the Town Book between 1542 and 1701 (Salzman 1946), the period of the first record of the tenement-name known to me. The base-word *capron* 'hood' itself is recorded in English in the Middle Ages, but very infrequently, and notably in the expression *capron hardy* 'crazy hood', which shouts out its French origin and is an exact semantic parallel for *madcap.*

But there is a strange and rather disturbing coincidence in the background of this routine house-name etymology. According to *OED*-2, *caprons* is the form of an obsolete word, also taken from French, for a type of pale-coloured strawberries (evidently suitable as a candidate for inclusion in a garden-name), which appears to imply that the berries tasted of capers. In fact, the word only appears once in the history of English, in 1693, where it is glossed as meaning 'Straw-berry Plants that have large Velvet Leaves, and bear large Whitish Straw-berries which have but a faint taste'. By a really strange twist, this single mention of the word in English is in a translation of a French gardening-book done by John Evelyn (1693), who lived in the house across the road from The Caprons, Southover Grange, during his childhood, from 1625 to 1637, and visited Lewes occasionally after that.

It remains unlikely that the strawberry-word appears in the Lewes tenement-name, because this other *capron* is not recorded even in French till 1642; so if the name does indeed contain it, we are looking at the oldest record of the word, appearing in Lewes even before it is recorded in the language from which it is borrowed and certainly before the birth of the French gardener from whom Evelyn got the word.

o *References*

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<div align="center">□□□</div>

Passing interest

Meresman - *a late survival and revival*

The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1983 reprint) records the term *meresman* (from *(ge)mære* 'boundary' + *man*] as obsolete, except in dialect, by 1867. But the officers of the Ordnance who were surveying the bounds of the parishes in Sussex were still using the term in 1871. The meresmen (as they were identified in the Ordnance Officer's notebooks) of adjoining parishes were consulted and some alterations in the alignment of the boundaries were agreed.

   In the notes consulted (for Tarring Neville, South Heighton, Denton, East Blatchington and Seaford) the reasons for the adjustments varied. Most were minor alterations made where tithe maps showed a slight variation in the bounds of neighbouring parishes, but some were occasioned by exchange of land between major landlords made in the intervening years. The latter reason accounts for part of the anomalous angular section of the northern boundary of Denton parish.

   While most of the boundaries were surveyed in 1871, others had been noted in 1862 and were updated in 1871. The date suggests that the survey was undertaken in preparation for the first edition of the 6" OS maps produced in 1874. Only after the production of these maps with their definitive record of parish bounds did meresmen, and their name, become obsolete. However in East Sussex the word has been revived recently. The newsletter of the Rights of Way and Countryside Management department of East Sussex County Council is entitled *The Meresman*.

Pam Combes

From the newspapers

A new development of houses in Billingshurst is to be called *Penfold Grange*, after the 300-year family connections of resident Colin Penfold (*Argus Property News* 06-12/01/99, p. 4).

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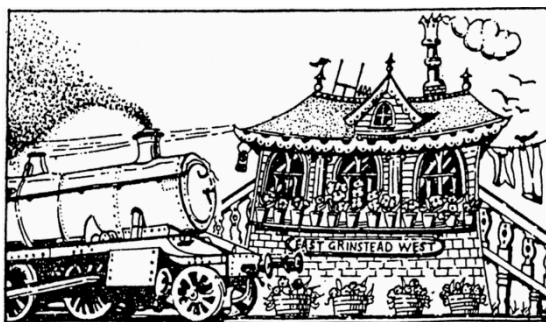
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