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# LOCUS FOCUS

forum of the Sussex Place-Names Net

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## • NET MEMBERS

John Bleach, 29 Leicester Road, Lewes BN7 1SU; telephone 01273 475340 -- OR Barbican House Bookshop, 169 High Street, Lewes BN7 1YE

Richard Coates, School of Cognitive and Computing Sciences, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9QH; telephone 01273 678522 (678030); fax 01273 671320; email richardc@cogs.susx.ac.uk

Pam Combes, 37 Cluny Street, Lewes BN7 1LN; telephone 01273 483681; email pamela.combes@virgin.net

Paul Cullen, School of Cognitive and Computing Sciences, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9QH; fax 01273 671320; email paulcu@cogs.susx.ac.uk -- OR paul@redcake.com

Anne Drewery, The Drum, Boxes Lane, Danehill, Haywards Heath RH17 7JG; telephone 01825 740298

Mark Gardiner, Department of Archaeology, School of Geosciences, Queen's University, Belfast BT7 1NN; telephone 01232 273448; fax 01232 321280; email m.gardiner@qub.ac.uk

Ken Green, Wanescroft, Cambrai Avenue, Chichester PO19 2LB; email 106160.3022@CompuServe.com -- OR thegreens@CompuServe.com

Tim Hudson, West Sussex Record Office, County Hall, Chichester PO19 1RN; telephone 01243 533911; fax 01243 533959; email thudson@westsussex.gov.uk

Gwen Jones, 9 Cockcrow Wood, St Leonards TN37 7HW; telephone and fax 01424 753266

Michael J. Leppard, 20 St George's Court, London Road, East Grinstead RH19 1QP; telephone 01342 322511

David Padgham, 118 Sedlescombe Road North, St Leonard's on Sea TH37 7EN; telephone 01424 443752

Janet Pennington, Penfold Lodge, 17a High Street, Steyning, West Sussex BN44 3GG; telephone 01903 816344; fax 01903 879845; email jpsussex@hotmail.com

Diana Sanders, Director of Administration, University College Medical School, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT; telephone 0171 209 6306; fax 0171 383 2462; email d.sanders@ucl.ac.uk

Liz Somerville, School of Biology, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9QG; telephone 01273 678511; email lizsom@biols.susx.ac.uk

Heather Warne, 13 Gladstone Road, Burgess Hill RH15 0QQ; telephone 01444 236347

Christopher Whittick, East Sussex Record Office, The Maltings, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1YT; telephone 01273 482349; email 100341.2565@CompuServe.com

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## • ABBREVIATIONS OF FREQUENTLY-CITED WORKS

<i>CDEPN</i>	V.E. Watts, <i>Cambridge dictionary of English place-names</i> (forthcoming, 2001)
<i>DB</i>	<i>Domesday book</i>
<i>DEPN (Ekwall)</i>	Eilert Ekwall, <i>Dictionary of English place-names</i> (-4 (1960) unless other edition flagged)
<i>DEPN (Mills)</i>	A.D. Mills, <i>Dictionary of English place-names</i> (1991)
<i>EPN</i>	Kenneth Cameron, <i>English place-names</i> (-5 (1997))
<i>EPNE</i>	A.H. Smith, <i>English place-name elements</i> (EPNS vols. 25/26)
<i>EPNS</i>	English Place-Name Society
<i>JEPNS</i>	<i>Journal of the English Place-Name Society</i>
<i>Lf</i>	<i>Locus focus</i>
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English dictionary</i>
<i>PN X</i>	<i>The place-names of county X</i> ; EPNS volume
<i>PN Sx (Roberts)</i>	R.G. Roberts, <i>The place-names of Sussex</i> (1914)
<i>PN Sx (Glover)</i>	Judith Glover, <i>The place names of Sussex</i> (-2 (1997))
<i>PNIL</i>	Margaret Gelling, <i>Place-names in the landscape</i>
<i>STP</i>	Margaret Gelling, <i>Signposts to the past</i> (-2 (1988))
<i>VCH X</i>	<i>Victoria history of county X</i>
<i>VEPN</i>	D. Parsons, T. Styles, with C. Hough, <i>The vocabulary of English place-names</i> (1997-, appearing by fascicle)
-0	an edition-flag (e.g. <i>STP</i> -2, second edition of <i>STP</i> )

Main relevant local periodicals and series:

<i>SAC</i>	<i>Sussex Archaeological Collections</i>
<i>SASNL</i>	<i>Sussex Archaeological Society Newsletter</i>
<i>SFH</i>	<i>Sussex Family Historian</i>
<i>SH</i>	<i>Sussex History</i>
<i>SNQ</i>	<i>Sussex Notes and Queries</i>
<i>SPP</i>	<i>Sussex Past and Present</i> (successor to <i>SASNL</i> )
<i>SRS 0</i>	<i>Sussex Record Society</i> volume, with volume number
<i>WSH</i>	<i>West Sussex History</i>

## • EDITORIAL

I am very pleased to say that the application for an AHRB grant mentioned in the editorial column of *Locus focus* 3 (1) has been successful. This means that Net member Dr Paul Cullen is employed as a research fellow at the University of Sussex from October 1999 till September 2000 on a project whose immediate aims are to make the English Place-Name Society's collections for Sussex and Hampshire available in database form and, hopefully, accessible via the Internet. A parallel element in the project is being directed by Dr David Parsons at the University of Nottingham; this involves the collection of material for Suffolk from scratch in electronic form.

A recent grant from the Margary Fund administered by the Sussex Archaeological Society also enabled Dr Cullen to be employed to investigate the Tithe Award place-name evidence at sites of known Roman villas (in the elastic definition provided by Eleanor Scott in her catalogue of known sites (1993)). We hope to report on this in a preliminary way in the next issue of *Locus focus* before publishing it definitively in *Sussex Archaeological Collections*.

Richard Coates  
Editor

## • CORRECTION

The Editor apologizes for over-zealous bibliographical attention to a book called *Scenes from provincial life* mentioned by David Padgham in *Lf* 3 (1), 15. The book should have been cited as follows:

Saul, Nigel (1986) *Scenes from provincial life: knightly families in Sussex, 1280-1400*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

From the newspapers

**NO SOONER** has Fatboy Slim's arrival in Hove turned every whist-drive into a rave than the Town Hall shook during a public inquiry over the recent banning of motor-cars from George Street, a shopping thoroughfare.

Traders claim that mere fume-free pedestrians do not spend as much and that

## WORDS

CHRISTOPHER  
HAWTREE

twitten, *n.*

this was a political wangle by councillor, now MP Ivor Caplin. Much of the many days' debate was occupied with the future role of an

alley; at every mention, this had the note "or twitten": not some legal nicety, but Sussexspeak for alleyway, from the Old English *twicen*. Although Sussex trugs are now in every B&Q, it will take more metrical ingenuity than digital savvy to make Gracie Fields's spirit sing of "Sally! Sally!/Pride of our twitten".

*The Independent*, 28/05/1999, Review 7 (supplied by Paul Cullen)

## • RECENT LITERATURE

□ Abbreviations in references: see page 1

□ Items in previous issues of *Locus focus* are not listed.

Chappell, L.A. (1999) Place-name errors [letter]. *SPP* 87 (April), 15. [About Framfield and source of 1724 misspelling, and Goldsmith(s) Avenue, Crowborough.]

Coates, Richard (1999a) Wick. *SPP* 87 (April), 5, 7 [correction to information in previous issue of *Lf*].

Coates, Richard (1999b) Tangmere. *SPP* 88 (August), 5, 9.

Coates, Richard (1999c) New light from old wicks. *Nomina* 22, 75-116. [An extended historical analysis of the Old English element *wīc*.]

Cole, Ann (1998/9) *Cisel*, *grēot*, *stān* and the four U's. *JEPNS* 31, 19-30. [On geological terms in PNs; some Sussex mentions.]

Dyson, A.G. (1999) 'Grinstead Weald'. *Bulletin of the East Grinstead Society* 67 (Spring), 4-6. [Replies to M.J. Leppard (1998) The origins of Ashurst Wood. *Bulletin* 65, 4-8. Proposes an alternative topographical distribution of the tithings of Grinstead hundred.]

Gould, David (1999) The Lingfield Road area, c.1860-c.1900. *Bulletin of the East Grinstead Society* 67 (Spring), 7-16. [Contains notes on origins and changes of street-names and house-names.]

Hobbs, Colin (1998) The history of Nutley. *Hindsight (Journal of the Uckfield and District Historical Society)*. [Contains information about the manors comprising Nutley in Maresfield and its territory relative to its neighbours; some place-name evidence mentioned, including *Windebeche* (on which see *Lf*, this issue, 20-2.)

Hobbs, Colin (1999) The parents of some East Grinstead manors. *Bulletin of the East Grinstead Society* 68, 4-6.

Leppard, Michael J. (1999a) *Domesday book* and early settlements: addenda. *Bulletin of the East Grinstead Society* 68, 7-9. [Part of a sequence of notes analysed in the heading of this article.]

Leppard, Michael J. (1999b) Hundreds and tithings and a hamlet too. *Bulletin of the East Grinstead Society* 68, 10-13. [Critical examination of M.A. Lower's claim that East Grinstead hundred and parish were coextensive.]

Leslie, Kim and Brian Short (eds) (1999) *An historical atlas of Sussex*. Chichester: Phillimore.

Parsons, David and Tania Styles (1999) *The vocabulary of English place-names*, fascicle II (*brace - caester*). Nottingham: University of Nottingham, Centre for English Name Studies.

There is other local place-name material on pp. 13 and 14 of the *Bulletin of the East Grinstead Society* 68.

## • NEWS ITEM

The Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland held a day conference at University College London on 30 October 1999. Among those presenting papers was Net member Paul Cullen, who spoke about the Sussex villa place-name project mentioned in the editorial on p. 2.

## • FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### *Medieval Settlement Research Group*

The Medieval Settlement Research Group has its annual general meeting on 4 December 1999 at Birkbeck College, London, at which some papers of place-name relevance will be presented.

### *Institute of Field Archaeologists*

The Institute of Field Archaeologists holds its annual conference from 4-6 April 2000 at the University of Sussex. A session, organized by Richard Coates, will be devoted to place-names as evidence in archaeology. Information can be obtained from IFA electronically at [admin.ifa@virgin.net](mailto:admin.ifa@virgin.net), or postally from the Conference Committee, IFA, University of Reading, 2 Earley Gate, PO Box 239, Reading RG6 6AU. David Rudling is the Committee contact. The section theme is advertised in advance as follows:

#### Linguistic indicators of archaeological and historical significance

When a population arrives in a territory for the first time, it will use its own linguistic resources to describe and name the features of the new land, or borrow from the indigenous people terms to do the same job. It has recently become clear, thanks largely to the work of Margaret Gelling and Ann Cole, that the Anglo-Saxons had a very precise technical vocabulary to describe landforms and other features of the landscape including archaeologically significant ones, such as linear earthworks, barrows, and standing buildings. Some words are known to have been borrowed from speakers of Brittonic, the language of (southern) Britain before the invasion.

If correlations can be established between the use of particular words and particular landscape features, that will tell us something about the Anglo-Saxon perception of and beliefs about landscape, and not necessarily about the original purposes of the monuments named. Studies of key words in archaeological contexts may help us understand their meaning better, as with the Old English barrow-terms *hlāw* and *beorg*. More interestingly for archaeologists, from such correlations it follows that further instances of a given word's use, in the absence of surface remains, might be used as diagnostics of archaeologically interesting sites. Are there signs that this might be achievable? Can Roman villas, Saxon field-systems and medieval industrial sites be located using linguistic evidence?

## • NOTES

### Pam Combes

#### *N3.2.1 Three Beddingham names that changed: a note of warning*

##### *The pit*

The different names recorded for what was originally *The Poor Pit* in Beddingham are worthy of note. In the mid-19th century, when the excavations at Gill's Grave were recorded by the vicar of Glynde (de St Croix 1868), was referred to as *Glynde Pit*; manorially it was administered from Glynde. The excavation notes for 1961-2 name both *Glynde pit* and *Newington's pit*, Newington's being the Lewes firm who worked the pit. Later archaeologists have identified it as *Beddingham Pit* since it lies within the parish of Beddingham. The Ordnance Survey identifies it as *Balcombe Pit*, which appears to associate it with the parish of that name, whereas the name is undoubtedly derived from the Balcombe family (who probably were named from the parish) who in the 17th century were free tenants of the manor of Preston Beckhellouin (named from the former owners of the manor, the Abbey of Bec, founded by Herluin). The Balcombe family farmed the land where the pit lies, but did not develop the lime-works.

##### *The barrow*

The Balcombes' freehold tenement was identified as *Longbirge* or *Longborowe* in 1625 (SRS 34, 202). If the identification discussed elsewhere in this number of *Lf* (12-17) is correct, this name is a later displacement of the 13th-century *Crotebergh*, as the form *Long-* as opposed to *Lang-* would also tend to suggest. By the 19th century, the barrow was known as *Gill's Grave*.

##### *The hill*

Loover Barn lies at the foot of a gently-sloping hill into which Balcombe pit has now been dug. Land in *the Nover* is recorded in the extent of Preston Poynings (1567) and *underthenovere* in a grant of land in West Firle (MS. ESRO GLY 1267, dated 1367). *The Noover* is identified on the Firle map of 1775 in the vicinity of what is now Loover Barn, which undoubtedly represents a later version of the name. The set of forms is equivocal; the name could be derived from either OE *ofer* 'flat-topped ridge' or *ōfer* 'bank, shore'. The topography of the site presents a similar dilemma. Before it was quarried away, the hill would have formed a flat-topped ridge with Loover Barn lying at the foot. The sharp scarp slope, almost a cliff, facing north to Glynde Reach, is unlikely to have been described as a shore or bank; but viewed from the east, where an area of watermeadow curves around the hill from the Reach, it might be considered to merit that description.

##### *A further comp ?*

A field in the manor of Preston Poynings was known as *Redecompe* (early 13th century) and *Redcompe* in 1567. The name has not survived, but in the 1567 extent appears to be located in the vicinity of the Morelands, *Helesfeld* (Hales) and *the Wisshe*, all of which lie between the Burgh Fields and Loover Barn. The Roman villa in the manor of Preston (Beckhellouin) in Beddingham lies just over a kilometre away.

○ *References*

de St Croix, W. (1868) *The parochial history of Glynde*. SAC 20, 47-90.

Godfrey, Walter H. (ed.) (no date; 1933?) *The book of John Rowe, steward of the manors of Lord Bergavenny, 1597-1622*. Lewes: SRS 34.

**Janet Pennington**

*N3.2.2 Two wells in Steyning town: Singwell and Britton's Well*

Springwells in Steyning, a house which is now a hotel, is first so called in the 1862 *Post Office directory*. Before that, the site was traditionally known as *Singwell(s)*, and the street in which it was situated bore its name. The earliest known reference to the old well in this area is seen in a court roll for Steyning dated 1498, when its name was written *Sewyngwell*. This was one of two public well sites which provided a constant supply of water for the town and would have been one of the main reasons for its early settlement; the other was Britton's spring or well at the north west end of town (*Bryten's well* in 1542), Singwell or Singwells being at the south east (see map on next page). Sheltered by the hills, embraced by two streams, with access to the sea via a small port somewhere behind the mound on which St Andrew's church is built, Steyning was a good place for the early settlers who came here soon after the Romans left 1500 years ago.

Spelling was not standardized in the 15th century, so just how *Sewyngwell* was pronounced is uncertain. Duke and Cox did not know of this early name-variation when they wrote that it ".... was a holy well, and so was covered by a shingled roof on account of its sanctity. Thus we have the Shingled Well, which in time became Singwell ...." (1954: 46). Many springs and wells were covered by well-houses, some with pitched roofs in tile, stone or wood. Oak shingles (narrow wooden tiles) are a convenient covering and there may have been such a structure in earlier times on both the Steyning well sites.

Most of the old pagan springs, dedicated to Celtic water goddesses, were christianized centuries ago. Singwell is recorded as *St Mary's* in manorial documents of the 18th century. There are several St Mary's well sites in the county (e.g. at Thakeham and Petworth) and the Virgin Mary, as a female deity, conveniently took over from the female Anglo-Saxon or Celtic water deities. St Bridget's (Bride's) well was another popular conversion name, usefully replacing the Celtic water goddess Brigantia. Powerful springs were seen by our Celtic ancestors as highly significant places, giving entry to the underworld and representing the life force. Ritual offerings were usually made at these special places, sometimes in the form of human or other sacrifices. The springs or wells were seen by Christian missionaries as important places for conversion and those at Steyning would have been no exception.

Pumps had been attached to the wells by the late 19th century. In the early 20th century, a resident of Charlton Street remembers as a young girl going down to the well every morning with a bucket to bring back the water supply for her mother. Singwell is now capped off and Britton's Well has disappeared under a garden.

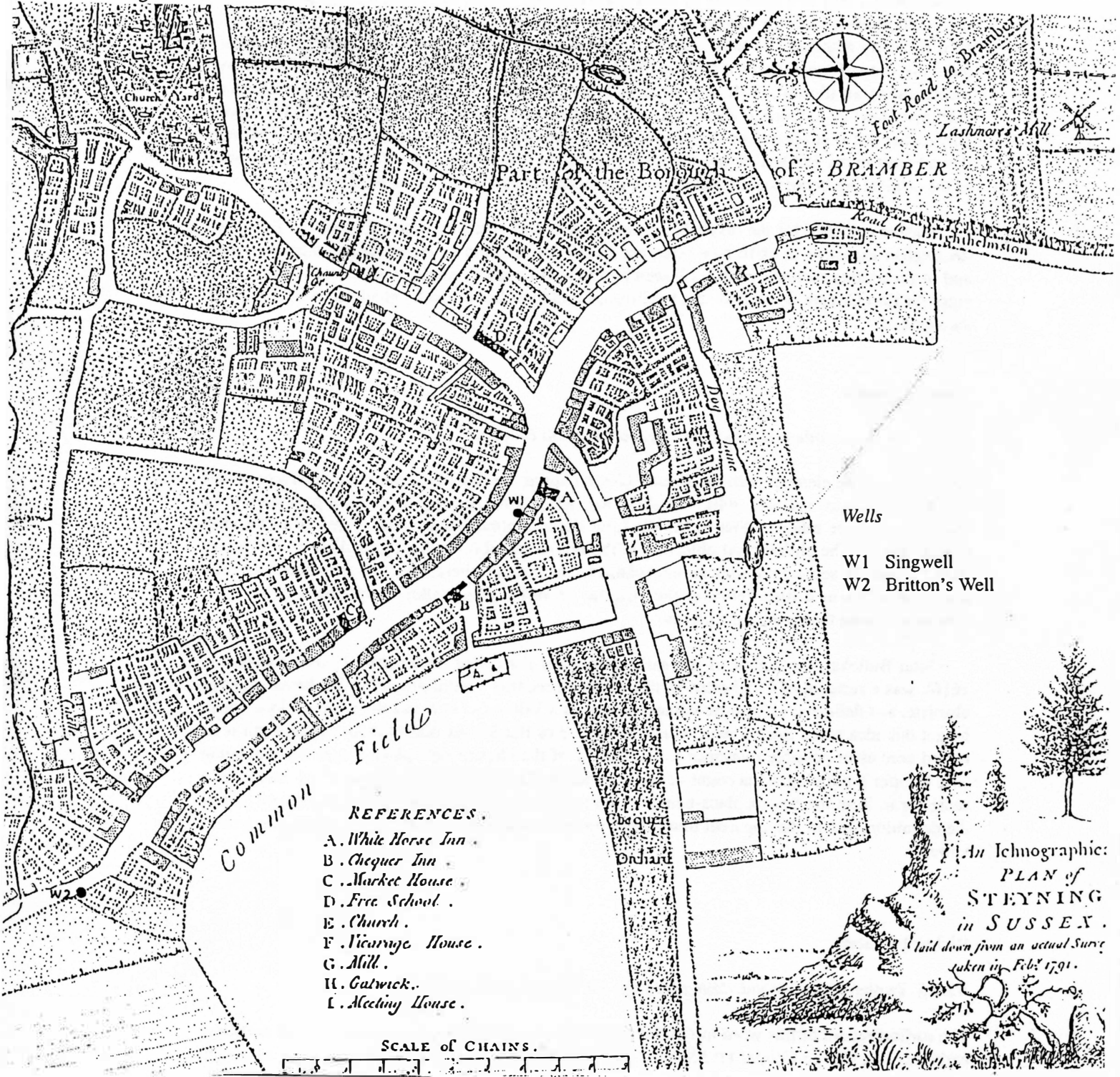
○ *Reference*

Cox, E.W. and F. Duke (1954) *In and around Steyning: a historical survey made in 1953*. Steyning: privately published.



○ Editor's note

*Sewyng* is very obscure here, but it may be compared with the expression *sewenge rope* (recorded in 1336), *sewing rope* (before 1515), under *sewing* (vbl. s.<sup>1</sup>) in OED-2. OED offers no firm suggestion about the sense.



## Christopher Whittick, Richard Coates and Michael J. Leppard

### N3.2.3 *More on the syllable-count of Lewes [ref. article in Lf 3.1, 18-20 (Richard Coates)]*

Christopher Whittick draws attention to the earliest-yet spelling clearly indicating a monosyllabic pronunciation. It is in a document of 1500 (MS. PRO SC 2/206/33, f22v), a rough court-book of the South Malling lordship written in the hand of the understeward, William Stapley of Framfield, so it is clearly authentically local. Another early instance is printed in Catherine Pullein, *Rotherfield: the story of some Wealden manors* (Tunbridge Wells: Courier, 1928), 272-3, the former page incorporating an illustration. It is a piece in Latin recording the seizure of Alexander Hosmer's customary land by the lord of the manor of Rotherfield after his burning at *Lewse* in 1557. A probably earlier one is suggested by the two nineteenth-century transcripts of an inquisition about Ash-down Forest in the 1530s. One has timber being sold at *Lewes*, and one at *Lewse*; the whereabouts of the original are being sought. All these items clearly record an authentic local tradition.

Further evidence for the disyllabic pronunciation was noted by Richard Coates in Bullokar's *An English expositor* of 1616 (see reference in N3.2.4; we find *Lewis* under the entry for *rape*), and in yet another national guidebook seen by Michael Leppard, *England displayed* (1769), in the entry for East Grinstead; we find "the road from London to *Lewis* and Brightelmstone ...." (emphasis supplied).

## Richard Coates

### N3.2.4 *An early-modern sidelight on Glynde, Glyne in Bullokar*

The origin of the element seen in *Glynde*, *Glyne Gap* and a few other names, exclusively in east Sussex (*PN Sussex* 352, 441, 446, 492, 493, 501, 531), is not known. It has been presumed to be English, and to be related either to Middle Low German *glinde* 'fence, enclosure', or to Swedish *glänta* 'glade'. The philological objection to the first is stated (or at least hinted at) by *PN Sussex* (352-3), and the second requires an unexplained consonantal alternation. Its frequent recurrence makes an origin in British \**glindos*, the ancestor of Welsh *glyn* 'valley', impossible, as does the situation of more than one of the places.

John Bullokar, the author of the early hard-word list called *An English expositor* (London, 1616), was a resident of Chichester. In this book, he records a word *glinne*, which he asterisks as obsolete, and defines it as 'A little village, or part of a Village'. I have not the remotest idea where he got this idea from. Such a word is not in *OED-2* or the Sussex dialect dictionaries. I put it on record here as of possible relevance to the history of the *Glynde*-type place-names without being able to offer a philological account of the connection. Did Bullokar invent the word, and infer a sense for it, from the Sussex place-names? That appears unlikely in the light of the second part of the definition, and in the apparent hint (based on the double <nn>) that the <i> represents a short vowel.

## Richard Coates

### N3.2.5 *Twitten again: an antedating [ref. Q1.3.4, N2.1.3, R2.1.4, R2.2.7]*

The earliest record of this word in *OED-2* is of 1801 in a Brighton-area context (like all authentic early records, though Cooper (1853: 83-4) declares that it is a general Sussex word). I have now

found an earlier use; the word appears in the *Memorandum book* of William Roe (Thomas-Stanford 1928) in the entry for 15/08/1794, where he refers to land that is part of his manor of Withdean-Cayliffe in Patcham.

○ *References*

Cooper, William Durrant (1853) *A glossary of provincialisms in use in the county of Sussex*. London: John Russell Smith (second edition).

Thomas-Stanford, Charles (ed.) (1928) *The private memorandums of William Roe of Withdean in the county of Sussex 1775-1809*. Brighton: privately published.

## • QUERIES

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

### *Q3.2.1 What to make of Conster in Brede?* (David Padgham)

A member of my local group, John Rea, who was at one time on the staff of the Public Record Office, is translating selected documents from the Brede manor records held in H[astings] M[useum]. He asked why Conster is not mentioned in *PN Sussex* although nearby Purster is discussed, and compared with Dixter in Northiam and two unidentified places in Bexhill. I think a probable answer is provided by Wallenberg (1931: 206) in comparing *biddan stiorf* near Rochester with Purster in Sussex: that no early forms of Conster were then known (and he was in touch with Allen Mawer, one of the editors of *PN Sussex*).

Early forms are in fact present in the uncalendared Brede manor rolls, e.g. a rental of 1448-9 (HM box 4, section F in the temporary listing) which has *Consterf* and *Consterff*, and there is little doubt that this is an addition to the group which Smith (*EPNE* II, 151) suggests as 'poor pasture'. What can we say about *Con-*? Coates, in an article on the element *steorf* (1979: 323; cf. also 1980: 327) suggests *cumb* 'valley' (of the Tillingham), but now rejects this. Conster Manor, incidentally, was never a manor.

○ *References*

Coates, Richard (1979) Old English *steorf* in Sussex placenames. *Beiträge zur Namenforschung* (new series) 14, 320-4.

Coates, Richard (1980) Studies and observations on Sussex place-names. *SAC* 118, 309-29.

Wallenberg, J.K. (1931) *Kentish place-names*. Uppsala: A.B. Lundequistka.

### *Q3.2.2 Who was the first student of English place-names?* (David Padgham)

I make a case for Laurence Nowell (died c. 1599) who was the first known author of county maps, in manuscript, and the probable inspiration for Saxton's printed editions. Curiously, all his place-

names are shown in Old English characters, e.g. *Wenchelsea* with the character <wynn> for <w>. I wonder what his sources were. He is stated by Kingsley (1982: appendix I, 336), to have been interested in the subject, and his plate 2 reproduces the Sussex map.

○ *Reference*

Kingsley, D. (1982) *Printed maps of Sussex, 1575-1900*. Lewes: SRS 72.

○ *Editor's note*

Nowell is known to have completed a manuscript *Vocabularium saxonicum* (MS. Bodley Selden Arch B), a *Codex chartaceus* including "Saxon" material (with William Lambarde, MS. BL Cotton Vespasian A. V), and *Excerpta quaedam saxonica* (MS. BL Cotton Domitian A xviii). It is not known who influenced him.

Q3.2.3 Trodgers (Richard Coates)

*Trodgers* in Mayfield (1651) and *Little Trodgers* in West Chiltington - conceivably from a surname representing medieval French *trossier* 'pedlar', Englished as /trɔʃər/? Any better ideas? The verb *trudge* is first recorded in the 1540s, and is of unknown origin; it is far from obvious how that might be involved.

## • QUICK RESPONSES TO QUERIES AND ARTICLES

R3.2.1 *More on blatchen/blatching [ref. Q3.1.1 (Tim Hudson, and Editor's note there)]*

**Paul Cullen** draws attention to the entry for OE *\*blācen* 'bleaching (in some application of the term)' in *VEPN* I, 112. There seems to be a fair bit of evidence for both a verbal noun in *-ing* and an abstract noun in *-en*, so *The Blatchen* need not necessarily represent the former.

1. *Blatchins Pools* (field no. 480 in Arlington (Sussex) TA, at NGR TQ 546066).
2. *bleccing* (774 (10th); BCS 214, S 111) in the bounds of Lydd, Kent; (*Bletching'* (1275); *Bleccinghe* (1278); later "*Bletching-court*" *alias Scotney* (at approx. TR 015198; Wallenberg 1931: 55-6, 1934: 481; Cullen 1997: 269-70).
3. *Blechene* (956 (14th); S 632) = Blashenwell Farm (*PN Dorset* I: 8-9, carefully discussed by David Mills).

In addition to the above, and the Sussex *Blatchingtons*, it may be worth reassessing such names as *Bletchingley* (PN Surrey 308), *Bletchingley* in Staplehurst (Wallenberg 1934: 326; among streams galore at TQ 770416), and not far away *Bletchenden* in Headcorn (Wallenberg 1931: 216-7, 1934: 214; *bleccingdenn* (863; BCS 507, S 332), near the River Beult at TQ 837430).

○ *References*

Cullen, Paul (1997) *The place-names of the lathes of St Augustine and Shipway, Kent*. Dissertation for the degree of DPhil, University of Sussex.

Wallenberg, J.K. (1931) *Kentish place-names*. Uppsala: A.-B. Lundequistka.

Wallenberg, J.K. (1934) *The place-names of Kent*. Uppsala: Appelbergs Boktryckeri.

*R3.2.2 Anyone for strawberries? or: More light on Caprons [ref. article in Lf 3 (1), 20-1 by Richard Coates]*

**Christopher Whittick** has uncovered a reference to a resident of Lewes surnamed *Capron*, which absolutely dispels any hint of a connection between John Evelyn's gardening book and the house in Keere Street and which confirms the normality of the tenement-name. MS. PRO CP 40/548 m389 deals with a case before the Court of Common Pleas in Hilary 1398 in which William Capron of Lewes and his wife Margery were plaintiffs, concerning a third of a messuage and 60 acres in East Grinstead which she had by the dower of her former husband Robert Estcote.

*R3.2.3 Knockfeild in Westfield [ref. article in Lf 3.1, 14-15 by David Padgham]*

**David Padgham** writes: In the last *Lf*, I commented that *Knockfeild* was not particularly a hillock. Having walked past it from the opposite direction to my usual itinerary, I can now see that it does present such an appearance, so in the interests of accuracy I withdraw the suggestions that it might be an *āc* as in *Knockholt* (Kent).

*R3.2.4 The colour of Falmer*

**Richard Coates** responded to an inquiry from a member of the public thus:

The name *Falmer* has some uncertainty, but the likeliest origin is OE *fealu*, *mere* 'fallow pond', where *fealu* is a colour-term meaning something in the range of ripe vegetation or the horse-colour bay (cf. *fallow deer*; thus *EPNE* I, 165-6 and standard dictionaries), not 'dark' as the editors of *PN Sussex* (308) say - Mawer, Stenton and Gover must have all nodded at the same time. So: something like 'yellowish-brown pond'. This must be due to whatever geological or ecological features were visible in about 500-600 C.E.

### **From the newspapers**

**Michael Leppard** supplies a piece from the *Argus* of 14/10/1999 showing local democracy in action in the selection of a name for an otherwise nameless street in Coopers Green, Uckfield. At the risk of pre-empting the outcome of the selection process: the popular vote is likely to favour *Court Lane*, after Les and Joan Court who ran the town post office for over 40 years. That might puzzle manorial historians in a few centuries' time if they have not read *Lf* 3 (2). The same piece throws interesting light on local government practices. Wealden District Council has a policy of not creating or changing a road-name without exceptionless approval from residents. The *Argus* tells us that there have been two consistent opponents of naming this street, one taking the principled view that they like their street nameless, and the other fearing the sprouting of a name-sign outside their own house. Wealden District Council is apparently prepared to violate its own rule-book in this instance.

## • ARTICLES

### Pam Combes

#### *Crottebergh: was it really in Firle?*

Two problems are immediately apparent about the settlement of *Crottebergh*, said in *PN Sussex* (361) to be in Firle parish. The derivation of the name is somewhat obscure and the precise location is lost.

#### *The name*

*PN Sussex* (361, 503) suggests that the first element is a personal name, *Crotta*, itself possibly derived from an earlier form *Corta*; these, or variants in the strong inflectional class, can be inferred from this and other place-names, but do not occur in independent sources. The name is occasionally spelt with a strong genitival *-(e)s* in the medieval record, but this appears to be in error for the predominant variant which can be taken as representing the weak genitival *-an*. That is, the personal name here was *\*Crotta* not *\*Crott*. It is not impossible that the name *Crotta*, which is unexplained, derives from the ancestor of Welsh *crwth* 'hunchback' (or 'violin', "crowd"). The spelling <o> that appears for Primitive Welsh [u] is not a true phonological difficulty; the [o] that this stands for is due to patterns of vowel-harmony in Old English, inherited from West Germanic (Campbell 1959: 42).

The second element of the name, *beorg*, is more problematic. In southern England it is frequently associated with barrows rather than hills (*PNIL* 127). There are two possible sites identified for *Crottebergh*; the prominent round hill just to the north of the downs on which Firle Tower (also known as Heighton Tower) now stands, and the Burgh Fields that lie on a slight rise in the water meadows to the north of Firle village (see map, p. 17). At neither site is there any evidence for a barrow.

#### *Location*

There are a number of documentary sources that provide some clues about the location of *Crottebergh*. In the middle of the 12th century, *Crottesberghe* (or rent in *Crottesberghe*) was given to Lewes Priory by Alured (de Bendevilla) and Sibilla his wife. Their grant was confirmed by their daughter Sara, who was probably Sara the wife of Stephen de Dammartyn, who reconfirmed the gift in c. 1170 (Salzman 1932: 73-5).

An undoubtedly forged charter, purporting to date from c. 1200 and to confirm grants to Lewes Priory, names Liefsi de *Crotteberge* and his brother, who were said to have granted tithes to the priory. It is worthy of note that Liefsi's name is listed among a group of men who can all be associated with Beddingham, not Firle; Drew of Beddingham, Alveric of Cumbe (i.e. of the manor of Combe in Beddingham), Liefsi and his brother, and Drew's reeve Alveric (Mayr-Harting 1964: 77).

However, somewhat later (probably about the second quarter of the 13th century) the land and ditch of Helyas de *Crotteberghe* were named as bounds in a grant of land in Firle to Chichester cathedral (Peckham 1943: 97 (no. 374)). Acres in the Lake and Hales lay adjacent to his land. Both these field-names survived in use in the late 18th century and allow the land to be located in the meadows to the north of Firle parish to the west and south of the Burgh Fields (MS. ESRO

ACC 2553; AMS 6164/1, schedule to map). Although the de Crottebergh family held land in Firle adjacent to the Burgh Fields, the lack of evidence for a barrow there and the slight nature of the hill suggest that their name was derived from a feature elsewhere.

Two further documents allow a more precise location for Crottebergh. Both refer to the king's highway, and the route of that road is crucial to identifying the location of the barrow that was probably the identifying feature of Crotta's settlement. In 1252, the bounds of the warren of Peter of Savoy in Pevensey Rape were confirmed. The boundary is described thus: "et inde per veterem viam inter Alciston et Sihalmeston et sic inde usque Croteberge per regalem viam et inde usque ad pontem de Glinde per regalem viam" 'and thence by the old way between Alciston and Selmeston and so thence as far as Croteberge by the king's highway and thence as far as the bridge at Glynde by the king's highway' (Margary 1939: 32-5). Margary considered that the term *the old way* referred to the Roman road that formed part of the parish boundary between Alciston and Selmeston and then followed the approximate alignment of the later toll road to Firle and Glynde. Thomas Marchant's map of 1775 demonstrates that the earlier road-system in Firle was markedly different from that in use today (MSS. ESRO ACC 2553, ESRO AMS 6164/1; see map, p. 17). North of the village the road from Selmeston divided and the southern alignment led to Preston and Beddingham with a side road branching off towards Glynde. The northern spur passed what is now Loover Barn and led directly to what was then *the poor pit* in Beddingham (see my note in this issue, N3.2.1), and from there to Glynde Bridge. The latter is the most direct route and, as such, possibly more likely to be the king's highway.

Thomas Attree's map of Preston Beckhellouin manor (1717; MS. ESRO GLY 3107) depicts the two roads joining to the south of *the poor pit*. The southern road follows, approximately, the alignment of the modern road from the A27 to the pit whereas the northern one passes higher up, but still around the hill, from Loover Barn. The latter road was disused by the time Marchant mapped the parish of Beddingham in 1785 (MS. ESRO GLY 3109). The field contained between the two roads was called *Harelink* (OE *hara* 'hare', *hlinc* 'cultivation-terrace'), a name that suggests the higher road formed a lynchet on the hillslope, a feature that characterizes many of the early roads passing over the downs.

Another mediaeval documentary source (c. 1280) associates Crottebergh with land in the manor of Preston Poynings in Firle. It describes a piece of land and a house "apud Crotteberghe" abutting on the land of Luke de Poynings and his son William of Preston on the east, west and south and the king's highway from Lewes to Pevensey on the north (MS. ESRO GLY 1266). Land in the manor of Preston Poynings extended as far as the parish boundary of Firle on the west (with Preston Beckhellouin lying on the Beddingham side of that boundary), Newelm to the south, Twytowne (later Troy Town) in Firle Park to the east and the Sparks and Morelands fields to the north (MS. WSRO Cowdray 306 (ESRO XA 23/7, microfilm copy).

If the king's highway is the northern road lying to the south-west of the Morelands and the Sparks, the land described lay within either the Lower Laine or the Wistes of Preston. If the southern road is the king's highway the holding could have been in the vicinity of Preston House (see map, p. 17). But the dimensions that are given cannot be equated with those of any enclosure on the earliest available map of Firle, so the precise location remains unknown.

The land and house "apud Crotteberghe" were clearly a subinfeudation of Preston (Poynings) since rent was due to Luke de Poynings and his son. But much rests on the translation of the term *apud* - which could be interpreted as 'at', 'near' or 'in' - take your choice! The only certainty is that the land described lay somewhere in the north-western quadrant of Firle parish, which supports the general location given in the earlier warren bounds.

### *The barrow*

Aerial photographs record two circular features that may be residual evidence for barrows lying to the south-west of Preston House (ESCC Transport and Environment Department, aerial photographs and S(ites) and M(onuments) R(ecord)). These features lie within the land area associated with Preston Poynings and are situated close to the southern spur of the pre-toll road system. In addition possible ditches and enclosures can be seen in the field to the west and north of Preston Court Barn. The results of limited archaeological work undertaken there will be published as part of the final Beddingham Roman villa excavation report; few artefacts were found, but a carbon-14 date of *c.* 1000 was obtained from a charcoal sample taken from within an oval enclosure (Rudling 1988: 4).

There is, however, another barrow, well documented but now lost, that is more likely to be Crottebergh. It lies in the manor of Preston Beckhellouin over the boundary in Beddingham parish. These late medieval manors of Preston may represent a division of the single manor of Preston recorded in *DB*, as Coates (1990: 5-6) has suggested. The two manors lie contiguous to one another on either side of the Firle/Beddingham parish boundary.

In the early 19th century a Bronze Age burial mound in Beddingham known as *Gill's Grave* was excavated by a group of army officers. The substantial barrow, about 3 metres high and 22-26 metres in diameter, lay on the hill over which, or beside which, the medieval king's highway passed. The barrow was later utilized as a millstead (de St Croix 1868: 47-55). The hill itself must have been a significant feature in the landscape adjacent to the water meadows along Glynde Reach; at about 30 metres, it would have overtopped the other hills, all slight rises, few of which exceed 10 metres. The significance of the site is now difficult to decide since almost the whole hill, including the barrow, has been quarried away (see sketch, below). The land adjacent to the hill continued in use in the Iron Age and the Saxon period. An Iron Age ditched settlement is recorded on the SMR to the north-west of Looover Barn, and it is clear that there was an early Saxon settlement nearby, as quarrying at the pit revealed several pagan Saxon burials.

The sketch attempts to reconstruct the profile of the hill and places the barrow in as close to the correct position as map comparison, measuring and calculation allows. The photograph on which the sketch is based was taken from Preston Court Barn (in the manor of Preston Poynings), looking towards the pit. Glynde Place and the hills north of the river are visible now, but before it was destroyed by quarrying the hill would probably have obscured all of the landscape to the north. Crowned with a barrow, it would have formed a dominant feature in the local landscape.

### *Conclusion*

Although Gill's Grave appears the most likely barrow to be associated with Crottebergh, as yet the site of the settlement cannot be precisely located.

Firle Tower can certainly be ruled out, and probably the Burgh Fields. The fields lie some distance from the route of the king's highway and in addition the evidence suggests that Crottebergh lay further west. But the possibility that a barrow was destroyed when the railway was constructed or as the result of agricultural activity over the years cannot be completely ruled out; certainly the significance of the name, possibly derived from *beorg*, requires further consideration.

The site close to Preston House in Firle remains a possibility on two counts. There may have been an adjacent barrow; and even if there was not, Gill's Grave/Crottebergh would have been visible from a settlement there, and the name could have been transferred. But the evidence for both the barrow by Preston House and a Saxon settlement there remains unsubstantiated.



Then there is Gill's Grave. The barrow lies on the alignment of the boundary passing by Crottebergh and near to land in Crottebergh, and with the evidence for Saxon settlement in the locality appears most likely to be the barrow that was the identifying feature of Crotta's settlement.

But the problem of the predominant association of Crottebergh with Firle and not Beddingham has to be addressed. At least part of the land in Crottebergh can be associated with the manor of Preston Poynings. If the *DB* manor of Preston encompassed both the manors of Preston Poynings and Preston Beckhellouin, the division of the manor could have detached all or part of the settlement of Crottebergh from the topographic feature from which the name was derived. The association of Liefsi de Crottebergh with Beddingham has already been noted. In addition it is clear that Lewes Priory, the recipients of the earliest known grant of land from Crottebergh, had an interest in both Firle and Beddingham in 1340 (*Inquisitione nonarum* 350, 354 (copy available at ESRO). Only two charters record gifts of land in those parishes to the priory; land in Firle was granted to them in *c.* 1140 but the interest in Beddingham cannot be associated with any grant other than that of Crottebergh (Salzman 1934: 10).

The two manors, identified either as Preston or West and East Preston, were taxed as a single tithing in Totnore hundred in the late 12th- and early 13th-century subsidy rolls. Moreover the boundary between the two parishes is remarkably straight and appears somewhat artificial in nature.

Finally, two *comp* names, Comp Farm and *Redecompe* in Preston Poynings, may represent boundaries of the Beddingham Roman villa estate; bounds that may have continued to be reflected in those of the *DB* manor of Preston.

The hill on which the barrow lay has been almost entirely quarried away and any evidence for a settlement site there may have been lost. The area was clearly a favoured site from the Bronze Age to the Saxon period and intensive fieldwork may yet reveal more definitive evidence for Saxon settlement in the locality; but we may never know where Crotta established his.

#### *Speculation*

To return to the name and indulge in some extreme speculation: if we accept that *Crotta* was indeed a personal name never recorded in documentary sources, the name must be early. Was Crotta, perhaps, the founder of a settlement with its associated burial site, situated adjacent to the watermeadows just outside the demesne of a former Roman villa estate?

#### ○ *Note*

I would like to thank Christopher Whittick for confirming the date of MS. GLY 1266 and for his advice and help with earlier drafts of this paper, Andrew Woodcock for enabling me to consult the ESCC archaeological records and for his advice on interpreting the features, Richard Coates for advice on the onomastic evidence and Angela Blyth for assisting with the final draft.

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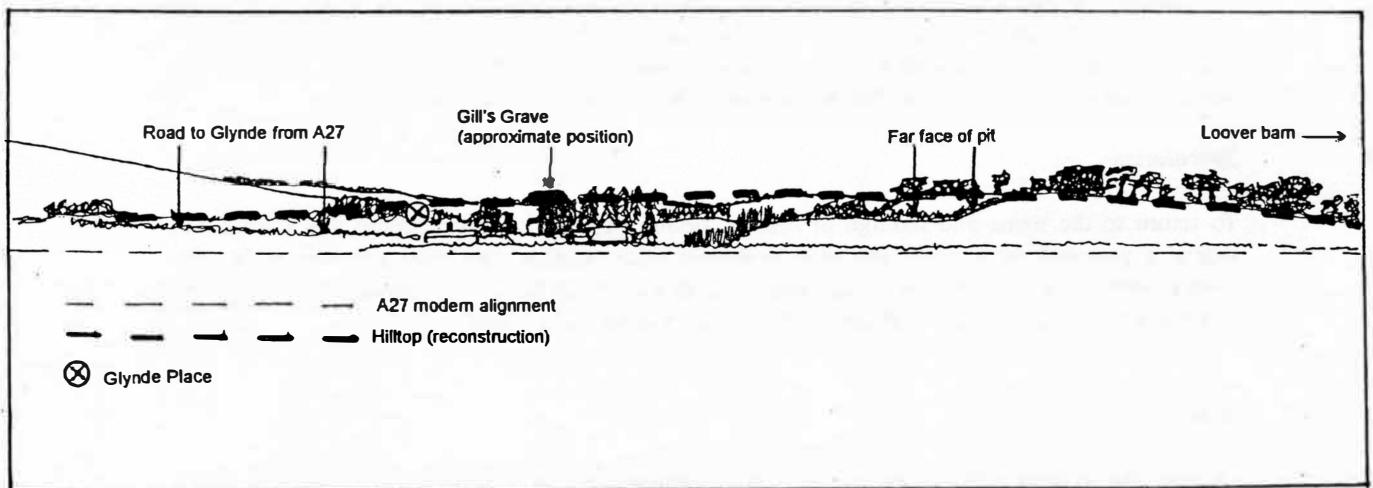
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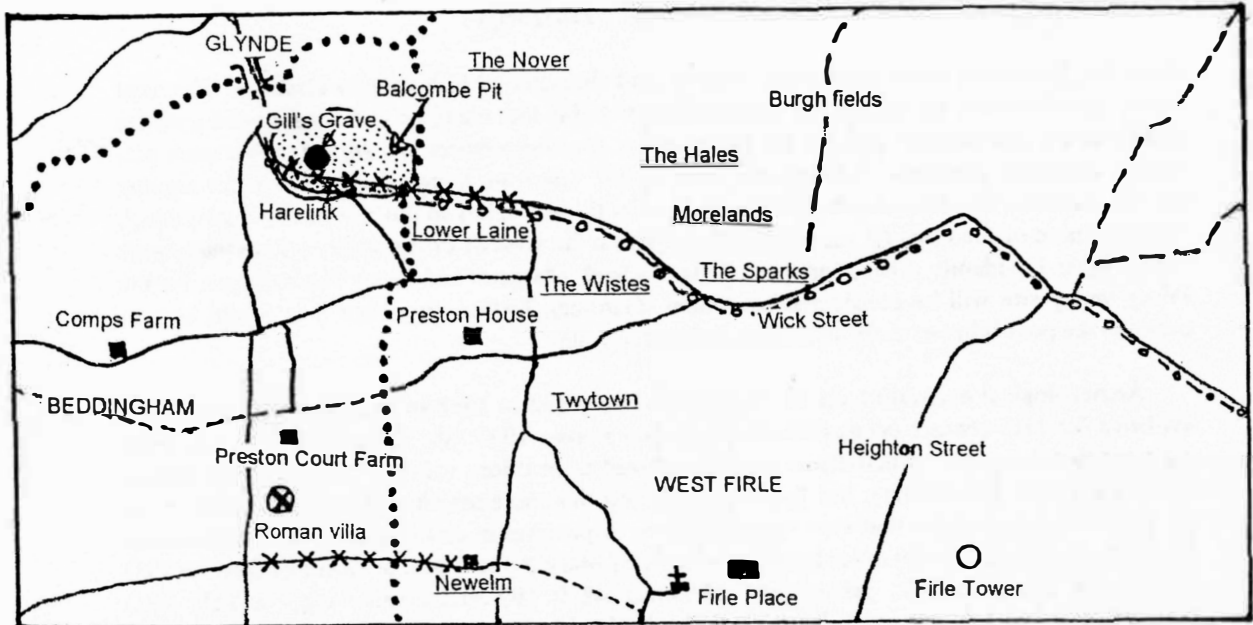
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Sketch below and map on next page © 1999 Pam Combes





1 kilometre

Reconstruction of 18<sup>th</sup> century road alignments in Firle and Beddingham

KEY

- Parish boundaries    ●●●●●●●●●●
- Footpaths 1999    - - - - -
- Droeways 1775    - - - - -
- Reconstructed road alignments    x x x
- Roman road (Margary)    ● - - - - ●
- Fields associated with Preston Poynings - Newelm

Barrow ●

## Mark Gardiner

### *Esteda and the character of eleventh-century Hastings*

There has been much discussion of the location and character of 11th-century Hastings. The most recent contribution to the debate has suggested improbably that the town was not founded until the middle of the 11th century and that the place-names *Hæstingaceaster* and *Hastingaport* were previously applied to Pevensey (Combes and Lyne 1995). There are more secure grounds for arguing that the main site of 11th-century Hastings lay not in Bourne valley to the east of the castle, which was the centre of the town by the 14th century, but on the west of Priory valley where there were the small, and evidently urban, parishes of Sts Michael, Margaret and Peter. The evidence for the Priory valley site will be considered elsewhere (Gardiner, forthcoming), but it is useful here to examine the possibility of early settlement in Bourne valley.

Archaeological excavation on the Phoenix Brewery site in 1988 in Bourne valley uncovered evidence for 11th-century occupation (Rudling and Barber 1993: 88; Vahey 1991). It had been accepted that the centre of activity at Hastings moved from Priory valley to Bourne valley during the course of the 13th century, but those finds suggest that there may have been earlier activity in the area. Some support for that view comes from an inspeximus or certified copy of a confirmation of grants of land and spiritualities to the college of St Mary in the Castle at Hastings (MS. WSRO Ep. VI/1/4, ff. 236r.-237r., printed in Peckham 1942-3: 299-302; another copy is MS. PRO E210/1073, printed in summary in *Ancient deeds* III, 532-3). There is no reason to doubt its essential authenticity. It comprises a confirmation of the early grants to the prebends of the college made before c. 1085 and a list of subsequent gifts. Among the later endowments was a grant by Ingelran de Scotney of a house (*mansura*) at *Esteda* given for the soul of his brother and for himself. Ingelran was the heir of the lands of Walter fitz Lambert, the progenitor of the Scotney family, and probably his brother.

*Esteda* may be understood as the 'east hythe' or, less probably given its location, as the 'east heath'. It must be the same place as the *Esthethe* recorded in the charters of Hastings Priory in the 14th century. The place-name *Esthethe* was then applied to plots of land in both All Saints and St Clements parishes (MSS. H(astings) M(useum and) A(rt) G(allery) 66, 69). In other words, it must have lain either side of the Bourne stream which divides the two, and indeed the bounds of some of the deeds mention the Bourne (MSS. HMAG 69, 81). It is difficult to locate the area precisely, although it certainly lay within the area of the 14th- and 15th-century town.

The implications of the place-name are worth exploring. The name indicates that there was a landing place or hythe in Bourne valley around 1100. The term *hythe* is usually applied to landing-places on rivers, not to ports on the sea (*PNIL* 76-8). In the present case it was presumably east in relationship to the main port in Priory valley on the other side of the castle. There were in total three landing places in Hastings at that time: the two mentioned, plus Bulverhythe, a few miles to the west. That name means the 'hythe of the burgesses', clearly referring to its relationship to the town of Hastings. Bulverhythe is first mentioned in the foundation charter of Hastings college when a payment of 2000 herrings and other fish was amongst the endowments of the prebend of William son of Alek. Clearly, it was already established as a small fishing port, a role which it continued to serve in later centuries (Searle and Ross 1967: 52).

We must imagine that the port of Hastings in the 11th century was not a single site, but a group of landing-places along a stretch of coastline. No doubt the main landing place was on the west of Priory valley, where the town developed, but there were lesser sites to the west and east.

The *Anglo-Saxon chronicle* (C, D; s.a. 1052) describes how in 1052 Earl Godwin on his return from exile in Flanders won the support of *butsecarlas* or shipowners from Hastings. Was *Hastings* a name for the entire length of coast with the three landing places?

○ *Acknowledgement*

I am grateful for Richard Coates for his comments on the place-name.

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**Passing interest**

**Michael Leppard** wondered why the railway station (recently reopened to traffic by the Bluebell Railway) near Tickeridge in West Hoathly should have been given the name *Kingscote* when the line opened in 1882, since this was a name new in 1866 for a nearby house built and named for himself by one Josiah King. Using evidence provided by V.K. Chew of London, he notes that this house was occupied in 1881 by John Wolf Barry, the engineer of the line (*Bulletin of the East Grinstead Society* 68, p. 13), and that solves the problem.

**offcentre**

**David Padgham** reports that Lower Lidham Hill Farm in Guestling (TQ 843167) has recently been renamed *Honeypot Farm* - at the whim of the owners, according to local residents. He cannot help wondering if they were moved in this instance by the un-neighbourly action of the farmer of the adjacent Lidham Hill who has been in trouble for spreading human sewage over his fields - one could understand a wish to dissociate.

## Christopher Whittick

### *The Windbeache on Ashdown Forest*

*(This is formally a response to Q3.1.2 by Mrs Dorothy Balèan in Lf 3 (1), 10, but its substance requires it to be treated as an article.)*

Mrs Balèan's contention that Chelwood Vachery is the site of a lost royal palace and that the thereby displaced holding of Michelham Priory is to be identified with the Isle of Thorns can be refuted on several grounds. It seems likely that the theory originated in the 1920s with the wish to identify the family holding with a royal palace rather than the more prosaic cow-pasture of the Augustinian Canons of Michelham Priory. But in reality the royal palace is to be identified with the manor-house of the manor of Maresfield, which came into the hands of the crown on the death of Gilbert de Aquila, the lord of Pevensey Rape and founder of Michelham Priory, in 1235. Despite the claims of Turner (1857: 41-4), followed and embroidered by Sutton (1902: 366), Christian (1967: 12-14) and Martin (1980: 1-10), there is no documentary evidence for a royal centre anywhere other than at Maresfield at any date. Furthermore, there is clear evidence that the present Chelwood Vachery is the site of an enclosure belonging to Michelham Priory and its successors, and that the present Isle of Thorns remained unenclosed until the second half of the 17th century. The map of The Vachery of 1799 (MS. ESRO DLW 562, map 30) shows nothing but wood and contains no hint of any settlement, medieval or otherwise.

### *The Isle of Thorns*

It is clear that the Isle of Thorns was not enclosed in 1564 and that Chelwood Vachery was.

It is perhaps worth quoting the first occurrence of the name, in a survey of the forest carried out in 1564 (PRO DL 42/112, f.165), in full: Parcel of West Ward

Beginneth at Millbrooke from thence westward to Egleswoodegill from thence to Stonegate and so leading by the pale to the Vacherye House from thence to the Ile of Thornesgill and so to Chellworth Gate and from thence to Powkechurchegill and so up the gill to Wiggecrosse and from thence eastwards down the gill called Depedeanegill leading by Petyhornewoode unto the steelforge and from thence southward to the three wards and from thence to Millbrooke.

Since it is clear that the perambulation is proceeding from east to west, we may be sure that in 1564, less than 30 years after the dissolution of Michelham Priory, the Vachery and the Isle of Thorns were seen as distinct locations, and that the Vachery lay east of the Isle of Thorns. It is also probable that, since the Isle of Thorns was referred to in the context of a stream, it was not at that date enclosed but merely open land indistinguishable from the rest of the forest.

Indeed we know roughly when the enclosure took place. The bounds for a proposed division of the forest in 1658 were to run past the Vachery, specifically excluding it, but were then to cross the Isle of Thorns, implying that the Vachery was enclosed and the Isle of Thorns was not (ESRO CAF 2/2, p. 167). The decree of 1693 (ESRO CAF 2/3, p. 145), which allotted the Isle of Thorns to Alexander Staples, describes it as "formerly enclosed by one Mr Jervis with hedge and ditch, and [now] divided by the fences and ditches formerly made and now continued by Alexander Staples". We cannot be sure of the identity of Mr Jervis, but he is possibly the Edward Jervis of Ardingly, butcher, whose will was proved at Lewes in 1688 (ESRO OW 1688.96). The Isle of Thorns

was sold by Staples to St Bartholomew's Hospital in about 1705, and its descent can be traced to the present day. It is shown in detail on a map of the Maresfield Park estate of 1820 (ESRO CAF 2/3, p.195-8; PAR 426/26).

### *Chelwood Vachery*

Michelham Priory gained *Windbeche* from Sir Robert de Mankesey, lord of the manor of Broadhurst in Horsted Keynes; the grant does not survive, but was included in an inspeximus made in the time of Edward II (SAC 6 (1853) 134)). The date of the gift is unclear, but if its reference to Robert's lord Gilbert Aquila implies that it was made in his lifetime, then a date between Michelham's foundation in 1229 and Gilbert's death in 1235 can be adduced.

The grant is as follows:

Sir Robert de Mankesie to Michelham; all his land of Windebeche near Horsted Keynes, in the forest of Heseldon, which he held by gift of Gilbert de Aquila. allowing the canons to have during the whole year, as often as needful, fencing in the aforesaid forest, to inclose the said land, under the inspection of his woodreeves. Also pasture for their animals near the forest, with the other men of Bradhurst.

The grant is not without its problems. Unless Gilbert had granted *Windbeche* to Robert to enable him to endow Michelham, it is difficult to know why Robert had anything within the forest, which was a demesne of the honour of Aquila, or why Robert's, rather than Gilbert's woodreeves had any jurisdiction there. Is this another instance in which the term *Ashdown* is used in general to denote wasteland, rather than specifically to define the land enclosed within the pale? The reference to pasture rights near the forest with the other men of Broadhurst must be taken as a reference to Chelwood Common which, before its enclosure in 1864, was appurtenant to that manor (ESRO QDD 6/13).

In addition to *Windebeche* and the rights of Chelwood Common, by 1274 Michelham enjoyed the right to run 60 cows and a bull in the forest, on the west part of *The Redee*, that is to say between *The Redee* and *The Wigge*. The church of Maresfield enjoyed similar rights in the same area, as did the prior of Wilmington and the free chapel of Maresfield at *Brounknoll* and on the south side of *The Loggebok* at *Uleley* respectively (PRO SC 12/15/46).

A badly damaged extent of the manor of Maresfield of c.1290 begins with a tenement called or at *...dbeche in foresta de Essedun'*, held by a rent of 7s. It owed neither suit, nor heriot nor relief, and it seems likely that Michelham's holding was intended (PRO SC 12/15/66).

In a list of Michelham's property of 1440, transcribed in 1533 (CKS U269 Q53), the property was referred as a manor at *Vacchare*, and was farmed by John Awcock at 20 shillings a year.

The woodmoot court for the west ward of the forest was held at *Wyndebeche* in 1461-1462 (ESRO CAF 2/1).

At the dissolution, Michelham was granted to Thomas Cromwell. In the accounting year 1539-1540, after his forfeiture, The Vachery, a parcel of land within the Forest of Ashdown, lately held by Thomas Rolles, failed to yield its rent of 20 shillings "because nobody wishes to occupy the land because the enclosures are totally in decay" (BL Harl. Roll D20, 21).

In 1542 commissioners surveying the forest referred to The Vachery as formerly part of

Michelham's possessions, from which no rent had been received for some years. They ordered the bailiff of Maresfield to seize it (ESRO CAF 2/1, p. 148).

It is clear from the survey of 1564 that a house stood at The Vachery at that date. Daniel Rogers of Ardingly, gentleman, held it in 1650, when the term *otherwise Windbeache* is again encountered (ESRO CAF 4/1). But by the time of the 1693 decree it seems to have been regarded as part of the demesne of Duddleswell manor, and is marked merely as The Vachery on the accompanying map (ESRO AMS 4084). It was certainly included when the forest was granted to the Duke of Dorset in 1730 and remained in the estate until the 19th century (ESRO DLW 318). It was the subject of a detailed map in 1799 (ESRO DLW 562, map 30).

#### *The royal palace*

Much of the desire not to take all the very clear evidence at face value has been based on the misunderstanding of equally clear material relating to the curia of the manor of Maresfield and the ecclesiastical establishments in the parish.

In brief, Maresfield was a demesne manor of the honor of Pevensey. In about 1230 Gilbert Aquila established a free chapel, dedicated to the Virgin, in the manor house, which had recently been moved to a new site. As well as the parish church, dedicated to St Bartholomew, there was also a chapel of ease at Nutley, dedicated to St George. On Gilbert Aquila's death in 1235 Maresfield, with the honor, passed into the hands of the crown, and it was for that reason that Edward II dated letters from Maresfield in 1325 (Calendar of Close Rolls 1323-7, pp. 404-7). The honor passed to John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster in 1372 and Maresfield, its manor-house and the chapel within it remained part of the duchy's possessions until the crown sold it to Sir John Gage in 1545; at that date the manor-house was said to be in ruins (ESRO SAS/G 19/4, 6/61, 62).

What was reasonably a folk-memory of a grand residence, occasionally visited by its royal owners, and a fairly standard ecclesiastical arrangement was totally misunderstood by the Rev. Edward Turner, who in 1857 confused the free chapel with the chapel of ease and ignored the obvious explanation that the royal residence was the manor-house of Maresfield, printing an engraving of the church of St Leonards near Hastings as his spurious chapel of St Mary.

His error has been built upon by the Rev. C.N. Sutton in 1902, who noted that "ruins of John of Gaunt's castle were still to be traced in the Vachery Wood", and more recently embroidered by Garth Christian and the Rev. D. Martin. The Sutton version was probably current when The Vachery was bought by F.J. Nettlefold in 1925, but it is almost certain that the ruins which had been visible were those of the house noted by the 1564 survey.

Edward's palace and Gaunt's castle did exist, not just in the minds of romantic scholars but more prosaically, a mile down the road at Maresfield.

I hope to publish a detailed correction of the Turner piece in a future volume of *Sussex Archaeological Collections*.

#### *O Acknowledgement*

I am grateful to Pamela Combes, Anne Drewery, John Farrant and Janet Hunnisett for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this note.



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## Richard Coates

### *A sense of place: aspects of the most local of naming in Rottingdean and nearby*

Rottingdean is on the SOUTH coast. It is a SEAside village, the edge of the land being marked by CLIFFS. It is in a fold of HILLS called by the special name of DOWNS, and the fold was once called by the now obsolete term DEAN that figures in the village-name.

It is part of the aesthetic of place that has been dominant since at least the mid-eighteenth century that well-sited places in general, and houses in particular, should have a PROSPECT, and, more recently and equivalently, a VIEW.

These facts are of great relevance for the house-naming of Rottingdean. The eight words in capital letters dominate the house- and street-names of the village. This set of notes is an exploration of these facts, and an attempt to show just how intimately house-naming has been guided by a sense of place defined by these key terms and a very small number of others, and by the principle of *meiosis*, which I shall define below. Rottingdean is only an example; I am quite sure that the tendencies I sketch here are repeated throughout England, and probably more widely still, but with different aesthetic counters in different cultures.

The eight words are exemplified in house-names (and street-names) as follows; the lists are likely to be exhaustive only for the historic village of Rottingdean and not at all exhaustive for Saltdean and Woodingdean, formerly within Rottingdean parish. Some names formerly in Ovingdean, and some still in Ovingdean, are mentioned, because for some categories of names exemplified the precise situation of administrative boundaries does not matter at all, and because the topic is house-naming, not Rottingdean.

All unsupported assertions are fully backed in Coates (forthcoming).

#### 1. SOUTH (and derived words)

Southdown (Steyning Road; probably directly from the hunt of that name and indirectly from the name for the local hills)

Southlands, 69 Elvin Crescent

Southerndown, 6 Falmer Road (possibly from the village-name in Glamorgan but seemingly applied for its perceived relevance here)

## 2. SEA

Sea View House (Kelly's, 1887; later called St Margaret's)

Seacroft, 29 Grand Crescent (possibly from the place in County Durham, but entirely characteristic of 1930s naming in this area; see CROFT below)

Seadowns, 27 Bazehill Road

Seafield, 46 Dean Court Road

Seaview, in Woodingdean (commemorated in Seaview Avenue)

Downsea, 559 Falmer Road, Woodingdean

Silver Sea, West Street, demolished

Stella Maris, Marine Drive (east), 'star of the sea' may also be mentioned here, though its motivation is primarily religious.

## MARINE

Brighton, four miles west, has of course for two centuries been England's leading seaside resort. Its status was cemented when the Prince Regent built his Marine Palace (the Royal Pavilion) there, and this appears to have set off a vogue for the use of the word *marine* in local names, e.g. the clifftop road *Marine Parade*. This influence is certainly felt in Rottingdean. We find:

Marine Cottage, east side of High Street (court books 1834, 1847; overlooking the end of the old coast road, which is now in the sea; demolished); probably the same as *Marine House* (Kelly's, 1895)

Marine View (Kelly's, 1895); near the sea end of the High Street

The word is also found in the street-name *Marine Drive*, a continuation eastwards of *Marine Parade*, and from their position in *Marine Drive* comes the name of the block of flats *Marine Court*, built in the 1990s.

## 3. CLIFF

Cliff Cottage (on the Quarterdeck; Kelly's, 1895)

Cliff Court, Park Road (flats dating from the 1930s)

Cliff-Dean, 26 Nevill Road (with further allusion to the village name)

Cliff Edge, 28 Marine Drive (east)

Cliff House (Cliffe House, Kelly's, 1887; now fallen into the sea)

(The) Cliff Houses (the previous item and the houses to its east were collectively so known)

Highcliff Court (on the Quarterdeck)

Whitecliff, 5 Chailey Avenue (and note the café *Whitecliffs* in Saltdean)

Clifton House, Manor Terrace (probably alludes to nearby cliffs through encapsulating the name of the resort of Clifton, Bristol, fashionable in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, just as *Cliftonville* in Hove and elsewhere does)

## 4. HILL

Hill Cottage, Bazehill Road (now Bazehill House)

The Hill House (1) (on cliff-edge west of gap; lost to the sea; sometimes named in the plural, as there were three residences in the building)

Hill House (2) (see Hillside (1))

Hillcroft (1), 57 Dean Court Road

Hillcroft (2), 9 Lenham Road West

Hillside (1), The Green (once *Hill House* (2); datestone on façade 1724 but name said to have been given by local gentleman Steyning Beard's first wife, i.e. in the mid-nineteenth century)

Hillside (2), 24 Nevill Road

Hillside Cottages, Black Rock

Hillview, 85 Dean Court Road

Hillview Cottage, 11 Romney Road

## 5. DOWN

Down House, The Green

Downalong, location unknown (pun on *Downs*, based on folk-song chorus "All along, down along, out along lea"?, and cf. *Upalong*, Longhill Road, Ovingdean)

The Downings, 5 Bazehill Road (other allusions possible but seemingly applied for its perceived local appropriateness)

Dow(n)lands, The Green (now split into houses Cavendish and Pax; *Dowlands* may have been the correct name, but both forms are found in the record and even in the same source)

Downlands, 15 Falmer Road

Downlands, 10 Crescent Drive South, Woodingdean

Downland Road, street-name in Woodingdean, giving rise also to *Downland Close*

Downsea, 559 Falmer Road, Woodingdean

Downside, site of modern street Roedean Heights, formerly in Ovingdean parish adjacent to the Rottingdean boundary

Downs Road, former name of Falmer Road in Woodingdean (itself formerly known as *The Downs Estate*)

Downs Valley Road, street-name in Woodingdean

Downsview, 110 Dean Court Road

Downsview, lost house-name in Woodingdean

Downsview special school, Warren Road, Woodingdean

Downsway, street-name in Woodingdean

Downsway, developers' prospective name of what became *Wilkinson Close*

Foxdown, formerly behind Longhill Road, Ovingdean (now also in a street-name in Woodingdean)

Highdown, 10 Newlands Road (possible allusion to the hill called *Highdown* near Worthing, not in its view)

Lower Down, 91 Dean Court Road

Maydown House, 94 Dean Court Road

Rotherdown, Steyning Road

Sandown, 33 Rowan Way (possibly/probably alluding to place on the Isle of Wight or in Surrey)

Seadowns, 27 Bazehill Road

Southdown, Steyning Road (see under SOUTH)

Southerndown, 6 Falmer Road (see under SOUTH)

Sundown, 32 Gorham Avenue (possibly a pun on the downland situation)

Wanderdown, Longhill Road, Ovingdean (punning name, giving rise to *Wanderdown Road, Way, Drive, Close*, all in Ovingdean)

6. DEAN or DENE; this word is especially prominent because it appears in the local major place-names *Rottingdean, Ovingdean, Saltdean, Roedean, Balsdean, Woodingdean* and *Bevendean*, and in the valley *Standean*.

Dean Cottage, 8 Romney Road

Dene Cottage, 29 Falmer Road

Dean Court Road

Dean Court, later *The Dene*, on The Green, giving rise also to *Dene Cottage*

Dean Court, later *Court Cottage*, 53 Dean Court Road

Denecroft, 15 Eley Drive

Deans Close, Woodingdean

Cliff-Dean, 26 Nevill Road

Deepdene, 47 Falmer Road (possible further allusion to place in Surrey or other)

Littledean, 11 Marine Drive

Maydene, 11 Welesmere Road

Rosedean, 18 Meadow Close

Rosedene Close, Woodingdean

West Dean, 14 Park Road (possible allusion to one of two villages in Sussex, but topographically appropriate)

#### 7.18. PROSPECT/VIEW

Prospect Cottage, later and now *Prospect House*, The Green

Downsview, 110 Dean Court Road

Hillview, 85 Dean Court Road

Hillview Cottage, 11 Romney Road

Marine View, near the sea end of the High Street

Meadow View, 86 Dean Court Road

Sea View House, High Street (Kelly's, 1887); later *St Margaret's*

West View, Steyning Road

Channel View, Race Hill Estate, Woodingdean (giving rise also to *Channel View Road*, *Holtview Road*, *Hillview Road*, *Seaview Road* and *Downsview Avenue*; though an early house-name *Seaview* is also known here)

This last cluster is an instance of what I call *meiosis*: the tendency of names to be given which allude to one already in use embracingly or adjacently, as if a named place was replicating itself by providing elements from within itself for recombination with others (without wishing to push the analogy too far). Channel View Road has in some sense inspired the entire group of others. Other examples of this phenomenon may be seen; a couple are mentioned above disguised by the words *giving rise to*.

#### Further local instances of meiosis:

Near the north gate of Challoners farmyard was built, in the 1890s, Northgate House. It was demolished in around 1960 and its site was developed as Northgate Close. Northgate Cottages were built, also in the 1890s, in Falmer Road. Immediately adjacent to the house-site in Bazehill Road are the houses Gate Cottage, a nursing home, and Canongate, ostensibly derived from an Edinburgh street-name, but this may be suspected of alluding to the farm gate or to the names which derive from it.

The warren on the eastern side of the Race Hill gave its name to Warren Farm, and to the Industrial School that was built there in 1862. Warren Road led there, and has now been extended to Woodingdean crossroads; Warren House was built opposite the original warren; later roads leading off from, or extending, Warren Road are Warren Avenue, Close (the site of Warren House) and Way.

#### Other favoured elements which have, or had, topographical relevance:

CROFT appears to have been specially popular in the 1930s, with no obvious reason why this should have been so unless it represents the tail-end of the Victorian passion for things Scottish.

(The word was of course used in English place-naming too, and in English legal discourse, but from about 1850 the Scottish application is likely to have dominated the minds of namegivers.) The houses do not adjoin each other, and no connection is known between any of them, so this is not a case of meiosis. Notice the combination of *croft* with the words already identified as locally important counters.

Denecroft, 15 Eley Drive

Dyxcroft, 3 Marine Drive (West)

Hillcroft, 9 Lenham Road West

Millcroft (lost; close to the existing mill)

Seacroft, 29 Grand Crescent (but possibly from a County Durham place-name)

Westcroft, 78 Eley Drive

Prior's Croft, 1 Saltdean Drive, Saltdean

FIELD; instances of this not resulting from meiosis are found in:

Field House, High Street (now St Aubyn's School)

Field Cottage, West Cliff

Eastfield, Steyning Road

MEADOW is found in the street-names *Meadow Close* and *Meadow Parade*, and in the adjacent house *Meadows* (49 Falmer Road); a known meadow is commemorated by meiosis here.

The preserved (but unused) MILL is probably Rottingdean's best-known feature, and it is alluded to in house-names, but without meiosis, as follows:

Mill Cottage, High Street (there is an actual connection with the mill here; it was the home of the last miller)

Mill Cottage, 28 Newlands Road (? mill in view)

Millcroft (lost; close to the mill)

Windmill House, 56 Nevill Road

Beacon Mill (Sheepwalk; close to mill)

The garden plots known in the nineteenth century as THE PARKS have been built on, and their site is commemorated by *Park Terrace*, *Road* and *Crescent*. In Park Road is Park Cottage.

Other instances of the use of regional or other special vocabulary are:

COOMBE, a poetic word for a valley, originally applied where there is a profile quite different from that in Rottingdean:

Coombe Cottage, 25 Falmer Road

Coombe Farm, Saltdean (whose situation respects the original application of the term), spawning the adjacent street-names *Coombe Rise* and *Coombe Vale*

LINKS, plural of a characteristic downland place-name word *link* 'cultivation-terrace'

White Links, 4a Falmer Road, is under suspicion of being named from its front fence, but perhaps in full knowledge of this local word.

The conclusion is that an important part of house- and street-naming is determined by strictly local topography and pre-existing names, and therefore that there is, in the community at large, a general sense of local appropriateness in naming. This is countered by alternative naming strategies, of which the two most importantly represented in Rottingdean and its area (as elsewhere) are (1) the use of place-names from outside the local district as house-names, e.g. Chelwood, Lynton, Clovelly, Hampton (Cottage), Inchcape, Dunbar, Lathkil, St Valery, Kyrenia, Virginia, Shalimar and Zante; and (2) the use of tree- and other plant-names, e.g. Jacaranda, Armeria and Woodbine; Fern Villa; and Ivy, Magnolia, Tamarisk, Honeysuckle, Box and Rose Cottages.

○ *Reference*

Coates, Richard (forthcoming) *A history of Rottingdean in its place-names*. [An early version (1998) may be viewed on the author's web-site at: [www.cogs.susx.ac.uk/users/richardc/index.html](http://www.cogs.susx.ac.uk/users/richardc/index.html) There it is called *The place-names of old Rottingdean: a millennium handbook*.]

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