

WIRRAL FIELD NAMES.

By Eric H. Rideout, B.Sc.

Read 8th March, 1923.

THE serious study of field names, like that of the nearly related place names, has been somewhat neglected until recently. Both subjects have suffered in the past from careless guess work. Names and their origins have often been distorted by local enthusiasts anxious to prove some pet theory. In Wirral one has only to recollect the name of Thurstaston, and the frantic endeavours, recently summarised by Mr. Beazley, to trace its origin to a supposed sacrificial stone erected in honour of the god Thor.¹ But because field names have been generally neglected by careful historians they have been even more liable to ridiculous distortion.

The modern study of place names depends almost entirely upon the study of early forms of the name, as found in contemporary documents; and this, taken in conjunction with a careful analysis of local topography, has undoubtedly led to results of some value. Early sources of place names, it is true, are scanty, but in comparison with those of field names are relatively abundant. Field names occur sometimes in early deeds, especially where any boundaries are concerned. Sometimes a rent roll or terrier is found, but always the discovery is more or less accidental and we are far too dependent upon chance sources for our information. Again some place names are found on every map, however small the scale, but rarely do we find a map whose scale is sufficiently large to mark the field names. In fact it is not until the early years of

¹ Beazley, F.C., *Thurstaston* (1924), pp. 198 et seq.

last century that we find a series of maps upon which is recorded every field name then known. I refer of course to the series of maps, with attached schedule, prepared in accordance with the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836. No attempt will be made here to trace the complicated history of tithes. It is sufficient to notice that the collection of tithes (a tenth part of the produce of land) had been attended in practice with so many difficulties that, by the act of 1836, payments then made in kind were commuted for money payments, the precise amount depending upon the average price of certain cereals during the previous seven years. To ensure an accurate account of the tithes payable, a survey of the whole of the country was made. Plans of each township, together with a descriptive schedule, were deposited with the tithe commissioner. Duplicate copies were deposited—one in the parish church, the other in the diocesan registry concerned. It is to these documents therefore that we must first turn for the identification of field names.

An examination of the recorded names has revealed many interesting facts, which help in some instances to throw considerable light on the topography and early history of the district. There are of course many thousands of fields in Wirral and hundreds of them had separate and distinctive names at the time of the survey. For the present no attempt has been made to give a complete list of the names occurring in the peninsula, but in the following pages an attempt has been made to classify the names, to reduce them to some sort of order, and to form thereby some idea of their value.

Nature and origin.

Field names exist obviously for the same purpose as place names, and serve to identify the several fields held by one or another landowner or tenant. Often these names have been handed down through many generations, and of this we have ample proof. It is possible too, that many have

been lost or so distorted that they can no longer be distinguished by their more modern variations. Others again are of quite modern origin; some even have arisen since the tithe schedules were completed.

There can be little doubt of the permanence of the majority of these names, but as written records are scanty we must be prepared for frequent corruptions. The tithe schedules themselves appear to have been compiled on oral evidence alone, thus giving many peculiar variations even in the same parish.

Corruption of field names.

In order to realise fully the extent to which corruption can take place we must have some older forms of the name available. Unfortunately in very few instances have we so far been able to discover sources older than the tithe schedule. In one or two townships we have early terriers; for the others we must rely on the chance identification of a field mentioned in an earlier document.

The most complete terrier so far available is that of the estate of Sir Charles Bunbury, dated 1736. In this document, with its accompanying plan, we have identified nearly every field in Stoke, Great Stanney and Little Stanney. A comparison of some of the outstanding examples of corruption found in this terrier and the tithe schedule is exceedingly interesting. Most of the marshy lands then known as the Moors is now split up into smaller fields, each with a distinctive name, such as Meacocks Meadow, Alder Meadow. The Oulton has been renamed The Old Townfield. Other names are:—

Terrier, 1736.

Dayseie Hay
Big Copse
Rushey Croft
Thisley Croft
Dellamore Croft
Intack
Coach Nook

Tithe Schedule, 1840.

Daysy Hay
Big Cop
Rushy Croft
Thistley Croft
Delamere Croft
Intake
Couch Nook

Terrier, 1736.

Cliver Loons
 The Mendor
 Conygrave Hay
 Pooter's Hooke
 Mellow Hays
 Higher Hay
 Wett Raines & ye Isle of Withs
 Ye Mackling
 Backen Butt
 Lane Acre
 Through Shoots
 Stony Croft

Tithe Schedule, 1840.

Clover Loons
 Mender
 Coney Greave
 Pooters Rock
 Mellor Hay
 Hither Hay
 Wet Rains & Butts.
 Mackle
 Bracken Butt
 Long Acre
 Trowse Woods
 Stanney Croft.

It should be remembered that no doubt whatever attaches to the identification of the names, since the two plans of 1736 and 1840 have been redrawn to a common scale and the separate fields have been identified by actual measurement.

The compilation of the tithe schedules on oral evidence has also caused some corruption. In Little Neston (Hargreave) occur Branna (33, 34, 35), and Piladall (36); whilst the adjoining fields in Raby are Branners (218, 223, 224, 225), and Peller Dale (220, 222).

Dialect Names.

Amongst field names there are naturally many whose meaning can only be explained on the assumption that they are derived from dialect words. Some of these words are still in use in parts of Cheshire; many others have long been obsolete. In the following classification the names are listed strictly according to meaning, without differentiation between words of obvious derivation and those in dialect form.

It is obvious that with so many names some system of classification is essential. The tithe schedules enumerate the holdings of individuals and the fields are named as they occur in each holding. The method adopted for their examination has been—firstly, to write the name of each field upon a separate card, together with suitable abbrevia-

tion for the name of the township, followed by the number of the field on the accompanying tithe plan.¹ The cards for all the townships were placed in alphabetical order in drawers for filing.

A rough classification based on the meaning of the field names was then adopted, the cards being sorted into one or the other division as required. Occasionally defects in the classification were observed, when it was found possible to include a card under two or more divisions, but on the whole the final scheme described below has proved most generally useful.

Classification.

1. GEOGRAPHICAL.

A. Names of Places.

B. Names of Position and Direction.

2. TOPOGRAPHICAL.

Names of Natural Features.

3. GEOLOGICAL.

4. METEOROLOGICAL.

5. BOTANICAL. Natural Vegetation.

6. ZOOLOGICAL. Natural Fauna.

7. CULTIVATION.

A. Systems.

B. Crops.

C. Stock.

8. HISTORICAL.

A. Personal Names.

B. Occupational Names.

C. Sites of Buildings, Roads, etc.

9. ECCLESIASTICAL.

10. VARIOUS.

It should be borne in mind that the classification is as yet extremely rough and ready in character and is only intended to serve the purpose of pigeon holes to facilitate further study. A greater range of examples will probably indicate many useful modifications in the scheme. As at present drawn up, it is hoped that the method will prove

¹ The abbreviations adopted are listed in the appendix.

useful to workers in other parts of the country. At all events it will serve as a working theory and hence stimulate others to criticise its value.

I. GEOGRAPHICAL.

A. *Names of places.*

In this section are included all those fields whose names are obviously derived from place names, without regard to the supposed derivation of the latter. Their origin is clear. As a farmer once remarked to me when asked the name of a field—"We call it Greasby Field, because it's the nearest field to Greasby." (This field by the way is described on the tithe schedule as Race Field.)

Bebington Meadow. Tm 599

Greasby Flatt. Un 46.

Caldey Hay. G.M. 69, 70, etc.

Hindertons Hay. Nn 33.

Ness Acre. Wn 181, 258, 261,

Saughall Way. Gy 30.

265.

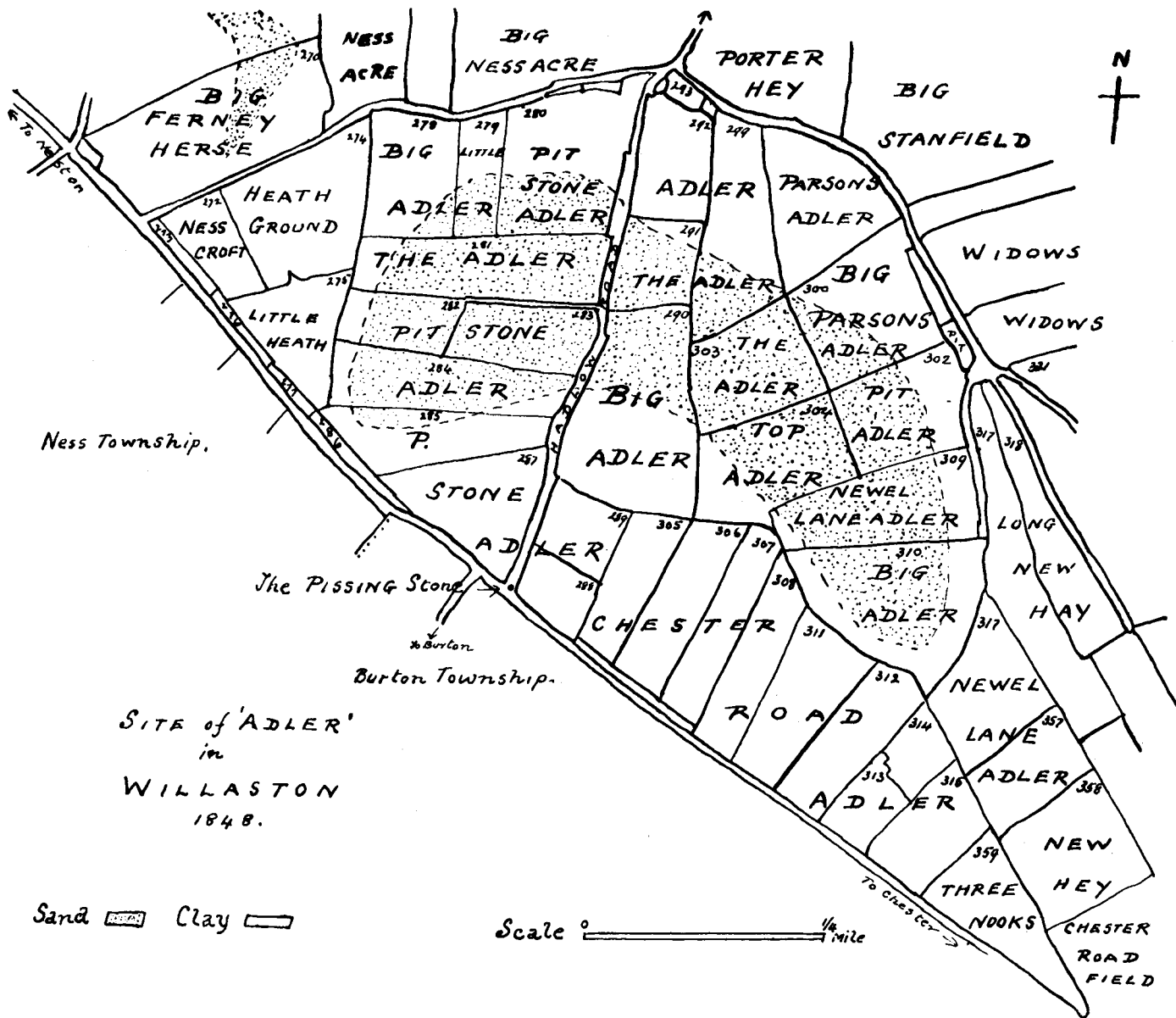
These names and dozens like them bear their meaning on the surface and call for no comment.

What appears to be a striking example of the value of field names in the location of lost villages is provided by a group of fields called Adler in Willaston. Through this cluster of fields runs a lane which has given its name to the railway station, Hadlow Road. Noticing the phonetic similarity of the words Hadlow, Adler, Edelaue, Mr. Irvine¹ suggested that the manor of Edelaue mentioned under Wilaveston hundred in Domesday was not, as Beaumont stated, Ewloe in Flint, but probably Hadlow in Willaston. Professor Tait² agrees that there is no philological reason why Hadlow should not be derived from Edelaue—O.E. *æt Eadan hlawe*, i.e., at Eada's grave, mound, or hill. Mr. Young³ noticing a mounting

¹ Irvine, W. F. "Notes on Domesday" etc., *Jour. Chester Arch. and Hist. Soc.*, v, 72 (1893).

² Tait, J. *The Domesday Survey of Cheshire* (Chetham Soc., 75), ix. (1916).

³ Young, H. E. *Perambulation of Wirral* (1909). On p. 106 Young quotes Ormerod's *History*, where the existence of a stone near the centre of the Hundred is assumed. Without further ado Mr. Young identifies this stone by the road-side with the one which should theoretically exist.



block by the cross roads in Hadlow Road, suggested that the stones were anciently part of one column, and renamed it the Wirral Stone. His sensitive mind took exception to the local name, which, according both to the tithe plan and to present custom, is the Pissing Stone. Other evidence¹ goes to prove that stones bearing this name were frequently found in the centre of a village green, and were used for the posting of official notices.

Reverting to the field names, it is found that the Adlers occupy a hillock of sandy soil, with the sandstone rock exposed in places. It has been observed by Edwards,² and confirmed by the writer, that the majority of old settlements in Wirral were on such sandstone hills.

Thus the nature of the soil and the field names combine to support a theory that a manor of Edelaue may have existed in Willaston township.³ Some of the Adlers have been built upon, but sufficient area remains to justify a careful examination of the site, particularly if further excavations for building purposes should take place.

Similar value attaches to Wooton Hays⁴ (Bn 114-115, 117, 120, 123), and to Dennah Hay (Ns 66, 71, 76) and Dennah Meadows (Ns 46).

B. *Names of Position and Direction.*

Under this heading are grouped a number of names indicating (a) position by compass bearing, (b) position

¹ Pissing Stone. Murray's *Standard Eng. Dicty.* says "Pissing post—commonly used for sticking up placards." J. Taylor, 1630: "On every pissing post their names I'll place."

² Edwards, *Proc. Lpool. Geol. Soc.*, ix., 292.

³ To support his contention that Edelaue is really Hadlow, Irvine identifies Domesday Wilaveston with Willaston, the word-ending representing not -ton, but -stone or -stan. The marking of the Pissing Stone on the Tithe Plan certainly indicates some peculiar importance attaching to the stone and might lend some colour to Irvine's theory; but Tait has pointed out that were the ending -stone or -stan, the Domesday form of the word would not be Wilaveston but Wilavestan. The name shows that the hundred meetings were at Willaston.

⁴ For Woolton see Irvine in *Chesh. Sheaf*, iv, 23., and *Lancs. and Ches. Hist Soc.* xlv., 78.

in relation to other features of the landscape or to buildings, (c) shape, and (d) indefinite size.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>a.) Westerly Hey. Ry 19.
West Field. He 75</p> <p>b.) Corner Marsh. Sy 22.
Higher Hay. St. 15, 48.
Hither Hay. St. 79.
Lower Backside. L.N. 11.
Middle Heath. Ns 281.
Top Mill Field. Gy 181.
Orchard Fold. Sn 198.
Barn Croft. Py 2, Nm 24.
Sy 1-6, Ox 189, 202,
220.
Bridge Meadow. Un 41. S.M.
193. M. 305, 307.</p> | <p>c.) Crooked Loons. Bd. H36.
Long Field. Sy 44, Ln 93,
Pn 13.
Square Field. Gy 80.
Triangle. Tm 329. Pn. 20,
M. 289.
Broad Arrowe. Aw 45.
The Roundabout. M 66.</p> <p>d.) Big Ley. G. Sy. 21.
Little Piece. G. Sy. 70.</p> |
|--|---|

It is noteworthy that although 'Triangle' always approximates to that figure, it not infrequently is a figure with four sides, e.g., M. 289, and Pn 20. On the other hand three-sided figures are sometimes known as Three Nooks (Ln 81, G.N. 355), while in Wallasey there occurs the engaging name Three Nook Cake (Wy 390).

Similarly the name Pingle (Sn. 19, Bn. 27, 244, G. 52, Gy. 87), with variants Pingles (Ry 18), Pingo (Ns 85), and Pingots (Lm 537), denotes a certain shape of field, either long and narrow or pointed, and small relatively to the surrounding fields. Holland¹ notices that Pingle is a north country word for a small enclosure, but in Cheshire it is more commonly Pingot; in East Anglia it becomes Pightle.²

In examining field names, one finds the term Thistly (or variant) applied often to areas which ill merit the opprobrium. In the two schedules quoted above it will be seen that Thisley Croft in 1736 becomes Thistley Croft in 1840. Obviously Thisley means nothing, and hence the

¹ Holland, *Chesh. Sheaf*, iii., 92. (1883).

² Benhall, Suffolk, Nos. 134, 257, 379; and Little Owsden, Suffolk, Nos. 5, 11.

corruption. This field lies near the boundary of two estates. "Holly"¹ says, "It is probable that we see the Norse word *twistle* (a boundary) in the field name of Twistle Hay at Poulton cum Seacombe." Twistle Hay lies on the edge of the pool, near the boundary of Poulton, (Wy 241). Again in Raby, Twizzle Hay lies not only where Raby joins Willaston but at the boundary of two estates. Is it unreasonable to suggest that Thistley often represents a corruption of the old Norse *twistle* when it occurs in such situations?

2. TOPOGRAPHICAL.

A topographical feature, a hill, a valley, a stream or lake, is frequently employed to distinguish fields. As was pointed out in a previous paper,² the early occupiers of Wirral must first of all have looked out for prominent features of the landscape to serve them for points of identification for their boundaries and landmarks. It would be much later in history that man-made land marks would be employed. The meanings of these names are usually fairly obvious and hardly call for special notice.

Bank Hay, H 128.

Dale, Ry 82, Ns 86, Pn 82.

Brow Field, M 65, Tm 359, 361.

Dale Shoots, Tw 92.

Hill, Nm 29.

Hill Grounds, M 28.

Brook Croft, Aw 75, 82

One of the prettiest examples of the value of field names as well as a peculiar example of distortion, is furnished by the Mares, Mares hay, and Mare Meadow in Ness. In the absence of earlier forms we should at once guess this name to refer to the female horse. Before definitely classifying it under the heading Agricultural Stock, however, we require to examine the site and distribution of the name in the township. The name is held by eight fields in the one township, and moreover these fields are confined to one spot. This disposes at once of the idea

¹ Holly, *Wirral Notes and Q.*, i. 57.

² Rideout, *Hist. Soc. Lancs and Ches.*, lxxiv., 95.

that it was customary to allot a field on each farm to the mares. Perhaps then a large field has been divided into many smaller fields or intensive farming of mares has been carried on, a theory that gains support from the name of the adjoining fields, Stud Folds. An examination of the site, however, shows all the fields to lie in a small hollow or basin on the slopes of Mill Hill. Further, the soil in this basin is of a peaty nature. On the Geological Survey map¹ the area is described as a "peaty flood basin, six inches to one foot peaty soil lying on discoloured clay," and is no doubt the tarn alluded to in an earlier publication.² Hence it seems reasonable to suppose that Mare is a corrupted explanatory form of Mere, the latter a name commonly used in Cheshire to describe sheets of water. The 'mere' apparently drained across the neighbouring fields and fell into Shotwick brook to the east. There is no historical record of the name so far as I am aware; hence here a field name gives a valuable key to what must have been at one time a most conspicuous feature of the landscape.

3. GEOLOGICAL.

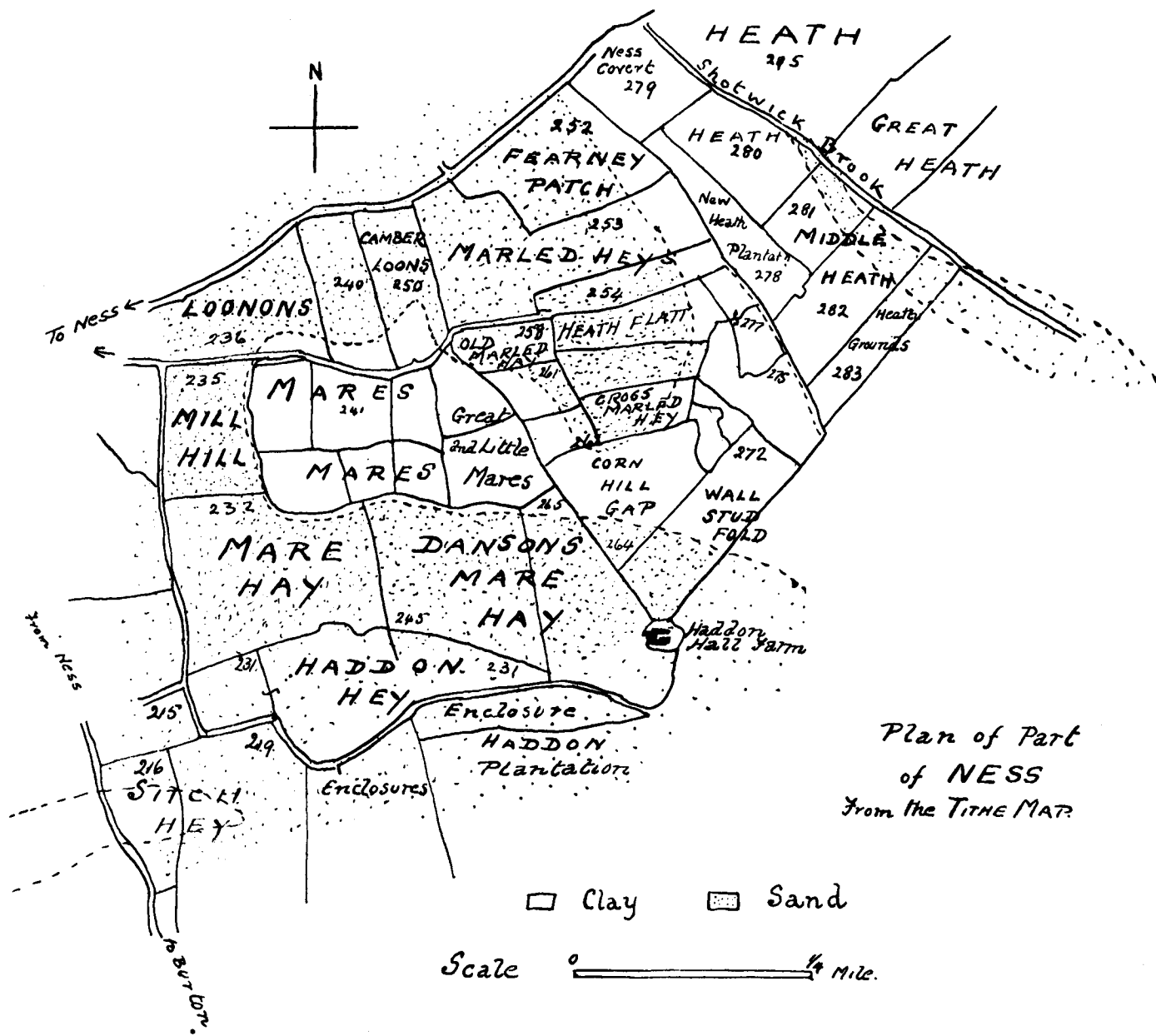
It is not surprising to find many fields named from the peculiar nature of their soil. Examples are numerous and generally easily explained. In most instances such names have been examined with the aid of the detailed maps of the Geological Survey. Personal inspection in some cases, with analysis of the soils, has verified the meaning of their names.

Clay Field, S.M. 194., Bn 264.	Sour Flatts, Sn 23.
Sand Field, H. 81, 83, 89, 90, 91.	Stone Croft, G 575.
Fy 99, Py 23, 24.	
Nm 41. Lm 14.	

The Black Meadow in Bidston (23, 24) is quite clearly

¹ The "Six-inch" to one mile Ordnance Sheets with details of the Geographical Survey of 1911-14 in MS. to be seen in the Geol. Museum, Jermyn St., London: Chesh. Sheet xxx N.E.

² Strahan Sheet memoir 79. S.E., p. 151.



Plan of Part
of NESS
from the TITHE MAP.

so called from its black peaty soil. Another name describing a similar type of soil is found in the Browns in Grange (43, 55, 56, 57). This at first sight might be placed among the personal names, but the early form of the word is *The Browne*.¹ Lying at the head of the Birket marshes and surrounded by streams, this area is marked by the Geological Survey as being of a peaty nature.² Examination of the soil confirms this description and reveals a dark-coloured, almost black, soil. Bearing in mind the reddish nature of the sandy soil above and the peculiar greyish shade of the silts below, it is hardly remarkable that this peculiar patch of soil should have been noticed by farmers.

Yellow Banks (H 59, 60, 61, 62) are notable for the bright yellow sand, in vivid contrast to the dull clay of the surrounding fields. A sandy soil, requiring much manuring to secure good crops, is 'hungry' as the farmers say; hence *Hungry Hay* in *Caldy* (148, 149), where a patch of sand comes to the surface in the midst of the clay plain. Similar instances are the numerous *Greedy Butts*.

4. METEOROLOGICAL.

So far a solitary example, and that doubtful, occupies this class. *Bleak Looms* (Tw 38), though quite probably derived from *Black Looms*, may emphasise the cold and exposed nature of the field. In the majority of instances the nature of the soil or natural vegetation would be of vastly greater importance for identification than any climatic peculiarity, which must surely be shared, in some degree, by neighbouring fields.

5. BOTANICAL.

Names denoting a type of vegetation are of particular value in interpreting local history. Areas of natural vegetation are by no means common even in rural districts,

¹ G.P.G. "Bordland Tithes in Great Caldý," *Ches. Sheaf*, v., 24 (1903).

² *Cheshire Sheet* xii N.E.

hence the names are usually old and of great value in forming a correct idea of early conditions. They might, in accordance with modern ideas, be divided into two classes, the first including all those formations which occupy extensive areas, for example Heath, Moor, Carr, Wood, and Grass. Secondly, there are many fields bearing the names of specific plants of special note or relative abundance, such as Birches, Gorse, Ling and Reeds. The following list will give some idea of their character and significance, those in the second class being grouped under the formations to which they naturally belong. Here the names of the formations only are given, since space does not admit of the addition of their location.

<i>Heath.</i>	Bracken Butts, St. 76.	Benty Brow, G. 573.
	Benty Hey, Pd. 182-4., Py 32, 33.	Gorse, Ry. 180.
	Broom, Bd. E4, 8, 9.	
<i>Moor.</i>	Moory Flaggs, S.M. 30.	Wet Moor, Pd. 140, 150, 157
<i>Carr.</i>	Moss, Bn. 46-50 etc.	Moss Meadow, Bd. R. 13.
<i>Marsh.</i>	Thorney Marsh, Sy 73.	Rushy Croft, Pn. 30.
	Dig Meat, Ln. 145	Rush Marsh, G. Sy 74.
	Reeds, M. 189.	
<i>Wood.</i>	Acorns, Pd. 104.	Oaks, L.Sy 25.
	Ash Alland, Wh 39.	Owler Hey, Pd. 237.
	Asp Hay, Wn. 344.	Shrub Field, M. 329.
	Birches, G.M. 79, Ry 107, 108.	Sycamore Bank, Bn. 88, 89.
	Coppice Croft, L.Sy. 14.	Thorney Butts, M. 310.
	Grave, Nm 39.	Willow Brow. Ry. 124, 127
	Holt Hey, Ns. 166.	126, etc.
	Hurst, Tm. 359.	Dean, G.M. 56, 60, 61.
		Dell, Nm. 34.

Referring to the maps showing the site of Adler and the site of Mares it will be seen that Big Ferney Herse (Wn 270), i.e., Big Ferny Hurst, and Fearney Patch (Ns 253) occupy sandy beds adjoining greater stretches of heath land. Fern is of course the local name for

bracken (*Pteris aquilina*), hence the field name here is a guide both to the soil and the vegetation. The most interesting name in this section is Digmeat (Ln 145). Wilbraham's *Glossary*¹ mentions Digg or Dig meaning a duck. Leigh's *Glossary*² mentions dig meat or duck meat, i.e. duckweed (*Lemna* sp.).

6. ZOOLOGICAL.

This section is limited to fields named from the natural fauna as distinct from domestic animals. Crow Holt, Pd 67, Cuckoos Field, Ln 115; Fish Pond, Ox 400; Fox Cover, Wn 353; Rabbit Warren, Aw 25; Thrush Butts, M 61; Coney Greaves, H 100, are examples of the obvious forms. More interesting examples are provided by the following. Asker Dale, Tm 353, does not jump to the eye as belonging to this section, but Wilbraham's *Glossary* notes Ask or Asker—a land or water newt; hence this field, obviously low-lying, achieved fame for its animal inhabitants. Again Snig Lane Meadow, G.N. 246, bears no clear reference to animal life, unless it is known that a snig is the dialect name for an eel. It is perhaps less necessary to explain that Brockles Hay, Wn 358, derives its name from the badger, brock being a common Cheshire name for the animal.³

7. CULTIVATION.

A. Systems.

The heading of this section is inevitably misleading. It would of course be hoping too much to expect to find in field names definite proof of the existence of any one old time system of agriculture in one place. Field names, however, do afford a valuable clue to the system that once obtained in any area, and it seems not improbable that a careful study of these clues will result in more

¹ Wilbraham, R., *Glossary of some words used in Ches.* (1826).

² Leigh, E., *Glossary of words used in the Dialect of Cheshire* (1877).

³ Cf. Ekwall, E. *The Place Names of Lancashire* (1922); Brockholes—Brocc=a badger, hol=a burrow.

certain knowledge on this topic than has hitherto been achieved.

The clear fact emerging from a study of Wirral field names is that some form of open field system was in use.

Town Field, G.M. 38, 39, 37, 36. Wy 11, 12, 18, 28, 29.

Wn 242-245.

Town Meadow, M 16-24. S.M. 60-64. Gy 59-63.

In these instances the name Town Field or Town Meadow is in itself a name to excite interest, but when the name is found to apply to as many as eight fields in a township it becomes almost a proof that an open field system existed. The shape, disposition, and the scattered ownership of the fields bearing the name are further evidence to support the theory.

Crook Loons, Lm 125, Ox 246.

Cross Looms, H 137, 139.

Long Loons, Lm 124.

White Loons, Pn 17.

Clover Loonds, L Sy 113.

Lands, loons, looms, launds, loundes are numerous. In almost every instance such fields in earlier documents are shown or indicated to be divided into the long narrow strips familiar to every reader of Seebohm's *English Village Community* as characteristic of the open field system.

Such formation characterises other fields. The "doles" of the Oulton in Stanney for example, by their shape and ownership, point to an etymological connection with the Westmoreland dales, portions of open unfenced land.¹ Similar inferences may be drawn from the name Quillet, Gy 174, and

Quillets, H 156-161, 164-169.

Quillets in Broad Meadow, S.M. 61.

Quilet in Outground, S.M. 8-16.

Leigh defines the term as meaning small plots of land,

¹ Seebohm, p. 110. Ernle. *English Farming Past and Present* (1919), p. 24.

I736.



surrounded, but without a fence. The fields were defined merely by stones placed at the corners and called Quillet Stones. T. Hughes¹ notes the term in the same connotation as occurring in Holt on the Welsh side of the Dee and in Devon. In Newton-cum-Larton there are three fields called Quillet in Town Meadows, which, even apart from the shape and diverse ownership of the three divisions, points to an open field system. Further suggestions lie in the name Acre with its many variants and compounds:—

Acre, Tm 565.

Acre, L. Sy 143.

Acres, L. Sy 74, 100.

Two Acres, L. Sy 38, 39, 40, 73, 74.

Half Acre, M. 168, 169, 172, 173.

Ackers, Wh 31, 32.

Accars, Wh 33, 34.

Accors, Wn 53, 54, 58, 59, 60, 82, 83, 84, 87.

Banakers, S.M. 171, 174, 175, 176, 178.

Wallacre and Poplady, Wy. 176.

Of these perhaps the most interesting is the collection in Little Stanney, where each field of the Two Acres was in 1736 divided into two fields under separate ownership. The corruption of the name is clearly shown in Woodchurch, where Ackers and Accars lie side by side.² Wallacre and Poplady, one huge meadow in 1840, contained in 1662 a strip called Wallaker, obviously a share in an open field.³

Under this section may be included the names—

Green, L.M. 99, 150, 157. Ns 21, 22, 37.

Greens, Tm 293, 295, 296, 297, 351, 352.

Green Field, Pd 67, 68.

Green Hay, Gy 75, 88, 89, 91.

Intack, Lm 170, 177.

Intake, G. 2, 4, 7, 8, 9.

Inclosure, Lm 173, 175.

¹ Hughes T., *Ches. Sheaf.*, ii., 109.

² See Tithe Map, *Trans. Lancs. and Ches. Hist. Soc.* lxxiv., 99.

³ Vyner terrier copied by Mr. Irvine.

Groups of such names may show enclosure either of a village green or of waste. A good example of the first type is shown on the accompanying plan of Stanney Green. Caldý township provides an example of heath inclosure, where the numerous enclosures lie next the Heath.

A distinctive method of cultivation is revealed by the names of Eddish Croft, G 581, and Eddish Field, G. 582. "The word etch or eddish occurs in Tusser, and means the stubble of the previous crop of whatever kind."¹

Seed first go fetch,
For edish or etch
White wheat if ye please
Sow now upon pease.

and

When wheat upon eddish ye mind to bestow.

Similarly on the same authority we have a probable explanation of Breach Field (Tw 88)—"The oats or beans grown on the wheat stubble were sometimes called breach corn, and breach land was land prepared for a second crop."

B. *Crops.*

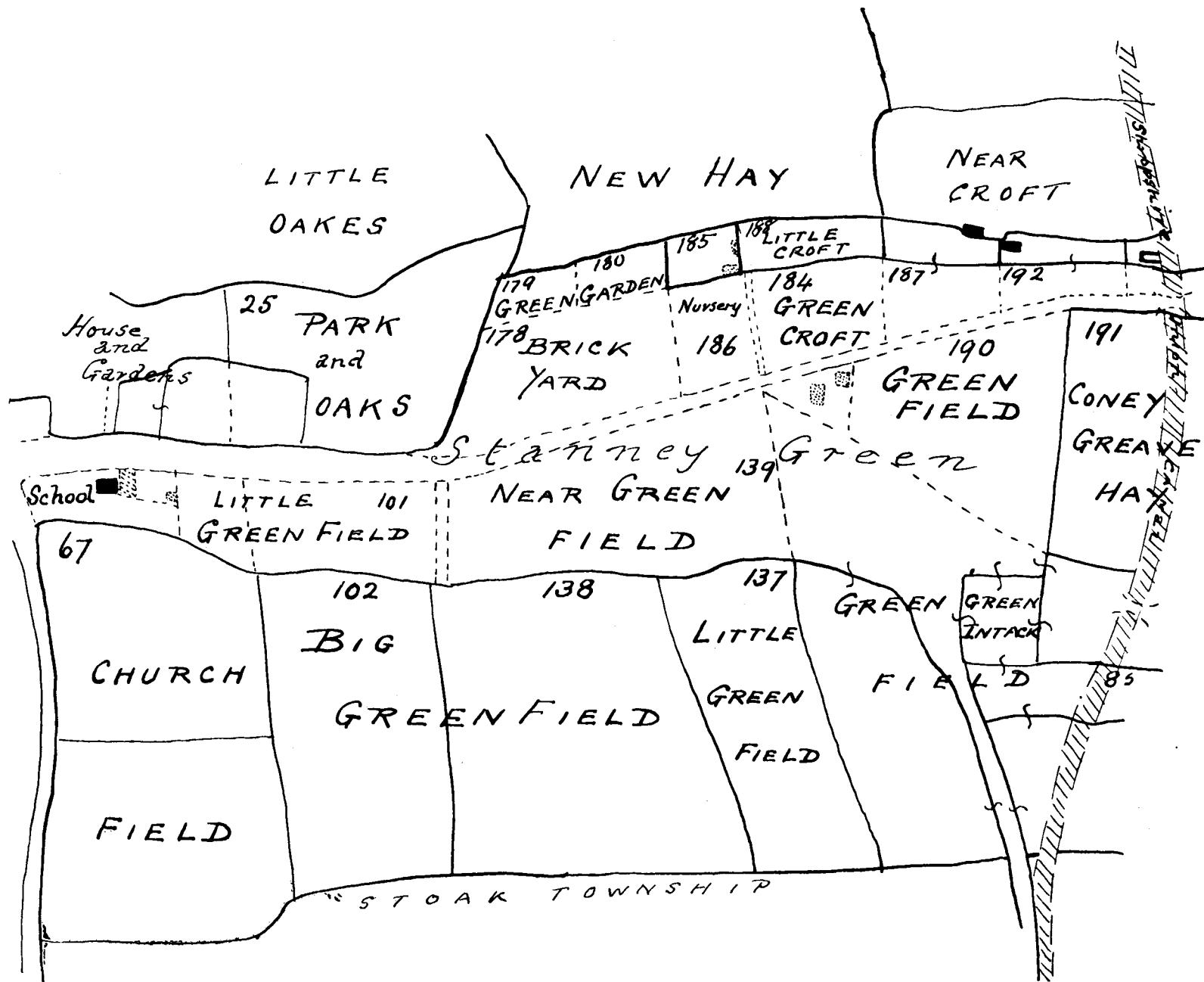
Special crops have obviously been responsible for the naming of the following fields and others like them:

Barley Corners, Lm 81.	Clover Root, Gy 76.
Corn Hill Thwaite, Bn 14.	Flax Hill, M 27.
Hop Field, M 220-223, 225.	Rye Field, Fy 190.
Oat Field, L.M. 41 etc.	G.M. 57-58.
Wheat Butts, Fy 14.	Vineyard, Od 22, Un 141.

C. *Stock.*

Still more naturally enclosures used for certain types of stock frequently perpetuate the fact in their name. Even the ox, whose use in local agriculture has long been discontinued, has many fields dedicated to its memory.

¹ Seebohm, p. 376; Tusser, *A Hundred Points of Good Husbandrie* (1557).



PLAN OF STANNEY GREEN.

Continuous line shows state in 1736. Dotted line shows state in 1840. Boundaries abolished in 1840 are bracketed.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Bull Dow, S.M. 123. | Calf Croft, Nm 33. 38. |
| Cow Croft, Ge 164. | Fat Cow Meadow, Bd K5, 6, 7. |
| Goose Green, M 100, 102. | Horse Pasture, Aw 90. |
| Ox Holme Meadow, Bn 239,
240, 241. | Sheep Cot Pasture, L. Sy 145. |
| Swine Loons, Gy 143, 150. | |

8. HISTORICAL.

The term historical is used to cover names whose meaning bears some reference to the habitation of an area by man, or to his occupation and works within that area. Owing to the large number of names involved and their consequent importance, it has been advisable to separate from man's general influence on the district, his works in agriculture and in the church.

A. *Personal Names.*

The biggest class consists of personal names, which can often be traced in old documents, e.g., parish registers, hearth tax and subsidy rolls, as names of families once residing in the district. The work of Mr. Irvine and others in this connection is well known.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Tottie Field, Fy 202. | Cotton's Meadow, Sy 28. |
| Sherlock's Pits, Bn 247. | Leech's Meadow, L.N. 25. |
| Stanley's Dale, Wn 100. | Meacock's Meadow, St. 24. |
| Tassey's Meadow, Bn 9. | |

B. *Occupational Names.*

It is a platitude that occupational names have been extensively transmuted into surnames. Consequently there is great difficulty in determining whether most of these names are truly derived from an occupation or should more properly be placed under the personal names.

Dyers Meadow, G. Sy 35, furnishes an example of an attempt to solve this difficulty. While Dyer is a common personal name, the Dyers Meadow in Stanney is situated on a marsh where a water supply for dyeing would be easily available. For this reason the name is classed as occupational.

Straight-forward examples are:—

Brewer's Croft, G.N. 128.	Coachmans Field, G 521, 522.
Butcher's Hays, G. Sy 10-13.	Cobblers Hay, Ge 35.
Butler Hay, Cy 28.	Beggars Flat, H 272, 273, 274,
Carters Field, Ry 231.	275.

Officers Croft (Cy 121) may be noticed. It lies on the shore at Caldý at the end of the Rake on a patch of sandy ground suitable for a landing place near the Red Bankes. As we know wine to have been imported at the Red Bankes as early as 1353,¹ it appears likely that the name derives from some customs officer such as was stationed at Parkgate.

Badgers Rake Field, Wn 392.

Badgers Rake, Wn 396.

Badger Butt, Wn 44.

According to Wilbraham a badger was a dealer in corn, from the A.S. *bycgean*. Leigh fancies this derivation to be too far-fetched, and defines a badger as a higgler who makes the round of the country to collect butter, eggs, poultry and fruit.

C. *Site of Buildings, Roads, etc.*

The application of this heading is restricted to fields whose name indicates works of man that no longer remain. The list of names must be headed by Site of Old Hall, (Ch. 96), which admits of no dispute. Moat Nursery (Sk 11) may indicate the site of a hall in Shotwick that stood before the hall described by Mr. Beazley² was erected in 1662. Moat Croft (Bd 26) has been suggested as the site of the grange of Birkenhead Priory, and Sulley³ says—"This grange stood between what is now Alfred Road and Euston Grove," and adds that part of the stones are still to be seen in the wall of Alfred Road.

The great number of Mill fields make an interesting study. They may, as in Moreton and Landican (M. 327,

¹ *Chester Chamberlain's Accls.* (Record Soc. Lancs. and Ches., Vol. 69).

² *Trans. Lancs. and Ches. Hist. Soc.*, lxvi., 67.

³ Sulley P. *History of Birkenhead* (1907), p. 32.

and Ln 131), be found where no record of a mill can be traced. Again, as in Thingwall, they sometimes (Tw 40-43) perpetuate the memory of a building that has disappeared only within recent times. Thingwall mill was pulled down in 1900.¹ The Mill field in Puddington is more problematic. (Pd 115). The fact that the field lies on the banks of a stream dividing Puddington from Burton is the only suggestion that a mill ever existed here. At the other corner of Puddington, however, the Dam Heys, (Pd. 209, 210, 211, 215, 217, 218) lie on Shotwick Brook, where earthworks that may once have been a dam can still be traced.

Limits Cross, Lt., found at the bounds of Leighton, a small croft on the roadside, may possibly have been the site of a boundary cross, while Headless Cross would seem to hold a significance that has not yet been traced.

Sites of old roads are commemorated by Street Hay Croft (Wn. 119) and Street Hay (Wn. 110-116), by Pad Road Field (Ch. 50) and Pavement Field (Wn 230). The name of the lane running through the Street Hays is Streety Hay Lane or more strictly Street Hay Lane. The Street was the original name of the lane, which gave its name to the neighbouring fields. The fields in their turn gave their name to the lane; hence the present interesting name form.²

Through Pad Road Field in Chorlton runs a footpath to Croughton, which, though now closed, is marked on the Ordnance Map.

Pavement Field marks the site of an old track now destroyed by the railway.

9. ECCLESIASTICAL.

This section, though more properly a sub-section of the Historical class, has been provided to collect those traces of church history so important to the local historians.

¹ *Trans. Lancs. and Ches. Hist. Soc.*, xlv., 78.

² *Ches. Sheaf*, xv., 38.

The meanings of such names are usually fairly obvious. They indicate either the position of fields in relation to existing or vanished ecclesiastical buildings, or lands part and parcel of the glebe, or personal possessions of the clerics of church or monastery.

Church Hay(s) (Un. 12, 13, 21), in Upton, marks the site of the first church of Overchurch, demolished in 1813.¹ Similarly Parsonage Croft (He. 37) adjoins an existing building. Stoak Glebe (14, 15, 16, 17) in Great Mollington in Backford Parish, and St. Bridget's Glebe (1, 2, 3, 4) in the same township are interesting survivals. The numerous names like Priors Hay (Bk. 25), Abbots Hay (Ch. 27, 28), if not personal names, may eventually be of assistance in tracing the ownership of lands for a long period. Kirk is probably of Scandinavian origin.

Kirka Loons, Gy 168, 173.

Kirkett Hay, Tm 380, 387.

Ry. 21.

Kirk Hay, Pn 57

Kirk Way, St 74.

Parsons Adler, Wn 288, 300.

Parsons Hey, Sn 206.

Parsons Meadow, 507.

Priests Park, Tw 57.

Priors Field, M. 65.

10. VARIOUS.

Every classification at the outset must be incomplete, and the present study of field names leaves a number unexplained. Such names can be collected in this last section, which becomes thus a kind of dump heap.

Seven Nobles Hay, Le 32.

Three Nobles Hay, Le 33.

Barefoot Loons, Bk 129.

Slinters Bridge, Bk 170.

Adfalent, Wn 238, 239, 240.

Canester Holt, Tm 445.

Vexation, Tm 488.

Yolk of Egg, Tm 465-467.

Cate Gree Clubs, Ns 32.

Ebby Leens, Gy 27.

Friz, Bn 268-272.

Lillaper Hey, Nm 15.

Mestils, S.M. 169.

Mistake, Tw 11.

Ufilyls, S.M. 169.

These are a selection from a list of names that have so far defied interpretation. Knowledge of the early

¹ *Trans. Lancs. and Ches. Hist. Soc.* xlvii., 122.

forms of such names is essential; otherwise these and many like them must remain unexplained.

It may perhaps not be out of place to close this brief account of Wirral Field Names with an appeal to any readers who may have old documents or terriers in their possession to communicate with the author. A full index of Wirral names is contemplated and all such details would be gratefully acknowledged.

My thanks are due to the incumbents or wardens of parishes who have so generously granted me facilities for extracting information from the documents in their charge, and to Messrs Barker, Coppack and Wickham for the loan of the Bunbury terrier.

Still more I thank Miss E. Leach, B.A., for her great assistance in reducing a nebulous mass of material to a coherent and more readable account of Wirral Field Names.

APPENDIX.

WIRRAL TOWNSHIPS WITH THE ABBREVIATIONS USED.

Arrowe .. ..	..Aw.	Greasby .. ..	..Gy.
Backford .. ..	..Bk.	Heswall .. ..	..H.
Barnston .. ..	..Ba.	Hooton .. ..	..Hn.
Bebington, Higher	..H.Bb.	Hoose .. ..	..He.
Bebington, Lower	..L.Bb.	Irby .. ..	..Iy.
Bidston .. ..	..Bn.	Landican .. ..	..Ln.
Birkenhead .. ..	..Bd.	Lea .. ..	..Le.
Blacon .. ..	..Bl.	Ledsham .. ..	..Lm.
Brimstage .. ..	..Be.	Leighton .. ..	..Lt.
Bromborough .. ..	..Bh.	Liscard .. ..	..Ld.
Burton .. ..	..Bt.	Meols, Great .. ..	..G.M.
Caldy .. ..	..Cy.	Meols, Little .. ..	..L M.
Capenhurst .. ..	..Ct.	Mollington, Great	..G.Mn.
Childer Thornton	..C.T.	Mollington, Little	..L.Mn.
Chorlton .. ..	..Ch.	Moreton .. ..	..M.
Claughton cum Grange	Cn.	Ness .. ..	..Ns.
Eastham .. ..	..Em.	Neston, Great .. ..	..G.N.
Frankby .. ..	..Fy.	Neston Little .. ..	..L.N.
Gayton .. ..	..G.	Netherpool .. ..	..Nl.
Grange .. ..	..Ge.	Newton cum Larton	..Nn.

Noctorum	Nm.	Stanney, Little ..	L. Sy
Oldfield	Od.	Stoke	St.
Overpool	Ol.	Storeton	Sn.
Oxton	Ox.	Sutton, Great ..	G.Sn.
Pensby	Py.	Sutton, Little ..	L.Sn.
Poulton cum Seacombe	P.Sb.	Thingwall	Tw.
Poulton cum Spital ..	P.Sp.	Thornton Hough ..	T.H.
Prenton	Pn.	Thurstaston ..	Th.
Puddington	Pd.	Tranmere	Tm.
Raby	Ry.	Overchurch	Un.
Saughall, Great ..	G.S.	Wallasey	Wy.
Saughall, Little ..	L.S.	Willaston	Wn.
Saughall Massie ..	S.M.	Whitby	W.
Shotwick	Sk.	Woodbank	Wb.
Shotwick Park ..	Sk.P.	Woodchurch	Wh.
Stanlow	Sw.	West Kirby	W.K.
Stanney, Great ..	G.Sy.		

The abbreviations throughout are used with reference to the tithe maps and schedules of the several townships; except that in the absence of a tithe map of Birkenhead the survey of Lawton, 1823-24, is used and the numbers refer to the printed edition of this map.