

## SOME CURRENT FIELD-NAMES IN THE PARISH OF REPTON, DERBYSHIRE.

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### INTRODUCTION.

IT would be difficult to overstress the importance of the field-names of the countryside to the student of economic and agrarian history. To the local annalist they are quarries in which he can work with endless profit. In them is enshrined so much of the material he needs that no attempt at reconstructing the bygone social, religious and economic conditions of a given district could hope to reach satisfactory results without a close study of the field-names.

Rightly interpreted, they prove to be valuable repositories of information throwing light on the parochial or manorial story from varying angles. Customs now obsolete, problems of land tenure and of agricultural method, even obscure questions of racial settlement in the centuries following the Roman evacuation, these and others will yield their secrets more readily to the enquirer who has spent time evaluating the significance of the field-names and other land terms in the chosen area.

Although the names of the vast majority of our modern fields date only from the century of intensive enclosure (1750-1850), the contention often advanced that all field-names are of comparatively recent origin, and are consequently likely to carry in them little of value to the delver into bygone times, will not hold water for a moment. For two reasons. Firstly, a good deal of enclosure went

on intermittently from the 15th or 16th century (the "ancient enclosures" of the Enclosure Awards), and the names originally bestowed on these old closes were as a rule left undisturbed, and are still very generally in use. Secondly, on the general enclosure of a parish under Act of Parliament in the 18th or 19th century, the innate conservatism of the English countryman caused him to transfer the old names of the shotts and flatts and furlongs, into which the great open fields were sub-divided, to certain of the comparatively small plots which are now our modern fields.

So that although a whole host of fresh names had to be coined at the time of general enclosure because of the multiplicity of new closes resulting from that process, many of the ancient names, or corruptions of them, are in use to-day; some dating from the enclosures by agreement which took place irregularly from the 15th century to the era of Parliamentary enclosure, others survivals from the open fields designations (and which might well be termed "transfer-names"), and others of perhaps of more ancient origin still. The supreme example of tenacity in Repton parish I have so far traced is a pasture near the church known as the Swan's Nest. Bigsby, in his "History of Repton," quotes a 700 years old charter in which the name appears as "Suanes-nest."

It is a lamentable fact that the use of field-names is gradually dying out. A contributory factor to this is the growing tendency for the old sentimental interest in the land, which affected its stabilised cultivators (owners, tenants and labourers alike), to disappear. While that interest and affection was alive field-names were safe. But the radical changes of late years in the economic structure of the countryside have helped to weaken many links, and with this weakening much that was of worth and beauty in the rural scene is gradually fading out.

Two main reasons would seem to account for this

progressive discarding of names for the fields. There is first the soulless functioning of the Ministry of Agriculture, which has no use for such archaisms, and in issuing its instructions to farmers refers only to the field-*numbers* as marked on the 25 inch O.S. sheets. In the second place there is the break-up of old family estates, many of which have in recent years passed into the hands of strangers whose chief interest in the land is a commercial one. Viscount Astor has written (1943): "I am informed that since 1914 nearly one-quarter of our farm land has been sold. Many occupiers—because they were tenants with short tenancies on private estates—had either to clear out or purchase the holdings." The hereditary landowners were the guardians of field-names; on their estate plans and terriers all these names were carefully set down, and as carefully entered on the tenancy agreements that were made with the farmers.

A typical instance of how these widespread changes in land ownership militates against the retention of field-names occurred in the parish of Willington, which was mostly, if not wholly, in the possession of the Burdetts of Foremark. In the early 1920's Sir Francis Burdett sold his Willington estate. The result is that to-day the farms are worked either by owner-occupiers or by tenants of owners probably living out of the district. The tenancy agreements existing at the time of sale, and which embodied the field-names of the farms, would quickly be looked on as valueless and almost certainly get lost or destroyed as time passed. Consequently, although all the present occupiers hold maps shewing the extent of their farmlands, these maps, instead of names, shew the O.S. field numbers only.

Despite the amazing tenacity with which labels will cling to the same plots of ground generation after generation, the names of fields are not immune to change, although this frequently comes about through corruption

of the originals. Mr. L. C. Picton, chief agent for the Burdett Estates, very kindly loaned me a superb map of the Burdett lands in South Derbyshire, drawn in 1825 by the then chief agent, Richard Crabtree. On comparing the field-names on it with those I had myself collected from other sources, I was surprised to find how many of them differed, although there may, of course, be special circumstances which have not come to my knowledge to account for some of the disparities.

It was when I tackled the etymology of the Repton field-names, and began to search for early forms, that I came up against an obstacle which must, I suppose, meet all students of this fascinating study. Corruptions of the original forms, some of them very gross ones, have crept in as the years passed. For instance—to leave Repton for a moment—in the parish of Ingleby there is a field known locally as British Close. No solution of this patriotic label suggested itself to me, and I gave up the attempt to explain it. Then the Crabtree map came into my hands and the mystery was solved. “British” was a corruption of “Breaches.” Other similar cases I met included Monsom for Man’s Holme (no doubt pronounced locally “Mon’s Holme,”) Coxon for Cock’s Holme, and Farlowes for Furrows—all in Repton.

These corruptions are no doubt due in some part to the names being copied by people indifferent to the importance of exactitude in such matters. Again, the laxity in spelling practised by our forefathers has to be seen to be believed; it is no uncommon experience to find the same word appearing in two or three differing guises in one paragraph. This adds to the complexities of interpretation, particularly in the absence of early forms of definite signification.

Tithe Awards with their relative maps are usually regarded as the most prolific sources for field-names. Consequently I approached the Tithe Redemption

Commission in respect of Repton, but was informed that according to their records the tithes arising in Repton parish were disposed of under the local Enclosure Act prior to the passing of the Tithe Act, 1836. This underlined information previously received that in many Derbyshire parishes glebe land was allotted in lieu of the tithes; which appears to be what happened at Repton and explains the absence of a Tithe map.

For the old forms so essential to interpretation it is advisable to consult such sources as Dugdale's *Monasticon*, calendars of ancient documents, monastic cartularies, etc. printed in local archaeological literature, old parish registers, churchwardens' account books, and the like.

The Repton Enclosure Award of 1769 proved a helpful instrument, insomuch as it provides the names of many Antient Enclosures, as they are termed. In fact, the number of these is so great that one is driven to the conclusion that a very considerable area of the parish had been enclosed by agreement prior to Parliamentary enclosure. This is emphasised by the consideration that the 1766 Act authorised the enclosure of eighteen hundred acres only, very much less than half the total acreage of the parish.

Although shotts and furlongs are by no means unknown in the Award, flatt is the name most in use to denote the divisions or tracts into which the open fields were split up. Closes are in existence to-day bearing such transfer-names as Bye Flatt, Clay Flatt, Scaw Flatt, Lousey Flatt, etc.

It occurred to me, viewing the circumstances, that it might be a worthwhile job to attempt the recording of some of this valuable material while the possibility of doing so still existed. Moreover, the desirability of the work appeared to be emphasised by the increasing prominence given in recent years to field and other minor names by the English Place-Name Society in their annual county volumes. For sufficient reasons I selected Repton

parish for my experiment, and proceeded to enter on the six-inch O.S. sheets the current names of practically the whole of the fields in the parish.

My methods of collection were various. I began by paying personal visits to the farmers and persuading them to allow me to copy the names from their tenancy agreements. Perhaps half of the total was obtained in this way, and it is to the credit of the Repton farming community that in one case only was I met with a point-blank refusal to give information. The remainder of the names I copied from the Rating Valuation List at the offices of the Repton R.D.C. In this I was lucky, as the Lists I examined of several adjoining parishes did not contain the names of the fields. A very few names were given me orally.

Repton parish extends to over 4,000 acres and comprises several hundreds of fields. For the purposes of this paper I have selected seventy of what I consider the more interesting names, and have in each case given the earliest reference, or references, I have been able to trace, with a suggested explanation and occasional historical comments.

My best thanks are due to the Rev. A. W. Fletcher, vicar of Repton, for research facilities afforded, and also to Messrs. F. Bailey and A. P. Hancock, Clerk and Surveyor respectively to the Repton Rural District Council, for much appreciated help. Mr. W. E. Tate, F.R.Hist.S., very kindly read my MS. and made some valuable suggestions.

#### ABBREVIATIONS USED.

E.R.T.	Earliest Reference Traced.
E.A.	Repton Enclosure Award, 1769.
V.L.	Valuation List of the Repton R.D.C.
T.A.	Farmers' Tenancy Agreements.
Clark Hall.	"Anglo-Saxon Dictionary," J. R. Clark Hall.
Ekwall.	"Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names," Eilert Ekwall.

- Tate. W. E. Tate, F.R.Hist.S.  
 E.D.D. "English Dialect Dictionary," Wright.  
 E.P.N.S. Volumes of the English Place-name Society.  
 D.A.J. Journals of the Derbyshire Arch. Society.  
 1825 Map. Richard Crabtree's Map of Burdett lands in  
 Repton parish, dated 1825.

ALLEN'S CLOSE. E.R.T. E.A.

I am informed by the Rev. A. W. Fletcher that of the original close only a small portion now exists; the remainder has been incorporated in extensions to the churchyard and vicarage garden. In the parish registers an entry dated 20th February, 1631 records the christening of Marah, d. of Thom. Allen, minister. An Allen's Lane and "an antient enclosure called Allen's Close" are referred to in the E.A. The alternative spelling "Alleyne" is probably an orthographical affectation of the 19th century.

ASKEW FIELD. E.R.T. Haskefield: 1539. (*D.A.J.*, 53, p. 78).

This close lies on the western slope of Askew Hill. One of the open arable fields of Repton was named Haskey Field (*vide* E.A.) and apparently the old name was transferred to this close with the aspirate dropped. Haskey may be from OE. *hassuc*, sedge, coarse grass (Clark Hall), and refer to the rough state of the ground when first brought into cultivation.

BANDLANDS. E.R.T. 1825 Map.

Tate quotes the late Sir Allan Mawer's explanation of this as a corruption of Beanlands, i.e. ridges or strips on which beans were grown.

BREACH. (Big, Little, Near, Far., etc). E.R.T. 1725.

"One land at Broaches." (*D.A.J.*, 36, p. 122).

These closes lie together on the elevated ground known

as the Broomhills, to the S.W. of the village. Breach is from OE. *braec*, land newly taken into cultivation (E.P.N.S., Vol. 17), and would appear to mean that here there has been a breaking into, or breaching, of land hitherto waste.

BROCKHOW. E.R.T. 1539. "Brockoo pasture."  
(*D.A.J.*, 53, p. 78); 1596. Brockowe. (Churchwardens' Accounts).

I suggest this name is from OE. *brōc*, brook, and *hōh*, a heel or projecting ridge of land (Ekwall). It is a pasture by the Old Trent Water near the Watermeetings. (q.v.).

THE BURIES. E.R.T. 1854. (Biggsby's "History of Repton.")

This close lies just below Willington Bridge on a disused channel of the Trent known as the Old Trent Water. It contains a rectangular earthwork, measuring roughly 70 by 55 yards, now called "The Buries." This earthwork, which encloses one or two mounds, has been excavated with no definite results, and has been ascribed to periods ranging from Roman to medieval. The Buries seems to be a recent "archaeological" name inspired by the entrenchment, as on the 1825 map the close is called Near Notlow Meadow, and the one adjoining it Far Notlow Meadow (*vide* The Knottlers). It is possible this work dates from the 9th century. The Danish Army wintered at Repton, A.D. 874 (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle), and so far as I am aware there is no evidence to disprove its Danish date.

BUTTER STY HOLE. E.R.T. V.L.

This close is near the southern end of the parish, abutting on Foremark Bottoms. According to the E.D.D. a sty was a narrow way or steep path up a hill. (See map on p. 322 of Gray's "English Field Systems" for its use denoting a way). The close is on a steep hillside rising



from a brook bottom, but no indication of any special path now exists. What Butter means I don't know: (ON. pers. name? Tate) it may be a mis-writing of some other word. "Butter Closes" figure in the Enclosure Award of Louth, Lincs. There is also a "Butterhill Close" in Church Broughton.

BYE FLATT. E.R.T. 1539. (*D.A.J.*, 53, p. 78).

From OE. *byge*, bend (of a river); (Ekwall). The flatt, or shott, or furlong, was an unfenced division of a pre-enclosure open field. The meaning is, therefore, the flatt in the bend of the river, which describes its position exactly.

CANON MEADOWS. E.R.T. 1539. "Chanon medowe." (*D.A.J.*, 53, p. 78).

These meadows were evidently part of the possessions of the Augustinian canons of Repton Priory.

CARR CLOSE. E.R.T. 1825 Map.

From OS cand. *kiarr*, marsh (E.P.N.S. Vol. 17). This close slopes down to the Milton brook, and is boggy in wet weather. Carrs (pronounced "kerrs" locally) are common in brook bottoms.

CLAY FLATT. E.R.T. E.A. and 1825 Map.

The name is geological, the land being clayey, on the red keuper marl. One of the "transfer-names" referred to in the Introduction.

DOLES. E.R.T. E.A. and V.L.

From OE. *dāēl*, portion, share (Clark Hall). This meadow borders the Trent in the extreme N.W. of the parish. In pre-enclosure days the occupiers of the open arable fields appear to have had meadowland allotted, or doled out, to them in proportion to their arable holdings. In his "Church & Manor" S. O. Addy quotes an interesting account of how these "doles" used to be ballotted for at Puxton, Somerset.

DUNDALES. E.R.T. 1825 Map: Dumdales. V.L. Dundales.

My only suggestion is that this may be a descriptive name, from dun, a yellowish-brown colour. "Dale" described the configuration of the close.

FERRY ACRES. E.R.T. 1674. (*D.A.J.*, 36, p. 119).

Three closes bordering the Trent W. of Willington Bridge. Prior to the opening of the bridge in 1839 a ferry took Repton traffic over the river at this point. In the Churchwardens' Accounts for 1600 appears the entry: "Payd to ye ferrimane . . . id."

FENNY FLATTS. E.R.T. T.A.

Another transfer-name. The adjective doubtless descriptive of the ground surface at the time the name was given.

FORE DRIVE. E.R.T. T.A.

This close lies to the E. of Quarry Hill (q.v.), on the lane leading to Meadows Farm. In E.P.N.S. Vol. 13, Fore-drift or Foredrove is stated to refer to a path for the purposes of draught from a farm to a main road, or to a narrow piece of meadow forming an approach to a farmstead.

FORTY LEYS. E.R.T. 1539. "Forty Leys in le Holme." (*D.A.J.*, 53, p. 78).

When the Old Trent Water was an active stream a large island or holme stretched from W. of Repton church down to the present backwater beyond Meadows Farm. The upper, or western, portion of this island was known as the Overholme, and the lower, or eastern, end as the Netherholme. Forty Leys is in the Overholme. Leys is from OE. *lāēs*, pasture (E.P.N.S. Vol. 1), and it is all flat riverland hereabout, with no trace of "ridge and furrow." "Forty" probably points to some early method of pasture measuring or allotting to which I have no clue.

Tate suggests it may refer to early tenants or perhaps to virgates. In this connection it is interesting, and may be significant, to note that Domesday Book records 37 villeins and 3 bordars (total 40) in Repton.

The names of two small hamlets in Smisby parish are "Forty" and "Fifty." Sir Allan Mawer quotes Mr. F. T. S. Houghton's explanation of Forty as: "an island or peninsula of land standing well out from surrounding marshy or low-lying land."

FORTY FOOT. E.R.T. T.A.

A narrow strip of meadow lying along the Old Trent Water. I cannot explain it, but see Forty Leys. There is a Forty Foot Lane in the South Derbyshire parish of Melbourne.

FROGHOLES. E.R.T. T.A.

E.P.N.S. Vol. 17 explains this name as denoting a damp site; presumably where frogs are likely to congregate. The close borders a brook flowing through an ozier bed. FULSITCH (Near, Middle, Far). E.R.T. 1825 Map.

From OE. *fūl*, foul, dirty (Ekwall) and OE. *sīc*, small stream in marshy ground (E.P.N.S. Vol. 1). This describes these closes exactly; they slope down into a long damp hollow, on the E. side of Askew Hill, which is definitely boggy in winter.

FURLONGS. E.R.T. V.L.

The furlong or shott or flatt (generally synonymous, I think, in the Midlands, Tate) was a sub-division of the open arable field. It comprised a variable number of acre and half-acre strips or holdings all running one way for convenience of drainage, the ideal acre being a strip of land 220 yards long (a furrow-long or furlong) by 22 yards wide. This is probably another instance of the name of a considerable tract of land transferred to a small close, seven acres in this case.

FURNACE CLOSE. E.R.T. V.L.

I cannot offer a suggestion, unless the name is a corruption of Ferns Close. There is a Ferny Close a couple of fields away in Foremark parish. Since the naming of many of these closes land improvement has often eradicated the characteristic feature giving rise to the name.

GREAT GALLS CLOSE. E.R.T. E.A. and V.L.

On the W. side of the parish, N. of Cockey Farm. Probably from ME. *galle*, denoting barren, unfertile, wet land (E.P.N.S., Vol. 17).

HANGAR FIELD: (Top and Lower). E.R.T. 1825 Map.

From OE. *hangra*, a slope (Clark Hall). A fitting name, as these two closes are on a steep slope rising from the Brookdale bottoms to the high ground in the S. of the parish which formed Repton Common or Waste.

HANDKERCHIEF MEADOW. E.R.T. T.A.

Probably a fanciful name given by some 19th century estate agent, who may have seen in the shape or size of this small, three-cornered close some resemblance to a folded handkerchief or table napkin.

HEMP YARD. E.R.T. 1825 Map.

This close adjoins Milton hamlet. The growing of hemp and flax for the making of coarse and fine linen was at different times ordered or encouraged by statute. 24 Henry VIII c. 4 decreed that a quarter of an acre was to be in flax or hemp for every 60 acres of tillage (Cunningham's "Growth of English Industry and Commerce.") Again, in 1782 an Act was passed fixing a bounty payable to the grower of 3d. per stone for dressed hemp and 4d. for flax (Cox's "Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals," Vol. II).

HILL CLOSE (Far and Near). E.R.T. E.A.

The E.A. refers to "antient enclosed lands called Hill Closes in Goodfield." This is a reminder that prior to the general enclosure under the 1766 Act of Parliament much

enclosing had already taken place, probably continuously from the 16th century.

HOLLOWAY SIDE. E.R.T. V.L.

A steep-sided little valley runs down from near Broken Flats Farm in the direction of Repton millpond. In addition to a small brook the valley contains a rough unmetalled lane, and the close in question borders this "hollow-way."

THE HOOK. E.R.T. 1825 Map.

This close is on the Willington road, and the shape of its western boundary is conditioned by an abrupt curve of the Old Trent channel. Hence, hook-shaped, from OE. *hōc*, bend, projecting corner (Ēkwall).

HUNGER HILL. E.R.T. c. 1400-1450. "The arable called Hunger Hill." (*D.A.J.*, 24, p. 72).

From OE. *hungor*, hunger (E.P.N.S., Vol. 1). The name appears to indicate land of poor crops or pasturage, as being hungry for manure.

ISLAND CLOSE. E.R.T. V.L.

This close lies where it might be expected, within the area of the Overholme referred to under Forty Leys.

INTAKES: (Near, Top, Big, Bottom). E.R.T. 1825 Map.

These closes adjoin each other to the S. of Milton hamlet. Repton Common doubtless extended N. as far as this point, and these may have been the first "intakes" from the waste.

THE KNOTTLERS: Oral. E.R.T. 1439 "Knotlowe pasture." (*D.A.J.*, 53, p. 78).

On the 1825 Map this close is called Far Notlow Meadow (*vide* The Buries). Originally, therefore, both the closes now known as the Buries and the Kottlers were "Notlow" meadows. The name presents difficulties.

The first element may be from ME. *knot*, a hill (Ekwall), in which case the name is tautological, like Knowle Hill in Foremark parish. Or the first element may be the OE. pers. name Cnotta (Ekwall), which would give Cnotta's Hill. In any case the name would seem to have associations with the earthwork described under The Buries.

LONGLANDS: (Near, Far, Top, Upper, Lower). E.R.T. 1825 Map and V.L.

"Lands" is a term brought forward from pre-enclosure days, when the arable fields were ploughed in lands or long raised strips with drainage hollows separating them, and which still survive in the "ridge and furrow" of many pasture fields. "Long"-lands would doubtless be those that were longer (and probably narrower) than the normal.

LOUSEY FLATTS. E.R.T. E.A. and V.L.

Tate suggests this was a term of contempt for the barrenness of the soil—which seems feasible.

MARES CLOSE. E.R.T. 1825 Map.

A pendant to the fairly common Horse Close. Prof. C. S. Orwin, writing of Laxton, Notts., in his book "The Open Fields," states that "one sike was reserved for mares and foals, another for stallions, a third for cows," etc. A sike was an unploughable tract in an arable field, on which animals were grazed. Apparently Mares Close commemorates such a tract.

MEAKIN'S HILL. E.R.T. Oral.

This is the name now in use, but the 1825 Map calls it Mill Yard Close, which seems more appropriate, as it adjoins the premises of Repton Mill. There have been Meakins in Repton for centuries, and in the printed Parish Registers (1578-1670) the family is mentioned 48 times.

MOOR CLOSES. E.R.T. V.L.

There are over a dozen Moor Closes and Moor Fields bunched together about the W. end of Well Lane. This is

all low-lying ground at the bottom end of the brook valley coming down from Cockey Farm, and I suggest it is the place referred to as early as 1436 (*D.A.J.*, 9, p. 16) as the More Syche, from OE. *mōr.*, morass, swamp (Clark Hall) and OE. *sīc*.

MONSOM: (Near, Middle, Far). E.R.T. 1825 Map and T.A.

This name puzzled me until I saw a copy of the Enclosure Award. Therein is mentioned a place called Man's Holme Common in a situation which corresponds with that of the Monsom Closes. It is obvious that Monsom is a corruption of Man's Holme. At Doveridge "land in Monnesholme" is referred to in a grant dated 1395 (*Jeayes' Charters*, No. 1024).

NETHER HOLME CLOSE. E.R.T. 1429. "le Holme." (*D.A.J.*, 36, p. 114).

This close, which lies along the backwater joining up with the present Trent channel, perpetuates the memory of the lower end of the island mentioned under Forty Leys.

NETHER MEAN CLOSE. E.R.T. c. 16th cent. "a Meane abutting on Trent." (*D.A.J.*, 36, p. 117).  
E.A. Upper Mean Close.

This close lies between the Old Trent Water and the river. According to the E.D.D. a "mean" was a field held in common, or mean, or joint, ownership. One custom connected with a mean-field was that one tenant had the right to take off the hay-crop only, the other having the right of eatage for the rest of the year. But Dr. Slater ("English Peasantry" etc.) states that a mean, or mesne, close consisted of intermixed tilled land separated from the surrounding pasture by a hedge. This is, I think, an interesting survival, and is the only "mean" name I have yet met.

NINETEEN LANDS (Far, Near). E.R.T. 1550. "the shutt called XIX landes." (*D.A.J.*, 53, p. 83).

Several closes lying together between the Milton Road and Mount Pleasant lane. The term "lands" appears to have caused some confusion among writers on agrarian history. Seebohm ("English Village Community") seems to infer that the "land" was synonymous with the strip or holding. Prof. C. S. Orwin ("The Open Fields") contradicts this with: "The size of the land depended entirely on the nature of the soil; on light soils it was fully 22 yards wide, but on heavy soil it might not exceed 3 yards, in order to provide more frequent drainage furrows," and this theory is supported by Dr. J. D. Chambers. It is interesting to note that the 1825 Map shews, in the neighbouring parish of Ingleby, a long close called Nineteen Lands, of which the area is stated to be nineteen and a half acres exactly.

PARSONS HILLS CLOSE. E.R.T. V.L.

A range of low bluffs facing the river to the W. of the church is known as Parsons Hills. This close may be the plot of land "in Goodfield" allotted by the Enclosure Commissioners to the Rev. John Edwards and his Successors in part lieu of Wool and Lamb Tythes, etc.

PEASY FLATT. E.R.T. V.L.

A small close S. of the Newton Road which doubtless preserves the name of a "flatt" in the open fields given over to the cultivation of peas.

PELLETTY HILL. E.R.T. T.A.

Tate, quoting F.T.S. Houghton, has it that this name is from the dialect word pellets, i.e. sheep-dung, and would refer to a place where sheep were regularly pastured.

PINGLE. E.R.T. E.A. and 1825 Map.

From ME. *pingel*, a small enclosure (E.P.N.S., Vol. 17). There are many small closes in the parish bearing this



designation, often with a qualifying addition, e.g. Brook Pingle.

PLACK OR PLECK. E.R.T. T.A. and V.L.

From ME. *plek*, a small plot of ground (E.D.D.). Plack and Nether Plack are two small closes bordering the brook N. of Milton hamlet. On the 1825 Map they appear as Flaxlands (*vide* Hemp Yard).

POTLOCKS: (Top, Bottom, Nether, etc.). E.R.T. 1422.

"Potlac broke." (Jeayes' *Charters*, No. 1986).

Mr. F. Williamson gives the meaning "pot-shaped pond" (*D.A.J.*, 50, p. 16). Ekwall gives "stream with deep pools." The various Potlock closes lie along the S. bank of the Trent, facing Potlock House on the Findern side of the river. Dr. J. C. Cox states that the Manor of Potlock lay in Findern and Repton parishes, the first part held by the Findernes and the other by the canons of Repton Priory ("Churches of Derbyshire," Vol. IV).

QUARRY HILL CLOSE. E.R.T. c. 1700 Quarry Side.

(*D.A.J.*, 36, 121). E. A. and 1825 Map. The Quarries.

This close overlooks a wide part of the Old Trent Water. It is in part pitted with deep and extensive hollows skinned over with turf, and in all probability the stone used in the building of the Norman Priory came from this spot. The Priory ruins are, I am informed by Mr. W. H. Hanbury, F.G.S., of the cream variety of keuper sandstone, similar to an outcrop in Quarry Close. Mr. Alec Macdonald, in his "Short History of Repton," suggests the Dawson's Rocks quarry near Hartshorn, and other suggestions have been Stanton-by-Bridge and Parson's Hills. But Dawson's Rocks and Stanton are both millstone grit, and the Parson's Hills stone is the pink variety of the keuper. So that it would appear we are thrown back on Quarry Close as the source of supply. That the

stone came from the immediate vicinity of the Priory site seems to be implicit in Jeayes' Charter, No. 531, wherein it is stated that in the middle of the 12th century Matilda, Countess of Chester, granted to the Canons of Calke a "cultura quarrerie de Rapendon juxta Trente," and of course the name born by the site supplies further corroboration.

RED WATER PIT. E.R.T. 1825 Map.

I can only suggest that this close, which lies on the S. slope of Askew Hill, contained at one time a pit or hollow which collected red-tinged water in the rainy seasons. A pond to the S. of Ridgeway Farm, on the same red keuper marl, to-day fills with water of a red-clay colour each winter.

RIDGEWAY: (Far, Near, Top, Bottom, etc.). E.R.T. 1325. Ruggeweye (*D.A.J.*, 9, p. 5).

These closes mark the general situation of the old open field called Ridgeway Field in the E.A. The Ridgeway leaves the village by Pinfold Lane, passing the old pinfold, and climbs on to, and continues along, the top of the watershed separating the valleys of the Repton and Milton brooks.

ROBIN'S CROSS: (Lower). E.R.T. 1325. Robincros. (*D.A.J.*, 9, p. 6).

Robin's Cross Lane, which an indiscriminating local tradition associates with Robin Hood, connects the valleys of the Repton and Milton brooks. Lower Robin's Cross is a close adjoining this lane at its lower end on the Repton side.

RUNNER: (Big). E.R.T. 1550. "the Runners," (*D.A.J.*, 53, p. 82).

According to E.D.D. a runner was a small stream. The close in question, in the extreme N.W. corner of the parish, is bounded on the N. by a brook which for some part of its

course forms the boundary between Repton and Newton Solney parishes.

RYEDIKE. Oral. E.R.T. 1550. Roodich. (*D.A.J.*, 53, p. 81). 1825 Map. Rawditch.

This is probably the same word as Rowditch, from OE. *rūh* and *dīc*, rough dike or ditch. (Williamson in *D.A.J.*, 63, p. 19). But dike can have the meaning of a wall, in which case the first element might be OE. *rāw*, row, line (Clark Hall), which would give a line of wall—or ditch.

SANDY SITCH. E.R.T. V.L.

There are four contiguous closes bearing this name. The character of the soil explains the adjective, and Sitch must refer to the old watercourse which runs along the ends of all four and finally discharges into the considerable backwater known as Anchor Church Pool.

SCAW FLATT. E.R.T. E.A. and V.L.

Another transfer-name. Probably from ON. *skógr*, a wood (E.P.N.S., Vol. 1). Scaw, or skaw, is, according to E.D.D., also an old name for the common elder (*Sambucus nigra*). In Cornwall the elder-flower is (or was) known as the Scawsy-bud.

SEED CLOSE. E.R.T. Oral, from Occupier.

This appears to be a modern name. In the E.A. and on the 1825 Map it is called Far Avery Flatt, and an Avery Yard is mentioned in 1539 (*D.A.J.*, 53, p. 78). The Averys were apparently an old Repton family, as in the printed Parish Registers, under the year 1610, is the entry: "bur. Averys wife."

SPUR FIELD. E.R.T. T.A.

A well-timbered reach of the Milton brook valley is known as Spur's Bottoms. (6 inch. O.S. map). This close is in the vicinity. The name is a mis-writing of Spor. From the evidence of a rent-roll (dated 1818) of the

Foremark Estate, a Joseph Spor was one of the largest tenants, and two persons of this name, presumably father and son, were buried in Foremark churchyard during the first third of the 19th century.

ST. ANNE'S WELL CLOSE. E.R.T. V.L.

A small close on Parsons Hills. It contains an ancient ashlar-lined well known as St. Anne's Well, which has unfortunately been much neglected and is now almost hidden by undergrowth. The 1825 Map calls this close Holy Well Hills. Another ancient well, some hundreds of yards to the E, is known as St. Thomas's Well. No. 1948 of Jeayes' "Charters" specifies a "chapel of St. Thomas" in the possession of the canons of Repton Priory *c. temp.* John. In the Inventory of the Priory property prepared at the Dissolution appears the entry (quoted in Bigsby's "Repton"): "In seint Thom's chapell I table of wode." In 1498 Alice Hynts left by will a sheep and a lamb to make an image of the Blessed Thomas the Apostle to be placed over the quire of the church (*D.A.J.*, 36, p. 116).

STINYARD AND STINYARD CLOSE. E.R.T. E.A. Stinyard Common.

These two closes face each other across the Old Trent Water to the N.E. of the church. I can only suggest that the "stin" is "stint," and that their situation marks that of "the stinted pasture called Repton Marsh" which was directed to be enclosed by the Act of 1766. The 1825 Map calls Stinyard Close "Priest Leys" (Priest Leys sounds the older name: Tate). The Stinyard is mentioned in the Churchwardens' Accounts under the year 1593: "Geven to a pore man thatt laye at the steanerde xijd."

STONE PIT CLOSE. E.R.T. 1825 Map.

This close borders Red Lane, where in a deep cutting an exposure of bunter conglomerate with bands of sandstone

can be seen. No doubt stone and marl were got here in times past, and in a lease dated 1550 is mentioned: "2 acres on the shutt into Red Lane next the great marlepit." (*D.A.J.*, 53, p. 81).

SWAN'S NEST. E.R.T. 1252. "Suanes-nest." (Bigsby's "Repton," p. 64). 1539. "Swannesneste." (*D.A.J.*, 53, p. 78).

This pasture borders the Old Trent Water N. of the church. Before the present road was cut through to Willington Bridge (opened 1839) this must have been a very quiet and sequestered spot, and no doubt swans nested here freely. The Bigsby reference of 1252 is from a charter of 36 Henry III.

THIEVES WAY CLOSE. E.R.T. 1825 Map.

Until I saw the spelling in the V.L. (theaves) I had visions of robbers and desperate doings. A theave is a young ewe, and no doubt the sheep were driven this way on to the high pasturage of Repton Common. A deeply sunk track, which has defied the wartime plough, crosses the close.

TWEEN THE WAYS. E.R.T. V.L.

Three closes bearing this name lie between the Newton Road and a well-used field track. Hence, I suppose, the rather quaint name.

TITHE BARN CLOSE. E.R.T. E.A.

This name looks ancient, but on the 1825 Map the close is called Near Avery Flatt (*vide* Seed Close). I am told that a barn stood in this close until recent years, but there is now no trace of it. It is possible the original barn here may have been an auxiliary of the Priory Manor tithe barn, which now functions as the art school of Repton School—or it may have appertained to the Lay Manor held by the Harpur family.

WATERMEETINGS: 1st and 2nd Closes below. E.R.T. V.L.

These two closes border the Trent immediately below the junction of the Old Trent Water and the river; hence the rather picturesque name.

WASTE: (Near, Middle, Bottom). E.R.T. V.L.

The surface of Repton parish rises gradually from about 140 feet O.D. at the N. or Trent end to close on 500 feet at the S. extremity. The old "waste" of the parish was on this high ground, which the O.S. still labels Repton Common, and the word lingers on in Waste Farm. This area seems never to have known the plough prior to the war-produced exigencies of the 20th century. The three closes named preserve the memory of these high grazing grounds. But Dr. G. W. Cooke, resident in Repton parish, submits to me that this area may have been put under the plough when corn prices soared during the Napoleonic wars. He points out that the light soil and the hilly, easy-draining configuration of the surface could account for the absence of the "ridge and furrow" which usually distinguishes grassland that has been arable in past times.

WET ROADS. E.R.T. V.L.

This close is called Near "Well" Roads on the 1825 Map. Which is right I cannot say. There is a pond in the middle.

WET ROADS: (Far). E.R.T. V.L.

This is Far "White" Roads on the 1825 Map. As in the previous entry, some confusion would seem to exist here, and I suspect carelessness in copying. "Roads" I cannot explain, unless it is a mis-writing of Roods. In a Repton lease of 1550 we read of: "arable land called the Seven Roods." (*D.A.J.*, 53, p. 82).

## WINDMILL HILL. E.R.T. V.L.

This elevated close rises steeply from the Milton brook, an ideal spot for a windmill. An old native I questioned has called it Windmill Hill all her life, but she has never heard of a windmill upon it. There is an ancient water-mill on the brook lower down, and it is difficult to see the necessity for two mills in a small place like Milton. The 1825 Map calls the close Near Long Roads.