THE PLACE-NAMES OF DERBYSHIRE.

By F. S. Scott.

THE publication of the English Place-Name Society's three volumes on Derbyshire is an event that has been eagerly looked forward to by all interested in the county or in place-names generally.[1] Nor will they find any reason for disappointment in the result. Dr. Cameron, lecturer in English in the University of Nottingham and formerly of Sheffield University, has evidently devoted considerable time and labour to the subject; he is thoroughly familiar with the available material, and has the necessary knowledge of the various ancillary subjects indispensable to the place-name specialist. Previous work in this field is represented by the scholarly though comparatively brief papers by Bernard Walker in vols. xxxvi and xxxvii of this *Journal* and by the "Notes on Walker's Place-Names of Derbyshire" (vols. xlix-l) of F. Williamson whose collection formed the nucleus of the present work. Many of the major Derbyshire names are, of course, dealt with by E. Ekwall in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* but his material was inevitably limited, and no complete study of the place-names of the county has previously appeared.

This is the first Place-Name Society publication since the appearance of the *English Place-Name Elements* by Professor A. H. Smith (1956) and the value of this work for the county surveys becomes very apparent during an examination of the Derbyshire volumes. The cumulative nature of place-name study and the increasing detail with which it is carried out is illustrated by the fact that whereas Notts. was dealt with by 34 pages of introduction and 348 of text, Derbyshire has needed 74 and 828 pages.

The introduction begins with a discussion of the effect

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[1] Kenneth Cameron, *The Place-Names of Derbyshire* (*English Place-Name Society*, vols. xxvii-xxix), Cambridge, 1959.

of the geological formation and water-supply of the county on settlement and industries. Place-names begin their recording of history before the Roman occupation: the Roman forts at *Derbentio* and *Navio* (Little Chester and Brough) were called after rivers with Celtic names which survive as Derwent and Noe, and the possibility that names may survive even from the population which preceded the Celts is not ignored in the case of the Wye. Celtic names for major rivers are of course far from uncommon throughout England, but the evidence from Derbyshire shows Celtic names for minor rivers and some natural features, which suggests that the county belongs to the area representing the expansion of the Anglo-Saxon settlements during the second half of the 6th and the first half of the 7th century; this conclusion is supported by the historical and archaeological evidence. Among Celtic hill-names, some of which became the names of habitation sites, are Chevin, Crich, Kinder and Pentrich. The majority of the names containing Celtic elements are found in the north-west of the county and this distribution agrees with other evidence that (as in Notts.) the first English settlements were in the extreme south, in the Trent basin, where are found the 6th century Anglian cemeteries at King's Newton and Stapenhill. On the other hand, the occurrence of inhumation tumuli rather than cemeteries among the upland *Pecsætan* suggests a later period of settlement there.

There are a number of references to heathenism, though few S. of the Trent. Wensley (grove or clearing dedicated to Woden) is perhaps the most northern occurrence of the god's name. Some at least of the many *-low* names probably refer to heathen burial-mounds, and Heathen's Low (lost, Bakewell) Hurdlow (treasure-hoard mound) and Drakelow (dragon's mound), though possibly of Christian date, are of interest here. The appearance of single-theme personal names, such as Abba (Abney), Badeca (Bakewell), etc., may be evidence of earlier rather than later settlement, and a study of such names illustrates the routes taken by the settlers — from the Trent valley along the rivers and old roads, including the pre-Roman Portway. Place-names, incidentally, shed

a good deal of light on the routes taken by this and other old trackways, and Dr. Cameron duly acknowledges Mr. Cockerton's pioneer work in this field.

The north-east of the county included the boundary between Mercia and Northumbria (as attested also by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*); this is reflected in the river-names Sheaf (sheath, boundary) and Meers Brook (brook of the boundary), while Mosborough and Barlborough may represent boundary forts.

Interesting survivals of Anglo-Saxon society are the assembly sites implied by Matlock (*mæðel:* "speech, assembly" + *ac:* "oak") and Speetley (Barlborough) (*spec:* "speech" + *lēah*, "grove or clearing") and others elsewhere. Haunted sites are commemorated by Hob Hill (Hazelwood), Wormwood (Hassop, Old English *wyrm*, a dragon) as well as Drakelow already mentioned.

Derby was one of the "five boroughs" of the Danelaw, and Scandinavian influence has clearly been of importance; the shire itself probably represents the district occupied by the Danish army whose headquarters were at Derby. This influence is not however so marked as in Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire or Lincolnshire. There are for example only 10 examples of *-by* (two of which are lost) compared with 21 in Notts., 56 in Leics. and 260 in Lincs. These Scandinavian settlers would appear to be usually Danes rather than Norwegians, though small Norwegian settlements are indicated by the three Normantons ("farm of the Norwegians"). Particularly interesting are names which refer to the settlement of men of Irish-Norwegian descent, coming presumably from the north-west. Ireton contains the element *Íri* used of a Viking who had been in Ireland, while Mammerton contains a Goidelic personal name. Significantly such names are absent in Notts. and Leics. Bretby probably commemorates men from the British kingdom of Strathclyde which was expanding southwards during the 10th century. Other Scandinavian names include Hackenthorpe, Boythorpe, Foremark (*forn + verk*, "old fortification") and Hoon (*haugum*, "at the barrows"). There are also a number of hybrid names, containing Scandinavian personal names compounded with Old English

elements such as Kedleston, "Ketill's *tun* (farm)." The early occurrence of some of these would suggest that the fusion of the two peoples was surprisingly rapid. In the discussion of the Scandinavian settlement in Derbyshire the paper by Dr. F. T. Wainwright in vol. lxvii is referred to.

Most of the Scandinavian names are to be found in the north-east and south-east of the county, which seem to have been the main areas of such settlement. Elsewhere, particularly in the north-west, occasional groups of names with Norse elements appear but they seem to indicate the absorption into the English language of Scandinavian words (such as *brekkr, holmr, slakki*) rather than actual settlement. The name of the county town itself (Old Scand. *djúr* + *bý*, "farm of the animals or deer") is particularly interesting since it provides one of the few actual recorded instances of an English name being replaced by a Danish one, though this must often have taken place. The earlier name was Northworthy, "north enclosure", and the chronicler Ethelwerd, writing *c.* 1000, records that the body of the ealdorman Æþelwulf, who was killed at Reading in 871, was taken for burial to "the place which is called Northworthige but according to the Danish language Deoraby". This section on the Scandinavian settlement is one of the most interesting of all: it is of course a field where place-name study plays a major part. Here too, however, archaeology can provide additional evidence, as in the Scandinavian cemetery at Heath Wood, Ingleby (vols. lxvi, lxix).

The history of personal names is reflected in place-names. After the Conquest names such as Walter and William became popular and produced Waterthorpe and Williamthorpe, in which, as usual, *-thorpe* implies secondary settlement. There are few purely French names in the county: examples are Champion, one of the parks of Duffield Frith, Belper (*beau repaire,* "beautiful retreat", possibly replacing the English Bradley) and the monastic Beauchief, "beautiful headland". Names of feudal lords of the manor have sometimes been affixed to village names, as in Houghton Bassett, Marston Montgomery.

The nature and extent of the royal forests in the county is a subject on which place-name study can throw light. As well as the modern parish name of Peak Forest, forest names survive in Chamber Farm, site of the first forest hall, and in Chapel-en-le-Frith (forest), site of the (later) forest chapel, while similar survivals occur in the Duchy of Lancaster forest of Duffield Frith. In addition, deer have left their name in Buxton, boars in Wildboar Clough (Charlesworth) and wolves in Wooler (Hope Woodlands) as elsewhere. The stud-keeper is represented by Stodhart and the dog-keeper by Dogmanslack.

Not surprisingly leadmining has made a considerable contribution to Derbyshire names, though as Dr. Cameron remarks the early place-name evidence is disappointing. The numerous Bole Hills belong here, along with names containing *rake, coe, cupola, jagger* and several other elements.

The recorded forms of place-names naturally contribute evidence for the dialect history of an area, and this forms a special section of the Introduction. The picture of the gradual development of OE *ā* to *ō* unfolded by the forms of the Old English element *hlāw*, Modern English *-low*, is particularly interesting. In the development of OE *y* (e.g. *hyll*) West Midland forms with *u* (*hull*) predominate over East Midland ones with *i* (*hill*) until comparatively modern times. One finds also the prevalence of the Southern and West Midland form of the Middle English present participle, *-inde*, over the East Midland form in *-ende*, and the Northern one in *-ande*.

In the main body of the work the presentation of the material is, as is usual, by hundreds, with the parishes in alphabetical order within the six hundreds: High Peak Hundred, Scarsdale Hundred, Wirksworth Hundred, Morleyston and Litchurch Hundred, Appletree Hundred, and Repton and Gresley Hundred. In early records the Scandinavian term wapentake is usually found in place of hundred.

There are of course innumerable derivations, interesting both to the general reader and to the one particularly interested in Derbyshire. These range from the obvious, such as Monyash, "many ash-trees" to the completely

disguised, such as Acre Wall (Terrace, in Bakewell), "Arnketell's well (spring)". Many of the names now listed for the first time are minor ones which may be as interesting as the parish and major names. Bakewell, for example, has a remarkable collection of animal names: Catcliff (Wood), "slope frequented by wild cats", Fly Hill "fly-infested hill", Endcliff (House), "sloping ground frequented by ducks", and Cow Hill; the same parish produces also a Heathen's Low and a Wakegreave, probably "grove where wakes were held". A very few further examples of interesting derivations must suffice. Local industry is exemplified at Spondon, "hill where shingle for tiling was obtained", and vanished occupations at Bearwardcote, "bear-keeper's cottage" and Gluman Gate (Chesterfield), "street of the minstrels". Hungry Bentley fulfilled the threat borne in its name and became deserted. Treak may commemorate the oak on which criminals were hanged, while Conjoint Lane (1764 Congins Gate), Tideswell, perhaps represents Middle English *congon* "dwarf, imbecile". Of course by no means all the names are early: at Jawbones Hill, Chesterfield, the jawbones of a whale had been erected in 1849, and there is the curious history of Woodville, which was Wooden Box Station in 1836, taking its name from the hut set up for collection of toll at the turnpike.

Not surprisingly, a few names, even though recorded from an early date, are still without explanation, a fact that helps to inspire confidence in the competence of the author. Examples of such unsolved problems are Findern, Sinfin, and Rodsley. The older street-names are recorded, particularly for Derby and Chesterfield, while one of the most noticeable features of this particular volume of Place-Name Survey is the very large number of field-names presented. To take but one example, there are over three hundred modern field-names (mostly from the 1847 Tithe Award) given for Matlock Bath and this list like those for other places produces several fascinating names on one page: Handkerchief Piece, Fantom Hag, Highest in the Middle, Sweeting Tree, and Burying Bun Close. Excursions elsewhere yield Sopiacres, Two Knights Meadow and Le Dedenave-furlonge.

The foregoing remarks will give some idea of the value of this work, in which the high standards established by the previous publications of the Survey are more than upheld. A perusal of the three volumes brings home the amount of work undertaken by the author in dealing with the many and varied sources, finding, recording, appraising, checking and listing in chronological order name-occurrences from surveys, returns, charters, wills, coins, maps, itineraries, periodicals and unpublished documents.

One or two minor points may perhaps be mentioned, though these refer to the series as a whole, and changes at this stage are perhaps undesirable. It is difficult at first to realise the sense in which Mercian is used in the dialect discussion. It seems to refer to the speech of the original settlements of the Mercians, in contrast with that of the area to the east which was presumably that of the Middle Angles. Nottingham was certainly part of Mercia for a long period, even if not originally so. Moreover, since it is usual to regard the term ''Anglian'' as inclusive of ''Mercian'' it is at first confusing to find the two in opposition. In any case it is perhaps rather uncertain whether speech divisions of the wælla/wella type necessarily imply political boundaries.[2]

With reference to the general method of setting out the material in the survey, while it is usually fairly easy to find one's way about it would greatly help if a different type had been used to separate place-name forms from sources. Both are at present in italics and they occasionally take a little sorting out. Also one wonders why the smaller maps which are only page size could not be printed in the text instead of being placed in a pocket whence they can, especially in a library, be so easily lost or mutilated.

There is obviously much work that can be done by those interested locally in the subject out of or in the

[2] With reference to the derivation of Denby one wonders if the explanation that it was ''a settlement of Danes in a predominantly English region'' (p. xxxiii) is a sufficient one. Admittedly the name ''village of the Danes'' would not have been bestowed by Danes and the vowel *e* rather than (Scandinavian) *a* would seem to rule out the possibility of its being Norwegian, but if it is a name bestowed by English-speaking people it is curious that they should use the element *bȳ* especially as it is not a common one in the county. Perhaps there has been a fusion of variant forms.

light of this survey. Further maps might be constructed, perhaps bringing out the connexions between name elements and topography, and it would be especially interesting to plot in this way the name elements which refer to former roads. In addition, as Dr. Cameron suggests, the relation between place-names and the lead-mining industry might repay study. And one would much like to know more about the suggested boundary forts at Mosborough and Barlborough as well as the other *"burhs"* that occur not infrequently in the county.

Such work as this, however, would not be possible without the immense amount of material which Dr. Cameron's industry and scholarship has made available to us. Clearly these volumes will be tremendously useful in the future and we shall feel increasingly grateful for their publication.

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