

Notes and Queries.

"In Robert Morden's map of this County and also in that of Emmanuel Bowen, Lockinge is not marked, but Ginge and Low Ginge are: is Low Ginge the origin of Lockinge? There is a spring in this village called Twilly spring, the water from which was formerly said to be good for any eye trouble: it has never been known to dry: what is likely to be the origin of the name?"

J. DENIS DE VITRÉ.

The Vicarage,
West Hendred.

[STENTON: The Place-Names of Berkshire, p. 16, has this note under the sub-heading of "River names." "we know that Wantage and Lockinge in their earlier forms were once river names—Ginge derives its name from the Ginge Brook; but the latter is probably derived from the OE *gœing*, a sewer—but there interpretation eludes us; they are equally unintelligible whether tested as Celtic or English." As to Wantage see C.S. 1032, 1058 *andlang waneting*, and as to Lockinge see C.S. 1032 *andlang lacing on cealc ford*. C.S. 935 (original) *on ealdan lacing*.

See also following numbers of JOURNAL containing Dr. Grundy's articles on "Berkshire Charters":—vol. 29, pp. 99, 115; vol. 30, p. 11; vol. 31, p. 111.

"Twilly" may be purely local for "twirly" or "bubbly."—ED.]

MOCKBEGGAR FARM, EARLEY, READING.

Into the possession of Reading Abbey had passed, long before the Reformation, considerable property in the immediate neighbourhood of Reading. The gradual accretion of this landed interest would make an interesting story were it possible to construct it; but original records of local ecclesiastical transactions of this kind are, it is to be feared, almost negligible. These notes will endeavour to deal with the history and succession of one small such holding which helped to swell the rent roll of the Abbot before the upheaval of the first half of the 16th century had transferred to lay hands the possessions that had hitherto been a source of strength and security to the Church.

In the Abbey's hands at the time of the Dissolution were lands in the parish of Sonning which had been farmed out to various tenants. Among them, Thomas Aleyn, or Allen, was farming three acres of land in "Arleghfeld," that is Earley Field, and the revenues from this source were formerly assigned to the charitable uses of the monastery. It is common knowledge that certain Abbots had failed to apply such revenues to their original eleemosynary purpose; but this example of a common failing need not detain us. What for the moment is of importance is the fact that the said Thomas Aleyn, or Allen, gave his name to a farm which was situate near the site of what is now the Mockbeggar estate lying south of the Wokingham Road towards Earley and now incorporated in the Borough of Reading.

At the Dissolution, "Aleyn's Farm" was granted by Henry VIII, with other possessions of the monastery in the parish of Sonning, to William Gray, a ballad-writer and a friend of the King and afterwards of the Protector Somerset. This Gray was Member for Reading and a character of national rather than local importance; but his story, which is a long one, only concerns this narrative in that when he died the whole of his possessions (and they were considerable) passed to the Blagraves by default of issue to him and his wife, Agnes, who before her marriage with Gray had married a member of the Blagrave family. By this early marriage the message before referred to eventually came to the Blagraves. It should be noted that at the time of the Dissolution "Aleys" was let to farm to Thomas Bek, or Beke, so that it must have been some time before this that Allen farmed it. Several members of the Beke family had long been in possession of the Manor of Whiteknights and its chapel of Earley St. Nicholas, which adjoined Mockbeggar on its southern boundary; and others served the office of Mayor of Reading in the 15th century.

That Allen's Farm is the farm referred to later as "Mockbeggar" is confirmed by a map in the writer's possession prepared by George Blagrave in 1669. It is a map of the Common Fields and Common Mead of Earley, and depicted thereon is a lane

called "Allen's Lane," leading off from the highway to Wokingham at a point where Crescent Road now begins. The map also makes it clear that Allen's Farm was an ancient enclosure lying in the south-west corner of Hawthorn Field, one of the six great Common Fields of Earley. It is again referred to as "Allen's Farm" in a map of an Enclosure of 1742, which appears to have added part of Hawthorn Field to the farm and, incidentally, to George Blagrave's extensive holdings. It is probable that at one time the buildings of the farm stood nearer to Whiteknights than they now do. Writing about 1833, in regard to the identification of a neighbouring parcel of land that had been exchanged between the Duke of Marlborough and Viscount Sidmouth, James Wheble, the then owner of "Mockbeggar," states: "The farm called Allen's Farm, or Mockbeggars, adjoined Whiteknights, and on it a farmhouse and buildings then stood. The greater part of this land has been planted and forms part of the Whiteknights woods and is fenced off from Mockbeggars. The buildings were moved to another part of the farm, where they now are."

There thus appears to have been a close association between the farm and the Manor of Whiteknights in early times. It is probable that when the Blagraves succeeded to Gray's possessions there was no highway delimiting the area of Mockbeggar farm on its southern side. The estate continued in the possession of the Blagrave family until its sale, in 1792, to the Rt. Hon. Henry Addington, afterwards Viscount Sidmouth, by Martha Blagrave, of the City of Bath, the widow of George Blagrave, and Jane Blagrave, spinster, of the City of Bath, the only surviving child and heir-at-law of the said George Blagrave. In November, 1801, James Wheble, then of Kensington, purchased "Mockbeggar," with other lands in the vicinity, from Viscount Sidmouth, and it continued in the possession of the Wheble family until 1896, when it was sold to Mr. Oliver Dixon, its present proprietor. Portions of the estate, however, on its western side, that at one time had formed part of the ancient Hawthorn Field, had been put up for sale in 1861.

And now we come to what is perhaps the most interesting feature of this small estate—its name, “Mockbeggar.” The enquiry resolves itself into two parts : the origin of the word and the reason it was given to the farm. Among deeds in the possession of the writer the expression “Aleyn’s or Allen’s alias Mockbeggars” is common ; but the latter name does not seem to appear before the end of the 17th or the beginning of the 18th century. The following would seem to give an explanation of the origin of the place-name. In the 17th century, the verb-stem “Mock” was prefixed to a few substantives forming compound substantives with the sense “one who, or something which mocks.” Mock-beggar is an example, being applied to a house that has an appearance of wealth, but is either deserted or else inhabited by miserly or poor persons. It also appears as a quasi-proper name, “Mockbeggars Hall.”

In Florio’s “Rich Cabinet,” 1616, there is this remark : “A gentleman without means is like a faire house without furniture, or any inhabitant . . . whose rearing was chargeable to the owner and painfull to the builder, and all ill-bestowed, to make a mock-beggar that hath no good morrowe for his next neighbour.”

Taylor, the Water-poet, in his “Water Cormorant,” 1622, says : “The poore receive their answer from the Dawes, who in their caa-ing language call it plain Mock-beggar Manour, for they came in vaine.” In the Gentleman’s Magazine for October, 1840, appears the following passage : “Both places . . . bear the name of Mockbeggar’s Hall. The one is an isolated rock near Bakewell presenting from the road the semblance of a house . . . the other is a Tudor mansion in the parish of Claydon which remained so long unoccupied as to be the cause of numerous disappointments to those travellers who had never been taken in before.”

So much for the origin of the word—a simple explanation. Its application to Allen’s Farm, however, presents far greater difficulty, and among the mass of documents dating from the early 17th century relating to Earley which are in the writer’s possession, there seems to be but one slender clue. Having

regard to the fact that events causing changes in nomenclature such as this are much more likely to be found in oral tradition than in documents, the following suggestion is put forward with reserve. Some time after William Gray died, troublesome litigation ensued before the Blagrove family were secured to their inheritance. Not a little confusion was caused by the fact that Gray's widow had two husbands before she married him and took another after his decease. Gray died in 1550 (1551). His widow died in 1579. In 1585 John Blagrove, the mathematician, and grandson of Gray's widow by her first husband, Robert Blagrove, published his famous work, the "Mathematical Jewel," and in the preface to this work, which was dedicated to Lord Burleigh, after expressing his gratitude for his Lordship's patronage and protection, the author goes on to say, "wherein the whole progenie of us are and shall be everlastingly bound unto your good lordship diverse wise, namely, for the sincere justice and pittie, or rather piety, so charitably extended in our late extreame and most injurious vexation. How wickedly they stale away (as they thought) all our evidences, and thereupon by what sinister means they wrought her majestie a title; how cunningly or rather cozeningly, they conveyed againe from her heighnesse for three score and £10 of money, (that) which cost my friends almost £3000 neere 40 yeeres past."

The "40 yeeres past" takes us back to the grant to Gray of lands and tenements in Reading and Sonning (including "Aleyns") for the sum of nearly £2,500. Is it possible that between the death of Gray and the death of his widow, or the publication of the "Mathematical Jewel," "Aleyn's Farm" was left untenanted and derelict and came to be known as "Mock-beggar's Farm" from that circumstance?

E.W.D.

RUSCOMBE.

THE ORIGIN OF THE PLACE-NAME.

Professor Stenton in his "Place-names of Berkshire" gives a very interesting origin for "Ruscombe," but a long familiarity with the neighbourhood inclines the writer to suggest an entirely

different meaning. Professor Stenton says : " the most interesting terminal employed in the county, interesting alike on account of its derivation and its extreme rarity, is that which occurs in the name of Ruscombe. This place is not surveyed independently in Domesday ; but the registers of Salisbury Cathedral furnish abundant early forms which prove that the "comb" of the modern name has replaced an earlier *camp* ; a word never found except in local names, but apparently borrowed from the Latin *campus*, with the meaning of field. The word is recorded in the phrase *to campsetena gemæra* in the foundation charter of Eynsham Priory, with reference to Chipping Campden in Gloucestershire The prefix of the name Ruscombe is also remarkable for by all signs it represents a personal name, Hroth ; a name-stem rarely used in local nomenclature . . . "

We thus get " Hroth's-field " as the origin.

The following suggestions are put forward with reserve (1) that " Roth's " is a gaelic name for a fort in allusion to the Roman encampment in Weycock-field ; or (2) that it is derived from " Rhos," a Celtic name for a moor of which the common rush is the characteristic plant ; or (3) from " Rus " which is a cognate word indicating undrained moorland (*vide* Ruscombe Lake).

T.

THE ALDERMASTON " LOOSEY."

Can any of the readers of this Journal give an authoritative explanation of the name " the Loosey," as applied to a piece of ground in Aldermaston parish ? The piece in question stands at the head of the main street of Aldermaston, immediately in front of the Vicarage, in the angle formed by the branching of the road, to the right, towards Basingstoke ; to the left, towards Mortimer. In shape it is an equilateral triangle, the sides measuring each about 15 yards in length. It is surrounded on all sides by the public road.

Tradition regards "the Loosey" as common land, and derives its name from a lady, one of whose names was Lucy, said to have planted the ancient oak which stands in the middle of the piece. This oak is surrounded by low railings, over which an old inhabitant informs me that he used to climb as a boy. Round the oak, within the railings, grew laurels and other shrubs. On the left of the piece as you look up the street, and therefore almost in front of the entrance of Aldermaston Court, stood the Maypole, "as high as a church tower," and of remarkable girth. The Maypole was taken down about 1885.

From time immemorial "the Loosey" appears to have been land on which public meetings could be held. Gipsies could camp there, though the police moved them on within 48 hours. Preachers could hold forth there, and a late Vicar, the Rev. F. R. Horwood, informs me that when he first became incumbent the Church Association used yearly to park their van on "the Loosey," while the man in charge used to warn the people against the Romish tendencies of their new Vicar. Those who know Mr. Horwood will appreciate the humour of this. It is reported that a Nonconformist Minister said that he had preached all over England, but more rotten eggs had been thrown at him on the Aldermaston "Loosey" than anywhere else.

Is it permissible to suggest that "the Loosey" may mean the "loose" bit of land, no man's land, land not tied to any owner, land over which no one has rights as proprietor? Murray gives, as one of the meanings of the adjective *loose*, "un-appropriated."

A. H. COOKE.

Mapledurham Vicarage,
Oxon.

AN ELECTIONEERING GLASS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Among the most coveted possessions of the collector of old glass are the inscribed wine or ale glasses commemorative of political or social events in the eighteenth century. Almost the rarest of these are electioneering glasses. Their purpose was

obvious, their existence brief, and the number of genuine specimens that remain so few that high prices are paid for authentic examples. They were issued at the height of the fray and not a few must have been smashed by the partisans of the opposing candidates. Some twenty years ago there turned up in Reading and the neighbourhood four of these glasses that are unique, inasmuch as they commemorate a name and an event of local interest. Two of the four were six and three quarter inches high, of a well-known mid-eighteenth century type, with ogee bowls and plain drawn stems. Each of these two bore within an engraved wreath the inscription "Sir Francis Knollys and Liberty, 1761." On the third, a similar type, were the words "Success to Sir Francis Knollys, 1761." The fourth, which was seven and a half inches high, had a large bucket-shaped bowl with plain drawn stem, the bowl being inscribed "Success to Sir Francis Knollys."

By the kindness of Mr. Arthur Churchill of Dover Street, London, I am able to give an illustration of a further example of the last-named type which has recently come into his possession.

All these glasses commemorate the Reading Election of 1761. There were three candidates—John Dodd, Sir Francis Knollys and Charles de Salis. Reading returned two members at this time, and Dodd and Knollys were elected, the former obtaining 396 and the latter 316 votes. The name of Knollys is too well known to need much comment in this note; suffice it to say that in the whole recorded history of the town there is no family that looms so large in its affairs. There were many of the name of Francis, but the one who contested the 1761 election appears to have been the last male heir of an illustrious line, and he was of Thame, Oxon. He was created a baronet in 1754 and died without issue in 1772—the writer believes at Windsor.

E.W.D.

THE OPEN FIELD SYSTEM OF CULTIVATION IN BERKSHIRE.

Professor Stenton in the *Introduction to the Study of English Place-names*, published by the English Place-name Society, calls attention to the fact that in a limited area in south-east



The Knollys Glass.

Berkshire, there are eleven places with names ending in "field." This suffix is properly "feld," signifying open country. Professor Stenton goes on to suggest that these names imply that "the Saxon settlement of this region was only made possible by the clearance of woodland, and that therefore compact villages surrounded by arable fields of the type more usual in open country are likely to be rare in this district.

A prolonged study by the present writer of the earlier history of Stratfield-Mortimer certainly supports this suggestion or theory, and he has failed to discover any evidence that the open field system, with its acre or half acre strips ever obtained upon the Manor.

Unfortunately, we have no very early Manor Court Rolls, and the earliest record giving any details concerning the tenants and their holdings is an Inquisition of 1304. In that record a tenant is said to hold "half a virgate" or a "cotland" as the case may be; but no indication is given as to the method of cultivation. Later records follow the same lines, but with the additional information that the land is adjacent to the tenement or farmstead and that the holding had a distinctive name; these names are mostly of former tenants, such as "Russells," "Clements" or "Matthew Wykyngs."

A dozen of Manor Court Rolls of the 15th century follow the same form, with no indication that the holdings were other than enclosed fields held in severalty.

References to the open field system are frequently found in Enclosure Acts, but that of Stratfield Mortimer, dated 1802, specifies commonable lands, which an examination of the map show to have been, with one exception, merely heath and waste. The exception is both curious and interesting; it consisted of two fields, the "Upper and Nether Wurthe," described as a common pasture over which the rector (Eton College) had the right "to sow" twice in every seven years. This form of the name is that found in a survey of 1553. By the time of the Enclosure it had become corrupted to "Worden," and still survives in the name of "Warrennes Wood." Even here we

have no evidence that the land, though held in common, as were several other pastures, and sometimes put under the plough, was cultivated or held under the open field system.

The object of this somewhat lengthy note is to ask if any reader can furnish information of any trace of the open field system in any of the Manors in Berkshire with the suffix "field," or any others south of the Kennet.

Any stray references to Stratfield-Mortimer in parish registers, or other records, or incidental mentions in printed books, will also be welcomed.

FREDERIC TURNER.

OLD NUMBERS OF THE SOCIETY'S JOURNALS.

The Editor is asked to draw the attention of members of the Society to the fact that the Hon. Secretary has a large accumulation of back numbers of the Society's Journal and that copies of the numbers which appeared before 1926 may be obtained at 1/- each on application to him at Leicester House, King's Road, Reading. It should be noted that a complete set of the Journal can now only be got together with difficulty. Members are therefore strongly advised to take advantage of this opportunity to purchase back numbers in the hope of completing their sets as occasion offers. The past numbers of the Journal contain information which is not readily available in any other publication.