Some Place and Field Names of the Parish of Staveley.

By Rev. Will. L. Coleman.

THE word *Staveley* is derived from two Anglo-Saxon words, *staef*, a stick, staff, rod, pole, or support; and *ley* or *lea*, which indicates an open place in a wood where the cattle lie, and afterwards a meadow. Thus we get *staefley*, the staffland or meadow of staves. In the Domesday Book, the name is spelt *Stavelie*, and in a document of the reign of Edward VI. we find that form of the word which one so frequently hears now in the local vernacular, *Staley*. In a Lichfield Diocesan Clergy List for 1602, it is termed *Stavy*.

From *Thorpe*, the Danish word for a village or hamlet, we get *Woodthorpe*, the village by the wood; also *Netherthorpe*, the lower hamlet, situated as it is at the foot of the little hill below Woodthorpe.

The three hamlets of Nether, Middle, and West Handley, were originally a separate manor, but are now merged into that of Staveley. The name probably indicates the high meadow, from the Anglo-Saxon *han* or *hean*, high, and *ley*.

The Anglo-Saxon *hagge*, *haigh*, or *hay*, denotes properly an enclosure surrounded by a hedge. There are many instances of this word in Derbyshire, two of which occur in Staveley, viz., the *Hague* farm near to Renishaw, and the *Hagge* between Staveley and Handley. The house which now bears the title of the Hagge was built early in the seventeenth century, and takes its name from the spot on which it stands, which, in the days when the

Frechevilles were lords of the Manor, was part of Staveley Park. This park extended over nearly half the area of the present parish, and we are able partly to trace its boundaries by the names which still remain, *Park House*, *Park Gate*, *Red Lodge*, and *White Lodge ;* the two last are said to have been the residences of the park keepers. Tradition also says that the term *Lowgates* owes its origin to one of the park entrances ; if so, it will be derived from the Anglo-Saxon *geat*, which means a gate. There is, however, the possibility that the name *Lowgates*, applied to a street in Staveley which forms part of the Chesterfield and Worksop road, may not have reference to the park boundary, but to the road, having for its origin the Danish word *gata*, which denotes a street or road. The words are nearly akin, and the idea of a passage or way underlies both, one being a passage through, the other a passage along. Instances of the former use may be found in *Briggat* in Leeds, and *Bridgegate* and *Irongate* in Derby, and in most of the street names of York.

Two rivers run through the parish, the *Rother* and the *Doelea*. According to Canon Taylor, the former is a corruption of *Rhuddwr*, and means the *red water*. This is very likely, as the waters used to be tinged with sediment from the ironstone which abounded in the country drained by the stream. I say the waters *used to be* tinged with sediment from the ironstone, because they are so no longer, except in the neighbourhood of North Wingfield and Pilsley where the river rises. Most of the iron has been worked out, and the Rother, at Staveley, is now a black and unsightly stream, the receptacle for the Chesterfield sewage and the refuse from several large works.

The *Doelea* in all probability takes its name from the land through which it flows. As we have already seen, a *lea* was an open space where the cattle used to lie, thus *Doelea* is the place where the does lie, and the land gives its name to the stream which flows through it.

Norbriggs, a small hamlet, is a corruption of *North bridge*, now a stone structure over the Doelea. Though this is North-East of Staveley, the designation is correct, for it is North of Staveley on

the main road from Chesterfield to Worksop. This bridge was built in the reign of Queen Mary by a fishmonger named Abbot, who, by way of penance, had been enjoined "to build the North bridge and causeway in the parish of Staley." As nothing was left for its repair, in the days of Sir Peter Frecheville, who died in 1634, a petition was presented to the Justices for the county of Derby, asking them to order the bridge to be repaired at the charge of the county, which order was then given. A stone records that "This county bridge was rebuilt and causeway repaired by the County, Anno 1742."

Not far from the North bridge there is a field called Abbot's flat, which doubtless owes its name to Abbot the fishmonger, who built the bridge.

A bridle road from Netherthorpe to Woodthorpe crosses the Doelea by High bridge, now pronounced "*Ee brig*." From the parish accounts for the last two hundred years, I find that this bridge has been a continual source of expense, scarcely a year passing without something being charged for its repair. The upper part is quite new, but the arch is very quaint. The adjoining meadow is also called *High Briggs*. I am unable to suggest a reason for the name, unless it was called *High* bridge in contrast to the *low* ford a few yards away. I am also at a loss with regard to *Earning** bridge, a little higher up the same stream.

Slitting-Mill bridge over the Rother derives its name from the slitting-mill, built in 1650 for the purpose of slitting iron into thin strips for the use of the sickle and nail makers.

Packsaddle bridge, built in 1777, over the Chesterfield and Gainsboro' canal, is said to be so called on account of its resemblance to a packsaddle, not because it was for the use of packhorses, as it is only a towing path for the horses drawing barges down a branch canal, and is not on any public road.

In 1487, "Richard Ince, of Spynkhill, granted to John Fretchville, a place in Staveley called Handley Wood," and from this

* "Earning"—the south-western pronunciation of the word "*running*." Is this indicative of the comparative force of the stream at this place ?
Anglo-Saxon *Yrnan*, to run ; *Ærning*, running.—Ed.

gentleman we get *Ince farm*, mentioned in the tithe agreements of the Rev. James Gisborne (1716-1759) as being in the occupation of Mrs. Froggatt, of the Hagge, and of which the present *Ince barn* and *Ince meadow* were part. Ince barn is not far from what is now called Handley Wood, and in those days the name embraced a larger area than at present.

In the same papers (Rev. J. Gisborne's tithe agreements) mention is made of *Wortley fields*, which may owe their name to Matilda *Wortley*, the wife of the Sir Peter Frecheville who died in 1503.

Foxlowe plantation is named after the Rev. Francis Foxlowe, who was curate of Staveley at the beginning of this century. Though this is quite a modern name, I have included it for the sake of its association, as Mr. Foxlowe was a man well known in the county, and whose words and deeds are talked of in this neighbourhood to-day. He was vicar of Elmton as well as curate of Staveley, and a captain of Volunteers.

Bright's plantation recalls a family of that name who flourished here during the last century.

Mastin *Moor* and Handley *Moor* carry us back to the time when the spacious area of Staveley Park was surrounded, on at least two of its sides, by open moorland, and the whole neighbourhood was stocked with an abundant variety of furred and feathered life, which the increase of population and the development of the coal and iron trade have now banished.

Hollingwood* *Common* and *Common piece* remind us of the common lands of the parish, which were enclosed by Act of Parliament in 1780. As a result of this Act, the name *Intake* appears several times on the map, indicating pieces of land which have been taken in from the road sides.

From Anglo-Saxon *mæra*, a boundary, we have *Meer sick*, the boundary stream, and the *Merrians*, the boundary farm, which mark the parish boundaries.

Another boundary between this parish and Eckington is *Efoxstone Wood*, now commonly spelt *Foxon*. The word *stain* or *stone* sometimes indicates a boundary stone, as in the case

* Hollin from Anglo-Saxon *holegn*—the holly tree.

of *Staines*, Middlesex, which Camden informs us is so-called from the boundary stone of the jurisdiction of the city of London, and no doubt it does so in this case. Even now, notwithstanding its close proximity to coal pits and railways, a fox is occasionally found there.

Foxhole meadow and *Foxhole nook* were once favourite haunts of Master Reynard.

Many fields bearing the title *coneygree*, a rabbit warren, testify to the presence of these little creatures in large numbers.

Dog croft and *Cow close* are plain enough, but the derivation of *Ox rail* is somewhat difficult. The word *rail* is used in two or three different ways; but the most likely one in this case is that given by Halliwell, who has, "rail—to stray abroad: perhaps from the older word reile, to roll." It probably means simply a pasture or enclosure for oxen, where they could be at large, as there are other fields called *Great rail*, *Little rail*, *Kay rail*, and *Dewis rail.*

Raile is used by Chaucer, Spenser, and others, as meaning "to spring, gush forth, or blow," so that *Well rail* may mean either the well enclosure, or the well spring.

Toad pool is a piece of wet, boggy ground; a very likely spot for the dwelling of the much maligned toad.

Mere is the Anglo-Saxon word for lake or marsh, and, as we should expect, *Shallow meer* and *Crowmere* are damp, low-lying lands, which are frequently flooded.

Not far from Crowmere is *Crow-nest hill;* besides which we have *Hawk lane*, *Cuckoo piece*, and *Snipe meadow.*

This last was formerly the appellation of a meadow near to Stubbing Wood. Snipe are still to be found in the Rother Hallows, and other marshy spots in the neighbourhood. In the latter part of the last century, when that enthusiastic sportsman, the Rev. Francis Gisborne, was rector of Staveley, many of these birds fell to his gun.

Many of our fields derive their names from trees and plants. There are three fields called *The Bushes*, several *Oak closes* and *Broom closes*, *Gorsey close*, *Elm-tree breck*, *Crab-tree piece*, *Rush*

meadow, and two *Yew-tree closes*, from which the yew trees have disappeared.

Garth is a Norse word, signifying an enclosed place. We have three *Willow garths*, which are enclosed strips of damp ground, covered with willows. There is also *Willow holt*, *holt* being an Anglo-Saxon word for a copse.

From the numerous fields called *Rye croft*, *Rye hills*, *Rye close*, and *Rye Riddings*, it would seem that rye was somewhat largely grown in this district.

One field bears the title of *Onion piece*.

Some fields take name from their size, as *Great croft* and *Little croft*. Others from their shape, as *Triangle*, *Three-cornered piece*, *Long croft*, and *Broad piece*.

A large number of names are derived from the physical features of the land, or quality of the soil, as *Pond meadow*, *Quarry field*, *Marl field*, *Limestone close*, *Stoney close*, and *Hill close*.

Breck is from *brekka*, a slope or brink. We have three or four *brecks*, which all agree with this description.

Hunger hill is a duplicate name, signifying literally hill hill, hunger being a common form of Anglo-Saxon *honger* or *hanger*, a hill. Readers of White's "Selborne" will remember *the Hanger* at that place. In the parish of Standon, Herts., there is *Hanging Wood*, and here in Staveley are *Hanging bank plantation* and *Hanging piece*, all derived from the same root, being applied in each case to a site on a hill side.

The terms *bottom*, *flat*, and *butts* are connected with the open field system, and are fully discussed by Canon Atkinson in Vol. XIV. of the "*Antiquary*," so that we need not go into them at length here. A *bottom* is a stretch of low-lying land, not wet like an *ing*, but dry and fertile; we have *The Bottoms* and *Ashes Bottom*, the latter probably owing its distinctive title to an old Staveley family named Ash.

Canon Atkinson's definition of a *flat* is "an extent of fairly level land below the general elevation of the district, mainly deep of soil and fertile, but divisible into separate portions by boundary lines." There are in Staveley, *Short flat*, *Hall flats*, *Sand flats*,

and *Barn flat*, which need no comment. *Abbots flat* has already been mentioned. *Pickleover flat* and *Spital flat* I am unable to explain.*

The *Butts* are the ends or small pieces of land which have been severed from the larger fields; thus we have *Crowmere*, and a small adjoining piece called *Crowmere butts*. There are also *Harehill butts* and *Sour butts*, which latter is severed from a large field by a tiny rivulet, and is an irregular shaped piece of marshy land, producing only rank grass and herbage, which the farmers still call sour, meaning coarse and unwholesome.

Dam-tail is a field adjoining the dam at Foxon wood.

Several *Pithills* mark the site of ironstone mines of the kind usually known as bell pits. It is certain that iron was extensively worked here two hundred and thirty years ago, but probably many of these pits date back much further than that.

Windmill hills at Handley and at Woodthorpe tell of windmills that have long since ceased to exist; while *Dam field* and *Miller's meadow* mark the site of the Woodthorpe dam and water mill.

The Anglo-Saxon *sich* was a furrow, gutter, or watercourse. It is also spelt sic, and syke, and indicates generally a little stream or brook. From this we get *Alder sick*, the brook of the alders. In this case there are but few alders left, and during part of the year the stream is dry. *Wellsick close* is so-called from a little stream issuing from a spring in the field.

In the adjoining parish of Brimington there is *Inkersick*, some land drained by a running stream, and I am indebted to the Editor for the suggestion that *Inker* is a plural of *ing*—a meadow, through the forms of *ingre* and *inkre*. If this is so, Inkersick is the stream of the meadows.

In like manner, *Inkersall* would be the house of the meadows, *sall* being an Anglo-Saxon word for a stone house.

A *Ridding* was a cleared space of sufficient size to be cultivated.

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* Pickle—obviously *Pikel*—a little pike of land; and '*over*,' a ridge—from *ufa*—high.

Spital—a short form of *hospital;* probably once connected with some old endowment.—ED.

In Staveley there are *Bate ridding*, *Wade ridding*, several *Water riddings*, and *Rye riddings*. The *Water riddings* are low, damp places; the *Rye riddings* were, no doubt, clearings where rye was grown. *Bate ridding* and *Wade ridding* may supply the names of their sometime holders.

Higgester, or *Uggester*, an outlying farm, may possibly owe its title to some Norse chieftain named Ugga, and so mean Ugga's land; but this is merely a suggestion.

There is a well in the village, lately disused, which is supplied by a spring, and goes by the name *Spring well*. Staveley people of the last generation had a saying to the effect that if a person once drank of the water from the spring well, he would never afterwards settle down in any other place.

There is also a spring, in a field a short distance from the village, called *Peter well*. It may have been one of the Holy wells of Derbyshire, many of which were dedicated to the saints whose names they bear, *e.g.*, Becket well in Derby, and St. Ann's well in Nottingham.