

Size and Shape in English Field-Nomenclature

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FEW PROPOSITIONS HAVE ATTRACTED so much agreement among place-name scholars as that large numbers of field-names are “common-place and uninteresting.” Among these rejected multitudes of names are certainly those relating to size and shape. The purpose of this article is to attempt to show that this opinion is mistaken. The fact that many of the names “lack distinction” (as one authority states) seems to the writer to be no reason for regarding their collection and study (in the words of another) as “a waste of time.”

By *field-name* is meant the name of any piece of land forming part of the agricultural economy of the area in which it is found. In England, the term is applied not only to the names of modern enclosed fields but also to the much larger open tracts of arable land (“great fields”) that were the main units of mediaeval agriculture in many parts of the country. The divisions of the great fields, known as “furlongs,” were also named and have a place in the genealogy of modern field-names.

The smallest unit in an open arable field was the “strip” or “selion.” Various known also as “acres” and “lands,” the strips of an individual tenant were normally dispersed through the two, three, or more great fields of a parish. Whatever the motives for this scattered distribution (e.g., the fair sharing among all tenants of both good and infertile land, or the averaging of travelling distance to the day’s labours), this arrangement has proved an unmixed blessing to the field-name student. The recital of the location of the parcels of land held by an individual (e.g., in the schedules known as “terriers”) requires the naming of many, if not all, of the constituent furlongs of each of the great fields, to the obvious advantage of the researcher.

The foregoing remarks will possibly clarify a discussion of a sample enumeration of field-names designating size:

Great Acre, Stockham Ch;¹

Great Close, Buckhorn Weston Do, Coston Lei, Ingarsby Lei, Stoughton Lei, Cottesmore R,

Ketton R, Preston R, Stretton R, Whissendine R;

Great Dale, Haltwhistle Nb;

¹ County names are abbreviated in accordance with the conventions of the English Place-Name Society. Bd = Bedfordshire, Bk = Buckinghamshire, Brk = Berkshire, C = Cambridgeshire, Ch = Cheshire, Co = Cornwall, Cu = Cumberland, D = Devon, Db = Derbyshire, Do = Dorset, Du

Great Field, Burghfield Brk, Cookham Brk, Bradwell Ch, Burwardsley Ch, Haltwhistle Nb, Easton Sf;
 Great Ground, Aldermaston Brk, Barkham Brk, Brimpton Brk, Cold Ash Brk, Hurley Brk, Wargrave Brk, Theddingworth Lei, Steeple Aston O, Teigh R, Mudford So;
 Great Ham, Eye & Dunsden O;
 Great Hayes, Harley Sa;
 Great Hey(s), Little Leigh Ch, Peover Inferior Ch;
 Great Hide, Tidmarsh Brk;
 Great Hill, Beenham Brk;
 Great Holt, Wymondley Hrt;
 Great Lands, Crosby Ravensworth We (*Gretelandes* c.1210);
 Great Lay, Sulhamstead Brk;
 Great Leys, Cookham Brk;
 Great Mead, Hermitage Do, Manston Do;
 Great Meadow, Crowley Ch (*The Grete Meadow* 1651), Ashwater D, Lamberhurst K, Blaston St Giles Lei, Middle Aston O, Belton R;
 Great Moor, Elwick Hall Du;
 Great Orchard, West Allington D, Hammoon Do;
 Great Park, Ashburton D, Ashwell R;
 Great Piece, Ashmore Do, Greetham R;
 Great Plantation, Lamberhurst K;
 Great Shaw, Cuckney Nt (*Shahewong* 1301);
 Great Wood, Beenham Brk 1791, Cerne Abbas Do.

It will be observed that the specifier *Great* is to be found in association with a large variety of generic components (or “denominatives”). Some of these indicate arable land; others, e.g., *Mead*, *Meadow*, and *Leys*, are grassland terms. *Close* is found regularly in many parts of the country as the normal name for an enclosed piece of land, whether ploughland or pasture. *Field* is often used in the same sense in modern names, though its earlier meaning (“tract of open land, divided into arable strips”) occasionally survives.

Great Acre and Great Lands call for special comment. The present-day sense of *acre* as a land measurement developed from the earlier usage of the term for “plot of arable land, individual holding,” associated with the idea that such plots represented a steady day’s work for a ploughman with a yoke of oxen.² *Lands* were the basic units of arable fields; they varied greatly in both width and length, so that there was scope for many different names alluding to these dimensions. The lands,

= Durham, Ess = Essex, ERY = East Riding of Yorkshire, Gl = Gloucestershire, Ha = Hampshire, He = Herefordshire, Hrt = Hertfordshire, Hu = Huntingdonshire, K = Kent, L = Lincolnshire, La = Lancashire, Lei = Leicestershire, Mx = Middlesex, Nb = Northumberland, Nf = Norfolk, NRY = North Riding of Yorkshire, Nt = Nottinghamshire, Nth = Northamptonshire, O = Oxfordshire, R = Rutland, Sa = Shropshire, Sf = Suffolk, So = Somerset, Sr = Surrey, St = Staffordshire, Sx = Sussex, W = Wiltshire, Wa = Warwickshire, We = Westmorland, Wo = Worcestershire, WRY = West Riding of Yorkshire, Wt = Isle of Wight.

² For a full discussion of the size of mediaeval strips, see C.S. and C.S. Orwin, *The Open Fields*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 35-44. See also Warren O. Ault, *Open-Field Farming in Medieval England* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1972), 20-23.

of course, often survive as the uniform undulations on old arable that has since been left under grass, to be seen in many parts of England, but particularly in the Midlands.³

Meadow, strictly “grassland mown for hay,” is often used of grassland in general. A term that might seem to be self-explanatory is *ground*. Though this term is locally frequent (e.g., in Worcestershire) it is by no means common throughout the country. It is primarily applied (usually in the form *grounds*) to fairly large areas of grassland; the name is otherwise used (much as *leasow* is in the West Midlands) as a general term for enclosed land, whether pasture or arable.

The names Great Holt, Great Plantation, Great Shaw, and Great Wood all refer to land planted with trees. *Shaw* is a term surviving in the dialects of northern England; it represents OE *sceaga*, usually glossed as “small wood,” though the occurrence of *great* as a specifier indicates that a more general meaning applies. It may be relevant to mention here that these generics do not necessarily define the function of the named land. Just as Twenty Acre Meadow may mean “grassland adjoining an arable close known as Twenty Acres,” Great Plantation or Great Shaw may well be land adjacent to woods, the denominative *close* or *field* being suppressed for the sake of brevity.

An obvious question to be asked about names of this kind is “how big is *great*?” The answer in many instances may be “a few acres larger than closes nearby.” Great Meadow, Houghton-on-the-Hill Lei, has an area of seven and one-half acres; Little Meadow, in the same parish, contains five acres. There is a greater difference between Great Homestead and Little Homestead, in Bushby Lei. The former is an 11-acre enclosure, but the latter has an area of only one acre. Great Whin Field, Easton Sf, is just over nine acres in extent; Little Whin Field is a little more than six acres. Great Brockard and Little Brockard, also in Easton, are very similar to the previous pair—nine acres and six acres respectively—but on a map of Easton dated 1729 there are two enclosures, Great Church Close and Little Church Close, differing in area by only 18 perches. It is not surprising to find that by 1839, Great Church Close (area 2a.1r.24p.) had been renamed Pit Piece, and Little Church Close (2a.1r.6p.) had become Cartshed Piece.⁵

Fields designated *Great* need not, as has been seen, be very large.

³ A tenant's strip might consist of one or more lands or ridges, so that *strip* and *land* are not, strictly, convertible terms. Traces of lands may still be seen in grassland, and oblique aerial photographs—and even pictures taken from ground level in the low sunlight of morning or evening—impressively portray the landscape almost exactly as it appeared four or five centuries ago. See, for instance, Plate II in Orwin, *op. cit.*

⁴ Cf. J. Packard, *Easton, Suffolk: The Fields and Field Names* (London, [Privately printed] 1972), 23-27.

⁵ Packard, *op. cit.*, 19. *Close* is not very often found as a denominative in this parish, only nine of the nearly 300 portions of land recorded in the Tithe Apportionment being so designated.

Although a mere couple of acres may be unusual, a Great Close or Great Field containing ten or 12 acres causes no surprise. But the range extends far in the upward direction. Two fields called Great Close occur in Lubenham Lei; one has an area of 31 acres, and the other is no less than 65 acres in extent. A similar range of possibilities exists for the appellation *Big*. Big Willowsgate, in Great Bowden Lei, is a field of 36 acres; Big Kestins in the same parish contains 15 acres, but Edwards Big Piece in Packington Lei measures only seven acres.

Smallness also is relative. Little Close, in Teigh R, has an area of just over one acre, and so has Little Homestead, Bushby Lei. Little Potash Piece names two adjacent closes in Easton Sf, each of them having an area of just over seven acres. Little Clover Piece in the same parish has an area of four acres, but Little Mill Mount (also in Easton) is twice as big.

Before passing to other names indicating size, it may be helpful to set out another sample, this time noting the occurrences of all the names of this group in any one parish.

Aldermaston Brk:	Great Ground Little Mead
Bucklebury Brk:	Great-, Little-Cowleaze Great-, Little-Dean Great-, Little-Ham Great-, Little-Welford Little Ground Little Meadow Great Well Pightle
Chieveley Brk:	Great Ground Small Meadow
Newbury Brk:	Great Ground Little Pightle
Woodley Brk:	Great Grove Great Mead Little Breach Ground
Chorley Ch:	Big-, Little-Harthill Field Big Meadow (<i>Magnum Pratum</i> 1447, <i>Le Grete Medowe</i> 1454, <i>The Great Meadowe</i> 1637) Little Harper's Field
Edleston Ch:	Big-, Little-Ox Pasture Little Brook Field Little Wood
Lea Ch	Big Ridding (OE <i>ryding</i> , "clearing")
Tittenley Ch	Big-, Little-Moor

10 *John Field*

Buckhorn Weston Do	Great-, Little-Berry Croft Great-, Little-Collycombe Great-, Little-Fifteen Acres Great-, Little-Parsonage Great-, Little-Sands Great Common Piece Little Elm Little Field Little Furlong Little Mead Little Wood Small Grove
Hermitage Do:	Great Cowleaze Great Grounds Small Drove or Greenway
Snarestone Lei:	Far Great Hill, Near Great Hill Big-, Little-Hill Big-, Little-Meadow Big-, Little-Wind Mill Hill Big-, Little-Quarry Little Blakelands Little Cow Cl Little Swamp
Chinnor O:	Great Moor
Lewknor O:	Great-, Little-Oat Hills Great-, Little-Water Croft Field
Stretton R:	Big-, Little-Garden Field Great Close Little Wood
Teigh R:	Big-, Little-Moor Big Horse Park or Twenty Acres Great Close Great Ground
Whissendine R:	Big-, Little-Elgate Big Church Lees Big Leighs Big Pickards Little Beck Little Loodle
Easton Sf:	Great-, Little Brockard Great-, Little Brooms Great-, Little Whin Field Great Mill Mount Great Potash Field, Little Potash Piece (x2) Little Clover Piece Little Walnut Tree Cl

Crosby Ravensworth We: Great-, Little Good Day
 Greatlands (*Gretland* 13c, *Gretelandes*
 c.1210, c.1240)

It would be dangerous to draw firm conclusions from a small sample such as this one, but it is worth observing, for instance, the comparative rarity of *Small* in field-names. It occurs usually with the sense "narrow," rather than "diminutive." *Big* occurs in the sample less frequently than *Great*. There are regional peculiarities, though it would be wrong to suppose that *Big* does not occur in Oxfordshire; examples can be found in that county, but it does not seem to occur in great numbers.

Some of the denominatives in the sample have already been discussed. Others manifestly consist of, or include, surnames: Pickards in Whissendine, and Harper's Field in Chorley are instances of this type. It will be noticed that *Cowleaze* occurs in Berkshire and Dorset; this term ("cow pasture") is found in the south and west of England, but is rare in other parts of the country. The third name in the Hermitage list, Small Drove or Greenway, deserves comment. A *greenway* was a path through the furlongs of the open field, by which access to individual holdings could be gained; along these greenways, too, cattle could be driven to pasture on the stubble or on grassland on the far side of the arable field.

Besides *great* and *little*, some of the names cited contain other specifiers. Little Clover Piece, for instance, is clearly a name within the cultivated crop category; Little Walnut Tree Close belongs to the fairly numerous class of names alluding to trees. Great and Little Good Day, however, are not merely in a different class from those mentioned (possibly being names of the complimentary type) but are also of different structure. The main component of such names is not a denominative of the usual generic sort, such as *close*, *meadow*, *furlong*, or *field*; instead, a noun or noun phrase suggestive of approbation serves as the denominative or, often, the sole constituent of the name.

Although containing an appropriate specifier, a name like Small Gains Furlong (Chadlington O) is clearly not a size name, since what is referred to is not the area of the field, but the smallness of the profit on the land. An interestingly ambiguous name, however, occurs in a number of places. This is Little Worth, found in several parishes in Wiltshire, in Bletchington O, Ashmansworth Ha, Brimpsfield G1, and Pucklechurch G1. In one sense of the word *worth* (the obsolete place-name sense of "enclosure"), this name undoubtedly relates to size; but if *worth* means "value" (as it almost certainly does in this series of names), then it is the derogatory type of name that is here represented.

There would seem to be little ambiguity in names denoting acreage. It would be tedious to enumerate even a selection of fields called Five Acres, Five Acre Close, Eight Acre Field, and so on. Such names are to be found in considerable numbers all over England, and there is little

reason to think that names of the type are limited to this country. Common though they are (or perhaps because of their frequent occurrence) a number of observations may be made about these names.

First, although acreage names occur in many places, it is not often that very many of them are found in any one parish. The reason is fairly obvious: if five or six pieces of land were all called Seven Acres, how could one of them be particularised? The identifying function of a name would be absent, and if several instances actually occur on a single farm or estate, other specifiers are usually added. In Hinton Martell Do, there are three fields called Five Acres. Discrimination is possible, however, since two of them are specified as Lower and Upper; the third is called Breach Five Acres, being adjacent to a close known as Breach. In Berry-narbor, in the neighbouring county of Devon, there are three examples of Four Acres. One (without other specification) is in Hill Barton Farm; the other two, Square Fouracres and Long Fouracres, are in Sloleys Farm.

Additions to acreage names do not always arise because of duplication. Butty Nineacres, in Clifton Ch, is the only acreage name in the published list for that township. Five Acre Longlands, Gaddesby Lei, gets its name principally because it is one of a series, the other members of which are Longlands, Longlands Close, and Longlands Meadow; there are no other fields called Five Acres in the Tithes Apportionment, but it must be noted that there are two instances each of Twenty Acres and of Three Acres, and no fewer than four of Four Acres—all undifferentiated by further specifiers.

Multiplications of names alluding to the same acreage are, as been noted already, uncommon; and so are long series of acreage names within the same township. There may be a set of a dozen or more in one place, but that every name should be of this type would be unthinkable, since the system would not operate. The practised eye can certainly estimate approximate acreages, so that Five Acres could be easily distinguished from an adjacent Eight Acres or Eleven Acres; but occasionally the nominal acreage is a very rough estimate indeed. In Burton Lazars Lei, for instance, there is a field called Four Acres which actually measures 5a.1r., and another called Six Acres whose actual area is five acres, one rood, 24 perches. Thus the difference, though amounting to two acres according to the names, is actually only about one seventh of an acre.

Correlatives such as Near and Far, or Top, Middle, and Bottom, are occasionally used with acreage names. This sometimes indicates division of the field subsequent to its receiving the name. In Stoughton Lei a piece of land originally called Thirty Acres is now divided into three: Far, Middle, and Near Thirty Acres are the present names. But in Seal Lei, Upper Four Acres, Middle Four Acres, Lower Four Acres, and Oak

Tree Four Acres, although not far apart, are certainly not fragments of an original Four Acres; they each contain approximately the stated acreage. A fairly certain sign of fragmentation is given in names like First (Second, Third, Fourth) Part of Forty Acres in Edmonthorpe Lei. Such expressions might be regarded as designations rather than true names. First and Second Three Acre Close, Cossington Lei, are independent pieces each containing about three acres.

Finally, a word or two is necessary on names of the type Three Acre Meadow, or Ten Acre Wood. Such names only occasionally represent the actual size. The reason is that meadows, woods, marshes, and other pieces of non-arable land are frequently named after an adjacent piece of tilled ground, e.g., Near Pike Nooks, Far Pike Nooks, and Nook Meadow (Barrons Park Lei), or Far Balance, Top Balance, Middle Balance, Bottom Balance, and Balance Meadow (Ashby Folville Lei—*Balance* being “bean lands”). Twenty Acres Meadow, Odstone Lei, is actually less than five acres in area; but the name is clarified when it is observed that the meadow adjoins an arable close called Twenty Acres which comes within a small fraction of being an exact name.

Areas may also be expressed in local acres (such as those of Cheshire or Cornwall); this practice may also solve some apparent anomalies in quantitative names. Hides and other obsolete units also occur in names. A hide represented an area of about 120 statute acres. Examples include The Hide (Chipping Norton O), Hide Field (Loughton Ess and Ampport Ha), North Hide (Coulsdon Sr), and—with a trivial spelling variation—The Hyde (Bucklebury Brk, Great Henny Ess, Hinckley Lei, and Shiplake O). The name does not, of course, imply great size in the modern enclosed fields; they are more likely to be merely remnants of fields or furlongs which had this area. *Daywork* and *Daymath* names may also be mentioned here.⁶ These are essentially north-midland terms, *day (s) work* being applied to arable land, *day(s)math* to grassland. A few examples will suffice: Six Day(s) Work occurs in Mooresbarrow Ch, Siddington Ch, Alderwasley Db, Hope Db, Shirley Db, and Solihull Wa. Six Day(s) Math is found in Barrow Ch, Edleston Ch, Minshull Vernon Ch, Habberley Sa, and Langley & Ruckley Sa. There are perhaps rather more instances of *daymath* than of *daywork* on record, no examples of the latter occurring in certain counties. One or two variants are found. Syncope of *daywork* occurs in some Cumberland names, e.g., Twenty Dork (Birker) and Two Dark (Bewcastle); and in some Cheshire names the first vowel of *daymath* is monophthongized and shortened, e.g., Five Damath (Coddington), Twelve Demath (Ridley), and Demath (Bollington). A sporadic instance in Devon—Day’s Moth in Widecombe—is worth noting, but this may lack the overtones of customary tenure suggested by Dodgson in connexion with Cheshire (&c) names.

⁶ These expressions are discussed by J. McNeal Dodgson in *Notes & Queries*, April 1968, 123.

Other units occurring in numerical names include the rood. Three Roods is recorded in a number of Derbyshire places (Belper, Curbar, Fooloe, Hope, Kingsterndale, Stony Middleton), as well as in Dadlington Lei and Scaftworth Nt. Lands and leys, the basic units respectively of arable land and meadow, also occur in names of this type. Examples include Four Lands (Outseats Db), Six Lands (Brough Db, Castleton Db, Osmaston Db), Six Lunds (Greenhalgh La), Seven Leys (Hoby Lei, Wykin Lei, Exhall Wa), Four Lees (Wilsen WRY), and Four Leys (Muston Lei). In Seven Ridges (Gilmorton Lei) and Four Riggs (Eldon Nb), *ridge* is used in the same sense as *land*.

The only generic term indicating smallness to be found in the list above is *pightle*. This denominative, usually taken to mean "small piece of land," sometimes bears the sense "portion of land, allotment," particularly when specified in various ways. Thus, there was a Four Acre Pightle in Northolt Mx in 1700,⁷ and the Tithe Apportionment for Easton Sf includes an arable close known as Easton Pightle, with an area of just over six acres, and Brockards Pightle was more than 11 acres in extent. By contrast, several closes in Easton labelled "Pightle," but otherwise unnamed, are of half an acre or even less.⁸

Variants of *pightle* are numerous and include *pickle*, *pighill*, and *pithill*. A small close in Southwell Nt is now known as Little Pickle; Pighill Close (Crofton WRY), Pig Hill (Crigglestone WRY), and Pig Hill Head (Hunsworth WRY) suggest that this form is limited to the West Riding, though not to the exclusion of other forms, since Hunsworth also has a Pith Hill. Pithill Close (Skipwith ERY), traceable to *Pichel* in the twelfth century, indicates that some of the variations may be graphic in origin.

The form *pingle*, a major variety of *pightle*, is found across the Midlands from Lancashire to Rutland. An early name in Duffield Db—*Princepingelle*—dates from 1482; the first element alluding possibly to the family of Richard Prynce, mentioned in early fifteenth-century records. Unlike *pightle*, however, *pingle* normally occurs alone; The Pingle is a frequent name, with at least six examples in each of Cheshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire, Leicestershire, and Nottinghamshire. Pingle Meadow occurs in Billesdon Lei, and Pingles in Youlgreave Db. But Penny Pingle (Witcham C) and Turnip Pingle (Middleton by Wirkworth Db) are noteworthy as rare examples of this element accompanied by a specifier, whereas similar names with *pightle* are not hard to find, e.g., Oat Pightle (Colne Engaine Ess), Well Pightle (Cantley Nf), Bean Pightle (Forncett St Peter Nf), Barn Pightle (Easton Sf), Long Pightle

⁷ C.H. Keene, *The Field Names of Northolt, Middlesex* (Northolt, Northolt Branch Library, 1973), *appended map*. The denominative distinguished this piece of land from Four Acres, about three-quarters of a mile to the south. There were at the time also First and Second Four Acre Closes.

⁸ Packard, *op. cit.*, 14, 23.

(Grazeley Brk), Wood Pightle (Soham C), and Charity Pightle (Ipsden O).

An additional set of variants occurs in Cheshire names. Pingo is found in Chorlton, Pingot(t) in Antrobus, Plumley, Siddington, Timperley, and a number of other places; Pingard (Clifton) seems to belong to the same group, and so does Pingate (Bosley). An intermediate form linking *plinge* with *pingot* is cited by Dodgson (PN Ch, II, 63): “a *pyngallt* of land on the north side of Waterless Brook,” found in a 1548 document relating to Tabley Superior.

Another name for a small field is Quillet, occurring in Lymm Ch, Little Neston Ch, Newton cum Larton Ch, Berrynarbor D, and Harley Sa. Quillets were unfenced shares of meadow, rectangular in shape and marked with a stone in each corner.

The Pleck seems to be more or less restricted to the West Midlands and the South West. It occurs in Hope Woodlands Db, Awre Gl, Doddenham Wo, and (by way of exception) in Witley Sr. The Plecks is found in Blaisdon Gl and Ruardean Gl, and The Plocks in Charlton Kings Gl and Tibberton Gl. In Oxfordshire there are Home Pleck in Lewknor, Wetherstones Pleck in Brize Norton, and Little Pleck Close in Crowell. Penny Pleck (Church Broughton Db), Rush Plecks (Bentley Wa), and Little Pleck (Padworth Brk) are further examples.

The terms so far studied (with some others, such as Plot, Bit, and Patch) belong to the technical vocabulary of field-nomenclature. There are other names for small fields drawn from quite different contexts and applied metaphorically: *Handkerchief* names come most readily to mind. There are small fields called Handkerchief in Eaton Ch and Handforth cum Bosden Ch; Handkerchief Close occurs in Bishop's Waltham Ha and Handkerchief Mead in Fair Oak Ha; Handkerchief Meadow is found in Repton Db and Bushby Lei; Handkerchief Croft in Bramhall Ch. Other denominatives are found—Ground, Nook, and Piece among them—in names from a dozen or so counties. An analogous name, Napkin Piece, occurs in New Mills Db. Wren Park is very plentiful in Derbyshire, but is found also in Essex (several times), in Piddington O, and in Bulwell Nt. Mouse Park, Newbold Db, conveys the same idea—that the land would be as spacious as a park to a very small animal—and Mouses Nest, Ringwood Ha, is even more pointed.

Thimble Hall, Warsop Nt, and Thimble Hole, Hope Woodlands Db, though clearly figurative, unambiguously refer to small pieces of land. Ambiguity, or at least irony, is however the theme of another group of names. Hundred Acres undoubtedly can be taken literally of a few fields to which it is applied. But instances in Bray Brk, Wargrave Brk, Comberton C, Soham C, Steeple Morden C (where *Le Hundaker* existed in the thirteenth century) and more than two dozen other places in six different counties, are fields less (sometimes much less) than three-

quarters of an acre in extent. In Shropham Nf there is a Hundred Acres Close with an area of two roods, ten perches.

Irony is taken even further in Horley Sr, where a field of less than half an acre bears the name One Thousand Acres. In Ringwood Ha and Richmansworth Hrt there are fields called Thousand Acres; in Whitchurch Canonorum Do there are no fewer than four with this name, and none of them exceeds an acre. The record for ironic hyperbole, however, is held by the Derbyshire parish of Temple Normanton, where there is a tiny piece of land known as Million Roods.

The various types of humorous response to very small pieces of land cannot be easily matched in respect of large areas. An obvious reason is that it is so much harder to recognise that a field is big; a small field exercises its effect by immediately demonstrating certain difficulties of management. If the land is well drained and the soil easily cultivated, a large piece of land would not present any particular difficulty in such matters as turning the plough. But if the soil is unproductive or difficult to work, a moderately sized field will draw attention—and contumely—to itself. The more extreme names of reproach may therefore be applied to fields that are both difficult and large, so that derogatory or other fanciful names applied to pieces of land merely because of their large size are consequently hard to find.

Little Breakfast is an unobtrusive example, bearing interesting witness to the practice of taking breakfast during, rather than before, the day's labours. A large field would leave little time for refreshment, an unfortunate fact considered worthy of record in the Lancashire parish of Westby with Plumpton. Everlasting, West Alvington D and Cardeston Sa, suggests land on which work seems interminable, as also does Hundred Year, Brampton Db.

Though humorous or fanciful names relating to large fields are rarely identified, this does not mean that the nomenclature of such land is entirely without interest. The ironical use of large acreage names for very small fields has been noticed; it is relevant to point out that occasionally very large numbers have a literal application. Hundred Acres sometimes indicates the actual area, for instance in Banstead Sr and Aldbourne W. Elsewhere there are doubtless enclosures of even greater size, but not designated by acreage names. Two tracts of hill pasture in Westbury W, however, may be mentioned: they are Four Hundred Down and Thirteen Hundred Down, the numbers in which signify the respective areas.

The mediaeval husbandman is hardly likely to have thought of his task as attempting to impose a rectilinear pattern on the corrugated surface of an irregular polygon, but the facts of the matter were doubtless impressed upon him before he had taken more than a hundred paces behind his plough, just as laying a carpet is the surest method of discovering that the corners of a room are not right angles. It is not sur-

prising, therefore, that the mediaeval ploughman, or his counterpart in a later generation, was moved to apply to some of his pieces of land shape-names which may or may not correspond with the outline of the present-day field. It cannot, of course, be too often repeated that a study of these names should include an inspection of the land referred to; if this is not possible, a map showing field boundaries should always be on hand. Many of these names were first bestowed in the eighteenth or even nineteenth century, and will be found to describe the shape to be found today.

Triangular pieces of land have received such names as Three Corner Close (Holwell Do, Bruntingthorpe Lei, Braybrooke Nth, Greetham R, Gunthorpe R, Thistleton R), Triangle Field (Alderwasley Db, Newbottle Du, Bradford WRY), or Three Nooks (Halton Ch, Kingsley Ch, Nether Peover Ch, Willaston Ch, Bakewell Db, Kingsterndale Db, Alston La, Ashton La, Bispham La, Bryning La, Grimsargh La, Lea La, Evington Lei). Frequent though these names are, they are still worth recording if only to note patterns in their application. For example, though names including *triangle* appear in Leicestershire—e.g., Triangle (Galby), Triangle Bit (Broughton Astley), and Triangle Piece (Wykin)—this term does not appear among modern names in Rutland, being replaced there by *three corner*: Three Corner Close (Greetham, Gunthorpe, and Thistleton), and Three Corner Field (Cottesmore, Exton, Greetham, and Teigh) are the names most often found.

In the open fields, triangular patches occurring among the furlongs were known as *gores*, and this term, variously spelt, survives in many modern names. The Goar is found in Steventon Ha, The Gores in Broadwell O, Mellow Sr, and Worplesdon Sr, and Gores Piece in Kingham O. There are also Gore Acre (Bullington Ha), Gore Mead (Kingsbury Mx), Gore Park (Widecombe D), Gore Tynning (Nettleton W), Gore Hill (Southrop Gl), and Gore Pleck (Ashmore Do). Gore Corner, in Treswell Nt, lays special stress on the angularity of the land. The most common of these names is Gore Field, which is found in Minshull Vernon Ch (*La Gore* 1220), Ashmore Do, Hornchurch Ess (*Gorefeld* 1240), Takeley Ess (*Gorefeld* 1403), Andover Ha, Hursley Ha, and Anstey Hrt.

Strips in the gore are referred to in Garlands, found in Barlestone Lei and Therfield Hrt (*Garlondes* t.Hy 8), and in Garbutts (Desborough Nth). The derivation of Garbutts and its variants (e.g., Garbits, Crosby Ravensworth We) from ME *gār-brēde* has not been finally demonstrated, and indeed seems improbable. This is, however, the etymology usually suggested, and it must remain on the record until early forms come to light in which *gār* is compounded with *butte*; other elements are found in early names, e.g., *furh* ("furrow") in *Gorefere*, Bray Brk 1384, and *furlang* in *Gorforlong*, Milford Db 13c. The peculiarity of strips in

the gore of the field was that, in order to compensate for the shortness that resulted as the piece came to a point, they were abnormally wide, so that *gār-brēde* was fixed on as the appropriate name for such strips—"gore-breadth," or "broad strip in the gore."

Examples are found as early as the thirteenth century of *gar-brede* names. *Garbrades*, Irthington Cu was mentioned in a document of 1205, and *Garbred* in Lambrigg We dates from the same year. Modern examples include Garbroad Close (Foxton Lei) Garbroods (Castleton Db), Gardbroad (Gumley Lei), Garborough (Scalthwaiterigg We), Goarbroade (Oundle Nth), and Short Gorbroad (Iffley O).

Another name applied to land which came to a point is *pike*, as in Pike Field (Norton Ch), Pikes Meadow (Windlesham Sr - *Longpik* in 1609), or Pikey Piece (Leebotwood Sa). An alternative form is *picked*, which occurs in various guises. Picked Close occurs in Bucklebury Brk, Burghfield Brk, Hinton Martell Do, Sherborne St John Ha, Crowmarsh O, South Newington O, and Watlington O. Picked Field is found in Banstead Sr; Picked Ground in Highclere Ha, Deddington O, Whitchurch O, Hennington W, and Stretton on Fosse Wa; and Picked Mead in Newbury Brk, Facombe Ha, Chinnor O, and Stanton Fitzwarren W. These examples, it will be observed, are all from central and southern counties, but there is a solitary Nottinghamshire example: Picquet Close, in Hayton.

Names incorporating the technical terms of geometry have a wider range. There are fields called Square Close in Ashreigney D, Belstone D, Alderwasley Db, Belper Db, Great Hucklow Db, Nether Padley Db, Fifehead Magdalen Do, Long Critchell Do, Narborough Lei, Owston Lei, Thurnby Lei, and Witherley Lei. Square Field occurs in seven counties, including Northumberland and Durham. In Barton-in-the-Beans Lei there is a field called Four Square.

Fanciful names are also found alluding to shape. In Norton Ch is a field shaped like a three-pointed star and known as the Isle of Man. The name is from its resemblance to the three legs of the island's badge. The same name occurs elsewhere in Cheshire, in Axminster D, Bletchingdon O, Bradford WRY, and Idle WRY; in some of these instances the name may refer to remoteness rather than to shape.

Cocked Hat (Ketton R, Farnfield Nt, Durnford W, and Almondbury WRY) alludes to triangular fields. The name is spelt Cockthat in Bradwell Db and appears as Cock Up Hat in Aston Brapmton O and Three Cocked Hat in Irthington Cu. Three Cornered Cap Field (Northolt Mx) is not strictly triangular, but rather resembles the shape of the flat cap worn by academics and prelates in the seventeenth century. It may not be immediately obvious that there is a connexion between the last name and Cheesecake (Kemble Gl, Coston Lei). This term seems to be confined to central England, the examples so far collected coming from

Oxfordshire (Cheesecake Butts, in Kingham, and Cheesecake Furlong, in Shipton-under-Wychwood), Rutland, and Warwickshire, in addition to the counties already mentioned. Various suggestions have been made about the name, including both botanical and complimentary allusions. But the use of the term "a cheesecake piece" (as a common noun) in Leicestershire deeds, indicates that it refers to a feature, such as shape, by which such a field could be identified. The possible allusion to shape seems to be confirmed by a reference in the Marprelate tracts to a bishop's cap as resembling a cheesecake—which connects this group of names with Three Cornered Cap Field already mentioned.⁹

In the north-west, certain names allude to the resemblance of triangular fields to the pieces of metal formerly used to heat smoothing irons. Heater (Dillicar We), Heater Croft (Marple Ch), and Heater Field (Barbon We and Beetham We) are examples. Shoulder of Mutton and Leg of Mutton are much more often encountered and are readily interpreted. Examples have been collected from all over the country. Shoulder of Mutton is the form most frequently found, and there are about 20 examples of this in Cheshire, closely followed by Leicestershire and Oxfordshire, with a dozen or so each. Breast of Veal (Henshull Ch) and Breast of Veal Field (Edleston Ch) are analogous names. The Heart (Wilcot W) and Heart (Selston Nt) also allude to shape in anatomical terms, and so do some of the names used of narrow, angled fields.

Elbow (Eggborow WRY and Sowerby WRY) is one of this group, to be placed alongside The Elbows (Ringwood Ha and Lyme Handley Ch), Elbow Greave (Beetham We), Crooked Elbow (Churchill O), Elbow Paddock (Wellow So), and a number of others from various counties including Gloucestershire, Leicestershire, Derbyshire, and Devon. A field with one or more projections might be described as having legs. Legged Field (Exton Ha) is a good example of a name embodying this idea, which is evidently an old one, to judge from Shankdale (Youlgreave Db) which was *Schonkedale* as long ago as 1352. Other names of this type include Leg and Foot (Hatherton Ch) and The Leg (Highcliffe Ha, Knebworth Hrt, Berrow So, Compton Bishop So, and Alvediston W).¹⁰

In Lancashire the name Stocking Foot occurs in Grimsargh, Ingol and Cottam, and Roseacre, indicating land with an angle not quite so abrupt as in fields bearing *elbow* names. It ought to be mentioned that other names containing *stocking* have no reference to shape, but to tree-stumps or stocks to be found on the land.

Yet another group of names applied to narrow fields with a sharp

⁹ Cf. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. *cheesecake*. *Cheesecake* names are discussed in the present writer's paper, *Compliment and Commemoration in English Field-Names* (published jointly by Dacorum College and The Names Council of Great Britain and Ireland, 1973).

¹⁰ But names in the plural form have a different sense. Legs (Bosley Ch, Spondon Db, Swannington Lei, Gorwell Paddock So) probably alludes to the framework of a corn- or hay-stack on the land. Cf. J. Field, *English Field Names* (Newton Abbot, 1972), 124.

angle is the type alluding to the letter *L*. In Bramshot Ha there is a field actually called The Letter L Field, to which may be added The L Close (Broughton Astley Lei) and L Nook (Pickworth R). In Ell Piece (Pease-more Brk) and Ell Pightle (Sandhurst Brk and Easton Sf) it has evidently been thought convenient to spell out the letter name, as also in a number of others, including The Ell (Tetton Ch), Ell Furlong (Osmaston Db), and Ell Ground (Buckhorn Weston Do, Henbury Gl, Old Sodbury Gl, and Melksham W). It is just possible that The Yell (Pauntley Gl) and similar names belong to this group. An alphabetic reference occurs also in Tea Close (Blaston St Giles Lei), T Acres (Elwick Hall Du), Tea Tining (Priston So), The Tee Bank (Martley Wo), Tee Close (Taddington Db) and The Roman T (Wrockwardine Sa). Also to be noted are Em Furlong (Stanton Db) and, possibly, Yem Croft (Press Sa) and The Yes Field (Swerford O).

Various terms are applied to long, narrow fields, among them *langet*, *slang*, and *slip* or *slipe*. The first of these has many variants: Langet occurs in that form in Dowdeswell Gl, and with a slight change, as Langett in Charlton Kings Gl, Hatherop Gl, Winstone Gl, Oaksey W, and Purton W. Langitt is found at Awre Gl, and Langot at Alsager Ch. Other forms include Langate (Chastleton O), Lancot (Shifford O), The Langhetts (Hope Mansell He), Langits (Rushbury Sa), Lankets (Chieveley Brk), and Languit (Feckenham Wo). *Slang* does not suffer quite so many modifications: (The) Slang occurs very frequently. It is often—if not usually—applied to a roadside strip of land, often left uncultivated, frequently the haunt of vagrants or the camping-place of gypsies. John McNeal Dodgson, in a brief but persuasive note, has discussed the etymology and semantics of *slang* and its congeners.¹¹ The forms seem to be: *slang*, *slanget*, *slank*, *slanket*, *sling*, *slinget*, *slinket*, with a rare form with affricative final consonant, *slenge*. The place-name evidence supports the *English Dialect Dictionary* in assigning this group of terms to central England. The Slang is to be found in Cheshire (e.g., Bredbury, Cholmondley, Horton, Malpas, Walgherton), Derbyshire (e.g., Alderwasley, Ashleyhay, Castleton, Foremark), Shropshire (e.g., Addlerley, Westbury, Yockleton), Leicestershire (e.g., Barwell, Market Bosworth, Great Stretton, Upton), and Warwickshire (e.g., Bentley, Polesworth). A single instance occurs in Rutland: Longslang, in Burley. The variant Slank occurs in Hungry Bentley Db. In Bredbury Ch both Slang and Sling occur. In Oxfordshire, *sling* names prevail. Oxford had a Sling Meadow in 1841, and there are half a dozen examples of (The) Sling elsewhere in the county, including one (in Souldern) dating from 1693. In Headington occurs the affricate variety, The Slenge or Slinge. A Northamptonshire name, Slench, in Great Addington, also belongs here; this is of further interest in having an early form—*Sleng* 1232.

¹¹ Dodgson, *op. cit.*, 123.

Names of the *sling* group occur in Warwickshire. The Sling is found in Packwood, Solihull, and Kingsbury (*Slynge* 1545). Gloucestershire instances are to be found at Kempley, Quinton, and Twyning. From Gloucestershire also come Slingate (Tibberton) and Slingett (Westbury on Severn). One instance of The Sling has been noted in Wiltshire: in Southwick. Sling Meadow occurs in Oxford, and also in Leigh Wo. Other Worcestershire examples of (The) Sling occur in Hanbury, Droitwich, Martin Hissingtree, Salwarpe, Stock and Bradley, and Upton Warren; there is a Long Sling Meadow in Inkberrow. The only instances noted of (The) Slinket are from Oxfordshire (North Newington, Thame, and Wardington).

The common features in the fields bearing all these names are smallness, narrowness, and, often, some degree of curvature. As Dodgson observes, "Many *slang* fields are in fact sinuous in shape, as they follow the line of road, stream or boundary against which they lie."¹²

Narrow, curving fields also receive more fanciful names, among them Swans Neck (Mobberley Ch, Rudheath Lordship Ch, Latton W), Swan Neck Field (Down Ampney Gl), Gooseneck Meadow (Solihull Wa), and Goose Neck Field (Marlston cum Lache X Ch). Snakes Tail (Henbury Gl) must be similarly interpreted, and so must Teakettle Handlepiece (Belper Db).

Narrowness is also the important feature of fields called The Slip, found in Bisham Brk, Newbury Brk, Comberbatch Ch, Market Overton R, Pyrton O, Duffield Db, Kingsterndale Db, Stanton by Bridge Db, Northolt Mx, and Twyning Gl. Slip Acre occurs in Liscard Ch, and Slips Field in Pitstone Bk. Side Slip (Bollin Fee Ch) is probably "narrow piece at the side," but Cislips (Hellidon Nth) is "broad, slippery place," on the basis of the form *Syslapes* 1402, which points to the elements *sīd*, "broad," and **slæp*, "muddy, slippery place."

The alternative spelling *slipe* also occurs. The Slipe is found at White Waltham Brk, Disley-Stanley Ch, Hemel Hempstead Hrt, Aldenham Hrt, Redbourn Hrt, Rickmansworth Hrt, Watford Hrt, Chinnor O, Cuxham with Easington O, and Great Haseley O; The Slipes occurs at Steeple Morden C. The semantic elucidation of these names is not so difficult as that of the *slang/sling* group. The latter names owe much to the idea of meandering or serpentine movements, as well as to the flexing or coiling of a catapult. The connexion between a slip of paper (the length of which greatly exceeds the width) and a slip of land is more obvious.

Land having the shape of a shovel, or so narrow as to be described as "shovel's breadth," accounts for a very large and varied group of names. One relatively small division may allude simply to the shape, i.e., a rectangle from which a straight tail protrudes. Among these names are The Shoule Land (Horspath O), The Shoules (Hook Norton O), Shouls

¹² *Ibid.*

(Wroxton O), (The) Shovel (Widecombe D, Wykin Lei), and Shovel Acre (Uckington G1 - *Souelakere* 1248). Shuflands Field, in Hursley Ha, probably also belongs to this group. Showell, in Staverton Nth, goes back to *Le Schouele*, recorded in 1320.

The larger group owe their origin to ME *shovel brade* "shovel breadth," usually interpreted as a hyperbolic expression of narrowness. It does not seem entirely out of the question that the reference is really to land on which the shovel was used, though there is plenty of evidence that many examples of the name certainly applied to narrow pieces of land. Whatever the semantic ramifications, however, the infinite variety of the forms of the name bestows its own interest. An enumeration follows, without further comment except to say that remarks on Garbutts above may well be relevant to at least one of these forms.

Shelboard, Osbaston Db; Shell Broad, Chapel en le Frith Db (Shoe Broad 1633); Shew Bread, Bramhall Ch, Wentnor Sa; Shewbut, Chinley Db. Shoe Broad, Sale Ch, Ashford Db, Buxton Db, Green Fairfield Db (*Should Broad* 1682); *Sholebread*, Welford G1 to .Ed.6. School Broad, Bonsall Db (with which in particular a Scottish example may be adduced for comparison: *Schuilbraidis*, Eymouth, Berwickshire 1599). *Shulebrede*, Great Tew O c.1240. *Shouldbreads*, Kings Norton Lei 1638; Shoulder Broad, Bamford Db; *Shoulderbroade*, Gumley Lei 1674; *Schouelebradlondes*, Newton near Chester Ch t.Ed.1. Still Bread, Beetham We. *Shouelbroade*, Milcombe O c.1235; Shovel Broad, Bamford Db; Shovel Broad Furlong, Southwell Nt (*Shovelbordes* 17c); Shovel Broads, Treswell Nt, Gomersal WRY.

Round fields are frequently so named. Examples include Round Field (Kintbury Brk, Lymm Ch, Snadbach Ch, Kings Langley Hrt, Sheepy Magna Lei, Adderley Sa, Berkwell Wa (*Roundruding* 1316, "round clearing"); Round Close (Welford Brk, Barton C, Ilsington D, Callow Db, Osmaston Db, Shirley Db, Therfield Hrt, Great Stretton Lei, Northolt Mx, Hook Norton O); and Round Meadow (East Allington D, Holbrook Db, Hulland Db, Idridgehay Db, Radbourne Db, Sandon Hrt, Catthorpe Lei). The form Round(e)y is found in a number of Devon field-names; the second syllable is all that is left of OE *gehaeg*, "enclosure." There are one or two examples from other counties, but it is to Devon that we must look for the choicest instance: Roundy Pounding, in Belstone. This name possibly started life as Roundy Pound, "fold beside Roundy," but the temptation to rhyme evidently proved too strong. Rather more fanciful is Pancake, used of a round, flat field in Out Rawcliffe La, with which may be grouped Frying Pan (Hilperton W), Frying Pan Start (Calverley WRY), and Frying Pan Bottom (Highclere Ha), the shape reference of which is also obvious.

Ring names allude either to the shape of the field or to circles of standing stones within. Among these are Ring (Out Rawcliffe La), Ring

Field (Audlem Ch, Carleton La), and Ring Meadow (Elkstone Gl). But Ringlands (Warter WRY), as can be seen from the 12c form *Wrangland* means "twisted strips," and Ringland (Whissendine R) may be similarly interpreted. The Old Norse word *kringla*, "circle," is the origin of a group of names. Among these are Cringle Carr (Cleveley La, Thornton La), Cringleholme (Church Brampton Nth), and Cringles (Lupton We).

Semicircular fields are sometimes called (The) Half Moon, examples of which are to be found in Binfield Brk, Bowdon Ch, Eccleston Ch, Painswick Gl, and Henley O. Only one instance of D Close has been recorded: in Tickencote R.

The easily recognised outlines of musical instruments proved useful in naming fields whose shapes might not otherwise be conveniently described. Jews Trump, in Kilburn Db, refers to a field shaped like a Jew's harp. Fields called (The) Harp are fairly numerous; there are examples in Thaxted Ess, Radwinter Ess, Bittom Gl, Hawkesbury Gl, Newent Gl, Westbury on Severn Gl (*La Harpe* 1255), Weston Hrt, Westbury Sa, and Corsham W. Elsewhere are to be found Harp Field (Eddlesborough Bk), Harp Piece (Bishop's Cleeve Gl, Uckington Gl, Acton Burnell Sa), Harps Croft (Horley Sr), and Harpscord Field (Bletchingley Sr). Names embodying *fiddle* cannot be interpreted with certainty as shape names, as some of them possibly allude to a plant, the fiddle dock (*Rumex pulcher*). Fiddle Clump (Bostock Ch) probably alludes to the shape; there are also Fiddle Piece (Kiddington O), and The Fiddle (Castleton Db, Withington Gl). Fiddle Case seems to be restricted to the north-western counties, with examples in Lancashire (Claughton, Cleveley, Goosnargh, Nateby, and Preesall), and Westmorland (Kendal and Whinfall).

The shape of tools and farming implements also provided a source of field-names. Chopping Knife occurs in Beighton Db and Aislaby Du. The Hook(s) is found in numerous places, often referring to curved meadow land adjoining a winding stream; there are examples in Sudbury Db, Tunstall ERY, Great Parndon Ess, Writtle Ess, Northaw Hrt, Burrough on the Hill Lei, Gaddesby Lei, Berrick Salome O, and Frensham Sr (*Hokerede* 1399, "hook clearing"). Hook Horn, in Hallow Wo, expresses its curvature twice over, since *horn* names also allude to shape (e.g., *The Horne Close*, Blaston Lei 1701, *Hornforlong*, Wendlebury O 1270, and Horne Field, Waltham Holy Cross Ess).

Names like Crook Croft (Childer Thronton Ch) also designate curving riverside fields. The primary sense appears to be the recurved shape of a pot-hook or a shepherd's staff. Published examples suggest a north-western provenance of these names; exceptions include Crooks, in Thorpe Thewles Du, and Crook Furlong, in Alton Ha. A large crop was reaped by the late F.T. Wainwright in Lancashire,¹³ including Crook

¹³ F.T. Wainwright, "Field-names of Amounderness Hundred" (*Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, Vol. 97 [1945], 207).

(Clifton with Salwick, Catterall, Out Rawcliffe), Crook Lands (Freckleton, Great Eccleston, Little Singleton, Newton with Scales), and Long Crook (Layton with Warbreck). Other examples come from Cheshire (e.g., Crook Croft, above, and Crook Field, Bollington) and Westmorland (e.g., Crooklands, Beetham).

Fields of irregular shape receive a variety of names. They may, for instance, be described as *crooked* e.g., Crooked Pature (Idle WRY), Crooked Field (Houghton le Spring Du, Laverstoke Ha, Lamberhurst K), Crooked Croft (Aston Db, Egerton Ch, Shelford Ess, Kensworth Hrt), and Crooked Close (Cookham Brk, Sherfield English Ha). Crooked Elbow (Churchill O) is reinforced by the anatomical allusion.

Names derived ultimately from ON *vrangr*, “crooked, twisted;” are an interesting group. Wainwright identified a local term, *Ranget*, for a field “small in size and irregular in shape.”¹⁴ Examples include: Ranget, in eight places in Amounderness Hundred; Rangit (Goosnargh); Rangate (Bilsborrow); Renget (Wharles); Rangert (Greenhalgh); Wranghart (Inship); and Wrangot(ts) (Hardhorn with Newton, Thornton, Carleton). In the same area are found Wrongway Field and Wrongway Meadow (Wesham), Wrang Hey (Hambleton), and Wronghorn (Hardhorn with Newton). In other counties there are Ranglands (Cossington Lie), Wrang (Ripley Db), Wranglands Close (Rampton Nt), The Wranglings (Enderby Lei), The Wrong (Therfield Hrt), and The Wrongs (Alphamstone Ess, East Dereham Nf, and Forncett St Peter Nf).

Wry Flatt (Normanton WRY), Wry Furlong (Aldsworth Gl), and Wry Neck (Hope Woodlands Db, Wykin Lei) also indicate irregular, twisted pieces of land, but Wry Furlong (Norton Hrt) seems to be named from its value as cereal-growing land, as it was *Rye Furlong* in 1637.

Woe Furlong (Fairford Gl, Weedon Lois Nth, Malden Sr) has all the appearance of a derogatory name, and this interpretation seems all the more plausible when applied to its variant Woeful Long (Newbold and Dunston Db). But the names are derived from OE *wōh*, “twisted, crooked,” an element found also in Woo Meadow (Cheswardine Sa), *Woo Furlong* (Deal K 1616), and Further and Hither Woo Croft (Binfield Brk).

The names discussed in the preceding pages are undoubtedly plentiful and varied, but they are only a small sample of the rich melange of names that enriches the intricate map of English fields. Many questions remain, such as the way by which shape was determined in the absence of plans or aerial photographs, and of course part of the answer to this is that those close to the land had—and have—a special sensitivity to the line of boundaries and the texture of soil. The town dweller must needs salute his rural counterparts and forebears who have made it possible to savour something of the reality of natural living, encapsulated in the

¹⁴ Ibid, 210-211.

picturesque and diverse nomenclature of green meadows and furrowed fields.

Dacorum College, Hemel Hempstead

ANS ANNUAL MEETING

Those desiring to present papers at the annual meeting of the American Name Society, to be held in San Francisco, California, December, 1975, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association, should send a one-page abstract to

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