

From the *Transactions* of the
Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society

Additional Notes on old Gloucestershire Maps

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1930, Vol. 52, 113-115

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ADDITIONAL NOTES ON
OLD GLOUCESTERSHIRE MAPS

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TO trace and, if possible, explain the mistakes and other peculiarities of the old county maps is to add to their interest and usefulness, and the following further instances are recorded with this object.¹

Another example of the creation of a place by a cartographer occurs in the case of Polebury Abbots. Morden desired, apparently, to indicate on his map some feature connected with Pen Pole or Penpole Point, and also to expand the name which had appeared in the older maps as Lye, across the Avon in Somerset, into its full form Abbots Leigh, but, the scale being comparatively small, he mixed the words up. He placed the dot for his combined name centrally between the two places, *i.e.*, about Seamills, and called the place Polebury Abbots. Abbots Leigh, still shorn of its prefix, appears simply as Ligh in his map. Bowen accepted this new creation without change, but these two are the only important maps in which the fictitious Polebury Abbots appears.

Bowen gives the name Stower R. to the upper portion of the river Frome; this is not a misplacement of the river Stour, but arises from the intention to show Stover, a group of houses, farm and bridge on the Frome, in Yate parish, nearly two miles from where the name is actually marked. Another mistake of position in this map is the placing of Stoak Bishop (Stoke Bishop) at Little Stoke, 5 miles too far to the northeast.

¹ For previous notes see *Trans. B.G.A.S.*, LI, 79.

All the maps, except Taylor's, treat St. Tecla's Chapel, at the mouth of the Wye, as if the name were Treacle, either with or without the saintly prefix; it would be interesting to know if this reflects local custom or if it is merely a case of ovine repetition of an initial slip by Saxton.

The only likely explanation of Morden's rendering of Seiscitati for Sezincote is that, as he was the first cartographer to notice this place, he was at the mercy of some illiterate correspondent for its name. We know that his names were obtained in writing.

Mention has already been made of two fruitful sources of error in Taylor's place-names, namely (1) the oral collection of names giving rise to phonetic mistakes, and (2) bad handwriting leading to misinterpretation by the engraver; it is quite possible by re-writing the latter names to see how the inaccuracies arose. The following is a further selection of such instances, but the list is far from exhaustive, only the less obvious ones being given. Under the former category come Bowets Green *for* Boughspring in the parish of Tidenham; Cheshire Lane *for* Chase Lane in Kingswood; Each House *for* The Achers in Rodborough; Haycom (Moor) *for* Eycot (Wood) in Rendcomb; Howbone (Green) *for* Alban (Place) in Quedgeley; Oileyford *for* Ayleford in Awre; Pathway Bridge *for* Halfway Bridge in Churcham; Walkers *for* Workhouse in Wickwar; Woundens *for* Homedowns in Ashchurch. In the latter class come Buck Tree (shown as a house) *for* Bushstreet (Farm) in North Nibley; Frodmore *for* Toadsmoor in Chalford; Winless Leap *for* Wintour's Leap in Tidenham; Bowthorn Down *for* Bowthorp Down in Eastleach Martin; Pendron Farm *for* Pindrup Farm in Coln Rogers; Puckeron *for* Puckrup in Twyning. The last three instances show how effectually the origin of a place-name may be obscured by such trifling carelessness as making the tail of the letter 'p' too short.

Ranags, *for* Rapsgate in Colesborne, appears to be the result of a combination of errors; Cha Down, apparently intended for Pen Hill 1 mile southwest of Salperton, does not seem to admit of explanation; while Hurebroke, shown between Cherington and Rodmarton, looks like either an interesting survival or a complicated mistake. Can it by any possibility refer to Hocberry, which is not far off?

One mistake is apparently due to the physical application of scissors, and throws some light on Taylor's methods. In order to reduce the preliminary sketch maps to manageable proportions, he seems to have cut them up into convenient sections, approximately along the boundaries of the hundreds. In so separating the hundreds of Cheltenham and Bradley, he cut through the name Dowdeswell Mill, and the engraver, spacing the dissected portions of the name a mile or so apart, and touching them up to suit his own ideas, evolved Day in one hundred and Jeswell Mill in the other.

Little has been said of mistakes in survey in the county maps, but this is not because they do not exist. A critic writing recently of Speed's maps said 'He never hesitates to transfer a town or village to another county when it looks better there'.² This euphemism may be paralleled by saying of Taylor that, as some of his streams appear able to run in either direction, he does not find it necessary to provide them with an outlet. It is worth noting, however, that the old county maps of Gloucestershire are not, from all accounts, any more inaccurate than those of other counties produced by the same cartographers.

² *The Times*, 17 Dec. 1929.