Iffley and Rose Hill - place names and field names

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Iffley and Rose Hill – introduction and origins

Old place names and field names give fascinating glimpses into the past life and landscape of this area of East Oxford – stretching back from the 19th century to Anglo-Saxon times, and even into prehistory.

The origins of the name **Rose Hill** are both recent and well recorded. This was the name of a 19th century house built on the road now called Rose Hill. Rose Hill was used first as a name for the houses and area around the original Rose Hill house, and then for the road and the council estate.[1]

The origins of the name **Iffley** are more of a puzzle. The 'ley' of Iffley is the Old English *leah*. This is a word that in early Anglo Saxon times meant 'wood'. There has been some disagreement among place name scholars about the later meanings of *leah*. A current view is that *leah* came to be applied to woodland used for pasturing pigs and other livestock. In Anglo-Saxon times herds of pigs were commonly kept in woods; they would graze on bushes and the lower branches of the trees, and in the autumn they would eat acorns and beech mast.[2]

The name Iffley is first recorded in 1004; in the earliest records the spellings suggest that the 'Iff' of Iffley was originally something like 'Yifete' or 'Gifete'. However, there are no recorded Old English words or names like this. Place name scholars have found a word in old German - *gibitz* - and speculated that there might have been a similar, related, Old English word. *Gibitz* means plover or lapwing.[3]

The trouble with this is that lapwings are not associated with the sort of wooded landscapes that might be expected from the *leah* element of the name. One argument might be that Iffley is one of the rare, untypical *leah* place names where *leah* was applied to river meadow landscapes – such as are still found in the lower parts of Iffley today and are likely habitats for lapwings and plovers. It would be easier to accept this argument if the *gifete* element of the name had been recorded elsewhere. Or it is possible that Iffley was a typical *leah*, largely covered with woodland, and the 'Iff' part of the name derives from some unknown name or word.

The township of Iffley (all borders are approximate):
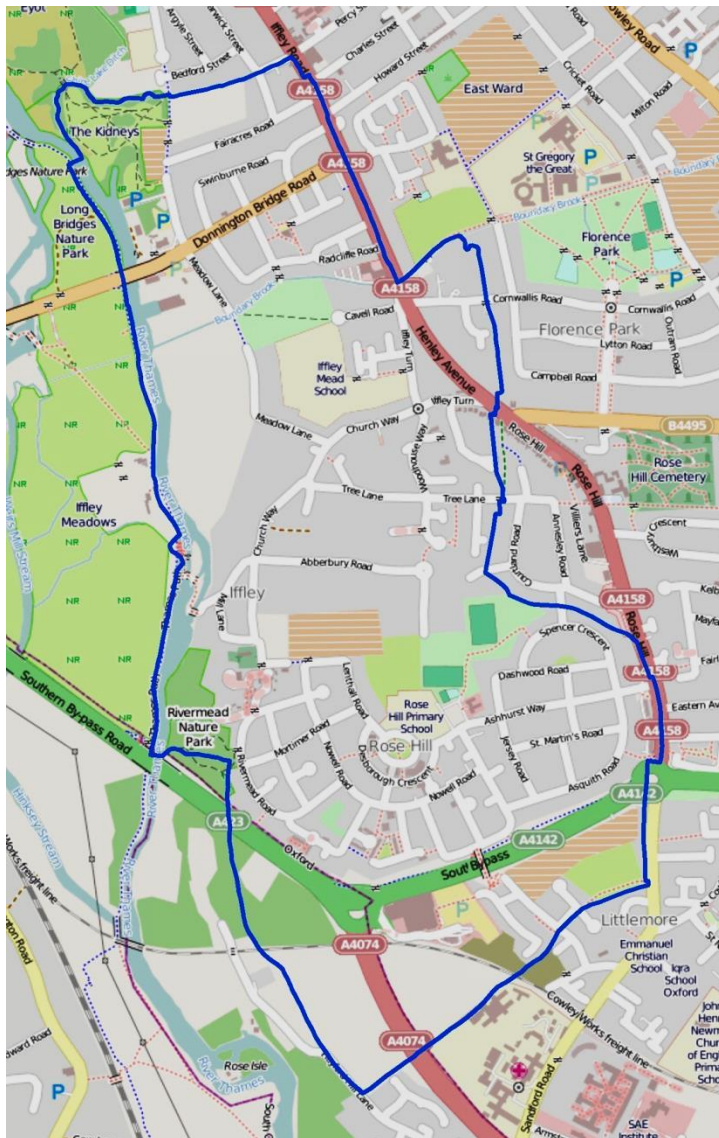
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The area that I have researched is the township of Iffley as it appears in the 1830 Inclosure Award. The borders of this area go as far north as around Daubeny Road, and to the south include Rose Hill and parts of Littlemore beyond the by-pass. The western border of the township of Iffley is mostly the Thames and the eastern border goes along the Iffley Road for the northern part and along the Oxford Road in the southern part. This area is smaller than the old parish of Iffley which included large parts of Cowley and Littlemore (it is also much larger than the current Iffley village).[4]

1. Edward Marshall, *An account of the township of Iffley in the deanery of Cuddesdon, Oxfordshire : from the earliest notice* (Oxford: James Parker, 1874), 10; Ann Spokes Symonds, *The changing faces of Rose Hill,* (Witney: Robert Boyd, 2000), 6-8.
2. Christer Johansson, *Old English place-names and field-names containing leah,* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1975); Della Hooke "The woodland

landscape of early medieval England" in *Place-names, language and the Anglo-Saxon landscape,* ed. Nicholas J. Higham and Martin J. Ryan (Woodbridge: Boydell Press), 143-174.

3. Margaret Gelling, *The place-names of Oxfordshire: Pt.1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 32-33; P. R. Kitson, "Old English bird-names (II)" *English Studies*, 79 (1998) 2.

4. Iffley Inclosure Award, 1830, OSD/A Vol. E, 212-259, Oxfordshire History Centre.

The woods of Iffley

The very name of Iffley commemorates its origin as a woodland place used for pasturing pigs. The field names of Iffley indicate where the some of the woods once were and why they had been important to the people of Iffley.

Barrow Hill was an area somewhere around Rose Hill. Here the 'barrow' may come from *bearu*, an Old English word for a small wood. By the 18th century Barrow Hill had been cleared and was just another section of the open fields.[1]
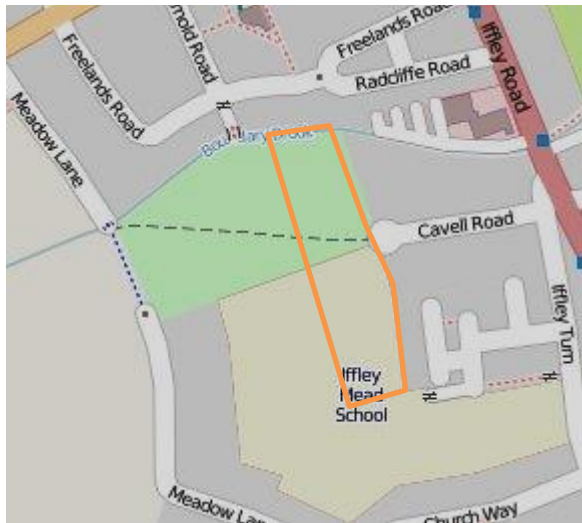
Bear Wood

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The area around Donnington Recreation Ground was once **Bear Wood**. This may sound like the remnant of a primeval forest with wild animals but in fact was a *bær,* a wood used for pasturing pigs and other livestock. In Anglo-Saxon times herds of pigs were commonly kept in woods. The pigs would graze on bushes and the lower branches of the trees, and in the autumn they would eat acorns and beech mast. A *bær* wood was often an outlying area of an estate – so the name Bear Wood might hint at a time when this part of Iffley was a peripheral portion within a much larger estate.[2]

The 'bears' in **Bears Hedge Furlong** come from a different woodland word. The Middle English word *berse* meant 'an enclosed or fenced-in part of a forest'. Bears Hedge Furlong was a field on both sides of the Iffley/Cowley border, roughly around the southern part of Courtland Road in Rose Hill. The

Iffley Enclosure Award boundary divided the core of Iffley from other parts of the parish. To the east of the boundary, the lands of Iffley and Cowley parishes are intermingled in the fields – it is often not possible to say that the whole of a furlong belonged to one parish or the other. Bears Hedge Furlong perhaps marks an older boundary, between an area of fenced-in woodland and arable fields beyond.[3]

There was one area of Rose Hill which remained wooded for over 1000 years – the **Grove**. This existed before the Norman Conquest and was mentioned in the Domesday Book, and later in a 13th century deed. In the 19th and 20th centuries the Grove was a small border of coppiced woods around fields called Grove Close and Upper Grove Close (in the area of Rose Hill just north of the Heyford Hill roundabout). In medieval times the Grove was probably much larger, extending over those fields and beyond.[4]

Iffley in Domesday Book from Open Domesday by Professor John Palmer and George Slater CC-BY-SA licence

In Anglo-Saxon and medieval times a 'grove' was an intensively managed wood, maintained for wood and timber and not used for pasture. Groves were enclosed with ditches or fences, like the *berse* of Bears Hedge. These sorts of woodland areas were usually privately owned rather than shared between the tenants of a manor.[5]

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Approximate location of New Close, Upper Grove Close, Grove Close and Grove Coppice.

A number of field names reveal the process of clearing Iffley's woodland. **New Close** and the **Breach** were named when parts of the Grove were cleared and made into new fields (breach is a medieval word used when woodland was turned into arable). Two medieval field names are similar: **Rodehende** was the field at the end of the clearing (*rod* in Old English) and **Runforlonge** was the field with the felled tree (*hruna* in Old English).[6]

1. Barrow Hill occurs in Donnington Hospital, Manor of Iffley court rolls, 1706, DH I/4, Oxfordshire History Centre; *bearu* – see Margaret Gelling and Ann Cole, *The landscape of place-names* (Stamford: Shaun Tyas, c2000), 223.
2. Iffley Inclosure Award, 1830, OSD/A Vol. E, 212-259, Oxfordshire History Centre; *bær* see Gelling and Cole, *The landscape of place-names*, 266.
3. *Berse* see David N. Parsons, ed., *The Vocabulary of English place-names: Brace–Cæster* (Nottingham: Centre for English Name Studies, 2000), 91; Iffley Inclosure Award; H. Simmons, "Cowley" in *The Landscape of Oxford's green belt* (Oxford: University of Oxford, Department for External Studies, c1981), 28-29.
4. "The Domesday survey: The text," in *A history of the County of Oxford: Volume 1*, ed. L. F. Salzman (London: Oxford University Press for the University of London Institute of Historical Research,1939), 410; Agnes M. Leys, ed., *The Sandford cartulary*, (Oxford: Oxfordshire Record Society, 1938), 62 (assuming *granam* to be a mistranscription for *gravam*); Iffley Inclosure Award.
5. Della Hooke "The woodland landscape of early medieval England" in *Place-names, language and the Anglo-Saxon landscape*, ed. Nicholas J. Higham and Martin J. Ryan (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), 143-174; Gelling and Cole, *The landscape of place-names*, 226-7.
6. New Close in Iffley Inclosure Award; the Breach in Manor of Iffley court rolls, 1706; 'breach' see John Field, *A history of English field-names*, (London: Longman 1993), 80; Rodehende and Runforlonge in Iffley deed, late 13th c., D/IFF/1, Lincoln College Archives; *rod* and *hruna* see "Key to English place-names," HALOGEN, accessed March 22, 2014, http://halogen.le.ac.uk/query/kepn.

Rivers, springs and marshes in Iffley names

The Thames gave Iffley its extensive meadows along the banks of the river but did not inspire any field names.

Instead the people of Iffley oriented themselves in relation to the Boundary Brook – looking from the village they called the arable field north of the brook **Above Brook Field** (this occupied an area from the brook up to the northern edge of the garden of Fairacres Convent, next to Meadow Lane).[1] This 19th century field name relates to the 13th century **Brokfurlang** (brook furlong).[2]

Boundary Brook is a later name for the stream that runs from Headington down to the Thames.

Originally there would have been more streams coming from the brook through Iffley Meadow and there are records of three medieval stream names here. One was called **Halibroc** (the holy brook); holy springs called Holywell are common but a holy brook is rarer. The other two streams were **Netherbroc** (the lower brook) and **Odbroc** (probably, the third brook, the odd one of three).[3]

Other parishes in East Oxford had extensive areas of marshy ground, commemorated in their field names. Iffley just had the **Upper and Lower Marsh**, where Henley Avenue begins now.[4] The medieval names for these fields were **Michelmersh** and **Littlemersh** (big and little marsh).[5]

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The current name of the Hawkwell House Hotel preserves an ancient field name relating to water. However, the modern form of this name conceals its original meaning – **Hawkwell** has nothing to do with hawks or wells. In fact, *well* in Old English had the meaning 'spring', and 'Hawk' probably comes from an Ango-Saxon name *Hocc*.[6] So the name gives a tiny glimpse of Anglo-Saxon life in Iffley: a man called Hocc and the springs that rose in his land.

There are still springs and wells around this area of Iffley. Springs were important resources and, like this one, were often known by a person's name.[7]

The name Hocc is only known from place names; the same name may occur in another local name, Hockmore, in Cowley.[8]

The earliest record of this field name comes from 1278-9, when it is spelled 'Hockeswell'.
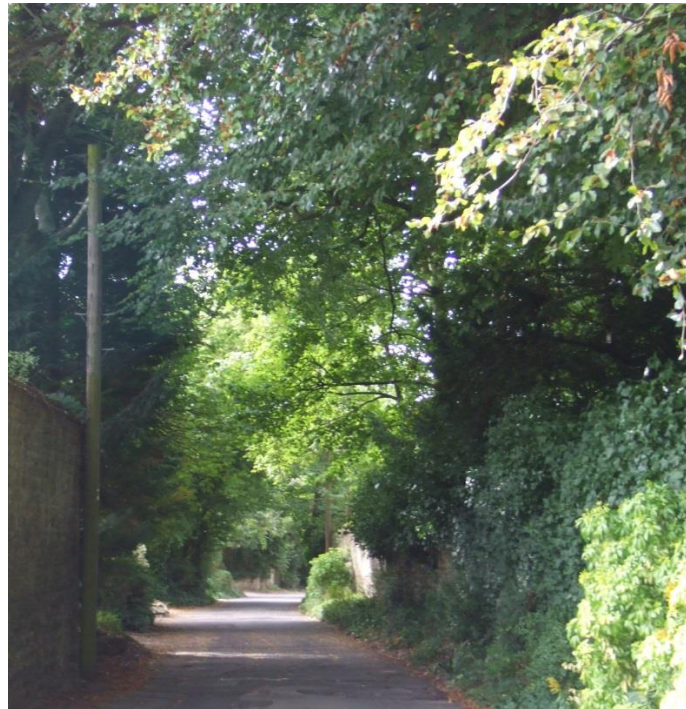

Tree Lane, the southern border of Hawkwell

It is this earlier spelling that suggests its origin as 'Hocc's well'.[9] On the Christ Church map of 1777, the fields in the neighbouring part of Cowley are called Short Hockwell and Hockwell Furlong.[10] By the time of the 19th century

enclosure records, Hawkwell had been divided up and quite a few of the plots had buildings on them.

The boundaries of the old Hawkwell field formed a triangular area between Tree Lane and Church Way.[11]
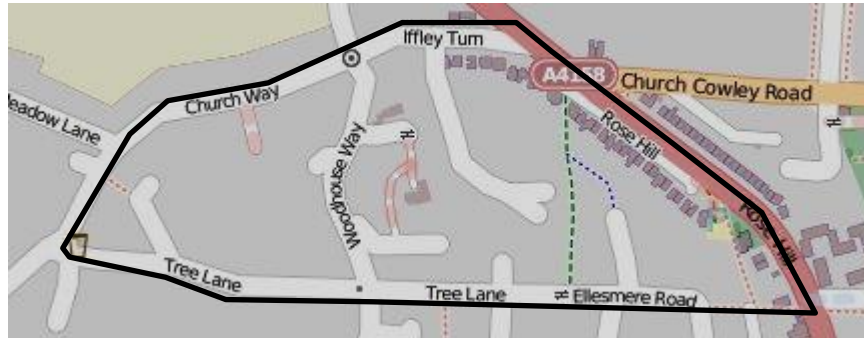
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1. Iffley Inclosure Award, 1830, OSD/A Vol. E, 212-259, Oxfordshire History Centre.
2. Magdalen College calendar of deeds, Iffley 2, c1220-30 and related deeds, Magdalen College Archives.
3. "Parishes: Iffley," in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 5: Bullingdon hundred,* ed. Mary D. Lobel (London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of Historical Research,1957),190.
   For Middle English *odde* see Barrie Cox *The place-names of Leicestershire*: *pt. 2. Framland Hundred (*Nottingham: English Place-Name Society, 2001, 359
4. Donnington Hospital, Manor of Iffley court rolls, 1746, DH I/60, Oxfordshire History Centre; Iffley Inclosure Award.
5. "Parishes: Iffley," 190.
6. Margaret Gelling, *The place-names of Oxfordshire: Pt.1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 33.
7. Margaret Gelling and Ann Cole, *The landscape of place-names* (Stamford: Shaun Tyas, c2000), 31-35.
8. Boel Jepson, *English place-name elements relating to boundaries* (Lund: Centre for Languages and Literature, Lund University, 2011), 88.
9. Gelling, *The place-names of Oxfordshire,* 33.
10. H. Simmons, "Cowley" in *The Landscape of Oxford's green belt* (Oxford: University of Oxford, Department for External Studies, c1981), 28-29.
11. Iffley Inclosure Award.

Meadows and islands

Iffley's large riverside meadow still exists, preserved by the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust. In earlier times the meadow was an important agricultural resource and it was just known as **Iffley Meadow**, or something similar: in Latin, *pratum de Hiftele* in a deed of c1210 and 'Yeftley mead' in 1706.[1]

Little Kidney (on the west) and Great Kidney (to the east)

Some of Iffley's other meadow land had much more distinctive names. The **Kidneys** were Iffley's islands, on either side of the Thames, surrounded more or less by streams and ditches or drains, and the 'ey' part of their name derives from *eg*, Old English 'island.' Their name is recorded in the 14th century as Keteneys, from the Old English word for kite, *cyta*. So, as we now see red kites flying over East Oxford, there were kites hovering over these islands in Anglo-Saxon or medieval times.[2]

The southern tip of Great Kidney

The island on the east of the river was known as Great Kidney, and usually the island on the west of the river was known as Little or Lesser Kidney. But

in a 19th century lease, Little Kidney is given an alternative name, **Aldermanbury**, which links this little meadow to an ancient border dispute.[3]

Little Kidney is the northern tip of Berry Mead, a larger island formed by the Thames to the east and Weirs Mill Stream/Hinksey Stream to the west. The Thames here used to form the boundary between Oxfordshire and Berkshire but as the river and its side streams changed over time it may have been difficult to decide which was the main course of the river. The original name of Berry Mead was Berege ('barley island').[4]

There is a story about a 10th century dispute between Abingdon Abbey and the men of Oxfordshire about which of them owned Berry Mead. To settle the dispute, a shield was floated in the river upstream, bearing a sheaf (presumably signifying Oxfordshire) and a taper (presumably signifying Abingdon) – whichever stream the shield followed, would be judged to be the county border. The shield floated along the stream to the east of Berry Mead, indicating that the island did belong to Berkshire and Abingdon Abbey.[5]

However, one part of Berry Mead, Liittle Kidney/Aldermanbury was retained by Oxfordshire, and Peter Finn suggests this was perhaps due in some way to the intervention of the ealdorman – the top official in the shire. Hence the little island was called *Ealdormann-bere-ēg,* the 'ealdorman's barley island.'[6]

1. Agnes M. Leys, ed., *The Sandford cartulary* (Oxford: Oxfordshire Record Society, 1938), 52; Donnington Hospital, Manor of Iffley court rolls, 1706, DH I/4, Oxfordshire History Centre.
2. "Parishes: Iffley," in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 5: Bullingdon hundred*, ed. Mary D. Lobel (London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of Historical Research,1957),190; P.R. Kitson, "Old English bird-names (ii)," *English Studies* 79, (1998): 9-10.
3. Cecilia Millson, *The history of Donnington Hospital : a family charity* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 1985), 56;
4. Thanks to Peter Finn for the sources about Berry Mead and the suggestion for how the name Aldermanbury might have arisen; Berege, the 'barley island' suggests that Berry Mead was used as arable land, for growing barley, before the 10th century, rather than as a meadow - see Margaret Gelling, *The place-names of Berkshire: Pt.1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1973), 454.
5. Joseph Stevenson, ed., *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon Vol. 1* (London: Longman, 1858), 88-90
6. Peter Finn, *East Oxford's 'landscape of governance' and local place-names*, unpublished paper, 2013.

Up hill and down dale

The landscape of Iffley was dominated by the steep, rounded hill we now call **Rose Hill**. This is a nineteenth century name and I have not found clear references to the older name for the hill. When referring to the hill as part of agricultural and manorial life, locals called it **Upper Field**, the largest of their open fields.[1]

One of the names of the furlongs in Upper Field was **Barrow Hill**. This may have been a name for part of the hill, or it may have been the older name for the hill itself. 'Barrow' may derive from a number of Old English words. *Bearu* referred to a small wood – this derivation would fit in with Iffley's past as a woodland resource. By the 18th century Barrow Hill had been cleared and was just another section of the open fields.[2]

Beorg could mean either a barrow, a prehistoric earthwork, or it could also mean a natural hill. *Beorg* was specifically applied to hills 'with a continuously round profile.' The whole hill may have been referred to as the *beorg* – and as the hill meaning of this word went out of use, the more usual word 'hill' was added to the name.[3]

The open fields and common lands in Iffley were often defined as Upper and Lower, Above and Below. Sometimes this reflected the highs and lows of the local geography – **Upper Field** for Rose Hill, **Lower Field** for the field in the lower, northern part of the parish. Similarly, **Lower Marsh** is further down the hill than **Upper Marsh**. But some names reflect a mental geography, centred on the village - so **Above Brook Field** is not geographically high – just furthest away from the village, beyond Boundary Brook.[4]

Braydon Close was a field on the northern end of the parish, between the Iffley Road, Daubeny Road and Fairacres Convent. There are signs of an early Saxon settlement here – and it is possible that Braydon may be the name of this settlement. Braydon may be Old English *brad dun,* the 'broad hill'; *dun* was used in forming names of settlements in the earlier part of the Anglo-Saxon period. You can see the hill from Meadow Lane if you look up Bedford Street or Fairacres Road.[5]

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The settlement here is early enough to guess that there may have been continuity on the site from pre-Saxon to early Saxon times. An alternative interpretation of the name Braydon would also express that continuity. There are similar place names (Bredon, Breedon, Braydon), which seem to combine

the British Celtic word for hill, *briga*, with *dun*, the Old English, Anglo-Saxon word for a hill.[6]

There are other names which relate to more localised hills and slopes. Around 1300 **Dounheye** or **Duneyehame** was the name of a house and garden in Iffley village, perhaps on the site of the Lincoln Manor House. 'Doun' also came from *dun*, a hill, 'heye' from *hæg*, hedge or enclosure, and 'hame' from *ham*, meaning estate, manor or homestead – suitable names for a property on land sloping up the hill from the river.[7]

1. Edward Marshall, *An account of the township of Iffley in the deanery of Cuddesdon, Oxfordshire : from the earliest notice* (Oxford: James Parker, 1874), 10; Iffley Inclosure Award, 1830, OSD/A Vol. E, 212-259, Oxfordshire History Centre.
2. Donnington Hospital, Manor of Iffley court rolls, 1706, DH I/4, Oxfordshire History Centre; *bearu* - see Margaret Gelling and Ann Cole, *The landscape of place-names* (Stamford: Shaun Tyas, c2000), 223.
3. *Beorg* see Gelling and Cole, *The landscape of place-names*, 145-151.
4. Iffley Inclosure Award.
5. Braydon Close is not recorded until 1613, which makes my suggestion about the age of the name more problematic: Iffley terrier, 1613,148/40, Magdalen College Archives; "Archeox winter newsletter" Archaeology of East Oxford, accessed March 28, 2014, https://www.archeox.net/news/2014/archeox-winter-newsletter-march-2014; *dun* see Gelling and Cole, *The landscape of place-names*, 164-173.
6. *Briga* see Gelling and Cole, *The landscape of place-names*, 152.
7. Duneyehame and Dounheye appear in Lincoln College deeds: Iffley deed, 1284/5, D/IFF/3, and Iffley deed, 1284/5, D/IFF/6, Lincoln College Archives. Lincoln ended up owning other property in Iffley as well, particularly Iffley Mill, but the name Dounheye suits the Manor House site better. *Hæg* and *ham*, see Margaret Gelling, *The place-names of Oxfordshire: Pt. 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 441-450.

Down to earth

There are a handful of Iffley field names which show how people looked at the land in terms of the type and quality of the soil.

Witelong is recorded in the 13th century, east of the Grove (on the south or east parts of Rose Hill). The name describes the appearance of the field: 'wite' is a medieval spelling of 'white' and 'long' is Middle English *lang*, a long strip of land.[1]

But this name not only tells us about a medieval field but takes us back beyond prehistory, to geological timeframes. This part of Rose Hill is on Kimmeridge Clay, which sometimes contains deposits of fossils, and a concentration of fossils could have given a field a whitish colour. This may have been yet another field created by clearing part of the woodland of Iffley – the colour of the soil could have been more obvious when the land was first being ploughed.

Further south was an area of different soil. **Sandy furlong,** recorded from the 18th century, was around Thomson Terrace, in what is now Littlemore.[2]

Somewhere in Iffley, on Rose Hill, or in Iffley Fields, some gardens may still be benefitting from the good soil of the lost medieval field of **Rychifurlong**, the 'rich' furlong.[3]

1. Witelong in Agnes M. Leys, ed., *The Sandford cartulary* (Oxford: Oxfordshire Record Society, 1938), 62; this is probably the same field as the white land, *alba terra,* in Iffley deed, late 13th c., D/IFF/1, Lincoln College Archives; 'wite' as a spelling of white, Kelly Kilpatrick, personal communication, March 3, 2014; *lang,* see "Key to English place-names," HALOGEN, accessed March 22, 2014, http://halogen.le.ac.uk/query/kepn.
2. Donnington Hospital, Manor of Iffley court rolls, 1721, DH I/4, Oxfordshire History Centre; Iffley Inclosure Award, 1830, OSD/A Vol. E, 212-259, Oxfordshire History Centre.
3. Margaret Gelling, *The place-names of Oxfordshire: Pt.1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 33.

Iffley livestock field names

The modern streets around the Iffley Road and in Iffley and Rose Hill were once fields where animals grazed and this is reflected in some of the 19th century field names recorded in the 1830 Iffley enclosure records.[1]

Just one of these field names is found in earlier records: **Horseleys**, 'horse meadow or pasture', which was included in a 1613 list of fields.[2] By the 19th century there were fields (in the area of the modern Radcliffe Road) called Horseleys Furlong, which suggests that an area of pasture had become part of the arable fields. There were similar field names nearby (on either side of the modern Cavell Road, extending as far south as Church Way): **Horse Commons** and **Horse and Cow Commons**. These may be alternative, more modern, names for the same field.

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Hog Common was a field of about two and a half acres, west of where Rivermead Road is, but from this field it also extended as a lane leading south along the parish boundary, and partly coinciding with Heyford Hill Lane. There is still a pond here – this would have been useful for watering the pigs.

In these names, 'common' refers to the way that these lands were available to Iffley landholders as shared pasture for their livestock. There were other fields used for pasture in Iffley but these were the ones so closely associated with a particular type of livestock that they were named after them.

The field name **Sheepway Furlong** commemorates an old routeway from Iffley to pastures outside the parish.[3] The 'sheep way' ran along Tree Lane and Sheepway Furlong itself covered the area south of Tree Lane where the modern Bears Hedge, West View, and Stone Quarry Lane are now. So field names show cattle and horses relatively close to the village, but record the movement of sheep and pigs away from the village, sheep off to the east, and pigs to the south of the parish.

Finally, the name of **Iffley** itself refers to the importance of livestock in Iffley in Anglo-Saxon times. The 'ley' comes from Old English *leah*: a woodland area used as wood pasture for sheep or pigs.

1. Iffley Inclosure Award, 1830, OSD/A Vol. E, 212-259, Oxfordshire History Centre.
2. Iffley terrier, 1613,148/40, Magdalen College Archives.
3. "Parishes: Iffley," in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 5: Bullingdon hundred,* ed. Mary D. Lobel (London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of Historical Research,1957),197.

Iffley trades and crafts

Place names reflect the importance of the mill in Iffley: **Mill Lane** is a longstanding street name[1] and, in the 19th century, **Mill Hill Common** was the name of the small triangular field to the west of Mill Lane where the land slopes up from the mill.[2] This common was originally a field available to Iffley landholders as shared pasture for their livestock. Here the common is named in relation to the topography and its closeness to the mill.

Without the field name **Windmill Close** we would never have known that there had been a windmill in Iffley; the name is the only record of its existence (a good example of the importance of place names to local history). According to the 19th century enclosure records, the field was where Bay Tree Close and Azor's Court are now.[3] This was a place high enough for a windmill to work but not on the highest ground in Iffley (the top of Rose Hill would have been higher). It was relatively close to the village, and on the old way that leads to Cowley.
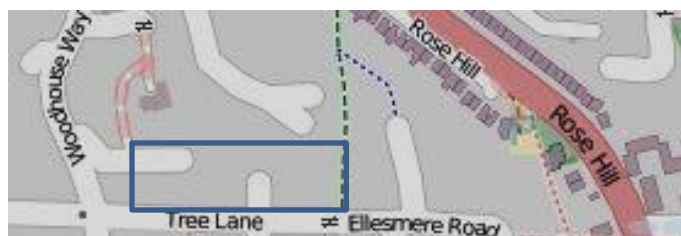
Windmill Close

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Smithcroft furlong no longer has anything to do with the hard toil of medieval smithing - it is now the Oxford Road Recreation Ground.[4] This was a field on the edge of Iffley, close to the border with Littlemore township – and the original smith was a 13th century Littlemore tenant whose family built up a small estate next to Smithcroft furlong.[5]

1. "Parishes: Iffley," in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 5: Bullingdon hundred,* ed. Mary D. Lobel (London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of Historical Research,1957),190.
2. Iffley Inclosure Award, 1830, OSD/A Vol. E, 212-259, Oxfordshire History Centre.
3. Iffley Inclosure Award.
4. Iffley Inclosure Award.
5. "Parishes: Littlemore," in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 5: Bullingdon hundred,* ed. Mary D. Lobel (London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of Historical Research,1957), 209.

Sources for Iffley place names and field names

The key source for finding Iffley field names is the 1830 Inclosure Act.[1] This includes a Plan, showing the layout of the field plots in Iffley as they were after enclosure, and the Award, which lists these plots. The plots are either named individually or described in relation to their place within larger fields. The

Inclosure Award gives the field names as they were in the 19th century; some of the names are likely to be much older. It is possible to start from the Inclosure Plan, progressing through older Ordnance Survey maps, and end up by working out on a modern map where each of the old fields was located.

The *Victoria County History* section on Iffley includes references to field names and gives the historical background to land use and ownership; it is based on extensive research in local archives.[2]

Gelling's *Place-names of Oxfordshire* has a section on Iffley which is very useful for the history and meaning of the key place names within Iffley. She also lists some of the field names recorded in early sources. However the only 19th century field names discussed are from the Hockmore Street part of Iffley (in modern Cowley), not the field names in the Inclosure Award.[3]

I have looked at records of Iffley landholding and property transactions in local archives. There are Iffley title deeds going back to the 13th century in Lincoln and Magdalen College Archives. These archives also contain later terriers, which are useful sources of information for the location of fields. Terriers list parcels of land, describing them in terms of the fields surrounding each parcel. The Iffley manorial court rolls survive for the 18th and 19th centuries; these sometimes include field names, especially when land was being transferred to new tenants.[4]

1. Iffley Inclosure Award, 1830, OSD/A Vol. E, 212-259, Oxfordshire History Centre.
2. "Parishes: Iffley," in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 5: Bullingdon hundred,* ed. Mary D. Lobel (London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of Historical Research,1957),189-206.
3. Margaret Gelling, *The place-names of Oxfordshire: Pt.1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 32-33.
4. Donnington Hospital, Manor of Iffley court rolls, 1746, DH I/1-125, Oxfordshire History Centre.