THE ANGLIAN AND SCANDINAVIAN SETTLEMENT OF LEICESTERSHIRE

BY W. G. HOSKINS
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Much excellent work has been done on the history of Roman Leicester and Leicestershire which carries our knowledge up to the early years of the fifth century. From here onwards, until we come to the work of Mr. Billson, Mr. Farnham and others upon Norman and medieval times there is a great gap. What material exists to fill this gap is scanty and mostly of a technical nature, and it does not give in itself a coherent idea of the history of these centuries between the Romans and the Normans.

The following paper attempts to make good this deficiency to some extent by considering the settlement of the county between 550 and 1000 A.D. Much that is set down here is tentative, but it will perhaps open up new lines for enquiry, above all in the field of place-names and the names of all the minor features of the landscape. The names of fields themselves are a most fruitful source for local history and here much work has already been done, though not so systematically as in some counties. Mr. Farnham's admirable *Leicestershire Medieval Village Notes* contains a great amount of material of this type waiting to be collected and interpreted, and so too does the recently published volume on the Wyggeston Hospital records. Even so, the bulk of this most suggestive material still lies among manuscript sources: enclosure awards, tithe maps, and manorial and other private records. The systematic collection and interpretation of this material would be of the greatest value not only for the study of the medieval village and its economy but for the study of pre-Conquest settlement, as showing the relative extent and strength of Anglian and Danish colonisation in different parts of the county.

Local histories skim very swiftly and lightly, and with uncertain touch, over the six centuries that elapsed between the withdrawal of the Romans and the coming of the Normans. Yet this is the very period when the district we now know as Leicestershire was being occupied and colonised, mostly for the first time:
when Anglian and, later, Scandinavian pioneers were pushing out over the cold uplands, along the deserted river-valleys, and through the dense oak-ash forests that covered so much of the midlands, founding the villages and hamlets that exist to-day. The map of Leicestershire had been drawn in all its essentials by the time the Normans arrived.

The almost complete absence of written records during these critical six centuries is, of course, the chief reason for the inadequate treatment they have received in local histories, but the indirect sources of evidence are abundant. First, there is the evidence of archaeology, especially concerning the distribution and dating of the Anglo-Saxon cemeteries. Secondly, the great volume of evidence afforded by the names of the villages, fields, rivers, and all the minor features of the country scene. Thirdly, the evidence of the people themselves, their physical appearance and their speech. And lastly, there is the inexhaustible mine of the Ordnance Survey map of England, “that marvellous palimpsest”, said Maitland, “could we but decipher it”. All these sources can be used, however imperfectly at present, to reconstruct the course of the Anglian and Scandinavian settlement of Leicestershire, despite the absence of written records; if, indeed we do not regard the Ordnance Survey map as the finest written record we possess.

The precise date of the withdrawal of the Romans from Britain, and from Leicester in particular, need not concern us here; for there is in any event a considerable gap between this and the coming of the Angles which no amount of patient research will ever adequately fill. Not until the first half of the sixth century, and probably nearer 550 than 500, can we pick up the threads of history again in this part of the country. From 550 onwards the Angles settled in and colonised the district now known as Leicestershire, slowly and in very localised groups at first, then more generally and rapidly; followed in the brief period between 877 and 919 by the Danes, and at a still later date by the few Norwegian settlers who drifted so far south from their stronghold along the north-west coast of England. We are therefore concerned with a period of roughly five centuries between the coming of the Angles and the coming of the Normans. In this period we can distinguish four main currents of settlement, viz.: —
The first settlements of the Anglo-Saxons in England may be dated approximately at 450. In the course of the succeeding hundred years the eastern and south-eastern sides of the country were occupied fairly quickly and extensively. Leicestershire, however, was among the latest, if not the last, of the east midland districts to be occupied, and then only to a limited extent. For this statement there are two types of evidence and the testimony of the map. First, there is the archaeological evidence that in all the seventeen Anglian cemeteries so far discovered in Leicestershire (see Plate I) nothing has been found of an earlier date than the second half of the sixth century, except for a find at Glen Parva which is said to belong to the first half of that century and an isolated find in Leicester itself. Most of the contents of these cemeteries can be allocated to the late sixth and early seventh centuries. That the cemeteries belong to the heathen period of the Anglian occupation is shown, too, by the burial of weapons with the bodies, a practice which ceased in Mercia after the adoption of Christianity by Peada in 653.

The evidence of place-names supports that of archaeology. It has been established by Ekwall, and by other workers in this country, that place-names ending in -ing and -ingham are among the oldest we have. The ending -ing denotes a tribal name, and was the earliest of all Anglo-Saxon place-names to be given, being bestowed on the district occupied by the tribe. Such names are Hastings, Reading, Barking and, to come nearer home, Kettering, Billing, and Wittering in Northants. Names ending in ingham indicate the hamm—the enclosed possession or fold—of the tribe, and are of slightly later date though still early in the Anglo-Saxon conquest. In eastern England generally, where there was no serious impediment to movement, such names were probably given round about the year 500, while -ing names probably go back to the second half of the fifth century in the same districts. Not all place-names which now end in -ing,
ANGLIAN AND SCANDINAVIAN SETTLEMENT IN LEICESTERSHIRE

ANGLIAN CEMETERIES IN LEICESTERSHIRE

REFERENCE.

CEMETERIES MARKED THUS ○ ON PLAN.
MISCELLANEOUS FINDS (LEICESTERSHIRE ONLY) AT THE POINTS MARKED THUS. X

NOTE, ONLY THE LEICESTERSHIRE CEMETERIES ARE NAMED, SEVENTEEN IN ALL. THESE 'HEATHEN' CEMETERIES MUST BE DATED GENERALLY FROM 450 - 650 BUT IN LEICESTERSHIRE THEY ARE NOT EARLIER THAN 550 A.D. COMPARE ABOVE PLAN WITH THAT SHEWN ON PLATE NO 2. ILLUSTRATING SETTLEMENTS UP TO 500 A.D.

ALBERT HERBERT, 1935
however, are genuine folk-names, and the recognition of the genuine variety is a matter of some difficulty in many cases.

Now, Leicestershire is singularly barren of such early place-names. Nowhere do we find an example of an "-ing" and an "-ingham," with one apparent exception to which we shall refer in a moment. Yet close to the northern border of the county we have Nottingham and perhaps Hickling; eastwards we have Spalding, Empingham and Uppingham; to the south-east are Rockingham, Cottingham and Kettering. On the west, though forty miles away, is Birmingham. Thus the place-names of Leicestershire contain no very early elements of the Anglian period, and though the elements "-ing" and "-ingham" have no definite limiting dates we are safe in assuming that a century had passed before the Anglian invaders reached and settled in this part of the midlands. In this manner archaeology and the study of place-names support each other in demonstrating that the beginning of the Anglian settlement of Leicestershire must be put at not earlier than the middle of the sixth century. The find at Glen Parva appears to be an exception to this statement, but the dating 500-550 is very wide and the precise date may well be much nearer the middle of the century than the beginning. The same applies to the isolated Leicester find.

But there is another exception which presents more difficulty, and this is the place-name of Peatling, which occurs twice some eight or nine miles south of Leicester, the only "-ing" name in the county.¹ Is this a genuine "-ing" derived from a folk-name and so representing very early settlement, or is it traceable to some less significant source?

The whole subject of place-names in "-ing" has been dealt with exhaustively in Ekwall's scholarly book and one can do no more than restate in a very summary manner the possible derivations of "-ing" names. Some go back to common nouns such as faelging ("fallow-land"), hryding ("cleared or ridded land"), or cieping ("market"). Of these elements the last is the commonest, appearing to-day in such names as Chipping Norton, Chipping Campden, or Cheapside, a street-name in several towns, including Leicester.

¹There is also the lost place-name of Lilinge, mentioned in the Domesday Book, but this was probably of the same type as Peatling, embodying hlice rather than ing.
Another more obscure group of such names goes back usually, though not invariably, to a personal name to which -ing has been added, giving the significance perhaps of ‘‘X’s place’’. Peatling may be of this group, or it may embody the element of ‘‘linch’’, i.e., ‘‘a bank, or rising ground’’.

Finally, Peatling may be of the genuine folk-name type with the old plural -ingas, such as we have in Haestingas for Hastings, but we must beware of attributing this meaning too readily to -ing names. In view of the fact that Leicestershire contains not a single other example of a place-name in -ing or -ingham, and that not a single find of the Anglian period can be dated earlier than the sixth century, we are probably justified in assuming that Peatling does not go back to a folk-name but to a personal name belonging to a later period than this.

We have, then, the negative evidence of place-names that Leicestershire was not occupied early in the Anglian invasions, despite the fact that the tide of settlers lapped all around in the Trent valley, in the Welland valley, and on the Rutland borders; and the positive evidence of archaeology that the contents of the Anglian cemeteries must be assigned, for the most part, to the late sixth and early seventh centuries.

To what must we attribute this sudden halting of the first Anglian advance at the Leicestershire borders? The geological map supplies, I think, a perfectly satisfactory explanation. Over the greater part of eastern Leicestershire lies a layer of boulder clay, anything up to one hundred feet thick, and in the north-eastern part of the county as much as one hundred and fifty feet thick. Though its consistency is not everywhere the same, it is generally heavy to work, difficult to drain, cold and uninviting.

Under natural conditions it was covered, and was still covered in Anglian times, with a dense and damp oak-ash forest, and though the invaders came from the forest-land and were accustomed to the work of clearing, the heavy cold lands of Leicestershire were not sufficiently attractive to the first settlers to be worth clearing. So the tide of settlement, running strongly up the Trent and Welland valleys and those of their larger tributaries, ceased at the edges of the boulder clay area and paused for close upon a century before pressing onward (see Plate II).
EARLY PLACE NAMES IN RELATION TO THE BOULDER CLAY AREAS

The distribution of these place names shows approximately the limits of Anglian settlement by 500 A.D. and the barrier presented by the Boulder Clay to further advance.

The Boulder Clay areas are shown thus.

ALBERT HERBERT, 1935
The whole of this area of the eastern and central midlands was unattractive, and it is significant that westwards we have to cross forty miles of country before we reach a place-name of the *-ing* or *-ingham* type, *viz.* Birmingham. All this intervening country, except perhaps the valley of the Anker, where a single Anglian cemetery has been found, was avoided until comparatively late in the Anglian colonisation of the soil.

But there is another significant fact about the geological map of Leicestershire that bears closely upon the question of early settlement. In the map showing the distribution of Anglian cemeteries in Leicestershire, it will be observed:

(1) that they fall markedly into the eastern half of the county, only one cemetery being west of the Soar (and that at Rothley, close to the river), the western half being entirely devoid of settlement of this type;

(2) that every cemetery lies close to a navigable stream or a tributary of such a stream;

and (3) that twelve of the total of seventeen cemeteries in Leicestershire occur in a small group along the tributary valleys of the Welland and the Soar.

Mr. E. T. Leeds has shown conclusively in *The Archaeology of the Anglo-Saxon Settlements* and elsewhere that the Anglo-Saxon invaders reached the heart of the country by the navigable rivers and their tributaries, the distribution of cemeteries of the heathen period (*i.e.*, 450-650) making this evident, and his conclusions have been supported by the evidence of place-names where these have been studied in sufficient detail. To this rule Leicestershire is no exception. The map makes it clear that the streams guided the Anglian settlers from the main channels into the upland country in the east of the county.

Now, there is a further geological factor at work, this time attracting settlement. This is the glacial sand and gravel which caps the discouraging clay lands in many patches of varying size, particularly in the upland country around Tilton and Skeffington, providing sites for settlement on a small scale. These glacial sands and gravels, rarely very thick (ten to twenty feet seems the usual thickness) provided first, a dry site in otherwise damp country; secondly, a better water supply, for though the
clays are damp the water is not much gathered into springs available for human use; thirdly, a much lighter and warmer soil, more encouraging to cultivation; and lastly, "islands" of lighter and more easily cleared woodland than the heavy oak-ash associations of the clays.

The villages of east Leicestershire to-day are noticeably gathered on these sand and gravel islands, with miles of gently undulating clay-lands, almost barren of buildings, between them. Just before entering any of these villages one climbs a short, sharp rise which is the edge of the sand and gravel cap, e.g., the short hills on the Leicester side of Oadby and Wigston). Some of these islands are comparatively large, many of them too small for village sites. At Houghton-on-the-hill, for instance, the island is one and a half miles long and from two to four hundred yards wide, a long narrow strip running mainly north and south which accounts for the elongated form of the village, besides giving its name of hoh tun, "the farm on the hill". The smaller patches of sand and gravel have long been worked for building materials and, where they have been abandoned and overgrown with nettles, make admirable rabbit-warrens in country otherwise very unattractive.

The earliest Anglican settlers in Leicestershire, from the middle of the sixth to the middle of the seventh centuries, made the same choice of site, as is shown by the location of their cemeteries. Unfortunately, the exact site of several of these was not recorded. Of those of which the exact site is known, practically all lie in these sand and gravel patches. Indeed, it is highly significant that the bulk of these cemeteries were first unearthed by workmen digging for gravel. These were all accidental discoveries and several doubtless remain unrevealed, but it is safe to assume that any future discoveries will be confined to the country east of the Soar, close to streams, and that the western half the county will show no signs of early Anglian settlement.

It remains, finally, to discuss the route by which the heathen Angles reached this part of Leicestershire. The two possible routes are the Trent valley on the north, with its tributary the Soar running back into the middle of the county, and tapping the eastern uplands in its own tributary the Wreak; and the Welland valley on the south, into whose basin a considerable part of south-eastern Leicestershire drains. Both these routes were
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undoubtedly used during the greater part of the Anglian period, but is it possible to say by which valley the earliest comers penetrated the boulder clay country?

The distribution of cemeteries and other less important finds must, I think, suggest that the first wave of settlers on any scale—apart, that is, from possible isolated sites in Leicester and at Glen Parva—reached Leicestershire from the south-east; that is, from the Welland valley. Though the middle Trent valley is fairly well sprinkled with cemeteries of the heathen period, the Soar as far up as its confluence with the Wreak, is associated with only two discoveries, despite the fact that it is flanked for some miles by terraces of river gravels providing dry sites and ample space for the cultivation of the soil. Nor is there any indication of early settlement in the place-names of this district until we have gone some way down the Trent to Nottingham. In other words, there are only two indications of settlement in the heathen period in the course of some twenty miles along the Trent-Soar route.

The upper valley of the Welland gives quite other indications. As soon as the wide fenland of the lower and middle reaches has been left behind we observe settlements of the -ingham type, such as Uppingham, Rockingham and Cottingham. Harringworth, near Rockingham, may also represent an early type of place-name. Though the Welland valley was not occupied to anything like the same extent as the Nene valley to the south, it appears to have been occupied independently and at the same time: that is, probably in the second half of the fifth century. To the south of these early settlements in the Welland valley, between them and the Nene, stretched the ancient and dense forest of Rockingham, a formidable barrier to movement in that direction. The Welland valley at this point was, therefore, practically cut off from the rest of Northants, so that expansion could take place only westwards towards the source of the river or northwards into Leicestershire. With a possible westward movement we are not concerned here, but northwards a number of small streams opened the way into the heart of east Leicestershire. Directly opposite Rockingham the Eye Brook, the largest of these streams, led back to the high plateau round Tilton round which most of the Anglian finds of the heathen period have been
made. And through Cottingham ran the so-called Gartree Road, probably still well-made, for not three generations could have passed since it was in regular use by the Romans. This road afforded a good crossing of the Welland valley-bottom, for though the Anglo-Saxons showed a marked tendency to avoid the Roman roads and to travel by the navigable rivers they were obliged to make use of earlier roads and tracks when water failed them. Only two miles from the Welland, and close to the Roman road, is Medbourne, where heathen Anglian interments have been found in association with what may be Roman remains of the early fifth century. Unfortunately, there is nothing to date the Anglian site more exactly; but it is the first of a chain of cemeteries running across the sands and gravels of east Leicestershire and represents, I think, the point of entry of the earliest Anglian settlers in this county. The Trent-Soar route was in use at a later date, perhaps after the establishment of Crida in Leicester in 586. In this connection it may be relevant to notice that the Anglian cemeteries in the upper Wreak valley, at Melton and Saxby, can be dated approximately as early seventh century, while the upland country to the south, which we have supposed to have been colonised from the Welland valley, can show numerous remains from the second half of the sixth century; in the case of the Billesdon brooch from 550. As for the early sites of Glen Parva and Wigston Magna, both of the sixth century, we must suppose an independent occupation by way of the Soar, probably soon after the occupation of the important centre of Leicester. This may have taken place early in the sixth century, but on this point it is useless to speculate for there is nothing to go upon as yet but theoretical possibilities.

To sum up: the eastern and central midlands, densely forested and unattractive in pre-Roman and Roman times, did not attract even Anglian settlers until a full century had passed after their first landing; though to the north, east and south early settlements were common. Towards the middle of the sixth century, however, some movement seems to have begun from the upper valley of the Welland into the eastern part of Leicestershire, where the pioneer settlers occupied the patches of glacial sands and gravels that rest on the clays. In this sixth century settlement the plateau around Tilton, high and dry, seems to have been the nucleus, just as it was in pre-Roman times. Most of the finds of
the Heathen Anglian period have been made along the little valleys that radiate from this upland centre.

Leicester, too, was occupied by this time, perhaps as early as 500 but probably nearer 550, and this was probably followed by the use of the Trent-Soar route and the establishment of a few Anglian settlements in the upper Wreak valley after 600. But there was no considerable colonisation from Leicester, the only known sites being those at Wigston Magna and Glen Parva, and possibly at Oadby. The country between Leicester and the eastern settlements does not seem to have been occupied at all until after 650, judging by the negative evidence of the absence of cemeteries and other remains.

Up to now seventeen cemeteries have been unearthed in Leicestershire, the great majority grouped together in the east of the county. Others undoubtedly remain to be discovered but they all lie almost certainly to the east of the Soar or in the Soar valley, either in the river gravels or in the glacial sands and gravels. If one may hazard a guess, the likeliest spots are in the extensive sands and gravels of the Tilton and Skeffington district; at Hallaton, which occupies a very likely site in many respects; and perhaps at Houghton and at Oadby.2

It is worth noticing that while an early place-name type indicates early settlement on that spot, a late place-name does not disprove the possibility of early occupation. One need only refer to Wigston as an illustration. Here we have an Anglo-Scandinavian compound name, dating from the late ninth or early tenth century, though we know the site to have been occupied before the year 600. The explanation of this apparent anomaly is that in the earliest period the place-names of small settlements

2Since this was written Mr. W. Coleman of Oadby has drawn my attention to the discovery of many skeletons in the gravels to the south of the church. According to Mr. Ernest Baker's Ms. history of Oadby "Thomas Ludlam and his fellow workers were digging gravel [in 1780] near Ridley's house, Brock's Hill, when they found a human skeleton about 3 ft. below the surface of the gravel, in removing which they discovered some small urns. In the same grave there was also appearances of ashes which lay in heaps". Thomas Ludlam declared later that he had found not less than eighty skeletons during the twenty-two years he had been a labourer, besides many urns and ashes. Mr. Baker suggests that these remains date from a supposed battle in 920, but the presence of urns and ashes seems to indicate a peaceful burial. It is more likely that this is another cemetery so far unrecorded, and one of the largest in the county.
were in a very fluid state, much the same as nicknames applied to a new boy at school. One such name, obvious and appropriate, might stick from the beginning in some cases; but more often than not several names are in existence at once until custom ordains that one shall live and the others cease to exist. Similarly chance has played a large part in the survival of early place-names. Some have survived from their first bestowal in the fifth century, but the majority have probably been changed more than once until a late name was finally accepted by customary use as the one destined to come down to us. We know, for instance, that Derby was formerly called Northworthy; for some reason the Scandinavian label displaced the older Anglian label. Whitby also had an earlier name, now lost to us. Such changes must have been fairly frequent in small settlements which changed their overlords often. Wigston is named after the viking (Wichingesitone—viking's tun—in 1086) who held the lordship in the late ninth or early tenth century; probably its earlier name or names commemorated previous Anglian possessors. Oadby, too, has undoubtedly possessed an earlier name, for in its original form (Oldebi in 1086) it seems to indicate that the invading Danes found here an old-established settlement and gave it their own label. The preponderance of Danes in the district then served to perpetuate the Danish name while the older Anglian name, whatever it was, gradually dropped out of use and was finally forgotten.

In this way, then, place-names can be misleading as well as extremely suggestive of the unrecorded past. Indeed, none of the sites of the heathen Anglian cemeteries of Leicestershire bears a recognisably early name; some of them carry deceptively late names.

(2) the Later Anglian settlements, 650 onwards

For the later period of the Anglian colonisation of Leicestershire we have no such distinguishing marks as cemeteries and place-name types to enable us to assign definite dates. Generally, we must put all Anglian settlements (i.e., those with names ending in -ton, -ham, -worth, -field, -ley and so on) that are not the sites of heathen cemeteries into the Christian period after 650. The bulk of these fall into the two centuries between 650 and 850, when the attacks of the Danes began in earnest. Some
settlement by Angles went on during the Danish occupation and afterwards, up to and beyond the Norman Conquest; but the bulk of the villages bearing Anglian names in Leicestershire may be assigned to the period 650-850.

The principal feature of the Anglian colonisation of these two centuries was the extension of their activities into the western half of the county, the heavily wooded country beyond the Soar, and into the north and south of the county which, covered more continuously and thickly with great stretches of boulder clay, had up to now seen little or no permanent human occupation, except in the neighbourhood of the Roman road. Both in the north and in the south of the county, to-day, villages are few and separated from each other by tracts of rolling clay-lands that are almost bare of any sign of human activity. The most casual glance at the map cannot fail to reveal how "open" these tracts of country are as compared with, say, the more genial and attractive valleys of the Nene or the Warwickshire Avon. The walker in north or south Leicestershire is immediately struck with the extent of the landscape at any point, the sensation of commanding a large stretch of country even where the road is barely four hundred feet above the sea.

This landscape is singularly monotonous and devoid of human interest (though not without charm), and must have been depressingly so to early settlers with no eye to scenery in itself, as something apart from the economic possibilities of the soil. I should be inclined to say, therefore, that the villages of the northern and southern parts of the county belong to a later period of settlement, generally speaking, than those of the more fertile sandstones to the south of Charnwood Forest. But even here a considerable number of villages were not founded until the Danish occupation.

The Forest, too, was more extensive and continuous than it is to-day, and was encroached upon only with difficulty and only at its edges. We have, for instance, such names as Glenfield and Markfield whose -field termination sufficiently indicate a clearing from the forest. Then there is Newtown (Linford)—"the new farm"—perhaps in relation to the old settlement of Anstey, indicating again the late occupation of the soil near the Forest. On the other side of the Forest is Woodhouse Eaves, which was
founded very late, for it does not appear by that name until long after the Norman Conquest. Only monks in search of solitude, like those of Charley and Ulverscroft, actually invaded the Forest and cleared a space for themselves as early as the twelfth century.

The Forest in fact formed a great barrier to all movement between Leicester and the north-west until well into medieval times. In Roman times one could only go from Leicester to Chester by making a detour to Watling Street, by way of the road through Peckleton and Kirkby Mallory, passing well to the south of the Forest. There is no evidence for believing that the Romans ever made a road through the Forest as is frequently stated.

The long-continued existence of this barrier on the north-west has had a most noticeable influence on the speech of the people. While in the east, north and south of the county the Leicestershire dialect shades gradually into that of the neighbouring counties, due to the ease of movement and consequent mixture of people from early times, the dialect boundary on the north-west, between Leicestershire and Derbyshire-Staffordshire, is very marked, because of the long separation of the people on either side of the Forest when dialects were taking form. There is a similar abrupt change on the south-western border, between Leicestershire and Warwickshire, but this is due, not to the physical difficulties of movement, but to the fact that Watling Street, the present county boundary, was the historic boundary between Danish England and Wessex.

This is all that can be said in a general way of the later period of Anglian settlement in Leicestershire. If one wished to assign a more definite date to the founding of a particular village one could only go by geographical facts and suggest where these would encourage or discourage early occupation (as, for example, the boulder clays of the south of the county) or occasionally by some suggestive place-name (like Newtown). Melton is a good example of both these methods of dating. We should expect from its geographical position that it was founded earlier than any neighbouring place. Its name, a Scandinavianised form of the O.E. *Middel tun*, indicates also that it was a central point for the district, a fact clearly brought out too by the remarkable arrangement of the parishes round this nucleus (see Plate IV). Both Lutterworth and Houghton-on-the-Hill show a similar
grouping of the parishes around a nucleus, extremely suggestive of earlier occupation than the neighbouring villages which were probably colonised from these pivotal points. Much could be deduced from the map from the formation of the parish boundaries alone which would not otherwise be discovered, but such deductions must be made with caution.

To sum up, then, what we know, or can reasonably deduce, of the later period of Anglian settlement in Leicestershire: it is probable that those villages of the eastern half of the county not already founded in heathen times were occupied early in the period 650-850, both because of their proximity to the older sites and because the boulder clays of this area are not so thick and continuous as elsewhere, and are more frequently capped with those critical patches of sands and gravels that determined the earliest occupation of the county. This dependence on the sands and gravels is revealed in almost every village site to the east of Leicester, whether of the heathen or of the Christian period (see Plate III).

Then perhaps the more attractive land west of the Soar was cleared of wood, especially in the neighbourhood of Leicester, the movement spreading more slowly as the Forest proper was approached. At the same time, or perhaps rather later as a general rule, the sombre landscape of north and south Leicestershire was occupied, beginning in the south with key-positions like Lutterworth, which may actually have been founded from the Avon valley to the south, to which it lies open. From here the surrounding villages appear to have been founded more or less as daughter-settlements, so that these may be given a fairly early date—perhaps eighth century. In the north of the county no similar key-position can be deduced from the arrangement of the parishes, though Loughborough, from its geographical position, is almost certainly the corresponding centre to Lutterworth in the south.

By the time the Danes began to attack in earnest and to spend the winter in England, most of the county had been occupied but to a very varying extent: the east fairly densely, the Soar valley nearly as much, the south and north rather thinly, and the west fairly densely near Leicester and more thinly as one went towards the Forest and the Staffordshire border. The
VILLAGE SITES EAST OF LEICESTER ON 'ISLANDS' OF GLACIAL SANDS AND GRAVELS RESTING ON THE BOULDER CLAY (DOTTED PORTIONS)

ALBERT HERBERT, 1935
THE SHAPE OF A PARISH AND THE ARRANGEMENT OF A
GROUP OF PARISHES ARE NOT ACCIDENTAL; THEY FURNISH
SIGNIFICANT CLUES TO THE MANNER OF SETTLEMENT OF A
GIVEN DISTRICT. E.G., IN THE SECOND MAP, KEYHAM HAS OBVIOUSLY BEEN CARVED OUT
OF HUNCERTON, SUGGESTING THAT THE LATTER WAS THE PARENT SETTLEMENT OF THE FORMER.
extreme north-west of the county seems to have remained unsettled until the coming of the Danes, when it was occupied from the Trent valley and not from the Leicester side; while the Charnwood area remained forested and uninhabited, except by monks, for many centuries after Angles and Danes had ceased to fight.\(^3\)

(3) the Danish settlement, 877-919.

When we come to the Danes in Leicestershire there is abundance evidence of their presence, though this is almost entirely, but not quite, the evidence of place-names. Something may be deduced in addition from the physical appearance of the natives of the county and from their speech, both of which show Scandinavian influence to a perceptible extent. Little or no work has been done, however, on the folk-types and dialect of Leicestershire, and what is set down here is intended to be only tentative. It is noticeable, for instance, that the natives of eastern Leicestershire, which was most thoroughly occupied by the Danes, tend to be fairer than those of the west of the county. Whether they are also taller, as they should be if Danish influence is at work, is a matter that has never been investigated, and one that would certainly yield some interesting results.

As regards speech, the evidence of Danish influence is not so strong as in, say, Lincolnshire, or the East Riding of Yorkshire, but it is perceptible even to the lay ear. The use of "I were" and "he were", so common in the speech of people still untouched by the standardised English of the B.B.C. and the class-room, is definitely a Scandinavian relic, the corresponding tense of the verb "to be" in modern Danish being var throughout. Another common indication of Danish influence is the frequent use of "Shall you" instead of the Anglo-Saxon "Will you". There are undoubtedly other grammatical peculiarities that would repay careful investigation. Nevertheless, we must

\(^3\)It is necessary to add, in order to complete this picture of Anglian settlement, that some settlements of British survivors appear here and there in Leicestershire. Thus we find Walton, Walcote, and perhaps Waltham, associated with the O.E. for "foreigners, serfs, or Welshmen", used by the early English of the Britons. There may also be British place-names in the Forest area (cf. Breedon), which would have been the likeliest refuge of the Romano-British from the all-conquering Anglo-Saxons. The place-names of this area would be well worth more detailed study.
not expect to find much Danish influence on the language of the people of Leicestershire, for, unlike some strongly Scandi-
navianised districts of England where Danish or Norwegian were spoken and written languages as late as the Norman Conquest, the common speech here appears to have remained English, judging by the evidence of the place-names.

The attacks of the Danes on England, increasing in fre­
quency and extent since about 820, came with their full force by the middle of the century, when the army began to spend the winter in this country (851). In 868 it wintered at Repton, just over the Leicestershire border, and attacked Leicester. Eight years later the Danes made their first division of land in England (in the East Riding) and made systematic settlements. In the following year (877) they settled in Mercia; doubtless, so far as Leicestershire was concerned, in the neighbourhood of Leicester, one of the five boroughs of the Danelaw. Thus the Danish settle­
ment of this county began in 877 and continued until 919, by which year Mercia was again in English hands. The bulk of Danish place-names in Leicestershire must therefore be placed within this period or soon after it.

Before examining the county for evidences of Danish settle­
ments we may notice the impact of the Danes on Leicester itself. The commonest relic to-day of this impact is the use of the word “gate” in the sense of street or road (cf. the modern Danish gade, or modern Norwegian gate) from the O.N. gata. Thus we have Gallowtreegate, Belgrave Gate, Sanvey Gate, Humberstone Gate and so on, meaning the roads leading in those directions. This must not be confused with the street-names which embody a reference to the medieval gates of the town, such as Southgate Street.

The suburb now known as Stoneygate takes its name from the fact that through this part ran the Roman road to Medbourne and ultimately to Ermine Street—the stoney road. Only the Romans were in the habit of making their roads with stone, so that we usually find such names as Stanton or Stanford close by a Roman road (cf. Stoney Stanton, near Narborough) though not invariably.

The most interesting Scandinavian name in Leicester is the lost name of the Skeyth, shown on medieval maps as just outside
the walls, to the north of Sanvey Gate. This name commemorated for centuries the fact that Leicester's race-course lay there, in the meadow between the walls and a branch of the Soar. The Scandinavians were passionately fond of horse-racing, as the frequency of this place-name testifies, not only in England but also in Sweden, but whether these races had any religious significance or not we do not know. At any rate Leicester may claim to have had a race-course for well over a thousand years.

Among the personal names in early medieval Leicester, too, we discover many traces of Scandinavian influence. The second name on the earliest Merchant Gild Roll (1196) is that of Hakon, and later on the same roll we have the feminine name of Sigrid, and the names of Steinn the miller and Thorstein. On a roll dated 1199 we find Siwat (from the O.N. Sighvatr), a name also found in Swadborough, a spinney beyond Stoughton. Not far away is a spinney by the name of Kettlesborough, embodying the common Danish personal name of Ketill. It is perhaps significant too that Stoughton should be originally stoc tun, "the farm made of or surrounded by stocks", and that not far away to the south-east should be Burton (Overy), "the farm at the burh". For some reason this little piece of country was well fortified in Danish times, possibly to guard the military centre from attack from the higher ground to the south-east of the town. A detailed survey of the names of the fields and spinneys and all the minor features of the countryside might reveal some more certain evidence of these difficult times.

One of the three fields of Stoughton in 1405 was known as Longwong, betraying in a village with a pure English name that Danish speech was strong enough to give names to the smaller units of land.

The village-names of the county show clearly that Leicestershire was one of the more strongly Scandinavianised parts of England. It is more than likely that the names of the minor features of each parish would reveal an even more pervasive influence, as in the case of Stoughton, which is concealed by the

A Thorstein founded the nearby village of Thrussington, which is "the farm of Thorstein".

In Oadby we have 14th century field-name of Cromborousike, indicating the existence of a crumb burh somewhere in the parish, i.e., "the crooke burh" (cf. Crumdbick and Crumdigate in Foston deeds of 1295-96— "the crooked ditch" and "the street of the crooked ditch"). A Stoughton deed of 1405 mentions the ditch which probably surrounded the village, a relic of Danish times.
English name of the village, but in the absence of sufficient information about these we must be content for the time being to use the village-names alone. By this test the valley of the Wreak was clearly the most intensively settled district in Danish times, the banks of the river being lined with names ending in -by. What is more significant is that the river itself almost certainly has a Scandinavian name, with the probable meaning of "winding", showing that the district between Leicester and Melton was as strongly Scandinavianised as any in England; for river-names are the most conservative of all names and in the great majority of cases have passed unchanged through many invasions since pre-Roman times. There seems to be some reason for believing that the original name of the stream was the Eye, a name now confined to a headstream above Melton, from the O.E. ea, meaning "river, stream". The fact that even the river-name was changed may, indeed, be an indication that in this part of the county the language in use for a time was actually Scandinavian and not English. The Wreak valley would be a highly interesting district to study in detail: the physical characteristics and speech of its people, its place- and other names, and the written records of its past. For instance, such a highly Scandinavianised part should show a higher proportion of free men at the time of the Domesday Book than the average for the county, and the medieval records of the villages should yield corroborative information.

The meanings of the Danish place-names are discussed briefly in an appendix and need not be commented upon here. What does need some comment is the large number of Anglo-Scandinavian compound names in Leicestershire generally, usually the common Anglian suffix tun attached to a Danish personal name so that the unwary student of local history may be trapped into supposing that the village-name is wholly English. For instance, in the north-west of the county we have Bilstone, Ravenstone, and Congerstone, all compounded from O.N. personal or other names, while in the eastern part we have Sproxton

On the other hand, a cursory examination of the poll tax lists for these villages (given in Farnham's *Medieval Village Notes*) does not reveal any marked Danish influence on family names. The date of these lists (1377-81) is, however, rather late for such an enquiry. We need twelfth century lists, if they exist.
(from the Old Swedish personal name, Sprok) and the group near Leicester consisting of Thurmaston, Thurlaston, Thurcaston, and Thrussington (see the appendix on place-names). We should be quite wrong therefore to limit our list of Danish settlements to those ending in -by and -thorpe. The whole county is much more intensively Scandinavianised than a mere inspection of the map would lead one to suppose.

Two of the hundreds bear also highly interesting names. That of Framland, Framelund in 1086, comes to us from "Frani's lund or grove"; Frani being the name of some important Dane and the lund a grove of trees usually having some religious significance. Frani's lund gave its name to the whole hundred, probably because it was the meeting-place of the men of the hundred. It has been suggested, probably with truth, that the place-name Great Framlands, high up on the clay-lands to the north of Melton, commemorates the site of this ancient grove where the great Frani and his men met.7

Gartree is another hundred-name showing Scandinavian influence. The first element comes from the O.N. geiri, cognate with gara, and is commonly embodied in North Country field-names. It is used of either a triangular piece of land in a corner of a field or an isolated patch of grass. In the case of Gartree we have the "tree on the isolated patch of grass", again the meeting-place of the hundred. The name therefore has not the slightest connection with Gallowtree Gate, as it is so often suggested. The meanings of these names are totally different, for the gallows-tree of the one had nothing to do with the gar-tree of the other. They were two distinct landmarks serving different purposes; the similarity of the modern names is accidental.8

Other Danish elements in the place-names of Leicestershire are toft, from O.N. topt, meaning a clearing especially on high or exposed ground (cf. Scraptoft) and the common thorpe. Thorp or thorpe may also be of English origin but in Scandinavian England it is safe to assume that it is Danish, having the special meaning of "a smaller village due to colonisation from a larger one". Where we have two villages close together and

7Lount, near Ashby, has the same origin in lund.
8The lost name of Thingou in Frisby commemorates "the how or mound upon which the thing met", probably a tumulus which has now disappeared. Perhaps a local field-name still preserves the site of this meeting-place of the tenth century.
with the same name, such as Barkby and Barkby Thorpe, just outside Leicester, we may deduce at once that they are related to each other in origin. In this instance, Barkby, low down on the river gravels, was the earlier and parent settlement, and Barkby Thorpe, higher up on the glacial sands and gravels, was of later foundation. More often, however, the later settlement was simply called Thorpe, though distinguished in feudal and medieval times by the addition of a great family name, such as Arnold, Satchville. Countesthorpe is of similar origin. In this case the "thorp" was distinguished by the fact that a countess held the manor in feudal times.

An interesting little group of names of Scandinavian origin is that of Blaby, Ratby, and Groby. Blaby gets its name from the O.N. blar, meaning "dark, blue, livid"; in this connection it would be used to mean "cheerless, exposed, cold". Ratby is "the red farm", probably from the colour of the soil here; while Groby appears to be derived from the O.N. gra, meaning "grey", used with the same special meaning as in Blaby of "cold and cheerless". These names are sufficiently indicative of how depressing the Leicestershire clay-lands must have been to the English and the Danish. It was the English who named Cold Newton and Cold Overton, both among the high boulder-clays of the eastern part of the county; while close to Cold Newton is Hungerton, denoting "the farm with the poor pasturage or crops". Place-names were not bestowed for any academic reason; they expressed always the chief characteristic of the site, and in the deciphering of them we catch a glimpse of how the landscape appeared to the first settlers ten or twelve centuries ago.

In the north-west of the county we have a compact group of Scandinavian place-names that were bestowed by invaders from the Trent side, e.g., Appleby, Ashby, Lount, Bilstone, Shackerstone, Congerstone, Ravenstone and others. As has already been observed, this part of the county, like the Wreak valley, was not settled to any considerable extent until the coming of the Danes, so that Danish place-names easily predominate. In the Wreak valley the Danes found the largest unoccupied part of the county, for the Anglians had preferred the higher lands to the north and south. Coming up the Trent and the Soar, and turning into the Wreak, the Danes settled in numerous small groups on the dry
terraces of the river gravels, just raised above the flood-plain, and gave the stream their own name.

Spreading on to the higher ground to the north and south of the river, the Danes entered country already largely settled by the English. Here we get such typical Anglo-Scandinavian place-names as Grimston, Sproxton and Croxton, indicating that the village was founded by a Dane but among an English-speaking population. In the valley proper, as we have seen, the place-names are pure Scandinavian (e.g., Rotherby—"the farm of Red Hair"), and there is some reason for believing that Danish was the spoken and written language for a time.

(4) the Norwegian settlement, c. 950.

Only a few Norwegian settlers drifted so far south from their strongholds along the north-western coast of England, whither they had arrived from Ireland and the Isle of Man early in the tenth century. In Leicestershire their presence is indicated by the place-name of Normanton (le Heath) near Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and possibly by the neighbouring place-names of Congerstone and Ravenstone. Normanton means "the farm of the Northmen", i.e., the Norwegians, and shows by its very nature that the Norwegians were rare as far south as this, so that their presence gave a distinctive label to a settlement. Just outside the boundaries of Leicestershire we have two or three other examples of this place-name, e.g., Normanton-on-Soar near Loughborough and Normanton near Oakham. Plungar, in the extreme north of Leicestershire, may embody a Norwegian element in its suffix, the O.N. garth, meaning "an enclosure", used in the same sense in Norway to-day where a gaard is the farm and its buildings.

There may possibly be other traces of Norwegian settlement in Leicestershire but they are few and difficult to distinguish from the Danish. Only along the north-west coast of England do the Norwegian place-names have characteristics clearly their own. But in any event the few Norsemen who reached this country were of little significance. By the middle of the tenth century, when they were straggling into the Midlands, the county had been well colonised and the great majority of the villages we know to-day were in existence.
DIAGRAM PLAN SHEWING THE PROGRESS OF SETTLEMENT IN LEICESTERSHIRE 550-1066 A.D.

DOTTED LINES THUS. ——— INDICATE THE GENERALISED LIMITS OF SETTLEMENT AT 500-650 AND 850 A.D.
THE ARROW MARKS INDICATE THE MAJOR LINES OF MOVEMENT.

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Ordnance Survey Maps.
Appendix

THE PLACE- NAMES OF LEICESTERSHIRE

The following list is compiled chiefly from the volumes of the English Place-Name Society's publications, to which I am indebted for much of my material in the preceding pages. The list is by no means complete, for it includes only about one-half of the village names of the county, but it is all that is available, and likely to be available, for some time to come. Even in this preliminary list the student of local history and topography will find much of interest and much material for further speculation. The interpretation of field and other minor names has not been attempted here, for these have never been systematically collected as, for instance, they have been in Northants. It is to be hoped that some such work will be undertaken for Leicestershire to fill this large gap in the material for local history, especially as other material (e.g., the manorial records) has been so thoroughly explored and now awaits the valuable supplementing that the study of place-names of all kinds can give.

Ab Kettleby Originally simply Kettleby, "the farm of Ketill" (O.N. pers name), but later distinguished from other places of the same name by the addition of the name of an O.E. owner, Aebba or Haebba, since shortened and corrupted to Ab.

Anstey From the O.E. anstig, "a narrow path". This may refer to the ancient track that passed through here towards the Forest (see Peake's essay on pre-Roman roads in Leics., in Memorials of Old Leicestershire).

Appleby "Apple-tree-farm".

Ashby A frequent place-name in Leics., the several places being distinguished by feudal or medieval additions such as de la Zouch, Magna, Parva, Folville, etc. Means simply "the farm by the ash-trees", the ending -by being, of course, the Danish ending corresponding to the English -ton. The ash is still the most common tree in the county.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aston (Flamville)</td>
<td>&quot;The east farm&quot;, probably east in relation to Burbage. The second name is from the manorial owner at some date, and this is so in the majority of double names like Kirby Muxloe, Burton Overy, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aylestone</td>
<td>&quot;Aegel's farm&quot;, O.E. pers. name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow-on-Soar</td>
<td>So called from the tumuli or barrows that probably marked the ancient crossing-place of the river. (See Peake's essay, loc. cit.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barton-in-the-Beans</td>
<td>Originally Barton, i.e., literally &quot;barley-farm&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgrave</td>
<td>In 1086 Belgrave was known as Merdegrove. The suffix is either -graef, &quot;a grave, pit or trench&quot; or -gra, &quot;a copse or wood&quot;. The prefix Bel- was added by the Norman-French, as in Belvoir, so the meaning is almost certainly that of &quot;the beautiful wood&quot;. The meaning of the older prefix is not certain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belvoir</td>
<td>Norman-French, &quot;the beautiful view&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilstone</td>
<td>&quot;Bild's farm&quot;. (O.N. pers. name).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birstall</td>
<td>From burh steall, &quot;the site of the burh&quot;. A burh was usually any fortified place, and is common in various disguises in Leics. Cf. Broughton, Burton, Narborough, &amp;c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaby</td>
<td>From O.N. blar, &quot;blue, livid, cheerless, exposed&quot;. Hence &quot;the cheerless farm&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosworth (Husband's)</td>
<td>Goes back to the O.E. pers. name Bar. Hence &quot;the small enclosure (worth) of Bar&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosworth (Market)</td>
<td>A different origin, from the O.E. pers. name Bosa. &quot;Bosa's worth&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowden</td>
<td>&quot;Buga's hill&quot;. O.E. pers. name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradgate</td>
<td>&quot;the broad way or road&quot;. Cf. Stoneygate, &quot;the stony road&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braunston</td>
<td>Both are derived from &quot;Brant's farm&quot;. O.E. pers. name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branston</td>
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Breedon
Celtic, *brig—"a hill". *Don is O.E. for "hill" also, added later; hence the name is tautological, like Stoney Stanton or Houghton-on-the-hill, q.v.

Bringhurst
"Bryni's hurst". O.E. pers. name. "hurst" originally meant a wooded hill.

Broughton
"burh farm", i.e., "the farm near the fortified place". Cf. Broughton Astley, Upper and Nether Broughton.

Burbage
"burh hill".

Burton
Another form of "burh farm". Fairly common in Leics., and distinguished from each other by feudal and medieval additions like Overy, Lazars, etc. Burrough-on-the-Hill is of similar origin. Here the "burh" referred to is the great earthwork behind the village it would be interesting to study the distribution of these 'burhs' most of which probably relate to the Danish military organisation of the county.

Bushby
Probably O.E. *bysc, "bush, thicket". Hence "the farm in or by the thicket".

Carlton (Curlieu)
From the O.N. karla-tun, the farm of the carls". A carl was in Norse "a freeman, a son of the common folk" corresponding to the O.E. ceorl, from which we get the word churl to-day.

Chadwell
O.E. *cild-cote. "Cottage held by a cild".

Chilcote
O.N. "Klakkr's farm".

Claxton
On of the many "new farms" distinguished later by an additional name denoting the cheerless nature of the landscape.

Cold Newton
"The upper farm", later distinguished as "cold, cheerless". The village lies over 600 feet up on the eastern edge of the wolds.

Cold Overton
"king's farm". O.N. konungr, "king".

Congerstone
Cotesbach  "Colt's hill". O.E. pers. name
Countesthorpe  Originally simply Thorpe, possibly a daughter settlement of Wigston. Later distinguished by the fact that the manor was held by a countess. Hence "'countess' thorp".
Cranoe  From O.E. cræwen, "crows" and hōh, "a promontory, a projecting ridge of land, a hill". Hence "hill of the crows".
Croft  O.E. "a small enclosed field or pasture".
Desford  "Dear's ford". O.E. pers. name, probably from the adjective deor, "beloved" from which we have "dear".
Dishley  From dic-leah, "clearing by or near the dyke".
Eastwell  "The east spring".
Eaton  From O.E. ea, "river, stream". Hence "the farm by the river", here the headstream of the Devon.
Edmondthorpe  Derived not from Edmund but corrupted form of O.E. pers. name Eadmaer. Probably the thorp settled from Wymondham.
Eye Kettleby  Another "Ketill's farm", distinguished by the name of the river flowing near. The river is here called Wreak and this supports the suggestion made in the foregoing pages that it was called Eye throughout its length at one time. As Eye is a later addition it seems to indicate that the two alternative names for the stream survived side by side for some time until Wreak ousted the other.
Fleckney  "Flæcca's land in the marshes". O.E. pers. name.
Foston  "Fol's farm". O.E. pers. name.
Foxton  "Fox farm".
Freeby  "Frithi's farm". O.N. pers. name.
Frisby  Probably from the same personal name as Freeby.
Gilmorton

Originally simply Morton (in Domesday Book), i.e., "farm on the moor". By the time of Edward I (1272-1307) we find the prefix Gild, indicating some association with a gild or members of a gild.

Glen

An interesting name because it reveals the changing of another river-name in Leics. Both Glen Magna and Glen Parva are on the Sence, the original name of which was Glen, meaning "clean".

Glenfield

"The clean field", i.e., free from weeds, etc.

Glooston

"Glor's farm". O.N. pers. name.

Groby

"grey farm", from O.N. gra, "grey". Hence "cheerless, exposed farm".

Gumley

"Godmund's clearing from the forest". O.E. pers. name.

Hallaton

"farm in a small hollow in the hillside", healhtun. This describes Hallaton's position exactly.

Halstead

From O.E. heall-stede, "site of the hall or manor-house", perhaps in relation to Tilton.

Harborough (Market)

"The burh on the boundary". Literally, har means "grey, hoar" and is principally associated with hoarstones or boundary stones. Hence it appears to be used in the sense of "boundary" with other suffixes, like Harborough, Harby and Harston.

Harston

"Boundary stone", the village being named after a stone marking the boundary of the county. Similarly, Harby ("boundary farm") lies close to the Notts. border.

Higham-on-the-Hill

"farm or manor above the surrounding country".

Hoby

"farm on the hill". See also Hoton and Houghton.

Holyoakes

Self-explanatory.

Horninghold

The second element is from the O.E. weald, wald meaning "high forest
land”, although later wold came to mean waste ground which was not necessarily wooded.

Hose

Plural of hoh, “hill”. Although Hose actually lies down in the plain, the steep face of the hills to the south must have been the most conspicuous feature of the landscape.

Hoton

“farm on the hill”. Hoton lies high up on the boulder clay above the Soar valley.

Houghton

Means the same. The addition of on-the-hill is therefore redundant. Houghton is the most conspicuous of the hill-top villages near Leicester.

Humberstone

Named after the “humber” stone, a stone of some sacred significance still standing on the edge of the parish.

Hungerton

“Hungry farm”, so called from the poorness of the soil.

Ibstock

“Ubba’s place” or perhaps “Ubba’s stockaded settlement”. O.E. pers. name.

Ingarsby

“Inguvar’s farm”. O.N. pers. name.

Kibworth

“Cybba’s worth”.

Kirby, Kirkby

Again a very common place-name in Leics., distinguished by feudal and mediaeval second-names. “Farm by the church”.

Knaptoft

O.N. knappr, “summit of a hill, short sharp ascent” and O.N. toft, “a piece of ground, homestead”.

Knighton

O.E. cniht, “boy, youth, servant”, later “servant of some military superior such as the king”, the origin of our word knight, though it had not yet acquired this special meaning. Hence the “farm of the youth or servant”.

Knipton

“farm on the nap of the hill”. O.N. knappr, as above.

Langton

“long farm”, i.e., a settlement covering a considerable extent of country,
to-day distinguished under four different names: Tur Langton, East and West Langton, and Church Langton.

Launde From the Old French launde, "open space in woodland, glade, pasture".

Leicester Almost certainly from Leire-cestor, "the camp on the Leire". At one time the Soar must have been known by the name of its small tributary, the Leire. cf. the village of Leire.

Leire Named after the stream on which it stands, a tributary of the Soar.

Lindridge "the ridge of the lime-trees".

Lubbesthorpe "Lubba's thorp". O.E. pers. name.

Lutterworth "Luthere's small enclosure or worth".

Marefield Perhaps from O.E. mere, "mere, pool", but difficult to distinguish from maere, "boundary". Probably it is the former, as it stands on thick clays that would hold water on the surface, and there is no discoverable boundary nearby. Hence "field with or by the pool".

Markfield From O.E. mearc, "march, boundary". Markfield would be the open space at the edge of the Forest, the boundary of the cleared land.

Medbourne O.E. maed, "meadow, grassland" and burna, "stream, burn".

Melton Scandinavianised form of O.E. middeltun, "the tun in the centre of a district".

Misterton From O.E. mynster, "monastery", used also of a large church generally. Hence "farm by the large church". cf. also Buckminster.

Measham "The farm or manor by the river Mease".

Narborough "the north burh", probably in relation to the burh at Broughton Astley.

Newton Perhaps the commonest place-name in this country, meaning, of course, "the new farm". Nearly always accompanied by a second name for the purposes of distinction.
Newbold  From O.E. *bold*, "building", hence "new building".

Normanton  "farm of the Northmen or Norwegians". This name is discussed in the text.

Norton  "the north farm". In Leics. we have King's Norton and East Norton, among others.

Oadby  In 1086 called *Oldebi*. "The old farm", perhaps named by the Danes in reference to a previously established settlement of the Angles.

Othorpe  "thorp of the oak-trees". Cf. also, Oakthorpe, near Measham in the north-west of the county.

Peatling  Has been discussed at length in the text. Almost certainly not a folk-name, but perhaps an O.E. pers. name compounded with *linch*, "bank, rising ground" which would suit the situation of Peatling Parva at least.

Pickwell  "Pic's spring". O.E. pers. name.

Plungar  Anglo-Scandinavian hybrid, from O.E. *plume*, "plum-tree" and O.N. *garth*, "enclosure". Hence "the enclosure by or with the plum-trees".

Potters Marston  O.E. *merse*, "marsh". Hence "farm in or near the marsh".

Quorn  From O.E. *cweorn*, "quern, hand-mill", associated with Quorndon, q.v.

Quorndon  "The hill (don) from which millstones were quarried". Quorn was the site of the mill itself.

Ratby  O.E. *read*, "red" and -by. "The red farm", probably from the colour of the soil. See Rothley, below.

Ratcliffe  O.E. "the red cliff". At Ratcliffe we have the steep slope of the red Keuper marls rising from the Wreak valley-bottom.

Ravenstone  O.N. pers. name *Hrafn*. "Hrafn's farm".
Rotherby

“farm of Red-hair”, from the O.N. pers. name Rethaer.

Rothley

“the red clearing”. O.E. read, “red”. The Keuper marls which give a red soil come out at Rothley.

Rearsby

From the same root as Rotherby, “farm of Red-hair”.

Saxby

Possibly “farm of the Saxon”. Leicestershire was settled entirely by Angles before the Danish occupation; a Saxon must have been a rarity and hence gave a distinctive label to the place he lived in.

Scalford

O.E. sceald-ford, “shallow ford”. This would normally have developed into something like Shalford, but the Scandinavian influence is apparent here in the hardening of the Sc-. Such hard sounds are characteristic of the Scandinavian languages, cf. ask, English ‘ash’, kirk, English ‘church’ and so on.

Sharnford

O.E. scearn, “filth, dung”. Hence probably the ford fouled by cattle.

Shepshed

Literally “sheep’s head,”, and probably the site of sacrifices to some heathen deity in which a sheep’s head was offered up.

Shenton

O.E. sciene, “beautiful”. Hence “the beautiful farm”.

Shilton

O.E. scylf, “shelving ground”. Hence Shilton is “the farm on shelving ground”, again a suitable description for the site of Earl Shilton.

Smeeton

O.E. smelhe, “smooth”. Hence “smooth farm”, probably from the nature of the land at that spot.

Stanford

“stone ford”, i.e., ford paved with stones.

Stanton

“stone farm”. Sometimes in association with a Roman road, e.g., Stoney Stanton near the Fosse Way, and Stanton Wyville near the so-called Via Devana. But Stanton-under-
Bardon is not near any possible Roman road, and the stone referred to here must relate to the quarries already being worked nearby.

**Stapleford**

O.E. *stapol*, "post, pillar, staple". Hence a ford marked with a post.

**Stapleton**

Similar origin. "Farm by the post or pillar".

**Stoke (Golding)**

Either from O.E. *stoc*, "place", or *stocc*, "stock, stump".

**Stoughton**

In 1086 was Stockton, i.e., "farm made of or surrounded by stocks".

**Stretton**

"*straet-tun*", "farm by or near a Roman road" usually. Thus we have Great and Little Stretton near Leicester; but Stretton-en-le-field, on the north-western border of the county is near no Roman road. Here the "street" referred to must have been of later construction.

**Sutton (Cheney)**

"south farm", perhaps in relation to Market Bosworth

**Swinford**

O.E. *swin*, "pig, swine". Hence "swine-ford".

**Thornton**

O.E. or O.N. "thorn-bush" "Farm near or made of thorns".

**Thorpe**

O.N. "a group of homesteads" in the sense of a smaller village due to colonization from a larger one. As this name is so common especially in Scandinavian England it is nearly always added to by a feudal or mediaeval family name, e.g., Thorpe Satchville, Thorpe Arnold, etc.

**Thrusington**

Another Anglo-Scandinavian hybrid, compounding the O.N. pers. name *Thorstein* with the English -tun. "Thorstein's farm".

**Thurcaston**

A similar hybrid of O.N. pers. name *Thurketill* and -tun.

**Thurlaston**

Similar O.N. pers. name *Thurlak*.

**Thurmaston**

Similar O.N. pers. name *Thormoth*.

**Tilton**

Probably the O.E. pers. name *Tile*, hence "Tile's farm".
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Tonge
Uncertain, but most probably meaning simply "a tongue of land", especially between two streams.

Twycross
O.E. twi-cros, "the double cross".

Twyford
Similarly, "the double ford".

Upton
Simply "upper farm".

Walcote
From O.E. for "foreigners, Welshmen, serfs", often used by the English of the Britons. Hence "the cot (or cottage) of the serfs". Similarly Walton is "the farm of the serfs".

Wanlip
O.E. an, "one lonely" and hlyp, "leaping-place". Hence "the lonely leap", perhaps over the Soar at this point.

Wigston (Magna)
O.N. pers. name Vikingr, "Viking's farm".

Wigston (Parva)
Comes from Wiceston in 1086, and has therefore a different meaning from Wigston (Magna) which it has come to resemble by association of sounds. Probably an O.E. personal name compounded with tun.

Willoughby
Either O.E. welig, "willow" or O.N. pers. name Vigleikr.

Wistow
A contraction for "St. Wigstan's place". Stow is used primarily of land dedicated to some saint or some religious purpose.

Woodthorpe
"thorp in the wood".

Woodhouse
"house in the wood".

Wyken
Plural of wic, usually meaning "the dairy farm of the community". Here there are two wicks close to each other and the name of the later village was formed from this circumstance.