The sixth volume of the survey of the place-names of Leicestershire has just been published*. The name Carlton is thought to be a partly Scandinavianised form of the Old English Ceorlenatum, derived from the plural form of ceorl meaning churl or free peasant with tun meaning a farmstead, village or estate – Ceorl (en) a tun – the village of free peasants.

In Old Norse karl means a freeman of the lower class while tun means a farmstead. It is therefore significant that the earliest documentary references to the village are Karlinton (1202), Karetton, Karilton (1200-1250), and Karelton (1250). Carletone is first recorded in 1277, followed by Carleton (1279), and Carlton (1387). The tun ending is shared with many local villages, and often indicated that the settlement was part of a larger estate.

The name Bufton derives from the Old English abufan – tun meaning above the settlement.

The specific name St Andrew’s Church is noted from 1877, but the earlier name of St Michael’s Church (in Nichols 1795-1811) is not listed. The church was originally a chapelry of Market Bosworth, and was described in 1220 as capellam de Karleton in the Matriculus of Hugh de Wells. In this connection, the field names Michael Meadow, Michaels Close, and Michaels meadow might refer to church land rather than a family with the surname Michael.

The name Friezeland first appears in 1252 as Freseleye, deriving from the Old English Frisa or Fresa meaning a native of Friesland (in the NW Netherlands), and possibly the Old English leah meaning a woodland clearing. The name of Lineage Farm derives from lin, the Old English and Old Norse word for flax, and means the place where flax grows.

Field names are a rich source of information on topography, taxation, land use and ownership. Many field names date from before 1750, and some probably date back to the days of the open-field system – for example the midle fielde, the Northe fielde, the common pasture, and Frisbees hadland. The latter derives from the Old English heafod-land meaning a headland left to turn the plough, either belonging to a family with the surname Frisby, or from Frisby, or both. The Ten Lands meant a close formed by ten lands or selions of a former great open field.

Shackerstone Walk was previously known as Occupation Road, a common name which often meant a private road for the use of the occupiers of the land, and signified an access road through what had been a great open field before enclosure took place.

The Stone pitt fielde, stonpitt furlong (both 1625) and stonpit hedge (1621) refer to the Stone Pits Field (for location see the map in Little Lane). Bull hoke (1625) and Bull hoke furlong (1621) deriving from the Old English hoc meaning a hook or projecting piece of ground later evolved into Bull’s Nook from the Middle English nok meaning a nook of land (now 7 and 9 Main St). Pinfold Close (1635) was the pinfold, where straying livestock would be corralled and kept (now Field Farm).
Two field names in Carlton – *The Bugnall* and *Goblen’s Flat* – together with *Goblin Flat* in Market Bosworth, and *The Goblin* in Shackerstone are said to be associated with a local superstition to do with hobgoblins. I have not come across this before, and would welcome information about any local tales or superstitions involving goblins or similar legendary creatures.

The Place-name Survey is based on documentary sources, but the list does not include the mysterious Hoop Hall, or Hoop Hall Gate which are only known from a Turnpike Act (see the last issue). The survey does not include house or farm names, so there is no reference to Carlton Hall or Carlton Manor, or to names which have not been written down such as Harry’s Grave or Nanny Sand’s Corner.


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Source: Carlton News, August 2014, p.5-6.