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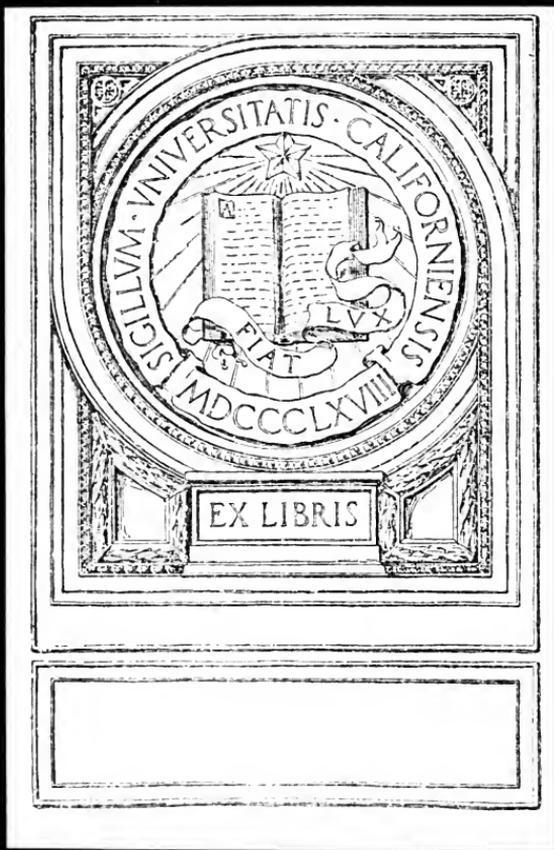
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NORSE PLACE-NAMES IN ESSEX.¹

BY J. H. ROUND, M.A., LL.D.

THE late Professor Freeman, in one of his historical works, was led by the mention of Milford Haven to write as follows:

In those waters the wandering wiking had seen the likeness of his own fiords, and had left his mark here and there on a *holm*, a *gard*, a *thorp*, a *ford*, some of them bearing names which seem to go back to the gods of Scandinavian heathendom.²

Again, in local papers on 'Anglia Transwalliana' and 'South Pembrokeshire castles,' he observed that

Such names as Hasgard and Freystrop seem to point not only to Scandinavian occupation, but to Scandinavian occupation in heathen times.³

In "the haven of Milford," he added,

We seem to see a Scandinavian trace; the *ford* here is surely neither an English *ford* nor a Welsh *fford*, but a Scandinavian *fiord*, like Waterford and Wexford. And a *fiord* of very truth it is; a *fiord* with endless creeks running far up the country. . . . We are here on a fiord of the Ocean, . . . the great fiord of Pembrokeshire," etc., etc.⁴

From Pembrokeshire to Essex is a far cry; Milford Haven and Hamford Water⁵ might not, at first, suggest a similar Norse origin. I have long thought that in the latter name we might detect a Norse *fiord*; for there is nothing in its situation to suggest an English *ford*, one of those fords which are so familiar to students of Essex place-names. I should, however, hardly venture to hazard this suggestion, were it not that—at the head of the large inlet of the sea known as Hamford water and behind Holmes island—there starts the parish boundary between Kirby and Thorpe (in the old Soke of Eadwulfsness), both of which, I shall show, have distinctively Scandinavian names. As for the name of Holmes island, it is found in Morant's work, where it is mentioned under Mose, and in the maps of Chapman & André and of Greenwood (1825). It now figures, however, on the Ordnance map as "Skipper's island,"—I know not

¹ I use the word 'Norse' here, instead of the more correct 'Scandinavian,' for the sake of convenience only.

² *The Reign of William Rufus*, vol. ii., p. 95. A footnote to this passage explains that the writer was alluding to Hasgard and Freystrop.

³ *English towns and districts*, p. 39.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

⁵ In north-east Essex.



why. The name 'Holmes' has no meaning, but if the original name was 'Holm,' which is one of the Scandinavian survivals in Mr. Freeman's list above, it would correctly indicate "a holme or island."¹ The pleonasm of Holme *island* would be parallel to that of 'Mersea island.'

In Essex, however, there were two cases of islands which, beyond dispute, had names ending in the Scandinavian 'holm,' although their exact locality cannot now be identified. Indeed, their very existence seems to have been overlooked. When Robert Mantel, who was sheriff of the county for several years under Henry II., and who was lord of Little Maldon, endowed the abbey of Beeleigh in or about 1180, two small islands, named 'Rucholm' and 'Hardholm,' were included by name in his grant.² Their locality must have been within the bounds of Maldon, a town of which the history has yet to be written, but which, as Morant duly observed, played a considerable part in the 'Danish' wars of the tenth century.

I propose to show in this paper that the termination 'holm' in place-names is of Scandinavian origin and that the Northmen introduced it into Normandy when they settled in that region and, in England, into the 'Danish' district and even into the neighbourhood of Maldon, although this was further south than one would expect to find it. I remember, when an undergraduate at Oxford, surprising the late Mr. (afterwards Professor) York Powell by informing him that we had in Essex two such distinctly Scandinavian names as Thorpe and Kirby in the 'Soken' district. The termination 'thorpe' is not of great rarity in Essex; for in addition to Thorpe-le-Soken, in Tendring Hundred, we have East Thorpe and Ingledesthorpe (in White Colne) in Lexden Hundred, and Gestingthorpe in Hinckford Hundred, while, in the south-east of the county, we find North Thorpe and South Thorpe in Southchurch, by Shoeburyness. The county, therefore, may claim some five or six examples, of which four may be found in north-east Essex. It is somewhat strange, therefore, that a county paper, which has done much to arouse interest in the history and antiquities of Essex, should assert that our county has only two, namely "Thorpe-le-Soken and Thorpe Bay (near Southend)." Moreover, its statement that "'Thorp' is merely Saxon for village"³ destroys the interest of the name; for its distribution is virtually restricted to a certain portion

¹ *Lincolnshire final concords* (1920), II., lvi.

² See the charter of Richard I. (7 Dec., 1189), confirming Robert's grant, in *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, vol. v., pp. 186-7: "Dnas parvas insulas quæ dicuntur Rucholm et Hardholm."

³ *Essex County Standard*, 18 March, 1922. The same statement was made by Morant under Southchurch and Thorpe-le-Soken.

f England, especially the 'Danelaw' and East Anglia. In Lincolnshire, an essentially 'Danish' county, it is pointed out by Canon Foster that the work of identifying place-names is rendered especially difficult by their excessive duplication; for the shire contains "six Kirkbys and probably no fewer than two dozen Thorpes."¹

Now, to begin with Scandinavia itself, we find, right out in the Baltic, the considerable island of Bornholm, lying between Germany and Sweden. Stockholm itself, the capital of Sweden, has been termed, from its multitude of islands,² the Venice of the north, and on the south-west coast we find Laholm and Engeholm. South of Christiania Norway has its 'Holmestrand,' and the *holmgang* of Scandinavian antiquity was an encounter on an island.

In Normandy there are several examples of 'Houlme' (*Hulmus*) or some variant thereof occurring in place-names to denote an island. Stapleton, in his learned *Observations on the Exchequer rolls of Normandy* (1840, 1844) has pointed out that in the Cotentin (now the Department of La Manche) Henry II. had joined his mother, the Empress Maud, in endowing "the abbey of her foundation in the island of Holm near Cherbourg"³ (now in Equerdreville), and has cited other instances.⁴ Among these there is one of quite exceptional interest. Further south in the Cotentin, where the Ouve and the Pante⁵ pass through a wide area of marshland,⁶ we find "the church of St. Mary of Le Homme" (*de Hulmo*), of which Stapleton writes:

This mention of a *Prevoté* is distinctive of a *bourg*, whilst *holm* is expressive of locality surrounded by water⁷; such was the site of the bourg of le Homme, called L'Isle Marie from the adjacent marsh, which had this name (*Mareium*, *Teri*), rather than by reason of the dedication of the church within its territory to the blessed Mary (II., xxviii.)

Essex antiquaries may be reminded of the somewhat similar corruption by which Stow Mareys (named from the family of Mareys) became "Stow St. Mary on the church bills (*sic*) and even on the sign posts."⁸ The surname Mareys must represent, not (as the late Mr. Chancellor thought) Morice, but the French 'marais' Latinised as *de Marisco*.⁹

¹ *Lincolnshire final concords*, II., p. 1.

² About half-way between Stockholm and Bornholm is Borgholm on the island of Öland.

³ *Op. cit.*, I., clxxv., and my *Calendar of Documents; France*, pp. 334-5.

⁴ *Ibid.* I., ccvi.b; II., cccvi.-cccvii.

⁵ These localities are best shown on Stapleton's map of ancient Normandy, which is reproduced in Prof. Powicke's valuable work on *The loss of Normandy*.

⁶ "Traverse les marais de Carentan . . . s'engage dans de vastes prairies marécageuses."

⁷ The italics are mine.

⁸ *E.A.T.*, vol. vii., p. 409. The official name, at present, seems to be 'Stow Maries,' a compromise which has been adopted in the Ordnance Survey.

⁹ See *Essex Fines*, vol. i., pp. 183 (No. 1054), 205 (No. 1097)



Of even more direct interest is Stapleton's observation (II., xxiv.-xxv.) that "Mareium (*Meri*) designated the marshy territory along the banks of the river L'Ouve in the vicinity of Le Homme, otherwise L'Isle Marie, adjacent to the *communes* of Liésville on one side and of Picauville on the other." For this 'Meri' is no other than that which is found in our *Essex Fines* (vol. i., p. 19, No. 13), where the index identifies it only as "Meri (Normandy)." I have, however, shown how it came to be connected, through the Bohuns, with the Fitz Walters of Dunmow and Woodham Walter.¹ These Bohuns derived their name from Bohon, as Stapleton has explained,² observing that "Carentan is in the immediate vicinity of Bohon, in the marshy district watered by the river Tante."³ The importance of "the castle of La Houlme" in the Cotentin, the "castel æt Hulme" of the English chronicler, is duly recognised by Freeman in his *William Rufus* (vol. i., pp. 462-3, 465).

Another instance of this termination is found, to the eastward of Cherbourg, in Quettehou on the coast, with the fortified island of Tatihou adjacent. Nor must one omit the island of 'Jettehou' or 'Keitehulm' off Guernsey, or the church of St. Mary of Lishou in that island.⁴

Returning now to England, we are reminded of our two Essex islets by the names of larger "islands in the Bristol channel, the Steep and the Flat Holm, which form such prominent objects in the view from either coast."⁵ It was to them that Gytha, Harold's mother, had fled for refuge, on the fall of Exeter in 1067. In earlier days, as Freeman writes, a band of Danish invaders had there found shelter; but while, in their case, this has led to their earlier names, 'Ronech' and 'Echin,' being replaced by those of Scandinavian origin, our Essex islets, on the contrary, have lost their 'Danish' names. Passing from the south-west to the eastern coast of England, one finds, of course, in Lincolnshire peculiarly strong traces of Scandinavian settlement.⁶ In Canon Foster's scholarly and most valuable work, *Final Concords of the county of Lincoln*⁷ (1920), of which the Lincoln Record Society may feel justly

¹ *E.A.T.*, vol. vii., pp. 329-330. I take this opportunity of explaining that "the land of Mers" of another and an important Essex fine (vol. i., p. 13, No. 38) is not actually "in Normandy," but at the mouth of the river, which divides it from Picardy.

² *Op. cit.*, II., xxii.-xxviii. See, however, my *Calendar of documents* preserved in France (pp. xlv.-xlvii.) for a criticism of Stapleton's conclusions.

³ *Ibid.* p. xxvi., note.

⁴ See my *Calendar*, pp. 252, 269.

⁵ Freeman, *Norman Conquest*, vol. iv. (1871), p. 158.

⁶ See my *Feudal England*, pp. 70 *et seq.*

⁷ Described, on the title-page, as 'Vol. II.,' as continuing the series printed by Messrs. Massingberd & Boyd in 1896.

proud, there is a section (xv.) dealing with "lost villis and other forgotten places": we there find such names as Holme¹ (in Clee); Brakenholm, "an island" in Farlsthorpe; Holme Spinney (p. lxi); and Haverholm (near Mumby). Among the county's religious houses one notes the names of Tupholme abbey and the priories of Haverholme and Thornholm. In Lincolnshire also was "the Isle (*insula*) of Axholme," the centre of the Mowbrays' power.

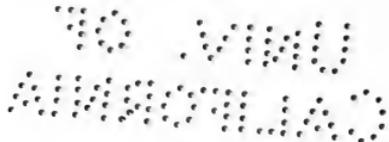
In Essex I have been able to trace the word 'holm' as occurring in more cases than the two Maldon islets. The outlets of the Blackwater and the Chelmer have been materially affected by the making of the navigation canal: on Chapman & André's map, however, one can see the stretch of marshland between Maldon and Heybridge as it had previously been. It was traversed, apparently, as at Bow, by a causeway and two bridges, from one of which the present Heybridge has derived its name. One may here note that the combination of a 'holm' with adjacent marshland is found in Lincolnshire, where Canon Foster observes, of Holme Spinney,² that the site "is partly surrounded by water, and in former days it may well have been entirely encircled, and thus have been a holme or island." He adds that "standing in the midst of the low lands near the Witham, which are still liable to be flooded, it must have been a position of great natural and artificial strength." We have seen above that, in the Cotentin, an island 'holm' had an "adjacent marsh,"³ and this is the conjunction found in the Maldon-Heybridge case, where the Blackwater and the Chelmer met.

By a strange coincidence Heybridge ('Hebrugge') belonged to the dean and chapter of St. Paul's—who were lords of the manor and patrons of the living,—while the bishop of London had manorial rights in Maldon. When we add to the manors held by the dean and chapter those which the bishop held in Essex—of which Bishops Stortford was the feudal head—we realise how extensive, between them, were the holdings in our county which were connected with St. Paul's. We have, however, to bear in mind the fundamental distinction between the manors held of the bishop, as of any lay baron, by knight service (*servitium militare*) and those which the dean and chapter held in frank almain, from a period long antecedent to the introduction of the feudal system into this country. Broadly speaking, we are mainly dependent (so far as printed

¹ By a strange coincidence there was here "a chapel of St. Nicholas at Holme" (*op. cit.*, p. liii.), as there was a "chapel of St. Nicholas" which went with "the church of St. Mary of Le Homme" in the Cotentin (Stapleton, II., xxviii.)

² *Op. cit.*, pp. lx.-lxi. The name has long been obsolete.

³ Stapleton, *op. cit.*, II., xxviii.



matter is concerned), for surveys of the capitular manors, on Archdeacon Hale's *Domesday of St. Paul's*, issued by the Camden Society in 1858, and on the valuable report by Mr. (now Sir Henry) Maxwell Lyte (the present Deputy Keeper of the Public Records) on the records of the dean and chapter, which are preserved at St. Paul's.¹ These two main sources can be supplemented, in some cases, by the *Essex Fines* which are now being issued by our Society. There are also various returns of those who held of the bishop by knight service, such as that which was made by Bishop Gilbert in 1166.²

The original name of the present Heybridge was 'Tidwolditune,' and it is so styled in early records, such as the surveys made for the dean and chapter of St. Paul's in 1181 and 1222.³ At the former date, the dean of St. Paul's was Ralf de Diceto, the well-known historian, who was then in his first year of office; in 1222 the dean was Robert de Watford. Strange as the system may seem to us, the capitular manors, in these surveys, are found to have been held on lease by 'farmers' (*firmarii*), who were, frequently, actual members of the capitular body. This system was fully explained, in his book, by Archdeacon Hale, and the late Bishop Stubbs dealt with the earlier survey in his introduction to *The historical works of Ralph de Diceto* (Rolls Series).⁴ The bishop was one of the founders of our Society, when holding (*E.A.T.*, vol. xiii., p. 2) the Essex living of Navestock, and was an honorary member when bishop. He gives a list of those who were "Farmers of the capitular estates" in 1181. Among them were the archdeacon of Canterbury, who was the son of a bishop and who became a bishop himself, the archdeacons of London and of Gloucester, and the prebendary of Twyford. At the time of the later survey (1222) the dean himself, who had 'farmed' Chingford, was 'fermor' of the great manor of Tillingham, and canons had followed his example.

Among these was Ranulf de Bisanc', who was 'farming' Heybridge ('Tidwolditun') and who had been a benefactor to the neighbouring abbey of Beeleigh.⁵ To the name of his predecessor, Peter 'de Hebrege,'⁶ I attach some importance, as carrying back the name

¹ This report was made for the Royal Commission on Historical MSS., by whom it was published in 1883 (9th Report, vol. 1., pp. 1-72). The index is somewhat difficult to consult, as in many of these reports.

² *Red Book of the Exchequer*, pp. 186-7. Such returns as this require to be annotated by someone who has the necessary local knowledge.

³ See the *Domesday of St. Paul's* (ed. Hale), pp. 52-8, 142, 149.

⁴ See *Historical introductions to the Rolls Series* (ed. Hassall, 1902), pp. 68-72.

⁵ *Report*, pp. 9a, 11b. Hale wrongly gives his christian name as Ralph.

⁶ "Quondam manerii firmarii." Hale, *op. cit.*, pp. 53, 58.

of Heybridge (from which he must have derived it) to the early years of the thirteenth century, if not earlier, although, in 1222, the manor was still styled 'Tidwoldintune.'¹

Now, in the survey of that date we read that in the demesne there were twelve acres "in holin," and, on the opposite page, of forty acres "in pastura de holin." One might hesitate to alter this reading, were it not that a document at St. Paul's, nearly forty years earlier, records that, in 1184, Mathew, son and heir-apparent of Robert Mantel, lord of Little Maldon and founder of Beeleigh abbey, executed, at the Exchequer, a formal quitclaim of any right in "the pasture of *Holm*."² One need not, therefore, hesitate to read Hale's 'Holin' as 'Holm,' an emendation which merely needs the alteration of 'in' into 'm.' Only those who are familiar with mediæval MSS. are aware how much may depend on the right reading of two or three 'minims.' For instance, in an interesting paper on the "records of Tiltey Abbey," our late esteemed treasurer, Mr. W. C. Waller, mentions "a grant relating to Widdington," in which we read of "the brook running from the vineyard of the King of Almaine to the clerks' spring (*de vinario domini Regis Allemanni versus fontem clericorum*)."³ English vineyards are a subject of considerable interest, and I have contributed a paper on "Essex vineyards in Domesday" to our *Transactions*.⁴ But *vinarium* (if the word exists) does not denote a vineyard (*vinea*); what it does denote can only be stated when we have corrected the reading by taking the two 'minims,' as 'u,' not as 'n.'⁵ We thus obtain the form 'viuarium,' which is found, for instance, in the Essex portion of the Pipe Roll for 1188 that I am now correcting for the press.⁶ This was then the scribal way of writing 'vivarium,' *i.e.* the fishstew that is still so frequent a relic of mediæval days in Essex. It is obviously more appropriate that a stream should issue from a fishpond than from a vineyard.

¹ Morant asserts that this name was "used in records till the reign of King Edward I.," but the two names appear to have been so used concurrently. 'Hebregge' must be carefully distinguished from "Hobregge *alias* Hubbridge Hall" in Witham (as Morant styles it), with which it is sometimes confused (*e.g.* in *Red Book of the Exchequer*, p. 1208).

² "In prato de Tidwolditun quod vocatur *Holm*." This transaction was printed by Madox in his *Exchequer* (1711) from Dr. Hutton's MS. (see Stubbs, *Introductions to Rolls Series*, p. 72) at Oxford (in the Bodleian) and by Newcourt in his *Repertorium*, from the original register at St. Paul's. Newcourt wrote *circa* 1700.

³ *E.A.T.*, vol. viii., p. 355. *Fons clericorum* is a Latinisation of Clerkenwell.

⁴ *E.A.T.*, vol. vii., p. 249.

⁵ These two letters are sometimes difficult to distinguish in mediæval MSS.

⁶ A man is there fined 15 marcs (10*l.*) for catching a fish in the king's fishpond ("pro pisce capto in *viuario regis*"), p. 38.



Let us now pass from the word 'Holm'—as a trace of Scandinavian settlement and of the strife in the Maldon district at the time of the Danish wars—to the 'Hope,' as found in the broad marshes which formed so distinctive a feature of our county's coastline.

It is one of the many points of interest that the publication of *Essex Fines* by our Society has brought to light that we find in these documents mention of a 'hope' of marshland. At East Tilbury, in 1201, we read of fourpence yearly being granted by a man "from his part of one 'hope,' . . . in Estillibire, in the great marsh"¹ and of "one pasture which is called Brodhope."² We read also of "a moiety of Brodehope in the marsh of Rainham" (*Reneham*).³

At Bowers Gifford there was a marsh known as 'Shepehope' or 'Syphope.'⁴ It is also mentioned by Morant under that parish, which is of special interest because of a reserved render from it of "one weigh of cheese at Midsummer."⁵ It may be remembered how I made a special feature of this sheep-farming, for cheese, in the Essex marshes, when dealing with the Essex portion of the Domesday survey.⁶

Returning now to the *Domesday of St. Paul's*, we find at Tillingham, three of those 'wicks' which denote these sheep-walks in the marsh.⁷ At that point, where the marshland was of great extent, there was a tenant of the dean and chapter holding a 'hope' thereof for two shillings a year.⁸ I can now deal with the very interesting return concerning Heybridge church in the same work. When Ralf 'de Diceto,' on becoming dean of St. Paul's, made enquiry as to the state of certain capitular manors and churches, in 1181, return was made as follows:

Habuit ecclesia ista de terra arabili xx acras ante dedicationem, et in dedicatione datæ sunt x acræ de terra arabili per Hugonem Decanum, et in bosco vij acre, et unum masagium juxta pontem, et mariscum, s[cilicet] *Chirchehop (sic)*.⁹

This evidently means that, when the church was dedicated, its glebe was increased by certain gifts, of which one was a 'hope' of marsh, that was thenceforth styled, on that account, 'Church hope.' The practice of granting land to a church, when it was built or rebuilt,

¹ *Essex Fines*, vol. i., p. 21 (31). ² *Ibid*, No. 29. ³ Vol. i., p. 26.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 83 (No. 59); p. 143 (No. 756).

⁵ *Essex Fines*, vol. i., p. 143 (No. 756). In our latest instalment (vol. ii., p. 51, No. 323) this annual tender of cheese is shown heavily in arrear in 1285.

⁶ *Victoria History of England, Essex*, vol. i., pp. 368-9.

⁷ "In marisco sunt iiij bercarie . . . howich . . . middelwich . . . doddeswich" (*op. cit.* p. 59).

⁸ *Op. cit.* p. 60—"unam hopam de marisco pro ij solidis."

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

is one of which I have noted various examples in Essex. 'Hugh the Dean' (of St. Paul's) was Hugh de Marney, of whom I hope to speak when I deal with the early Marneys. Lastly, it should be observed that the bridge (at Heybridge) is here spoken of as already in existence in 1181.

In later days and in a document of very different character, we again meet with 'hopes' of marsh. This is the Inquest after death, held at Brentwood in 1418, on Robert Burford, of London, bell-founder.¹ This Inquest takes us back to the great Tilbury marshes of which I spoke above. We there read of "one marsh called Bakereshope . . . two hopes called Bachelers hopes . . . one marsh called Mousehope . . . one hope called the Cornhope in the Mersshe."²

There is some ground for supposing that 'holm' and 'hope' are not the only terms connected with the Essex marshlands; those who are willing to help in tracing the existence of others might do useful work by noting their occurrence when they come across them.

¹ *E.A.T.* (N.S.), vol. iii., pp. 238-240; vol. vii., p. 275.

² Mr. Fowler, I ought to add, has drawn my attention to the occurrence of an 'Avicelhope' in Boreham (Anc. Deed, A. 11849) as unconnected with the salt marshes.

THE HORNCHURCH ROAD.

BY J. H. ROUND, M.A., LL.D.

IN 1896 the churches of Hornchurch and of Upminster were visited by our Society, and the late Mr. Chalkley Gould, who wrote an account of the proceedings,¹ has chronicled for us that, from Romford, where its members assembled, they "proceeded along the Hornchurch Road." It is of this "Hornchurch Road" that I have something new to say.

In his interesting and stimulating paper on "Roman Roads in Essex," Mr. Miller Christy claimed, two years ago,² that this highway was the first part of a Roman road, till then (I believe) unknown, leading to the station of 'Othona,' now "at Bradwell-on-Sea." According to him this road runs "everywhere fairly direct, right to Othona, a distance of very nearly fifty miles." He asserts that "the whole of the Roman road is still in use, and that its line is remarkably well preserved"; indeed, that "no other road in Essex, except Stane Street, is so straight or so continuous for so long a distance." Now I myself cannot claim to have made any study of Roman road construction, either in theory or in practice; but, we must remember, the roads we owe to the men of Imperial Rome are the link—in England at least—that unites the present with the past, and that did so even more in mediæval days. The only properly constructed roads then available for our forefathers must have been those which the Romans, when they abandoned this country, left behind them, and for the upkeep of which there was, so far as we know, no organisation, either central or local, among the scattered settlements of the liberty-loving English.

This is a subject with which I have dealt, some five years ago, in a paper, published in our *Transactions*³ on the Selden Society's volume on "Public works in mediæval law."

I have there shown that although bridges were sometimes a charge on the villas or estates adjoining them, "the broken bridges

¹ Vol. vi. (n.s.), p. 199.

² *E.A.T.* vol. xv., pp. 217-8.

³ Vol. xiv., pp. 338-342.

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TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

Essex Archæological Society.

VOL. XVI., PART III.

NEW SERIES.

*Round, John H.
Norse place names in Essex*



COLCHESTER :

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY AT THE MUSEUM IN THE CASTLE.

1922.

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