

# Christchurch in the Making

## How Our Township Grew

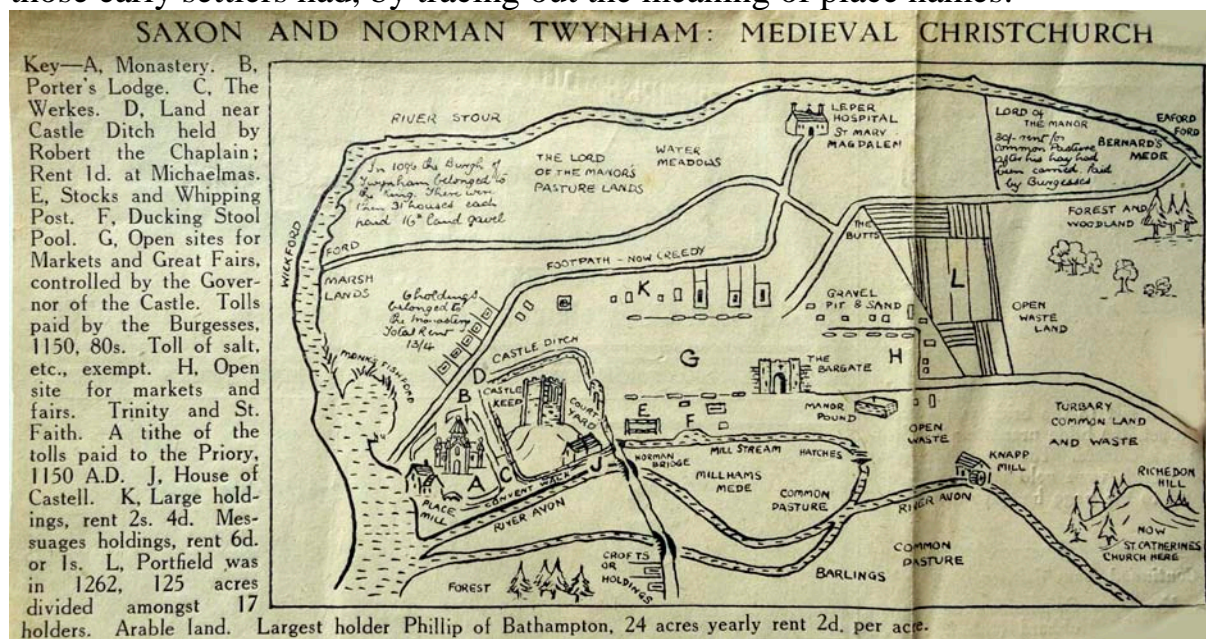
### Map Building by Research

C.T. August 28th 1937

**THAT ENGLAND WAS ALWAYS A MOST DESIRABLE AND PLEASANT PLACE AND OF MARKED APPEAL TO THE PIONEER, IS CERTAIN, BUT WE DO NOT REALIZE THAT SO MUCH THAT GOES TO-DAY TO MAKE IT PLEASANT IS DUE TO THOSE SAME HARDY FIRST SETTLERS.**

**The vivid green pastures and meadows which are its special glory were only won from the Forest by years of toil and husbandry.**

Dr. J. D. Chambers developed this theme in published articles and by a B.B.C. broadcast. He stressed the thrill of seeking out evidences of the struggle those early settlers had, by tracing out the meaning of place names.



### WHAT "FIELD" MEANS.

"Consider," he said, "the number of place names ending in "field"; this is a German word meaning an open place or glade in the forest.... Another name indicating the presence of trees, and one which is more common is 'ley' or 'ly.' Then there are 'dens' or 'dales' and 'cotes,' or 'cots,' which were scattered groups of woodmen's cottages.

'Hurst,' indicates a wooded hill, 'holt '—a wood. 'Hay,' a fence, 'hithe'—a landing place. 'Ey'—an island or marsh, 'low'—a burial ground.

So, argued Dr. Chambers, the names of the roads and fields of the village will give clues to the growth of the community. The first purpose of the road was to provide a way for men and beasts and roads which have come into being in this way, as part of the organic life of the village or town, can usually be distinguished by their narrow windings and sharp bends, from the broad highways laid out by enclosure commissioners.

Dr. Chambers, for all his interest, is more of an enthusiast than an authority upon his subject, and he puts forward some very obvious facts as a matter for wonderment; yet the subject of his discourse contained sufficient interest to whet the appetite of many who are proud of their ancient town, and one locally who is notable for his own explorations into the historic past, was Alderman Russell Oakley.

### MEDIAEVAL CHRISTCHURCH.

Dr. Chambers suggestion that a building up of a town as laid out in the past by means of place-names would prove of great interest, was realised to the full by Alderman Oakley, who forthwith proceeded by reference to the Domesday Book, deeds, documents and place-names to reconstruct Mediaeval Christchurch.

Once he had started delving, Mr. Oakley stumbled across many survivals of a vanished world. When he had got his information complete, he sketched a plan of the town, which Miss Blofeld, of Christchurch, completed into the accompanying sketch.

He was able to place the position, to almost a nicety of, for an instance, the old stocks and whipping post, and that even more reprehensible mechanical punishment, "The Ducking Stool."

Piece by piece, his map grew, and the fascination of filling it in, still continues.

"An example of what may be done to reconstruct a township is seen in the accompanying plan of Christchurch in Hampshire," says Dr. Chambers, "which was drawn up by a listener (Alderman E. R. Oakley) and very kindly sent on to me."

It is by Alderman Oakley's courtesy that we are enabled to reproduce his map of Saxon and Norman Twynham.

By studying it, quite a fund of interest will be discovered, and it needs only the application of one's imagination in order to bring to light with a picturesque vividness many scenes of the past.

### PUNISHMENT OF A "SCOLD."

Picture, for an instance, a happening by the waterside of what we call "Millhams" (strangely enough we sentence wrong-doers to-day to their punishment at a spot near where the ducking stool and whipping post stood. If ever ground can be haunted or possessed by black and angry thoughts, Millhams must be physically discoloured by such earth-bound emotions.

The rabble and the victim, the "authorities" of that day engaged upon an official "ducking," come to life once you may picture the actual location. Punishment perhaps was meted out to some poor innocent woman accused of witchcraft, and one may visualise the glee of the louts and the deep satisfaction of the authoritative but narrow-minded officials in administering such a satisfactory sentence—satisfactory to the beholder.

Picture old Bargates, once you are familiarised by its location by this map, and note (and reconstruct to your own satisfaction) the "site for markets and great fairs. See the first seedlings of the High Street, and note also how closely the Forest crept up to our very thresholds in those distant Saxon days.