



St. Andrew's Hill in 1960. Its old name was Hog Hill and the first Corn Exchange was built where the cars are now parked.

CAMBRIDGE

STREET NAMES

BY ENID PORTER

A 13th century visitor to Cambridge would have found no neatly-lettered signs to direct him through the streets and lanes of what the planners now call the 'historic centre', nor, had there been any, would he have been able, probably, to read them.

But he would soon have learned from the inhabitants how they had come to distinguish one street from another; how they had bestowed on one, perhaps, the name of a local land or property owner, on another the name of the trade carried on in it, on others the names of nearby churches or other landmarks. Thus it was natural that the lane leading to the nunnery of St. Radegund should be called Radegund's Lane or Nuns' Lane, just as it was natural that the name should be changed to Jesus Lane when Jesus College was built on the nunnery site. Many roads in the oldest parts of Cambridge have had several names in the course of their existence.

Sometimes our ancestors bestowed on a street a semi-humorous nickname, or on another a name descriptive of its appearance. Until the 18th century the lane we know as Botolph Lane was Pennyfarthing Lane, a name given to it in earlier times because in it stood a hostel for very poor students — men worth not much more than a penny-farthing each.

Drummer Street is the modern form of Drusemere which means a muddy pool, for two watercourses meet here; while the 'honey' of Honey Hill was, to those who first named it, nothing more than the sticky, muddy ground which formed the hill. We can only conjecture why a lane near King's College came to be called Piss-Pott lane: its length is given in a 17th century document as 132 yards. And was it, perhaps, because anyone who passed through the narrow alley which lay between St. Edward's Church and houses built close up against it, had literally to creep under the overhanging eaves of the tenements that the passage

was called Creeper's Lane?

And was the name of Cut Throat Lane, which is now Whitehill Road, first given because a murder was committed there or because, as is more likely, the lane was a lonely, eerie one to walk along on a dark night?

Creeper's Lane is but one of the many streets, yards, lanes and courts which have now disappeared, and in many cases we should not have known of their existence or even the early names of some of our present streets had these names not been entered in old deeds and on early maps and plans. In these documents they appear over the centuries in the Latin of the clerks and in varying English forms and spelling as our language evolved to that which we write and speak today.

Petty Cury is the name which probably arouses the curiosity of most visitors to Cambridge. Passing through many forms and spellings from the *parva Cokeria* referred to in a document of 1332 and the *Petycurye Strete* recorded in 1552, to the form we know today, the meaning has always been the same: the little Cook's Row which was an extension to the main row of pastry-cooks' shops and eating houses which occupied, probably, part of the market place.

Not far away is St. Tibb's Row, again one of our more curious names,

for in comparison with other towns and cities of comparable antiquity Cambridge is now relatively poor in unusual street names, the modern ones being often less picturesque than the earlier ones they replaced.

The Row, often simply called Tib Row in the past — it is thus printed on a map of 1801 — was named after St. Tibba, a daughter of Penda, the 7th century King of Mercia. She was the patron saint of falconers and it was fitting that her name should be given to a Row which adjoined the ancient Falcon Inn whose yard alone remains today.

The market area abounded once in interesting names for here, of course, was the main trading centre of old Cambridge and the makers and sellers of the various wares tended to keep together in groups according to their trades and crafts. Our present Market Street has borne this name only from the early part of the last century. Before that it was Shoemaker Row and, earlier still, Cordwainer Row because here lived and worked the cordwainers — the shoemakers who used the fine leather imported from Cordova in Spain.

Guildhall Street was once the centre of the meat trade and was known as Butcher Row, with a later extension in Short or New Butcher Row which is

now the Wheeler Street whose name perpetuates the memory of Richard Wheeler, a Petty Cury basket maker of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Corn Exchange Street, from the 18th century until the 1840's, was Slaughter House Lane and, before that, Fair Yard Lane — named from the Hog and Horse Fair once held on Hog Hill, now St. Andrew's Hill where the first Corn Exchange was built.

Peas Hill has retained its ancient name to remind us of the wares once sold here and of the fact that, in company with Market Hill and St. Andrew's Hill it stood, in earlier times, at a higher level above the river than it does today. Over the centuries the surrounding lower, swampy ground was gradually filled in to provide firm footings for the buildings of the growing town, so that today the hills are hills only in name.

Old documents record that the market was once divided into several sections, among them the Milk Market, the Malt Market and the Leather Market, while the names of many rows of traders' booths are similarly recorded: Cutlers' Row, for example, Lorimers' Row where metal harness fittings were sold, Smeamongers' Row where Cambridge citizens could buy tallow, lard and other grease, Pewterers' Row and many more. The names of the Duddery where woollen cloth was sold, and of the Shraggery where the dealers in old clothes brought their wares, have long since vanished, but Butter Row stood, though in its last years no butter was sold in it, until part of the present Guildhall was built on its site in 1936. Its 19th century sign is in the Folk Museum.

Some of the landmarks which gave their names to Cambridge streets have now disappeared, leaving us with a Castle Street without a castle, a Mill Road without the mill which once stood near Covent Garden, a Mill Lane surviving the King's and Bishop's Mills which stood near Newnham Pool, and a Free School Lane from which the Perse School has twice moved to new sites.

All Saints Passage commemorates the church, pulled down in 1865 and rebuilt in Jesus Lane, by which it ran, just as earlier its name of Dolphin Lane had been given to it by reason of the Dolphin Inn which stood at its Sidney Street end. The Post Office, which moved in 1850 from 44 Sidney Street to the site of the old Brazen George Inn, moved again in 1885 to the corner of Petty Cury and St. Andrew's Street;

Post Office Terrace, however, once the yard of the Brazen George, survives.

Some of the streets which now bear the names of the Colleges which stand in them once bore those of earlier buildings. The house of the Dominicans or Black Friars, for example, on whose site Emmanuel College now stands, gave the names of Black Friars Lane and Preachers Lane to St. Andrew's Street which, previously, had been known as Hadstock Way because it led ultimately to Hadstock in Essex. Our modern Emmanuel Road, was until the middle of the last century, called Miller's Lane, named probably from a local landowner.

Christ's Lane, which was "lost" a few years ago in the redevelopment of St. Andrew's Street, had several names before it acquired that of the College by which it ran. Because it went in the direction of Cherry Hinton it was referred to in a 13th century document as Hinton Way or Hinton Lane. In 1368 we find it named Rokes Lane — Roke probably being the name of a landowner. Cambridge citizens, however, took this to be Rogue's Lane from which, by association of ideas, evolved for a time the name of Hangman's Lane.

Pembroke Street and Downing Street were, together, known in the 13th century first as Langrith Lane and then as Dowdiver Lane. The first name was probably in reference to a stream — the long stream — which flowed into another called the Lorterburne or muddy stream whose course followed Free School Lane which was earlier called Lorterburne Street. The name Dowdiver evolved from an early form — Deus Deners Lane — which recalled the Duzedeners (that is the Twelvepenny) family who once owned property here. Downing Street also bore in the 18th century the name of Birdbolt Lane because on the corner, where the Norwich Union buildings now stand, was the Bird Bolt Inn, while in the 16th century Pembroke Street was called Plot and Nuts Lane.

Fair Street is obviously named from the annual fair still held on nearby Midsummer Common, but Stourbridge Fair, once the greatest in Europe, has not been proclaimed since 1933. The memory of it lingers, however, in the names of Garlic Row and, perhaps, of Cheddars Lane — names which recall the fact that in all fairs the merchants' booths were set up in rows according to the different trades. Yet another Cambridge fair gave its name to a street, for Park

Street was once Garlic Fair Lane because, until the first few years of the last century, the Garlic Fair granted to the nuns of St. Radegunds in early times was still held in Jesus Lane.

Eden Street, Paradise Street and Adam and Eve Row may seem today incongruous names to find in such a built-up area; the streets, however, stand on part of what was once a market garden which was popularly known as the Garden of Eden and to which many Cambridge people went early in the last century to buy their vegetables. Prospect Row was so named because from it a view of the garden could be obtained. Orchard Street, not far away, did in fact run alongside an orchard — that of Charles Humphry whose large house stood, early in the last century, on the site of Earl Street, Clarendon Street and Victoria Street.

Personal names account for a great number of street names, so many in fact that only a very few can be mentioned here. Little or nothing is known of some of the early inhabitants who gave their names to streets and names: Ralph the Felterer or felt maker, for example, who owned land in what is now King Street but which was, in the 12th and 13th century, called Felter Street after him. We know a great deal more, however, of the carrier Thomas Hobson who has given his name to Hobson Street, of Oliver Green of Caius College on whose estate Green Street was built and of James Burleigh, another Cambridge carrier who was Mayor in 1799 and from whom James Street and Burleigh Street are named. We know, too, that John Lens, who owned a field on the south side of the former Deepway which is now Lensfield Road, was one of the original Fellows of Downing College. It is not certain, however, from whom the lane now known, as it has been known since the 1840's at the latest, as Burrell's Walk, acquired its name. Tradition has it that John Burrell, a linen draper of Market Hill who lived from 1730 to 1805, was known to follow the footpath regularly on his frequent walks over to Coton.

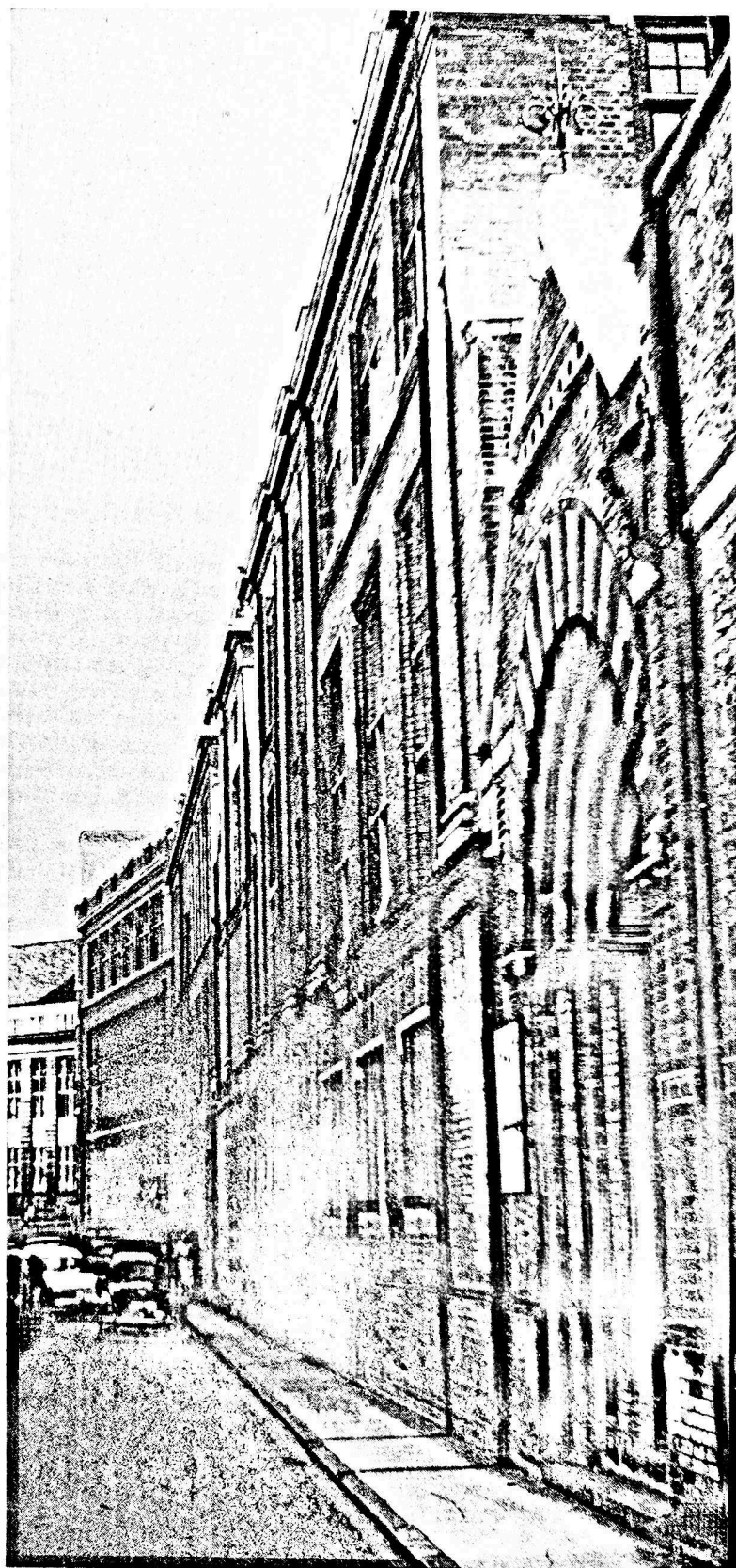
In the Newmarket Road area many streets are named from people connected with the great Augustinian Priory of Barnwell — which Cambridge people insisted on calling an Abbey. Peverel Road and Close commemorate the Pain Peveril who began to build the Priory on this site in 1192; Beche Road is so called in memory of Everard de Beche, a generous benefactor of the Priory, while two Priors, Jolan de Thorleye and Thomas Rawlyn

have given their names to Thorley Road and Rawlyn Road. Godesdone Road commemorates the hermit Godesone — though his name has been misspelt — who is said to have built on the future site of Barnwell Priory a wooden oratory dedicated to St. Andrew.

In more modern times builders and land developers have given their names to several Cambridge streets: David Bradwell, for instance, whose yard is now Bradwell's Court, or Frank Thoday of the firm of Thoday & Clayton which built many of the houses in Thoday Street; Frank's son, Herbert, is remembered in Herbert Street. The Rock Freehold Land Society of London, one of the first outside development companies to build in Cambridge, laid out the Rock Estate in the 1880's. The Company gave their name to Rock Road and their surveyor, Charles Blinco, was honoured by having Blinco Grove named after him.

The steadily increasing population of Cambridge in this century, and especially since 1945, has called for the building of more and more houses and the laying out of a great number of new roads for which names have to be found. Usually these names are chosen with some care. When an estate is developed on land that was at one time the property of a College it is fitting that the streets in it should bear the names of persons connected with the College. Thus we have in Gilbert Road, Ascham Road, and Gurney Way, for example, a reminder that these stood on land once owned by St. John's College, while Chalmers Road, Birdwood Road, Gisborne Road and Perne Road are all named after one-time Masters of Peterhouse to whom the land once belonged. Nightingale Avenue, and Almoner's Way are fittingly so-named since they occupy what was once property of St. Thomas's Hospital in London.

Many modern roads — Campkin Road, Spalding Way, Alex Wood Road, Keynes Road for example — have been named after former City Councillors and Mayors not as was usually the case in the past, because these people owned the land, but as a memorial and a tribute to the part they played in the life of Cambridge. Thus even the newest street though now it is more likely to be a Way, a Close or a Road — can, by its name, help to remind us of the City's history just as so many do which have existed for centuries.



*Corn Exchange Street,
once known as
Slaughterhouse Lane.*