

A snapshot of 1841 South Brent

Lily Style: May 2023

This Archive blog article is developed from notes penned when I transcribed the 5,000 odd entries in South Brent's tithe apportionment to create a searchable database.

If you're not familiar with tithe maps, they're a detailed record of land use and ownership in England and Wales circa 1840, similar to the more famous Domesday Book of 1086, but much more detailed. Every speck of land is numbered for identification in the map's accompanying tithe apportionment list. The resulting data contains such an astonishing quantity of detail that individual hedges are mapped and named.

On top of this goldmine of historic data, the first census of England and Wales was carried out in 1841: the exact same year in which South Brent's tithe map was published.

A major quandary has been whether entries in the "Name and description of lands and premises" column are joined or not, because the cursive script flows between words. For example, plot #2173, in Higher Lutton, looks like "great stonepark", but plot #2184 ("little stone park"), also in Higher Lutton, has clearly spaced words (illustrated: right).

Place names are frequently spelt differently in the tithe apportionment and 1841 census, despite both having been published in the same year. For example, Great Aish in the tithe apportionment is spelt "Great Ash" in the census; Yelland in the tithe is "Yeoland" in the census; and the tithe's Merrifield is "Merry Field" in the census. So, the spellings aren't fixed. After all, they were passed down by word of mouth (not quill).

"Lord of the Rings" names

Names recorded in the cursive script of the parish's tithe apportionment (the directory accompanying the map) feel heavy with the earthy scents of loam and green growth. Lord of the Rings enthusiasts might pick up a Tolkienesque feel:

Coldish, Bow Down and Hambridge Marsh: Stippadon

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Numbers referring to the plan	Landowner	Occupiers	Place	Name and description of lands and p	State of cultivation	
			Part of Gribbles Down	Higher Gribbles Down	Pasture	
1150	Elias Stranger	John Manning	Part of Gribbles Down	Hedges	Pasture	
1151	Elias Stranger	John Manning	Part of Gribbles Down	Lower Gribbles Down	Pasture	
1152	Elias Stranger	John Manning	Part of Gribbles Down	Hedges	Arable	
1153	Elias Stranger	John Manning	Little Aish	Great Hill	Arable	
1155	Reverend John White	Thomas Wakeham	Little Aish	Hedges	Arable	
1156	Reverend John White	Thomas Wakeham	Little Aish	Little Hill	Waste	
1157	Reverend John White	Thomas Wakeham	Little Aish	Waste	Waste	
1158	Reverend John White	Thomas Wakeham	Little Aish	Hedges	Arable	
1159	Reverend John White	Thomas Wakeham	Little Aish	Rock Park	Arable	
1160	John Butter M.D.	Elijah Smerdon	Great Bulhornstone	Hedges	Arable	
1161	John Butter M.D.	Elijah Smerdon	Great Bulhornstone	Three Corners	Arable	
1162	John Butter M.D.	Elijah Smerdon	Great Bulhornstone	Hedges	Arable	
1163	John Butter M.D.	Elijah Smerdon	Bulhornstone	Bulhornstone Cross Field	Arable	
1164	Lady Elizabeth Carew	James Goodman	Bulhornstone	Hedges	Arable	
1165	Lady Elizabeth Carew	James Goodman	Little Bulhornstone	Longland	Arable	
1166	Sir Warwick Tonkin	Elijah Smerdon	Little Bulhornstone	Hedges	Arable	
1167	Sir Warwick Tonkin	Elijah Smerdon	Great Bulhornstone	Bar Field	Arable	
1168	John Butter M.D.	Elijah Smerdon	Great Bulhornstone	Hedges	Arable	
1169	John Butter M.D.	Elijah Smerdon	Bulhornstone	Bulhornstone Cross Homer Field	Arable	
1170	Lady Elizabeth Carew	James Goodman	Bulhornstone			

Above: a section of my transcription of South Brent's tithe apportionment list.



*Yonder Brim Park, Goosey Plot and
Crowdy Cross Field: Great Palstone*

Faithful Blatchard
Hercules Joint
Quintin Hext
Servington Savery

- The origin of modern street names
- A window into language formation
- Old Devon words
- Ancient Brentonians
- Suggested stories
- Class inequality

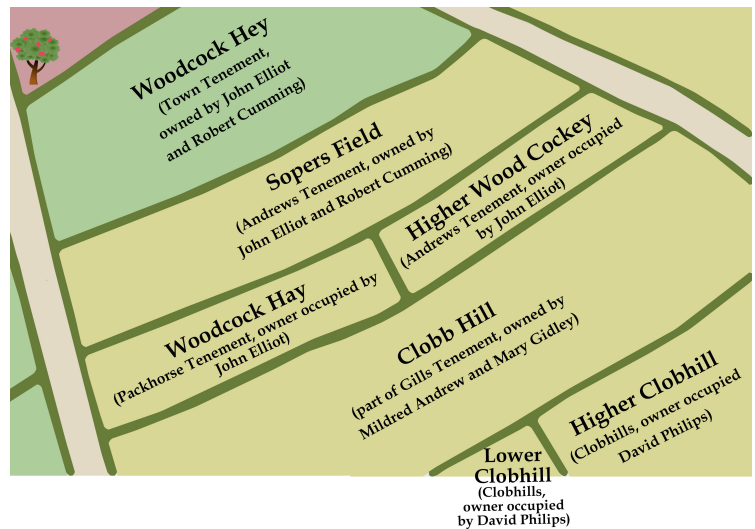


Above: detail of Stidston, South Brent based on the tithe map and 1841 census.

The origin of modern street names

Many modern street names match field names in the tithe map:

- **Brakefield:** Brake Field.
- **Clobells:** fields belonging to different farms with names like Clobb Hill and Lower Clobhill. One of the farms is called Clobhills. The rise of land modern-day Clobells occupies seems to have been known as Clob Hill.
- **Chapel Fields:** Chapel Field.
- **Corn Park:** Lower Corn Park and Upper Corn Park.
- **Crowder Park:** next to Crowdy Cross Park
- **Green Fields:** Higher Green Park.
- **Higher Green:** Higher Green Field
- **Palstone Park:** Little Palstone Park and Great Palstone Park
- **Pool Park:** Pool Park.
- **Springfield Road:** lies on the site of Sprigs Moor, and may have got its name from “sprig’s field”
- **Woodhay Close:** Woodcock Hey.



Above: detail of tithe map field names for modern-day Clobells and Woodhay Close.

A window into language formation

The tithe record contains “fossilised” examples of proper names developing from utilitarian descriptions. Necessity, as they say, is the mother of invention.

“Where do you want me to plough?”

“Bottom field.”

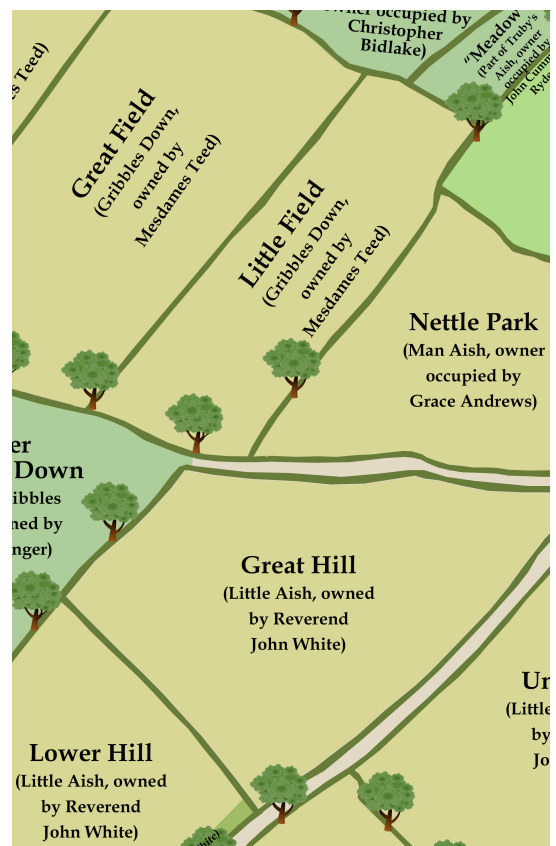
Or

“Crooked meadow.”

Or

“Yonder little field.”

It can be hard to distinguish proper names from descriptions in the tithe apportionment. “Hedges”,



Above: detail of tithe map field names for Aish.

“road” and “orchard” are clearly descriptions, but should the many “little orchard”s be capitalised?

“Crooked meadow” sounds like a name developed to distinguish it from other pieces of land.

“Pannells Meadow” definitely seems to include a proper name.

But what of the instances where places called “Meadow” are described as “Pasture”? In these cases, Meadow seems to be the pasture’s proper name telling the story of the land’s usage.

“Higher barn & court” in Weeks Horsebrook seems to be a combination of a proper name with a description (Higher Barn & court). Other entries, such as Little Bullcombe Park in Great Palstone, seem to include older descriptive names (in this case “Bull Combe” meaning bull valley) which had already become proper names. In other words, utilitarian descriptions evolved into proper names continued their evolution by forming newer names.

Old Devon words

- **Brake:** furze/bracken patches. E.g., plots named “Brake” in East & West Moore, Lisburne and West Wonton are have “furze” in the state of cultivation column.
- **Close:** field (see also Down and Park).
- **Court:** seems to be a courtyard/paved area.
- **Down:** field (see also Close and Park)
- **Furze Pen:** a field that’s presumably been formed by clearing furze/bracken. Examples include: Cross Furze Pen in Forder; Water Furze Pen & Wild Oak Furze Pen in Stidston; and Lower Furze Pen in Zeale.
- **Linhay:** according to Wikipedia, an ancient type of circular structure found in England, particularly associated with Devon, that’s characterised as a two-storeyed building with an open front, with a hay-loft above and livestock housing below.
- **Mowplat:** local dialect for Mowplot (see below)
- **Mowplot:** appears to be a Devon and Cornish word, possibly meaning to a hay field.
- **Park:** the most common name for fields in

Knowlings Thinnicombe	Thinnicombe Brake	Furze
Gispeadown	Gispeadown Brake	Furze
Higher Yelland	Lower Tangs	Furze
Didworthy	Yonder Brake	Furze
Didworthy	Bales Corner	Furze
Freeland & Mitchelwell	Higher Brake	Furze
Freeland & Mitchelwell	Ball Brake	Furze
Underhill	Waste	Furze
Ley	Waste	Furze
Yollands Thinnicombe	Waste	Furze
Thinnacombe	Lower Thinnacombe	Furze
Stippadon	Tongue Down	Furze
Luscombe Tenement	Waste	Furze
Forder	Waste	Furze
Lisburne	Brake	Furze
Barley Combe	Furze	Furze
Charford	Waste	Furze
West Wonton	Brake	Furze
Gills Down	Furze Brake	Furze
East & West Moore	Brake	Furze

Above: plots described as furze in the tithe apportionment.

the tithe map (see also close, down). A member of South Brent Storytellers & Archive Facebook group said they'd heard that "parks" are fields that were created by joining strips of land, probably dating back to the end of the feudal system in the middle ages.

- **Plat:** seems to be plot rendered in the local accent. E.g., "Little Plot", "Higher Plat" and "Potato Plat" in Higher Lutton.
- **Rack:** "rock" in local dialect (there are seven "Rack Park"s and nine "Rock Park"s)
- **Slade:** uncertain meaning.
- **Strole:** may be places reached by a short walk.
- **Tenement:** farm (e.g., Sopers Tenement and Cranches Tenement)
- **Waste:** uncultivated land; evoking the mindset that land that didn't benefit humans was wasted



Above: detail of Lutton with fields named both "rack" and "rock".

Adjectives used in the 1841 tithe map include:

Great, little, middle, crooked, lower, higher, middle, square, three corner, tongue and homer (the opposite of yonder or outer (e.g., Homer Neale and Yonder Neale in Ley, and a farm at Over Brent has fields called Homer Beara Park and Outer Beara Park).

There's Higher Abovetown, Middle Abovetown and Lower Abovetown in Higher Badworthy, and, in Kerry Down there's Middle Park and Second Middle Park (evidently "middle park" was a popular description there).

According to an [article on Martin Ebdon Maps's website](#), the adjectives in South Brent's tithe map tally with ones used in north Devon:

"The first word in a field-name is often an adjective, distinguishing a field from its neighbours by its compass direction (North or South, East or West, Easter or Wester), its size (Great or Little), its height (Higher or Lower), or its location relative to the farmstead (Home, Homer, Inner, and Hither all mean 'near' while Over, Outer, and Yonder mean 'far'). Hence, there are pairs of fields that have the same basic name such as Western Barn Park and Eastern Barn Park, Higher Broom Close and Lower Broom Close, Great Down and Little Down, Home Four Acres and Outer Four Acres. Sometimes, in between such a pair of fields, there is a third one whose name begins with the word Middle. Very few field-names use the adjectives Big or Small; they are vastly outnumbered by names that begin with Great or Little."

A PDF, entitled The Secret of Field Names, published by Archi UK Maps, says:

“Through my research I have found fields containing mounds to have names such as Mound Field, Coney Field, Moot Field, Barrow Field, Rounds and other similar names. In Cornwall fields containing the name 'Round' are often the sites of small Iron Age Celtic settlements. 'Coney' is the old word for rabbit.”

Having come across several South Brent fields with “coney” in their names, I was excited to check this out but, disappointingly, when I compared them to OS maps, there were no ancient burial mounds, etc marked. Ditto for Burrow Park in Burland, just north of Harbourneford.

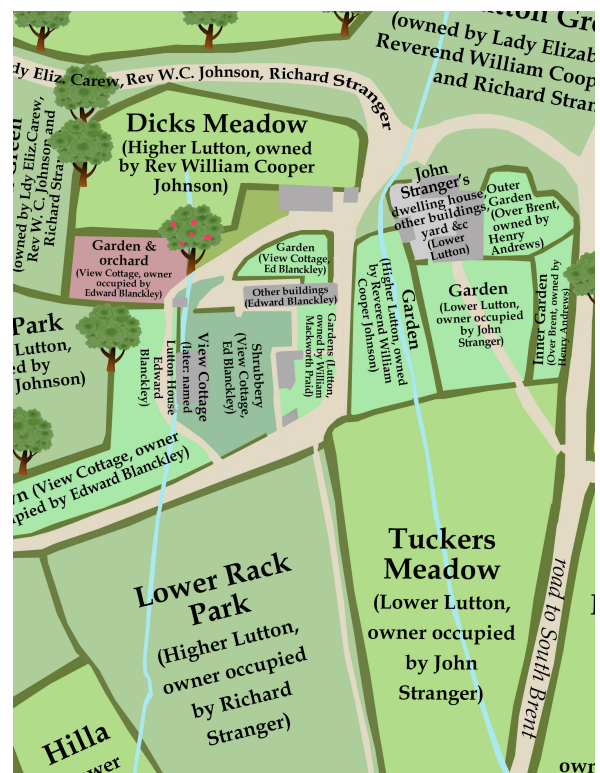
Ancient Brentonians

The identity of previous land-users are “fossilised” in the 1841 tithe apportionment. These are people who lived in Brent decades, or even hundreds of years before the tithe map was recorded.

For example, in 1841, Sopers Horsebrook was owned by Henry Cutmore and tenanted by Peter Kingston (with no one by the name of Soper in the near vicinity). There’s also a Sopers Field in a farm called Andrews Tenement.

Other traces of ancient Brentonians include:

- *Cranches Tenement*
- *Dicks Meadow: Higher Lutton*
- *Dukes & Peeps: Binnamore (with fields called Peeps and Lower Peeps)*
- *Farmer Ned’s Field: Late Stidstones Tenement*
- *Nicks Plat: Lower Lincombe*
- *Nichols Tenement*
- *Quicks Field: Andrews Tenement*
- *Pannells and Pannells Meadow in Forder*
- *Peters Park: Great Over Brent*
- *Tuckers Free Field: Charford*
- *Whites Field: Town Tenement*
- *Wyatts Aish*



Above: detail of Lutton showing fields named “Dicks Meadow” and “Tuckers Meadow”.

The names of Lower Somer Hill and High Somer Hill in Stidston may be echoes of a previous Brentonian named Somer who also gave their name to Somerswood by Lydia Bridge.

Was Polly Meadow in Little Bulhornstone named after someone called Polly, or is “polly” an old, Devonian word?

Suggested stories

Some of the names recorded in the 1841 tithe map tell stories of changing land-use.

Field names containing “furze” are classed as pasture, whilst ones named meadow are classed as arable. Of the many plantations, almost all are described as “fir”, bar one in Binnamore that’s an orchard. More examples:

- Lisburne: “Nursery” is arable.
- Sopers Horsebrook: “Long Orchard” and “Lower Marsh” are arable.
- Barley Combe: “Potato Plat” is an orchard.
- Late Stidstones Tenement: “Orchard Plat” is arable.

Dramatic social stories are hinted at too:

- Cost is Cost: Lower Badworthy.
- Duels Field: Kerswell.
- Grants Castle & garden: Lisburne.
- Stabs Field: Binnamore.

3356	James Cornish	John Luce	Kerry Downs	Hedges	Arable
3357	James Cornish	John Luce	Kerry Downs	Andrews Marsh	
3358	James Cornish	John Luce	Kerry Downs	Hedges	Arable
4505	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	Deals	Waste
4506	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	Waste	
4507	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	Hedges	Arable
4508	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	Higher North Down	
4509	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	Hedges	
4510	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	Hedges	Arable
4511	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	Little Moor	
4512	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	Hedges	Arable
4513	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	New Park	
4514	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	Hedges	Arable
4515	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	Duels Field	
4516	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	Hedges	Arable
4517	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	Lower Broadland	
4518	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	Hedges	Arable
4519	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	Higher Broadland	
4520	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	Hedges	Waste
4521	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	Kerswell Cross Park	
4522	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill	Dwelling House	Garden
4523	Richard Marshall	Faithful Blatch	Kerswill	Garden	
4524	Richard Marshall	Faithful Blatch	Kerswill	Hedges	Orchard
4525	Richard Marshall	Faithful Blatch	Kerswill	Orchard	
4526	Richard Marshall	Faithful Blatch	Kerswill	Hedges	
4527	Richard Marshall	Faithful Blatch	Kerswill	Barn & court	Orchard
4528	Richard Marshall	Faithful Blatch	Kerswill	Lower Orchard	
4529	Richard Marshall	John Crossing	Kerswill		

Above: Duels Field in the tithe apportionment.

Land ownership and class inequality

Tenants of one farm were sometimes the owners of another. For example, Quintin Hext owned Higher Badworthy; rented Binnicknowle from James Cornish and co-owned “Part of Binnicknowle” with James Cornish

A select few, such as Lady Elizabeth Carew, owned multiple farms, and tenants, like John Manning, lived in homesteads described as “dwelling house, other buildings, yard &c”; but lowlier people live in cottages where a single occupant’s name makes do for the tenants:

- Barrack Street: James Hannaford and others
- Binnicknowle Cottages: Henry Hannaford and others
- Church Street: Sarah Smerdon and others
- Harbournford: Robert Tucker and others.
- Splatton: Edward Leaman and others.
- Sprigs Moor: John Wakeham and others

Conclusion

The field names listed in South Brent’s 1841 tithe apportionment are a treasure trove of historical information. This includes the origin of modern street names (e.g., Clobells comes from “Clob Hills”); a window into language formation (e.g., Little Bullcombe Park); a record of old Devon words (e.g., Higher Plat) and ancient Bretonians (e.g., Cranches Tenement); suggested stories (such as Duels Field in Kerswell) and traces of class inequality (e.g., only Edward Leaman’s name was given for the five households at Splatton).

1067	John Cumming Ryder	Himself	Part of Truby's Aish	Borough Park	
1068	John Cumming Ryder	Himself	Part of Truby's Aish	Hedges	Arable
1069	John Cumming Ryder	Himself	Part of Truby's Aish	Long Park	
1077	John Cumming Ryder	Himself	Part of Truby's Aish	Little Chilverland	Arable
1078	John Cumming Ryder	Himself	Part of Truby's Aish	Hedges	Arable
1079	John Cumming Ryder	Himself	Part of Truby's Aish	Knowle	
1080	John Cumming Ryder	Himself	Part of Truby's Aish	Hedges	Arable
1129	John Cumming Ryder	Himself	Part of Truby's Aish	Meadow	
1130	John Cumming Ryder	Himself	Part of Truby's Aish	Hedges	Pasture
1070	John Cumming Ryder	Himself	Part of Truby's Aish	Hedges	
3140	William Pearse and Geor	George Luscor	Part of Westabrooks	Orchard	
3141	William Pearse and Geor	George Luscor	Part of Westabrooks	Hedges	Orchard
1051	William Pearse	Grace Andrew	Part of Wyatts Aish	Stone Park	
1052	William Pearse	Grace Andrew	Part of Wyatts Aish	Hedges	Arable
1059	William Pearse	Grace Andrew	Part of Wyatts Aish	Little Field	
1060	William Pearse	Grace Andrew	Part of Wyatts Aish	Hedges	Arable
1063	William Pearse	Grace Andrew	Part of Wyatts Aish	Above Town	
1064	William Pearse	William Brookir	Part of Wyatts Aish	Hedges	Arable
1122	William Pearse	William Brookir	Part of Wyatts Aish	First Clapper Head	
1123	William Pearse	William Brookir	Part of Wyatts Aish	Hedges	Arable
1124	William Pearse	William Brookir	Part of Wyatts Aish	Second Clapper Head	
1125	William Pearse	William Brookir	Part of Wyatts Aish	Hedges	Arable
1615	John Elliot and Mary Gidl	Lord Peter	Parts of Kerry Downs	Little Meadow	
1616	John Elliot and Mary Gidl	Lord Peter	Parts of Kerry Downs	Hedges	Meadow
2837	John Elliot and Mary Gidl	Lord Peter	Parts of Kerry Downs	Bowling Field	
2888	John Elliot and Mary Gidl	Lord Peter	Parts of Kerry Downs	Hedges	Arable
3256	John Elliot and Mary Gidl	William Hoskin	Parts of Kerry Downs	Brake Field	
3257	John Elliot and Mary Gidl	William Hoskin	Parts of Kerry Downs	Hedges	Arable
3258	John Elliot and Mary Gidl	William Hoskin	Parts of Kerry Downs	Crowdy Cross Field	
3259	John Elliot and Mary Gidl	William Hoskin	Parts of Kerry Downs	Hedges	Arable
3260	John Elliot and Mary Gidl	William Hoskin	Parts of Kerry Downs	Sweets Field	
3261	John Elliot and Mary Gidl	William Hoskin	Parts of Kerry Downs	Hedges	Arable
3262	John Elliot and Mary Gidl	William Hoskin	Parts of Kerry Downs	Outer Great Field	
3263	John Elliot and Mary Gidl	William Hoskin	Parts of Kerry Downs	Hedges	Arable
3264	John Elliot and Mary Gidl	William Hoskin	Parts of Kerry Downs	Inner Great Field	
3265	John Elliot and Mary Gidl	William Hoskin	Parts of Kerry Downs	Hedges	Arable
3266	John Elliot and Mary Gidl	William Hoskin	Parts of Kerry Downs	Inner Field	
3267	John Elliot and Mary Gidl	William Hoskin	Parts of Kerry Downs	Hedges	
4643	John Savery and John El	Themselves	Road at Lincombe	Road	
1959	William Cornish	Himself	Rock Cottage	Cottage & front garden	
1960	William Cornish	Himself	Rock Cottage	Garden	Garden
1055	John Butter M.D.	Himself	Shepperds Aish	Rock Park	Arable
1056	John Butter M.D.	Himself	Shepperds Aish	Hedges	
1075	John Butter M.D.	Himself	Shepperds Aish	Two Parks	Arable
1076	John Butter M.D.	Himself	Shepperds Aish	Hedges	
1080	John Butter M.D.	Himself	Shepperds Aish	Hedges	
1081	John Butter M.D.	Himself	Shepperds Aish	Knowls	
1100	John Butter M.D.	Himself	Shepperds Aish	Smithy Mead	Arable
1110	Christopher Bidlake	Himself	Shepperds Aish	Chorrell	Arable
1111	Christopher Bidlake	Himself	Shepperds Aish	Hedges	Pasture

Above: a sample of field names in the tithe apportionment.