



# *Sheetlines*

The journal of  
THE CHARLES CLOSE SOCIETY  
for the Study of Ordnance Survey Maps

“The meaning of the mereing”

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*Sheetlines*, 106 (August 2016, pp. 28-29)

Stable URL:

<http://www.charlesclosesociety.org/files/Issue106page28.pdf>

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Published by  
THE CHARLES CLOSE SOCIETY  
for the Study of Ordnance Survey Maps  
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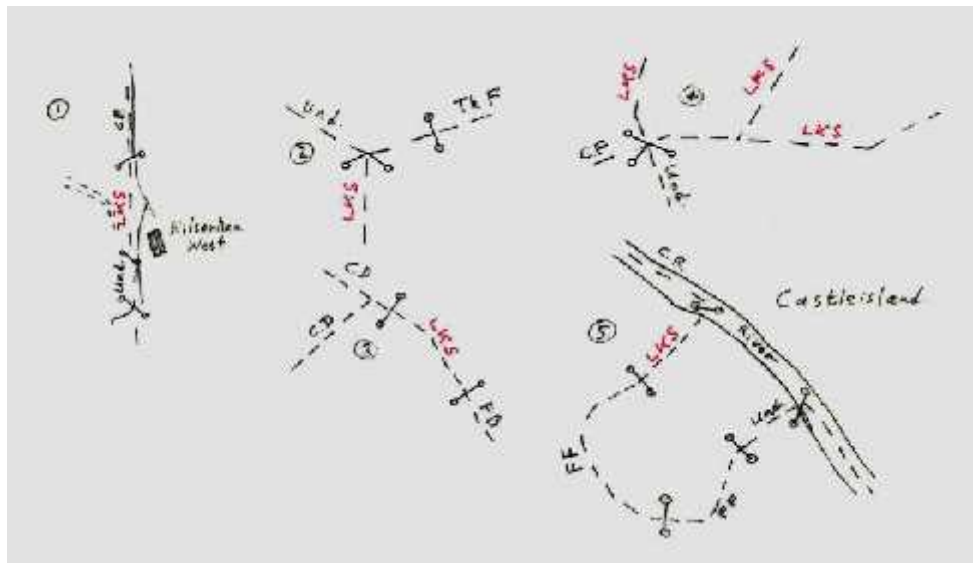


## *The meaning of the mereing*

**David EM Andrews**

Following my article *Merely a question of boundaries*,<sup>1</sup> John Cole raised a query with me about a strange boundary mereing he had encountered on some Irish County Series mapping. Neither John nor I had ever encountered the mereing 'LKS' before, and all John's attempts to discover the meaning had so far failed. Even the best authority that I could think of, one Richard Oliver, had never come across it before.

Here are a few examples that John had sketched and I was going to set the readers of *Sheetlines* a challenge to see if anyone could explain this mereing.



That is, until John stumbled across an entry in the *Blue Book 1966, Instructions to Surveyors and Revisers*, (the OSI equivalent of the OSGB *Red Book*). Under the indexed terms is *Lockspits will not be shown in bogs except where they occur on County, Barony and Townland Boundaries*. John's examples appear on or close to bogs, and seem to be logical places for lockspits, as they are lines that seem to join up gaps in boundaries that are otherwise marked by more permanent features.

Many English dictionaries do not have an entry for 'lockspit', but according to the on-line Oxford Dictionaries a lockspit is:

"A narrow trench dug to mark out a boundary or to indicate lines of work in construction or civil engineering projects".

The Scottish National Dictionary (1700–) defines lockspit (also *loxpit*) as:

I. *v.* To mark out a boundary or limit by cutting a furrow with a spade or plough or by a cross-trench.

II. *n.* A cut, furrow or cross-trench made for this purpose.

[From *lock*, in the sense of enclose, + *spit*, a cut made by a spade.]

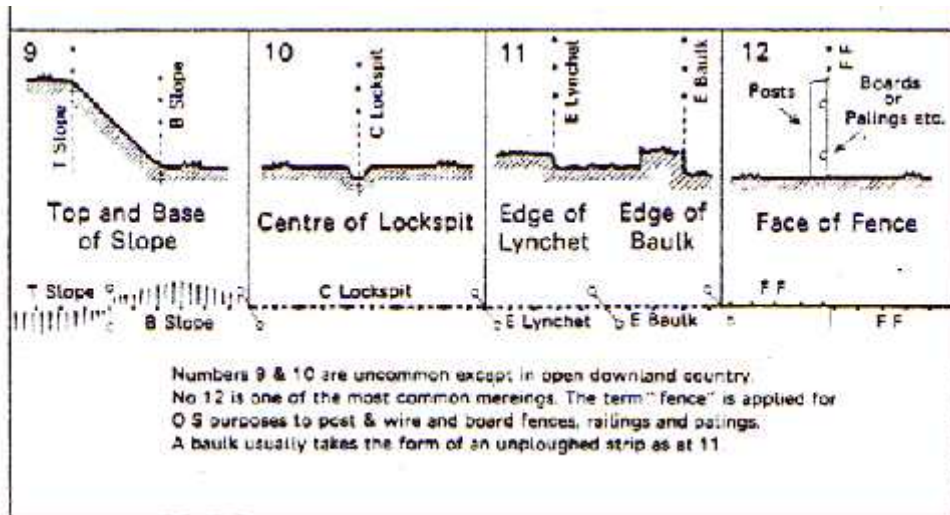
So it appears the mystery is solved (unless someone has another explanation!)

<sup>1</sup> *Sheetlines* 103, 31.



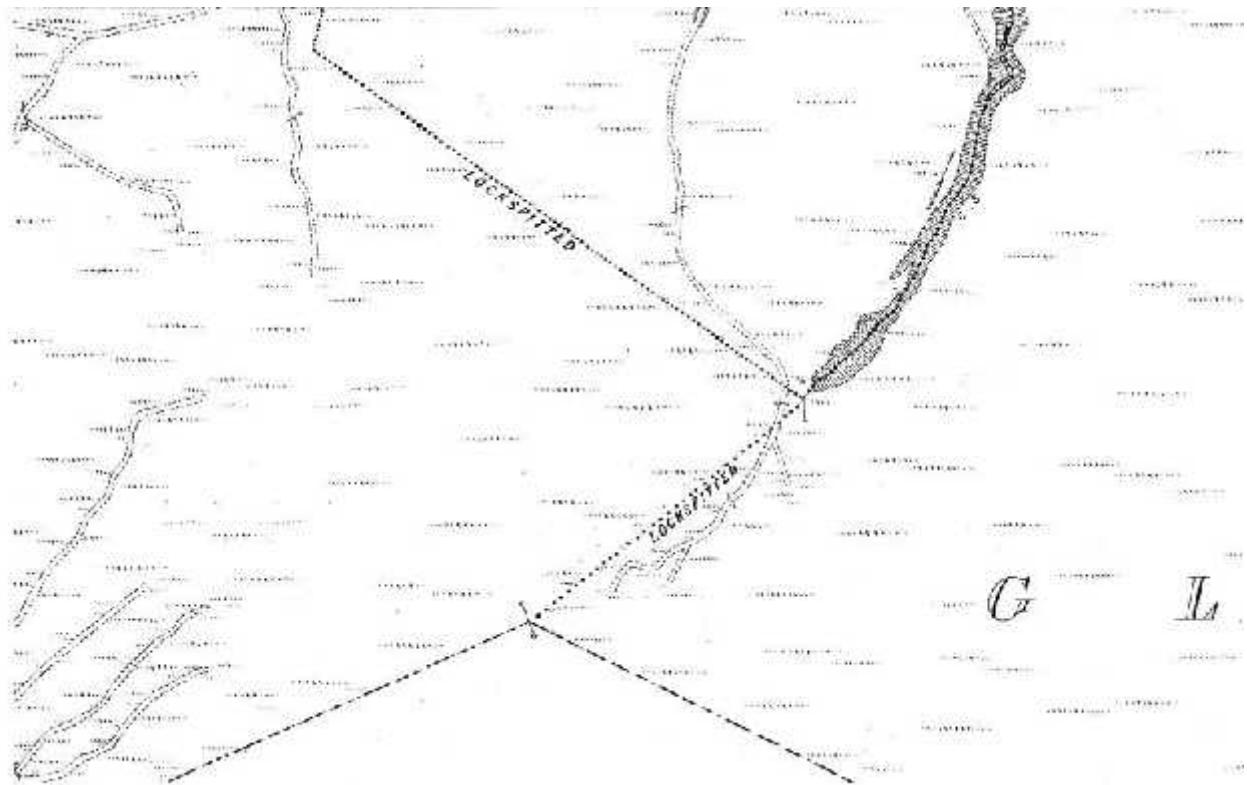
Interestingly *Public boundaries and Ordnance Survey 1840-1980*<sup>2</sup> at pages 311 and 312, (see below), mentions lockspits being used to mere boundaries, but the actual mereing abbreviation used is "C Lockspit", (for Centre of Lockspit).

**Lockspits:** Example 10. Not common as a mereing and sometimes found as "C Furrow" or "C Grip" or even "C Swank".



It would seem that the abbreviation 'LKS' was never used by OSGB, only by OSI, (and apparently not used after 1940).

Below is another example which has just come to light, on 1:2500 scale sheet County Dublin XXIV.16 published 1866.



<sup>2</sup> JRS. Booth MBE, Ordnance Survey, 1986.