

HARRY'S GRAVE

A lecture on the history of village names was given at a recent meeting of the Market Bosworth Society, and I asked about the origin of the name Harry's Grave. This is the local name for the crossroads just northeast of Carlton where Bufton Lane meets Nailstone Road at SK403058, and does not appear on the Ordnance Survey map. I know of only one other crossroads in this area with a similar name - Lads Grave near Coton in the Elms (SK233158).

The word grave comes from the Anglo-Saxon *graef* meaning a grave, pit, hollow, or sometimes even a pool in a hollow, but there is no evidence that the name Harry's Grave goes back this far. There are now no nearby traces of an old grave in the form of a mound, tumulus or barrow. The word Harry does seem to be a personal name, and is not an obvious corruption of an old descriptive word.

The fact that Harry's Grave marks the boundary between the Parishes of Carlton, Shackerstone and Nailstone is probably significant. A boundary stone or marker might have been put up here in the past, and the word grave might refer to the pit dug for it, or left when the marker was removed.

In the 17th century it was customary to bury beggars or paupers on the parish boundary or just outside it. The most likely explanation of the name is probably the simplest and most literal - that someone known as Harry was buried here. Who Harry was, and when and why he was buried here will remain matters for speculation until new evidence comes to light.

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The above article appeared in the March 2007 issue of Carlton News.