denotes a circular or twisting shape. Do the name 'Troy' and its variants refer to the twists and turns of the classical labyrinth design? The Welsh word for labyrinth, *caerdroia,* means 'city of turns' or 'castle of turning'. A 19-ring labyrinth at Stolp in Poland was known variously as 'Winding Path' or 'City of Winding'.

Additional evidence comes from a surprising range of sources. Blomfield, in his *History of the Deanery of Bicester,*[12] says that Scottish children trace mazes on sandy beaches and play a game called 'The Walls of Troy'. Miss M. Courtney, writing in *Folklore Journal,*[13] says 'All intricate places in Cornwall are called Troy Town. ... Nurses say to children when surrounded by a litter of toys that they look as though they were in Troy Town.' A Manx website[14] translates 'a Troy-Town' as a state of untidiness and confusion, as in 'Her house is a proper Troy-Town', and 'The flood left a regular Troy-Town after it.' An etymological explanation seems far more convincing than fanciful associations with the Minotaur of Knossos, or the *Lusus Trojae* played by Roman youths in the Circus Maximus.

Before leaving the subject of Troy Towns, I cannot resist noting a reference to not one but two turf labyrinths, now lost, on Bullingdon Green in Cowley, about four miles east of Oxford. Herbert Hurst, a Victorian historian writing in 1884, noted in the second edition of his book *Rambles and Rides Around Oxford*:

> There were cut in the turf of Bullingdon, in two separate spots, mazes formed of a pathway, about 20 inches wide, and spaces of six inches; they were very simple in their construction, and alike in the tortuous arrangement; circular in outline. The names given were Tarrytowns, or Troytowns. Why 'towns' no one pretended to say.

The VCH makes no mention of these labyrinths, but tells us that Bullingdon Green was a large common pasture, dating from the Middle Ages, and that popular tradition alluded to the existence of a lost village and castle there. It seems that the labyrinths were destroyed when the Cowley Barracks were built in 1876, as too was a rectangular earthwork near the Roman road, which I suppose might have been the actual site of the labyrinths.

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[12] Blomfield, J.C., *History of the Deanery of Bicester, Part IV: Middleton and Somerton*, 1888, pp.101-102. *
[13] Courtney, M., *Folklore Journal,* vol. 5 (n.d.). *
[14] www.isle-of-man.com/manxnotebook