Some Aspects of the
Pronunciation of English
Place-Names (V)

Christopher Powell

Some Reasons for Discrepancies between the Spelling and Pronunciation of English Place-Names

It is clear that discrepancies between the way place-names in England are spelt and the way they are pronounced go far beyond the normal vagaries of English orthographic/phonetic latitude, and also that many of these discrepancies can be traced back many hundreds of years. As I pointed out in *Researches* No 19, 1982, p. 4, *Pontefract* (W. Yorks.) has been locally pronounced [ˈpɒmfrɪt] from time immemorial, while a late 18th century manuscript quoted in A. E. Jones' *From Medieval Manor to London Suburb* shows that the pronunciation [ˈkɜːʃəlton] for *Carshalton* (Lond.), which has only died out in the last sixty years, was in general use 150 years after Blaeu's *Map of Surrey* (1648) was published, although the map already showed the present-day form of the place-name. When we consider how many cases of orthography/ pronunciation irregularity have only recently been resolved, usually by the adoption of a spelling pronunciation, we can be confident that in the past there must have been an immense number of such cases and that therefore certain factors must have operated to produce them, perhaps factors which do not operate today. Here I would like to comment on four possible reasons for the discrepancies, and explain why they are unlikely to apply in the future.

1) *The Law of the Least Resistance*—Until the Education Acts of the
nineteenth century began to make an impression, the great majority of people in England had little or no regular schooling beyond the most elementary level, and subsequently had little or no need for reading or writing. In all ages many uneducated people must have pronounced everyday words according to the traditions of their local dialect and with no reference to any literary standards. Unfamiliar or long words must often have been mispronounced in the manner we can see in Dickens’ portrayal of illiterates like Noddy Boffin or Mrs Gamp. But in the case of everyday language, the language shared more or less by everyone in England, the existence of a literary standard, however little regarded, and of educated people, however few, prevented or reduced the cases where ordinary words would come to be pronounced in ways which reflected no rule of correspondence to orthography. Even the extreme cases like the various realisations in speech of -ough can be traced to the rules of their derivation from a limited number of Old English forms. Why did this system of checks and balances not apply to Neatishead [niːtstɪd] Stiffkey [ˈstɪfki] or Cirencester [ˈsɪstə]? Why has Gloucester been pronounced [ˈɡlʌstə] since the Middle Ages? Why is Mildenhall (Suff.) [ˈmɪldənhoʊ] but Mildenhall (Wilts.) sometimes [ˈmɪməl]? One reason, I believe, is that until the days of easy travel a locality was only known to its own people and once a non-standard pronunciation had come to be accepted by the community there it would impose itself in spite of any official spelling, so that even educated people would write the name of their town in one way but pronounce it in another. No doubt Kilvert, the country parson of the Diary, regularly referred to his father’s parish as [ˈhaːnɪʃ] while writing it Hardenhuish. To have given it a spelling pronunciation when talking with local people would have seemed an affectation. If a town was large and nationally known, it might in due course come to have both a local and a national pronunciation, like Carlisle (Cum.) locally [ˈkɑːləl] but more generally [kɑːˈlæl] or Newcastle (Tyne) locally [ˈnjuːkæsəl] but nationally [ˈnjuːkɑːsəl] or Heathfield (E. Sus.) locally until recently [ˈhefl] although [ˈhiːθfiːld]
to outsiders. The local form might become general early in history for such a famous city as Gloucester or Worcester though now many Americans apparently refer to the famous sauce as [ˈwɔːrɪsɛstəfər ˈsɔs].

When we come to think about the actual mechanism by which a place-name’s local (and perhaps eventually nation-wide) pronunciation came to be different from its orthography, it seems obvious to refer to the ‘law of the least resistance’, the tendency of most human beings to find the simplest and easiest way of doing something. In the case of speech, this implies the simplification of consonant-clusters, the elision of whole syllables, vowel changes, metathesis and assimilation of sounds in the interests of ease of pronunciation, the insertion of additional sounds for the same reason. Here are instances of these tendencies at work in place-names:

*Chaddeuden* (Derby,) [ˈtʃædzən] - the omission of the [d], which simplifies the consonant-cluster [dzd] dates back to at least the sixteenth century; *EPNS*(XXIX) gives the form *Chadeson* from 1568.

*Chaddlehanger* (Dev.) [ˈtʃædlʰæŋə] or [ˈtʃælʰɪŋə]; *Happisburgh* (Norf.) [ˈheɪzbərə]; *Cholmondeley* (Ches.) [ˈtʃɔmləli]. In these cases complete syllables have been elided. For the first *EPNS* (VIII) gives a written form *Challinger* from 1708; *EPNS* (XLVII) traces *Cholmondeley* back to the 1086 Domesday Book version *Calmundelei*, deriving ultimately from the Old English ‘Ceolmund’s leah’ or clearing. By 1397 there is a written form *Cholmeley* evidently reflecting a contemporary pronunciation. By 1420 this is *Chomley*. That the present written form of this name should still be so close to the original Old English is remarkable given so long a history of a contracted pronunciation.

*Happisburgh* (Suff.) [ˈheɪzbərə]. In this case the dropping of inter-vocalic [p] from the original name has been accompanied by a change in the vowel from [æ] to [ei]. It is worth remarking in this context that Reaney’s derivation from ‘Hæpping’s burg’ ‘fortress of Hæp’s people’ seems preferable to Eckwall’s from ‘Hæp’s burg’. The Old English proper name having become unfamiliar, this would have facili-
tated successive changes, perhaps at first to *[1hæpizbærə], reflected in the dropping of -ng- from the spelling, and later to *[1heizbærə], a change not accompanied by any orthographic alteration.

**Alverdiscott (Dev.).** BBC says that this is the usual written form of the name and that the pronunciation is *[1ælvədɪskət], but gives another written form Alscott pronounced *[1ɔːlskət] as a less usual alternative. \*EPNS VIII gives Alverdiscott in Fremington Hundred as being pronounced *[1ɔːlskət] while mentioning another locality in Shebber Hundred as Alscott. Both are derived from 'Ælfred's cote' or cottage. Possibly BBC has confused the two. The proper name Alfred being common (and pronounced with [v] in West Country English) it is hard to account for the shortened pronunciation except by unwillingness to pronounce the [lv] on the part of uneducated local speakers.

**Thurstonfield (Suff.) [1θʌstənfiːld].** Here there has been metathesis of [s] and an originally pronounced [r], and subsequent change of [ɔː:] to [ʌ].

Assimilation of one kind or other is a common feature of irregular pronunciations, examples of which are *[1æmθiːl] for Ampthill (Beds,) and *[1ɔːlzfəd] for Alresford (Hants.). In the former case [p] has been assimilated to the preceding [m] and in the latter [r] has combined with the preceding [l].

**Kiveton (S. Yorks.) [1kɪvətən] shows an intrusive [ɪ] where we would not normally expect to find one. A more natural form would be *[1kætvən], but the origin suggested by Eckwall, from OE cyf, 'a tub', here = hill, may have preserved its short vowel and the repetition of the same sound after the [v] would have facilitated pronunciation. There is hesitation between *[1wɪvətən] and *[1wɪvɪtən] for Wiveton (Norf.) but in this case the [ɪ] reflects an original pronounced vowel from 'Wifa's tun'.

The above examples, it seems to me, can all be adduced, at least in part, to a desire on the part of ordinary uneducated speakers to simplify pronunciations which they found hard and which, in many cases, did not seem worth making the effort for as the meanings were obscure.
2) **French influence**—'The greatest influence of French on our place-names, says P. H. Reaney, 'was its effect on their written form and pronunciation' (*The Origin of English Place-Names*, p. 198). It is now well known, for instance, that the name Salop for Shropshire developed from the inability of the Normans to pronounce the English Scrobesby-rigscir, which was first modified to Sciropescire and then to Salopescira. The recent decision to allow the longer form Shropshire to stand instead of a bureaucratically determined Salop represents a sort of compromise between the Old English and Norman possibilities. Had the Old English name developed without Norman influence, we might have had *Shrewsburyshire*. (On the other hand, if Shrewsbury, the town, had had its name modified by Norman influence, it might have ended as *Slopsbury*.)

Where problems over place-name pronunciation have arisen in connection with French influence, it has generally been the other way about—a French place-name, bestowed by the Norman invaders, has given difficulty to English speakers, who have therefore produced pronunciations which range over the entire spectrum between near-French forms and much-anglicised ones. Here are examples of this range:

**Beaudesert Park** (Staffs.) ['bɔdɛzə]. Here the near-French pronunciation may be owing to the social standing of the family living there, who might have tried to keep such a pronunciation to emphasise their claims to Norman ancestry.

**Beaudesert** (War.) is ['bɔdezə]. Perhaps the application of the name, in this instance, to a village rather than a great house and estate has helped the pronunciation to change in the direction of the vernacular (a less common version is ['belzə]).

**Haltemprice** (Hum.) ['hɔltəmprais], appreciably altered from the original French Hautenprise ('high enterprise'). the name given to the monastery built on this site in 1322.

**Jervaulx** (N. Yorks.) and **Rievaulx** (N. Yorks.) both have two distinct pronunciations. one fully English ['dʒə:vis, 'ri:vəz] and the other inclined to French ['dʒə:və, 'ri:və]. According to BBC the form
[ˈdʒɔːvəs] is still used by local old people, so we may be faced here with a Norman French name (itself a translation of the English Ure-dale, 'vale of the Ure', Jorvalle c. 1145) which has become anglicised in its pronunciation and is now being re-Frenchified, perhaps because the anglicised form is itself now very removed from the spelling. The same may have happened with Rievaulx, which derives from a French translation of the old English name Rye-dale 'vale of the Rye' Rievallc 1157.

3) Popular etymology - on occasion, discrepancies or other difficulties over the pronunciation of a place-name may arise because either the orthography or the pronunciation (or both) have been modified through a desire to 'make sense' i.e. to make a name whose meaning was no longer remembered appear to have some meaning. Examples:

Beausale (War.) [ˈbjuːsl] appears to be of French derivation, but in fact Eckwall traces it to 'Bēaw's hāl' or corner. A medieval spelling Beausala shows how at an early date a false etymology had been developed since Domesday Book.

Borrowash (Derby,) may be pronounced [ˈbɔːrəʊʃ], [ˈbɔːrəʃ] or [ˈbɔːrəʊʃ] according to BBC. The form with [ˈbɔːrəu] would go historically with the form Burwashasse 1275 (see Eckwall) but analogy with ‘borrow’ may have produced the [ˈbɔːroʊ] forms.

Sawbridgeworth (Herts.) [ˈsɔːbrɪdʒwɔːθ]. Here both spelling and pronunciation have followed a false etymology. The old pronunciation [ˈsæpswɔθ] (see Researches No 20, 1983, p. 4) may be a final vestige of the original version, which was ‘Sæbeorht’s worth’ or homestead. The Saxon name was forgotten and a supposed ‘bridge’ apparently developed in the popular mind to account for the middle element of the form Sebrichewortheghe which had come into use by 1245 (Charter Rolls, quoted by Eckwall).

Neatishead (Norf.), [ˈniːtstid] in the traditional pronunciation, according to BBC. The final element of this name derives from OE htređ ‘household’. It is rare as a place-name element, but a common termination in the same locality is -stead from OE stede ‘place, site for
a building'. Examples within five miles of Neatishead are Horstead, Brumstead and Worstead. It would therefore be very natural for local speakers to analogise and convert the final element -head into -stead, and this is what appears to have happened.

4) Pronunciations derived from an earlier form of the place-name—
I have already commented on Ebrington (Glos.) [ˈɪbrɪntən] or [ˈebrɪntən], in Researches 20, p. 3, where I pointed out that BBC derives the former version, still used by older inhabitants, from the pre-1700 form Ebarton. A further example is Pontefract (W. Yorks.) [ˈpɒntɪfɪrækt] or [ˈpɒntɪfrækt]. The latter, local form appears to refer to the French version of the place-name, Pontfreit, which appears in the Pipe Rolls in 1177, probably as a translation of the original Latin which appears in the dative form as Pontefracto in the early Yorkshire Charters for 1101–2 (both mentioned by Eckwall). Here it is the earlier form that has survived in writing and is now coming to dominate in pronunciation also.

Although other factors may be involved, the above four seem to me to account for the majority of cases of discrepancy between the orthography and pronunciation of English place-names, as well as for many cases where such discrepancies once existed but have now been resolved. The reasons for their being unlikely to apply in the future are easily stated. French influence no longer operates, and with the spread of education and the universal levelling effect of the mass media, especially radio and TV, there is a firm tendency for regularity to impose itself and for spelling pronunciations to predominate. The only area where place-name pronunciation is very likely to change in the future—and here pronunciation and spelling are likely to go side by side—concerns cases where a deliberate decision is made by the local authorities to reinstate an old and lost name for historical reasons. Thus the civil parish of the Rodings (Essex) is once again Rothing, Harringay (Lond.) has reverted to the old spelling Haringey, and the area of Suffolk round Bawbergh has become the administrative district of Babergh, thus encouraging the alternative pronunciation [ˈbeɪbə] for the village, which is also known by the later, spelling pronunciation.
This article will now proceed with Lists C and D, together with a short List E for addenda and names which do not fit into the other categories.

List C

Place-Names Incorporating Family or Personal Names or Titles

This list will also include a few names which, while not conforming to the above description, are of similar form. The list is arranged alphabetically in order of the proper names. French names beginning with the particle DE are listed under D if the name is now written in one with the particle (e.g. Delamere) but under the letter heading the main name if the present orthography puts the particle separately or has a contraction with apostrophe. Thus d'Arcy and d'Abitot come under A and de la Launde under L. Under the general terms of these articles, only names presenting a doubt as to pronunciation are included, so Courtney and Peppard, which educated speakers of English would at once be able to pronounce correctly as [ˈkɔːtn] and [ˈpeɪpəːd] are omitted, while Keynes, which might appear to be [ˈkeɪnz] but is actually [ˈkiːnz], is included.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABBAS</td>
<td>Melbury Abbas (Dor.) [ˈæbæs].</td>
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<tr>
<td>d'ABERNON</td>
<td>Stoke d'Abernon (Sur.) [ˈdeɪbənən].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d'ABITOT</td>
<td>Croome d'Abitot (Here.) [ˈdeɪbɪtəʊ].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALUPH</td>
<td>Boughton Aluph (Kent) is [ˈboʊtən ˈælf] in BBC, but in Séan Jennett's The Pilgrims' Way (London, Cassell 1971) a pronunciation [ˈælɐf] is also mentioned, though [ˈælf] is said to be 'more usual'. [ˈælf] would accord with the derivation from the proper name Aluf, one of this name having held the land in 1211 (Eckwall).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d'ARCY</td>
<td>Toleshunt d'Arcy (Ess.) [ˈtəulzɔnt ˈdəsɪ].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASPAL</td>
<td>Stonham Aspal (Suff.) [ˈstɒnæm ˈæspl].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAGPUIZE</td>
<td>Kingston Bagpuize (Oxon.) [ˈbægpjuːz].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAMPFYLDE</td>
<td>Weston Bampfylde (Som.) [ˈbæmfɪld].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEAUCHAMP</td>
<td>This name, appearing in a number of place-names in-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
cluding Beaufort Royston (Ess.) and Shepton Beauchamp (Som.) always appears to be [ˈbiː:tʃæm].

**BECHER**
Becher’s Brook, the famous obstacle in the Grand National racecourse at Aintree (Mer.) is [ˈbiː:tʃəz].

**BEDON**
Stow Bedon (Norf.) [ˈbi:dən].

**BEGGEARN**
Beggearn Huish (Som.) [ˈbægən hjuːʃ]. The name derives from the genitive plural of ME beggere, a beggar, and presumably alludes to mendicant friars (Eckwall).

**BELLINGER**
Shipton Bellinger (Hants.) [ˈbelɪndʒə].

**BELOTH**
Vogue Beloth (Corn.) [ˈvɔɡ biˈloʊ].

**BLOUNT**
Kingston Blount (Oxon.) [ˈblʌnt].

**BOWELLS**
Shellow Bowells (Ess., not in BBC) is [ˈbəʊəlz]

**BRUERN**
Stoke Bruern (N’hants.) [ˈbruːn].

**BUCI**
The village of Kingston Buci (W. Sus.) is more commonly known nowadays by the corrupt version Kingston-By-Sea. The original name derives from the name of Robert de Busci (Probably Boucé in Normandy) who held it in 1199 (Eckwall). The pronunciation is [ˈbjuːst].

**BUSCEL**
Hulton Buscel (N. Yorks.) is spelt thus in Geographia. Bushell in Eckwall, both in BBC and Bushel in Johnstone. The pronunciation is [ˈbuːʃl].

**BREUX/ BREAUX**
Wickham Bre(a)ux (Kent), these days usually spelt Wickhambeaux is [ˈwɪkəmbruː].

**CAIUS**
Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, is usually known as ‘Caius’ pronounced [ˈkiːz].

**CANONICORUM**
Whitchurch Canonorum (Dor.) is [ˈwɪtʃər kəˈnɒnɪ kərəm]. Reaney, in The Origin of English Place-Names derives this from the canons of Salisbury Cathedral; Kenneth Cameron, in English Place-Names, claims that it refers to the ownership of the village by the abbey of St Wandrille in Normandy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAREW</td>
<td>Seaton Carew (Cleve.)</td>
<td>['siːtən ˈkærə]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAMBER-LAYNE</td>
<td>Compton Chamberlayne (Wilts.)</td>
<td>['kɒmptən ɪʃəmbɔlɪn]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHENEY</td>
<td>Lilton Cheney (Dor.)</td>
<td>['lɪltən ˈʃəni] I can find no reference in BBC for the pronunciation of Lilton Cheney (Leics.), but Eckwall gives the same derivation, from the family name Cheyne, so the pronunciation may also be the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEVIN</td>
<td>Otley Chevin (W. Yorks.)</td>
<td>['ɒtlɪ ˈʃiːvɪn] or ['ʃɪvɪn]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLVILLE</td>
<td>Carlton Colville (Suff.)</td>
<td>['kɔlvɪl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONSTABLE</td>
<td>Mellon Constable (Norf.) and Constable Burton (N. Yorks.)</td>
<td>are both ['kʌnstæbl]. They used to belong to medieval officers of that title.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONYERS</td>
<td>Hutton Conyers (N. Yorks., not in BBC) and Yealand Conyers (Lancs.)</td>
<td>are both ['kʌnjəz].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COURTENAY</td>
<td>Newnham Courtenay (Oxon.) and Sampford Courtenay (Dev.)</td>
<td>are ['kɔːtəni].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRUCIS</td>
<td>Ampney Crucis (Glos.), said to be named from a cross in the churchyard (Eckwall)</td>
<td>is ['kruːsɪs].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRUWYS</td>
<td>Cruwys Morchard (Dev.)</td>
<td>['kruːz ˈmɔrˌʃɔd], takes its name from one Alexander de Crues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAMAREL/</td>
<td>Stoke Damarel (Dev.)</td>
<td>is thus spelt in EPNS VIII but it is Dameral in BBC. The pronunciation is ['dæmərəl].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUCIS</td>
<td>Derby Dux (Corn.)</td>
<td>['derbɪ 'dʌks], or ['ˈdɜːrnəd].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGAINÉ</td>
<td>Colne Engaine (Ess.)</td>
<td>['kæn əŋˈgeɪn]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENSOR</td>
<td>Baddesley Ensor (War.)</td>
<td>['bæd(ə)lɪ ˈɛnзоʊ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALCON</td>
<td>Thorne Falcon (Som., not in BBC)</td>
<td>['θɔːn ˈfɔːlkən].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAVELL</td>
<td>Weston Favell (N'hants.)</td>
<td>['feɪvl].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOLIAT</td>
<td>Chilton Foliat (Wilts.)</td>
<td>['ʃəlɪət].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOLIOT</td>
<td>Tamerton Foliot (Dev.)</td>
<td>['fəlɪət]. BBC has Foliott.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOLVILLE  Ashby Folville (Leics., not in BBC) ['folvl].
FRIERN  Friern Barnet (Lond.) ['frən]. The reference is to the Friars of St John of Jerusalem.
FURNEAUX  Furneaux Pelham (Herts.) ['fɜ:niks, 'fɜ:naʊ]. A good example of a place-name where an original French element has had its pronunciation anglicised, and then a restored French pronunciation has been developed to co-exist with it. cf. Jervaulx, Rievaulx.
GIFFORD  Ashton Gifford (Wilts.), Aveton Gifford (Dev.) and Bowers Gifford (Ess.) are all ['dʒɪfəd]. (The main element in the Devon place-name is ['dʒ:ton] or ['dʒətən].)
GILBERT  Witton Gilbert (Dur.) is more often ['dʒɪlbət] than ['gɪlbət]. The original French pronunciation of the name has thus survived longer here than in the personal name Gilbert, which is always pronounced ['gɪlbət].
GOBION  Higham Gobion (Beds.) ['haɪəm 'ɡəbɪən].
GUIDE  Aspley Guise (Beds.) ['gaɪz].
HADRIAN  Hadrian's Wall across the North of England is of course ['heɪdrɪænd].
de la HAYE  Layer de la Haye (Ess.) ['leə de la 'heɪ].
HUCKNALL  Ault Hucknall (Derby.) ['ɔːlt 'hʌknəl].
INGHAM  Aston Ingham (Here.) ['ɪŋəm].
KEYNES  Ashton Keynes (Wilts.) and Horsted Keynes (E. Sus.) are both ['keɪmz].
KEYNELL  Yatton Keynell (Wilts.) ['kenl].
KEYNSTON  Tarrant Keynton (Dor.) ['keɪnstən].
KERRIAL  Croxton Kerrial (Leics.) ['krəʊsən 'kərɪəl].
KYME  Newton Kyme (N. Yorks.) ['kaim].
de la LAUNDE  Ashby-de-la-Launde (Lincs.) ['æʃbɪdəla 'lə:nd].
LAZARS  Burton Lazars (Leics.) ['læzəz].
LISLE  Kingston Lisle (Oxon., not in BBC) ['laɪl].
LONGUEVILLE  Orton Longueville (Cambs.) ['lɒŋvɪl].
LOVELL  Minster Lovell (Oxon.) ['lʌvl].
MALHERBE  *Boughton Malherbe* (Kent) [ˈbɔ:tən ˈmæləbi]. A curious development of the pronunciation from French *malherbe* ‘bad grass’, which had come to be a Norman family name.

MALHERBIE  *Cricket Malherbie* (Som.) [ˈmæləbi]. Here the Norman-French family name *Malherbe* has had its spelling altered to fit the same strange pronunciation noted for *Boughton Malherbe* above.

MALZEARD  *Kirkby Malzeard* (N. Yorks.) [ˈkɜːki ˈmælzəd]. This is not a family name, in spite of its appearance; it comes from OFr. *mal assart*, signifying ‘a poor clearing’ (Eckwall).

MARIES  *Stow Maries* (Ess.) [ˈmaːriːz].

MATRAVERS  *Langton and Lytchett Matravers* (Dor.) [məˈtrævəz].

MAUDIT(T)/MAUDUIT  *Harley Mauditt* (Hants., not in BBC) and *Easton Mauduit* (N’hants.), spelt *Maudit* in *Geographia* are both [ˈmɔːdɪt].

MAULEVERER  *Allerton Mauleverer* (N. Yorks.) is [məˈləvərə].

MESNES  *Worsley Mesnes* (G. Man.) [ˈwɜːli ˈmeinz]. This again is not a family name despite its appearance. It means ‘domains’.

MINNIS  *Stelling Minnis* (Kent) [ˈmɪnɪz]

MONACHELSEA  *Boughton Monchelsea* (Kent) [ˈbɔːtən ˈmɑntʃlə].

MORIEUX  *Thorpe Morieux* (Suff.) [məˈruː].

MOWBRAY  *Melton Mowbray* (Leics.) [ˈmɔbrə].

NOVERS  *Swanton Novers* (Norf.) [ˈnɔvə].

OVERY  *Burton Overy* (Leics., not in BBC) [ˈɔvəri].

PAGNELL  *Newport Pagnell* (Bucks.) is [ˈpægnəl], while *Hooton Pagnell* (W. Yorks.) can be either [ˈhuːtən ˈpægnəl] or [ˈhətən ˈpænl] according to BBC.

PAUNCÉFOOT  *Compton Pauncefoot* (Wilts.) [ˌkɒmpən ˈpɔːnsfʊt].
PEDWARDINE  Burton Pedwardine  (Lincs.)  ['pedwədain].
PERO       Stoke Pero  (Som.)  ['pɪərəʊ].
POMEROY    Stockleigh Pomeroy  (Dev.)  ['stəklɪ ˈpɒmərɔɪ].
PUERORUM   Ashby Puerorum  (Lincs.), not in BBC  ['pjʊəˈroːrəm].
This comes from the choristers of Lincoln Cathedral, who were supported by this parish in the Middle Ages (Reaney).
PUNCHARDON Heanton Punchardon  (Dev.)  ['hte(ə)nənt  ˈpʌntʃədən].
PURCELL    Newton Purcell  (Oxon.)  ['pəsəl].
PURLIEU    Dibden Purlieu  (Hants.)  ['pɜːliː].
PYCHARD   Ocle Pychard  (Here.)  ['ɔklɪ ˈpɪtʃəd].
PYPARD     Clyffe Pypard  (Wilts.)  ['klɪf ˈpapə:d].
RALEIGH    Combe, Colaton and Withycombe Raleigh  (Dev.) are all connected with the family of the Elizabethan explorer. BBC does not give the first. Although only  ['rɔːli] is given by BBC and Eckwall, other forms which I have heard are  ['ræli] and  ['rɔːli].
RALPH     Brompton Ralph  (Som.)  ['rælf].
REGIS      This addition, signifying ‘royal’, is to be found after a great many English place-names, of which a few are Bognor  (W. Sus.), Lyme and Melcombe  (Dor.), Milton  (Kent) and Rowley  (Here.). The pronunciation is always  ['riːdʒɪs].
REIGNY    Newton Reigny  (Cum.)  ['reini].
REYNES    Clifton Reynes  (Bucks.)  ['reinz].
RIVEL     Curry Rivel  (Som.)  ['rʌvəl].
ROGUS     Holcombe Rogus  (Dev.)  ['holkəm  'rɒgəz].
ROUS      Rous Lench  (Here.)  ['raʊs  ˈlɛntʃ]. The name derives from the OFr.  Ranulf.
ROUSE    Duntisbourne Rouse  (Glos.)  ['dʌntɪsbɔːn  'raʊz]. In this case, the derivation is from the nickname  rous or red-haired.
ROWANT   Aston Rowant  (Oxon.)  ['rəʊənt].
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ROWLAND   Nymet Rowland (Dev.) ['nɪmɪt ˈrɔulənd].
SALOME    Berrick and Britwell Salome (Oxon.) ['sæləm]. Both Geographia and Johnston mark the latter village as simply Britwell.
SALTERTON  Budleigh Salterton (Dev.) ['bʌdli ˈsɔːltətən]. This also is not a family name, but means ‘saltworks’.
SEMELE   Radford Somele (War.) ['sɛməli].
SEYMOUR   Kingston Seymour (Avon). This name is not in BBC, but the fairly common family name is usually ['siːmɔː] or ['siːmə].
SIBLE      Sible Hedingham (Ess.) is usually ['sɪbl ˈhedɪŋəm], though Eckwall gives ['henɪŋəm].
SOCON       Eaton Socon (Cambs.) ['iːtən ˈsəʊkən].
SPINEY     Sampford Spiney (Dev.) ['sæmfəd ˈspaini].
SUGWAS     Stretton Sugwas (Here.) ['sʌɡwəs].
TYAS       Middleton Tyas (N. Yorks.) is ['tæːs]. So presumably is Farnley Tyas (W. Yorks.) though this is not in BBC.
VAUCHURCH  Frome Vauchurch (Dor.) ['fruːm ˈvɔːtʃər].
VEN(E)Y    Sutton Veny (Wilts.) is spelt thus in Geographia, Johnston and Eckwall, but Veney in BBC. The pronunciation is given as ['vɛni] in BBC, but EPNS XVI has ['veni], which seems more likely from the origin ‘fenny’. Perhaps ['vɪni] is a modern development brought about by the single N in the spelling.
WAWEN       Wootton Wawen (War.) ['wʊtən].
WESPALL    Hartley Wespall (Hants.) ['wɛspəl].
de la ZOUCH  Ashby-de-la-Zouch (Leics.) ['æʃbi də lə 'zuːʃ].

List D

Place-Names Incorporating the Names of Saints

Many places in England incorporate the names of Christian saints, usually those used in the dedication of the local church. The great majority are the names of apostles or other saints from the Bible or are
common English names. Their pronunciation is therefore familiar and they will not be listed here. Most of the others are in Cornwall, where local saints so often furnished the dedications of churches. These names are frequently of Celtic origin and their pronunciation is therefore a problem even for English people unless they come from Cornwall. In other parts of England a few Saxon saints' names are to be found and in a few instances these are also hard to pronounce. All the important cases of these various names are listed below in alphabetical order.

ALBAN  
*St Albans* (Herts.) [snt 'ɔ:lbənz]. The Roman name of the town, still used in connection with its historical sites, was *Verulamium*.

ALDATE  
*St Aldate's* (Oxon.) a church and area of the City of Oxford, is [snt 'ɔ:ldəts], or [snt 'əuldəz].

ALDWYN  
*Coln St Aldwyns* (Glos.) [ˈkɔn təldwɪnz]. It is given as *Coln St Aldwyn* in BBC.

AUSTELL  
*St Austell* (Corn.) [snt ˈɒstəl] or [snt ˈɔːstəl].

BREAGE  
*Breage* (Corn.) ['breɪdʒ, ˈbriːdʒ] is apparently named after a Cornish saint (*Eckwall*).

BREOCK  
*St Breock* (Corn.) [snt ˈbrɪək].

BREWARD  
*St Breward* (Corn.) [snt ˈbruːəd].

BRIAVEL  
*St Briavels* (Glos.) [snt ˈbriːvlz]. A name of Celtic origin hence its Cornish appearance.

BUDEAUX  
*St Budeaux* (Dev.) [snt ˈbjuːdəʊ]. in BBC. I have also heard [snt ˈbʌdəks].

BURYAN  
*St Buryan* (Corn.) [snt ˈbɜrɪən], or [snt ˈberɪən]. Mr. Costigan believes the former is more often used by 'foreigners' (English people from outside Cornwall).

CLETERH  
*St Clether* (Corn.) [snt ˈkleðə].

COLUMB  
*St Columb Major, St Columb Minor, St Columb Porth, St Columb Road*, all in Cornwall, are all [snt ˈkʌlmə] or [snt ˈkʌləm].

CYRES  
*Newton St Cyres* (Dev.) is [snt ˈsərəz]. It is doubtful whether the name is in the subject or possessive form,
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as it derives from St Cyresius.

**DECUMAN**

*St Decumans* (Som., not in *BBC*) [snt 'dekjəmənz] named after a Welsh saint who died there.

**DEVEREUX**

*St Devereux* (Here., not in *BBC*) [snt 'devərʊks] named after the Welsh St Dyfrig.

**ENDELLION**

*St Endellion* (Corn.) [snt 'endəliən].

**ENODER**

*St Enoder* (Corn.) [snt 'enədə].

**ENODOC**

*St Enodoc* (Corn.) [snt 'enədək].

**EVAL**

*St Eval* (Corn.) [snt 'ɛvl].

**EWE**

*St Ewe* (Corn.) [snt 'juː:].

**FRIDESWIDE**

*St Frideswide*, formerly the dedication of Oxford Cathedral, is [snt 'fraɪdzuːd].

**GILES**

*St Giles in the Heath* and *St Giles in the Wood* (Dev.) are both [dʒaɪlz].

**GLUVIAS**

*St Gluvias* (Corn.) [snt 'gluːvias].

**IVE(S)**

*St I ve* (Corn.) is [snt 'iːv], and is derived from the name of St Ivo. Both *St Ives* (Corn.) and (Cambs.) are [snt 'aɪvz], but the derivation of the former is from a saint called Ia (*Eckwall*), while the latter is derived from St Ivo. *St Ives* (W. Yorks. not in *BBC*) is said by *EPNS XXXIII* to be probably a transfer from the *St Ives* in Huntingdonshire (now Cambridgeshire) so the pronunciation, though not specified, is likely to be [snt 'aɪvz]. *St Ives* (Hants.) is not really a saint's name having come from OE *ɪfɪg 'ivy'* (*Eckwall*). I cannot find the pronunciation in *BBC* or anywhere else, but suspect it to be [snt 'aɪvz].

**JULIOT**

*St Juliot* (Corn.) [snt 'dʒuːlɪət] or [snt 'dʒɪlt].

**KEYNE**

*St Keyne* (Corn.) [snt 'kiːn] or [snt 'kiːn].

**MARY AXE**

*St Mary Axe* (Lond.), a well-known street and church, traditionally has the pronunciation [snt 'mərɪ təks], though the pronunciation [snt 'mərɪ təks] is now more common says *BBC*. 
MARYLEBONE  *St Marylebone* (Lond.) see *Marylebone* (List B)
MEWAN     *St Mewan* (Corn.) [snt 'mju:ən].
NEOT      *St Neot* (Corn.) [snt 'niːət] and *St Neots* (Cambs.) [snt 'niːəts].
OSYTH     St Osyth (Ess.) [snt 'ɔuziθ] or [snt 'əuziθ].
PANCRAS   *St Pancras* (Lond.) [snt 'pæŋkrəs].
TEATH     *St Teath* (Corn.) [snt 'teθ].
TOUT SAINTS  *Buckland-Tout-Saints* (Dev.) is ['tuː'sɛnts].
This is really a family name in spite of its derivation from the French for 'all saints'. The village was held in 1242 by William de Tuz Seynts apparently a native of *Toussaint* in France (*Eckwall*).
TUDY      *St Tudy* (Corn.) [snt 'tjuːdi].
WEONARD   *St Weonards* (Here.) [snt 'wenədz].
WERBURGH  *Hoo St Werburgh* (Kent) [snt 'wəʊbər].

**List E**

**Addenda and Names Which Do Not Fit into Other Categories**

Items in this list appear in alphabetical order of the problematic element.

AVE MARIA  *Ave Maria Lane* (Lond.) [ˈævi ˈmærə leim].
BERGH     *Bergh Apton* (Norf.) [b3: ˈæptən].
CHAPEL    *Chapel-en-le-Frith* (Derby.) ['tʃæpl en lə ˈfrɪθ].
CLAUGHTON *Cloughton* (Mer.) is ['klɔːtən] but *Cloughton* (Lancs.) is ['klɔːtən] and *Cloughton-on-Brock* (Lancs.) is ['klɔːtən ən ˈbrok].
CLEARWELL *Clearwell* (Glos.) can be ['klɪə 'wel, klɪə'wel] or ['klɪəwel] according to *BBC*.
CONYER    *Conyer* (Kent) ['kʌŋjə] or ['kʌnjə].
CWM       *Cwm* (Shrops.) ['kʌm]. From the Welsh word for a deep valley, cognate with OE *cumba*.
DENT-DE- LION  *Dent-de-Lion* (Kent) ['dændilaʊn].
DYMOCK    *Dymock* (Here.) ['dɪmək].
ERCALL     Child's Ercall (Shrops.) ['tʃaɪldz 'a:kl].
FABIS      Barton-in-Fabis (Notts.) ['ba:tn in 'ferbis]. The meaning of the Latin element is identical with the nearby Leicestershire place-name Barton-in-the-Beans.
FOWNHOPE   Fownhope (Here.) ['fəʊnhoʊp].
FROME      Canon Frome (Here.) ['kænən 'fru:m].
GUÑING     Temple Guiltig (Glos.) ['gaitɪŋ].
HALL I'TH'  Hall 'iθ' Wood (G. Man.) on the outskirts of Bolton, is ['hɔ:lt 'wʊd]. It is also spelt Hall-in-the-Wood.
HEDGEHOPE  Hedgehope (N'hum.) ['hedzɔp].
HOLCOT      Holcot (Beds. not in BBC) is ['hʊkət] in Eckwall.
HULME       Cheadle Hulme (G. Man.) ['tʃi:dl 'h(j)u:m].
INTRINSICA  Ryme Intrinsica (Dor.) ['raɪm in'trɪnziːkə].
LEADEN      Leaden Roding (Ess., not in BBC) is ['lɪ:deɪn] in Eckwall.
LEIGH       Asthall Leigh (Oxon.) is ['æstəl 'liː] or ['leɪ].
MAKERFIELD  Ashton-in-Makerfield (G. Man.) ['æstən in 'meɪkəfel].
MENEAGE     The Cornish district of Meneage, near Helston, is [ˈmiːnɪ:ɡ] or [miːnɪɡ].
NYMET       Nymet Rowland (Dev.) ['nɪmət 'raʊlænd].
PYON        Canon Pyon (Here.) ['kænən 'paɪən].
SOKEN       Thorpe-le-Soken (Ess.) ['θɔːp ə 'sʌkən].
SOUGH       Calver Sough (Derby.) ['kɑːvə 'sɒf].
TOUT        Belle Tout (E. Sus.) ['bel 'tuːt]. This was the old Beachy Head lighthouse.
WEAR        Countess Wear (Dev.) ['kʌntɪs 'wɛə].
WICKHAM-    Wickhambreaux (Kent) ['wɪkəmbreə]. (see also List C under BREUX).
elements and discussed them with references to various authorities on the subject, chiefly the *BBC Pronouncing Dictionary of British Place-Names* and Eilert Eckwall's *Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*. I do not pretend to have covered all cases, but hope these notes will enable the interested student of English place-names to find out how a great many place-names are actually pronounced, as well as to see how the authorities frequently disagree on the subject. In the end, any survey of this type has to be faulty and incomplete because unlike the Greek philosophers arguing about the number of teeth in the mouth of a horse it is not possible for us to verify the information just by going and having a look. Even if one spent a lifetime visiting every place in England asking people how they pronounced its name there would be bound to be cases where information was partial or variable depending on the age, education and idiolect of one's informants. Still, these lists which I have tried to make more readable than lists usually are by adding interesting points of etymological and other information, may serve as a guide. My notes on how some place-names have changed, on especially unusual cases of anomalous pronunciation and on some reasons for spelling/pronunciation discrepancy may also be of some interest. I have pointed out that although there has for a long time been a tendency, fostered by education and the uniformity imposed by mass communications, for spelling-pronunciations to be adopted, this solution has by no means triumphed in every case, nor is it likely to do so in the future. Given the persistence of tradition, the vagaries of English spelling and the dislike of human beings, especially the English, for uniformity, it seems to me quite likely that pronunciations like [ˈwustə] for *Worcester* and [ˈheɪzbərə] for *Happisburgh* will always be with us. Perhaps too that is rather a good thing.

**References**


Some Aspects of the Pronunciation of English Place-Names (V)

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