



A Dictionary of English Place Names

A. D. Mills

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England's diverse and often odd-sounding place-names speak of thousands of years of history, reflecting conquest and migration, topography, local trades and agriculture, and changing customs. With over 12,000 informative entries, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Place Names* offers a unique path into this rich past of the English landscape, as read in local names.

Time and time again, the British Isles have been overrun by invading nations--the Romans, Saxons, Vikings, and Normans, to name a few--each leaving their language and locations etched into the countryside. The traces of these successive tongues can be heard in such places as *Humber* (pre-Celtic), *York* (Celtic), *Lincoln* (Latin), *Scunthorpe* (Scandinavian), *Basingstoke* (Old English), *Devizes* (French), and *Broadstairs* (Middle English). *Chester*, for example, began as a Roman military base, and originated as a latin word for a camp. Mills reveals how local names reflect such elements as the size of a place (as in *Much Wenlock*), its location (*High Barnet*), a local product (*Saffron Walden*), the tribe that settled there (*Essex*), natural features (*Bromsgrove*), or pre-Christian worship (*Wednesbury*).

This fascinating resource offers clear, concise entries that discuss the meaning and origin of these names, tracing their development from the earliest appearances to the present day. Mills provides earlier forms of each name, along with the earliest date and its spelling in the Domesday Book (William the Conqueror's famous survey of England) if it appears there. He also covers recent place-names and establishes the contemporary location of each site. Additional features include a select bibliography, maps of England's changing counties, and a helpful glossary of common elements in English place-names.

Covering cities and suburbs, towns and villages, counties and districts, rivers and coastlines, *The Dictionary of English Place Names* offers an authoritative reference and a unique historical tour through the English countryside. For readers interested in history, literature, or travel (armchair or otherwise), this volume will provide long hours of enjoyment.

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