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Old English words not hitherto noted in place-names: some instances from Hampshire

Richard Coates (pp. 5–14)

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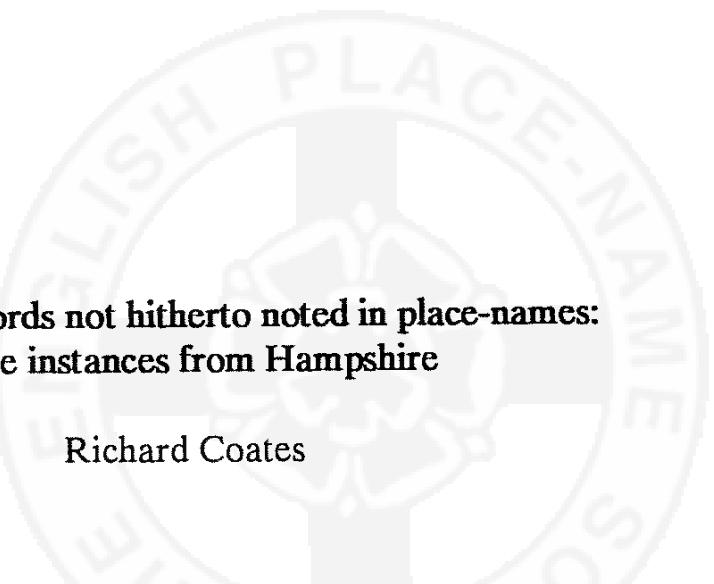
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ABBREVIATIONS OF COUNTIES AND EPNS COUNTY SURVEYS

Co	Cornwall
Ha	Hampshire
He	Herefordshire
K	Kent
La	Lancashire
Nb	Northumberland
Sf	Suffolk
So	Somerset
Wt	Isle of Wight
CPNE	<i>Cornish Place-Name Elements.</i>
EPNE	<i>English Place-Name Elements, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN BdHu	<i>The Place-Names of Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire.</i>
PN Brk	<i>The Place-Names of Berkshire, Parts 1, 2 and 3.</i>
PN Bu	<i>The Place-Names of Buckinghamshire.</i>
PN Ca	<i>The Place-Names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely.</i>
PN Ch	<i>The Place-Names of Cheshire, Parts 1–5.</i>
PN Cu	<i>The Place-Names of Cumberland, Parts 1, 2 and 3.</i>
PN D	<i>The Place-Names of Devon, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN Db	<i>The Place-Names of Derbyshire, Parts 1, 2 and 3.</i>
PN Do	<i>The Place-Names of Dorset, Parts 1–4.</i>
PN Du	<i>The Place-Names of County Durham, Part 1.</i>
PN Ess	<i>The Place-Names of Essex.</i>
PN ERY	<i>The Place-Names of the East Riding of Yorkshire and York.</i>
PN Gl	<i>The Place-Names of Gloucestershire, Parts 1–4.</i>
PN Hrt	<i>The Place-Names of Hertfordshire.</i>
PN Le	<i>The Place-Names of Leicestershire, Parts 1–6.</i>
PN Li	<i>The Place-Names of Lincolnshire, Parts 1–7.</i>
PN Mx	<i>The Place-Names of Middlesex (apart from the City of London).</i>
PN Nf	<i>The Place-Names of Norfolk, Parts 1–3.</i>
PN Nt	<i>The Place-Names of Nottinghamshire.</i>
PN NRY	<i>The Place-Names of the North Riding of Yorkshire.</i>
PN Nth	<i>The Place-Names of Northamptonshire.</i>
PN O	<i>The Place-Names of Oxfordshire, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN R	<i>The Place-Names of Rutland.</i>
PN Sa	<i>The Place-Names of Shropshire, Parts 1–6.</i>
PN Sr	<i>The Place-Names of Surrey.</i>
PN St	<i>The Place-Names of Staffordshire, Part 1.</i>
PN Sx	<i>The Place-Names of Sussex, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN W	<i>The Place-Names of Wiltshire.</i>
PN Wa	<i>The Place-Names of Warwickshire.</i>
PN We	<i>The Place-Names of Westmorland, Parts 1 and 2.</i>
PN Wo	<i>The Place-Names of Worcestershire.</i>
PN WRY	<i>The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire, Parts 1–8.</i>



Old English words not hitherto noted in place-names: Some instances from Hampshire

Richard Coates

During the preparation of my forthcoming book *The place-names of Hampshire*, I arrived at some etymologies on the basis of words not hitherto recorded in place-names (by which I mean they do not figure as separate entries in EPNE). In one case (*cawel*) it is the application of the word that is novel and not the word itself. I have extracted, and lightly edited, the entries for the relevant names, and I reproduce them below, with a certain amount more detail than appears in my book. The new elements in question are OE *cawel* 'cabbage' as applied to seakale (a borrowing from Latin *caulis*), **frāw* 'swift', *hæfelēast* 'want, poverty', *heregeard* 'army camp', *polleie* 'pennyroyal' (a borrowing from Latin *pulegia*), **soppa* 'bog', **stanin* 'stem/stern-post', *swamm* 'mushroom, toadstool', *swaðul* '(?) mist', *swearð* 'pelt, hide'. Along with these I treat ME *polk(e)* 'pool', found in a name I do not treat in *The place-names of Hampshire*, but in a separate work (Coates, forthcoming, b). The spellings mentioned below are mostly from the EPNS's collection housed at University College, London, assembled by J.E.B. Gover. His typescript notebooks, which were never taken up into the EPNS series of county volumes, were very useful to me in the preparation of my book, but only one of the etymologies suggested below coincides exactly with Gover's, and the rest represent a subset of my fairly numerous cases of disagreement with his interpretations. The exception is *Herriard*, which I have thought it desirable to include here because of the unusual historical interest of its origin, not noted by either Ekwall or Gover.

Abbreviations for documents are as usual in EPNS volumes; any that do not occur regularly in these volumes are explained in the references at the end of the article.

The relevant names

CALMOOR, CALMORE in Netley Marsh/Eling (SU 339145)

c13 Cauwelmor (AD)

1276 Caulemore (Cl), Kaulemor (FF)

1557 Colmore (Pat)

OE **Cawelmōr* ‘cabbage marshland’, as suggested by Gover (or ‘wasteland’). But the reference is almost certainly to seakale (*Crambe maritima*) since the place is adjacent to the once-tidal marshes of the Test. Its seeds disperse through tidal action on sandy and pebbly beaches. The seakale of Southampton Water was famous as a wild food, and it was an eighteenth-century Hampshire man, William Curtis, who popularized it among London gourmet palates. It was especially common locally on the sands near Calshot Castle at the seaward end of Southampton Water. (Cf. Grigson 1958: 63.)

FROYLE (UPPER and LOWER), parish (SU 755429)

1086 Froli (DB)

1167 Froila (P)

1196 Frolia (FF) 1199 Frohill', Froille (Cur)

1205 Frohull (Obl)

1236 Froyle (Cl)

Ekwall and Gover both toy with the idea that it is OE ‘hill of (the god) *Frēo/Frig*’, which (a) is highly speculative; (b) does not account for the universal *o*; (c) does not really account for the morphology of the name - one might expect some twelfth-century forms with three syllables; and (d) does not respect the fact that Upper Froyle is at the tip of a rather insignificant ridge, and closer to the river Wey than to the more significant ridge to the north of it. Only a small group of forms like that of 1199 (4 attestations between 1199 and 1306) show *h* and therefore appear to suggest *hill*. Better perhaps the unrecorded ancestor of ME *frow* ‘swift’ and OE *wiell(e)* ‘spring, stream’ (on which latter, cf. Kitson, forthcoming). The name would refer to the Wey itself, as there is no side stream here. There is plenty of support from other

Germanic languages for an OE **frāw-*, e.g. ON *frár*, OHG *frō*.

There is still the question of *Frobury* farm in Kingsclere, however (e.g. 1184 *Frolebiri*, *Frollebiri* (P et passim), 1236 *Froillebyr'* (Ass), 1541 *Frowbery* (FF), 1586 *Frolberry* (LSR)). Ekwall considers this name to contain that of Froyle (or one identical to it) as its first element. But *Froyle* shows lots of evidence for a medial -*i*-, whilst in *Frobury* only the form from 1236 has an -*i*-. The two are probably therefore unrelated. They are not really near each other (Froyle SU 755429, Frobury SU 512595). *Frobury* may contain **Fr(e)olla*, a short-form of the name *Freoðulaf* (*Friðulaf*).

FRYSPOOLK, lost coastal feature of Hayling Island (approx. SU 7101)

Maybe denotes the stream through the saltings now mapped as *Upper Rithe*, or some feature in it.

1544 Fryspoolk Reach (*CtR*) (Longcroft 1857: 289)

1547 Frypole Ryth (*CtR*) (Longcroft 1857: 288)

Not treated in Gover's MS. If the spelling of 1544 is genuine, the element *pole* in the 1547 spelling is not a descendant of OE *pōl/pull* 'pool', but from ME *polk(e)* in the same meaning, hitherto unrecorded in place-names in England. The form of 1547 would then be a rationalization of it, just as *reach* (1544) rationalizes *rithe* (from OE *rið* 'stream'). The first element is uncertain, but may be ME *fresshe* 'fresh'; or, according better with the 1547 spelling, perhaps the surname *Fry*, which I have not found recorded in relation to Hayling. I have found it in a Hampshire context, however, displaying the same curious composition without -*s* as is found in the 1547 form: Henry *le Frye* held land in *la ffrie breche* in East Aston, Longparish, in the late Middle Ages (*VCH IV*: 407-8).

HENSTING, farm in Owslebury (and now hamlet in Colden Common) (SU 495220)

970(c12) hefesylting (BCS 1158, Sawyer 827)

1208 Hevenstigge (EcclComm)

1231 Hevelesting' (EcclComm et passim)

1350 Havelestyng, Hevelestynche (EcclComm)

The OE form is out of line with later ones. That of 1231 is typical, suggesting that *l* and *s* have been transposed in Sawyer 827 in the act of copying. Ekwall (1962) tries to derive the name from **sielting* ‘salt-place, salt-lick’, which is topographically highly unlikely (the place is not adjacent to tidal marshes) and leaves the first element unaccounted for (Ekwall flounders about with a supposed personal name). Gover leaves the question of interpretation severely alone.

Although one might have expected more medieval spellings with *a* in the first syllable (the form of 1350 is unique), it appears to be a singular *-ing* derivative of the OE *hæfleast* ‘want, poverty’. It is therefore conceivable that it is the last trace of a lexicalized derivative showing double *i*- umlaut caused by the *-ing* suffix, (cf. SWAYTHLING below), i.e. **hefliesting* ‘poverty-place’, in which case the first vowel would be expected to be *e*, and the vowel of the penultimate syllable of the OE record acquires extra significance: perhaps we have West Saxon *y* for *ie*. The later spellings with *n* for *l* are due to assimilation to the nasal consonant in the final syllable. Reduced forms akin to the shape of the modern name are found from the sixteenth century onwards: 1534 *Henstyng*, 1759 *Hinstead*.

The name is therefore highly unusual; such derivatives of abstract nouns are all but unknown in early English toponymy. The original farm is in Owslebury on the soils of the Andover-1 association. These soils are thin and fertile but potassium-deficient when newly broken in; barley may suffer from magnesium deficiency too (Jarvis et al. 1984: 84). Their agricultural quality may be further indicated by the fact that much of the parish in medieval times was episcopal rabbit-warren, and therefore not prime arable land. These soil characteristics may account for the name.

HERRIARD, parish (SU 663460)	
c.1160	Herierd (Oxf et passim)
1236	Hereyerd (Ass et passim)

There are occasional spellings with *h* in the second element (e.g. 1269 *Hereyherd* (For)), but the name is clearly OE **Heregeward* ‘army yard or enclosure, camp’ (thus also Ekwall and Gover).

Although in use as a personal name element, the word *here* was not a flattering one by later OE times; the *Laws of Ine* define it as a band of more than 35 robbers, and it is the normal word for the dreaded Danish host. What events are commemorated by this place-name is not known for certain. But intriguingly, the *OE Chronicle* (A and E versions) records that in 851 [850] "[the heathen, i.e. the Danes] went south over Thames into Surrey; and king Æthelwulf and his son Æthelbald, with the West Saxon levies, fought against them at *Acleah*, and there was the greatest slaughter of a heathen host that we have ever heard tell of, and there won the victory" (Garnonsway's translation of the E-text). Recent historians have declined to identify *Acleah*; it is certainly not Ockley (Sr), as once thought. I present arguments (Coates, forthcoming a) that Baring (1907) was correct in identifying *Acleah* with Oakley west of Basingstoke, about six miles north-west of Herriard. If Herriard was not the site of the Danish camp in 851 [850], it may have been that of 871 [870], when the Danes defeated the West Saxon levies at Basing, about 6 miles north of Herriard.

It might be objected that other OE words in *here-* do not allude specifically to the Danish host. But it may well be that these established lexical words antedate the later ninth century. I am speculating on a possible use of the word *here* in a new coining under the conditions of c. 850-75. Even if there is no specific allusion to the Danes, and if *heregeard* was an existing compound unattested before this time, it is tempting to connect the place-name with the activities of either army in the events of 851 or 871.

POULNER, district of Ringwood (SU 162060)

1300	Poleno (Rental)
1327	Polenoure (SR, p.)
1410	Pulnoe (Pat)
1682	Powne (Claims)

The second element is *ora* or *ofer*, both words for 'bank, slope' discussed by Gelling (1984: 173-82). *Ofer* appears to mean 'flat-topped ridge' and *ora* 'slope, foot of a slope'. The topography of east Ringwood favours the latter. If the first element is not an unknown personal name, it may be OE *polleie* 'pennyroyal' or a

derived adjective **pollegen* (spelling normalized). This well-known medicinal mint grows in sandy damp places, for which the local soils of the Bursledon Association, a sandy loam subject to waterlogging, would provide a good habitat. The plant is known in place-names under different names, e.g. *dwōstle*.

SOPLEY, parish (SZ 156968)

1086	Sopelie (DB)
t. Hy I	Soppeleia (XtCart)
1152	Soppeley (Holtzmann)
1236	Soppele (Ass et passim)

Possibly OE **Soppanlēah* ‘Soppa’s wood/clearing’ (thus Ekwall and Gover). This man’s name has been inferred from other PNs. But it is legitimate to wonder if an OE **soppa* ‘milksop’ existed; only the strong counterpart *sopp* is recorded, but there are continental Germanic parallels for a weak **soppa* (MLG *soppe*, OHG *sopfa*, both meaning ‘milksop’ (Hoad 1986: 449)). If so, this is ‘sop clearing/wood’ in a topographical sense; the church at the village centre is by a marsh in the Avon valley, clearly marked even on modern maps.

STAMSHAW (STAMPSEY), Liberty of Portsmouth

(SU 645025)	
1236, 1242	Stamnesho (Ass, Fees)
1292	Stampneshou (Ipm)

The first element appears to be an OE **stamn* (from Gmc. **stamnaz*); not attested, but related to the *stemn* (from Gmc. **stamniz*) that gives us *stem(-post)*, and paralleled precisely by modern German *Stamm*. It may even be a borrowing from Old Low German *stamn*, transmitted in contacts established before the rise of the Hanseatic League. It would be no surprise to find such a borrowing in toponymy in Portsmouth. The second is OE *hōh* ‘heel’. OE **Stamneshōh* ‘heel of land, promontory, marked with a (stem- or stern-) post’. There are odd transformations in the later record, e.g. 1294 *Scampnesho* (PortsRec), 1333 *Stamelleshou* (SR), c.1600 *Stampsey* (PortsRec), which are all explicable in terms of

common letter-confusions or well-known phonetic processes.

SWAMPTON, tithing of St Mary Bourne (SU 418507)

- | | |
|-----------|------------------------------|
| 1086 | Suantune (DB) |
| 1248 | Swanton (Ass) |
| 1269 etc. | Swamptun (For, SR et passim) |

Only the two earliest attestations support derivation from OE **Swantūn* ‘swan farm’. There is no trace of the medial *-e-* which would make **Swānatūn* ‘swains’ farm’ likely. These are the two possibilities that Gover mentions. The forms in *-mp-* are, however, inexplicable starting from **Swantūn*. Most likely therefore **Swammtūn* ‘mushroom/toadstool farm’, with epenthetic *p*. The word *swamm* has Indo-European relatives meaning ‘sponge’, so its Germanic application is presumably an innovation.

SWARRATON, parish (SU 569371)

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| 903 (16c.) | Swerwetone (BCS 602, Sawyer 370) |
| 1135x1154 (14c.) | Serueton (Pat) |
| 1207 | Sherueton (FF) |
| 1242,1250 | S(w)arweton (Fees) |
| 1280 | Swerweton (Ass) |
| 1327 | Swareweton (SR) |

Ekwall suggests that the first element is a reduced form of **Swær-wæd* ‘heavy ford’ (i.e. over the right-bank tributary of the Itchen entering below Alresford). Grundy (1927: 259), following a guess of Bradley’s, suggests the first element is a pre-OE stream name. The former demands a rather heavy reduction. The latter cannot be right; PrW **sy-* is non-existent (Jackson 1953: 525-6). Perhaps it is rather OE **Sweatwætūn* ‘pelt (gen.pl.) farm’, i.e. farm supplying dressed or undressed animal skins, if OE *sweat*, *sweard* ‘pelt’ is for Germanic **swarðu-*, **swarðw-* as Germanic and Baltic cognates seem to suggest. For a trace of the *u/w* in the second syllable to be preserved, the name would have to be of high antiquity, as the word attested in OE does not otherwise show it. The ‘oldest’ spelling is preserved only in a 16c. copy of a spurious document, but it looks a fair ancestor for the modern name, and there is some medieval

support: 1228 *Sereweton*, etc., where there is dissimilatory loss of the first *w*, 1250 *Swarweton*, a form typical of later thirteenth- and fourteenth-century mentions.

If the suggested origin is correct, the name is of considerable dialectological interest as being the only known example of the retention of *-w-* in a *w-* stem noun in a Wessex place-name (cf. Kitson, forthcoming).

SWAYTHLING in North Stoneham, now suburb of Southampton (SU 4416)

909 (?c11/c12)	(be) swæðelinge (BCS 620, Sawyer 376)
932 (c13/c14)	(to) swæðelingeforda, (of) swæðelingforda (BCS 692, Sawyer 418)
t. Ethelred (c12)	(on) swæðeling ford (KCD 713, Sawyer 944)
1045 (c12)	(on) swæðeling wylle (KCD 776, Sawyer 1012)
1256	Swathelinge (Ass, first element thus freq.)
1272	Swateling (Ass)

Despite 5 separate mentions in Anglo-Saxon times, and despite the remarkable similarity of these, the name remains difficult. Swaythling seems to have been the name of the stream now called *Monk's Brook* which falls into the Itchen here; the form of 1045, apparently 'the stream (called) *Swaythling*', supports this view. Ekwall's etymology, in effect **Swæð-ling* 'track-place', will not pass muster, on practical or formal grounds; this is not a good name for a stream, and all the ancient spellings show a medial syllable. It may be a singular *-ing* name based on OE *swaðul* 'smoke, (hence possibly) mist', with double *i-* umlaut caused by the suffix, **Swæðeling*, and if so therefore 'place of mist'. It would be interesting to know more about the microclimate of the area. Modern Swaythling is adjacent to marshland which might have been characteristically misty. OE *sweðel* 'wrappings, swaddling-bands' might be considered, in use as a topographical term, but the stream is not especially winding and nothing else would seem to justify such a name.

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