

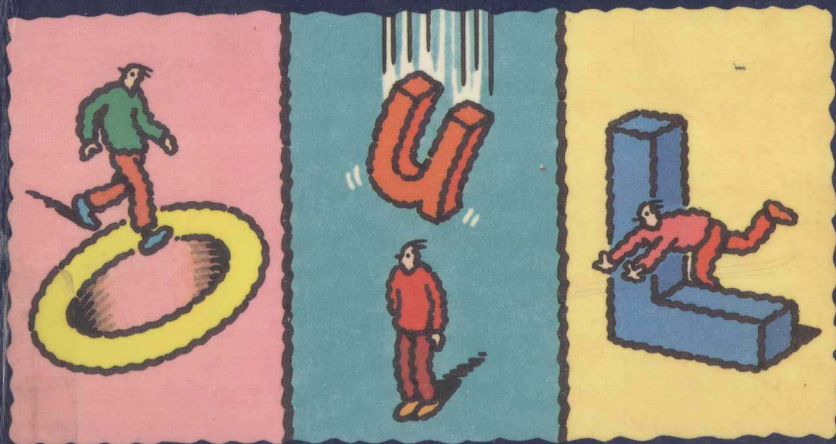
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Pronouncing

Dictionary

of British Names



BBC
*Pronouncing Dictionary
of British Names*

SECOND EDITION

Edited and Transcribed by
G. E. POINTON

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PREFACE

ELEVEN years have passed since the publication of the first edition of this dictionary, edited by Miss G. M. Miller, and the BBC's Pronunciation Unit has been continuing its work throughout that time. A lot of new information has come to light, concerning personal and place names which had not previously been recorded by us and also names which were already part of our collection. This new information has been incorporated where appropriate in the second edition.

Some minor changes have been introduced in the layout: most importantly, each place name is now identified by its county, or in Scotland its region. This is in order to show at a glance which place is intended. There are many names which occur in more than one county, and the BBC has established the pronunciation only of those whose county is stated. Other places whose names are identically spelt may be differently pronounced.

Secondly, there is no longer any typographical distinction between personal and place names. The addition of county and region names has rendered the previous practice superfluous.

The bracketing of both IPA and Modified Spelling has been discontinued without, we hope, giving rise to any ambiguity.

I have included on another page the names of members of the Pronunciation Unit, past and present. If there are any omissions, they are not intentional, as all my fellow-workers in the Unit are responsible for some part of the material in this book.

Those who have helped in the revision of the work are too numerous to mention by name, and include many people in public libraries, post offices, police stations, and elsewhere, who remained anonymous. I am grateful to them all for the time they gave me as well as for the information. BBC staff around the country, in local radio stations and regional headquarters, were also very helpful and deserve my thanks. Special mention must be made of two people, however: Miss Nia Rhosier, who

gave a lot of time and effort to helping me with the Welsh entries, and Mr Gregory James, lecturer in the Language Centre at the University of Exeter, who checked many of the entries for Devon and Cornwall. My thanks go also to Miss Alexandra Bejda who prepared much of the typescript for this edition, and to Betty Palmer and Ena Sheen of the Oxford University Press for their help in seeing the work through to publication.

The responsibility for any errors which may remain lies entirely with me.

G. E. POINTON

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August 1982*

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

IN this book the BBC has gathered together the fruits of more than forty years of research into the pronunciation of proper names in the United Kingdom. The book was compiled primarily for the use of members of staff, but the BBC hopes that it will prove useful to many other readers. Here they will find the pronunciation which as nearly as possible represents the usage of the inhabitants of the place or of the family bearing the name listed. Although the BBC does not, and never did, impose pronunciations of its own on English words, the myth of 'BBC English' dies hard. It owed its birth no doubt to the era before the Second World War, when all announcers and perhaps a majority of other broadcasters spoke the variety of Southern English known as Received Pronunciation, which is the type of English spoken by those educated at public schools; but there was nothing esoteric about this way of speaking, nothing exclusive to the BBC, and in its pre-war setting it came to be accepted as the natural mode of communication over the air. Even today, when a much wider variety of voices is heard, the old style is still regarded as having an important place in broadcasting. The good announcer remains, as far as the BBC is concerned, the pleasant, unobtrusive speaker who does not distract attention from his subject matter by causing embarrassment, unwitting amusement, or resentment among intelligent listeners. He is the mouthpiece for the BBC's official pronouncements, the man who links programmes, announces concerts, narrates opera scripts, reads bulletins prepared in the newsroom, and generally undertakes the exacting task of interpreting other people's work, only occasionally displaying his own versatility by taking part in particular programmes.

In the early 1960s, the BBC felt that it would be more realistic to throw the stage open to the men behind the scenes, so that news men participated personally in news broadcasts, meteorologists gave us our weather

forecasts, policemen enlisted our aid direct from Scotland Yard, and the BBC Motoring Unit kept us hourly aware of traffic problems. This created a greater sense of immediacy between the listener and those at the heart of the event. Naturally, there was no longer insistence on purely southern usage, as these experts are likely to be drawn from all parts of the country. Their prime advantage is that they are informed and articulate on their own subject, and consequently easy to follow. They hold the interest and sympathy of the listener because of their expertise. At the same time, a more colloquial element has been introduced, which has disposed even further of a sense of formality. Individual departments are of course responsible for avoiding the pitfall of employing the man who is patently neither adequate speaker nor expert. In both radio and television, News Division has experimented widely. London television presentation announcers, on the other hand, continue to be drawn from the ranks of RP speakers, while domestic radio presentation has extended its range to take in several Commonwealth announcers. In the BBC's European and World Service English language broadcasts, understandably, Southern English RP remains the accepted norm for all announcers, both in news bulletins and in programmes. As well as the need to overcome the occasional vagaries of short-wave reception, there is the consideration that to a very large number of listeners English is a foreign tongue, and a stable style of pronunciation greatly helps intelligibility. It is also appreciated by the world-wide followers of BBC English by Radio programmes.

There is one sphere, however, in which the BBC expects conformity from all its official broadcasters, and that is in the treatment of British proper names. It is felt that, as a matter of courtesy, the bearer of a name or title should be referred to by the pronunciation which he himself prefers; and that place names should be pronounced as they are locally, with perhaps rare exceptions where there is a recognized 'national' pronunciation. A name is usually a matter of vital moment to those closely and often emotively concerned with it, and unfavourable reaction to a mispronunciation, with all the lack of

interest and care that the latter implies, is immediate. On the BBC's part, the size of the Pronunciation Unit's telephone bills must be considered one small testimony to its endeavour to keep in close touch with personal and local usage. It is this Unit, which emerged as the direct heir to the BBC's Advisory Committee on Spoken English in 1939, that continues to carry out the Committee's far-sighted recommendations in regard to both English and foreign language problems. It is worth pausing for a moment to study the calibre of the Committee itself, which was set up in 1926 by the Director-General, Mr. J. C. W. Reith, later Lord Reith. Foremost among its members were four linguistic specialists—Arthur Lloyd James, Professor of Phonetics at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London, who acted as honorary secretary to the Committee and linguistic adviser to the announcers; Daniel Jones, Professor of Phonetics at University College London, a phonetician of world repute, whose close association with the BBC continued until his death in 1967; H. C. Wyld, Merton Professor of English Language and Literature in the University of Oxford; and Harold Orton, later to become Professor of English Language and Medieval Literature in the University of Leeds. Among the members of the main Committee over the years were the Poet Laureate Robert Bridges, Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, George Bernard Shaw, Sir Julian Huxley, Lord David Cecil, Sir Kenneth Clark, Lady Cynthia Asquith, Rose Macaulay, and many others of distinction. After some early lively battles on matters of principle, the members settled down to collecting information for inclusion in a successive range of booklets covering the pronunciation of English, Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Irish place names, and of British family names and titles. All their findings, published before 1939, have been incorporated in this present book, together with much evidence acquired since that time.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor A. Lloyd James and Professor Daniel Jones, who were responsible for the inception of this collection and for the principles on which it is based, and with whom I had

the constant pleasure of working during their years as the Corporation's Linguistic Advisers; to my colleague, Elspeth D. Anderson, who has not only collaborated closely throughout the preparation of the dictionary, but who did much of the research over a long period of years; to R. L. W. Collison, formerly BBC Librarian and now Professor of Library Service in the University of California, Los Angeles, who advised on the more intricate aspects of indexing; to Dr. Aled Rhys Wiliam, formerly of the BBC in Wales and now Director of Audio-Visual Media at the University of Salford, whose scholarly yet practical knowledge of his country and its language, enhanced by his broadcasting experience, has left him singularly well equipped to advise on Welsh names; to Arthur G. Kent of Jersey and Frank Falla of Guernsey, who undertook the difficult task of indicating by pen rather than by word of mouth the pronunciation of Channel Islands names, and whose wishes I hope I have interpreted successfully; to A. C. Gimson, Professor of Phonetics in the University of London, who has been unfailingly swift and generous with advice on general and specific points whenever this was sought; to J. Windsor Lewis, Lecturer in the Department of Phonetics in the University of Leeds, for accepting the arduous assignment of proof-reading, in the course of which he has offered much constructive criticism and valuable guidance on phonetic problems, particularly in relation to Welsh names; and to numerous BBC colleagues in London and the Regions.

G. M. MILLER

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London, W.1.
December 1970*

INTRODUCTION

A CURIOUS witness to the remarkable diversity of provenance of the inhabitants of the British Isles is the fact that the first entry in this dictionary should be *Aagaard* and the last *Zabiela*—names more immediately suggesting an affinity with Scandinavia and the Iberian Peninsula. Here, however, the recording of pronunciations rather than research into historical origins has been the aim. The book includes titles, family names (i.e., surnames), certain Christian names (or personal first names), place names, those of institutions and societies, and adjectival forms of proper names, drawn from England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands—the last appearing in a separate appendix. Some names, like that of *Yehudi Menuhin*, appear because their owners, although not technically of British nationality, have made their homes here and are very much a part of the British scene. It is not an exhaustive collection, and not every pronunciation of every name is represented; only those for which satisfactory evidence was available have been included. Local clergy, town clerks and their staff, postal and police officials, and many private citizens have contributed—sometimes very extensively—to the information on place names. Advice on personal names has been most carefully sought from the individuals concerned, or from members of their families or other sources close to them. Although it is naturally outside the scope of the book to record the many popular versions of pronunciations used by those professing no local or personal knowledge of the names, there are cases, like those of *Carlisle* and *Newcastle*, in which an accepted ‘national’ pronunciation has been recorded, even though it is not necessarily the most general one among the educated local population. Many historians, artists, musicians, scientists, and others have been consulted about present-day spoken forms of historic names. Descendants of historical personages, too, have sometimes provided interesting information about past

and present usage. For entries like *Wriothesley*, where evidence was elusive, various written sources were also consulted.

Spellings

For place-name spellings, the authorities accepted have been the Handbook entitled *Post Offices in the United Kingdom* published by the Post Office in November 1974, the *Census 1971, England and Wales, Index of Place-names*, the *Ordnance Survey Gazetteer of Great Britain*, the *Gazetteer of Welsh Place-Names*, and Bartholomew's *Survey Gazetteer of the British Isles* and *Gazetteer of Britain*. Spellings of titles were verified in Debrett.

Titles

The pronunciation of a title has been linked, according to its origin, sometimes with a family name and sometimes with a place name. In the case of an historic hereditary title where the line of succession has come to an end, or the title is in abeyance, and the last holder's pronunciation is known to us, this has been recorded, as appropriate, as a *dukedom*, *earldom*, *viscounty*, or *barony*. Likewise, the term *barony* appears in association with certain family names to record the specific pronunciation of one who has been a life peer. However, no mention is made of the large majority of life peers whose title is identical with their family name and whose pronunciation is in no doubt. A place name has sometimes been retained in a title, not because it is an integral part of the title, but because of its pronunciation interest. This situation arises when the place name, in this particular form, appears only in the title and is not to be found elsewhere, e.g., *Viscount Greenwood of Holbourne*, *Baron Tedder of Glenguin*. The opportunity to record the pronunciation might otherwise be lost. There are titles, on the other hand, where the territorial designation is included as a matter of course because it is an essential distinguishing feature of the title, e.g., *Baron Balfour of Burleigh*, *Baron Balfour of Inchrye*.

County names

The names of counties, or in Scotland regions, have been included for each place name recorded. Many place names occur in more than one county or region. In such cases only those counties have been included for which satisfactory evidence of the pronunciation has been obtained by the Pronunciation Unit. For instance, Bartholomew's *Survey Gazetteer of the British Isles* records 48 places called *Broughton*, but for those in counties not named in the dictionary, we have not had occasion to verify the pronunciation. When a river flows through more than one county, those counties have been identified.

Indexing

Names of the same spelling appear in the sequence of Christian name (i.e., personal first name), family name (i.e., surname), and place name. A title, if isolated, precedes all of these, but titles generally are associated with particular family or place names. Otherwise names are in strict letter-by-letter alphabetical order. Where the same sequence of letters appears twice, as a single word and as a group of two or more words, the single word is given precedence, e.g., *Vandyck*, *Van Dyck*.

All names beginning *Mac-*, *Mc-* or *M'-* have been treated as beginning with *Mac-*, and placed accordingly. Optional ways of writing this initial syllable, according to family preference, are exemplified in the name *MacGregor*, *Macgregor*, *McGregor*, *M'Gregor*.

St., the standard abbreviation of *Saint* in family and place names, is treated for alphabetical purposes as if it were written in full. In general, the names of saints associated with these islands occur, as do other Christian names, in their due alphabetical places throughout the book. Certain of them, however, having come to the notice of the BBC in the form of names of individual churches or hospitals, have found their place alphabetically under *St.*, intermingled with place names and family names.

Unless otherwise stated, it may be assumed that the ordering of variant pronunciations within an entry is

as follows for place names: the first entry is that preferred by the local educated population, and is recommended to BBC announcers. Local dialectal pronunciations are given last if at all. Between these two extremes are given, in descending order of frequency heard (in so far as we can judge) any other variant pronunciations we have been made aware of.

All entries under a place name refer to one specific place. Family names with variants must be understood differently: some bearers of the name prefer one pronunciation, others prefer another. Thus *Kenneth Alwyn* (conductor) is 'ɔlwɪn, áwɪn, while *William Alwyn* (composer) is 'ælwɪn, álwin, and to refer to them otherwise would be, at the least, discourteous, if not completely wrong. Even so, in a very general way, the first pronunciation given is normally that for which we have the most evidence, and subsequent ones are in an approximate order of decreasing frequency.

Welsh names

Those who are already aware of the complex linguistic situation arising from the differing pronunciations of North and South Wales on the one hand, and from the existence of a demotic and a classical language on the other, will appreciate that the BBC's need to adapt individual pronunciations still further to the speech of English announcers must inevitably produce different solutions from those which might appear in a work of exclusively Welsh interest. It can be taken for granted, however, that a BBC announcer is expected at least to distinguish between *l* and *ll* in those Welsh names in which these consonants would be differentiated by local educated speakers of English. Professor A. Lloyd James, whose comprehensive collection of Welsh names and their pronunciations was published by the BBC in 1934 in *Broadcast English IV*, found it necessary to recommend considerably anglicized versions for the use of announcers in London and the rest of the country. In the present work extensive advice on the adaptation of these names and many others has been given by Dr Aled Rhys Wiliam, Mr Jack Windsor Lewis, and Miss Nia Rhosier; if there has been any failure to adopt their

recommendations, the fault is certainly not theirs. Orthography was checked largely against *A Gazetteer of Welsh Place-Names* prepared by the Language and Literature Committee of the Board of Celtic Studies of the University of Wales, but in cases where this was at variance with *Post Offices in the United Kingdom* the final decision was allowed to rest with the latter, as it is the forms used there which are most likely to appear in national newspapers and in BBC news bulletins. Nevertheless, the Committee's admirable principle of making stress patterns clear by the use of hyphens has been followed wherever possible. In Welsh names stressed at the regular penultimate syllable no hyphens are necessary. The appearance of a hyphen before the final syllable, however, reveals that stress falls on that syllable, e.g., *Troedrhiw-fuwch*. The practical benefit of the system is perhaps most evident in two-syllable names which, in North Wales, tend usually to be stressed on the first (or penultimate) syllable, whereas in the South their counterparts are often stressed on the second (or final) syllable, thus, *Penrhos* in Gwynedd, but *Pen-rhos* in Gwent and Powys. Hyphens are in general also used before and after the definite article in three-syllable names where the stress falls on the last syllable, as in *Pen-y-bank*, *Pen-y-fan*, *Pont-y-clun*.

KEY TO PRONUNCIATION

Two systems have been employed to indicate pronunciation, one for the benefit of those acquainted with the International Phonetic Association's method of symbolizing sounds and the other for the general user. In the IPA system, a 'multiliteral' transcription has been used, with the addition of italicized [ə], [h], [r], [p], [d], to indicate variant pronunciations. For the second method an English modified spelling system has been used which, after its explanations have been studied, should be immediately obvious to most English speakers. The systems have been adapted to Received Pronunciation, which is familiar alike to BBC announcers and to listeners and viewers in this country and overseas, whether it happens to be their own type of speech or not. The only exception to this is that orthographic *r* is acknowledged in both pronunciation systems. In those cases, however, in which it is in general omitted by Southern English speakers, it is written as italicized [r] in the IPA version.

Vowels

IPA symbol	English modified spelling	Words containing sound
i	ee	see
ɪ	i	pity
e	e	get
æ	a	hat
ɑ	aa	father
ɒ	o	not
ɔ	aw	law
ʊ	ōō	book
u	oo	food
ʌ	u	but
ə	ă, ě, ǒ, ũ	about, butter
ɜ	er, ur, ir	fern, fur, fir
ɔ̃	ö	<i>is used to indicate this same centralized vowel sound in cases where there is no 'r' in the original spelling, e.g.</i> Beinn Laoigh ben 'lɔɪ, ben lö-i De Vuelle də 'vɔɪ, də vól Des Voex der 'vɜ, day vó

Exotic vowels

More or less as in French

æ	ang	vin
ā	aang	banc
ō	ōng	bon
ɛ:	e	fèvre
y	ü	du

Diphthongs

eɪ	ay	day
aɪ	ī	high
ɔɪ	oy	boy
oʊ	ō	no
aʊ	ow	now
ɪə	eer	here
ɛə	air	there
ʊə	oor	poor

Consonants

p, b, t, d, k, m, n, l, r, f, v, s, z, h, w are used in both transcriptions with their customary English values.

Otherwise the symbols are:

g	g	get
x	<u>ch</u>	Scottish <i>loch</i>
tʃ	ch, tch	church
dʒ	j	jet
ŋ	n	see note on syllabic n
ŋ	ng	sing
l̥	l	see note on syllabic l
ɭ	<u>hl</u>	Welsh <i>llan</i>
θ	th	thin
ð	<u>th</u>	there
ʃ	sh	shut
ʒ	<u>zh</u>	<i>s</i> in <i>measure</i>
ɾ	r	<i>is used in French-type pronunciations to denote devoiced, non-syllabic r following p, t; e.g., Earl of Ypres</i> ipɾ, eepr
hw	wh	where
j	y	yes

Stress symbols

In the IPA transcription main stress is indicated by the symbol ['] preceding the stressed syllable, and secondary stress by the symbol [ˌ]. In modified spelling, secondary stress is not shown, but main stress is indicated by an acute accent '´' above the syllable. Thus:

Aberdeen *Grampian*, ,æbər'din, abbərdéen

Use of hyphens

The use of hyphens in the IPA script has been kept to a minimum, but hyphens have been introduced to avoid the ambiguity which might arise when [ɪə] and [ɔɪ] are employed not as diphthongs but in each case as two distinct vowels. *Flawith* makes the point particularly well, as its pronunciation allows two such variants: 'flɔ-ɪθ, fláw-ith; flɔɪθ, floyth. In modified spelling hyphens are used more frequently, and generally for obvious reasons. A less obvious treatment becomes necessary in a name like the Welsh *Dewi*, where the use of open [e] 'e' before [w] 'w' constitutes a sound sequence unfamiliar to most users of the Received Pronunciation of English, and where the pronunciation ['dewi] has been written 'dé-wi'. Similarly, the Irish name *Mulcahy*, pronounced [mʌl'kæhi] with *a* as in 'cat', has been written 'mulká-hi'.

The two systems

In the text, the IPA transcription precedes the modified spelling, the two being separated by a comma. Where more than one pronunciation is shown, a semi-colon keeps them apart. The two methods are systematically related, although the precision of the IPA system cannot be quite matched by the other, and certain concessions have had to be made in the modified spelling system in order to avoid misinterpretation. For example, the sound corresponding to [ju] appears as 'yoo' at the beginning of a pronunciation, as in **Udall** 'judɔl, yoodawl, but in all other cases as 'ew'; that corresponding to [ɔr] is generally written 'or', but before another vowel, or following 'w', it becomes 'awr', so that **Dorey**