

A Pronouncing
Dictionary
of English
Place-Names
including
standard local
and archaic
variants

by Klaus Forster

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A Pronouncing Dictionary of English Place-Names

Preface

This dictionary presents a collection of the phonetic forms of about 12,000 different names of English counties, towns, villages, farms, fields, rivers, lakes, mountains, islands, and even street-names of some major English cities (such as Bristol, Leeds, and London).

The material has been taken from printed sources published during the past hundred years or so; they include publications on English place-names, dialects, phonology and local history as well as pronouncing dictionaries. The periodical publications of various local historical and other learned societies proved to be valuable sources.

In contrast to most pronouncing dictionaries, not only the standard pronunciation of a place-name is given; in fact, the aim set by the author was to collect forms of pronunciation which are now either archaic, obsolescent or even obsolete, or are used by the natives of a particular place or by people living in the neighbourhood of that place.

At first the intention was to start at around 1900 in order to restrict the dictionary to forms which have been used in the present century. But later on it was decided to widen the time bracket to a little more than a hundred years, which enabled the author to include the glossaries of the EDS, Hope's glossary of local place-nomenclature and other glossaries published in the second half of the nineteenth century. Yet it should still be possible to say that all pronunciations recorded in the present dictionary have been used within living memory.

This dictionary does not claim to be complete; neither does it contain all the place-names of England nor does it offer both the standard, local and archaic forms of pronunciation for each name listed. Much work remains to be done for the fieldworker in collecting forms of pronunciation which have never been recorded and which are likely to become extinct soon.

Aware that such a project is beyond the means of a single onomastician, the author would welcome any suggestion for the improvement of this dictionary, as well as contributions of additional forms and references to sources which have escaped his attention.

Erlangen

K.F.

Arrangement of the Dictionary

All the place-names are listed in alphabetical order. No difference has been made between names spelt as one word and those spelt as two words (thus, e.g., *Brough*, *Brougham*, *Brough Sowerby*, etc. are listed in that order). Place-names prefixed by common nouns (such as Bishop, Church, Market, etc.) and adjectives (such as Great, High, North, etc.) are listed under their principal name, with the prefix only being placed in brackets after the principal name if it is necessary to distinguish between various places, or if there is only one such prefixed place-name (e.g. Bishop's Stortford is listed under *Stortford* (*Bishop's*); Great Malvern and Little Malvern are listed under *Malvern* without the prefixes being added). A phonetic transcription of these prefixes will not be given, unless there is a particular local or dialectal form. In this case the place-name and its pronunciation are listed under the prefixed name and a cross-reference will be found under the principal name.

A county reference will follow each place-name unless the place-name is found in more than three counties (e.g. Copeland/Cu,Nb,We). For convenience the traditional county-names have been used throughout. As to the names of rivers, a county reference is always given, comprising all counties through which the river passes. Groups of county-names set apart by a semi-colon indicate several rivers of that name (e.g. Stour/Ca,Ess,Sf;Do,Ha,W).

Place-names other than the names of major inhabited places are marked 'f.n.' (for field-name), etc. (see list of abbreviations).

If the spellings of a place-name differ in my sources, alternative spellings are also quoted and cross-references will be given.

After each phonetic form the source from which it has been taken is indicated in an abbreviated form; the full bibliographical data will be found in the bibliography following this introduction. From them the reader will see when a particular form was recorded and whether it is likely still to be in current use. Dictionaries, glossaries and other publications with alphabetical lists of place-names are quoted without page references; in all other instances the numbers following the bibliographical abbreviation refer to the volume (if applicable) and pages (or paragraphs, note, etc., whatever is applicable). Explanatory notes found in the sources are quoted either before the pronunciation or after the reference.

Phonetic Symbols

Great care has been taken in rendering the various phonetic transcriptions used in the sources in the phonetic alphabet of the International Phonetic Association (IPA). This proved particularly difficult in the case of some sources which were inconsistent in the use of the phonetic symbols explained in their introductions, and in the case of different interpretations of Standard English vowels (e.g. the vowel in 'there' is sometimes rendered /ɛ:/, sometimes /ɛə/. In many other sources, which did not use any approved phonetic alphabet (IPA, Romic, Glossic, etc.), letters or combinations of letters were often ambiguous (e.g. ow ≙ [ou] or [au]? u ≙ [u] or [ʌ]?). Hope's glossary is a notorious example.¹ Again, in other instances th and s are indiscriminately used both for [θ]/[ð] and [z]/[s] resp. In some cases it was mere guesswork to find out what sound the author meant. In these cases the original notation is added in a footnote and the reader is invited to check this against my rendering.

The phonetic notation used in this dictionary is a modified broad transcription, i.e. only some major dialectal variants are distinguished (e.g. [o:] - [ɔ:], [e:] - [ɛ:]), others have been reduced to their nearest Standard English equivalent, e.g. [au, əu, ʌu] > [au], [ai, ai, ʌi] > [ai], [ou, ɔu, əu] > [ou], [ei, ɛi, əi] > [ei], [a:, ɑ:] > [ɑ:], etc.

1) cf. H.Alexander's remark: "Many of Hope's records are unintelligible or ambiguous because of the absence of any obvious phonetic notation" (H.A.(2)34).

The following phonetic symbols are used in this dictionary:

a) short vowels:

i	e.g.	pin
e		pen
æ		pan
a		German Mann
u		put
o		as in November; also a variant of /ɔ/ before r
ɔ		pot
ʌ		but
ə		unstressed vowel of father

b) long vowels:

i:	e.g.	beat
e:		German nehmen
æ:		long variant of /æ/ before voiced and unvoiced consonants
ɛ:		there (monophthong!)
ɑ:		stressed vowel of father
ɔ:		saw
o:		German Sohn
u:		food
ə:		bird

c) diphthongs:

ai	e.g.	my	ua	e.g.	poor
ɔi		boy	iə		fear
ei		day	ɔə		variant of /ɔ:/ before r
au		cow	ɛə		Mary
ou		show			
əu		variant of /au/			

Occasionally other self-explanatory combinations of vowel symbols are used for diphthongs (e.g. oa, eu, etc.).

d) consonants:

p	e.g.	pit	l	e.g.	low	θ	e.g.	thorn
b		bit	r		row	ð		then
t		tea	s		see	j		year
d		day	z		zeal	h		hat
k		key	f		fine	χ		velar fricative (German ch)
g		go	v		vine	ʔ		glottal stop
m		man	ʃ		shoe	w		win
n		no	ʒ		measure	hw		when
ŋ		sing	tʃ		church			
			dʒ		judge			

e) stress:

- ' placed before the stressed syllable (if no stress symbol is used, the main stress is on the first syllable)
- ' The name is stressed on the syllable indicated.

f) other symbols:

For convenience phonetic notations have not been enclosed in square brackets; square brackets, however, have been used for phonetic notations in quotations.

Abbreviations and Symbols

(for bibliographical abbreviations see Bibliography)

Ave.	Avenue	Mx	Middlesex
Bd	Bedfordshire	N	North
Bk	Buckinghamshire	Nb	Northumberland
Brk	Berkshire	Nf	Norfolk
Ca	Cambridgeshire	Np	Northamptonshire
Chs	Cheshire	nr	near
Co	Cornwall	NRY	North Riding of Yorkshire
co.	county	Nt	Nottinghamshire
Ct	Court	O	Oxfordshire
Cu	Cumberland	occ.	occasionally
D	Devon	oth.	otherwise
Db	Derbyshire	Pk	Park
dial.	dialect, dialectal (also used in quotations)	p.n.	place-name
Do	Dorset	Pt	Point
Du	Durham	pron.	pronounce, pronounced, pronunciation (also used in quotations)
E	East	Rd	Road
EDS	English Dialect Society	r.n.	river-name
EPNS	English Place-Name Society	RP	Received Pronunciation
ERY	East Riding of Yorkshire	Ru	Rutland
Ess	Essex	S	South
Fm	Farm	Sa	Shropshire
f.n.	field-name	Sf	Suffolk
Gdn	Garden	s.n.	street-name; sub nomine
Gl	Gloucestershire	So	Somerset
Gn	Green	Sq.	Square
Gt	Great	Sr	Surrey
Ha	Hampshire	St	Staffordshire; Street
Hd	Hundred	StE	Standard English
He	Herefordshire	Sx	Sussex
Ho	House	Twr	Tower
Hr	Higher	Upr	Upper
Hrt	Hertfordshire	vol.	volume
Hu	Huntingdonshire	vulg.	vulgar, vulgarly (also used in quotations)
Is	Island	W	West
K	Kent	W, Wilts.	Wiltshire
La, Lancs.	Lancashire	Wa	Warwickshire
Ldn	London	We	Westmorland
Le	Leicestershire	Wo	Worcestershire
Li, Lincs.	Lincolnshire	WRY	West Riding of Yorkshire
loc.	local, locally (also used in quotations)	Wt	Isle of Wight
Lt	Little	Yorks.	Yorkshire
Lwr	Lower	→	see s.n.
Mt, mt	Mount, mountain	-	sign of repetition

B i b l i o g r a p h y

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- Ant.Mag. Antiquarian Magazine and Bibliographer.
- Ant.Sunderland Antiquities of Sunderland and its Vicinity.
- Arch.Ael. Archaeologia Aeliana.
- Arch.Hist.Soc. Chester Journal of the Architectural, Archaeological and Historic Society for the County and the City of Chester and North Wales.
- Archiv Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen.
- Arch.J. Archaeological Journal.
- Arch.Rev. The Archaeological Review.
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- B'ham Arch.Soc. Transactions of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Archaeological Section.
- B'ham Midl.Inst. Transactions of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Archaeological Section.
- Bristol Glos. Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society.
- Arch.Soc. Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society.
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 East Herts.Arch. Soc. East Hertfordshire Archaeological Society Transactions.
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