

TOWARDS AN ATLAS OF ENGLISH SURNAMES*

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Introduction

The English of England has already been put on the map in a number of atlases. There are national atlases as well as regional ones; there are very detailed maps and simplified ones. Surprisingly perhaps, there is not yet a comprehensive atlas of family names.

This also holds true for many other languages. The internet provides the distribution of some family names for France, Italy and the USA¹⁾. For Luxemburg 112 distribution maps of individual family names are available; there are also quite a number of maps of German family names in print, and for the Netherlands an atlas of family names is in preparation²⁾. The reason for the dearth of such projects must be seen in the available sources.

In addition to the atlas proper, and as part of the atlas, it is my intention to produce a grammar of family names that will consist of two parts. The first part will be concerned with aspects of expression and the second part with aspects of content. Thus the first part will, e.g., deal with graphemics, that is variant spellings of names, such as *Hardy-Hardey-Hardie-Hardee* ('bold, corageous'); *Jolly-Jolley-Jollie-Jollye* ('gay, lively') in the vowel range and *Ri(t)ch*, *W(h)ild(e)* or *Pig(g)* in the consonant range³⁾.

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Moreover, special developments in phonology will also be discussed here, such as *Servant(e)-Sarvant*; *Sertin-Sart(a)in*; *Hermitt-Armett*, *Armit*; *Pitt(e)-Pett(s)-Putt* (< OE *pytt* 'hole'); *Mi(t)chel(l)-Mutchel*; *Mich-Mu(t)ch* (< OE *mycel* 'big', 'large'); *Perry-Pir(r)ie-Purry* (< OE *pyrige* 'pear-tree'); *Fiddler-Vidler* 'one who plays the fiddle'; *Fenn-Venn*; *Seller-Zeller*; *Chancellor-Cancellor*; *Wait(e)-Gait(e)* (in this context 'watchman'); *Rigg(e)-Rigg(s)* (< Old Norse *hryggr* 'mountain ridge') - *Ridge* (< OE *hrycg* with the same meaning).

On the syntagmatic level I will deal with the disintegration of old declensions and their effect on family names. Examples: OE *bȳre* 'stable, hut' (> ModE *byre* 'cowshed') had such inflected forms for the dative plural as *æt þāem bȳrum* > ME *at then* (contracted to *atten* around 1200) *bīren* > *atte bīres* (around 1300 with the standardized plural *-s*) from which developed the ModE family names *Byrom*, *Byram*, *Biram* (earliest layer) - *Byron*, *Biron*, *Byran* (second layer) and *Byres*, *Biers* (final layer) or OE *hæsel* 'hasel-nut tree': *æt þāem hæslum* > etc. (see above) yielded the family names *Haslum*, *Haslam*, *Haslem* - *Hasler* (-*Hasel*, *Hazel*) - *Aslam* - *Aslen*. From OE *gōdnē dæg* - *sē gōdan dæg* developed *Goddenday*, also *Gooodday*, from *sum blæc man(n)* - *sē blaca man(n)* developed *Black(e)* - *Blake* or *æt þære āce* 'at the oak' > *atter ōke*, *atten ōke*, *atte ōke* which, in turn, gave the family names *Roake*, *Roke* (due to deglutination) - *Oak(e)*, *Oke* and *Oaks* or, because, again, of wrong separation of article and noun (*atten ōke* > *atte nōke*) *Noak(e)*, *Noke(s)*, *Noakes*.

A further aspect to be treated will be family names in relation to the history of word-formation:

There are agent-nouns such as OE *dēma* 'judge' > *Deem*, *Deam*; also *dēmere* 'judge' existed in Old English from whence developed *Deemer*, *Deamer*, *Demer(s)*. OE *hunta* 'hunter' gave *Hunt*; since Middle English *Hunter*, *Hunt(s)man* have also existed. OE *webba* 'weaver' > *Webb(e)*; since Middle English we also have *Weaver(s)*, *Wheaver*, *Webber*. Today there are *Deemer* (see above) and *Dempster* or *Weaver* (see above) (< OE *wefere*) and *Webster*. In OE *-stre* was freely used to form feminine agent-nouns, in exactly the same manner in which *-ere* was used to form masculine agent-nouns. In northern Middle English, however, perhaps owing to the frequent adoption by men of trades like weaving, baking, tailoring etc., the suffix *-ster* came very early to be used indiscriminately with *-er*, as an agential ending irrespective of gender (*The Oxford English Dictionary* [1989], s.v. '-ster').

A further group is formed by obscured compounds: For instance *-eye* (< OE *ē(a)ge*): *Bradie*, *Brady*, *Broady* (OE *brād* > ModE *broad*); *Littley* (OE *lȳtel* > ModE *little*); *Fair(e)y*, *Farrie*, *Farey* (OE *fæger* > ModE *fair*); *-house* (< OE *hūs*): *Broadhouse*, *Broadis* (OE *brād* > ModE *broad*); *Stannas*, *Stanners*, *Stannis*, *Stannus* (OE *stān* > ModE *stone*); *Kirkhous*, *Kirkus* (Old Norse *kirkja* >

ModE dialectal *kirk*); *-herd* (< OE *hierde*): *Shep(h)erd*, *Shep(h)ard*, *Shepp(h)erd*, *Shippard* (OE *scē(a)p* > ModE *sheep*); *Hoggard*, *Hoggart(h)*, *Hogarth*, *Hoggett* (OE *hogg* > ModE *hog*).

The second part of the atlas will deal with aspects of content. Here the arrangement of family names will be according to their origin. Surnames can be divided into the following main categories: Local surnames where locative and topographical surnames can be distinguished; surnames derived from personal names; surnames of relationship; surnames of occupation, status or office; and nicknames.

Local surnames are by far the largest group. Locative surnames derive from the names of specific places, indicating where the man held land, or the place from which he had come or where he actually lived. These local surnames derive (with occasional exceptions) from English, Scottish or French places and were originally preceded by a preposition *de*, *at*, *by*, *in* etc. A certain number of Old English formations are found before the Norman Conquest in 1066 such as *Aelfweard at Dentune* (972) or *Aelfstan on Lundene* (988) (cf. Tengvik 1938). After the Conquest the usual preposition is *de*, which is used before both English and French place names. In French names beginning with a vowel, this *de* has often coalesced with the name, as was the case with, e.g., *Danvers* (from Anvers [Antwerp] or *Disney* (from *Isigny* [Calvados in northern France])). Moreover, names associated with natural landmarks, topographical surnames, such as *Banks*, *Ford*, *Field*, *Moore* or *Westbrook* belong to the local surname group as well as names associated with man-made landmarks, such as *Bridge* or *Bridger* 'dweller by the bridge', *Castle*, *Hall* or *Towers*, or names which indicate nationality, such as *English*, *Scott*, *Angwin* or *Fleming*, all of which are found in the Domesday Book⁴. Even after the spelling of the place-name had become fixed, new colloquial pronunciations could develop which were adopted as the correct form of the surname. Hence, it is often impossible, at first sight, to identify the place from which the surname originated. To mention just one example out of many: *Sawbridgeworth* (Hertfordshire) was *Sabrixte worde* in 1086 'the farm of Sæbeorht'. By 1565 it had become *Sapsworth* and by 1568 *Sapsforde*. Both *Sapsworth* and *Sapsford* are now found as surnames and from these come *Sapserd* and *Sapsed* and, with intrusive *t*, *Sapste(a)d*. Weekley (1936) presents quite a number of examples of obsolete, dialect or obscure place or manorial names which have given surnames. They are mostly monosyllables of Old English origin, but they also include a few Old French words. Some are quite simple, but others Weekley was unable to explain. Interesting survivals of Scandinavian formations are the local surnames *Sotherby* or *Westoby* (from Old Norse *suðr* or *vestr í bý* [the man who lived] 'south or west in the village'). Similar English formations survive in, e.g., *Westington* (< OE *west in tūne*), or

Uppington (< OE *upp in tūne* [dweller] 'up in the village') (for further information on this aspect see Redmonds 1997).

In the literature, surnames derived from personal names are sometimes subsumed under surnames of relationship, sometimes both groups are kept separate. I will deal with them separately and start with the more numerous personal names. They are often called patronymics, which is inadequate because many modern surnames are formed from women's names, such as *Margetts*, a common medieval woman's name, or *Margary* (*Margerie* was a popular French form of *Margu rite*).

Among Christian names (predominantly patronymics) the following subgroups can be differentiated:

- a) Full form of names without any addition:
Welliam, Gill(i)am, Gil(l)ham; John, Jone, Joan, Jan, Jane, Jean.
- b) with *-s* suffix (*-s* being either an abbreviation of 'son' Or marking the possessive case or going back to the Old French vocative case):
Williams, Willems; Jones, Joanes, John(e)s, Janes, Jean(e)s; Roberts.
- c) with *-son* suffix:
Williamson; Jo(h)ns(on); Rober(t)son.
- d) Shortened and pet forms:
Will(e); Hann; Robb, Dobb(e), Hob(b).
- e) Shortened and pet forms with *-s* and *-son*:
Will(e)s, Wyllys, Wil(l)son; Robbs, Rob(e)son, Dobbs, Dobson, Hobb(e)s, Hobson.
- f) as in d), with suffix *-kin*, perhaps of Flemish origin, meaning 'little', partly with *-s* or *-son*:
Wilkin(s)(on); Jenkin(s)(on), Hankin(s); Hopkin(s)(on), Hobkinson.
- g) as in d), with suffix *-cock* (of uncertain origin), partly with *-s* or *-son*:
Wil(l)cock(s)(on), Wil(l)cox; Johncock(s), Han(d)cock, Hancox.
- h) as in d), with one of the French diminutive or pet suffixes of the types *-et*, *-ot*, *-on*, *-in*, *-al*, partly with *-s* or *-son*:
Willet(t)(s), Willor; Robin(s)(on), Dobbin(s)(on), Hobbins, Roblin, Hoblin, Roblett.
- i) Formations with *Fitz* (< Old French *fiz* 'son'):
Fitzwilliam(s); Fitzjohn; Fitzhenry; Fitzwa(l)ter; Fitzhugh, Fitzhuges.
- j) Formations with *Mac-*, *Mc-* (Scottish and Irish 'son'):
McWilliam(s); McMichael; MacGregor; McNic(h)ol, McNickle; Macadam.
- k) Formations with *P-* (*B-* before a vowel) (Welsh *ap* 'son'):
apRoberts, Probert; Pugh; Badams; Bevan(s) (*Evan* is the Welsh form of *John*).

Thus a Christian name can be altered over time. The name *David*, for example, has become: *Davey, Davids, Dowell, Davidson, Davidge, Davie, Davies, Davis, Davison, Dayson, Davy, Davys, Daw, Dawe, Dawes, Dawkes, Dawkins, Daws, Dawson, Day, Davitt, Dowson, Dowd, Dowden, Dowling* and *McDavid*. The baptismal name of *Richard* has been modified to give us: *Dick, Dickens, Dickenson, Dickson, Dixon, Heacock, Hick, Hickin, Hickman, Hickmot, Hickox, Hicks, Hickson, Higgins, Higginson, Higgs, Higman, Hiscock, Hitch, Hitchcock, Hitchcox, Hitchinson, Hitchmough, Hix, Reckett, Ricard, Rich, Ritch, Richard, Richards, Riche, Richer, Richett, Richney, Richie, Richman, Rick, Rickard, Rickeard, Rickett, Ricketts, Rickman, Ricks, Rickson, Ritchie, Ritchard, Richardson, Rix and Pri(t)chard(s)*.

Surnames of other relations are surnames from terms of relationship, such as *Couzens* with many different spellings (< Old French *cusin, cosin* 'a kinsman or kinswoman'), *Neave* (< OE *nefa* 'nephew'), *Uncle* and so on. In early sources relationships such as *Alwinus Childebroder* or *Wluin Brune stepsune* are expressed. Everywhere in England surnames of this type constituted only a small proportion of the total body of names in use.

As for surnames of occupation, status or office, the innumerable surnames of this type refer to actual holders of office, whether of church or state, e.g. *Abbot, Prior, Chancellor, Steward* ('dapifer' = 'one who brings meat to table; hence, the official title of the steward of a king's or nobleman's household'), or to ecclesiastical or manorial status, e.g. *Monk, Sergeant* or *Reeve*. Among the Normans some offices of state such as steward or marshal became hereditary and gave rise to hereditary surnames. Abbots, priors and monks were bound by vows of celibacy and thus could not found families. As medieval surnames, these must be nicknames, 'lordly as an abbot', often, too, bestowed on one of most unpriestly habits.

Occupational surnames originally denoted the actual occupation followed by the individual. At what period they became hereditary is difficult to say. A marked feature is the surprising variety and specialised nature of medieval occupations, particularly in the cloth industry where Fransson 1935:30 noted 165 different surnames, while the metal trades provide 108, and provision dealers 107 different names. Many of these have disappeared but other surnames still recall occupations or occupational terms long decayed. Examples are: *Barker* ('tanner'), *Chaucer* ('shoe-maker'), *Cheesewright* ('cheese-maker') or *Lister* ('dyer'). Other modern surnames that derived from occupations are still clearly recognisable, such as *Barber* (formerly a regular practitioner in surgery and dentistry), *Baker, Smith, Taylor, Potter, Carpenter, Fisher* or *Butcher*. In some cases the Latin or French words won out in the general language against the English (e.g. *Butcher* against *Flesher* or *Carpenter* against *Wright*), in others the

reverse occurred (e.g. *Fisher* against *Petcher* or *Peacher* or *Smith* against *Fe(a)vers* or *Faber*). A *Farmer* did not only cultivate land for the owner, but he also collected taxes. A *Banker* is not an occupational term at all; it meant 'dweller by a bank'.

The final major group is the nicknames. No full and satisfactory classification can be attempted. Some are unintelligible; the meaning of many is doubtful. Many medieval nicknames have disappeared. Some are obvious, describing physical attributes or peculiarities, e.g. *Whitehead*, *Longfellow*, *Goodbody* or *Goosey* ('goose-eye'). *Kennedy* is Gaelic for 'ugly head'. For mental and moral characteristics *Swift*, *Hardy*, *Wise*, *Daft* ('foolish'), *Pennyfather* ('miser') are examples. Other nicknames indicate some quality or characteristic, such as *Dollittle*, *Gotobed* or *Makepeace*. Oath names and imperative names also belong here, such as *Pardew*, *Pard(e)y*, *Pardue*, *Pardoe* (< *par Dieu*, perhaps shortened from *de par Dieu* 'in God's name') and *Crakebone* ('crack bone', 'break bone', a nickname for the official, who inflicted the cruel punishment of medieval law'). Many of these nicknames are more or less derogatory occupation names: *Knatchbull* (ME *knetch*, *knatch* 'to knock on the head, fell' and *bull* 'Fell bull', a nickname for a 'butcher') or *Catchpole* (originally Old Northern French *cachepol* 'chase fowl'; 'a taxgatherer', later 'a petty officer of justice, especially a warrant officer who arrests for debt', signifying a 'constable').

In London surnames of all kinds became hereditary among the patrician classes in the 12th century. With the common folk it took longer. Definite information is often difficult to find. Fransson (1935) has suggested several methods by which heredity can be inferred when relationship is not given. When two men of the same name are distinguished by the addition of senior and junior, it is a fair assumption that they were father and son. Further, he notes that in the subsidy rolls it is not uncommon to find several men of the same name assessed in the same village and suggests that where the surname is a nickname, it has become hereditary. By about 1350, everyone in southern and Midland England had a hereditary name. The process took up to a hundred years longer or even more in northern England⁵.

Back then, names could vary considerably during a man's life, change from generation to generation, be changed at apprenticeship or be subject to translation by the clerks at their whim, so that the process by which they became fixed and passed from father to son was quite accidental. A man might start his existence as *Will Dickson*, then become known by his trade *Will Potter* or *Will Smith*. Then, if he moved away from home, might be known in his new town by the name of the birthplace: *Will York* or *Will Chester*. Eventually, these names began to be passed on from one generation to the next, so a man might be called

Potter even if he followed a different trade (see further Reaney 1967)⁶. Because it is often impossible to know the original form and, therefore, the etymology or meaning of the surname of a particular family until one has traced that family's history and seen how its surname has changed over time, the various available dictionaries of surnames should be used with great care. The most authoritative work is Reaney – Wilson (1991) which lists the surviving spellings of many surnames as well as giving referenced examples from the earliest times.

Just as a linguistic atlas must be selective with regard to the features presented, the projected atlas of English surnames must do the same. The number of surnames is just far too high.

Earlier Work

Few attempts have so far been made showing the distribution patterns of selected surnames across the United Kingdom. The comprehensive earlier work is H.B. Guppy (1890). His distributions were based on counts of farmers' surnames in late Victorian county directories. Unfortunately his book contains no maps. Similarly unfortunately, Guppy only recorded part of the data – the frequency of surnames in the counties in which they reached or exceeded 7 per thousand.

Bardsley (1901) also gives counts by county of the number of occurrences of each surname taken from *A Return of Owners of Land* (1873). This source lists those who owned more than one acre of land and is arranged by county, with additional volumes for Scotland and Ireland. The returns can lead one directly to where bearers of a surname were living at the time of the 1871 census.

Another source for the 19th century is the *1881 Census* returns for England, Scotland and Wales. They have meanwhile been made available on the internet (see also the *Journal of One-Name Studies* 6/3 [1997] and further below).

The centralised indexes to the civil registration of births, deaths and marriages in England and Wales, which began in 1837, give an indication of the distribution of surnames at a slightly earlier period. For examples using this source see Hey (1997b) and Rogers (1995).

Brett (1985) presented the distribution of a few names in map form. He used contour lines for two or three frequency levels relative to the highest frequency found for that surname. Ecclestone (1989) was more interested in the diffusion of English surnames. In 1987 Porteous outlined a method by which a surname may be traced back from its current nation-wide distribution (the macro-scale) to one or more regions of origin (the meso-scale). Specifically, the combined use of the following four steps enables Porteous to locate the surname in question within an originating region: (1) telephone directory analysis, (2) a

questionnaire, (3) civil registration indexes since 1837, and (4) the Mormon International Genealogical Index (see further below). To these 4 steps Porteous added three further ones to see whether more detailed research, at the micro-scale or parish level, could add significantly to what is already known: (5) a thorough search of all parish registers in the indicated region for the period 1538-1837, beginning with suspected local parishes and working outwards spatially until a continuous layer of parishes with no evidence of the surname appears; (6) a search of all relevant printed and manuscript indexes to pre-1538 sources of data (lay subsidy rolls, wills, etc.) available in national and county archives; (7) if necessary, detailed perusal of the original documents discovered via step (6). Porteous used these 7 steps to investigate the origin of the *Mell* family in the Humberhead region and noted that research of this type is extremely time-consuming, so much so in fact that I would like to add that the last-mentioned 3 steps cannot be adopted on a larger scale as envisaged for the atlas.

Lasker – Kaplan (1983) and Lasker (1985) followed a different course and only used a selected list of surnames whose holders married in England and Wales in the first three months of 1975. For these authors, marriage records are generally more preferable for distribution studies than birth or death records because the population sampled by marriage records is the adult breeding population of interest in human population genetics, whereas some individuals listed in birth and death records never lived to enter the breeding population.

Such are the sources used and the accomplishments achieved by the researchers?

Databases Used in this Study

1) *The International Genealogical Index (IGI)* for the periods 1538 to 1850.

This is a compilation, consisting mainly of parish register records, published by the Family History Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, commonly known as Mormons. Records which can be found in this Index are birth, christening, marriage and death or burial records. The records include the name and gender of a person as well as the date and place, including the parish, city and county, in which the event took place. The *IGI* should be used carefully as a reference. There are a number of problems which arise, such as double or even triple entries of the same persons. Certain groups of people were not recorded at all in most parishes, for example people who did not belong to the Anglican Church, or records got completely lost because of fires or other catastrophes.

Because of these problems the *IGI* can only be seen as a source for a general overview. The total numbers given should not be treated as absolutely

accurate numbers of people bearing a certain surname in a county at a particular time. Compared with the more accurate data from the census records the *IGI* data, however, clearly show certain tendencies such as the potential county a surname originated from.

2) Decennial censuses in Britain have been held since the early 19th century. The first censuses, starting with the census of 1801, have been more or less mere headcounts and provide only little statistical information. From 1801-1831 the census was the responsibility of the Overseers of the Poor and the clergy, and before 1838 there was no civil registration of births, deaths and marriages (Flinn 1970: 11).

The first census to include statistical data was the census of 1841. Each householder was required to complete a census schedule giving the address of the household, the names, ages, sexes, occupations and places of birth of each individual living in his or her accommodation. More importantly, the responsibility and administration of the census passed into the hands of the Registrar General and the Superintendent Registrars. The census enumerator's books from the 1841 census onwards have been preserved, unlike the original census schedules.

The census enumerator's books of the *Census of 1881* provided the basic data for the census records available on CD-ROM of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. The census data are much more exact than those of the *IGI* but they are not flawless either. One of the problems worth mentioning is accuracy. Since the records were taken by human beings, mistakes like misspellings, misread information or not recorded information are inevitable. The second problem is the fact that almost half of the British population at the time was illiterate or semi-literate at most (cf. Stratford-Devai 1999). Most people had to give their information verbally to a third party, mostly the enumerator himself, which led to various additional misunderstandings. Another problem might have been the tendency of some people not to tell the truth about their own heritage. The enumerators had to simply believe what they were told. However, this is probably the most insignificant source of flaws in the censuses. Other problems occur because all the work on the CD-ROM edition of the census was done by amateurs working on a voluntary basis instead of by professionals. Only for this reason could it happen that somebody confused the city of Sunderland in County Durham with the Scottish County Sutherland (cf. Tyrwhit Drake 1999).

All in all the Census records mostly provide accurate information and, fortunately, the flaws have been noticed by experts in the field of genealogy.

3) With regard to the present-day geography of surnames, a telephone directory was used, namely the *UK-Info Disk V9 2004*, a People-Finder published by iCD-Publishing, London, which covers the United Kingdom as well as Ireland. *UK-Info Disk* combines over 44 million entries compiled from the 2002 and 2003 Electoral Rolls. A pool of 11.5 million Normal Directory entries was checked. This excludes an average of 35% of Ex-Directory entries of the total of 20 million entries which are not checkable. Of course, double entries do occur, due to a combination of business and private entries in the database, yet this will be a phenomenon occurring with all names examined and in all counties searched. When percentages are given they state the share a particular name in a county has with regard to the total number of surname entries in that county, i.e. they present the name's relative distribution, or the total number of entries found for a particular name is given, i.e. the name's absolute distribution. The maps represent the idea of dialectometry (cf. Viereck et al. 2002: 97 ff.), mapping the retrieved data on area fill maps, point maps, poly symbol maps or pie charts varying in size in order to display areas of higher versus lower concentration of the name.

Some Results

There are surnames that have a rather short history in England. One such example is *Murphy*. It was not listed by Guppy in 1890 and must be presumed to have become common in England only after large-scale immigration from Ireland since the potato famine. *Murphy* derived from Irish *Ó Murchadha* 'descendent of *Murchadh*' 'sea-warrior' (Irish *muir* 'sea' and *chadh* 'warrior').

As Map 1 shows, *Murphy* has become quite a common name in England today. Yet with a total of almost 17%, its density is greatest in the Lancashire area, followed by the London area with about 12%⁸⁾. As London has acted as a magnet for migrants during all the centuries since surnames were formed, it is normal to find that some, probably many, people there possess a surname that is otherwise concentrated elsewhere. The distribution of the name in and around London can often be disregarded, unless of course all the other examples of the surname are from those parts. Thus in England especially the Lancashire area remains where there is a strong correlation with settlement history (see Map 5 reproduced from Darby 1976). As Maps 6a and 6b taken from Viereck – Ramisch (1991) show, Anglo-Irish *praties* was still well attested in precisely that area a century later. Originally, Irish *préata*, *práta*, *fáta* are loans from English *potato* that the Irish later reimported into England as *pratie(s)*. Another allusion to the Irish must be seen in *murphies*, which in the mid-20th century was only once attested in Kent from incidental material of the *Survey of English Dialects*

(Orton 1962 – 1971) and thus not mapped⁹⁾. The *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (1966) notes "from the common Irish surname *Murphy*, with allusion to the potato being a staple article of food of the Irish peasant" (s.v. 'murphy'), and the first attestation of *murphy* in this sense in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989, s.v.) is from 1811¹⁰⁾.

In contrast to *Murphy* the following surnames have a long history in England. Of these a real dialect example concerns Old English <y> that developed in Middle English to <e> in Kent, Essex, Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Sussex, Middlesex and southern Cambridgeshire, to <i> in the north of England and to [ü], spelled <u>, mainly in the south-west and the West Midlands, including Lancashire. This development is still mirrored in surnames, sometimes to a greater, sometimes to a lesser extent. The surname chosen here is *Hyll/Hill/Hell/Hull*. It is basically a topographical surname going back to OE *hyll* 'a dweller on or by a hill', which is a common feature of every landscape. For other possible origins see further below.

Hyll diminishes quickly through the centuries, as is to be expected (see Map 7). From 1,164 *IGI* entries in the 16th century (which is a remarkably high number, considering the otherwise scarce output for *Hull* or *Hell* for this time-period) with Gloucester, Hertford, Greater London and Worcester as main distribution areas, the total number of entries dwindles to 446 in the 17th and 7 in the 18th century, before the name is no longer recorded after 1805. Consequently, a search of the *1881 Census* yields no results and the *UK-Info Disk V9 2004* has no such entry either.

As regards *Hill*¹¹⁾, the *IGI* and the *1881 Census* deliver thousands of entries, e.g. 4,279 entries appear in the *IGI* for Bedford alone. The *UK-Info Disk V9 2004* equally yields rich results, namely 118,494 for the United Kingdom. Thus a concentration on the distribution of *Hell* and *Hull* seems advisable¹²⁾.

As Map 8 shows, *Hell* has nearly died out. Whereas Weekley (1936) emphasises that *Hell* is simply a variant of *Hill*, Reaney (1976) assumes that *Hell* "may occasionally be for *Hill*, preserving the south-eastern form: *William atte Helle* 1296 [Sussex], but in surnames, as in place-names, this usually takes the standard form. The surname is clearly chiefly from a personal name *Helle*, a pet-form of *Ellis* ... or of some name in *Hil(d)-*, or perhaps of *Helen*" (s.v. 'Hell'). The mere 201 *IGI* records for the whole period of time (16th century: 52, 17th century: 61, 18th century: 55, 19th century: 33) mirror Reaney's statement. In 2004 no more than 27 listings for the whole United Kingdom were found; most of them occur in the south-east of England. Kristensson (1967, 1987, 1995, 2001) has no attestations of *Hell(e)* for the north of England nor for the West Midlands, only for Suffolk, southern Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent and Sussex. Kristensson's material is taken from the Lay Subsidy Rolls of the

early 14th century. These documents contain lists of taxpayers and cover the whole area fairly evenly. They reflect local Middle English usage very well. It is quite likely that the occurrences of *Hell* outside the south-east derive from another origin as hinted at by Reaney.

According to Reaney (1976) *Hull*, *Hull(e)s* may derive from the personal name *Hulle*, a pet-form of *Hugh* or of its common diminutives *Hulin*, *Hulot*, but as the first possibility he states “*atte hulle* is a southern and west-midland form of *hill* ... , but this has, no doubt, usually assumed the standard form” (s.v. ‘Hull’). Nevertheless the *Hulls* have always been more frequent than the *Hells*. Altogether the *IGI* lists 25,373 entries for *Hull*. Their total number rose constantly from 3,110 in the 16th century to 8,306 in the 19th century. The *1881 Census* correlates with this development. An interesting finding is that Somerset decreases from 1,111 records in the 16th century to 141 in the 19th century, while Greater London increases from 103 to 1,453 in the same period of time. This demonstrates again that London is a special case. While the main areas of concentration according to the *IGI* data, namely Lancashire, Somerset, Bedford and Hertford (in addition to Greater London) are in conformity with the development of OE *hyll* to *Hull*, only Durham lies outside. But for neighbouring Yorkshire and Cumbria, Reaney (1976, s.v. ‘Hull’) provides surnames going back to the personal name mentioned above. For the Middle English period Kristensson (1967, 1987, 1995, 2001) documents *Hull* for all areas of England, with a high concentration, however, only in the West Midlands and in the south. As to the present-day geography of *Hull* (vs. *Hill*) cf. Map 9.

As an example of an occupational surname *Cropper/Craper* was chosen. It is an agent-noun going back to ME *croppen* ‘to crop, pluck’ (Reaney 1976, s.v. ‘Cropper, Craper’). What was cropped, however, is unclear. It may have been iron, cloth, fruit, vegetables or corn. Hey 1997: 516 notes that “*Craper* is a northern form of *cropper*”. Map 10 reveals, however, that this is only a half-truth. As surnames both *Craper* and *Cropper* are northern forms in origin.

Cropper is the most common variant of this surname. The *IGI* shows a steadily growing population with this surname in Lancashire ever since the 16th century. With nearly 66% of all registered *Croppers*, Lancashire leaves a big gap to the next highest percentage in York with a mere 10% of *Croppers* registered for the *1881 Census*. The 2004 telephone directory shows the same picture: In England Lancashire, Merseyside and Greater Manchester, the historical Lancashire that is, show with 41% the highest density of *Cropper* occurrences, Yorkshire with 9% and Cheshire with 7% follow in second and third place. Noteworthy are also the high numbers of *Cropper* entries in southern Wales, mainly in the Cardiff area. Cardiff, the largest city of Wales, is also an important centre for the manufacture of iron, steel and wire-rope making. It was also the

outlet for products manufactured in the ironworks of the neighbouring Merthyr Tydfil region.

Craper is a variant resulting from the unrounding of ME /o/¹³). It is less common than *Cropper* and its distribution is interesting. With 816 of 1,428 *Crappers* Yorkshire shows the largest number of *Crappers* in the *IGI*, most of them living in Sheffield. Compared with the 2004 telephone directory it can be assumed that hardly any migration movements affected the members of these families. The only areas with barely more than one hundred entries in the *IGI*, besides Yorkshire, are Greater London, Lancashire and Oxfordshire. As no *Crappers* were recorded in the hearth tax returns for London and Oxfordshire in 1665, the ones living there later must be descended from migrants from the north. It is important to mention, though, that with quite a few entries in Lancashire in the 17th century it was not clear whether the surname was *Craper* or *Cropper*. The 60 *Crappers* accounted for in Lancashire in the 17th century compared with the 3 *Crappers* in the 19th century lead one to assume that most of the *Craper* entries were in fact *Croppers*¹⁴). Hardly any *Crappers* have migrated to the northernmost counties of England or to Scotland and very few *Croppers* have moved to these regions.

The variants *Craper* and *Croper* show very similar distributions to their above-mentioned relatives. *Craper* mainly occurs in Yorkshire in the *IGI* data, whereas *Croper* appears mostly in Lancashire. The Middle English different spellings of the verb *crop(p)en* seem to be responsible for these variants. With only 24 entries for *Craper* (12 in Middlesex, 7 in Yorkshire, 5 in Nottinghamshire) and 42 entries for *Croper* (19 in Lancashire, 5 each in Middlesex, Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire, 4 in Staffordshire, 2 in Cheshire, 1 each in Durham and Surrey) in the *1881 Census* these variants, however, are very rare.

In conclusion I hope to have shown that the study of surnames has many facets, it is truly interdisciplinary and I find that a comprehensive atlas of English surnames is a worthwhile project which has long been overdue.

Notes

- 1) France: http://www1.notrefamille.com/lastnames/lastnames_stats.asp;
Italy: <http://www.gens.labo.net/en/cognomi>;
United States of America: <http://www.gens-us.net>
- 2) *Geographie der Luxemburger Familiennamen*. Luxemburg 1989; Kunze 2003; Marinyssen 1995.

- 3) The International Genealogical Index (see below) usually has all the variant forms of a surname conveniently grouped under a 'standard' spelling. Other useful indexes which do this are the will indexes published by the British Record Society in its *Index Library* series. These include indexes to the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in which wills and administrations for the whole country appear during the Commonwealth period, 1653-60 (57,000 wills in vols. 54 and 61, and 43,000 administrations in vols. 68, 72, 74 and 75). Another index with a wide coverage in which the variants are grouped together is the typescript index of Apprentices of Great Britain 1710-74 at the Society of Genealogists. Boyd's Marriage Index (England only) 1538-1837 and the Great Card Index at the Society of Genealogists are further important sources. For Scotland variant spellings are provided in Black (1946), for Ireland cf. MacLysaght (1991) and Bell (1988), for Wales see Rowlands – Rowlands 1996 and Morgan – Morgan (1985).
- 4) This was the record, written in Latin, of a survey made in England in 1086 to ascertain the holdings and rights of the crown and to list the economic resources of the country for accurate taxation. It was ordered by William the Conqueror in 1085, and was completed the following year. The accuracy and speed with which the survey was taken made it a unique achievement in medieval times. The name *Domesday*, sometimes spelled *Doomsday*, means 'day of judgement', in this case in a legal or economic sense.
- 5) In Scotland, early material for the study of surnames is much later than in England. Many names in Scotland are undocumented before the 15th or 16th centuries, a period so late that definite etymologies are often impossible. Surnames appear in Ireland in the middle of the 10th century. These were patronymics formed by prefixing *O* or *Ua* to the grandfather's name or *Mac* to the father's, whether a personal or an occupation name. Of these the *Mac*-names are later. In Wales and on the Shetland Islands a large proportion of the population did not develop stable hereditary surnames until the 18th century.
- 6) In England anybody may change his or her name without any formality whatsoever. The change may be effected by merely assuming the new name, though it is advisable to have some proof that one has assumed the new name. This is generally provided by deed poll or by Royal Licence, and occasionally has been done by private Act of Parliament. In all these cases the name has been changed by voluntary assumption. The great majority of changes of surname have thus probably gone unrecorded but if some record has been made a reference may be found in Phillimore – Fry

- (1905). Deeds poll of change of name were sometimes (though not always) enrolled in Chancery after 1851 and from 1903 in the Supreme Court of Judicature. Those enrolled since 1914 have been published in the *London Gazette*. These records may be found at the Public Record Office. On the legal aspects see also Meyer-Witting (1990).
- 7) A table showing the relative frequency of the 147 most common surnames in the 20th century appeared in the *Genealogists' Magazine* 25/11 (1997). For maps showing the distribution of some surnames cf. also Hey 1997a, 2000 and Lasker – Mascie-Taylor 1990. Hey 1997a has 3 maps based on the entries in the telephone directories of the late 1980s and Hey 2000 has a few more surname maps whose distributions rely on parish registers between 1842 and 1846. For more information, also on the production of surname maps, consult the internet addresses: <http://homepages.newnet.co.uk/dance/webpjd> and <http://www.archer-software.co.uk/satlas01.htm>.
- 8) In Scotland with about 6% Lanarkshire shows the third highest density of the *Murphy* population in the United Kingdom today. The reason, again, is clear. Glasgow, the third largest city in Great Britain, with its important industries attracted many Irish immigrants, too, who looked for a more prosperous life in the richer industrialised areas across the Irish Sea. – Maps 2 – 4 show County divisions, their abbreviations and full forms.
- 9) Wright (1898 – 1905) attested *murphy* 'a potato' in a much larger area, namely in Lancashire, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Oxfordshire (*s.v.* 'murphy') and *pra(i)tie* in Lancashire and Cheshire (*s.v.* 'potato').
- 10) All the maps were prepared by Stefan kai Spoerlein. He also extracted and analysed the *Hyll/Hill/Hell/Hull* data from the various databases. In the same way Stephanie Barker is responsible for *Murphy* and *Cropper/Crapper*.
- 11) Apart from the etymological origin mentioned for *Hyll*, some authors state also other possible origins, namely a derivation from a pet form for *Hilary* or *Hilger* or from one of the Germanic compound names with the first element *hild* ('battle, strife'), as, e.g., in *Hildebrand* and *Hilliard*. See Hanks – Hodges (1988) and Cottle (1978). Cottle, however, assumes this to be a "very rare" possibility.
- 12) Also the plural form *Hills* was disregarded here, of which Guppy (1890) states that it is also very frequent, especially in the south-east of England.
- 13) On the variation between <o> and <a> see, e.g., Horn – Lehnert (1954: 153 ff.).
- 14) The *IGI* lists them as "*Crapper* or *Cropper*".

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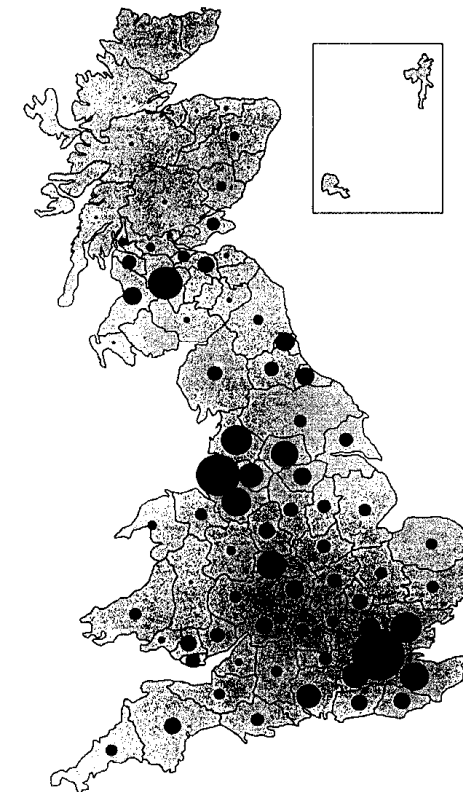
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Appendices

Murphy

UK-Info 2004: Absolute Distribution (Point Map)

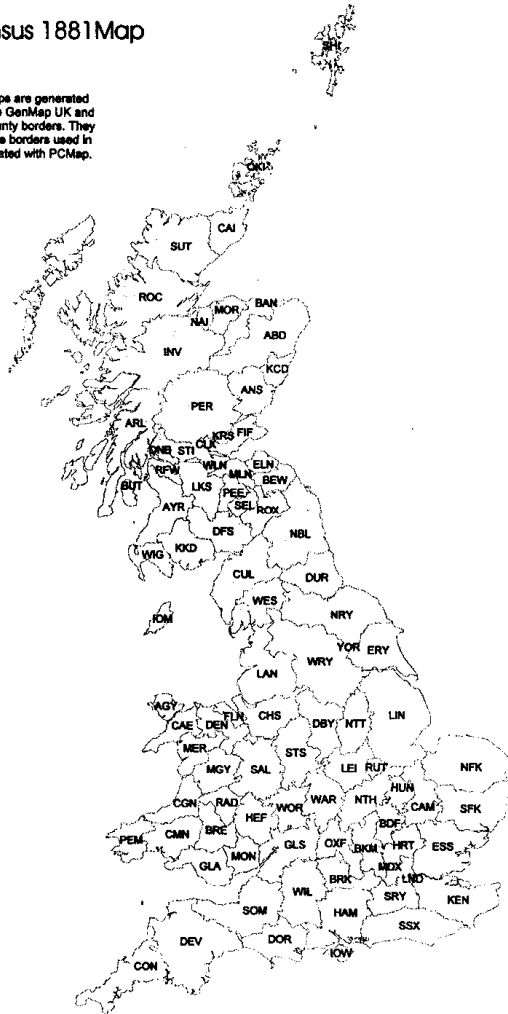


County	Names
LND	7544
MSY	5113
LKS	3139
ESS	2631
LAN	2528
CHS	2388
KEN	2253
WMD	2278
WYK	1962
SRY	1882
GTM	1897
HAM	1642
HRT	1191
TWR	1058
AYR	921
WAR	919
SYK	885
CLE	836
DEV	783
SXE	783
GLS	781
MLN	752
SXW	714
MGM	702
STS	690
BDF	635
CLM	595
GNT	563
DJR	556
DBY	553
NTH	552
RFW	533
HUM	531
OKF	528
SGM	515
LEI	505
NTT	491
FIF	472
BRK	470
DOR	459
NYK	427
LIN	426
CLW	399
DFD	393
SFK	389
BKM	378
WLN	377
HWR	375
CAM	374
CON	359
NFK	357
WIL	338
SOM	337
NBL	271
ANS	261
SAL	230
ABD	223
GWY	221
STI	208
DNB	183
AVN	155
WCM	128
DFS	109
CLK	88
ELN	83
ROX	72
PER	63
BAN	62
INV	50
WIC	49
POW	46
MOR	40
ARL	33
ROC	32
KCD	22
CAI	18
BEW	11
PEE	11
SEL	7
WGD	6
NAI	6
OKI	6
KRS	5
SHI	0
SUT	0

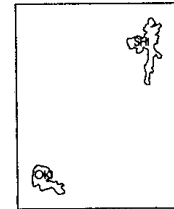
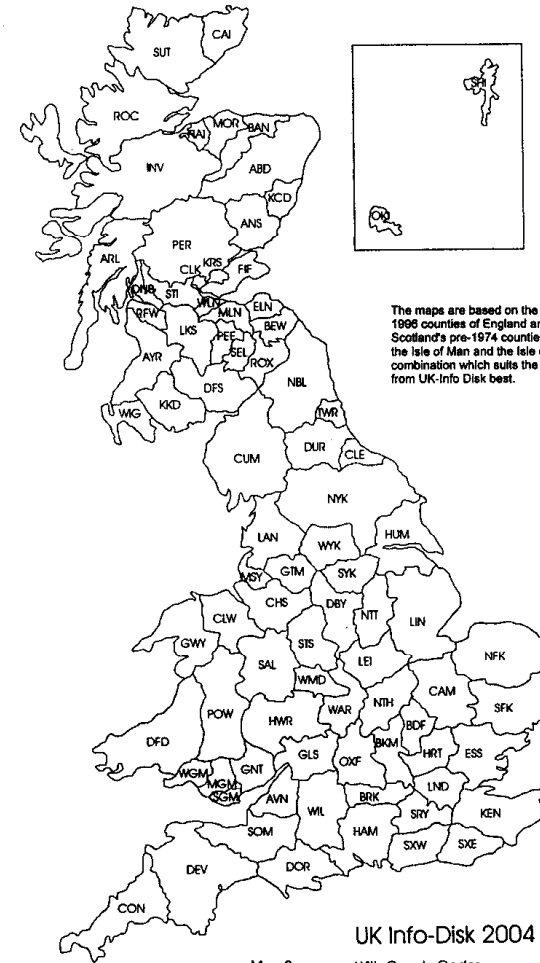
Map 1

IGI and Census 1881 Map

The IGI and Census maps are generated directly with the software GenMap UK and display the pre-1974 county borders. They very closely resemble the borders used in the UK-Info Maps generated with PCMap.



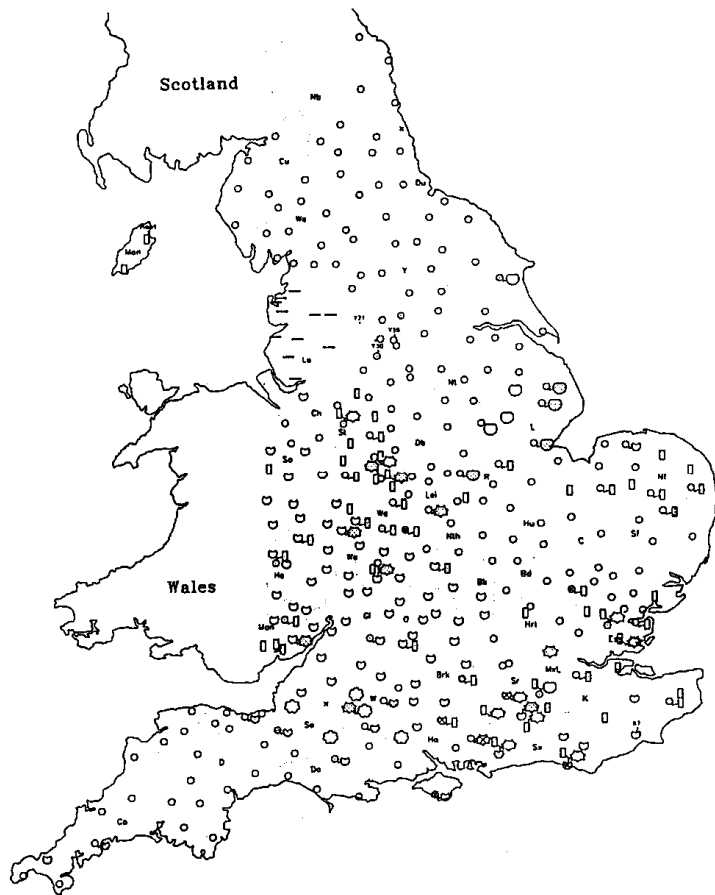
Map 2



The maps are based on the (post) 1974-1996 counties of England and Wales and Scotland's pre-1974 counties without Bute, the Isle of Man and the Isle of Wight - a combination which suits the data received from UK-Info Disk best.

UK Info-Disk 2004 Map
With County Codes

Map 3



Map 6a
(From Viereck-Ramisch 1991)

L 25: II.4.1.1 Potatoes

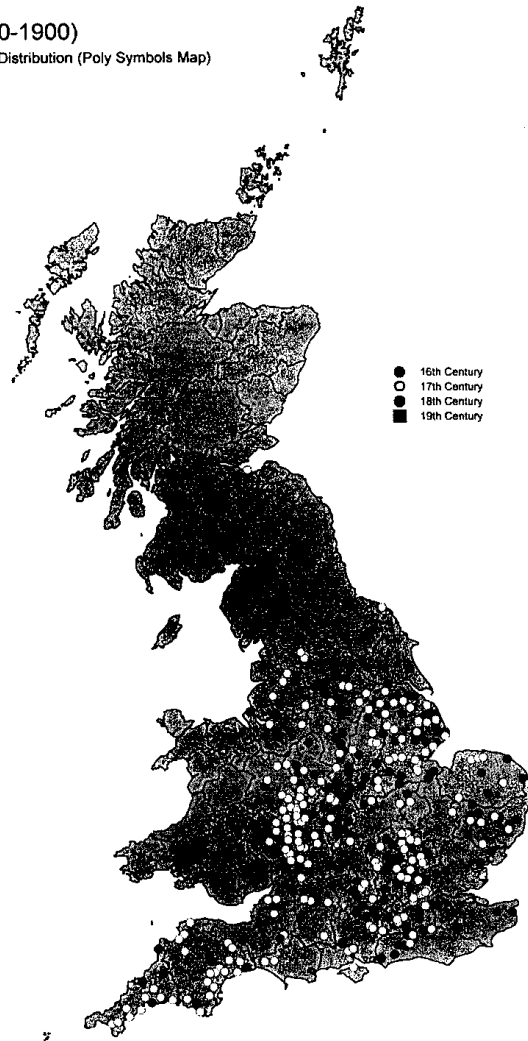
What root-crops do you grow?

<p>o talles: Nb1,Nb2,Nb3,Nb4 Nd5,Nb7,Nb8,Nb9 Cu1,Cu2,Cu3,Cu4,Cu5 Cu6 Du1,Du2,Du3,Du4,Du5 Du6 We1,We2,We3,We4 Le1,Le2,Le3 Y1,Y2,Y3,Y4,Y5,Y6 Y7,Y8,Y9,Y10,Y11,Y13 Y14,Y15,Y16,Y17,Y18 Y19,Y20,Y22,Y23 Y24,Y25,Y26,Y27,Y28 Y29,Y31,Y32,Y33,Y34 Ch3,Ch4,Ch5,Ch6 Db1,Db2,Db3,Db4 Db5,Db6,Db7 N14,N12,N13,N14 L1,L2,L3,L4,L5,L7 L8,L10,L12,L13,L14 L15 S12,S13,S16,S17 S18 Le11,Le12,Le13,Le14 Le15,Le16,Le17,Le19 Le10 R1,R2 He7 Wo7 Wa1,Wa2,Wa3 Wa4 N1h1,N1h3,N1h4 Hu1,Hu2 C1,C2 N14,N12,N14,N15 N18,N10,N11 N12,N14 S14,S12,S13,S14,S15 Mon7 Bk5,Bk6 Bd2,Bd3 Hr14,Hr12 Ess1,Ess2,Ess3,Ess4* Ess5,Ess6,Ess9,Ess10 Ess11,Ess12,Ess13* Ess14 Mx1 So5,So6,So7,So8 So9,So10,So12 So13 W1,W4,W6,W8 Br15 Sr1 K2,K5 Co1,Co2,Co3,Co4 Co6,Co7 D1,D2,D3,D4,D5,D6</p>	<p>D7,D8,D9,D10,D11 Do1,Do2,Do3,Do4 Do5 Ha5,Ha6,Ha7* Sx2 Y12,Y30* Nbz Bc1 o laters: Ch1 Se1,Se2,Se4,Se5 Se6,Se7,Se8,Se9,Se10 Se11 He1,He2,He3,He4 He5,He6,He7 Wo1,Wo2,Wo3,Wo4 Wo5,Wo7 Wa5,Wa6,Wa7 N1h5 N12 Mon1,Mon2,Mon8 G1,G12,G13,G14,G15 G16,G17 O1,O2,O3,O4,O5,O6 Bk1,Bk2,Bk3,Bk4 So1,So2,So7,So10* W1,W2,W3,W6,W8* Br1,Br2,Br3,Br4 Sr2,Sr3 K4,K7 Co4,Co5 Do2 He1,He2,Ha3,Ha4* He7 Sx3*,Sx4,Sx5 o laters: Sx6*</p>	<p>Sr1*,Sr4,Sr5 K1,K2*,K3,K5,K6 Ha4 Sx1,Sx3,Sx6* Man1,Man2 o apuds: S12,S16,S17*,S19* Le10* Wo2*,Wo7* Mon6* Ess12,Ess15* Mx1,2* W7* Sr2,Sr3*,Sr5 Sx1,Sx2*,Sx3,Sx6 - pralies: La4,La5,La6,La7 La8,La9,La10,La11 La12,La13,La14 o talles: Y20 L6,L7*,L8*,L9,L11 L12* Le18* Sr1 o chittles: So3,So11 W5,W7,W9 priddhes: Man1* potatoes: Y21,Y26*,Y30 murphies: K7*</p>	<p>o usually, familiarly o rare, occasionally, less common o older, obsolete o modern, newer o strongly pressured, suggested form/word o preferred o excerpted from incidental material o same symbol for more than one response x no response s irrelevant response u unwanted response</p> <p>o talles (194) o laters (78) o potatoes (58) o apuds (19) - pralies (11) o talles (9) o chittles (5)</p>
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Map 6b
(From Viereck-Ramisch 1991)

Hyll (1500-1900)

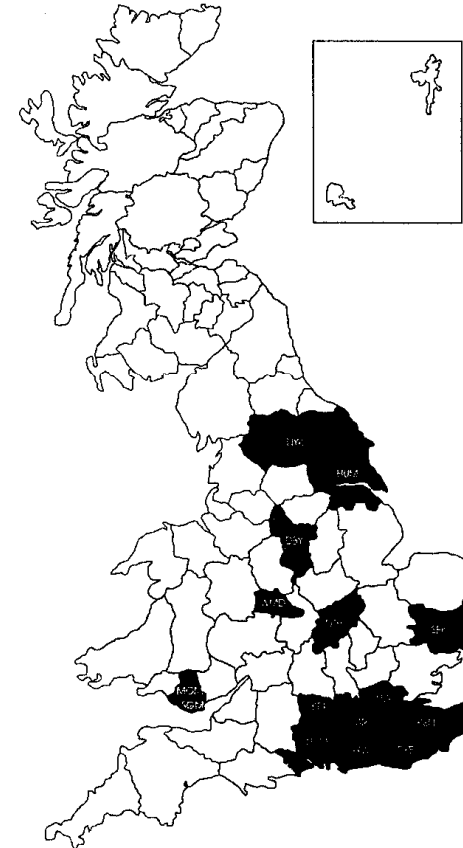
IGI: Absolute Distribution (Poly Symbols Map)



Map 7

Hell

UK-Info 2004: Absolute Distribution (Area Fill Map)

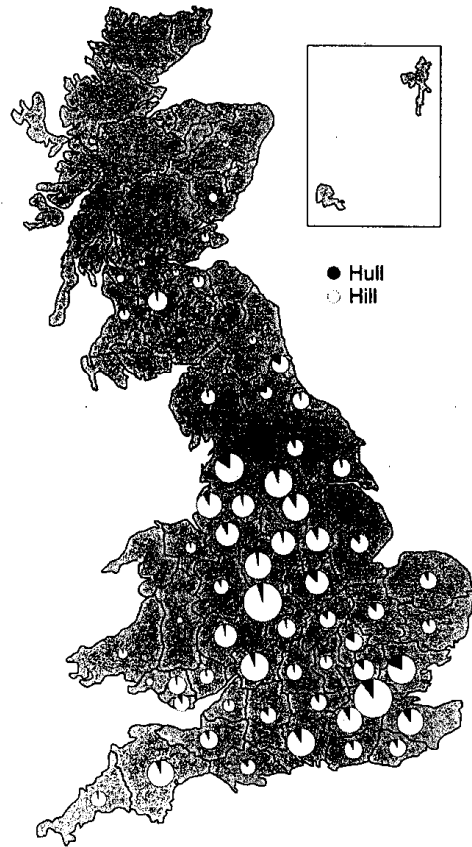


Map 8

County	Names
LND	4
NTH	4
WMD	3
NYK	2
SKW	2
BRK	1
DBY	1
SXE	1
HAM	1
HUM	1
KEN	1
MGM	1
SGM	1
SFK	1
SRY	1
ABD	0
ANS	0
APL	0
AVN	0
AYR	0
BAN	0
BDF	0
DEW	0
BKM	0
CAI	0
CAM	0
CHS	0
CLK	0
CLE	0
CLW	0
CON	0
CUM	0
DEV	0
DOR	0
DPS	0
DNS	0
DUR	0
DFD	0
ELN	0
ESS	0
FIF	0
GLS	0
GTM	0
GNT	0
GWY	0
HWR	0
HRT	0
INV	0
KCD	0
KRS	0
KKD	0
LKS	0
LAN	0
LEI	0
LIN	0
MSY	0
MLN	0
MOR	0
NAI	0
NFK	0
NBL	0
NTT	0
OKI	0
OXF	0
PEE	0
PER	0
POW	0
RFW	0
ROC	0
ROX	0
SAL	0
SEL	0
SHI	0
SOM	0
SYK	0
STS	0
STI	0
SUT	0
TWR	0
WAR	0
WGM	0
WYK	0
WLN	0
WIG	0
WIL	0

Hill/Hull Comparison

UK-Info 2004: Absolute Distribution (Pie Chart)

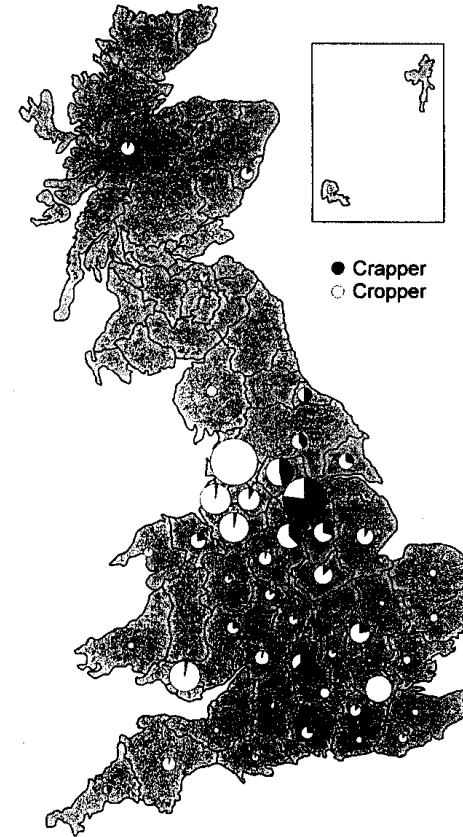


Map 9

County	Hill	Hull
ABD	206	19
ANS	462	8
ARL	74	1
AVN	721	48
AYR	630	28
BAN	35	0
BDF	1390	310
BRK	1379	127
BEW	67	8
BKM	913	56
CAI	25	0
CAM	1367	171
CHS	2834	213
CLK	95	2
CLE	1512	91
CLW	654	15
CON	1237	79
CUM	1143	74
DBY	3025	180
DEV	3448	218
DOR	1160	135
DFS	166	2
DNB	92	14
DUR	686	197
DFD	512	19
ELN	102	0
SXE	1484	118
ESS	3494	853
FIF	365	21
GLS	4074	209
LND	7119	713
GTM	2693	452
GNT	1113	51
GWY	235	28
HAM	3893	361
HWR	2695	95
HRT	2053	269
HUM	1766	95
INV	78	1
KEN	3538	386
KCD	32	0
KRS	8	0
KKD	28	0
LKS	2016	68
LAN	3906	695
LEI	2742	334
LIN	1659	183
MSY	3031	336
MGM	1629	96
MLN	786	21
MOR	42	0
NAJ	8	0
NFK	1448	145
NYK	1481	169
NTH	1352	170
NBL	318	34
NTT	3002	216
OKI	35	1
OXF	1293	82
PEE	16	0
PER	150	10
POW	230	3
RFW	342	0
ROC	53	1
ROX	116	1
SAL	1146	85
SEL	45	1
SHI	12	0
SOM	1699	125
SGM	1248	89
SYK	3701	317
STS	3715	124
STI	275	9
SFK	1005	113
SRY	3307	261
SUT	16	0
TWR	1360	268
WVR	1784	102
WGM	285	5
WMD	7393	395
SXW	1691	178
WYK	4096	312
WLN	243	8
WIG	33	13
WIL	1253	167

Crapper/Cropper Comparison

UK-Info 2004: Absolute Distribution (Pie Chart)



Map 10

County	Crapper	Cropper
ABD	0	0
ANS	0	2
ARL	0	0
AVN	0	2
AYR	0	0
BAN	0	0
BDF	17	65
BRK	0	21
BEW	0	0
BKM	3	13
CAI	0	0
CAM	0	7
CHS	5	174
CLK	0	0
CLE	20	20
CLW	10	38
CON	8	7
CUM	0	23
DBY	51	78
DEV	2	34
DOR	1	9
DFS	0	2
DNB	0	2
DUR	2	3
DFD	0	10
ELN	0	0
SXE	2	14
ESS	0	14
FIF	0	4
GLS	2	40
LND	0	143
GTM	7	90
GNT	0	0
GWY	1	17
HAM	8	24
HWR	8	23
HRT	0	4
HUM	14	35
INV	1	39
KEN	0	8
KCD	0	26
KRS	0	0
KKD	0	0
LKS	0	3
LAN	0	430
LEI	10	65
LIN	4	56
MSY	7	176
MGM	4	181
MLN	3	13
MOR	0	0
NAJ	0	0
NFK	0	12
NYK	19	29
NTH	1	4
NBL	0	0
NTT	23	57
OKI	0	0
OXF	43	24
PEE	0	0
PER	0	3
POW	0	2
RFW	0	0
ROC	0	0
ROX	0	1
SAL	3	11
SEL	0	2
SHI	0	0
SOM	0	7
SGM	1	88
SYK	284	88
STS	0	35
STI	0	2
SFK	0	15
SRY	3	25
SUT	0	0
TWR	1	3
WVR	3	15
WGM	0	1
WMD	4	19
SXW	0	9
WYK	68	80
WLN	0	2
WIG	0	1
WIL	9	5