

JOAN STEVENS, M.B.E., F.S.A.

Joan Stevens, elected to our Council in 1977, died on 21st March 1986, at the age of 75. Though born in Lichfield, she was of Jersey descent (her father, Col. W. J. J. Collas, was a Jurat and Senator of the island) and was educated there and in Lausanne. As early as 1931 she had become Assistant Secretary to La Société Jersiaise, but after marrying C. G. Stevens in 1934 she was mainly based in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). In 1949, however, they returned to Jersey and while bringing up their four children turned to the study of the island's history, to which she became the most outstanding contributor. Vice-President of La Société from 1968, she was President from 1971 to 1974 and in recognition of her work was elected F.S.A. in 1976 and made an M.B.E. in 1977. Her most notable publication was Old Jersey Houses, of which Vol. I (A.D.1500-1700) appeared in 1965 and Vol. II (post-1700) in 1977, but in the meantime she and her husband were building up a Dictionary of Jersey Place-Names, the editing of which she completed in the last year of her life.* Unfortunately she had been able to attend only one of our Conferences (that at Keele in 1980), but she will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

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*The publication of this seems still to be delayed.

MENDIP

The Somerset hill-range name Mendip is explained, by such recent commentators as have offered an opinion, as a hybrid compound of the Bredon type, the first element of which is mened, an anglicized form of Primitive Welsh *mōnið 'hill'. There is no independent evidence about whether to expect a 'Welsh' or 'Cornish' form of this word in Somerset (i.e., in this instance, the Welsh raising of pretonic o to u before a nasal, prior to its reduction in unstressed position, leading to the possibility of rendition by a wide range of OE vowel letters). But the attested variation in the vowel of Mendip could well be an attempt to render the reduction of PrW [u] from [o] before a nasal consonant, i.e. would be consistent with PrW rather than with Primitive Cornish developments. (Cf. Jackson 1953: 673-81 and Padel 1985: 163-4, s.v. meneth; the list of forms quoted below should also be compared with those for Longmynd (Sa) and Mynde (He) in DEPN, where the language of transmission is obviously PrW.)

The second element is said to be OE hop 'valley' (DEPN, s.v.; Reaney 1960: 74; and Field 1980). Field notes that it is very odd that such a name should have come to denote the hills themselves, rather than, as he puts it, 'the valley which bisects the Mendips'. (DEPN uses a similar expression. I take it that this phrase could denote the Lox Yeo River gap, or the valley between Wavering Down and Shute Shelve Hill, or the Cheddar Gorge, or most probably the valley which gives Winscombe its name.) Gelling (1984: 172), however, prefers to treat the latter part of the name, at least, as an unsolved problem, and Field (1984) adopts a similar cautious position.

Gelling's and Field's reserve is quite justified, because in addition to being semantically curious, this solution is phonologically unsatisfactory. The early forms, including those cited in DEPN, hardly suggest hop:¹

<u>Munedup</u>	705x712 (11th)(13th)	Grant by King Ine to Beorh[t]wald, abbot of Glastonbury (Sawyer, no. 1670); e.11th cent. copy in lost <u>Liber Terrarum</u> , an epitome of which is known from John of Glastonbury (1247; Finberg 1964, no. 374).
<u>Menedip</u>	740x756 (14th)	Epitome (l.14th cent.) of a grant by King Cuthred to Sherborne Abbey, BL Cotton MS. Faustina A ii, fo. 23r; Finberg 1964, no. 386 and cf. Finberg 1953.
<u>Menedipp</u>	c.1150 (14th)	Regesta III, no. 373 (a forgery)
<u>Menedepe</u>	1185	Templar

<u>Mendep</u> , <u>Menedup</u>	1225	Ass
<u>Munedup</u>	1235	Cl
<u>Minedepe</u>	1236	FF
<u>Menedep</u>	1299	Cl
<u>Menedepe</u>	1302	Cl
<u>Munedep</u>	1303	Cl
<u>Menedep</u>	1320	Ipm
<u>Menydep</u>	1322	Ipm
<u>foresta de Mendep̃</u>	1368	Kalendars of the Exchequer (ed. F. Palgrave, 1836)
<u>Menedep</u> , <u>Mendype</u> , <u>Mendipe</u>	c.1540	Leland X, fo. 68r
<u>Mindiffe</u>	c.1685	Fiennes

I propose instead that the second element is OE yppe 'lookout place' (= 'weardsteal, spectacula, orcestra, pulpitus'; Wright's glosses, 39, 35-6. See further, below). Smith saw this element in Epping (Ess), Ipley (Ha),² Uppingham (Ru) and a few other names (EPN, II, 283). Persistent e for OE y in the West-Saxon dialect area would be curious, but the problem vanishes if the name is treated as an obscured compound, in which case y would have become [a] (written e) in line with other vowels in unstressed syllables. For some other instances of the rare appearance of y in unstressed syllables, see Campbell (1959: 372). The loss of the geminate -pp- would also be hardly surprising in an unstressed syllable, even in OE (cf. Campbell 1959: 457); and the form ostensibly datable to c.1150 may be some support for an original geminate, though its value is diminished by its occurring in a later medieval forgery. The absence of a geminate in the two Anglo-Saxon grants could be just a little disturbing, but in neither case can we be sure of the form in the original manuscript epitomized in medieval times.

There may be more to the name than this. If it is an yppe- name, it conforms to a pattern of association between yppe and royal forests, of which Mendip was one (Close Rolls, passim, and Rackham 1980: 178). Epping is intimately associated with Epping or Waltham Forest (for the significance of the latter name in this connection, see Huggins 1975).³ Ipley, a vill of Fawley, was in the hundred of the New Forest, likewise an Anglo-Saxon hunting-ground (notwithstanding its traditional association with William the Conqueror). Uppingham was the justice-seat of Leighfield Forest (Cox 1905: 235). It is not clear whether the genitival name Ipsley (Wa) is relevant here, but it is

on the boundary of Feckenham Forest (VCH, Warwicks., III, 288). It may be that we have to do with an OE word very similar in meaning to the ME/early ModE folly and standing (Crawford 1921: 33-5); an yppe could have been a hunters' dais or platform before which deer were driven, to judge by the meanings recorded in the OE and Latin glosses to the term quoted above, which are essentially to do with constructed objects (thus weardsteal 'watchtower'; spectacula 'theatre-seat(s)'; pulpitus 'scaffold, platform'; orcestra arguably 'chair', see Latham 1965, s.v.). But then its application in Mendip, Epping and Uppingham would be metaphorical in some way, since 'Mened- dais' (etc.) obviously makes no literal sense. There is likely to be an allusion to the relatively level, six miles wide, 800' high, plateau top of the Mendips, on the salience of which see D. I. Smith (1975: 95-8). The ancient parish centre of Epping, west of the hamlet of Epping Upland (sic), also appears to be on the edge of a plateau, judging by Chapman and André's map of 1777 reproduced in VCH, Essex, V and by the current O.S. 1:50,000 map. Note also that Uppingham lies 'for the most part on a tableland' (VCH, Rutland, I, 95).⁴

To make my proposal perfectly clear: Mendip, like other names mentioned, contains the element OE yppe 'hunting-dais', used characteristically in forest districts as a natural metaphor for a plateau. It is, of course, possible that I have got things entirely the wrong way round, and that yppe is a primary topographical term for flattish upland whose usage was extended to mean platforms of various kinds. But that would leave the apparent association of the place-name element with forest districts as an anomaly or a coincidence, for surely not every plateau was a forest. It is also possible that the basic sense of yppe was 'anything raised (and flat?)', and that it had two specific sub-senses 'plateau' and 'dais'. This is a weaker hypothesis than the one I prefer, and the fact remains that the glossary evidence (the only direct evidence available) points to yppe denoting a constructed object. This weaker hypothesis is not, of course, etymologically surprising, and will carry the day if cast-iron evidence for a primary sense 'plateau' or 'upland' in OE is forthcoming.⁵

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ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTES

Campbell, A. (1959) Old English Grammar. Oxford.

Cox, J. C. (1905) The Royal Forests of England. London.

Crawford, O. G. S. (1921) 'Place-names.' Archaeological Journal LXXVIII, 31-46.

DEPN, see Ekwall.

Ekwall, E. (1960) The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names. 4th edn. Oxford. [DEPN]

EPN, see Smith, A. H.

EPNS = English Place-Name Society.

Field, J. (1980) Place-Names of Great Britain and Ireland. Newton Abbot.

Field, J. (1984) Discovering Place-Names. (Discovering Series 102). Princes Risborough.

Finberg, H. P. R. (1953) 'Sherborne, Glastonbury and the expansion of Wessex.' Transactions of the Royal Historical Society (fifth series) III, 101-24.

Finberg, H. P. R. (1964) The Early Charters of Wessex. Leicester.

Gelling, M. (1984) Place-Names in the Landscape. London.

Grundy, G. B. (1925) 'Saxon land-charters of Hampshire, II.' Archaeological Journal LXXXII, 32-126.

Huggins, R. (1975) 'The significance of the place-name Wealdhām.' Medieval Archaeology XIX, 198-201.

Jackson, K. H. (1953) Language and History in Early Britain. Edinburgh.

Latham, R. E. (1965) Revised Medieval Latin Word-List. London.

Padel, O. J. (1985) Cornish Place-Name Elements, 2 vols. EPNS LVI/LVII (continuously paginated). Nottingham.

PN + county abbreviation = the relevant county volume(s) of the English Place-Name Society.

Rackham, O. (1980) Ancient Woodland. London.

Reaney, P. H. (1960) The Origin of English Place-Names. London.

Smith, A. H. (1956) English Place-Name Elements. EPNS XXV-VI. Cambridge.

Smith, D. I. (comp. and ed., with D. P. Drew) (1975) Limestones and Caves of the Mendip Hills. Newton Abbot.

VCH = the relevant volumes of the Victoria History of the Counties of England.

Wright, T. (1857, 1873) A Volume of Vocabularies I, II. Privately printed. Ed. W. Wülcker (1884).

1. All the primary sources quoted are printed ones, and full bibliographical details are given in EPNS county volumes and/or DEPN. I assume they are familiar enough to most readers not to require elaboration here.
2. Grundy (1925: 37) derives Ipley from a personal name Ippa. A strong form of this name is favoured in PNWa (213-14) for the Warwickshire place-name Ipsley.
3. The names Uppingham and Epping presuppose that yype could form a derivative in -ingas, i.e. that it was available very early in the insular history of OE. In both these cases, a secondary -ingas derivative from a primary place-name or topographical word *ypping 'place like an yype; upland?' is also possible. Huggins (1975) argues that wealdhām names also date from early Anglo-Saxon times, and were those of royal forest estates operative before c.550. It is therefore quite conceivable that the forests with which yype names seem to be associated are of very early origin. If that is so, there is no tension between the requirements (a) that some yype-names or derivatives be early, and (b) that the royal forests with which they are linked be of early origin.
4. Yype may also appear in Ipstones (St), where the reference may be to the crags of the Millstone Grit. This name could be taken to substantiate the weaker etymological hypothesis offered at the end of the present article, for Ipstones is associated with no forest. I have not made much of this possibility because the etymology of Ipstones is not certain; i for OE y as far west as Staffordshire would be somewhat surprising. I have ignored DEPN's Tipalt Burn (Nb), which is not recorded till the 16th cent. The survival, or restitution, of u in Uppingham is noteworthy in a place so far east. The earliest, 12th cent., form shows y, however, and to judge by appearances the modern u must be analogical in virtue of its upland situation.
5. See further the discussion in n.4, above.