

**English Personal Name Studies
since 1991**

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Some major publications on given (i.e. first) names since 1991

There is still no dictionary of Old English given names. But we do have:

2014: Fran Colman, *The Grammar of Names in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: OUP).

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1992: Cecily Clark, ‘Onomastics’ in *The Cambridge History of the English Language*, I and II (Cambridge: CUP).

1995: Cecily Clark, *Words, Names and History: Selected Writings*, ed. Peter Jackson (Cambridge: Brewer).

1994: John Insley, *Scandinavian Personal Names in Norfolk* (AARGA: Uppsala).

1998: Peter McClure, ‘The interpretation of hypocoristic forms of Middle English baptismal names’, *Nomina* 21: 101–31.

1997: Scott Smith-Bannister, *Names and Naming Patterns in England 1538–1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

2004: George Redmonds, *Christian Names in Local and Family History* (Kew: The National Archives).

First name dictionaries

1945 (revised 3rd edn **1977**): E. G. Withycombe, *Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

1983, 1993: Leslie Dunkling and William Gosling, *Everyman's Dictionary of First Names* (London: Everyman).

1990: Patrick Hanks and Flavia Hodges/**2006**: Patrick Hanks and Kate Hardcastle, *Dictionary of First Names* (Oxford: OUP).

1995, 2002: Adrian Room, *Dictionary of First Names* (London: Cassell).

1999, 2004: David Pickering, *The Penguin Dictionary of First Names* (London: Penguin).

2009: Julia Cresswell, *Dictionary of First Names* (Edinburgh: Chambers).

For a critique of first name dictionaries see

2016: Peter McClure, 'Personal and surname dictionaries', chapter 16 in Philip Durkin (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Lexicography*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 271—91.

Principal (English) surname dictionaries 1991-2009

1991: P. H. Reaney and R. M. Wilson, *A Dictionary of English Surnames* (London: Routledge). 3rd enlarged and re-titled edn of Reaney's *Dictionary of British Surnames* (1958, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul).

2009: John Titford, *Penguin Dictionary of British Surnames* (London: Penguin Books), a revision of Basil Cottle's *Penguin Dictionary of Surnames* (2nd edn 1978).

Both dictionaries are useful but are also often wildly inaccurate and ill-informed.

Innovations in English surname research since the 1990s

1. Advent of DNA analysis of male bearers of surnames.
2. Major advances in research methodology.
3. The digital revolution: searchable electronic data files on CD-ROMs and on the internet.

DNA and family name origins

2011: George Redmonds, Turi King, and David Hey, *Surnames, DNA, and Family History* (Oxford: OUP).

Surname research needs to be embedded in local and family history

1963-2007: English Surnames Survey/Series, 8 vols by Redmonds, McKinley, and Postles (Dept. of English Local History, Leicester University).

1992: David Hey (ed.), *The Origin of One Hundred Sheffield Surnames* (Sheffield: Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language + Adult Continuing Education, Sheffield University).

1997: George Redmonds, *Surnames and Genealogy: A New Approach* (Boston: New England Historical Genealogical Society).

2000: David Hey, *Family Names and Family History* (London: Hambledon and London)

2000-10: Edgar Tooth, *The Distinctive Surnames of North Staffordshire*, 4 vols (Leek: Churnet Valley Books).

2013, 2014: Peter McClure ‘Explaining English surnames: linguistic ambiguity and the importance of context. Part I’, *Nomina* 36, 1—33, Part II, Interpreting the modern data’, *Nomina* 37, 109—41.

2015: George Redmonds, *A Dictionary of Yorkshire Surnames* (Donington: Shaun Tyas).

The digital revolution

1990s– in progress: British censuses 1841–1911 (now online via Ancestry and Findmypast websites)

2003–15: Steve Archer, *The British 19th Century Surname Atlas* (www.archersoftware.co.uk), CD-ROM, based on the LDS digitized indexing of the 1881 census.

2010– in progress: Church of the Latter Day Saints, *International Genealogical Index* (IGI), now online at Familysearch.org/search/records. It indexes the names of people in births, marriages and deaths registers, mainly from parish registers (1538 onwards) but also those of other denominations and some civil registers.

2001– in progress, The National Archives ‘Discovery’ website.

[1998–2005]: unpublished electronic index of Carolyn C. Fenwick (ed.), *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381* (Oxford: OUP/British Academy), made available to the Family Names in the United Kingdom project.

The Family Names in the United Kingdom project

Based at UWE, obtained AHRC grants 2010–14 and 2014–17

Editorial team: Patrick Hanks, Richard Coates, Peter McClure, Paul Cullen, Simon Draper (to 2013), †Duncan Probert (2013-14), Kate Harcastle, Harry Parkin, Kay Muhr, Liam Ó hAisibéil, Matthew Hammond, Tom Turpie. Consultants: Oliver Padel, Prys Morgan, Simon Taylor, Thomas Owen Clancy and others.

2016: Patrick Hanks, Richard Coates, and Peter McClure (eds), *The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland*, 4 vols (Oxford: OUP). Online edition to libraries only. It has 46,602 entries, with sequences of dated and geographically located historical forms. Priced £400.

A 2nd unpublished edn, with around 60,000 entries is in preparation.

2021: Harry Parkin (ed.), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain* (Oxford: OUP). It has *c.*43,500 entries, without the historical evidence. Priced £80.

The future of English personal names research?

Potentially brilliant but fragile

Major contributions in the last 30 years to other fields of inquiry:

Historical linguistics (especially dialect phonology)

Lexicology (e.g. antedatings of words in OED)

Demography (especially migration)

Social and family history, etc.

With so many new resources and unresearched data there are unlimited opportunities for personal name studies to make significantly greater contributions.