

Bedford U3A – Surnames

compiled by Charlie Haylock
(author of, “In a Manner of Speaking”)
(also dialect tour of GB on
Charlie Haylock YouTube)

ME	Middle English (1066 to 1487)	NF	Norman-French
NV	Norman-Viking	OD	Old Danish
OE	Old English (Anglo-Saxon)	OG	Old German
OF	Old French	Bryth	Brythonic
ON	Old Norse	OW	Old Welsh

Able *Abel* – Biblical Hebrew name meaning breath or vigour – brought back by Crusaders to show they were in the Holy Land

Ainley from Ainley House in Ovenden, WR Yorkshire

Amos variation of Ames – NF *ames* friend

Andrews final letter s usually means widow of Andrew, but can be son of - Greek name *Andreas* - manly - adopted by Normans

Armstrong OE *earm strang* strong in the arm Cumbria and Borders

Baker OE *baecere* – baker

Baldwin OE *bald wine* bold friend

Barker either NF *berchier* shepherd
or ME *barker* a tanner

Batt either son of Bartholomew - Batt is pet form of Bartholomew
Bartholomew itself means rich in land
or a cudgel maker OE *bata* cudgel
or nickname for someone short and stout (like a cudgel)
or a good husbandman ON *bati*

Bell either NF *bel* beautiful
or OE *belle* . . . a bellman or bell ringer
or dweller near bell house, town bell or church bell

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Blunt	fair haired, blond	NF	<i>blund</i>	
Bott	either	OE	<i>bōt</i> compensation for a wrong, atonement, penance, repentance or similar	
	or	Old Frisian	<i>bote</i> a messenger	
Bowyer	maker or trader in bows	OE	<i>boga</i> (pronounced boya) a bow	
Brindle	from Brindle, Lancashire	OE	<i>burna hyll</i> hill by a stream	
Brinsley	from Brinsley, Northants - in Domesday Book as <i>Brunesleia</i>	OE	<i>leah</i> woodland clearing belonging to a man called <i>Brun</i>	
Briscoe	from Briscoe, Cumbria, NR Yorks or WR Yorks	ON	<i>bretaskogr</i> wood <i>skogr</i> belonging to Britons <i>breta</i>	
Brown	OE	<i>brūn</i> or ON	<i>brúnn</i> brown hair or swarthy complexion	
Bull	a keeper or minder of bulls	OE	<i>bula</i> bull	
Bullen	from Boulogne – Bullen & Bulling are anglicised variations			
Cartledge	from Cartledge, Derbyshire . . .	ON	<i>kartr</i> rocky ground	
	OE	<i>loecc</i>	boggy stream	
Cartwright	cart maker	OE	<i>craet</i> or ON <i>kartr</i> cart	
		OE	<i>wyrhta</i> craftsman	
Clyma	Cornish form of Clement	NF	<i>clement</i> merciful, peaceful and mild	
Codman	either	most likely - a worker in leather	OE	<i>code</i> a particular wax used in making leather goods
	or	less likely - catcher or seller of fish	OE	<i>cad(d)</i> a bag
			OE	<i>codde</i> cod
Colson	either	son of Coll, abbr. of Nicholas, adopted by the Normans from the Greek meaning 'victory people		
	or	son of Cole . . .	OE	<i>col</i> charcoal
				nickname for either a charcoal burner or someone with dark black hair

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- Corless** OE *carl̄as* free from care
- Corley** from Corley Warwickshire OE *corn leah*
leah clearing frequented by herons *corn*
- Craven** from Craven W.R. Yorkshire
from a Brythonic (Celtic Briton) word meaning garlic place
- Crye** Irish *craoibhe* curly haired
- Cullis** either Scottish family name - son of Collie - a pet form of
Nicholas NF nickname *Nicolaus* adopted from
Greek via Latin for “victory people”
or nickname for a sickly weak person needing *cullis*
ME *cullis* - a strong clear meat broth
- Dally** either D'Ailly from Ailly, Normandy
or from Dally Farm, Forest Row, Sussex
or Irish leader Irish *dalach* from *dail* an assembly
- Day** either OE *dāge* kneader of bread ME *daye*
or pet form of David . . . son of David
- Deamer** OE *dēmere* a deemer, a judge . . . one who presides and
makes judgement
- Dobson** son of Dobb. . . which is a pet name for Robert
Robert is a Norman-Viking name meaning “fame bright”
- Doulton** from Dolton, Devonshire, in Domesday Book as *Duueltone*
abbreviated form of OE *dufe feld tun* open cultivated
farmland frequented by doves
- Farrar** either from *ferreor* NF for farrier
or derives from Pharaoh . . . the person who played the
part in Medieval pageants

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Fewings the final letter “s” denotes widow of Fewing, maybe son of -
Fewing - NF *fuy* (abbreviation of *fuyster* – saddle-tree maker)
plus OE *inga* family or son of - *fuy inga* anglicised to **Fewing**

Frankel German and Ashkenazic origins, used as an ethnic or regional
name for someone from Franconia ("Franken" in Germany),
SW Germany, an early Frankish settlement. Frankel is a German
and Ashkenazic diminutive of this placename.

Frost OE *forst* – frost . . . either someone with white hair or beard
or very cold without ardour

Garner NF *gerner* keeper of a granary or grain house

Gee either from Gee Cross, Cheshire
or a nickname from NF *geai* a jay - a chatterer

Girling anglicised corruption of NF *coeur de lion* which became
girdelion . . . then *girdling* . . . eventually *girling* heart of a lion

Griffin a pet form of *Gruffudd* (Griffith) from Old Welsh *Gryff-iud*
Gryff the chief

Gudgin NF *goujon* a credulous person easily tricked

Haines from Haynes, Beds OE *hagen* (pron hayen) hedged enclosures

Hooper someone who fits wooden or metal hoops onto casks etc
OE *hōp* a hoop or band

Howell son of Hugh NV *hue* kind mind plus NF *ell* son of

Howitt son of Hugh NF *hue* . . . mindful, kind hearted
hue + ett literally means little Hugh - son of Hugh

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Hulatt	one of the many variations of Howlett a double diminutive of Hugh <i>hugh</i> + <i>el</i> means son of Hugh <i>hughel</i> + <i>ett</i> means son of <i>Hughel</i> Hugh is NF <i>hue</i> . . . mindful, kind hearted
Jervis	Anglicised variation of NF Gervaise <i>geri vaulx</i> - dweller in a valley shaped like a spear
Keene	wise, brave and proud OE <i>cēne</i> ME <i>kene</i>
King	someone who behaved like a king OE <i>cyning cyng</i> or from part played in a pageant play (eg one of the three kings)
Knaggs	dweller by jagged rocks ON <i>knag</i> jagged rock
Knubley	surname distribution would suggest a lost village in Lancashire OE <i>leah</i> woodland clearing belonging to a man called Cnub
Ladd	OE <i>lad</i> for servant
Laing	Scottish variant of OE <i>lang</i> long - nickname for a tall person or humorously the opposite - a very short person note - this was very common - eg Little John being the biggest member of Robin Hood's band of merry men
Law	Either dweller on a hill OE <i>hlāw</i> hill or pet form of Lawrence – (peacemaker)
Leach	a physician who used leeches OE <i>læce</i> leech
Lewis	either (and most likely) from NF Louis which derives from Old Frankish <i>hlūd</i> loud <i>vig</i> battle over 50 different spellings throughout Europe ranging from Louie to Ludvig to Lewis or (most unlikely) from Lewes, Sussex

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Lincoln	from Lincoln
Lisamore	from Lisamore, between Oban and Mull, Scotland
Lowe	either NF lou wolf - warrior nickname or ON lagr (pronounced lowre) meaning someone short or OE dweller by the hlaw (hill or burial mound) or pet form of Lawrence (Lawrence means peacemaker)
McVey	variation of McBey, and same derivation as Macbeth Macbethad either son of life or man of religion
Mabbitt	Mabb + itt son of Mabb . . Mabb is pet form of Mable
Mapledoram	from Mapledurham, Oxon. OE mapuldor ham homestead settlement ham where maple trees grow
Massey	NF - various place names in Normandy with this name
Mayes	The final letter "s" denotes widow of May(e), maybe son of May(e) is a pet form of Mayhew (variation of Matthew) Matthew is a Biblical name . . . Hebrew Mattathiah 'gift of God' - introduced into England by Knights Templars after the Crusades
Molyneux	from Moulineaux, Normandy
Moore	either OE mōr moor, marsh or fen . . . dweller by the moor or from one of the places called Moore or More or NF maur swarthy like a Moor or Irish mordha proud and stately or Welsh mowr proud and stately
Morgan	Celtic name pre-Christian morcant - meaning most probably sea defender or sea chief being the most popular translations

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Morton	from one of the many places called Morton OE <i>mōr tūn</i> farmstead (<i>tūn</i>) on moorland or marshy ground
Muggeridge	from the lost village of Mogridge, Devonshire
Musselwhite	a lost village by the River Itchen near Southampton OE <i>musle wiht</i> bend in the river where mussels are found
Nesbitt	from Nesbit, Berwick or Northumberland or Nesbitt Northumberland or Durham
Newman	OE <i>neowe mann</i> the new comer - the new man
Nind	at the end of the village OE <i>atten ende</i> abbreviated to <i>nend</i> or <i>nind</i>
Noake	dweller by the oak OE <i>atten āc</i> abbreviated to <i>nāc</i>
Nobel	NF <i>noble</i> noble, well known
Parker	NF <i>parchier</i> – one in charge of a park note – parks were large areas of land where nobility could hunt
Patching	from Patching, Sussex or Patching Hall, Essex
Pearce	<i>Piers</i> NF variation of Greek <i>Petros</i> (Peter) steadfast like a rock
Perriton	dweller at the peartree farm OE <i>pirige</i> peartree <i>tūn</i> farm or from one of the six villages with same derivation
Plant	gardener (one who plants vegetables etc) OE <i>plante</i> plant
Pyne	either dweller by the pine tree or pine wood NF <i>pin</i> pine or dweller on top of a hill OE <i>pin</i> pointed hill top or from Pinn nr Sidmouth, Devonshire or from Le Pin, Normandy

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Quiller	spoon maker	NF <i>cuiller</i>	spoon, ladel
Read	either	Old English <i>rēad</i>	red - red hair or complexion
	or	from Read, Lancashire	
	or	from Rede, Suffolk	or Reed, Hertfordshire
	or	dweller in a clearing	OE <i>rīed</i> – clearing
	or	dweller by the reeds	or reed cutter
		or reed thatcher	OE <i>hrēod</i> – reed
Rennet	origin not found - possibly something to do with cheese making -		
	<i>rennet</i> late 15th century - curdled milk		
Robinson	son of Robin, which is a pet form of Robert	NF <i>Hrodbeorht</i>	
	fame bright - bright most probably referred to shiny bright armour		
Rose	either	NF name <i>roese</i>	from Viking roots renowned and kind
	or	ME <i>rose</i>	dealer in roses and rose petals – medicinal, herbalist or perfumery
	or		for someone who lives by the sign of the rose
Rossin	first recorded as a surname in England - 13th May 1720 -		
	therefore suggesting a French Huguenot surname -		
	from Old French <i>rous</i> red - and a nickname for the red haired		
	Viking invaders of northern France, earlier in the C10th		
Saunders	<i>Saunder</i> is dialect variation of <i>Sander</i> – a pet form of Alexander		
	final 's' usually denotes the widow of, but can be son of Sander		
	Alexander – introduced by N-F – adapted from the Greek		
	meaning – defender of men		
Scarbro	from Scarborough, Yorkshire - OE <i>burh</i> fortification		
	belonging to <i>Skarthi</i> ON personal name		
Seymour	from either St Maur -des-Fossés (Seine)		
	or Seamer, Yorks or Semer, Suffolk	OE <i>sae mere</i>	marsh pool

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Shackcloth either from OE verb *sceacen* to shake plus OE *clāth* cloth - name given to person who shook the cloth in process of making cloth or similar material
or possibly a variation of Shacklock
ME *schaklock* fetters - nickname for gaoler

Shelford from one of the places called Shelford OE *sceldu ford* ford at a shallow place

Sleight either dweller at the level field ON *sletta* level field
or cunning, artful ON *sloegð* (ð - ON for th)

Smart OE *smeart* quick, active prompt

Southam from Southam in Gloucestershire or Warwickshire
or dweller on the south homestead OE *suth ham*
or dweller south of the homestead settlement

Stanton from one of the many places called Stanton or Staunton
OE *stan* stony *tūn* farmland settlement

Stubbing final letter s denotes widow of Stubbing, maybe son of -
Stubbing derives from -
either short stumpy person OE *stybbing*
or dweller by the cleared land ME *stubbing*

Stuckey from Stiffkey, Norfolk in Domesday Book as *stiuekai*
OE *styfic eg* dry area surrounded by marsh with tree stumps

Sturges NF variation of ON personal name *þorgils* (Thorgils)
þor Thor - god of thunder *gils* hostage
þ is a character pronounced “th” in both OE and ON

Tabor a military drummer NF *tabur tabour* a small drum

Thacker either from OE *þacian* or ON *þak* to thatch – a thatcher
þ is a character pronounced “th” in both OE and ON

9

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Thomas Biblical name of one of the Apostles - means twin brother . . .

in England, up to 1066 Thomas was a priest's name only. . .
afterwards it became a very common Christian name,
then as a surname – son of Thomas

**Thompsett
Thompson** Thomas - Biblical name of an Apostle - means “twin brother” -
in England, up to 1066, Thomas was a priest's name only. . .
after The Conquest it became a very common Christian name,
then later, a surname – Thomsett means son of Thom (Tom)
Thoms + ett (little Thom) - Thomson means son of Thom (Tom)
note – the “p” was added later in C16th for easier pronunciation

Timms final letter s means widow of Timm, maybe son of -
first recorded as a surname in 1285
nickname for someone famous OE *tima*
note - is not a diminutive of Timothy - the name Timothy
only appears after the Reformation - late 1500s

Tingle maker of nails or pins ME *tyngyl* a very small nail

Trend dweller on the banks of one of the rivers called Trent in
Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire or Dorset -
Bryth. river name meaning one that easily floods

Tucker either (most probably) preparer of cloth OE *tūcian* to tuck
or (rarely) NF for brave *tout cœur* (all heart)

Twells final letter s means widow of Twell, maybe son of -
dweller at the source of a river or by a stream OE *atte wella*
at the spring or stream - abbreviated to Atwell - later to Twell

Umney from a lost village . . distribution of surname would suggest
somewhere in the London area

Underwood dweller below the tree line OE *under wode*
or from several places with Underwood in the name

10

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Valentine introduced as a surname in England in C12th

through the French connection . . adopted from the Latin *valentinus* . . strong and healthy

- Viercant** possible variation of Belgian word **vierkant** . . . translates as square . . perhaps nickname for a short stocky person
- Wagstaff** ME *wag(gen)* to brandish, shake + OE *staef* staff
nickname for bailiff, beadle, catchpole or any other officer who carried a staff and shook it for effect
- Warren** from La Varenne in Normandy
not dweller by the warren . . . never been recorded as *atte Warren* only as *de Warren* or similar
- Welbourn** from one of the various villages in Norfolk, Lincs or Yorks with similar spellings . . . OE *wella* spring *burna* stream
- Wheatley** from one of the places so called in Essex, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire or Yorkshire
OE *hweote* wheat *leah* cultivated clearing
- Winsland** Most probably a lost village - distribution map would indicate somewhere on the English south coast
- Wolton** from Woolton, Lincs or variation of Walton
- Woodward** a forester OE *wud weard* literally a wood guard or wood ward
- Worsfold** from the lost village of Worsfield in Sussex area or nearby county
- Yalland** a dialect variation of Yelland
either dweller on land by a river OE *yeo* river *land* land
or from Yealand, Lancashire

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York from York - the place name derivation comes from Brythonic roots which the Romans Latinised to *Eboracum* -

estate where the yew trees grow
later to be called *Eoforwic* [pronounced *eyorwic*] by the Angles -
the Vikings kept the same name, but pronounced it as *yorvic* -
later English pronounced it as *yorwic* and later it became York

- Yeats** The final letter 's' denotes either widow of Yeat, or son of
Yeat derives from either OE **geat** gate (pronounced yate)
dweller by the gate or a gatekeeper
or from Yate, Glos. OE **geat** gate or pass
- Yule** someone born at Yuletide or Christmas OE *geol* (pronounced yeol)

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**Charlie Haylock YouTube
Dialect tour of GB**