CAMBRIDGE STREET-NAMES Their Origins and Associations

This book draws on the great wealth of associations of streetnames in Cambridge. It is not a dictionary but provides a series of entries on such topics as the Reformation, George IV and his wife, twentieth-century scientists, businessmen, Elizabethan times, medieval Cambridge, mayors, millers and builders. It includes hermits and coal merchants, field-marshals and laundresses, martyrs and bombers, unscrupulous politicians and the founder of a Christian community, Cromwell and Newton, an Anglo-Saxon queen, Stalin's daughter and the discoverer of Uranus – all people who lived in or often visited Cambridge.

The ancient Stourbridge Fair is included, along with castles and boat-races, sewage pumps and the original Hobson of 'Hobson's Choice'. Who was St Tibb? Where did Dick Turpin hide? Where was the medieval takeaway? Unlike earlier works, this is a history of everybody for everybody, not least for teachers, for whom the many references to other works will be helpful. The book also sheds light on such questions as which names are preferred, and how such choices may benefit the sociological study of Cambridge. The entries are spiced with anecdotes and epigrams, and a number of drawings by the architect and planner, Virén Sahai OBE, are included.

RONALD GRAY is a Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, having formerly been Vice-Master of the college and University Lecturer in German.

DEREK STUBBINGS writes and lectures on local history in Cambridge.

CAMBRIDGE

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King's Parade

CAMBRIDGE STREET-NAMES

Their Origins and Associations

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RONALD GRAY ^{AND} DEREK STUBBINGS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY VIRÉN SAHAI



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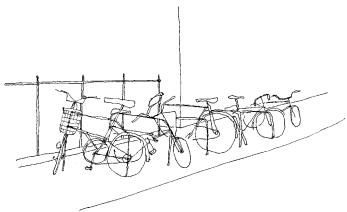
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VS.

What do street-names mean?

Names are a sensitive matter: a 'wrong' name can affect the price of houses, as the residents of Barton Road realised on hearing the news of a fresh development, when they objected to the name Wortley, that of a seventeenth-century Fellow of Caius, as 'ugly and cumbersome to use'. St Neots residents objected recently to the names of councillors being given to streets, preferring those of local footballers. The vicar of a church in SUEZ* Road protested that 'Suez' was a dirty word politically (referring to the abortive Suez Canal attack of 1956): on the phone, people had thought he said 'sewers'. That name remains, but a proposal to call KIMBERLEY Road, with its South African name, after Nelson Mandela, was also vigorously opposed by residents, for whom, at that time, the great man was a Communist terrorist. His name survives in Mandela House in Regent Street, containing offices of the City Council.

Personal names were given frequently in the nineteenth century. Before that, streets were usually named according to goods sold in them – the medieval centre of Cambridge has no personal names except those of saints. Only later were any other individuals singled out to be honoured, although in paintings they appear as early as the thirteenth century.

Ribald and obscene names still found on nineteenth-century maps have almost all vanished, no doubt from concern with property prices. Who in fact ever did call TRINITY Lane

^{*} Capitals are used for something of special interest about a street. Where some (varying) degree of doubt is present the name is enclosed in square brackets.

What do street-names mean?

Pisspot Lane, however appropriate it may have been in less hygienic times? And how about Bandy Leg Walk, now demurely LADY MARGARET Road – was some resident being mocked? In BOTOLPH Lane, where there was a workhouse, mockery was certainly implied by the nickname Penny Farthing Lane.

A red light district existed in earlier times around NAPIER Street, to which MAIDS' CAUSEWAY led; it was renamed by some wag Coarse Maids Way. (The same wag, perhaps, turned SEDLEY TAYLOR Road into Tiddly Sailor Road.) Similarly, STOURBRIDGE has given rise to spurious etymology, respelling it as Sturbitch. Cambridge does not have, as some towns do, a Grape Road, whose vowel has been changed in the course of time, but the old name Hore Hill, also called Hare Hill, once graced an area round POUND Hill where prostitutes were still being arrested in the 1970s. (Oxford's Horspath, the first syllable appearing also in the nearby Horsepath, seems to have had the same original meaning.) But Cambridge does have a Cut Throat Lane, not shown on maps, but well known in the Newmarket Road, and even used on the vans of a company selling pine furniture there, referring of course to its prices.

More respectably, but still in the interests of property, BERMUDA Road reassumed its delectable name when it changed from the awful industrial connotations of Foundry Road. Then there are OXFORD, RICHMOND, CAN-TERBURY, WINDSOR, all close together, streets which would never have been popular if Bradford, Swansea or Middlesbrough had been proposed – though HALIFAX slipped somehow into the same group of names that tourists fancy. Quite near to this are ARUNDEL, CLIVEDEN, WARWICK and several others with unquestionable status as castles and

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What do street-names mean?

homes of the nobility, perhaps named by the same person. CROMWELL and FAIRFAX, however, on the other, eastern side of Cambridge, could have been deliberately sited for their radical associations. This was a 'Labour' area.

BELGRAVE is a decidedly 'posh' name, and there is something in the battlemented bay windows of Victorian terrace houses that still shows, in names like 'Chatsworth', 'Carltonia', 'Charterhouse', an apparent wish to be associated with the high and mighty. (Less concerned with such pretensions are the boarding house name 'Lingalonga', and the combinations of forenames: 'Louistan', 'Rondale', 'Rondoral'.) Other names favoured by somebody in charge suggest rural idylls, often in the Lake District, or in '-ferns' and '-dales', Scottish places (and a few Irish, but no Welsh) and in 'glens' and 'meads'. The prefix 'Lyn-' is curiously popular in house names. Religious personages are liked for reasons not hard to guess: 'abbot', 'bishop', 'friar', 'monk', 'nun' all occur, and there is romance in the many '-crofts' and '-holmes', '-hursts' and '-denes'. Yet who would choose to live in BUFFALO Way or yet MANDRILL Close, if offered an alternative? There is a regular zoo in the Cherry Hinton area, with names chosen by South Cambridgeshire District Council, against objections by the City Council, which preferred, and elsewhere got, local flower names, CLOVER, COLTSFOOT and so on. Almost all native trees occur.

Cambridge does not go in for foreign capitals, and hardly for foreign places at all. PORTUGAL, which once supplied port via nearby QUAYSIDE to college High Tables, and no doubt businessmen's tables too, is a rare exception. Apart from a few Empire names such as MADRAS, KIMBERLEY, PRETORIA and possibly BANFF and CALLANDER (but these two names are found in Scotland as well as in Canada), there are only

What do street-names mean?

MANHATTAN and LEXINGTON, oddly enough, seeing that the latter is the place that saw the first defeat of the British in the American War of Independence, in 1775 – and of course TRAFALGAR, but not Waterloo; both NELSON and WELLINGTON were afforded pokey places compared with the grand thoroughfares in Paris named after Napoleon's marshals. (No one has thought Agincourt or Crécy suitable.) Churchill does not have a street named after him at all; even London has nothing comparable to the Avenue Charles de Gaulle. BLENHEIM, where Churchill lived, had to suffice, though a college is named after him.

Women's names rarely occur. Despite the growing confession that women have been unfairly treated by society, only eight were named in this century and recently there has even been a 'PRINCE WILLIAM' but no 'Princess Anne' or 'Princess of Wales'.

'Street' names are often road names. The change from one to the other is yet another sign of social preferences. As an official explained in the *Daily Telegraph* in 1971 (quoted by L. Dunkley in *The Guinness Book of Names*, p. 156): 'Streets have gone out of fashion and no one wants to live in one. When people think of a street they imagine something like the Coronation Street image of old terraced back-to-backs. You can call them roads, avenues, lanes, groves, drives, closes, places – anything but streets.' Cambridge follows the same trend; it has also 'causeway', 'broadway', 'corner', 'crescent', 'end', 'pightle', 'hill' (of all things), 'glebe', 'drift' and many more. But if you look at the centre, and at the nineteenth-century developments in the 'Kite' area, along Mill Road, the northern end of Hills Road, the Newnham and Romsey Town areas, you will seldom find any other designation but 'street', and in the newer areas hardly find

What do street-names mean?

it at all. 'Terrace', first noted by Charles Kingsley in 1851, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, as a name for suburban rows of houses, perhaps reflecting the glory of London's Carlton House Terrace, was an alternative to 'street' even at that time. But today the objection of house-buyers to 'street', and to 'terrace' as well, has vanished. The people who lived in such places were largely working class, railwaymen and college servants, and their successors have moved out to the suburbs, to Arbury, King's Hedges, Cherry Hinton, Histon, while the professional classes who want to be near the station or the city restaurants send sky-high the prices of what were sometimes slums.



Trinity Street

How can you tell?

Cambridge streets reflect the dominance of the University, though not so much as taxidrivers sometimes suppose. There are clusters of names especially in the area of TRUMPINGTON Road, COLERIDGE Road, GRANGE Road, MILL Road, QUEEN EDITH'S Way, BARTON Road, NEWNHAM and off HUNTINGDON Road, where each college holds or held land, often acquired in the nineteenth-century Inclosures.

The streets concerned here are:

- Christ's: DARWIN, FRANCIS DARWIN, MILTON.
- Churchill: COCKCROFT.

Clare: FERRARS, LATIMER.

- Corpus Christi: MAWSON, TENISON, PEROWNE, EMERY, MACKENZIE, [WILKIN], PARKER, SPENS, GOUGH, STUKELY, MARLOWE.
- Downing: LENSFIELD.
- Emmanuel: ALEX WOOD, HOPKINS, PEMBERTON, FINCH, HOLLAND.
- Gonville and Caius: GUEST, COLLIER, WILLIS, GONVILLE, MORTIMER, DROSIER, GRESHAM, HARVEY, GLISSON, BATEMAN, WOLLASTON, PERSE, SCROOPE.
- Jesus: GREVILLE, CORRIE, RUSTAT, FLAMSTEED, FANSHAWE, BANCROFT, DAVY, RADEGUND, STERNE, CRANMER, FAIRBAIRN, [TILLYARD].
- King's: KING'S (not King Street), KING'S PARADE, ANSTEY, MILLINGTON, CHEDWORTH, MERTON,

How can you tell?

ELTISLEY, WALPOLE, [WEST], KEYNES, DURN-FORD.

Magdalene: [BUCKINGHAM], PEPYS.

Newnham: RACKHAM.

Pembroke: GRAY, PRIMROSE, RIDLEY.

Peterhouse: LANGHAM, GISBORNE, HOLBROOK, PERNE, [BROOKS], BIRDWOOD, CHALMERS, GRAY, WARKWORTH, [BEAUMONT], AINSWORTH.

- St Catharine's: HOADLY, SHERLOCK, EACHARD, WOODLARK, SHIRLEY, [RAMSDEN].
- St John's: GILBERT, ASCHAM, METCALFE, GURNEY, COURTNEY, CLARKSON, WILBERFORCE, SYLVESTER, ADAMS, HERSCHEL, BATESON, HAVI-LAND, COCKCROFT, LADY MARGARET, BENIANS, SELWYN, VERULAM, [FAIRFAX].

Sidney Sussex: CROMWELL.

- Trinity: NEWTON, BENTLEY, PORSON, RAYLEIGH, RUTHERFORD, [DIAMOND], MAITLAND, CAVENDISH, ZETLAND, SIDGWICK, SEDGWICK, SEDLEY TAYLOR, LUARD, ACTON, ADRIAN, BYRON, CLARENDON, [MELBOURNE], CLERK MAXWELL, MANSEL, DALTON, LANSDOWNE.
- Trinity Hall: BATEMAN, CHESTERFIELD, WARREN, THIRLEBY, WOODHEAD, FRASER, LATHAM, GELDART.

All these provide certainty about explanations of streetnames. The clusters of names of High Stewards and of military men also leave no doubt. It is a fairly safe bet that most of the mayors have been honoured, several in the area around

Queens': [ERASMUS].

How can you tell?

CAMPKIN Road, along with some local people. Few university names are in this part of Cambridge. Unusual names with a local connection offer some probability. Groups of Roman (MINERVA, etc.) and Anglo-Saxon names (QUEEN EDITH, etc.) offer complete certainty.

In other clusters some historical association may be at least strongly inviting, as with [MELBOURNE], CLARENDON, VICTORIA and EARL, and the fact that the two first named were both at Trinity at almost the same time strengthens the case. BURLEIGH and JAMES together are a good pointer to the man named in NORFOLK Street, James Burleigh's fatherin-law. GEORGE IV, REGENT, CAROLINE, CORONA-TION, BENTINCK and in another cluster the various streets named BRUNSWICK shed light on one another. Geographical clusters are found in BRENTWOOD, CHIGWELL, COGGESHALL, THE RODINGS, TIPTREE, all in Essex (with BERGHOLT, in Suffolk, but near the other villages) and EDINBURGH, DUNDEE, INVERNESS, KINROSS, STIR-LING, all in the area once occupied by SCOTLAND Farm (where Scottish cattle halted on the way to London?).

Where problems arise, several criteria can be used, not necessarily to provide certainty. Sometimes, but rarely, the name is recorded in Council Minutes as suggested by a college or an individual. Where there is more than one choice, a close connection with Cambridge is a strong indication. A pair of names like AYLESTONE and HUMBERSTONE, for streets close to one another and built at about the same time, suggests a connection with Leicester, since both are parts of that city. But [BULSTRODE] and [HEDGERLEY], parallel with one another, although both are names of villages in Buckinghamshire, may refer to people. Lord William (Henry

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How can you tell?

Cavendish) Bentinck, later governor-general of India, was born at Bulstrode in 1774, and Sir Richard Bulstrode, educated at Pembroke Hall, a well-known royalist in the Civil War, whose father was Edward Bulstrode of Hedgerley, seemed a likely candidate until Mr Wise pointed out to us that Christopher Stone Bulstrode (1818–94) owned a house called 'Hedgerley House' on the site of the present street of that name. He was a cabinetmaker and upholsterer with premises opposite Trinity College Chapel, and was a trustee of Hobson's Conduit in 1868, so evidently a man of some consequence in the town. Both names could be connected in more than the place-names, but there is no conclusive evidence.

Proximity is another criterion: there can be no other IZAAK WALTON or Steve FAIRBAIRN, and these connect, being near the river, with ANGLERS Way, LENTS, MAYS, GRAYLING and LONG REACH (which might puzzle a total stranger, connecting it with boxing, rather than a stretch of the Cam).

Builders and developers are to be inferred because their names are often well known in Cambridge, like KELSEY and KERRIDGE, whose association nobody living in Cambridge could doubt. Spalding's and Kelly's Cambridge directories often list names of shopkeepers and tradesmen.

We aim at certainty, but have included, in brackets, some names that are reasonably well connected, or simply interesting. The main object of writing about street-names is after all not to trace exactly every single case, though the effort at exactness has to be made, but also to connect the names in such a way as will make the past of Cambridge come alive. In any historical account we look back over hundreds of years, but with streetnames there is a daily reminder of some particular person or

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How can you tell?

event. So one of the medieval fields round Cambridge, BRAD-MORE, comes to mind, and the Anglo-Saxon lands at Cherry Hinton owned by QUEEN EDITH and her relatives, and the farms at UPHALL and NETHERHALL, like HALL FARM, MANOR Farm, ELFLEDA Farm and GRANGE Road, which constitute a ring of formerly open spaces round the present built-up area. The city grows from its two small centres on CASTLE Street and near St BENET's church – where very few medieval names now survive - as it takes in the new population along MILL Road brought by the railways. CHESTERTON, once separate, links up, and so does BARNWELL. Windmills appear in the mind's eye at FRENCH'S Road and MILL Street, and theatres, hospitals for lepers, prisons occupy spaces that now look dull by comparison. The romantic atmosphere of Cambridge, its main attraction for tourists, is tempered by the awareness through street-names that the Backs were in medieval times a long harbour for barges coming up from King's Lynn or Wisbech, and that even in the nineteenth century coal and corn were passing all the time under the ancient bridges and past the architectural wonders. On the site of St John's Master's Lodge was once an iron foundry; the river-bank up to Newnham mill was crowded with men unloading barges and tending the horses that had brought them there; there was even a foundry by Market Hill. There have been breweries in Magdalene Street and Trinity Street, a malting-house during the late nineteenth century in the school of Pythagoras (Merton Hall), a coprolite mine on the site of New Hall, gravel pits in East Road, a military hospital where the University Library is, a steam-plough works in Cherry Hinton - all seeming now encroachments in residential areas or college precincts.

A book of this size can only suggest, so to speak, avenues to

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How can you tell?

be explored. For this reason a large number of books and pamphlets on Cambridge history are included, and not in a separate bibliography, but immediately after the mention of some individual or aspect that arouses special interest. There is much more, too, in P. H. Reaney's The Place-Names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely, 1943, in the English Place-Names Society's Series, in the many volumes of the Dictionary of National Biography, of the Victoria County History of Cambridgeshire, Charles Henry Cooper's Annals, 1842-52, and the reports of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, as well as in Nikolaus Pevsner's volume, Cambridgeshire, 1954, in the Buildings of England series, and R. Willis and J. W. Clark's monumental Architectural History of the University of Cambridge (which also includes gardens). Sara Payne's articles in the Cambridge Evening News, published in two volumes as Down Your Street, 1983 and 1984, are also valuable. The Cambridgeshire Collection in the Central Library building in Lion Yard has newspapers, maps, photographs, books, pamphlets, card-indexes in profusion. The maps of Inclosures in the County Record Office provide many useful indications. May this brief account lead to greater enjoyment of all these, and may readers go on to interpret the significance of street-names further.

Spellings in maps and in the streets themselves are not always reliable. The name of MARTIN'S STILE LANE appears on the street-sign without an apostrophe 's', seeming to make Stile a surname. [MANERS], shown thus on the street-sign, appears on one map as [MANNERS], perhaps appropriately, since the latter is a family name of the Dukes of RUTLAND. GODESDONE has been the name on the street-sign for many years, though the original name was Godesone. [AUGERS] Road in Cherry

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How can you tell?

Hinton looks suspiciously like a mis-spelling of Aungers, the name of a family which owned land at the other end of Cambridge, near High Cross, and at Coton. (It appears in the index of the Local Red Book map as Algiers, but correctly on the map itself.) The surname Augers does, however, exist, and the Aingers family were large landowners in Histon. (See Clive Ennals, Street Names in Histon and Impington, 1985) On one map AKEMAN appears incorrectly as Axeman. Stainsfield appears in the Local Red Book map instead of STANESFIELD. KELSEY appears as Kesley in the same map, which also has Packenham for PAKENHAM, and ST BARNABUS as well as other mishaps. Lingrey appears to have been put sometimes for LINGEY, being not far from Lingey Fen, so spelt, correctly, on the Ordnance Survey and A-Z maps, though Barnett has Lingrey for both. [WILKIN] should perhaps be Wilkins, for the reason given below (p. 84). We have interpreted with a little freedom where doubts caused by these and other instances occur.

Nearly all the printed works mentioned can be consulted in the Cambridgeshire Collection.



Magdalene Street