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Naming Shirehampton and the name *Shirehampton*

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Naming Shirehampton and the name *Shirehampton*

Abstract: Focusing on the place-name *Shirehampton* in England, this article explores (1) the complications involved in understanding the history of a particularly difficult place-name (an etymological and philological question) and in the history of the naming of the place in question (an onomasiological question), (2) some practical consequences of different understandings of the place-name at different points in history (a historiographical question), and (3) the historical transfer of this name into other onomastic categories (a semasiological question and a culturally and theoretically interesting question). Some new understandings of the name and its history are proposed. The article can be taken as an object lesson in the lexical-semantic and phonological difficulties of historical onomastics (and therefore as academically routine), and also in the pleasures of travelling unexpected byways in the history of onomastics and in cultural history. It endeavours to affirm, by example, the case for historical onomastics as a discipline which ranges more widely than

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establishing the etymology of a name, and explores finally some issues of theoretical and methodological interest.

Keywords: Place-names, English language, onomasiology, semasiology, name change, transferred place-names, invented surname, documentary evidence, local history.

Nommer Shirehampton et le nom *Shirehampton*

Résumé : En se concentrant sur le nom de lieu *Shirehampton* en Angleterre, cet article explorera tout d'abord les complications inhérentes à la compréhension de l'histoire d'un nom de lieu particulièrement difficile (question étymologique et philologique) et à l'histoire de la désignation du lieu en question (question onomasiologique. Ensuite il examinera certaines conséquences pratiques de différentes interprétations du nom de lieu à divers moments de l'histoire (question historiographique), et enfin le transfert historique de ce nom en d'autres catégories onomastiques (question sémasiologique en même temps culturellement et théoriquement intéressante). De nouvelles façons de comprendre le nom et son histoire seront proposées. Cet article peut être considéré comme la démonstration des difficultés lexico-sémantiques et phonologiques de l'onomastique diachronique (et donc comme de routine académique), ainsi que des plaisirs inattendus de voyager à travers l'histoire de l'onomastique et l'histoire culturelle. Il s'efforcera, en analysant en profondeur le toponyme *Shirehampton*, de valoriser l'onomastique historique en tant que discipline allant bien au-delà de l'étymologie d'un nom, et explorera enfin certaines questions d'intérêt théorique et méthodologique.

Mots-clés : Noms de lieu, langue anglaise, onomasiologie, sémasiologie, transformation d'un nom, nom de lieu transféré, nom de famille inventé, preuve documentaire, histoire locale.

Shirehamptons Namensgeschichte und der Name *Shirehampton*

Zusammenfassung: In Bezug auf den Orstnamen *Shirehampton* in England untersucht dieser Artikel (1) die Komplikationen bezüglich der historischen Deutung eines besonders schwierigen Ortsnamens (eine philologisch-etymologische Frage) und der Namensgeschichte des Ortes (eine onomasiologische Frage), (2) praktische Konsequenzen unterschiedlicher Interpretationen des Ortsnamens zu verschiedenen Epochen (eine historiographische Frage), und (3) die historische Übertragung des Namens in andere onomastische Kategorien (eine semasiologische und zugleich eine kulturell und theoretisch interessante Frage). Einige neue Erkenntnisse zu dem Namen und seiner Geschichte werden vorgeschlagen. Der Artikel kann also als Vorbild für die Analyse lexikalisch-semantischer und phonologischer Schwierigkeiten in der diachronischen Onomastik (und damit als akademisch routinemäßig) und auch als Beispiel unerwarteter Freuden des Lustwandels in der Geschichte der Onomastik und der Kulturgeschichte dienen. Es wird bestrebt, durch Beispiele die historische Onomastik als Disziplin zu bestätigen, die weiter reicht als die Etymologie eines Namens festzustellen; und schließlich einige theoretische und methodische Fragen zu erläutern.

Schlüsselbegriffe: Ortsnamen, englische Sprache, Onomasiologie, Semasiologie, Namenswandel, übertragene Ortsnamen, erfundene Familiennamen, dokumentarische Nachweise, Ortsgeschichte.

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Naming Shirehampton and the name *Shirehampton*[*]

RICHARD COATES

Shirehampton is a village in southern Gloucestershire, England, which has been absorbed into the city of Bristol. It has expanded into a suburb with a population of 6867 in 1991 (census figure; the precise local figure is not readily deducible from later census data).[1] Its territory included, until 1917, what was marshland and is now Avonmouth docks and suburb. A major factor in its history has been the ferry across the river Avon indicated on the map in Figure 1, which shows the Shirehampton area at the time of the original Ordnance Survey, published in 1830. The historical development of its name is easy to follow in broad and unrevealing terms, but there is a considerable amount of problematic detail. In this article I explore what it is possible to deduce about aspects of the processes involved in its evolution, which are not at all straightforward. The paper can also be taken as an object lesson in the lexical-semantic and phonological difficulties of historical onomastics, and in the pleasures of travelling unexpected byways in the history of onomastics and in cultural history. But historical onomastics, in the sense of establishing the etymology of a name, is not the same as exploring the history of a name, and not the same as the historiography of a name. In analysing Shirehampton and its name, we shall look at all of these approaches and processes in detail.

I attempt to explore the historical *onomasiological* questions of what this particular tract of ground has been called over the centuries, and why; the *semasiological* question of the use of the place's name or names in derived names (eponymy or commemoration); and the *historiographical* question of what scholars have deduced from the place's name or names: first and foremost the history of the interpretation of the place's name or names (changing views on its/their etymology, and the consequences of changes in such provisional knowledge), but also changing views about the identification (denotation) of the

[*] Preliminary versions of two small sections of this article, those mentioning Shirehampton in Jamaica and the dating of the chapel, appeared in the *Shire* community newspaper numbers 542 and 543 (paper and online), March and April 2017 (accessible via www.shire.org.uk/).

[1] Together with Avonmouth, 9232 in 2017, according to UKCrimeStats website, www.ukcrimestats.com/Neighbourhood/Avon_and_Somerset_Constabulary/Avonmouth_and_Shirehampton (accessed 2017-06-12).

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name or names featuring in the record, and some real-world consequences of that. All that may sound hyperacademic, pedantic and abstract, perhaps even mysterious, but the article itself is much concerned with the hard detail of the transmitted documentary record, and the intention is, as far as the evidence permits, to clarify what has often been obscure about the name(s) of this place. A. H. Smith took a mere seven lines of print to give an etymology for the dominant name-form set of Shirehampton (PN Gl III: 132), one line of which is the heading and five the data, but without even addressing the current form of the name.[2] To get somewhere near exhausting what I think needs to be said, deserves to be said, and is revealing and entertaining about the local relation between language, geography, history and culture will take 36 pages of this journal.



Figure 1: Map of Shirehampton in 1830 (Ordnance Survey), with the ferry to Pill arrowed

[2] Unfortunately, Smith ascribes Shirehampton to Henbury parish rather than Westbury-on-Trym (Coates 2008); see directly below.

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The administrative background

Shirehampton first appears in the late ninth century (though not by name) as part of, or as land associated with, the Stoke Bishop estate belonging to the bishop of Worcester.[3] Part of Stoke Bishop closer to the main or home tithing of Westbury-on-Trym parish was a hunting park, as the surviving name of Sneyd Park ["Sneed Park" on the map in Figure 2] within it testifies.[4]

Stoke Bishop and Shirehampton formed separate tithings within Westbury parish, and continued as such until the modern era. As can be seen on the maps in Figures 2 and 3, Shirehampton tithing ["Stoke II" on the map in Figure 3] was geographically detached, separated from the main body of Westbury by a strip of the King's Weston tithing of Henbury parish ["Weston" on the map in Figure 3] descending to the Avon at the site of the modern Sea Mills housing estate. Shirehampton ultimately also became a chapelry, with the foundation of a chapel of ease probably in the 1470s as I have argued elsewhere (Coates 2018b), though there is no documentary proof of this date.

Why Shirehampton should have become part of Westbury rather than of (Weston tithing in) Henbury is not known. It might be speculated that it had something to do with rights over the Shirehampton to Pill ferry, from time immemorial the lowest crossing-point of the Avon from Gloucestershire to Somerset and the only one downriver of the Avon Gorge (arrowed in Figure 1),[5] or with ensuring that Westbury had a share of the economically important marshland and riverside grazing land near the confluence of the Avon and the Severn. Conversely, it could be thought that the intrusion of an arm of (Weston tithing in) Henbury into Westbury's Avonside territory had to do with a perceived need for Henbury's access to the Avon, at the mouth of the little river Trym which drove at least one mill belonging in later centuries to the King's Weston estate. In medieval times, Henbury was the prime manor of the bishop of Worcester in southern Gloucestershire and *caput* of the bishop's hundred of Henbury. Westbury manor was one with a long and complex history of association with the bishop and with Westbury's collegiate church (Thompson 1915; Orme & Cannon 2010: part 1, *passim*), so the bishop had a more or less direct interest in both manors and their parishes. Westbury was

[3] For the most recent analysis of the boundaries set out in the grant of 883 C.E. (Birch 551/ Sawyer 218; copied in the eleventh century) and other related charter material, see Higgins 2002: esp. 118–119; previously Taylor 1910: 127–130; Wilkins 1920; Grundy 1935–6: 227–228; Lindley 1959: esp. 102–103; Everett 1961; and note Higgins' trenchant critique of especially Grundy's and Lindley's efforts. The Shirehampton section of the charter bounds is rather straightforward and uncontroversial.

[4] A *tithing* is an obsolete subdivision of an administrative hundred, originally a group of ten householders, collectively responsible to a manor court for each others' good behaviour; later the term was used more loosely, in effect for a fiscal subdivision of a parish.

[5] On the history of the ferry see Bettey and Webb (2014); Coates (2018a).

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also in Henbury hundred. The question of Shirehampton's detachment deserves further investigation, but this is not the place to do it.



Figure 2: James Russell's map (in Orme & Cannon 2010) showing Shirehampton tithing in the wider context of Westbury and Henbury parishes.

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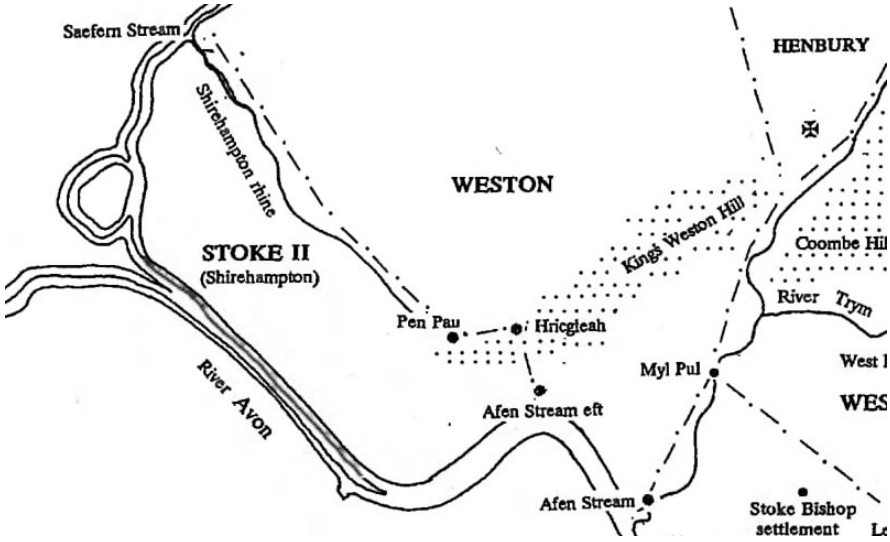


Figure 3: David Higgins' map (2002) showing the more or less agreed boundaries of Shirehampton tithing ("Stoke II") in 883 C.E.

The simple version of the name's history

Shirehampton began life as *Hampton*. In the fourteenth century it came to be known as *Shernyhampton*. In the sixteenth century this name was replaced by *Shirehampton* and *Sherehampton*. The former eventually displaced the latter.[6] In PN Gl (III: 132), Smith simply ascribes the base-name to Old English *hām-tūn* and derives the "affix" from Old English *scearnig* 'dirty'. This leaves many questions unasked and many points of detail unexplained.

Some false starts

Explaining the name has been made more difficult by a misleading presumption made over 300 years ago, which was still having repercussions 250 years later, and which is probably still not completely flushed out of local history-writing. A further misleading one was made in the mid-twentieth century.

Atkyns (1712: 804) believed that *Chire* in Domesday Book was to be identified with *Shirehampton*, or at any rate with the *Shire* part of it. He was misled by the information that before the Conquest six hides in *Chire* had

[6] The fullest and most reliable source of evidence so far is PN Gl (III: 132), but the editor includes an irrelevant form *Scearamtone*, to be discussed directly. Baddeley (1913: 140) did not have access to enough medieval spellings to achieve a proper understanding of the name.

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belonged to *Huesberie* into believing that *Chire* was related to Westbury-on-Trym, rather than to Westbury-on-Severn (also in Gloucestershire, on the west bank of the river), which is what turns out to be the case in reality. He was followed in this error by the other early county historians Rudder (1779: 803) and Rudge (1803: 364). By the early 1900s, it had been realized that this was impossible phonologically and historically, and that it represented a gross misunderstanding of Norman French orthographic practice. Moore (1987: 118) called identifying Latin/Norman French <ch> in this name with later English <sh> /ʃ/, instead of with the phoneme /k/, an "elementary linguistic howler". Ellis (1879–80: 94, footnote 2) was the first to reject the bad identification; Round (1908: 283) made the correct one, followed by Baddeley (1916: 150); and Taylor (1913: 182, 185, etc.) made some further progress in relation to *Chire*, even if not in sorting out the various manors involved. Moore (1987: 118–121) finally solved the last recalcitrant figures in the Domesday arithmetic involving more than one mention of *Chire*. *Chire* is now generally believed to be Kyre (pronounced /kɪə(r)/ "keer") in Worcestershire, which has the merits of fitting much more coherently into the known pattern of related Domesday holdings in the middle Severn valley, and of being linguistically impeccable. But Atkyns' view is still occasionally asserted, for example in a mid-twentieth century guide to Shirehampton church (Wheeler 1968: 15),[7] and from there in the work of local historian Ethel Thomas (1993: 19–20).

The second false start is due to Finberg (1961: 47, 201 footnote 2; charter no. 83), who adduced the form *Scearamtone* purportedly relating to about 854 C. E., in a thirteenth-century manuscript of William of Malmesbury's *De antiquitate Glastonie ecclesie*, and suggested identifying it with Shirehampton. This must be discounted in the light of the later spread of spellings (see below),

[7] This persistent error has had historically unfortunate consequences. If *Chire* had been Shirehampton, that would have meant that Shirehampton had a Domesday relationship with the Benedictine abbey of Our Lady at Cormeilles in the Eure *département* of Normandy. It would (or could) have been home to a priory of that abbey. On that flimsy basis, a souvenir of the dissolved and ruined abbey was sought in the 1960s, and a carved stone from there has a place in Shirehampton parish church under false pretences. There is a big old house in the village with an allegedly medieval core (Robinson 1915, III: 193; Thomas 1993: 20–21). But it is probably late, only fifteenth-century, according to its listed-building record (1869M; English Heritage Legacy ID 380231), and therefore a most unlikely candidate for association with any priory belonging to a foreign abbey, because the last monks in such priories had been expelled from England by Richard II in 1378. Under the shadow of Atkyns, at some point after 1772 and before 1883, this house acquired the name *The Priory* and gave its name in about 1900 to the new nearby Priory Road (see Coates 2011: 38–39). It served as the vicarage from 1889 till 1951, and its grounds now also host a cul-de-sac called *Priory Gardens*. Priory House in Pembroke Road (demolished 1972) was also supposed to have been in the non-existent priory's grounds. It used also to be believed locally that the 15th-century Tithe Barn in the High Street was built by or for the monks of Cormeilles, but it is more plausible to view it as contemporary with the establishment of Shirehampton's chapel of ease in the late 15th century (Coates 2018b).

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especially since forms in *S-* do not otherwise appear till the fourteenth century. The form may be a (very bad) garble of the *Cerawicombe* that stands at the relevant place in a list of Glastonbury holdings in the actual grant document (Birch 472/Sawyer 303). Finberg was followed in his opinion by Smith in PN Gl; for a caveat see Abrams (1996: 86 and footnote 51), and for an explicit rejection of Finberg's view, Watts (CDEPN 2004: 546a) and Coates (2011: 13). This misappropriated form is what leads Smith to say that the "affix" acquired by *Shirehampton* is Old English, when in fact it dates from the fourteenth century. Unfortunately the misidentification persists in the modern online tool derived from the Survey of English Place-Names, the Historical Gazetteer of English Place-Names.[8]

Hampton

A ninth-century grant of privileges to Berkeley Abbey by Æthelred of Mercia (Birch 551/Sawyer 218; see footnote 3) states the boundaries of the future Shirehampton. The territory is associated with places called:

> (1) *(on) pen pau*, *(of) penpau* ('(onto/from) Penpole'): Penpole is the end of a conspicuous limestone ridge; Brittonic **penn pōɣ* 'head of the district', a kind of "Land's End" name (Baddeley 1913: 120; Förster 1942: 813, note 6)
> (2) *(in) hri*^{c}*gleage*, *(of) hrycgleage* ('(to/from) ridge wood': the name has not survived)

If we discount this grant, which does not name the territory as distinct from Stoke Bishop, the place is first documented as *Hampton*, and all of its records from the earliest one in 1284–5 until 1325 take this form (Table 1). This is a common place-name type with three different sources, namely: Old English *hām-tūn*, an established generic term for a major farming estate; *hamm-tūn*, a constructed or coined name for a farm at a *hamm* or piece of hemmed-in land, often a riverside site or watermeadow; or *hēan tūne*, a constructed name meaning '(at the) high farm'.[9] By the thirteenth century it is often difficult or impossible to disentangle the three different origins; all may appear as *Hampton*. Because the first of the three types was rather common, it tended to assimilate the other two. Shirehampton may well be a straightforward example of the first type. But it is not impossible, judging from its situation along the north bank of the Avon and including some of its estuarine marshland grazing, that it could be of the second type, though there is no documentary

[8] placenames.org.uk/ (accessed frequently).
[9] For the evidence for the three types, see DEPN and CDEPN under *Hampton*.

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evidence which supports this interpretation. Since its historic centre is uphill from the Avon but downhill from Penpole ridge, the third type offers the least likely origin. The simplex name *Hampton* continues to be used sporadically until 1455, and after that, it seems, only in Westbury parish registers, the last instance known to me being in 1633.[10]

In Feet of Fines[11] in 1457 a name *Hempton* is found, taken by Elrington (2013: 145–146) as referring to Shirehampton.[12] It is called a manor, which makes it certain that Hempton in Almondsbury (a farm on the site of modern Aztec West business park) is meant, because Hempton was actually called a manor elsewhere in Feet of Fines, whilst Shirehampton is never called a manor until its acquisition by the Mallet(t) family after the dissolution of the monasteries, probably in the 1550s or 1560s.[13]

Table 1: Recorded spellings of the name *Hampton*[14]

Base name *Hampton*	**Record**	**Last known instance**
Hampton	1284–5 Feudal Aids ["Kirby's Quest"] 1287 Assize Rolls [1303 ?a probable mistake in PN Gl for] 1316 Feudal Aids 1327 Subsidy Rolls 1394 Patent Rolls [editor indexes this as Shirehampton] 1455 Inquisitiones post mortem (Record Commission)	1633 WoT PR
Hempton	1457 Feet of Fines	unique (if referring to Shirehampton)

Shernyhampton

In Feet of Fines in 1325, a qualified form of the original name, *Shernyhampton*, appears for the first time. This clearly contains an adjective *sherni* 'dungy' derived from Middle English *shern* 'dung'. At some time by the fifteenth century, a general pronunciation change occurs in English as a result of which [e] before [r] plus a consonant is lowered to [a] (Lass 1999:

[10] It was revived for a 1970s block of flats in the centre of the village, *Hampton Corner*.

[11] Published collections of documents are referred to by the *class* to which they belong, with a date, and an archive reference where unpublished. Details of the published documents and the whereabouts of others not specified here can be found in the reference-list in PN Gl (IV: 79–92).

[12] Presumably following PN Gl III, Elrington's index allocates Shirehampton to Henbury.

[13] TNA C 3/129/14 (1558x1579, Morgan vs Mallet concerning a copyhold).

[14] In note 13 and in the material which follows, note the abbreviations for archives and for certain classes of documents which can be found listed before the references at the end of the article.

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109).[15] The former is the form usually found in our name, spelt <er>, with just one spelling in <ar> in Feet of Fines of 1367 (Table 2). There are two questions to ask about this development, one unanswerable. The first is why a qualifying element appears at all. The answer might seem to be to distinguish Shirehampton from other places in Gloucestershire named *Hampton* in the fourteenth century (whatever the origin of their names might be individually), for example Minchinhampton (found in a qualified form about 1220), Meysey Hampton (found in a qualified form in 1221) and perhaps Hampton in Minsterworth (which, being non-parochial, like Shirehampton, did not need to gain a distinguishing element) or Hampnett with its suffixed diminutive marker (found in the suffixed form in 1211–13). However, the first two of these acquired their qualifiers a century before Shirehampton, if the silence in Shirehampton's record can be trusted, and the timing of the innovation retains an element of mystery. It is unlikely that distinction from Leckhampton or Rockhampton was intended, since neither of these Domesday manors were called by the simplex name *Hampton* in surviving records. Distinction from nearby Hempton in Almondsbury also seems unlikely, because Hempton never acquires a qualifying element to distinguish it reciprocally from Shirehampton; it does however occasionally appear as *Hampton*, for example in Assize Rolls (1248), presumably by assimilation to the commoner type.

No manorial connection between Shirehampton and any other Gloucestershire Hampton is known that could provide an administrative rationale for setting up a distinction between their names. We may need to look further afield and consider a deliberate distinction from the bishop's manor and supposed palace at Hampton Lucy (Warwickshire).[16] This Hampton is also on Avon – the Stratford Avon – and is referred to as *Hampton super Avene* in an episcopal document of 1290 (PN Wa 233). 1290 may be an important year in this narrative. In that year bishop Godfrey Giffard intervened in the affairs of Hampton on Avon to convert its church into a prebend,[17] partly in pursuit of a controversial wider programme of administrative reform in his diocese aimed at strengthening the bishop's own hand against the monks of Worcester

[15] Note the convention in linguistics that <angle brackets> enclose letters of the alphabet, /slashes/ enclose phonemes (abstract distinctive sound-units more or less corresponding to written letters), and [square brackets] enclose representations of actual sounds. Phonemes and sounds are notated using the alphabet of the International Phonetic Association.

[16] *Lucy* is a modifier not recorded before the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the late 1530s. The place was *Hampton Episcopi* or *Bishops Hampton* in the Middle Ages. It has been suggested that Hampton Lovett (Worcestershire) was also an episcopal manor, but *VCH Worcestershire* (III: 153) indicates otherwise.

[17] A prebend was a parcel or set of parcels of land or other sources of revenue from which a stipend was derived to support individually a canon of a collegiate church or cathedral.

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cathedral[18] for reasons that we can pass over here (Orme & Cannon 2010: 26–31). Westbury-on-Trym was by then already a collegiate church organized with the dean as incumbent, supported by five or more prebends. Gifford seems to have intended that other major churches in his diocese, including his cathedral, should be administered on lines similar to Westbury. Shirehampton was not a prebend of Westbury, but it was part of the parish, and the parish was a bishop's peculiar, i.e. under bishop Gifford's own jurisdiction and not that of the local archdeacon (Red Book of Worcester, 1299, cited by Orme & Cannon 2010: 33). The collegiate and prebendary systems meant that the bishop, directly or indirectly, had a major interest in both Westbury and Hampton. Worcester must therefore have been especially aware of its two separate Hamptons on their two separate Avons at this period, and may have sought to distinguish them by name at some time between the creation of the Hampton Lucy prebend in 1290 and the first record of *Shernyhampton* in 1325.

Our second question concerns why precisely this adjectival qualifier should have been chosen. We might think it alludes literally to the richness of the farm's soil due to the dung left by cattle on its extensive Avonside and Severnside grazing and carted by the tenants or serfs to the fields. Cullen and Jones (2012: 105) appraise this view tentatively when discussing a range of dung-related names: "The dung of Shirehampton could arguably have been seen as an economic bonus[,]" before retreating at the end of the same paragraph: "But *dirty* is unlikely to be a complimentary epithet, and *sharny*, presumably nothing more than 'filthy, bedaubed with muck' in a place-name like Sharneyford in Lancashire …, seems unlikely to carry a different sense when employed as an affix." We might therefore conclude that it is meant to be disparaging rather than descriptive, as Watts assumes in CDEPN, and as modern sensibilities would probably require. It may simply encode one bishop's preference for his Warwickshire manor.[19] We shall never know for sure what the motivation was, nor whether the change was episcopally or locally generated, but in either case the word is practically unique in English place-naming. It has been tentatively claimed that *sherni* occurs in a scandinavianized form in Scarrington (Nottinghamshire; PN Nt 228), but the general run of spellings for that place does not support this interpretation. The base-word, Old English *scearn* 'dung', on the other hand, is fairly common, especially with water-related words, for example in Shernborne (Norfolk),

[18] Worcester was a monastic cathedral, i.e. it was staffed by monks rather than secular priests, and its bishop was technically also its abbot. Gifford was in frequent conflict with his prior or second-in-command, who was effectively the head of the monastic body in the light of the bishop's dual role.

[19] A bishop actually resided at Hampton Lucy at least twice in the early fourteenth century (Calendar of Patent Rolls 1317–21, p. 499, and 1334–8, p. 310; cited in *VCH Warwickshire* III, Hampton Lucy, footnote 41).

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Sharnbrook (Bedfordshire) and Sharnford (Leicestershire); see also Cullen and Jones (2012: 100).

A range of slightly differing spellings of the qualifying element is found, as would be expected in the medieval record, but none of them undermines the conclusion drawn by Smith and endorsed here in its essentials (except to clarify that the name is Middle English, not Old English as Smith suggests, as noted above).

Table 2: Recorded spellings of the name in the guise *Shernyhampton*

Qualified name in its original form	**Record**	**Last known instance**
Shernyhampton	1325 Feet of Fines 1394 extents for debts TNA C 131/44/10 1398 extents for debts TNA C 131/214/42	1420 Feet of Fines
Schernyhampton	1397 certificate TNA C 241/187/62	unique
Sharnyhampton	1367 Feet of Fines	unique
Shirnyhampton [previously read as *Shiruy-*; image of original checked, and <n> is equally likely]	1450 Feet of Fines	unique
Sherynhampton[a)]	1398 extents for debts TNA C 131/47/6	1440 Patent Rolls
Shirynhampton	1406 Patent Rolls	unique
Shirenhampton	1428 charter of feoffment BrArch AC/D/11/17	unique
Shernhampton	1410, 1411 Patent Rolls	unique

a) This form may derive from a common type of misreading with *Sherni-* taken to be *Sherin-*, and with <y> then substituted for <i>; or more likely, with the next item, it represents a form of *Shern-* with syllabification of the [n] after [r].

The last three items in the list could suggest, when taken together, that the syllable representing the adjective suffix *-i* was being elided from the four-syllable name around 1400, rather than that the base-noun *shern/sharn* was being substituted for the adjective *sherni/sharni*. In any case, the words *sharn* and *sharni* were becoming obsolete by the end of the Middle English period (15thC) in the south of England and retreating to become dialect words of the north of England and southern Scotland (see MED, DSL, EDD, under the relevant words, *s(c)harn*, *shairn*), so it is by no means certain that either would have had any currency in Gloucestershire at this period.

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A couple of fifteenth-century forms spelt with <i> before <r(e)n> indicate that something else was afoot. Given the origin of the name, this new spelling is phonologically irregular (implying vowel raising rather than the normal lowering of [e] before [r] + a consonant), and suggests either that the first element of the name was being reanalysed or reinterpreted as something else, or that the traditional pronunciation (rather than the meaningful element itself) was being avoided. These spellings cannot be evidence for the ultimate merger of Middle English /ir/ and /er/ before a consonant, because that process dates from the seventeenth century and later (Lass 1999: 112–113). In the 1480s, two new spelling-types emerge which share the loss of the medial <n>: *Shirehampton* (*Shyrehampton* 1480 William Worcestre) and *Sherehampton* (1486 Patent Rolls). Both of these show a number of sub-variants which are tabulated below, but most of the sub-variants can be allocated without ambiguity to one of these two types. On the face of it, the initial element is being replaced by two Early Modern English words. It would be easy to ascribe these substitutions to a kind of euphemism, a desire to avoid the negative associations of *shern(i)*/*sharn(i)*, as Watts concludes (CDEPN 2004: 546a), but as we have seen these 'dung' words had been falling out of use in the south for some time before the 1480s, and the extent to which they would have caused people to blush in Gloucestershire in 1480 can only be guessed at, rather than assumed. Any argument about their replacement involving an appeal to their lexical meaning, therefore, may be anachronistic here in the fifteenth century. In any case, we would need a culturally supported explanation for why such a euphemism should be felt necessary precisely in the 1480s after at least 150 years of uninhibited usage. The end of the Wars of the Roses (nominally in 1485) is rather early for an outbreak of Puritanism (a 17thC phenomenon).

A complication for the lexical replacement idea (which in itself contains the weakness just identified) is the fact that there may be a purely phonological reason for the loss of the medial <n>. Smith notes in PN Gl (IV: 73) that <n> is lost after <r> in the place-names *Barrington*, *Farleys End* and *Tarleton*. In the latter two it is lost before <l> (in Smith's analysis, though his argument in the case of *Tarleton* is speculative), but this condition does not apply in the case of *Shirehampton*. *Barrington* (*Berninton*, among other forms, in 1086 Domesday Book), perhaps along with *Brentry* hundred (PN Gl III: 126; *Bernintrev'* in Domesday), provides the best analogy, with [n], a nasal consonant, being lost in anticipation of a following nasal consonant in the same name. In *Shirehampton*, the nasals [m] and [n] both follow. But *Barrington* provides the only secure parallel to the posited process, and the [m] in *Wormington* (PN Gl II: 40) is not lost as one might expect if the anticipatory process had been applicable to nasal consonants more generally. There is also no reason why the loss of [n] should have the effect of lengthening the

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originally short vowel in *Shern-*, as is required by the entire subsequent development of the name.

We might, therefore, point to both cultural-lexical-semantic and phonological motivations for the change away from *sherni/sharni* without being able to construct a knock-down argument in favour of either.

Shirehampton

The spellings with <i> mentioned above open the possibility of at least scribal association with Middle English *shīre* or *shīr*, which has a long vowel (Table 3). This is current in Middle English in two possibly relevant senses. Throughout the period, one is that of a noun meaning 'administrative district, county'. The other, also throughout the period, is that of an adjective meaning 'bright, shining', 'clear', 'pure, perfect' (hence also 'mere; absolute', resembling the modern use of *sheer* in *sheer nonsense*), and also, after 1398, 'thin, scanty'. Other recorded senses, involving a verb and an adverb, can be discounted for the purpose of interpreting a name. OED notes that the adjective is related to *sheer* by the process called *ablaut*.[20]

Which, if any, of these semantic possibilities might be relevant for Shirehampton's name is not as simple to decide as it could appear. It is not at all clear why a place might be distinguished, uniquely, as 'district or county Hampton'. The first time Shirehampton was administratively distinct in any sense was when it became a new ecclesiastical parish in 1844. Being a mere tithing does not distinguish it from countless other places, let alone the other two tithings of Westbury. It had, as noted above, been geographically detached from time immemorial, but that does not explain why it might have deserved such a new epithet for the first time in the late fifteenth century. Following the account sketched in OED and examples of the word's use in MED, *shīr(e)* in the sense of 'bright' might appear a pleasant epithet and a morale-boosting replacement for 'dungy, mucky', but this sense was defunct by the fourteenth century except in northern dialects (including Scots) and except as a linguistic fossil which proved useful in constructing Middle English alliterative verse. If we presume that the deliberate adoption of a changed name-form for the meaning of one of its newly adopted elements depends on the sense of the new element being positive or flattering, we could hardly feel comfortable with the other, later, sense of *shire*, 'thin, scanty, bare', though that is recorded in England as a description of poor crops in a Shropshire word-book as late as the nineteenth century.

[20] *Ablaut* is an ancient Indo-European and Germanic process for creating new words with meanings related to the base-word, or new grammatical forms of the base-word, by changing the root vowel according to a set of fixed patterns.

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Table 3: Recorded spellings of the name *Hampton* with changed qualifier *Shire-*

Changed qualifier – 1	**Record**	**Last known instance**
Shyrehampton	1480 William Worcestre 1542 John Smythe's ledger + 1544 letters patent to Ralph Sadleir BrArch AC/AS/1/1 1544 LPFD [sale to Sadleir][b)]	see also next box
Shire Hampton	1543 [correctly 1542, i.e. 34 Henry VIII, October 30; twice] TNA PROB 11/29/262 [will of Thomas Smythe, hooper; not really clear in the will that it is two words] 1721 bill and answer TNA C 11/666/28 1737 bill and answer TNA C 11/1054/29 1784 Monthly Repository (1822)	found occasionally post-1800, e.g. 1837 Moule's county map
Shirehampton / Shyrehampton	<i> 1547 commission under Great Seal TNA E 328/43 <?> 1551, 1570 Feet of Fines <i> 1583 will of Phillip Poope TNA PROB 11/65/173 <i> 1595 SMV + <?> 1672 Phillimore: Parish Registers 16 <i> 1710, 1712 Phillimore: Parish Registers 16 <i> 1720 Final concord BrArch 12151/127 <i> 1720 Halett's plan of the Mannor of Kings Weston <i> 1771/2 Isaac Taylor's plan of King's Weston estate[c)] <i> 1800 wall monument of James Lewis, WoT parish church [1551, 1570 and 1672 are taken from PN Gl III: 132; it is sometimes unclear there which records have <i> and which <y>, but for present purposes this is immaterial as the two are taken to be equivalent]	The form with <i> is hardly ever found in truly early, truly local, documents, is rare in the 17thC, but is the form in consistent use in the later 18th and 19th centuries when Shirehampton was frequently mentioned in guide books giving details about the famous adjacent tourist attraction, the King's Weston estate (e.g. Shiercliff 1789: 87; Ibbetson and others 1793: 198–202; Butcher 1805: 81). It has remained current to the present day.
[Shirehampto]	1648 Blaeu's county map [printer's error]	unique
Shirehamton	1579/1607 Saxton's county maps	1762 Dissenters' certificate

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	1611 Speed's county map (Sh[e]arhampton in county index)	
Shirhampton	1810 conveyance BrArch 11054/21	unique

[b)] The surname of the prominent Tudor courtier is often spelt like this; for his descendants, it is generally given as *Sadler*.

[c)] Maps of several estates, belonging to Edward Southwell esq., BrArch 26570.

Sherehampton

This is the form which predominates in Tudor and Stuart times (Table 4), to be replaced in due course by *Shirehampton*. But the relevance of the word *sheer* in any of its independent senses to the change away from *Sherny-* can quickly be dismissed. The possibly topographically relevant noun senses of 'change of direction, swerve' and 'the fore-and-aft upward curvature or rise of the deck or bulwarks of a vessel; the curve of the upper line of a vessel as shown in vertical section' do not emerge till the late seventeenth century, whilst the adjectival sense 'abrupt (of slopes)' is not found before Wordsworth used it in a poem published in 1800.[21] The adjectival senses which were recorded before 1600 are clearly irrelevant, especially '(of drink) taken unaccompanied by food'. We find 'bright, shining' and 'thin, sparse, insubstantial', 'diaphanous' in the sixteenth century, and a case might be made that these meanings emerge from a conflation of *sheer* and *shire*, two originally distinct though related words, based on a confusion with or a dialectally triggered adaptation of the word *shir(e)*; that is, *sheer* is identical to an archaic pronunciation of *shire* before the operation of the Great Vowel Shift.[22] There is no doubt, judging by the evidence presented below, that the *Shere-* variant contained a long vowel. No other word looks remotely plausible as a source of this group of spellings.

[21] "Hart-leap Well", line 50: ("… it was at least/Four roods of sheer ascent …"). The OED's view seems questionable; this instance seems to me compatible with the established 'pure, nothing but' sense rather than a topographical description, but in this widely-read context it may have allowed the inference of a new sense 'abrupt' which then gained currency.

[22] The Great Vowel Shift was a set of coordinated changes which (for our purposes here) yielded the modern pronunciations of *shire* and *sheer* from earlier pronunciations somewhat resembling modern *sheer* and *share* respectively. So the point here is that, at the time in question, *sheer* [ʃi:r] might have been understood as the newly fashionable pronunciation of *sheer* or as an old-fashioned one of *shire*.

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Table 4: Recorded spellings of the name *Hampton* with changed qualifier *Shere-*

Changed qualifier – 2	**Record**	**Last known instance**
Sherehampton	1486 Patent Rolls 1504 Bristol Port Books +[d] 1510 will of John Tillyng of Westbury TNA PROB 11/16/376 [with final <-n'>] 1514 Staple Court Books + 1516 [etc.] Bristol Port Books +[e] 1526 Bristol Ordinances + 1533 LPFD[f] 1539 John Smythe's ledger + 1551/2 will of William Mallett, Tudor Wills + 1570 Feet of Fines "et freq." [PN Gl III: 132] 1577–9 Seyer: Memoirs of Bristol (1823) 1583 Exchequer Commission: Port of Gloucester TNA E134/25Eliz/Hil3 1595 (copied before 1608) WoT PR 1600 will of William Nicholas Tudor Wills + 1608 Sadler Courts of Survey 1632 lease GlArch D2957/268A/1 1633 WoT PR 1655, 1678, 1679, 1681 SMV + 1656, 1663, 1669, 1677, 1685 etc. WoT Poor Book 1650 Deposition Books + (William Coterill) 1657 CSPD 1666 Ashton MS 29 [according to PN Gl 3: 132; = ?? final concord BrArch AC/AS/28/29/5] 1687 will of Richard Britten TNA PROB 4/5494	typically in local documents, dominating in the 17thC 1721 BrArch AC/AS/51 occasionally found in census returns, e.g. birthplace of Harriet Green (Wiltshire, 1871); probably in all cases an error of the enumerator or the transcriber rather than the survival of an archaic form
Shere(-)Hampton	1693 Greenvil[l]e Collins' "King's Weston" map [Shere hampton]	1726 Post-Office Intelligence (Love-Letters); the contents list dated 1736 introduces a hyphen[g]
Sheerehampton	1575 (copied before 1608), 1610 WoT PR 1623 lease BrArch AC/WO/12/30	typically in local documents

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	1644/5 WoT PR 1662 assignment of lease BrArch AC/WO/12/38 1673 enfeoffment GlArch D2957/206/51 1688, 1695, 1696 etc. WoT Poor Book [Sheerehamton 1689]	1715 Quarter Sessions GlArch Q/SO/4/3
Sheerhampton	1640 release BrArch AC/WO/12/35 1647 will of Edward Creed (proved 1649) [? = TNA PROB 11/196/76] 1658 will of William Cotterell (Blagg 1936) 1662 assignment of lease BrArch AC/WO/12/38 1662 assignment in trust BrArch AC/WO/12/48 about 1678 Guildhall Library 25565/10 fo. 178 [re: a local contribution to rebuilding of St Paul's cathedral, London] 1724 report of Samuel Roach's appointment as high sheriff of Gloucs, from London Gazette, 04/01/1723	1745 SomHC DD\NP/1/21/1d much later: 1807 Almondsbury burial of John Gillam[h)]
Sheershampton [?endorsement]	1647 transcript of will of Edward Creed (proved 1649)	unique [and no doubt erroneous]
Sherhampton	1595 sentence of Thomas Clement TNA PROB 11/86/402 1652, 1682, 1686 etc. WoT PR 1654 Deposition Books 1654–63 John Falconer sent to Virginia as servant (Hargreaves-Mawdsley I: 21) 1684 WoT Poor Book 1686 CSPD, Minute Book of Bristol Friends	typically in later local documents 1800 Monthly Magazine & American Review 3
Shearehampton	1629 will of Robert Attwood, probate (Canterbury; R. H. Ernest Hill's index of 1912)	unique
Shearhampton	1656 Henry Spelman: Villare Anglicum 1657 CSPD 1670 power of attorney BrArch AC/WO/12/43 1673 George Fox: Journal 1720 Cox: Magna Britannia et Hibernia	typically found in gazetteers apparently deriving from Villare Anglicum; typically not in local documents 1798 Walker: Universal gazetteer

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	1751 Whatley: England's gazetteer 1760 agreement for lease Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre 1178/688	
Shear Hampton	1681 Glanville: Saducismus triumphatus[i)]	as two words, so far unique
Sharehampton	1603x25 trust settlement of manors TNA C 2/JasI/M20/18	unique

d) Sources marked with + are publications of the Bristol Record Society.
e) Flavin & Jones (2009). The editors note explicitly that *Shirehampton* is spelt *Sherehampton* in these documents.
f) www.british-history.ac.uk/letters-papers-hen8/vol6/pp23-28 (accessed 2017-06-09).
g) Available online via Google Books.
h) Appears to testify to the late survival of an archaic pronunciation; unexplained; archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/BRISTOL_AND_DISTRICT/2009-09/1252369295 (accessed 2017-05-16). See further below.
i) quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A42824.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext (accessed 2017-05-16); transcription clearly correct. Other transcriptions of the same text (or a different printing?) have a hyphen.

Spellings with <ea> are assumed here to be equivalent to <ee>; compare the modern high front vowel shared by *feat* and *feet*. But <ea> could also be a spelling for a mid front vowel; compare such a vowel shared by modern *great* and *grate*. *Sharehampton* is unique, but appears to derive from the <ea> tradition by mistakenly treating <ea> as in *great* rather than *feat* and re-spelling the result. It must be recalled that spelling could still be highly variable in the seventeenth century.

Other forms of the name

A small number of recorded spellings mainly from the seventeenth century onwards are ambiguous outliers which do not fall cleanly into either of the traditions of *Shire-* and *Shere-* identified so far (Table 5). Nevertheless it is clear that they do not represent a wholly separate development.

Table 5: Recorded spellings of the name *Hampton* with ambiguous changed qualifier

Changed qualifier – 3: ambiguous forms	**Record**	**Last known instance**
Sheirhampton	1595, 1610-11 SMV + 1691 deed poll of sale Lincolnshire Record Office 1 FANE 3/1/C/3	1701 Bristol Corporation of the Poor +

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Sheirehampton	1610-11 SMV +	Shirehampton registers from the 1720s onwards
Shierehampton	1633 WoT PR	unique
Shierhampton	1639 Court of Chivalry, concerning John Stokes challenging Thomas Malett to a duel[j)] 1687 University of Nottingham literary MS. 98 "Transcribed at Mallets=Court in Shierhampton Dec^{r}. the 13th: 1687. by Me Tho^{s}. Alcock" 1761 British Magazine 2, reporting the murder of Henry Morgan	1867 London Gazette 06 August 1867
Sh(e)ierhampton	1655 Parliamentary survey of benefices TBGAS 38 (1915): 170	the <eie> variant is unique

j) www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/court-of-chivalry/400-malett-stokes (accessed 2017-06-15).

The relation between the alternative changed names

Attempting to come to a conclusion about the changes affecting the name around 1500 and stabilizing eventually in the present form is by no means plain sailing. We seem to be blown towards believing that the form *Sherni-*, *Sharni-* was displaced by euphemism, but as we have seen it is unclear that a need for euphemism would have been felt by 1500 because the toxic word was obsolete or obsolescent in southern England. A phonetic change, the loss of [n], may have been a contributory factor, but there is no reason to think that the loss of [n] would have triggered the lengthening of the preceding vowel which is common to the main variants in the later record. The loss of [n] in *Sherni-*, *Sharni-* would have produced a form which could have been associated, in a sense punningly, with the long-vowelled words meaning (1) 'county' or (2) 'bright' or similar, despite the difference of vowel length between the older form and these. The 'bright' word, unusually, could have two distinct pronunciations because of the conflation of two distinct but related words – though the initially dominant form *Shere-* would have been identical to the archaic, recessive, pre-Great Vowel Shift pronunciation of the form *Shire-*. This assessment is complicated by the fact that the most obviously positive lexical senses or associations of the new form, whether *shire* or *shere*, were also obsolete or obsolescent in southern England and restricted to the north and Scotland by the time they were apparently adopted.

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That *Shire-* and *Shere-* spellings were truly used as equivalents is shown convincingly by two local records close together in time in the same source, John Smythe's ledger (Vanes 1975):

> Allsson Deane of Sherehampton wedo 1539
> Allson Smythe of Shirehampton wyddo 1542

Such evidence leads to a final caveat on the question of the relation between *Shire-* and *Shere-*: the possibility that, despite the presumption made in the above analysis, the two forms may simply have been graphic variants, i.e. that the graphic distinction does not, after all, represent a pronunciation distinction. A similar caveat might be made based on the range of spellings in the Merchant Venturers' documents (SMV in the table above) in the seventeenth century. It is possible that the range of spellings testifies to a single form with a reduced pronunciation like [ʃər-] in the first syllable, encoded in the form of competing real words, rather as if *Fazakerley* (Lancashire) with [fəz-] could be rendered either as **Furzeakerley* or as **Firezakerley*. But the weight of probability seems to me to be against this. If one looks at the most extremely different contemporaneous spellings, for example *Shier(e)hampton* (1633, 1639) and *Sharehampton* (1603x25), *Shearhampton* (1657), it is harder to avoid the conclusion that true variant pronunciations are indicated. The growing use of *Sher-* in the seventeenth century could, however, be viewed as evidence pointing in the other direction, to a single reduced form [ʃər-].

Was anyone responsible for the Tudor substitution?

At the dissolution of the monasteries, much of what had been owned by Westbury College, a college of secular canons (Orme & Cannon 2010: part I, throughout), was granted at a knock-down price to Sir Ralph Sadleir, Henry VIII's Secretary of State (Wilkins 1909). He was a notoriously acquisitive man reputed, at the end of his life, to be the richest commoner in England. The college's possessions included the lands of Shirehampton, which did not amount to a manor. But it must have come to be considered as a manor at about this period, because Rudder (1779: 803) states that the manor of Shirehampton was granted to Thomas Mallet in about 1566, which cannot be wholly or permanently true. A manor is referred to in the will of Richard Malet of Enmore, Somerset, dated 1552/3;[23] but in the 1608 muster roll known as the *Men and armour survey of Gloucestershire* (published as Smith 1980), the

[23] www.mallettfamilyhistory.org/tng/getperson.php?personID=I7147&tree=M05 (accessed 2017-06-14).

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manor of Shirehampton is recorded (1980: 219–220) as being jointly under the lordship of Ralph Sadler [the Secretary of State's grandson by his son Thomas, RC], Sir John Mallet and a Mr Lewis, whilst by 1634 the manor was in the sole possession of George Lewis.

These facts lead to the suspicion that Sadleir's irruption into the affairs of Gloucestershire, however indirect, may have had an impact on the name-change. Sadleir, or agents for him, may have been responsible for inflating its status. He clearly did not invent any form of the new name; he was born in 1507 and the earliest departures from *Sherny-* are earlier than that. But *Shyrehampton* is the form which appears in Sadleir's letters patent of 1544, picking up a form in use locally in the landowning Smyth(e) family in the 1540s, and that may have had a decisive influence on the subsequent direction of the name's development. Titles, honours and land were all important to Sadleir. The fact that he had been a *knight of the shire* (MP) for Middlesex (1539–40), was knighted probably in 1540–1, was created a knight-banneret in 1547 and had held many county-level positions such as justice of the peace in Hertfordshire in 1544 and in Gloucestershire in 1547 (Phillips 2004), may have had a subliminal effect in promoting a variant of the place-name which chimed with and reflected well on his status(es). Or perhaps it was more than subliminal. We may also need to view the relation between the place-name (in whatever form) and *shire* as an actual pun. It has long been thought that "[t]he pun seems to have been a novelty in Tudor England" and that two pages of puns on *sallet/salad* in the play *Thersites* (1537), now attributed to Nicholas Udall, "look like the very first puns ever devised" (Lang 1912: 158).[24] The emerging forms in *Sher-/Shir-* may have encouraged and endorsed a fashionably punning connection with the 'county' word (in spirit not unlike the playful canting arms and rebuses which were also so popular in Tudor times) that was felt to be an adornment for an estate newly acquired by a courtier who was ambitious and better-connected than most.

Shere- was in widespread use at the same time both locally (1510 will of John Tillyng of Westbury; 1514 Bristol Staple Court Books; 1551/2 will of William Mallett) and nationally (1533 LPFD). But this numerical advantage seems to have been progressively eroded, presumably by the usage of the manor under the Sadlers, the Mallets in due course, and the Lewises. In this regard, it is unexpected (though not chronologically so) to find the manor still referred to as *Sherehampton* in records from the Sadler family's courts of survey of 1608. It will be noted that some of the spellings listed above are typical of certain classes of documents, but no hard and fast documentary

[24] That is, the first in English – the device is foreshadowed in Plautus, whose work Udall undoubtedly knew (McCarthy 2017: 25–26, 102).

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characterization of some particular spelling can be arrived at, and neither can a fully convincing spelling stemma (transmission history) be constructed.

Modern developments

A cartographical aberration in the late eighteenth century results in the place being mapped as *Chit(e)hampton* (1777 Taylor's map, 1787 Cary's map). This most probably derives from a misreading or a simple misprinting, but it has an unsettling affinity with the long-sustained error due to Atkyns (1712) which identified *Chire* in Domesday Book with Shirehampton.

But the onomastic interest of the name of Shirehampton does not finish at the point where the modern spelling is finally victorious, say in the late eighteenth century. There are two points of interest, very different in character.

The first is that the place today is generally known colloquially by the abbreviated name *Shire*, despite the fact that the full name is stressed on the second syllable. This could not have happened until any alternative pronunciations had been eliminated. I have found no reference to this abbreviated form before the mid-twentieth century. A mention of the short-lived Shire Farm in Woodwell Road in the early 1940s (BrArch Building plan/Volume 190/25d; Coates 2012: 12) is the earliest record I have found definitely implying the existence of the abbreviated form. It has caught on, and is in use, for example, in the street-name *Shire Gardens* (highway adopted 1959; BrArch Adoption notice 40287/22/112) and in the title of the community newspaper *Shire* (1972–). It is also probably the most frequent form used in conversation by residents. On the other hand, a pronunciation *Shrampton*, embodying a first-syllable reduction dependent on the second-syllable stress, is included in "Robson"'s "dictionary" (1970: 27). Although that is not a serious work of dialectology, the form is echoed by "Jennifer" as an example of the name in a "proper Bristolian accent".[25] However, I have not heard the form in use despite being a resident of the place for over twelve years, and it must be obsolete, even if formerly genuine. If it ever did exist, it could have originated as a reduced form of either *Shirehampton* or *Sherehampton*, i.e. as a direct descendant of a possible early-modern reduced form discussed above.

[25] Online review of Storey (2004): https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1230874.The_House_in_South_Road (accessed 2019-03-26). It also turns up in online forums with a Bristolian orientation, e.g. http://www.flickr.com/groups/46594087@N00/discuss/72157623341435054/. Whether these forms (including the one used by "Jennifer") are (self-)consciously imitated from "Robson" is not always clear, but there is often evidence of lifting "Robsonian" material *en bloc* in comic writing, e.g. in the repeatedly adjacent "snanz" and "shrampton" ('St Anne's' and 'Shirehampton').

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The surname *Shirehampton*

The second point of interest is that *Shirehampton* also appears as a surname. Most English surnames can be shown to have been formed between 1100 and 1500, but the case of *Shirehampton* is different. Very unusually, we know exactly when it was created: on 13 September 1915. In the *London Gazette* of 28 September of that year (issue 29310, p. 9596, identifier 026) the following legal notice appeared:

> I, WILLIAM BRUFORD SHRIMPTON, of "Ninehams Gables," Caterham, in the county of Surrey, hereby give notice, that I have assumed and intend henceforth upon all occasions and at all times to sign and use and be called and known by the surname of "Shirehampton" in lieu of and substitution for my present surname of "Shrimpton," and that such intended change or assumption of name is formally declared and evidenced by a deed poll under my hand and seal dated this day, and enrolled in the Central Office of the Supreme Court of Judicature on the 22nd September, 1915. In testimony whereof I hereby sign and subscribe myself by such my intended future name.—Dated the 13th day of September, 1915. WILLIAM BRUFORD SHIREHAMPTON.

William was an electrical engineer originally from Lee, Kent who had no known connection with the Bristol area[26] – in fact he moved with his wife Caroline Hilda from Caterham to Ravenscroft Park, High Barnet, Hertfordshire, in later life, and had property at Walton on the Naze, Essex. He seems genuinely to have thought that *Shirehampton* was the etymological source of *Shrimpton* and that he was setting history right by restoring its primordial form.[27] He may also have thought *Shirehampton* sounded more dignified, because less crustacean, than the name he had been born with. The surname existed till 2014, but only among his descendants and those who have married them.[28]

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[26] But his daughter married a master from Clifton College, Bristol.

[27] *Shrimpton* actually derives by a somewhat irregular route from the place-name *Sherington* in Buckinghamshire (FaNBI, under *Shrimpton*).

[28] His only son was born a Shrimpton in 1910: Squadron Leader the Rev. William John Prankerd Shirehampton MA CF RAFVR, known as John, ordained priest in 1937, an RAF chaplain in WW2, and after demobilization a school chaplain in Oxfordshire and Monmouth; he died in 1992. He had studied at Queens' College, Cambridge, from 1931–4 and played hockey for the college and the university, gaining a Blue in 1934 (*Queens' College Record* for 1933; Cambridge University Hockey Club website, www.cuhc.co.uk/varsitymatch/archive/1930-1939/ (accessed 2017-06-26). He was the author of two slim books on the railway history of Monmouth and the Forest of Dean (Shirehampton 1959, 1961; see also 1952). His first wife Catherine (*née* Parry) seems to

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Shirehampton in Manchester parish, Jamaica

The Gloucestershire Shirehampton gave its name to one other place in the British Empire. Shirehampton in Jamaica was a medium-sized plantation,[29] probably a coffee plantation since that is what Manchester parish was best known for, run by about 50 enslaved people between 1817–22 and by about 100 from 1823–33, the year of the abolition of slavery in Britain. They were owned by John Racker Webb,[30] and, after his death in 1830, by his (illegitimate) son Thomas and sons-in-law George Bowley Medley and Robert Podmore or Padmore Clark. Medley was a London stockbroker, who was awarded £2068 and sixpence by the government as "compensation" in 1833 for the freeing of his Shirehampton slaves.[31] Theophillus [sic] Staines, otherwise associated with Green Vale plantation in Port Royal parish [later Kingston], appears to have had a brief interest in 1821.[32] After abolition, the property continued to be owned by Medley, later a Lloyds underwriter, who went bankrupt in 1854, and then by D. Shield.[33]

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have been known as *Mrs Shirehampton* even after the marriage was annulled, and died aged 79 in 1993 in Sidmouth, leaving over £1.75m to the Devon Wildlife Trust. His second wife June had an address in Bishopswood, Ross-on-Wye, in 2002 (electoral roll). The eldest daughter of John and June, Dr Teresa [Tessa] Shirehampton (1948–2014) lived near Pewsey. Tessa had two sisters, Joanne and Sarah, both now married with different surnames. John's only sister, Hazel Ruth (1913–2014) married Alan Fawdry. I know of no other persons who have ever been surnamed *Shirehampton*; the surname had nine bearers and lasted 99 years. For some further family details, see Coates (2017).

29 568 acres (*Jamaica Almanac*, 1840). Crop accounts survive for 1834–7 (Jamaica Archives Liber 1B/11/4/75, /76 and /78).

30 *Jamaica Almanac* (1823, 1825); Legacies of British Slave-Ownership [LBS] project database, University College London, www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/888679210; and for the family see www.antonymaitland.com/jammaitl.htm, under "Mary Wint" (accessed 2017-03-16). The Racker family can easily be traced to Keynsham, Somerset (see below, next paragraph but one). Fairly prosperous Webbs are assessed for the poor rate in Shirehampton (or in Westbury on Trym proper; it is not always easy to tell) from 1665 onwards (WoT Poor Book): "Mris Web(b)" (1660s–70s; about £19), later Obadiah Webb (1670s; about £13), then (Captain) George Webb (1690s; about £14). Obadiah is conspicuously referred to as "Mr." in 1709 and 1710, implying some degree of wealth and social status; he died later in 1710 (WoT PR). These details are suggestive of a link between the two Shirehamptons through (a) wealth and potential investment in the Caribbean, and (b) a maritime command sailing from the port of Bristol. But a definite genealogical connection between these early Webbs and John Racker Webb has not yet been demonstrated, whilst *Webb* is a reasonably common surname.

31 LBS, https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/21518 (accessed 2017-03-16). Webb junior, Medley and Clark received £1998 2s 11d for the Keynsham slaves.

32 www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Members/a/al1821_06.htm (accessed 2017-07-06).

33 *Jamaica Almanac* (1845).

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The descent of the property, or perhaps by now the hamlet, becomes rather obscure thereafter. Ann Eliza Webb resided there in 1877.[34] It was the domicile of William T. Holnes[s], who was awarded a petroleum licence in 1891.[35] The will of Nathaniel Emanuel Seal (?1904x1914) states that he paid £46 for 13 acres at Shirehampton to Charles Robinson, and that "[I] give my interest in this land to my nephew George Ebenezer Wright, but he must give my wife £20."[36] Today it seems to have shrunk to a thin scatter of houses and a burial ground, but it still was a venue for the petty sessions of Manchester parish in 1857.[37] Toponymists of Jamaica do not mention it (Cundall 1909; Sibley 1978; Cassidy 1988;[38] Higman and Hudson 2009), but it appears to have been in the Don Figuerero Mountains, in, or on the fringes of, "the locality called The Colonies" (as mapped by Higman and Hudson 2009: 35). It has no entry in Wikipedia's list of villages in Jamaica, but it can be located using Google Earth (Figure 4); otherwise it can only be found on a few nineteenth and early twentieth-century maps such as that by Cram of Chicago (1901; excerpt reproduced as Figure 5).[39] Figure 6 shows the county structure of Jamaica with the approximate position of Shirehampton indicated.

[34] www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Members/r/Rw_l-w.htm (accessed 2017-07-06).

[35] *Jamaica Gazette*, 23 April 1891.

[36] www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Members/r/Rsco-si.htm (accessed 2017-07-06.). A William Peter Holness was Seal's godson.

[37] www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Members/a/alm1857_02.htm (accessed 2017-06-12). The land in this part of Manchester parish today is classified as subsistence farming, rough pasture and/or "ruinate": http://www.gifex.com/jamaica_maps/Jamaica_Land_Utilization_Map_2.htm (accessed 2017-06-20). Despite being largely deserted, it been mentioned occasionally: see Haynes (2010: 13), and the report by Setrena Clarke ("Miss Yaad Trendz 2015") that it was her birthplace and residence till the age of two (netcomp1220uwi.weebly.com/about-us.html; accessed 2017-03-16).

[38] Cundall (1909: 8) said only: "Many names of townships and properties have been translated from the old country [...]", whilst Cassidy said (1988: 157): "A whole chapter might be written on the [English, RC] names of plantations …", but regrettably he did not write it.

[39] It is hard to be sure, because of the scale and the pre-modern administrative boundaries, whether an unnamed plantation is marked at the site on a map of 1794 (http://www.raremaps.com/gallery/enlarge/26728; accessed 2017-06-19). No owner's name relevant to the present history is found on the remarkable map of 1763 indicating many plantations by their owner's name rather than by a toponym (www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Members/JamaicaMap1763.htm; accessed 2017-06-21).

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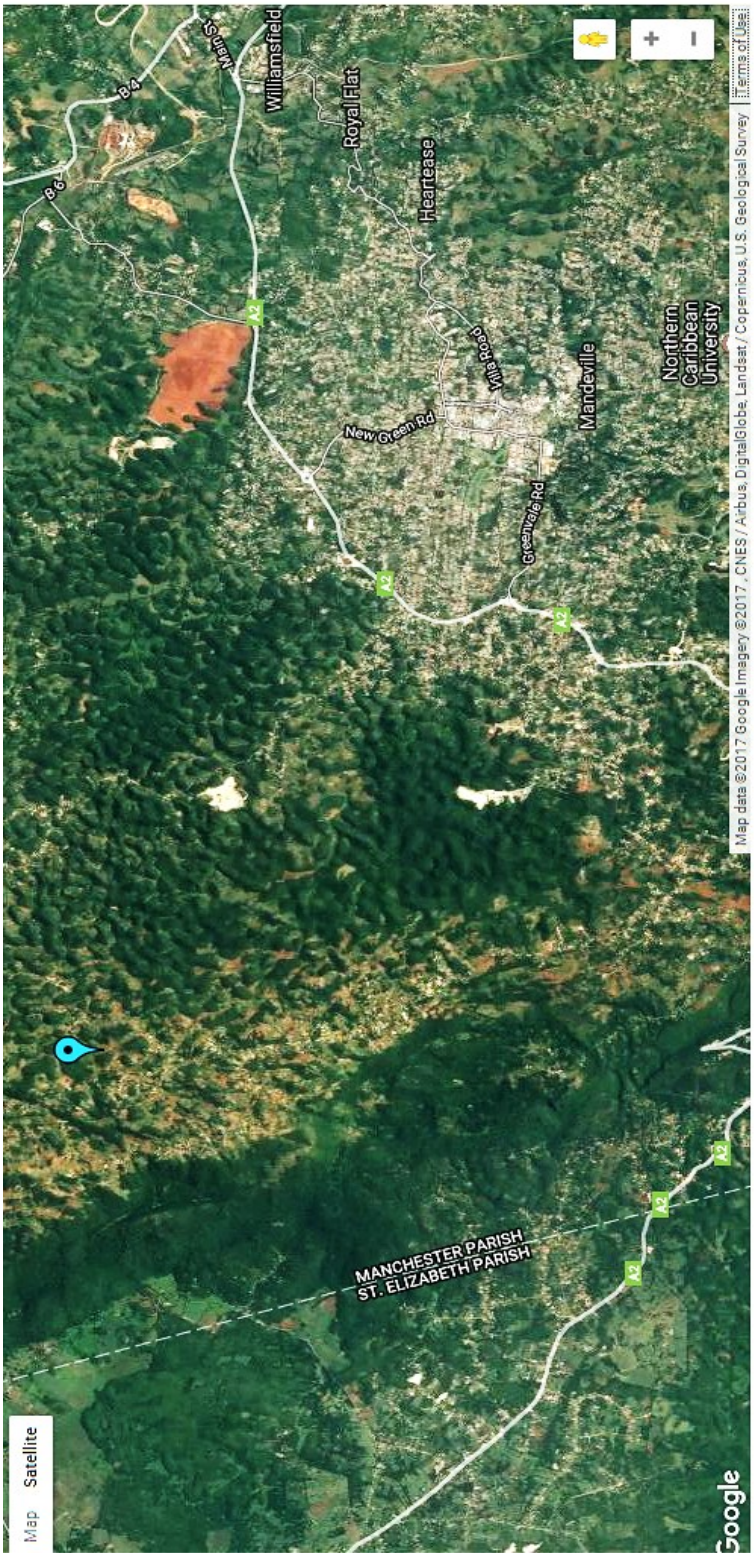


Figure 4: Screenshot from Google Maps; the blue pin shows the position of Shirehampton, in the hills north-west of the major town of Mandeville (bottom right) and the (orange) Marl Quarry (upper right).

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The first slave-owner John Racker Webb lived at a place called *Keynsham*, also in Manchester parish, underlining the Bristolian connections of the wider area since Keynsham estate is named after a town between Bristol and Bath. We read in the *Evening Post* (New York [online archive]), 21 February 1832 (p. 2), that "the Keynsham, Shireampton [sic] and Endeavor people still continue troublesome. Allick, a slave belonging to Glenhead Plantation, had been condemned by a General Court Martial, and executed on the 26th inst. [summarizing a despatch dated in January, RC]", again pointing to a close connection between Keynsham and Shirehampton.

The onomastic twist in the story of Shirehampton plantation is that it is recorded in archaic spellings long after these ceased to be normal currency in England. We find *Sheerhampton* (1811 [the first official list of plantations in the island] and 1816) versus *Shirehampton* (1817).[40] We have seen that in Gloucestershire the incidence of *Sheerhampton* (along with *Sherehampton*) peters out during the seventeenth century, though it is the one form which maintains a sporadic existence into the nineteenth. This may well indicate that the pronunciation with /ʃi:r-/ remained current in Jamaica – how long we cannot tell – and perhaps locally also in Gloucestershire, if the 1807 burial record from Almondsbury can be credited. It might also be taken to imply that, in addition to being a phonological variant of *Sherehampton*, *Shirehampton* may have been a mere spelling-variant which in the long run gives rise to a modern spelling-pronunciation, but I have argued above that the distinction may well be a genuine phonological one. It is impossible to be specific about whether, in nineteenth-century Jamaica, *Shirehampton* and *Sheerhampton* were mere alternative spellings, for example of a name with a reduced form [ʃɪ(r)-] or [ʃə(r)-] as the first syllable.[41] If such a form existed, it might also have been current in England, but there is no hard evidence for it. If it had existed, it would have made the leap made by William Shrimpton in changing his surname easier to manage.[42]

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[40] *Royal Gazette*, 23 July 1811; www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Members/a1817_04.htm (accessed 2017-06-13); www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/estate/view/10895 (accessed 2017-06-12).

[41] Very recently, a death notice mentions "[i]nterment in the family plot, Sherehampton" (2013; www.obitsjamaica.com/obituaries/view/4468, accessed 2017-03-16). If this is not a typo, it may indeed suggest that the name can be pronounced, at least locally, with such a reduced first syllable. The Jamaica Archives have offered me only a pronunciation like the current English one, which may be a spelling pronunciation in Standard Jamaican English rather than a truly local form. (Thanks to Kimberly Blackwin for this information.)

[42] The despatch of 1831/2 quoted above from a New York newspaper suggests local loss of /h/ in the name, which would make the leap even easier. See also "the Shirampton tank" in the *Kingston Gleaner* [online archive], 14 November 1923, p. 4, and "Sherampton in Manchester", *Kingston Gleaner*, 6 January 1956, p. 5.

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Figure 5: Excerpt from a map of 1901 by George F. Cram, Chicago

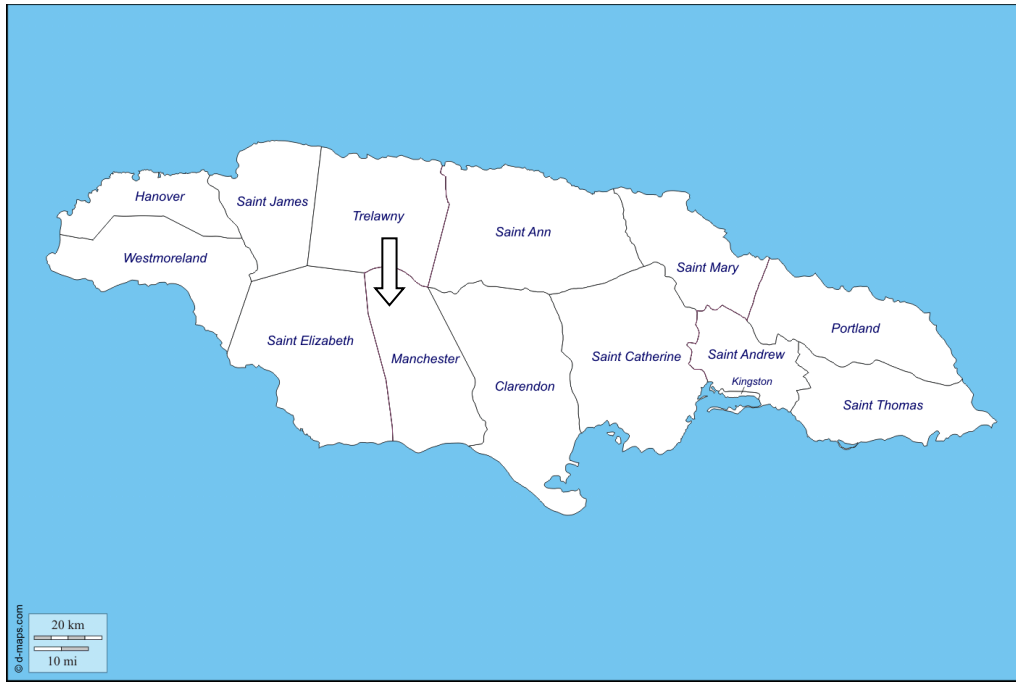


Figure 6: The parish structure of Jamaica, with the approximate location of Shirehampton marked by the arrow (d-maps.com/pays.php?num_pay=147&lang=en).

Four further facts of related onomastic interest

(1) There was a business called *Shirehampton Limited* with its headquarters in East Park, Crawley, (West) Sussex. It was involved in raising sheep, goats and other animals, and traded from 1996–2008. Its first director was Edward Paul Shrimpton of South Godstone. It seems there are obvious inferences to be drawn. Crawley is only 17 miles away from Caterham, the

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residence of William Bruford Shrimpton in 1915, and Godstone is only three miles away. But I have no information to confirm any suspicions.

(2) There is a Shirehampton House at 35–37 St David's Hill, Exeter, a grade II listed Georgian building (source ID: 1223327; English Heritage Legacy ID: 418995). No connection with the narratives in the main text above is known. It housed the office of an eponymous estate management company which in 2012 migrated to Elmley Castle, near Pershore, Worcestershire.

(3) The village of Shirehampton is commemorated in Shirehampton Close at Webheath, Redditch, Worcestershire. The names of adjacent streets do not suggest any thematic reason for this.

(4) A desire for completeness at any cost drives me to mention the existence of Shirehampton Drive in Huntington Village, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, on the edge of the Mojave Desert. There is no clue for its motivation in the names of surrounding streets, except that they embody references to places or institutions in England or Wales of the most varied sorts (*Trumpington Court*, *Merseyside Drive*, *Porttalbot Avenue*, *Stonehenge Walk Avenue*, *London Eye Close*, *Connex Court* …).[43]

Summing up and wider issues

We have examined the record of structural, lexical, orthographic and phonological innovations in the development of the name of Shirehampton, and tried to construct a culturally grounded history, not merely an etymology (an aspect of the *onomasiological* endeavour). The relation between the forms in *Shire-* and *Shere-* remains somewhat unclear; we may be dealing with phonologically distinct but semantically related forms of which one eventually triumphed, and/or with orthographically varying renderings of a phonologically reduced form of the name, with the modern form (and the abbreviation which it licenses) being a spelling pronunciation. We have followed changing scholarly opinions about the history of the name and about the naming of the place (an aspect of the *historiographical* endeavour), and seen how these have led to historical misjudgements and some consequent pseudo-histories. We have noted that the modern form of the place-name yields a surname under unusual circumstances, and has given rise to a place-name in Jamaica the circumstances of whose naming can be found in hints, but not fully understood in a detailed family-historical sense (aspects of the *semasiological* endeavour).

[43] For the often unconventional names of modern streets in Las Vegas, such as *Backslash Avenue*, *Fast Lane* and *Elvis Alive Drive*, consult Hall-Patton (2009) and Staley (2013).

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The fact that the name *Shirehampton* denotes, or has denoted, a village, a plantation and a family (by being a surname) illustrates in a small and routine way the theoretical difficulty with the idea espoused by many onomastic scholars that name *types* (in the sense of the type/token distinction), also called *proprial lemmas*; e.g. Van Langendonck (2007: 186–223), can be categorized synchronically in culturally significant ways. *Shirehampton* is not synchronically just a place-name but also a family name, and can be classified as a place-name *tout court* only by giving priority to the diachronic dimension, and/or on the presumption that synchronically valid patterns of naming-after are common knowledge among speakers of the relevant language. I offer this article in support of the view I have expressed more fully elsewhere (Coates 2014) that name types (proprial lemmas) are best understood synchronically simply as *names* (as opposed to ordinary lexical items) and only secondarily and probabilistically as names with a classifiable set of denotations, such as *place-names* or *family names*.[44]

Acknowledgements

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[44] In case this argument seems arcane, or even perverse, let us work through an example for readers with a theoretical inclination. There are many places called *Ashton*, and many boys, these days, with the given name *Ashton*. Each individual *token* is either a place-name or a male given name, of course. But it cannot simply be said that *Ashton* is of one or the other *type*, which entails that if we insist on categorizing it we have to propose two proprial lemmas with the same pronunciation and spelling. Now add the homonymous surname, the name of the winner of the St Leger Stakes horse-race in 1809, a brand of cigar made in the Dominican Republic, and a failed Avro airliner design of the 1950s. If we wish to believe that one or the other application-type is more basic in a linguistic sense, we are in trouble, because our ability to assess that proposition depends on our individual life experiences. If I had lived around horses in 1809, I might have formed the view that *Ashton* was a suitable stereotypical hipponym or horse-name in the same way (perhaps) as *Bucephalus* or *Dobbin*. We cannot, even in principle, construct a synchronic list of linguistic objects which are (only) toponyms, as distinct from those which are (only) anthroponyms or (only) hipponyms: only (overlapping) lists of those which serve as the names of individual entities in one or other category, which would be of as little theoretical interest as a telephone directory or an equine sale catalogue. By the time we have said that *Ashton* as a proprial lemma is a toponym, a given name, a surname, a hipponym and a brand-name, or that there are homonymous proprial lemmas in all these categories, we have effectively conceded that *Ashton* can name anything which is nameable. It follows from that that there is no such thing as a place-name *qua* proprial lemma; only a name.

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Abbreviations for documentary sources and archives

BrArch = Bristol Archives (till 2016 known as Bristol Record Office)
CSPD = Calendar of State Papers Domestic
GlArch = Gloucestershire Archives, Gloucester
LPFD = Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic
Minute Book of Bristol Friends = *Minute book of the Men's Meeting of the Society of Friends in Bristol, 1686–1704* (Mortimer 1977)
SMV = Society of Merchant Venturers of Bristol (McGrath 1952)
SomHC = Somerset Heritage Centre, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton
TNA = The National Archives, Kew
WoT (PR) = Westbury-on-Trym (parish registers); mentions taken from WoT sources are only a sample from those sources

For abbreviations of titles of other publications, see the list of references.

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