History of English

Jonathan Culpeper

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HISTORY OF ENGLISH

Second Edition

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Jonathan Culpeper is a senior lecturer in the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University.

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HISTORY OF ENGLISH

Second Edition

JONATHAN CULPEPER

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Sources for Appendix IV

Text 1: from a facsimile of the *Peterborough Chronicle*, in Dennis Freeborn's *From Old English to Standard English* (London: Macmillan, 1992). Text 2: from *A Middle English Reader*, edited by O.F. Emerson (London: Macmillan, 1905). Text 3: from *The Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton*, edited by W.J.B. Crotch, (The Early English Text Society, London: Oxford University Press, 1928). Text 4: from a facsimile of the Public Record Office document SCI 59/5, in *The Cely Letters: 1472–1488*, edited by A. Hanham (Early English Text Society, London: Oxford University Press, 1975). Text 5: from the *Merrie Tales of Skelton* (1567), extracted from the *Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760* (Merja Kytö and Jonathan Culpeper). Text 6: from the Authorised Version of the English Bible (1611), edited by W.A. Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909). Text 7: from a facsimile of the *Areopagitica* (Henston: Scholar Press, 1968). Text 8(c): from Mark Sebba's *London Jamaican: Language Systems in Interaction* (London: Longman, 1993:14).

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USING THIS BOOK

Students and teachers read this!

The commentary in this book aims to be clear, and to deliver an account that would be generally accepted by the scholarly community. However, as I make clear in Unit 2, no account is entirely free from controversy. The exercises and discussion points in the book are partly designed to air some of those controversies, as well as exemplifying *and* moving beyond the points made in the commentary. This book aims to involve readers as much as possible in conducting their own investigations. If you decide just to read the book and not actively do the exercises, that is fine, but do read and think through all parts of the book. 'Answers' to exercises are in Appendix V, but this Appendix does not include 'answers' that can be worked out by using a reference work (e.g. a dictionary), that involve you working on your own data or that ask you about your own language usage.

Some exercises will ask you to consult 'an etymological dictionary', by which is meant a dictionary that contains historical information, such as how a word was created and how its meaning might have changed. The best dictionary for the purpose is the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2nd edn, 1989) (hereafter, the *OED*) (available in many libraries, and also on the internet (http://www.oed.com/), though not for free). Appendix I describes some key features of *OED* entries. If you have not got access to the *OED*, don't panic! Some of dictionaries derived from the *OED* (e.g. the *Compact OED*, the *Shorter OED*) will prove sufficient for basic work. Alternatively, you could try a specialist etymological dictionary, such as C.T. Onion's *Oxford Dictionary of Etymology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966) or E. Partridge's *Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* (London: Routledge, 1966), though the range of words covered is not as great as in the *OED*. Also, the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2000) is a good source of historical information, tracing – where possible – words back to Proto-Indo-European. Moreover, it is available for free at www.bartleby.com/61 (persevere with the search engine!).

During the course of this book, you will be referred to specific texts in the 'mini-corpus' of texts in Appendix IV. Texts have been selected to illustrate some of the changes that have occurred in English, and, sometimes, they also present the views of commentators on the language. You could expand the range of texts, but beware of modern editions in which the language has been modernised or 'cleaned up'. An excellent source of texts, including numerous facsimiles and accurate transcriptions, is Dennis Freeborn's *From Old English to Standard English* (2nd edn) (London: Macmillan, 1998). Alternatively, there are considerable quantities of historical texts available on the internet. Digital images give you a real sense of the historical document, but they can be difficult to read and cannot be searched by a computer. Conversely, electronic transcriptions are relatively easy to read and can be searched (e.g. if you want to find examples of a particular word or structure, you can easily retrieve them with some retrieval software or even the 'find' facility in a word processor). However, a drawback is that transcriptions are dependent on the purposes

and abilities of the transcriber. Historians, for example, typically ‘tidy up’ the punctuation and spelling, but these might be the very things the linguist is interested in. It is advisable to seek out resources primarily designed for linguists. Appendix VI suggests possible web-links.

At the end of every unit, you will find a number of follow-up readings for the topic of that particular unit. Frequently, you will be referred to the relevant pages in David Crystal’s *Encyclopedia of the English Language* (2nd edn) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). This is comprehensive, clearly written and, moreover, widely available. For more detailed, and often more authoritative, accounts of the history of English, readings are suggested for specific topics at the end of each unit, and Appendix VII gives suggestions for general, supplementary and more advanced readings.

1
THE BIRTH OF ENGLISH

Clues in placenames

The most important factor in the development of English has been the arrival of successive waves of settlers and invaders speaking different languages. The history of placenames in Britain is closely connected to the presence of various languages at various points in time.

English does not originate in Britain, but can be traced back to the language of the various tribes in what is today's north-west Germany. If you had been standing in Britain 2,000 years ago, you would probably have heard a language more like modern Welsh. Today, we consider languages such as Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Irish Gaelic and Breton to be 'Celtic' languages. Ancient Britain was inhabited by various Celtic-speaking tribes, of which the 'Britons' were one. Appendix II displays the Indo-European 'family tree' of languages. Note the Celtic branch. The idea is that languages grouped on particular branches have features in common. Thus, the Welsh word for English 'water' is *dyn*, while in Gaelic it is *duine* and in Breton *dan*. Moreover, the assumption here is that languages are related because they had a common ancestor. For Celtic languages, this is obviously Celtic. But there are no written records of Celtic – it is a hypothetical language reconstructed by linguists. For example, we can minimally infer that the Celtic word-form for 'water' consists of [d + vowel + n]. Ultimately, if we go back far enough (and well before surviving written records), the theory is that we arrive at a language, Indo-European, which is the common ancestor of all the languages in the tree.

As far as vocabulary is concerned, the impact of the Celtic languages on English has been minimal – a mere handful of words. Scholars have claimed that words such as *brock* (a badger) and *dun* (a dark greyish brown colour) have a Celtic heritage. The predominant Celtic legacy is in placenames, such as those below:

Cities: Belfast, Cardiff, Dublin, Glasgow, London, York
Rivers: Avon, Clyde, Dee, Don, Forth, Severn, Thames
Regions: Argyll, Cumbria, Devon, Dyfed, Glamorgan, Kent, Lothian

EXERCISE

1.1 Consider the list of placenames above. What areas of the British Isles seem to be well represented? Can you guess why this might be?

Etymology

Onomastics

We cannot be totally sure what these placenames might have originally meant. Like many other placenames, they pre-date written records, which are preserved in significant quantities

in English only from about AD 700. Indeed, the study of the history of placenames in general is characterised by careful reconstruction (and a bit of guesswork!). Apart from records, we can, for example, compare placenames with words in surviving Celtic languages or consider the geography of the places in question. Thus, we can make a reasonable guess about the meaning of the placename element ‘pen’ in the placename *Pendle*, because ‘pen’ in today’s Welsh means a summit or top, and there is indeed a hill top at *Pendle*. Such detective work in tracing the history of words, whether placenames or any other type of word, is a matter of ETYMOLOGY. Etymology will be an important issue in both Units 4 and 5. The study of both placenames and personal names in particular is referred to by linguists as ONOMASTICS.

The first notable group of invaders to join the Celtic-speaking tribes of Britain were the Romans, bringing Latin (check Latin on the family tree in Appendix II). Although Julius Caesar had raided Britain in 54 and 55 BC, it was not until AD 43, under Emperor Claudius, that the real occupation of Britain got under way. Lowland Britain (the midlands and south), which already had had some cultural and trading contact with continental Europe and Rome in particular, was taken over relatively swiftly, but today’s Wales and northern England – the highland areas – took a generation, and the invasion ground to a halt at Carlisle, where Hadrian’s Wall was built to keep out tribes (e.g. the Picts) further to the north (i.e. in what we would think of as Scotland today). In the north of England, not only was the terrain more difficult but there was a lack of people to do business with, and so a ‘military zone’ was set up. In the lowlands to the south, there was a more highly developed system of aristocratic leaders, attracted by Roman culture and willing to do business. The result was deep societal divisions in the British Isles. The survival of Celtic placenames in some areas (see Exercise 1.1, p. 2) must partly reflect the lack of domination and/or assimilation of Romans in those areas.

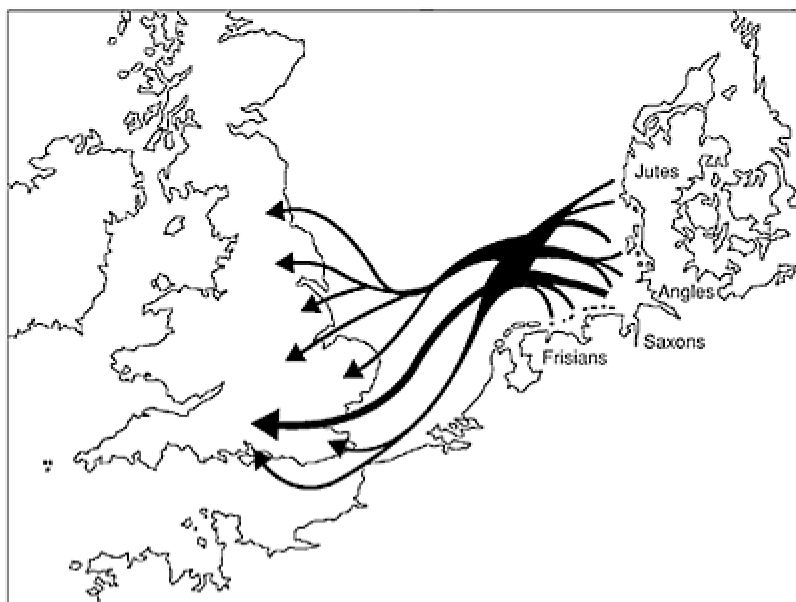
The Romans often Latinised existing Celtic placenames, rather than inventing completely new names. *London* is a Celtic placename, supposedly based on the personal name *Londinos*, meaning ‘the bold one’. It was made more like Latin by being changed to *Londinium*. Few place-names surviving today are straightforwardly based on single Latin words. If invading powers want a swift administrative transition, they do not change all the placenames, otherwise confusion will result. One example of complete change is *Catterick*, which apparently is derived from Latin *cataracta* ‘a waterfall’ (and there is a waterfall at *Catterick*). A less dramatic change is to add a placename element, of which the most notable from Latin are:

castra = a camp, walled town (e.g. Lan*caster*)
portus = port (e.g. *Ports*mouth)
via strata = paved way, a ‘street’ in a town (e.g. *Strat*ford)

In the above illustrative examples, only the first, *Lancaster*, has a Celtic element. ‘Lan’ is from the *River Lune*, and *Lune* is probably from Old Irish ‘slán’, meaning ‘health-giving’ (which wouldn’t be my description of the river today!). The non-Latin and non-Celtic elements *mouth* and *ford* of the other examples, *Portsmouth* and *Stratford*, have a Germanic background.

The English language has its roots in the language of the second wave of newcomers – in the Germanic dialects of the tribes of north-western Europe (including areas of today's north-west Germany). Check English and its location in the family tree in Appendix II. Modern Germanic languages clearly have related words for English 'water' (e.g. Dutch 'water', German 'wasser', Swedish 'vatten'). These tribes, conventionally referred to as the Anglo-Saxons, entered Britain in the year AD 449, after the Romans had withdrawn in AD 410. At least that is what the standard histories say, drawing their inspiration from Bede, a monk at Jarrow in Northumberland, who completed his ecclesiastical history of the English people, the *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, in 735 (the surviving early eleventh-century manuscript can be seen at: http://image.ox.ac.uk/show?collection=corpus&manuscript=ms279b, and a translation can be found at: http://www.ocf.org/OrthodoxPage/reading/St.Pachomius/bede.html). According to Bede, three tribes – Angle, Saxon and Jutish – were initially invited in by the British king Vortigern, to help fight off the Picts to the north. Eventually, they became discontented with the deal offered by the Britons, so they helped themselves to British territory. Bede follows this with an apocalyptic account of mass murders, buildings being razed to the ground and refugees. Map 1.1 shows where these tribes are thought to have come from (there is particular uncertainty about the location of the Jutes).

Bede's account, however, is unreliable. Note he was writing 400 years after the event. Moreover, histories are selective interpretations, written by writers with their own agendas. Bede's claims about specific tribes invading in a purposeful and warrior-like manner would help create a heroic Anglo-Saxon history behind which the various tribes and kingdoms of Briton could unite. Placename evidence seems to suggest that there were identifiable tribes. The Angles appear to have settled in and given their name to what is now *East Anglia* (comprising *Norfolk* = 'north folk' and *Suffolk* = 'south folk'), and also spread to *Mercia* (the Midlands) and further north to *Northumbria* ('north (of the) Humber', and south-east Scotland). The Saxons appear to have remained in the south, as evidenced by the area names *Sussex* ('south saxons'), *Essex* ('east saxons'), *Middlesex* ('middle saxons') and the old name for the south-west *Wessex* ('west saxons') (Wessex extended from Sussex to Devon and as far north as Gloucestershire; its most famous capital was Winchester). The Jutes seem to have remained largely in Kent and the Isle of Wight. However, it is possible that the terms 'Angle', 'Saxon' and 'Jute' were overlapping or even synonymous, not least of all because commentators nearer that time were inconsistent in their usage. Archaeological evidence does not support the idea of invading hordes, mass destruction and the Britons fleeing to the north and west. Many excavations suggest slow dilapidation of Romano-British buildings, and not sudden destruction. There was indeed some warfare and displacement of Britons, but there is also evidence that many Britons, particularly in the east, adopted the new prestigious Germanic culture, and there is evidence of intermarriage. Moreover, the Anglo-Saxons never got as far as the northern and western extremes of Britain. The Celtic languages – notably Cornish, Welsh, Irish Gaelic and Scottish Gaelic – proceeded relatively independently of English in what are today Cornwall, Wales, Ireland and Scotland. Each established its own literary tradition, and, excepting Cornish, which died out in the eighteenth century, are living languages today.



Map 1.1 *Angle, Saxon and Jute invasions*

Records suggest that the Anglo-Saxons referred to themselves as *Englisc* or *Ænglisc* (derived from the name of the Angles) from the ninth century, and a little later used the term for their language. Thousands of English placenames were created by the Anglo-Saxons in this early period. Common placename elements (with various spellings) include:

Byrig/burg = fort (e.g. Canter*bury*, Edin*burgh*)
dun = hill (e.g. Swin*don*)
feld = open land (e.g. Maccles*field*)
ford = river crossing (e.g. Ox*ford*)
tun = farm, village (later developing into 'town') (e.g. E*ton*)
ing = place of (e.g. Claver*ing*)
ingas = followers of (e.g. Hast*ings*, Read*ing*)
ham = settlement, homestead (e.g. Nort*ham*)
hamm = enclosure, land in a river bend (e.g. Chippen*ham*)

The final four elements give rise to potential difficulties in deciding the meaning of Anglo-Saxon placenames, since the modern placename spelling may not distinguish the original elements. In distinguishing *ham* and *hamm*, sometimes the only solution is to check the local landscape, in particular to see whether a river is present. This problem of spelling disguising the roots of words is in fact a more general problem in the study of placenames, and, indeed, in the study of words in general. We always need to be cautious in drawing conclusions, and try to trace the earliest possible forms.

Compounding

Let's briefly consider how placename elements combine to form place-names. Swindon, for example, is created by combining the words swine (=pigs) and dun (= hill). This process of joining words to form other words is called COMPOUNDING. We will look at this process in more detail in Unit 5. Note that by investigating placenames we can learn about the culture and economy of the time. Swindon has a hill where, presumably, pig farming used to take place. A dominant trend in Anglo-Saxon place-names is that they take on the name of the tribal leader. For example, the first elements of the placenames Macclesfield, Hastings and Chippenham come from the personal male names Mæccel, Hæsta and Cippa. This trend highlights the fact that Anglo-Saxon society was patriarchal: power was concentrated in the hands of the leader, who, judging by placenames, was usually male (Bœrma of Birmingham is a rare exception).

In the ninth century, Britain saw the beginning of a third wave of newcomers – the Scandinavian Vikings, arriving from what would be today's Denmark, Norway and Sweden ('Scandinavian', as typically used in history of English books, does not include Finland). This is usually dated from the raid on Lindisfarne in Northumbria and the sacking of the monastery there in 793 (see some of the remarkable work carried out by the monks at: http://ibs001.colo.firstnet.net.uk/britishlibrary/controller/home (search on Lindisfarne)). Note that the fact that the Vikings were pagans, while most of the Anglo-Saxons were Christians (St Augustine had arrived in 597, spreading Christianity), would have made them seem more alien. These raids developed into continuous and spreading occupation, from about 851. This was finally halted when King Ælfred, the king of Wessex in the south-west, won a decisive victory over the Danish King Guthrum in 878. A treaty was concluded whereby the Danes stayed to the east of a line running roughly (the exact positioning of the line is controversial) from Chester to London, an area that later became known as Danelaw (see Map 1.2). While the Danish Vikings had been busy with the east and north of England, the Norwegian Vikings had invaded the northern and western isles of today's Scotland and the neighbouring parts of the Scottish mainland. They also tackled Ireland (founding the city of Dublin in 840), though they never completely colonised it. From about 900, the Norwegians in Ireland began to invade and settle in England, particularly the north-western areas.

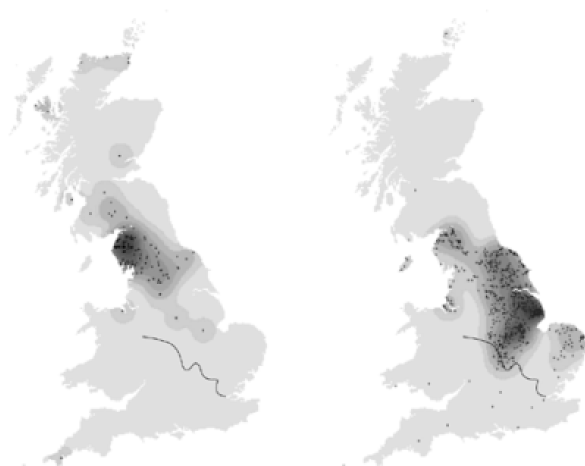
In the tenth century, the Anglo-Saxons retrieved all the Danish territories south of the river Humber, even taking York, which had been a key Viking centre for many years (see http://www.jorvik-viking-centre.co.uk/, for information about the Viking history of York and images of artefacts). But their fortunes were reversed in 991. Olaf Tryggvasson, king of part of Norway, defeated the Wessex King Æthelred II's army at Maldon in Essex (the poem *The Battle of Maldon* celebrates the event). Æthelred retaliated by ordering the massacre of Danes outside Danelaw. Unfortunately, one of the Danes who got killed was the Danish King's sister! The Danish King, Sveinn Forkbeard, arrived with a large army, and was in control of most of England, when he died in 1014. Æthelred returned from France (where he had fled), and began eliminating the Danes, upon which Sveinn's son, Canute, returned with a large army. (You may be wondering about the wisdom of this King Æthelred. He may be known to you as 'Ethelred the Unready'. 'Unready' is not thought to mean 'ill-prepared' but 'ill-advised', from 'un-ræd'.) A power-sharing agreement came about

between Æthelred and Canute, but Æthelred died in 1016, leaving Canute in complete control. 'England' was part of the Danish Empire. But this situation did not last long: when Canute's son died in 1042, Æthelred's son, Edward (the Confessor), succeeded to the throne.

One important consequence of the Scandinavian invasions and settlement is that it had the effect of increasing linguistic differences between the north and the south of England. These differences are still apparent in today's dialects of English, and we will consider them further in Unit 9. One can also see the Scandinavian influence on placenames. Words derived from Scandinavian languages frequently appear in northern and north-eastern placenames – the shaded areas in Map 1.2. Common Scandinavian placename elements (with various spellings) include:

> *by* = village (e.g. Kirk*by* or Kir*by*, Cros*by*)
> *thorp* = village (e.g. Miln*thorpe*)
> *thwaite* = glade, clearing (e.g. Hawthorn*thwaite*)

Interestingly, today's placenames ending -*thwaite*, -*scale*, -*slack*, -*gill* are almost exclusively in the north-west of England (Cumbria and North Lancashire) (see the left of Map 1.2), whereas those ending -*by* and -*thorp(e)* are largely in the north and east (see the right of Map 1.2). This reflects the fact that the first group is from an earlier form of Norwegian (Old Norse) and the second an earlier form of Danish (Old Danish), and it is the Norwegians who settled in the north-west. (Beware: some commentators use the term Old Norse as a blanket term for earlier forms of Norwegian *and* Danish.) Placename evidence has been used to account for the movements and settlement of peoples, as I have done above. But caution is needed. Just because a location has a particular placename does not necessarily mean that it was 'settled' by, say, Scandinavians. It is possible, for example, that a placename was changed by a Scandinavian official, but that few Scandinavians actually settled in that location.



Map 1.2

Placename evidence: Norwegian (left) and Danish (right)

Hybrid forms

As with Anglo-Saxon placenames, a number of Scandinavian place-names were formed by adding the name of the tribal leader (e.g. *Corby* = Kori's village; *Formby* = Forni's village). In some cases, an Anglo-Saxon tribal leader's name was simply replaced by a Scandinavian one. Sometimes this led to a situation where within one placename there was a word of Scandinavian origin as well as one of Anglo-Saxon origin. The classic – though disputed – example is *Grimston*, which was thought to combine the Scandinavian personal name *Grímr* with the Anglo-Saxon word *tun* (= village). Other examples are *Rolston* and *Oulston*, whose first elements are formed from the Scandinavian names *Hróllfr* and *Ulfr*. Words of mixed origin are called HYBRID FORMS.

The fourth wave of newcomers were the Norman French, who invaded England in 1066. Norman French became a prestige language spoken by the upper ranks and used for administration. Most traditional place-names, however, were left unchanged, perhaps so that administration could continue smoothly. Amazingly, a Norman force of about 10,000 had captured a country whose inhabitants are thought to number about 1 million (estimates of population are especially controversial). Clearly, the numbers would only allow the replacement of people in key positions with Normans. But some placenames were changed. As with Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian placenames, sometimes the personal name of the local lord of the manor or powerful family became part of the placename. For example:

Melton *Mowbray* (Roger de Moubray)
Leighton *Buzzard* (the Busard family)
Stanstead *Mountfitchet* (the Montifiquet family)

However, note that French personal names often stand alone, usually as the second word in a placename. French, unlike some of the other languages we have considered, did not greatly interfere with the traditional placename. In some cases, as happened with Scandinavian-influenced names, the pronunciation was slightly changed so that it would be easier for a French speaker. For example, Nottingham originally had the (perhaps less attractive from the point of view of today!) name *Snotingeham*. The first two sounds are an unusual combination for a French speaker, so the [s] was dropped. Possibly the most common French words to be incorporated into placenames are *beau* and *bel*, which mean beautiful or fine (e.g. *Beaulieu* = beautiful place; *Beaumont* = beautiful mountain; *Belvoir* = beautiful view). These positive terms were sometimes used to improve the image suggested by a placename, as when *Fulanpettæ* ('foul pit') was changed to *Beaumont*.

What about more recent developments in placenames? In Britain, very few placenames have been coined in recent centuries. According to one source, about 98 per cent of current English placenames originated before 1500. The few placenames that have been recently created tend to commemorate famous events and people. For example:

Battles: Waterloo, Maida Vale, Peacehaven
People: Nelson, Telford, Peterlee

An interesting modern development is the transference of a placename from one country to another. For plentiful examples of placename transference it is best to look outside Britain and in particular at areas of the world that were subjected to British colonisation. In the United States, for instance, we find the transferred British placenames *Birmingham*, *Bristol*, *Cambridge*, *Canterbury*, *Lancaster*, *New Castle*, *Norwich*, *Swansea* and many others. However, it is not the case that British colonisers could operate in total isolation from the local population. In many cases local place-names survived, despite the colonisers' attempts to create a second England by transferring placenames out of Britain. As a result, in former British colonies one typically finds a mixture of transferred British place-names and native placenames. To some extent, the same is true of the English spoken by the colonisers: it came into contact with the local language and adopted some of its particular characteristics, leading to a distinct variety of English. This globalisation of English is an important development and we shall return to it in Unit 11.

EXERCISES

1.2 If you live in Britain, investigate the placenames of your area. If you do not live in Britain, use a fairly detailed map of Britain and select a particular area. Take at least 15 placenames and use the readings suggested at the end of this unit to discover how those placenames came about. Classify your placenames according to (a) the period in which they were devised; (b) etymology, i.e. Celtic, Latin, Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian, French; (c) the kind of element involved (e.g. personal name, description of local landscape or vegetation, commemorative); and (d) the form of the placename (e.g. a single word, a compound, a hybrid). Try to relate any trends you discover to historical or cultural factors.

1.3 To what extent did British colonisers use transferred British placenames?

(a) Investigate the placenames of Australia. You could just consider the most important placenames in Australia, or, with a more detailed map, the placenames of a particular state.

(b) Investigate the placenames of the United States. You could make the study more interesting by comparing three states: one from the east, one from the south and one from the west. Make sure that you sample the same number of placenames from each state.

You will need to devise your own classification system, perhaps including such categories as transferred placenames (with sub-categories according to where the placename was transferred from, e.g. Britain, France), biographic (with subcategories according to the nationality of the person the place was named after), or language derivation (with sub-categories according to the language involved, e.g. English, French, Spanish, Aboriginal, Indian). At the conclusion of your investigation, calculate percentages for your various categories, so that you can compare the relative importance of different types of placename.

DISCUSSION POINT

Just as placenames can be revealing, so can personal names. The earliest English hereditary surnames appear shortly after the Norman Conquest. Investigate the history of your surname. Does your name seem to be associated with a particular language? Is it associated with a particular region? Is it in fact originally a placename? Is it the name of an occupation, or does it specify a particular family relationship? If you are part of a group, find out the histories of other surnames. Are there particular trends within your group?

SUMMARY

- In its history, Britain has been populated by a number of different peoples (Britons, Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Scandinavians, French) speaking different languages. This diversity has had an important effect – as we shall see during the course of this book – on the way the English language has developed.
- By investigating the etymology of placenames, we can appreciate the influence of a diverse range of languages at various points in time, and also gain insight into the social, cultural and economic history of Britain.
- Studying the history of English involves carefully weighing evidence. We must be careful not to rely on assumptions. Evidence can be of varying types – this chapter drew upon archaeological evidence, for example – but it should not be taken at face value. Historical change in spelling, for example, can easily disguise the etymology of a word.

FOLLOW-UP READING AND RESEARCH

The key pages on placenames in David Crystal's *Encyclopedia of the English Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) are pp. 140–7. For a discussion of personal names see pp. 148–53. Good introductory books on placenames are Kenneth Cameron's *English Place-Names* (London: Batsford, 1996) and Margaret Gelling's *Signposts to the Past: English Placenames and the History of England* (London: Phillimore, 2000). Eilert Ekwall's *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960) is a valuable source of information, as is Victor Watts's *Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-names* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). For American placenames a standard source of information is George R. Stewart's *A Concise Dictionary of American Place-Names* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970). A good introductory book on surnames is P.H. Reaney's *The Origin of English Surnames* (London: Routledge, 1967). For reference purposes, a decent work is Patrick Hanks and Flavia Hodges' *A Dictionary of Surnames* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). This unit has tapped into a lot of British history. Now might be the time to brush yours up! An excellent survey of the main period we have been dealing with in this unit is Edward James's *Britain in the First Millennium* (London: Arnold, 2001). Alternatively, explore the websites given in Appendix VI for general British history.