

East Anglian Surnames

Patrick Hanks

Family Names Research Project

Bristol Centre for Linguistics

University of the West of England

Email: patrick.w.hanks@gmail.com

Talk Outline

- Surnames in the 1881 census that are most strongly associated with (respectively) Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, according to Steven Archer's *British Surname Atlas*.
- Compare the results of FaNBI research into the origins and history of each of these surnames.
 - Did they originate in (or near) the relevant county, or were they immigrants from elsewhere?
 - HAnDOUT & thanks to FaNBI colleagues, esp. Paul Cullen.
- A selected case history.
- (Tentative) conclusions
 - relative stability of population in the three counties vs. early migration into them?

Population statistics

- In surname studies, we are generalizing across very large volumes of very unstable data.
- Are we comparing like with like?

– Year	Source	Norfolk	Suffolk	Essex
– 1881	Archer	446,000	353,000	571,000
– 1961	GENUKI	561,000	349,000	1,860,000
– 2011	Wikipedia	858,000	350,000	1,800,000*

* Boundary changes in 1974 affected Essex in particular. A large chunk of what had been SW Essex was assimilated into Greater London.

England: Administrative Counties 1890-1965



County-specific Surnames

Select a county and display a list of surnames characteristic of that county. The Threshold option restricts the listing to UK populations above the selected number of occurrences (default=100, minimum=10). Double-click to select a surname for mapping. The Percentage column displays the proportion of the occurrences within the selected county. See the program Help for an explanation of the Banwell figure. Click on a column header to change sort order (default = 'percentage'). See the Help for the selection criteria.

Selection

County :

Norfolk

Threshold :

50

Surname :



Copy Table

Help

Clear All

ID >	Surname	Number in County	National Total	Percentage	Banwell
1	Peachment	50	51	98 %	65.3
2	Shackcloth	50	51	98 %	65.3
3	Winterbone	50	51	98 %	65.3
4	Popay	61	63	97 %	64.5
5	Thouless	55	57	97 %	64.2
6	Greef	56	60	93 %	62.1
7	Jermamy	74	80	93 %	61.6
8	Neustead	62	67	93 %	61.6
9	Cletheroe	55	62	89 %	59.1
10	Artherton	60	68	88 %	58.7
11	Mappert	72	81	87 %	57.9

Identifying the most associated names for each county (1881, Archer)

'Most associated' surnames

- More than 50% of 1881 bearers located in Norfolk/Suffolk/Essex:
 - Norfolk: 268 surnames
 - Suffolk: 107 surnames
 - Essex: 120 surnames
- More than 70%:
 - Norfolk: 82 surnames
 - Suffolk: 24 surnames
 - Essex: 36 surnames

Threshold: minimum 50 bearers in the UK in 1881.

Among the most typical Norfolk surnames

- **Locative, indigenous:** *Framingham*; *Scottow*; *Tungate*; *Kitteringham* (< Ketteringham); *Oswick* (< Oxwick); *Matsell* (< Mattishall); *Mindham* (< Mundham); *Debbage* (< Debach, Suffolk)
- **Locative, immigrant:** *Chestney* (< Le Quesnay, N France); *Bunkell* (< Bunkle, Berwicks, Scotland); *Cletheroe* (< Clitheroe, Lancs); *Hornigold* (< Horninghold, Leics).
- **Patronymics:** *Hannent* (< ME *Anand*, *Anund*, *Hanon* < OSc *Anundr*, equivalent of Scottish *Annan*); *Hodds* (< ME *Hod*, *Odd* < OSc *Odd*); *Randlesome* (= ‘Randolf’s son’); *Jeary* (= Geary); *Jarred* (= Gerard); *Ebbage* (= *Ebbes* ult. < *Herbert*); *Semmence* (= Simmons); *Merrison* (metronymic = ‘Mary’s son’)
- **Nicknames:** *Peachment* (< ME, OF *parchemin* ‘parchment’: occupational or descriptive?); *Popay*, *Poppy* (‘poppy’).

Among the most typical Essex surnames

- **Locative, indigenous:** *Redg(e)well* (< Ridgewell); *Totham* (< Great & Little Totham); *Mattams* (< Mattins Farm (Radwinter) or Martinfield Green (Saffron Walden), both in Essex); *Watsham* (< Wattisham, Suffolk).
- **Locative, immigrant:** *Pavelin* (< Pavilly, N France); *Pasterfield* (= *Baskerville*, < Boscherville, N France); *Bloyce* (< Blois, N France); *Pertwee* (Huguenot, < Perthuis, name of several places in France); *Rulton* (= *(W)relton*, < several candidates, none in Essex); *Cogdale* (prob. < Coquetdale, Northumb); *Trowles* (prob. < Trowell, Notts).
- **Patronymics:** *Pettican* (< ME *Peterkin*), *Allston* (< ME *Alstan* < OE *Æðelstān* or similar).

Among the most typical Suffolk surnames

- **Locative, indigenous or adjacent:** *Baalham* (< Baylham, Suffolk); *Crisell* (< Creswell); *Colthorpe* (< Calthorpe, Norfolk); *Landymore* (< Landermere, Essex); *Naphine* (< Knapton, Norfolk).
- **Locative, immigrant:** *Laflin* (< Scottish or Irish *Laughlin*); *Muddock* (< Scottish *Murdoch*); *Hadgraft* (< Dutch/Flemish *Hooggraaf* or *Hoograven*).
- **Nicknames:** *Gildersleeves* (‘golden sleeves’); *Pickess* (< ANF *picois* ‘pickaxe’, presumably occupational).
- **Occupational:** *Strowger* (‘astrologer’); *Smy* (‘smith’).

Folk etymology (1): Whistlecraft

- The surname most associated with Suffolk in the 1881 data is *Whistlecraft*.
 - It has nothing to do with *whistles*, nor with *crafts* or *craftiness*.)
- Reaney & Wilson say that it is probably ‘dweller at the croft in the river-fork’, from OE *twisla* ‘river-fork’.
 - This is evidently guesswork. No place so called has been identified anywhere. R&W adduce only one EB, Thomas *Wyslylcroft*, 1524 in Suffolk Subsidy Rolls.
- More plausible is that it is a variant of the Cheshire name *Wolstencroft* (from a place in Agden).
 - Thomas *Wustyncrofte* and John *Wustencroft* are in the 1524 Suffolk Subsidy Rolls.
 - Indigenous origin is always a preferable hypothesis, but (when it fails or seems dubious) early migration cannot be ruled out.

Folk etymology (2)

- The Norfolk long *a*: *Artherton*, *Arthurton* (< Atherton, Lancs, or < ME *at ther doune* ‘at the hill’), as if containing the personal name *Arthur*.
- *Peachment* (< ME, OF *parchemin* ‘parchment’), as if from *impeachment*.
- *Baalham* (< Baylham, Suffolk), as if from the Old Testament name *Baalam*.

Case study: a locative surname

- *Fosdyke* is a small village in S Lincs on the river Welland, near its discharge into the Wash.
- Medieval bearers are found in S Lincs, including Walter *de Fotesdik*, 1202 in Assize Rolls; Robertus *de Fossedike*, 1381 in Poll Tax (Moulton, Lincs); Emma *Fossedik* alias *Fosdik*, 1381 in Poll Tax (Whaplode, Lincs).
- Some time thereafter the surname died out in Lincs.
- No modern bearers of the surname use the place-name spelling.
- The surname migrated first to Suffolk, where a characteristically E Anglian pronunciation with long -o- came to be represented as -or-: *Forsdyke*.
- In the C16-C17 the surname also became established in Norfolk (mainly in Filby), and metathesized to *Frosdick*. In most spellings it is now a Norfolk surname.

Surname epicentres move

- A typical FaNBI cluster: main entry *Forsdyke* (2011 frequency: 319)
- Frequent modern variants are *Forsdike* (202), *Forsdick* (202), *Fosdike* (52), *Fosdick* (16), *Frostick* (460), *Frosdick* (354).
- Earliest known bearers:
 - *Fosdyke*: 1524 in Suffolk (Subsidy Rolls); 1557 in Wingfield, Suffolk
 - *Fosdick*: 1553 in Glemsford, Suffolk (now rare in GB; numerous in the USA)
 - *Frosdick*: 1610 in Horstead, Norfolk
 - *Frostick*: 1620 in South Walsham, Norfolk
 - *Fosdike*: 1661 in Shotley, Suffolk
 - *Forsdick*: 1669 in London; 1793 in Irstead, Norfolk
 - *Forsdike*: 1757 in Levington, Suffolk
 - *Forsdyke*: 1760 in Filby, Norfolk
- The epicentre of this cluster of surnames moved from S Lincs (C11-C14) to E Suffolk (C15-C17) to E Norfolk (Flegg, Filby; C17-now).

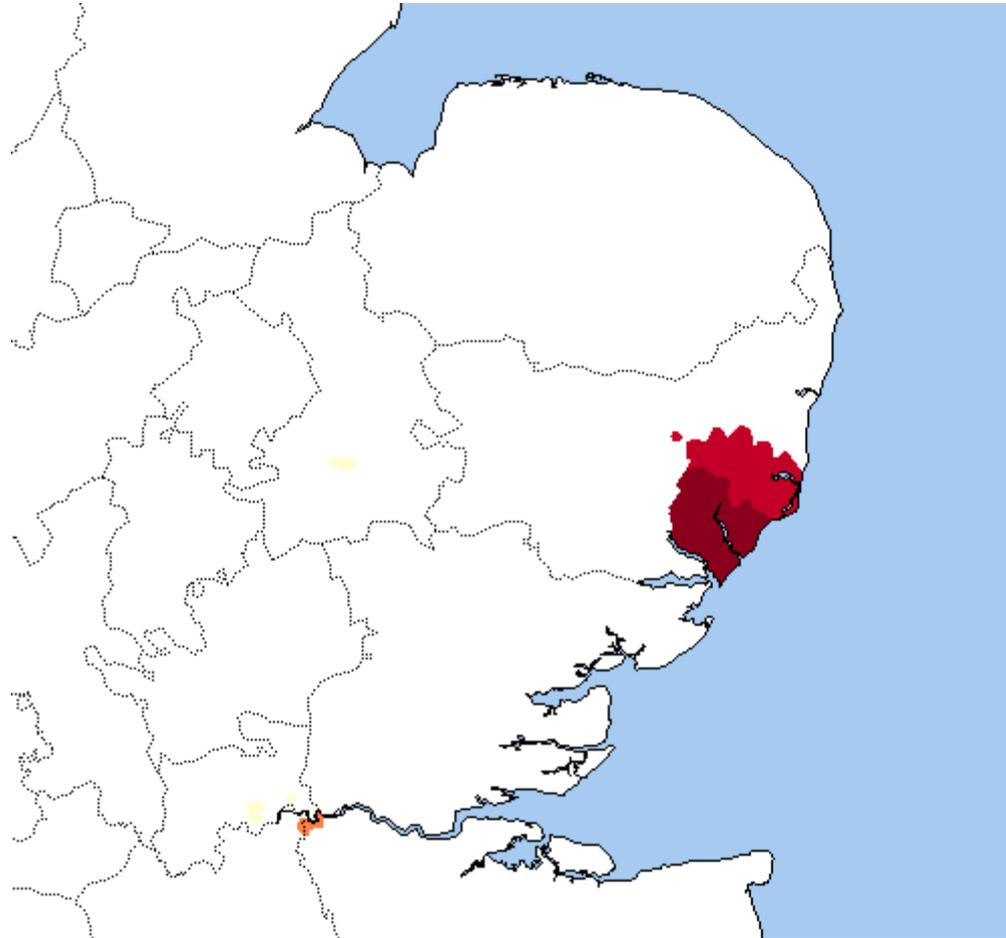
the southward creep and palatalization of Fo(r)sdyke

Additionally, IGI records, among others, the following rare forms:

- *Fosdicke* (14 bearers, 1563-, in Suffolk and Norfolk)
- *Fosdeck* (2 bearers, 1590 & 1612, in Little Bealings and Woodbridge, Suffolk)
- *Fostdicke* (3 bearers, 1648- , in Great Bealings, Suffolk)
- *Frostich* (9 bearers, 1751- , Hingham, Norfolk; 1820-, Mersea Island, Essex)
- William *Frosdyche* (1 bearer, 1776 in Norwich, Norfolk)
- *Frostish* (4 bearers, 1852- , in Little Bromley, Essex)

Fosdyke in 1881

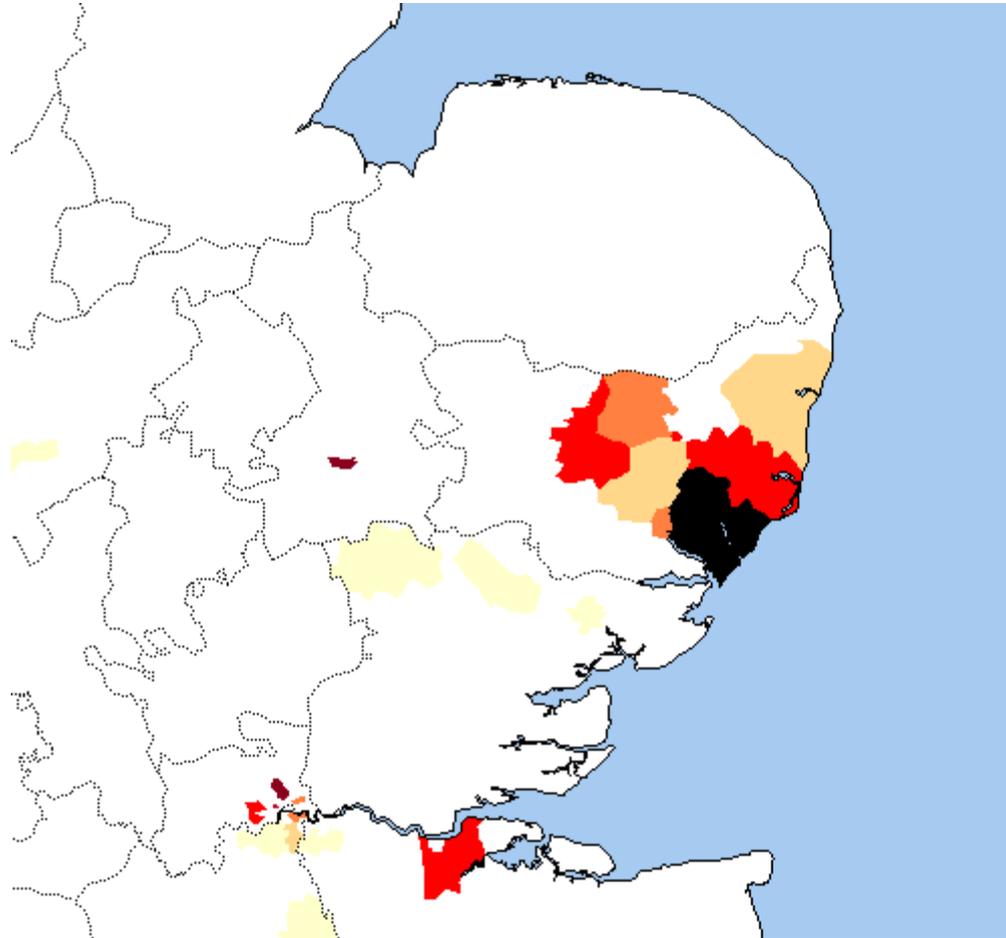
(42 bearers)



(Archer: distribution by Poor Law Union)

Forsdyke in 1881

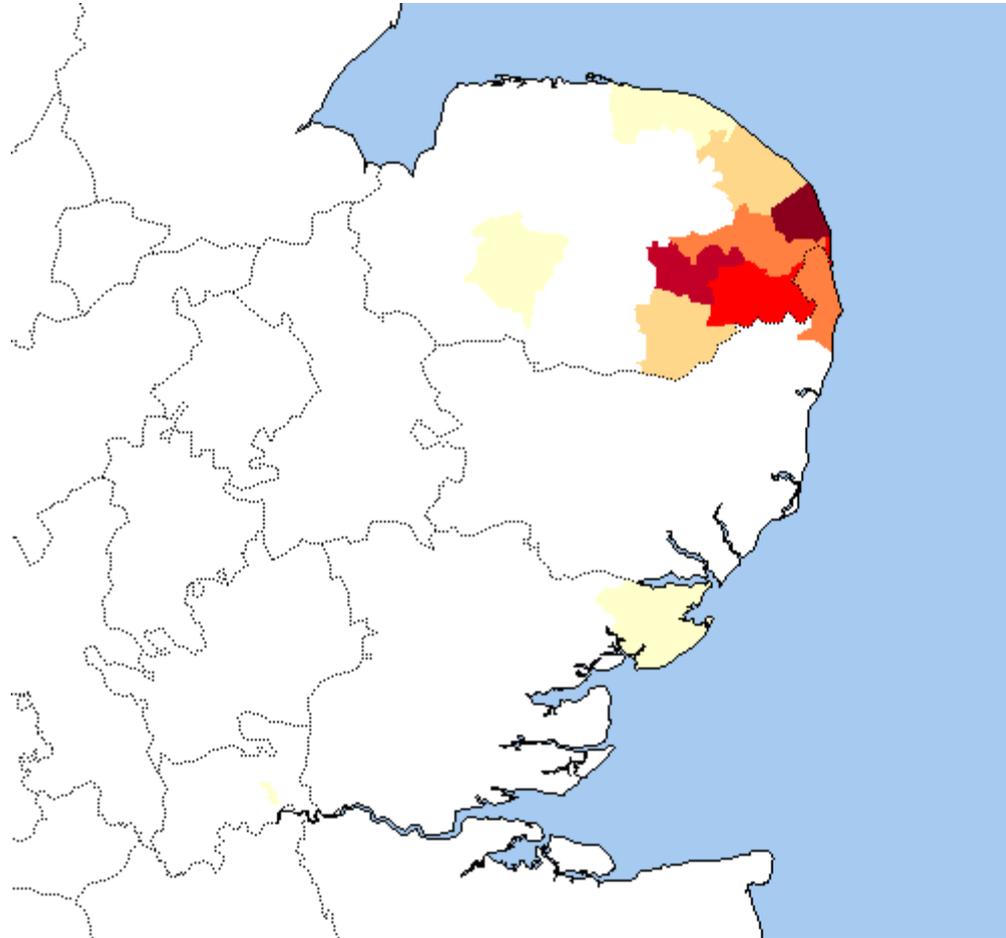
(147 bearers)



(Archer: distribution by Poor Law Union)

Frosdick in 1881

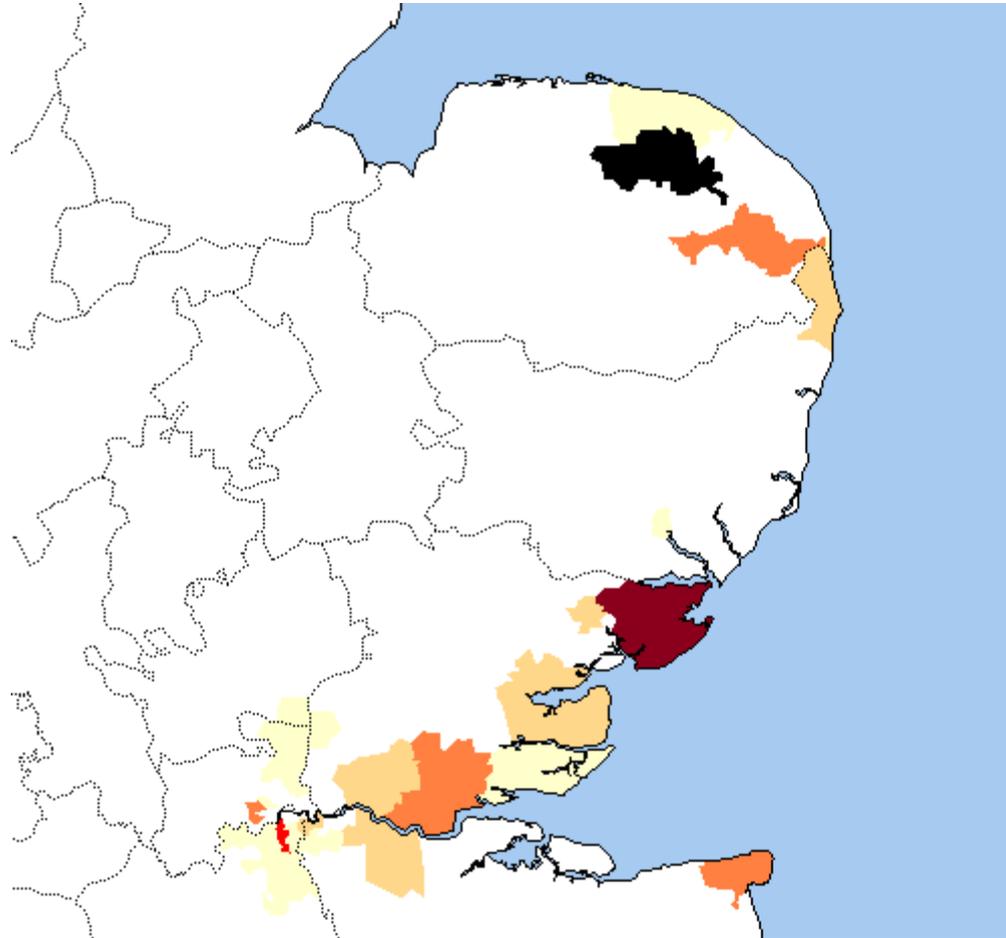
(187 bearers)



(Archer: distribution by Poor Law Union)

Frostick in 1881

(202 bearers)



(Archer: distribution by Poor Law Union)

Who were the Fo(r)sdykes?

- Like *Laflin*, *Fo(r)sdyke* and its variants are ‘coastal’ surnames. Before C19, people who moved about generally preferred to travel by sea rather than by land.
- It seems likely that many of the Fo(r)sdykes were inshore fishermen or coastal sailors by hereditary trade.

Continuing mysteries

- Surnames of unidentified origin:
- Norfolk: *Arnup, Bessey, Chettleburgh, Daplyn, Feek, Larwood, Sillis, Whittleton, Yallop.*
- Suffolk: *Emsden* (derivation from Elmdon in Essex is very uncertain), *Hurr.*
- Essex: *Boughtwood (Boultwood), Legerton, Wil(l)smore.*

Some methodological observations on the study of surnames

- Vast quantities of data (*unmanageably vast for traditional methods*)
- Forms of surnames (spellings) are highly variable
- Locations, too, are highly variable, though statistically significant associations are everywhere observable:
 - People (unlike places) move around a lot—and have always done so
 - Sometimes over short distances, sometimes long
 - **Epicentres move too.**
- Surnames can only be studied by computational analysis of “big data”
- Statistical methods (not yet developed)
- Etymologies, etc., are hypotheses with varying degrees of probability
- “A high degree of probability is in no way equivalent to a certainty”
 - N. Chomsky

Conclusions

- The names studied in this exercise were not a statistically valid sample. A fuller study of population stability and migration is needed.
- But impressionistically:
 - Many of the surnames most associated with Essex (56%) originated outside the county:
 - from Scotland, France (Norman, Huguenot), Flanders, Netherlands, Notts, Derbys, Northumb, and even Ireland.
 - The Norfolk population seems to be rather more stable. Many of the surnames (67%) most associated with Norfolk originated there.
- Surnames are inherently unstable, mainly because people move around, can't spell their own names, and die.
- There was more early migration than is generally believed.
- Destabilizing influences include: a) proximity to a large city such as London; b) proximity to the sea coast.
- For most of history, the sea was a highway, not a barrier.