

What's in a Name?



Place names can be a clue to hundreds of years of history!

Some of the names around the Ridgeway are well over 1,000 years old. The earliest are British names, from before the Roman period, next come Latin names from Roman times, then Old English ones from the time of the Saxons.

Here are some names you know well – but do you know where they come from?

1. **Abbotsbury**: Old English for 'the town of the Abbot'
2. **Broadmayne**: *Broad* is Old English for broad or wide and *mayne* is even older, from the British name for stone.

So what do you think **Little Mayne** means?

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3. **Bincombe**: *Bean* + *cumb* is Old English for 'the valley where beans grow'.

How do you think **Lower Bincombe** got its name?

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4. **Came Wood**: is Old English for 'Wood belonging to the Abbey of Caen' in France.
5. **Dorchester**: Dorchester is a Old English name but it has earlier roots: *chester* means a Roman camp and *Dorn* was the British name for the people who lived there.

Can you think of any other towns which end in '**chester**'?

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6. **Elwell**: *El* comes from the Old English name for an omen, so it gets its name 'The Wishing Well'
7. **Little Bredy**: Little Bredy takes its name from the **River Bride**. *Bride* is a British river name meaning 'boil' or 'bubble'.

What do you think **Bride Head** means?

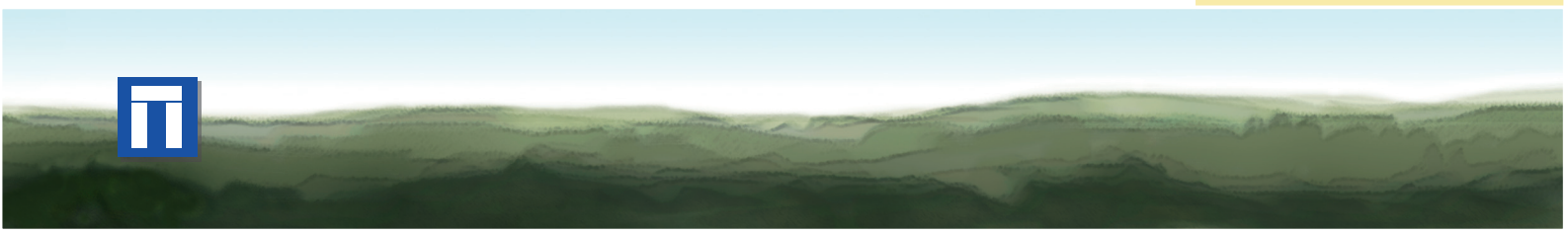
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Timeline

**Old English (Saxon)
(AD500 –)**

**Roman/Latin
(AD43 –)**

**British
(in use before AD43)**



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8. **Maiden Castle:** *Mai* + *dun* comes from the Celtic for 'great hill' or 'principle fort'

9. **Portesham:** *port* + *hamm* In **Old English** *port* can mean either a harbour or a market town. *Hamm* means village.

Which do you think **Portesham** means?

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9. **Upwey:** *Wey* is a **British** river name.

What do you think **Upwey** means?

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10. **Waddon:** In **Old English** it is *wad* + *dun* which means hill where they grow woad. (Woad is a plant used to dye material blue.)

11. **Winterbourne:** Winterbourne comes from the **Old English** words *winter* + *burna* and means a stream that flows in winter. **Winterbourne Abbas** was once owned by the Abbey of Cerne. **Winterborne Monkton** was once owned by monks.

What do you think **Winterborne Came** means? (Remember **Came Wood!**)

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