Scandinavian elements in Suffolk place-names

Les éléments scandinaves dans les noms de lieux du Suffolk

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Abstract

Suffolk is the only English county which had some Scandinavian settlement and influence, but lacks a published comprehensive place-name survey. But now a survey of Suffolk place-names is underway (by Keith Briggs), and we are able to give a progress report on some of the Scandinavian elements. Several new discoveries amongst minor place-names are pointed out. Precisely because the Scandinavian settlement was sparse (and mostly coastal), such small pieces of evidence are of greater-than-usual value.

Main message: total corpus of Scandinavian toponyms is small, so any additions are of relatively larger importance.

Apologies: these slides lack documentation of sources; this information is available on request.
Le Suffolk est le seul comté anglais qui ait eu une colonie scandinave, mais pour lequel on ne dispose d’aucune étude complète et publiée sur les noms de lieux. Une telle étude est maintenant en cours (par Keith Briggs), et nous pouvons fournir un rapport concernant l’évolution des travaux sur certains des éléments scandinaves. Nous remarquons plusieurs nouvelles découvertes parmi les noms médiévaux des lieux-dits, fermes, et champs. Etant donné que la colonisation scandinave était clairsemée et principalement confinée à la côte du comté, ces fragments d’information sont d’une grande valeur historique.
Outline

- Summary of the existing state of knowledge of Scandinavian place-names in Suffolk (based mostly on parish names).
- Presentation of new data found in manuscript sources, recently published cartularies, etc. Most of this concerns minor names; i.e. names of farms, tenements, woods, and fields.
- Main conclusion: conventional view of distribution is not accurate; even the newer view can be expected to change in the near future as work progresses.
The view of Smith, *English place-name elements* (1956)

Map 10: “The Scandinavian settlement: Parish names of Scandinavian origin”
A more up-to-date view

Scandinavian & Anglo-Scandinavian place-name types

- 'Grimston-hybrid'
- 'Grimston-hybrid'?
- other ON ton
- other thorp
- ON thorp
- ON thorp?
- thwaite
- topographical
- topographical?
- hybrid
- minor hybrid
- uncertain
- Peat & alluvium soils
- Land over 30 m OD
- Land over 60 m OD
The established Scandinavian(ized) toponyms in Suffolk

- **thorp**: about 20 cases, a few lost (some now Thorpe Hall etc.)
- **toft**: Lowestoft Hloðvér
- **kirkja**: Kirton, Kirkley, *Kirkton* (Shotley)
- **lund**: Lound
- **karl**: Carlton × 2, Carlford
- **bý**: Ashby (*Askeby* 13th), Barnby, Risby (not Wilby!)
- **eik**: Eyke
- **stofn**: Stoven
- **þveit**: Thwaite
- **konung**: Coney Weston

(plus Grimston hybrids: see next slides)
The established Grimston hybrids in Suffolk (with OE *tūn*)

**Surviving:**

**Lost:**
- *Barkestone* (1086–1346) **Børk**, *Thurkelton* (Shotley) 1086–18th **Thurkil**.

**Doubtful:**
- *Gapton* *Gabbi*: more likely *gappe* ‘gap’ (cf. surname *atte Gappe*).
Some other known hybrids in Suffolk

NB: these can be cases of borrowing of Scandinavian personal names into English.

- Kettleburgh: **Ketil** + **beorg**.
- Gusford (Stoke-by-Ipswich) *Gutthuluesforda* 1086: **Guthulf** + **ford**.
- Ilketshall: **Ylfketil** < **Ulfketil** + **halh**.
- ? **Stokerland** (Eyke).
More Grimston hybrids in Suffolk

- **Guston** (Kirton) *Guthiestuna* 1086, to 1785
  - ?*Guth* (<*Guthfrith*?).
- **Ingleston** (Foxhall) *Ingoluestuna* 1086, to 1536
  - *Ingulf*.
- **Isleton** (Foxhall) *Isleuestuna* 1086, to 1245
  - *Islēf*.
- **Strewston** (Kirton) *Struestuna* 1086, to 1554
  - ?*Strui* (?*Strut*).
- Brotherton (Hacheston) *Brodertuna* 1086, to 1839
  - ODan personal name *Broper*?
- Sharpstone **Skarf** (see next slide).

For Foxhall, see Briggs JEPNS 42 (2010) 31–42.
Sharpstone (Barham)

- **Escarlestuna, Scaruerstuna**, etc. 1086
- No OE personal name **Scearf** is recorded, though there is some evidence for **Sceorf**.
- A Grimston hybrid, with the common Scandinavian by-name **Skarf** ‘cormorant’?
- Scarsdale Hundred in Derbyshire incorporates the same name **Skarf**, and like Sharpstone has a recorded spelling with an irregular **-l-**: **Scaluesdale** 1130.
- Sharlstone in Yorkshire may an identical name, since early forms include some such as **Scharuest(on)**’ 1173–93.
- Ekwall suggests that Sharples in Lancashire contains a word **scherpel** or **scearpol** meaning ‘peak’ or ‘rough place’. Influence from this word might explain the apparently irregular **-l-** in some of the **Sharp**- names.
- Cf. also Scartho (Lincolnshire), **Scarfho** 1177.
Grisetoft (Roughham)

- Recorded as *Grisetoft*, -*tuft* from c.1100 to c.1250.
- ‘pig toft’ $<\text{grīs} ‘\text{young pig}’$, or personal name *Grīs*?
- The Kalendar of Abbot Samson (12th) states “*Grisetoft q[ue] dicitur parva Bertone*” (now Barton Mills).
- Cf. *Grisetoft* (Walpole St Peter, Norfolk), Insley p.148
- Cf. *Girsby* (County Durham) EPNS PN Du 1.199.
- An apparently identical name occurs in Normandy as Grisetot (50690, Teurthéville-Hague), but it is unexplained by Renaud, *Vikings et noms de lieux de Normandie: dictionnaire des toponymes d’origine scandinave en Normandie*.
- Other possible animal-tofts:
  - *Hundstoft* 1086 (Wilford Hundred)
  - *Muletoft* 1215 (Thorndon)
lund ‘grove’

NB: can be ambiguous with lond, a ME spelling of “land”.

- Shrubland (Barham): Scrubbelund’ 1204 FF. Another case: cultura called Scrubbelonde (Lawshall) in 14th-century Ramsey Cartulary. Both are good early evidence for ME scrubbe (OED3 from 1398).
- Hobland Hall (Bradwell): Habelund 1224 (Assize Rolls).
- Lounde 1295 (Bury St Edmunds, survey).
- Sutherlound 1311 (Great Bealings) (SRO HD1538/130/1).
- le Lound 1413 (Peasenhall) (HD1538/345/1/57).
- Lound Wood 1665 (Ickworth, survey).
- Landelund, Prestelund 1235 (Knodishall).
ODan **busk** ‘bush’, ***byski** ‘bushy area’


**busk:**
- *le Busk* 1325 (Sibton Estates)
- Suffolk medieval surnames: *Busk, del Busch, de Buskes*.

***byski:**
- Bixley (Suffolk and Norfolk).
- *Bischelea* 1086; *Bisk-, Bysk-* etc. 13th onwards.
- *Biskelund* (Wymondham Cartulary, Norfolk) probably contains *biskop*.
- Cf. Byske, Bysket, Præstebysket (Bornholm); Biskeagre; Biskehøj etc. in Denmark.
Newbourne ‘nine springs’


- *Ne(u)brunna* 1086, usually *-brun(ne)* until 1500.
- The usual etymology ‘new stream’ has semantic objections.
- Thus Briggs has suggested *níu brunnar*.
- ‘nine springs’ has many parallels (even more so ‘seven springs’)
- However, ‘nine springs’ is unknown in Scandinavia, so one view is that this is a Scandinavian calque on an originally OE name.
- Newbourne is certainly an area long famous for its many springs.
- Cf. Neufffontaines (Nièvre).
Some other hybrid minor names in Suffolk

- **Sagrimesleiam** 12th (East Bergholt): **Sægrīm+lēah** ‘clearing’.
- **Gunolfeshace** 1198 (?Spexhall): **Gunnolf+hæc** ‘hatch, gate’.
- **Unspaksheg** 1202 (Barham): **Unspak<Ōspak+hege** ‘hedge’.
- **Hindolueswell** 1202 (Barham): **Hildulf(?)+welle** ‘stream’.
- **Hamundered’** 1202 (Barham): **Hāmund+*ryde** ‘clearing’.
- **Aslakeshawe** 1325 (Sibton): **Āslāk+haga** ‘enclosure’.
- **Sumerfalee** 13th (Bentley): **Sumerfugl(?)+lēah**.
More thorps and tofts

- **Clachestorp** 1086, **Clakestorp** 13th (Eyke): **Klak**
  - cf. **Clakestorp** in Matlask (Norfolk, EPNS PN Nf 3.23)
  - cf. **Clakesmede** 13th (Brantham)
- **Aketorp** 1086, **Hacketorp** 1228 (Lowestoft): **Āki**
  - cf. Ågerup, Denmark
- **Ayleucstoft** 1240 (Weybread), **Aylemerestoft, Erburestoft, Grimestoft, Leshestoft** 1235 (Knodishall); all from Butley Cartulary.
- **Cawtyestoft** (Sapiston), **Bekkystoft** (Stanton), **Herewardystoft** (Wickham Skeith); all 15th, Sudbury wills.
hop, holm ‘raised area in marsh’

- Westhopmerse 1208 (Falkenham)
- Fulholm 1275 (Gorleston) fugl?
- Odenholm: was a meeting place in Ipswich, medieval spellings typically Odenholm, Odynholm. Apparently the same name as Odensholm/Osmussaar in Estonia (see map next slide).

(Hopton may have OE hop; Hopton-on-Sea may have Scandinavian hóp ‘inlet of the sea’.)
Odelso, Estonia — 16th-century map by Portantio
Streets and other Þings

- *Mycelegata* 1086 (Trimley) – *Micelgate* 1493.
- Raingate (Bury St Edmunds) *Reynegate* 1295 – present: *rein-gata* ‘boundary street’.
- Northgate, Southgate, Risbygate (Bury St Edmunds).
- Ingate (earlier *Endegate*) Beccles.
- *Stephen de Steingat* 1228 (Lowestoft, Feet of Fines).
- ? *Breygate* 1639 (Great Livermere) ‘broad road’
- Thingoe (Bury St Edmunds): *þing-haugr* ‘meeting mound’ – Cf. *Thingou* 1202 FF (Holt, Norfolk)

(Thingstead (Ipswich) *Thingstede* 1245 may be purely English.)
Remnants and doubtful cases

- (Wickham) Skeith: skeîð ‘separation, boundary’
  – Cf. Skeygate, Norwich

- Togrind (Cavenham): grein ‘river fork’
  – Briggs JEPNS 44 (2012), 10–11

- Flatford (Brantham) Flotford 12th
  – flot ‘piece of level ground’ (see next slide)

? Sicklesmere Sydolfesmere 11th: *Sidolf < *Sidewulf.

? Sleighton Hill (Trimley), Slaughden (Aldeburgh)
  – slēttæ<sleht-, or OE *slæget ‘sheep pasture’
  – cf. Sleights (Yorkshire)

? Pilbarrow (Somersham) Pilb’ga 1086, Pilberwe 1327
  – pīl ‘willow’ or OE pīl ‘pile’? (Survives as a surname.)

? Melton *mel.

? Seckford (Martlesham) < Scandinavianized secgford.
John Constable, *The Hay Wain* (1821), at Flatford
East Anglia — Scandinavian(ized) place-names types

Place-name types
- 'Grimston-hybrid'
- 'Grimston-hybrid'?
- other ON ton
- by
- ON thorp
- ON thorp?
- other thorp
- habitative
- toft
- thwaite
- topographical
- topographical?
- hybrid
- uncertain

Legend:
- Peat & alluvium soils
- Land over 30 m OD
- Land over 60 m OD
Suffolk — without Grimston hybrids
South-east Suffolk

Scandinavian & Anglo-Scandinavian place-name types

- 'Grimston-hybrid'
- 'Grimston-hybrid'?
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- topographical
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- Peat & alluvium soils
- Land over 30 m OD
- Land over 60 m OD

Peat & alluvium soils
Land over 30 m OD
Land over 60 m OD

Other ON ton
ON thorp
habitative
thorp
hybrid
thwaite
topographical
topographical?
hybrid
other thorp
other ON ton
ON thorp?
Suffolk — more Scandinavian(ized) place-names

Place-name types

- 'Grimston-hybrid'
- topographical
- toft
- thing
- hybrid
- hybrid minor names
- uncertain

Peat & alluvium soils
Land over 30 m OD
Land over 60 m OD
French names brought to Suffolk by the Normans

- **Boulge** Bulges 1086: OFr bulge ‘bulging area of land’
  – Briggs JEPNS forthcoming
- **Gulpher (Trimley)**: Gulpelea 1086, Gulpeler 1274 etc.
  – OFr goupilliere ‘fox hole’
- **Hussey Green (Fressingfield)**: Husseio 1188, Huse 1269 etc.
  – AN houce (huse) ‘holly wood’
- **Caisneid** 11th (Inquisitio Eliensis) ‘oak-wood’.
- ? **Candlet (Trimley)**: Candelenta 1086.
- ? **Clare**: transferred from Clères near Rouen?
- ? **Trimley**: Tremeleia 1086: OFr tremele(t) ‘aspen wood’?
Some final wild speculations

Tangham and Coram both look like -hām names but are not in DB.

? Tangham (Tangham 1275, Butley) tangum: ‘at the tongs (river-fork)’?

?? Coram (Corham or Carham 1306, near Hadleigh): kiarum ‘at the marshes’ (but this would be expected to give ME *kerrum).

? Another dative plural for comparison (OE)?: Yarn Hill (Iken, near the River Alde). No early forms; could it be OE gearum ‘at the fish weirs’, like Yarm in North Yorkshire?

??? Glevering (Hacheston): at a deep gorge of the River Deben — cf. ON gljúvr ‘chasm’ > AS glēvr — but this is a West Norse word, and the -ing would be unexplained.