Word Ways has frequently explored the oddities of United States placenames, in such major articles as Leslie Card’s "A Tale of Cities and Towns" in the August 1970 issue, and Dmitri Borgmann’s four-part "An Onomastic Study" beginning in the May 1973 issue. We believe that the quainter British placenames are even more peculiar than the United States ones discussed earlier, and would like to share them with American readers.

We have assembled a list of 50 names, two for each letter of the alphabet (except X, for which no British placename seems to exist). All names in this list can be found in Bartholomew’s Gazetteer of the British Isles, published by John Bartholomew, London and Edinburgh, 9th edition with supplement, 1966. The names here are of places, villages, towns, localities and parishes; names of rivers, hills, mountains, lakes, woods and other geographical features have been excluded.

Ampney Crucis
Barton-in-the-Beans
Cadoxton-juxta-Neath
Deaf Hill cum Langdale
Edenordinary
Fighting Cocks
Germansweek
Hanging Walls of Mark Anthony
Indian Queens
Jericho
Kiln St. Nicholas
Leighton Buzzard
Market Jew
Near Oxenhope
Over Peover
Pennycumquick
Queen Camel
Readdymoney
Shoulder of Mutton Green
Tolleshunt Knights
Up Ottery
Ventongimps
Wendens Ambo
Yate and Pickup Bank
Zeal Monachorum

Ashby St. Ledgers
Burstwick cum Skeckling
Cow Honeybourne
Dollar
Even Swindon
Freezywater
Great and Little Cowdens
Hereford St. John the Baptist
Irlams o’ the Height
Jerusalem
Knotty Ash
London Apprentice
Middle Wallop
Norton sub Hamdon
O Wood Row
Peterston super Montern
Quex
Rotten Row
Stamford Baron St. Martin Without
Top o’ th’ Hill
Upperup
Victoria Cross
Westward Ho!
Yatton Keynell
Zouch Mills