

AMERICA IS A BRITISH VILLAGE

PETER NEWBY

Chesterfield, England

One of the charms of **Word Ways** is to discover the more offbeat communities of the United States which feature in the various articles of its contributors. This factor has even extended to my first reply from a reader of the magazine to my recent request for words of an unusual lexical property ("A Trivial Challenge", February 1989); Martin Gardner drew my attention to the alternate Os of the Wisconsin town Oconomowoc. However, Great Britain has its share of curiously-named towns and villages, and a small selection of these may be of interest.

COUNTRIES Egypt, Canada, America, Bohemia, Holland, Ireland, Rhodesia, Scotland, Gibraltar, Palestine, New Zealand

CITIES, REGIONS Paris, Canton, Dallas, Dublin, Ostend, Arcadia, Calgary, Dunkirk, New York, Toronto, Normandy, Bethlehem, Charleston, Georgetown, Sebastopol, Philadelphia (I omit examples such as Boston, where the American city has taken its name directly from its British counterpart)

PEOPLE Paul, Clive, Lionel, Martin, Charles, Patrick, Shirley, Winston (there is also a Churchill), Mark Cross, Bolton Percy, Burton Agnes, Edith Weston, Countess Wear, Mavis Enderby, Margaret Marsh, Constable Burton (I omit examples such as Cromwell and Washington where the famous surnames denote ancestral origin)

CREATURES Ram, Seal, Bunny, Eagle, Potto, Swine, Badger, Black Dog, Barnacle, Cowbit, Duck End, Foxhole, Catbrain, Frog Pool, Crow's Nest, Mousehole, Dog Village, Donkey Town, Duck's Cross

MISCELLANEOUS Box, Sea, Ball, Bank, Bean, Beer, Boot, Drum, Gang, Hive, Hole, Lake, Pill, Pool, Sand, Shop, Booze, Brawl, Bride, Bugle, Drift, Fence, Racks, Shelf, Walls, Barley, Barrow, Street, Twenty, Bottoms, Letters, Mucking, Pity Me, Cold Ash, Wide Open, Baker's End, Clock Face, Fairy Cross, Four Throws, Row-of-Trees, Shop Street, Westward Ho, Above Church, Collier's End, Great Snoring, Indian Queens, Cross o' th' Hands, Heart's Delight, Hole-in-the-Wall, Little Comfort, Little Snoring, Plain Dealings, Lower Slaughter, Sixpenny Handley, Barton in the Beans

To set a different ball rolling, the following are the names of British rivers: E, Ba, Og, Add, Ant, Ash, Axe, Box, Doe, Eye, Roy, Rue, Sid, Abel, Alan, Bank, Bran, Bray, Cary, Dane, Dart, Deer, Dove, Earn, Hart, Hope, Idle, Lark, Liza, Mint, Mole, Pang, Pant, Quin, Sand, Shin, Tame, Test, Till, Tone, Went, Wolf, Abbey, Amber, Brain, Bride, Broom, Camel, Chess, Clown, Cover, Creed,

Dutch, Fleet, Greta, Otter, Polly, Snail, Under, Sprint, Weaver, Foulness, Ale Water, Dye Water, Eye Water, Hart Burn, Ewe's Water, Luther Water, Black Cat Water (where these names include Water, Burn, or Stream, that is the full name and they are neither prefixed nor suffixed River; apart from Dutch, which has River as a suffix, all others are prefixed River which gives rise to such delights as River Bank).

We Brits also have our mountains and headlands: Cat Law, Odness (a true quaint), The Bin, Penbrush, Rubha Mor, Dollar Law, Farr Point, Hope's Nose, The Rivals, The Saddle, Blowup Nose, Brown Willy, Girdle Fell, The Cobbler, The Needles, The Pennies, Chicken Head, Priest's Nose, Startup Hill, The Devil's Point.

Our waterfalls include: Dog Fall, Aira Force, Falls of Lora, Grey Mare's Tail, Nelly Ayre Foss.

For outcrops, fissures and columns 'how about: Cow and Calf, Old Man of Hoy, Old Man of Mow, Old Man of Storr.

Cave and cavern names appear as: Wookey Hole, Rob Roy's Prison, The Anchorite's Church.

Three lakes I like are: Over Water, Bottom Flash, Peppermill Dam.

Even sandbanks, such as Mad Wharf, are named on the Ordnance Survey Maps.

With its Dismal Swamp, Craters of the Moon, and Kicking Horse Pass, the map of North America should yield geographical features to rival any found in Britain.