

THE NAME "MARYLEBONE".

BY

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THE "generally accepted" etymology of this name was put into form by Rev. Daniel Lysons, M.A., F.S.A., in his well-known and classic work on the "Environs of London," published in 1795. Therein he writes, in the section on Marylebone (Vol. III, p. 242): "When the church was altered to another spot near the same brook (*i.e.*, the Tybourn) it was called, I imagine, St. Mary at the bourne, now corrupted to St. Mary le bone, or Marybone." Sixty years later, Timbs ("Curiosities of London," 183) repeats Lysons' surmise; and in 1909 Prof. Skeat, in "Notes and Queries" (10th Ser., xi, 201) quotes Timbs, adding, "*i.e.*, St. Mary's near the Brook; and this is correct."

These writers assume an original form of the name which, based upon its modern spelling, may seem reasonable enough; but the form suggested is not supported by the facts, which are now ascertained.

It is now generally agreed by students that the first step in investigating a Place Name is to search the records for the ancient forms of it inscribed therein; and then, having traced the actual (as distinguished from the conjectured) original, or the earliest available spelling, to consider its etymology by the aid of philology; and finally, it may be, to work out its evolution by collecting and collating the intermediate forms as written from time to time by contemporary writers—largely in interpretation of the pronunciation they heard. This method has been followed by the present writer for about 20 years, and in applying it to the name now under consideration an

extensive search in the various contemporary sources has yielded the results tabulated below, from which the following conclusions may be drawn.

The original form was Maryburne, which appears in 1453 and was in use, with but normal variations in spelling, until about 1566, and it appears as late as 1654. (See Nos. 1, 3-6, 13, below.) Its etymology is clear, its two elements being (1) the personal name *Mary* and (2) the familiar word *bourne* in one of its mediæval spellings (O.E. *burna*, *burne*; M.E. *burn,-e*, *bourne,-e*, *born,-e*, *boorn,-e*=a stream), and it will be seen that the other regular "Middle English" forms are represented in the list below.

In its progression to the present form, its first element seems to have suffered little change in sound, the substitution of *i* or *e* for the final *y* being merely incidental to the scribe and not representing any phonetic change. Concurrently, however, the letter *r* in the second element, *bourne*, got dropped more and more frequently, and it finally was silenced altogether—the usual fate of this letter in London and the South, where it has quite lost its original strong roll, and in practice its observance, where it precedes a consonant, is now slight and rare. This change is indicated as early as 1461 (No. 2, below), and becomes very evident during the 16th century (Nos. 7 to 12, and 14 onwards); and it is assisted by the stressing of the first syllable in the first element (*Mary*) and the shortening of its vowel—which leads to the occasional doubling of its *r* (Nos. 9, 17, and 19). The resultant pronunciation, "Mar'ryb'n," appears to have been the popular usage¹ from an early point in the history of the name, and it has been noticeable up to the present time.

¹ Given me about 1875 by a competent Londoner whose experience dated back to about 1830. Sometimes rendered "Mar'rab'n." The final syllable, which was lightly sounded in each case, might be represented by *-bon*, *-bone*, or *-bun*, according to the taste of the writer of the record.

In considering the genesis of the name it should be borne in mind that the earliest entries apply it to the manor or the parish, the Inquisition of 1461 (No. 2 below) and the Fines of 1489 and 1504 (No. 3) giving it as another name for "Tyborne" manor ("the manor of Tyborne otherwise called Maryborne," etc.), and the four entries in 1491 (No. 4) refer to the manor without mentioning the older name (Tyborne) which had been attached to it. The next entries, two Fines of 1510 and 1511, relate to land in the "parish of the Blessed Mary of Marybourne"; and the State "Letters and Papers" mention the rectory of "Maryborne or Tyborne" in 1526, the "parish church of Maryborne or Tyborne" in 1528, the advowson of "Maryborn and Tyborn" in 1530 and 1532, and the "parsonage of Maryborne" and the manor of "Maribourne" in 1533. About 1540, "Maribone-broke" is mentioned by Leland (see below): the first specification of the stream by this name.

The first element is probably connected with the dedication of the newly built church² to the Virgin Mary; and it was incorporated in the place-name between 1400 and 1453—probably during the first few years of that period, and as a renaming due to the odium which had become attached to the old name Tyburn, as has been suggested by Mr. Ashbridge (p. 57 above). It is possible that it was a deliberate substitution for the first element (Ty-) in the old name; or it may be regarded as giving a name to the brook which ran through the parish.

The naming of a stream from the parish or place by or through which it flows is a well-known procedure;³ and

² See the preceding paper. The ultimate source of the statement of the rebuilding in 1400 of the old church of Tybourn on the new site is Bp. Brabrook's Register, cited, e.g., by Newcourt (*Repertorium*, i, 695).

³ E.g., the brook which runs from the Norwood hills to the River Wandle is the "Norbury Brook" as it passes Norbury and the "Graveney" as it goes by Tooting Graveney. There are many such cases, however.

in a number of instances the compound name thus formed has become the name of the place itself. The converse process is also recorded in many cases, some of which I specify in a Note below. In this connection we may note the name of St. Marybourne, a village and parish in Hampshire. It appears as "Burne" and "Bourne" in the 12th and 14th centuries, and late in the 14th century "St. Marie" becomes prefixed.⁴ The Church is dedicated to St. Peter, and not to St. Mary. The stream there—an intermittent brook—is a feeder of the River Test, and is known as "St. Mary's Bourne," and also as "The Upper Test";⁵ the Ordnance Survey (1 inch) marks it "The Bourne Rivulet." It passes two other villages, and appears in their nomenclature, viz., Hurstbourne Tarrant and Hurstbourne Priors.⁶

It may be noted that the brook at Marylebone, after it crossed the Tyburn Road (Oxford Street)—*i.e.*, at the south end of the "Marybourne" parish—was called the Aye Brook, or the "Aybroke" (*e.g.*, in a lease of 1491 in Letter Bk. I, p. 284), evidently from its proximity to the manor, etc., of Aye or Eye; and another well-known name for its lower length was Tyburn,⁷ which was applied as early as the 10th century, in Edgar's grant to Westminster

⁴ Winchester Archives, Subsidy Rolls, etc., cited in Joseph Stevens' "History of St. Mary Bourne" (1888; pp. 218 et seq.). See also Pat. Rolls, 1468 ("Burne St. Mary") and 1475, Inq. P.M. of 1476, and S.P. of 1597 and 1640.

⁵ Stevens' *op. cit.* I note also a "Maribroc" (*i.e.*, Mary brook) in Herefordshire in a 13th century deed (C. 2012) in the Public Record Office.

⁶ "Hurstbourne" was originally Hysseburna (in King Alfred's Will) and later Hussebourne and Hus-. The *t* is a late insertion, and "Tarrant" and "Priors" are mediæval additions to the original name.

⁷ It was assumed by the late J. G. Waller, F.S.A., in his admirable paper on "The Tybourne and the Westbourne" in this Society's Transactions (Vol. VI, p. 244, 1882) that the name of Tybourne was applied to the whole length of the stream from its source at Hampstead to its outflow in the Thames; but evidence of this is not given, and it may not have been the case.

Abbey of c. 970 (printed in Birch's "Cartularium" iii, 260, and elsewhere), and again in Æthelred's grant to the same, of date 1002 (printed in Dean Robinson's "Gilbert Crispin," p. 168—in which is also printed the Edgar charter). On the other hand, Leland, in his Itinerary (Toulmin Smith Edition, ii, 114), written c. 1540, speaks of the "Maribone-broke" running "by the park wall at St. James" in a way which may imply that the "Maribone" name extended beyond its parish-limits and that the brook hereabouts had two and perhaps three names about this time. Mr. Ashbridge's discovery of "Rivulet Spry" as a name for part of its upper course (p. 68 above) on a plan of 1780 is interesting.

I append the list of the forms which I have noted, with the date and description of the record. Where there are many instances, the source of the first is specified, and the number of entries noted follows the latest date of the series. The references "L. & P." and "S.P." are the State records calendered as "Letters and Papers, Domestic" (1509 to 1547), and "State Papers, Domestic" (1547 to 1703). For the entries marked "(Harben)" I am indebted to a list of forms given by the late Henry A. Harben in "Notes and Queries" (10th Ser., XI, 291; April 10, 1909).

1. Maryburne: 1453 (Corporation Letter Book K, 356).
2. Mariboune: 1461 (Inquisitiones Post Mortem).
3. Maryborn,-e: 1489 (Fines) to 1564 (11 entries).
4. Marybourne: 1491 (3 P.R.O. deeds and 1 Fine) to 1566 (11).
5. Mariborn,-e: 1526 (L. & P.), 1654 (Berners Estate Sale).
6. Maribourne: 1533 (L. & P.).

^s This is printed in the Official Calendar as "Marybone," and the MS. is now (1918) temporarily inaccessible. Mr. Harben, who also noted this form, was able to see the original, and he states that the penultimate letter is either *u* or *n* accompanied by an abbreviation mark by which an omitted *n* was usually indicated. I have given the more probable extension.

7. Maribone: 1537 (Grant of St. Giles to Hy. VIII) to 1745 (20).
8. Marybone: 1537 (L. & P.) to 1795 (65).
9. Marrybone, Marry Bone: 1539 (L. & P.), 1650 (S.P.), 1682 (Harben).
10. Marybound: 1541 (2, S. & P.).
11. Marybon: 1542 (L. & P.) to 1755 (10).
12. Marebone: 1563 (Fines), 1593 (Norden, Map Mx).
13. Maryboorne: 1566 (Harben).
14. Maryboune: 1575 (Harben).
15. Maribon: 1575, 1611 (Harben).
16. Mariboone 1592 (Inq. P.M., London).
17. Marribon: 1611 (Harben).
18. Marbone: 1625 (Harben).
19. Marrowbone, Marrow Bone: 1639, 1649, and 1650 (S.P.), 1660, 1667, and 1668 (Pepys), 1708 (Hutton's New View of London), 1714 (Harben), 1733 (New Remarks of London; by Co. of Parish Clerks).
20. Marow bone: 1651 (S.P.).
21. Mary-le-bone, Marylebone, Mary le bone: 1666 (S.P.),⁹ 1689 and 1694 (Harben), 1708 (Plan of Estate, Crace Colln., port. xiv, 18) to 1761 (22)¹⁰.
22. Mary la Bonne: 1708 (Newcourt, "Repertorium," i, 695) to 1721 (9).
23. Mary La Bone: 1711, 1749 (Par. Registers).
24. Mary Le Bon (and -le-bon): 1715 (Par. Registers) to 1755 (10).
25. Mary Le Bonne (and -Lebonne): 1719 (Par. Registers) to 1733 (4).
26. Mary Labon: 1719, 1722 (Par. Registers).

⁹ "Mary-le-bone" in the Official Calendar, but the MS. is not accessible. Reference to the original is desirable, as this appears to be the first instance on record of the *-le-*

¹⁰ Including entries in the Parish Registers. These Registers date back to 1668, but the Place Name is not written therein until 1711. I have not pursued these latest forms after the middle of the 18th century.

The insertion of *-le-* does not appear until the second half of the 17th century; and its use did not become general until about a century later than that. It is evidently another of the now familiar attempts at imparting to the spelling of a Place Name a current notion of its etymology, by a topographer, parish clerk, or other writer.¹¹

At that time the name was usually written Marybone, or Marybon, or Maribone; and one may conjecture that the scribe would regard his inserted *-le-* as explanatory of an otherwise unintelligible name. The spellings numbered 22 to 26 bear this aspect even more clearly, and appear to be attempts at improving on the "le bone" forms—then more or less novel.

An apt and simple instance of this scribal quasi-etymological misspelling is met with in connection with the name of Stepney. The notices now issued by the Office of the Manor give its name as "Stebunheath otherwise Stepney";¹² and the *a* in the former is a modern insertion. "Stebunheth" (with and without a final *-e*) is one of the numerous mediæval spellings found in the records, and the second element, *-heth*, is a familiar M.E. form of the O.E. *hyth* (= hithe, wharf), the other usual M.E. forms being *-hith*, *-hyth*, and *-huth* (with and without a final *-e*); and a modern scribe has evidently read it as "heath," and inserted an *a* to make it agree with this quasi-etymology. I surmise that this happened in the 19th (or perhaps the 18th) century; and it has remained as the official spelling.

It has been suggested that either *lès*, or "at the," may

¹¹ An exercise in which our excellent John Stow was an early amateur, with his Oldborne, Ealdgate, etc., and in which Leland made an earlier error.

¹² Information courteously given me by the Deputy Steward of the Manor of Stepney. I had previously seen a printed official notice bearing this style of the name exhibited on St. Paul's Church, Shadwell.

have formed part of the name at the outset, but may have been dropped before the date of the first record. Assuming that the church was built and dedicated by 1402, and the new name formed and in use within a few years after that, this would imply that a part of the new name dropped so completely out of use within fifty years that it was not written even once in the records. Changes in place-names, however, operate slowly; a form once in use "dies hard," and even if a part of it were being displaced it would be met with in some quarters for a considerable time—probably extending to centuries—before it disappeared so entirely as to leave no trace in sound nor in spelling. Both "lès" and "at the" are too distinctive in sound to be easily lost, and, to judge by experience of such sounds in place-names, either one of them would have persisted for a very much longer time than would here have been the case. The suggestion is against the facts known to us.

The case of Stepney, mentioned above, illustrates this, and to a marked degree, as the longer mediæval form remains in occasional use until the present day, the simpler and easier sound of the present name (Stepney) having failed to eliminate it from the records, although "Stepney" dates back to the first half of the 16th century (c. 1538) and other simplifications are recorded as far back as the 12th century—e.g., Stebehee (c. 1150) and Stebenee (1198).¹³

The records of the name of Battersea afford another instance of the vitality of medial syllables in the longer original or early forms. In its progress from its early forms *Badorices heah* and *Badrices ege*¹⁴ to the 17th cen-

¹³ The early forms indicate an original *Steban* (or *Stebban* or *Stibban*) *hyth* = the hithe or wharf of a man named *Steba*, *Stebba*, or *Stibba*.

¹⁴ Signifying "the island, or waterside land, of *Badoric* or *Badric*" (later forms of the O.E. personal name, *Beaduric*). See L. & Mx. A.S. Transactions, 1913, N.S.II, 434: "A Note on the Name 'Battersea,'" by A. Bonner, in which a dated list of forms is given.

tury spelling now in use, the awkward-sounding 12th century form *Batricheseye* and its literal variants remained in use until 1566, despite the introduction of the shorter and easier-sounding forms of *Batriseye* (recorded in 1365), *Batersey* and *Battesey* (early in 15th century) and *Battersey* (1502). And its neighbour-name, *Putney*, on its road from O.E. *Puttan hyth* (Putta's wharf), maintained its early form of *Puttenhith* (and variants) until 1564, against the simpler forms of *Putneth* (recorded in 1474 onwards) and *Putney* (1503).¹⁵ The case of *Battersæa* is the more striking, as the simplified forms were in use for about two centuries before the longer and harsher renderings dropped out of use, but the older forms of *Putney* persisted for about a century after the simpler modernisations came into use. Other instances are available, but this point need not be laboured.

The prefix "Saint" is first recorded about the close of the 17th century. Mr. Harben noted it under date 1694—a few years earlier than I have observed it.

NOTE. STREAM-NAMES EXTENDED TO VILLAGES, ETC.

Among other instances of this nature the following may be cited. All these became village names at an early date, and some of them before the Conquest. The four etymologies marked (S) appear in Prof. Skeat's *Place Names of Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, and Berkshire* respectively.

Westbourne, London: 1259 Westeburne (Fines) = West stream. This entry refers to "premises in Westeburne," showing that the stream-name was then the Place Name.

¹⁵ For these spellings and dates see *Surrey Fines* (Calendar published by Surrey Archaeological Society, 1894), and "Extracts from the Court Rolls of the Manor of Wimbledon," 1866.

Broxbourne, Herts.: 13th to 15th centuries = *Brokesburn*, and *-bourne*, and in Domesday *Brochesborne* (*ch* = *k* in sound); from O.E. *Brocces burn*, signifying *Brocc's* (personal name) brook (S).

Woburn, Beds.: 10th to 14th centuries = *Woburn,-e*, *Wou-*, *Wu-*; from O.E. *Woh burn* = crooked or winding brook (S). Woburn (Park), near Chertsey, Surrey, has similar early forms and origin.

Pangbourne, Berks.: 9th century *Pæginga burn*, 11th and 13th centuries *Pangeborne*, and *-burn*. From O.E. *Pæginga-burna* = "the stream of the sons of Pæga" (S).

Lambourne, Berks.: 9th century *Lamb-burna* = lamb-stream (S). This stream-name was applied to the place and the Hundred before 1086, as Domesday mentions "Lamborne in Lamborne hundred."

Benfleet, Essex: 9th century *Beamfleot* = O.E. *beam*, a tree, and *fleot*, a fleet, tidal-stream, or creek; with the sense of tree-creek. Purfleet (anciently Portflete), Essex, and Northfleet, Kent, are other cases of creek names extending to village and parish names.

Compare also Bayswater, Mx.; Darenth, Kidbrook, Bekesbourne, and Patribourne, Kent; Hagbourne and Shottesbrook, Berks.; Redbourne, Herts.; Fishbourne and Eastbourne, Sussex.

These names do not exhaust the list of such derivations.