

## A NOTE ON THE NAME "BATTERSEA."

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THE "Peter's-ey" etymology, suggested by Camden and Lysons, and accepted in Taylor's "Words and Places" and elsewhere, was conjectured on the strength of the one-time ownership of the manor by Westminster Abbey (which was dedicated to St. Peter) and without any apparent thought as to its philological possibility or of the existence in early records of the actual original.

Aubrey, writing about 1670, says: "Battersea, or Patresey, i.e., Patricii Insula, perhaps once the residence of St. Patrick." I have not been able to verify Aubrey's alternative form, "Patresey," from the various records I have searched; and if he was not simply imagining it and had actually seen it, I should judge it to be an accidental mis-spelling.<sup>1</sup>

The well-known derivation from Patrick is apparently confirmed by the spelling of the name in Domesday, where it appears as Patricesy. The initial P of the Domesday form appears in three other MSS. of the eleventh and twelfth centuries; and in two of these the name is also spelt with a B. The Norman scribes of Domesday, however, are not reliable guides for the spelling of English names, as is well known; and other MSS. of the Norman period also need checking.

Fortunately, the name appears in three pre-Conquest charters, and the existing copies of these give us the personal name Badric, Batric, or Badoric,

<sup>1</sup> Probably in 14th century. See "Batresey," 1385, below.

and the sense is clearly Badric's island. We have Badoric or Bæderic in the original name of Bury St. Edmunds, which was in A.D. 945 Bæderics worth (= Bæderic's farm), as we learn from King Edmund's charter to the monastery<sup>2</sup>; and Bethersden in Kent apparently contains it also, as its mediæval form of Beatrichesden<sup>3</sup> indicates. The correct or earlier form of the name was Beaduric.<sup>4</sup>

I give here the list of the forms of the name which I have extracted from various contemporary sources, and the dates of their appearance. These sources are specified in the five earliest cases, i.e., up to Domesday; the later forms are from the MSS. in the British Museum and at Westminster Abbey, and from the Calendars of Feet of Fines, Testa de Neville, P.R.O. Deeds, Patent Rolls, London Wills and Letter Books (R. R. Sharpe), etc; the figures in parentheses following these indicate the number of instances I have noted where it is more than one or two. The spellings in italics are accidental or erroneous.

My grouping of the mediæval forms—and also my insertion of a hyphen between the current form of the personal name and the -eye, where the latter varies in spelling—is intended to aid the reading of the evolutionary stages given below.

Badrices ege, and Batrices ege, 693. [Charter, "Bishop Agelric" to Westminster Abbey; a XIIth century copy at Abbey, facsimile at Brit. Mus.; printed in Birch's "Cartularium Saxonicum," i, 116.]

<sup>2</sup> Printed from the Abbey Registers (XIIth century), in Birch, ii, 564.

<sup>3</sup> Register of Feudal Aids, 1316.

<sup>4</sup> Searle's "Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum."

- Badoricesheah, 693-5. [Ercwald's gift to Barking Abbey, MS. Cotton Vespasian A ix (mediæval copy); in Birch i, 123.]
- Batricseseie, c. 957. [Extent of the Manor, on a grant by King Edwy. A copy (XIIth century ?) at Westminster; in Birch iii, 189.]
- Batricseseie and Patricseseia, 1067. [Wm. I to Westminster Abbey. B.M. charter Cotton vi, 3.]
- Patricsesy, c. 1086. [Domesday.]
- Patricsesy, c. 1100; Patricenseia, 1150, 1199.
- Badericheseie, 1198.
- Badriches-hec, 1203; -ey, -eye, 1204 to 1250 (4).  
*Badrigesce*, c. 1250; *Badrecheshagh*, 1255;  
*Baudriches-e*, -eye, -eghe: 1263 (5).
- Batriches-eye, -ey: 1150 to 1566 (33); -hee, 1200; -e, 1235;  
 -weye, 1263; -seye, 1308; -ay, 1450;  
*Betricheseye*, 1241; *Batricheshagh*, 1255 (2);  
*Batrichishey*, 1387; *Batrycheseye*, 1439.
- Batrichs-ey, 1199; -aye, 1356; -e, 1414.  
*Batrychsey*, 1372; *Batrichhey*, 1370.
- Baterecheshegh, 1255; Batericheseye, 1294, 1365;  
*Bathericheseye*, 1359; *Baterycheseye*, 1425.
- Batriseye, 1365; Batreseye, 1385 (2);  
*Brateseye*, 1386; *Batrysheye*, 1396; *Batrishey*, 1407;
- Baters-ey, -eye: 15th century (9); *Batirseye*, 1481.
- Batteseye, 1429.  
 Battersey, 1502, and onwards.  
 Battersaye and Battrychsey, 1553.  
 Battersea, 1670 and onwards.

The evolution of the name has been along normal lines, and its stages may be thus indicated:—

- In the personal name Beaduric, later Badric, the *d* early sharpens to *t*, but survives in occasional use until the 13th century;  
 the final *c* (hard) becomes palatalised (*ch*) by the 12th century (see Mr. Stevenson's note below), and it remains

thus until its disappearance—a gradual process which extends over about two centuries, i.e., from 1365, the first appearance of Batri's eye, to 1566, the last appearance of Batrichesey;

the genitive case ending in *es* shortens to *s* (Batrich's ey, 1199, etc.), and loses its existence as a syllable, as usual;

in the second syllable, *r* and the vowel become transposed—or *e* develops out of *r* and the next vowel drops; the *t* finally doubles.

The temporary sharpening of the initial B to P in the Norman period is obviously a passing aberration which did not obtain currency.

The suffix [sounded as *-ea* (two syllables), written in mediæval Latinised documents as *-cia* or *-civ*] becomes *-ey* in the ordinary course, and is finally written *-ea* (one syllable): *-hey*, *-hee*, and *-hegh* are vagaries dating from the Norman period.

It will be noticed that the name loses two syllables during its development from Badricesge (five syllables) to Battersea.

Mr. W. H. Stephenson, M.A., of St. John's College, Oxford, the distinguished authority on our early documents ("Diplomatics") and on Place Names, has favoured me with the following note, on seeing a proof of the above. "Battersea is undoubtedly derived from *Beadurices-ieg*, later *-ig*. In the south *-ric* was palatalised and so produced the pronunciation of our word "rich." The collision of this with the *-s* of the reduced gen. *-es* in a secondary-accented position accounts for the sound-development. By about 1000 the *u* of the first part of the compound was slurred to an obscure vowel represented by *e*, and *Baderic* therefore hardly differed from *Badric* (with trilled *r*). . . . In the suffix *-ieg*, dative *-ige*,<sup>5</sup> *g* was a palatal, representing an original *j* (i.e., English *y*)." . . .

<sup>5</sup> = island, watery land, *-eg* was a Mercian and Anglian form.