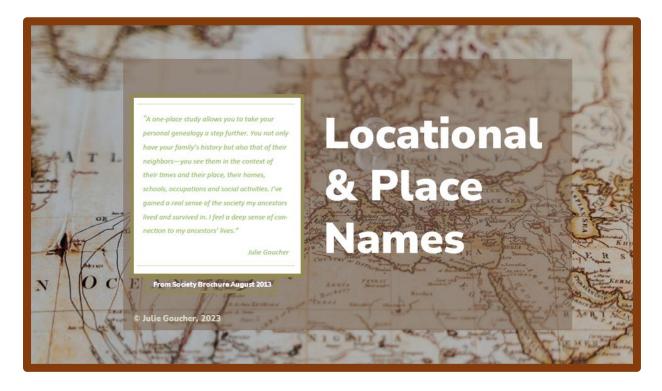# LOCATIONAL and PLACE NAMES

Our genealogy and family history are littered with names and places. Whilst the people are really important, so to, are the places where those people called home, whether that is a town, village, community or the name of a farm, a hamlet.

How do places get their names?
What is the rationale behind the name?
A Descriptive name of what was seen at a particular time.
Did the people have that surname, taken from the manor land? Or,
Did the land provide the surname for the people?
Or did the people take a surname based on a hierarchical structure of people in their community?

What is the definition of a:

- **Hamlet** – a village without its own church. Typically rural, homes that have been established because of a mill or large farm.
- **Village** – a group of houses and buildings in rural areas, where the population is somewhere between a few hundred to several thousands.
- **Town** – an urban area, built up with a population of more than several thousands. Has defined boundaries and has a local government presence.
- **City** – an urban area, where there is a defined boundary, local government presence. A previously used marker was a population of more than 50,000 people, a university and a cathedral, but that no longer is the marker. It has extended further to provide a structure of facilities such as a market. This might be variable, think of a box with rubber sides!

These are broad definitions, though the UK Government has provided a research paper as a way of providing some clarification as farm land is sold off to make way for house development - https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8322/

There are various requirements specified by the Government that need to be included, as purchased farm land is developed for houses - the provision or accessibility of shops (or a large supermarket), education, medical facilities. New housing estates requires new roads, and possibly roundabouts. These roads, roundabouts, or estates may be named after the builder, historical context, or other elements locally.

How does your place fit into **the National Plan**? This is set by the Department for Levelling up (link below). That then drills down to the **Local Plan** which can be accessed by either Borough Councils or County Council- https://www.planningaid.co.uk/hc/en-us/categories/200537272-Local-Plans and then into individual **Community Plan** - https://www.planningaid.co.uk/hc/en-us/articles/203195361-How-does-a-Neighbourhood-Plan-fit-in-with-the-Local-Plan-

Whilst the examples above are related to areas of the UK, there are a few others listed under resources. See these as a taster of what is available.

Resources
- **Definitions of populations** – https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8322/
- **Planning Aid England** - https://www.planningaid.co.uk/hc/en-us
- **National Planning Policy Framework**, which is part of the Government Department for Levelling up - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1182995/NPPF_Sept_23.pdf
- **Historic England** - https://historicengland.org.uk/
- **Heritage Ireland** - https://heritageireland.ie/
- **Italy Heritage** - https://www.italyheritage.com/regions/
- **Heritage Malta** - https://heritagemalta.mt/about/
- **Australian Indigenous**
    - https://australian.museum/learn/cultures/atsi-collection/sydney/place-names-chart/
    - Aboriginal Words as Place Names - https://australian.museum/learn/collections/museum-archives-library/research-library/guides/aboriginal-words-as-place-names/
    - Clan Names Chart - https://australian.museum/learn/cultures/atsi-collection/sydney/clan-names-chart/#Clan

About the author

Julie Goucher is of mixed heritage, Sicilian on her paternal side, with her family coming from Sutera on the Mediterranean Island of Sicily, with migration to both the United Kingdom and the United States. Julie's maternal heritage is from England, primarily from what is defined as the "Home Counties" – Surrey, Sussex, and Hampshire, in the southeast of England where her ancestors did not really move more than 40 miles for 300 years.

Julie began researching her ancestors in the late 1980s and is undertaking two One-Name Studies, for surnames representing her parents – BUTCHER and ORLANDO. Julie is a Trustee for the Guild of One-Name Studies (https://one-name.org), and a Tutor for Pharos Tutors (https://pharostutors.com) , where she tutors three surname courses and a further course on Researching Ancestors from Continental Europe. Julie also has two One-Place Studies, Sutera on the island of Sicily and Puttenham (including Wanborough), a rural Surrey parish.

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All sites accessed September2023.