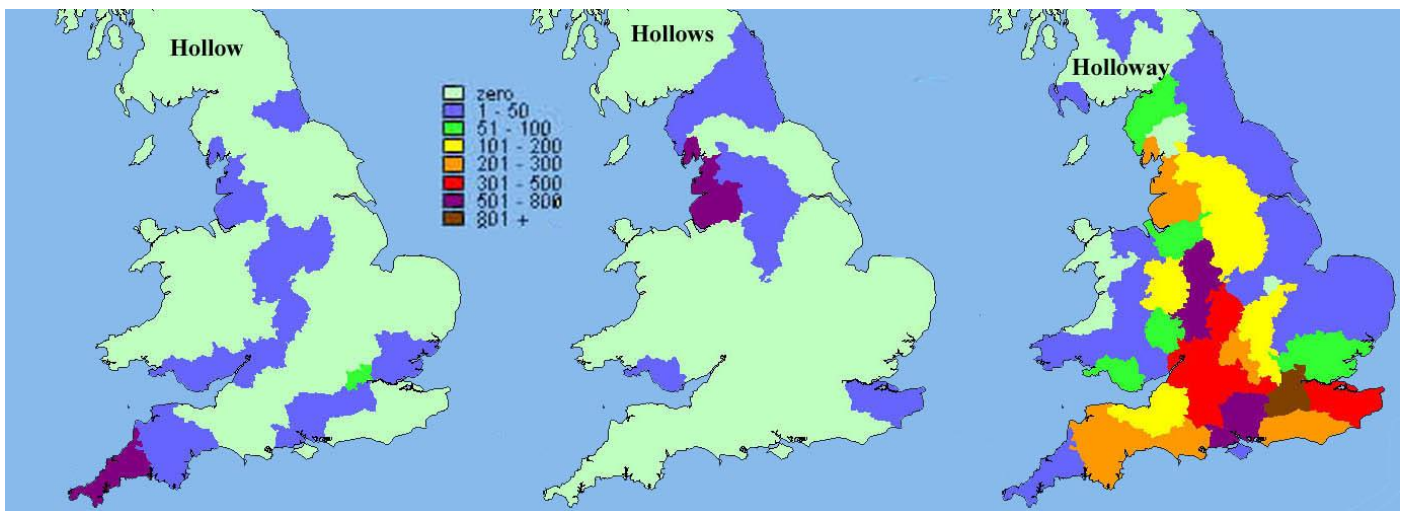


Origin of Hollow... via Holla via place name?

The conventional wisdom in surname origin studies is that the name Hollow is derived from hallow meaning moor, so a dweller of or by the moor. Sometimes it is explained as a contraction of the name Penhallow, which means from the head or end of the moor. The Penhallow family had an estate in Philliegh on the Roseland peninsular in mid Cornwall but Penhallow has by and large disappeared as a surname in Cornwall.

I have never been happy with this explanation of the name origin. Moors are defined as broad areas of open land that are not good for farming. Moors are known all over England but Hollow is a name that is very much a Cornish name and more than that it is almost confined to

muster rolls of 1569 Holla is used, the first parish records of Holla are a marriage in Madron in 1578 and a Christening also in Madron of 1593. The first times the name Hollow was used in a parish record was in the 1600s but it wasn't common. Sometimes Holla and Hollow were used in the same family. As time went on the name Hollow was more frequently used. In the 1841 census in Cornwall there were 274 Hollow records and 22 Holla records, by the 1851 census there were 334 Hollow records and only 4 Holla records, from one family in Sancreed. In the 1861 census there were no Holla names but there were seven records, one family, with the Hallo name. When traced back this family had been recorded as Hollow, Holla but had used Hallo or Hallow for some time and seemed to favour Hallo. The name is still used by the family; there are Hallo descendents in Australia today.



Distribution maps of the names Hollow, Hollows and Holloway in the 1881 Census.

the pointy end of Cornwall, the West Penwith region. This area does have areas described as moors but they are quite small and local. The most well known moor in Cornwall is Bodmin moor and it is not and never has been a Hollow stronghold. The only Hollow residents in that area have been inmates of the Bodmin gaol.

A similar origin is given for the name Hollows but it is a localized name too. Most Hollows were centred on Lancashire and Yorkshire; it was not a common name of Cornwall or any other county outside these two. It would be logical, given the number of moors that the name would be found in other counties. The name Holloway is more widely used and it would seem that surname is more likely to be associated with moors.

Another argument against this origin is that in the beginning of Cornish records the name was recorded mostly as Holla. In the subsidy rolls of 1549 and the

My thought is that the surname Hollow is a transformation of the surname Holla and that we should concentrate on finding the origin of Holla. All the explanations of Hollow coming from the old English word "holh", meaning hollow or sunken and thus the name for someone who lived in or by a "hollow" still applies but why are we centred on Cornwall? This source of a surname is what is called a topographical surname. eg Hill, Wood, Downs, Ford.

My feeling is that it may be a locational name, i.e. a name derived from a place name. Many British surnames derive from the village or manor or property where people worked or lived. The British National Archives has an online catalogue and a search for "Holla" throws up mostly people with that surname or the surname Hollas but there are three records that indicate it was a place name too. The first is a record from 1506, This record is

held by the Devon Heritage Centre. The record's description (in the text box adjacent) shows that this family derived rents from place called **Holla**. The second record found at the Cornwall Records Office and dated 1546, is the "Rent roll of Trevanion property". The Trevanions were gentry, a family with extensive lands in Cornwall. The roll consists of a list of nine manors each followed by a names of properties that are part of the manor. These would be farms or other rent generating properties. One Manor, Grogoth Manor in the centre of Cornwall near Probus, has a list of twenty seven properties belonging to it, one of which is **Holla**.

The third reference refers to the same place and is also held in the Cornwall Record Office. The record is from 1677 and is a lease document of Trevanion lands, in St Michael Caerhays, Gorran, Veryan, Kenwyn all parishes in the centre of Cornwall. Listed in this reference is '**Holla alias Lamellyn**'. This apparent name change might explain why Holla is no longer to be found as a property in this district. There still is a Lamellyn Farmhouse near Probus. It is a grade II listed C17 and C18 Farmhouse with C20 wing.

The three references to a place called Holla are more than likely the referring to the same place. The Arundell and the Trevanion families were linked by marriage. Cornish records in Devon are not uncommon as the churches were under control of the Bishop of Exeter. Another possible reason is that a Trevanion was the bishop of Exeter about this time. The property known as Holla would have existed before the date of the 1506 record. It could be that people from that farm took the name Holla when they needed a surname.

The British Archives also contain the earliest record of a person called Holla. In a record within the period 1486 to 1515 and another in the period 1493 to 1500 a John Holla is mentioned in relation to the ownership of a messuage in Penzance, Cornwall. A messuage is an archaic term

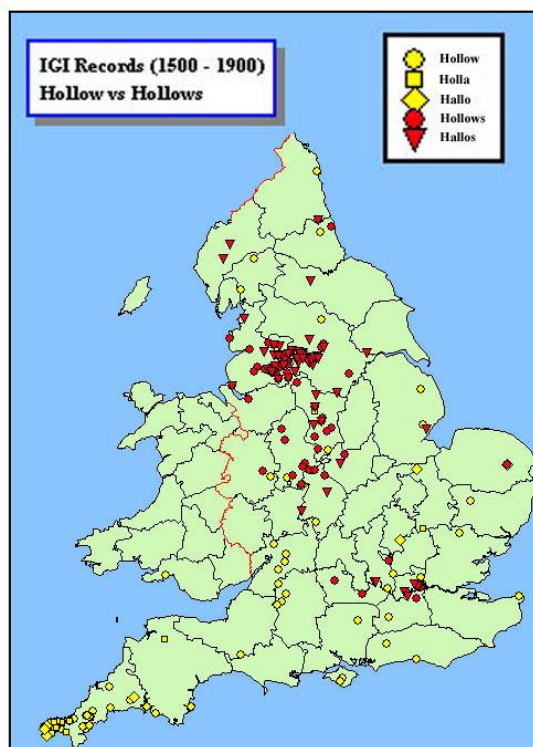
used in conveyancing, and refers to a dwelling house and all the buildings attached or belonging to it, its garden and orchard. This record is about fifty to seventy years before the first muster, subsidy and parish records of a Holla and it is in Penzance. If the name Holla is linked to a property in the middle of Cornwall how do we explain the surname being used predominantly in the west of Cornwall?

Grant of wardship and marriage. d. Johanna Arundell, widow of Edmund Arundell, knight, and Elizabeth Radclyff her daughter. Thomas Upcott. Wardship and marriage of John Wey son and heir of William Wey, who held the lands and rents of Holla and Underclyff by grant of Edmund Arundell and held by knight service of the manor of Hwuyssh. Warranty against Edmund Arundell's executor. 2 Tag seals, and signatures.

Dated 9 January 1506

A possible explanation could be that the Holla family or families moved from one Trevanion holding to others. The Trevanion Manors are found over a wide area of Cornwall. In the west they were found in the parishes of St. Buryan, Ludgvan, Morvah, Sennen, Zennor, Gulval, and St. Just in Penwith are included in two of the Trevanion manors. These are the areas that the Holla and Hollow families predominately lived.

Of course the surname may have originated much earlier when the property called Holla was owned by the Arundell family.



The National Archives reference to John Holla and his messuage in Penzance in the late 1400s suggests he could be the first of the Holla line, perhaps granted a messuage for services to the Trevanion family or to the Arundell family, The Arundells owned manors in the Penwith region, the western tip of Cornwall. In Hollow Log 41 the report of Chris Hollow's work showed there was a distant link between the Holla and the Arundell family in the 1700s.

There will have to be more done before this theory of the origin of Holla could be confidently embraced. Researchers into surname origins are more and more are questioning the surname origins explanations that have been included in references such as Reany and Wilson's *A Dictionary of English Surnames*. A study by the researchers at the University of Western England, Bristol is beginning to

revisit and reinterpret commonly held ideas of surname origins. My next move is to contact this group and find out if they have tackled the origins of the name Hollow. ♣

by Colin Hollow, maps by British Surname Atlas and GenMap
UK

Origin of Hollow Name - Update

I did contact researchers at the University of Western England at Bristol who were working on surname origins and were about to publish their findings. I received a reply from Richard Coates, the leading investigator of the project and Professor of Linguistics/Onomastics at the University of the West of England in which he said... *I agree from the evidence in the paper you attached that there is a prima facie case for the name coming, in at least some instances, from a place-name in Cornwall, and I'll ask our Cornish consultant for his comments. Richard Coates*

Then a few days later...*I've heard back from Oliver Padel, our Cornish consultant, and I attach what almost amounts to a full academic paper on the topic! As you will see, he agrees with you that Hollow is likely to come from C16 Holla, and that Hollow and Hollows probably have different origins, but he doesn't think, on the balance of the evidence, that Hollow/Holla is a locative name. There are different ways of taking the evidence, and I tend to think he's being a bit cautious: see what you think.*

Oliver Padel did pour cold water on my idea that Holla was a locative name. The two places called Holla he concluded were not relevant as one was in Devon and the other, although in Cornwall, was in the parish of Cornelly which is adjacent to Probus. His main argument was that if the name Holla originated from these places there would be evidence of the name Holla in their records.

A fellow researcher who responded to my article put a different take on the theory.

"You ask a question:"If the name Holla is linked to a property in the middle of Cornwall, how do we explain the surname being used predominantly in the west of Cornwall?"

I should have thought that this was obvious. Surely, a locative name (e.g A) was given to someone living in place B who came from place A. People living in place A would never be called A, but be given other names in order to distinguish them all from one another."

I quite like the logic here. If you are the only man from Holla in the village wouldn't that be an obvious name for you to be given.

Oliver Padel did offer his ideas of where the name came from.

...Occurring where it does at the date when it does, the surname could be a Cornish-language one; as such, it could be either nickname-descriptive or occupational in type; but I cannot think of any suitable word in Cornish having the right form for either of those types. A third possibility is that it is a patronymic. There were various vernacular forenames ending in -a, of the pattern Tomma (Thomas), Jacka (John, Jack), Watta (Walter), and

so on, and these did give rise to surnames in the sixteenth century; again presumably with preservation of Middle English -e (though possibly with some Cornish-language input too, in west Cornwall). However, I cannot readily think of a suitable forename to have given rise to Holla (Henry, pet-form Hal, is possible but not very convincing). But that is my best guess for an origin on the present information....

These ideas lack any evidence as Oliver Padel suggests so they do not get us much closer to an answer. Oliver did mention a nick name as a possible source. I have a reprint of an old book, "The Ancient Language and the Dialect of Cornwall" by Fred.W.P. Jago. The original printed in 1882. It contains what it calls a Glossary of Cornish Provincial Words. Within the Glossary are two references to Holla.

Holla-pot See Tom-holla

then

Tom-holla. A noisy, rude fellow.

Could a person who was a noisy rude fellow be given the name Holla!

I have read of surname origins based on characteristics or nick names, maybe we have one here. The search continues. ♣

The latest in this saga

I came across this reference at the Cornwall Records Office which suggests another slight connection between our family and the Arundall family. It also suggests that we Holla, Hulla, Hollow (we can be any of these) might have had an ancestor that wasn't a farmer, miner or a mariner in earlier times. It also pushes back the earliest Holla/Hulla/Hollow reference to 1451. Or is my obsession getting away from me??

AR, Arundell family of Lanherne, Mawgan in Pydar ,
AR/19, Marriage, jointure and dowry .
RefNo. AR/19/10
Title, Lease for term of life, Katherine Stafford
Date, 5 Mar 1451
Format, Manuscript
Extent, 1 piece
Description, Pre-nuptial settlement? Parties: 1) John Arundell, esquire, son and heir of John Arundell, esquire 2) Katherine, who was wife of William Stafford, esquire, daughter and one of the heirs of John Chideok, knight Party (1) to party (2), his manors of Carnynowe, Lambroun, Trembleyth, Conarton, Tregam Condorowe, Penwerres (Penwerres), Rynsy, Kenell, Lanherne, Seynt Columb, Methsholl and Truruvyan, together with the advowsons of the churches of those manors, and all lands, etc. For (2) to hold for term of her life. Rent: 1 grain of wheat yearly at Michaelmas, for all service. Warranty clause. Appointment of William Rede, Edward Tycyng and John Michall as attorneys to deliver seisin. Witnesses: John Stafford, Archbishop of Canterbury; James Lord of Ormound, William Lord of Bonevill, Edward Hulla and John Colshull, knights, John Maon, Thomas Bodulgate, Richard Tregoyis. Seal, good; of party 1?. Dated 29 Henry VI; at Lanherne. In Latin. Notes on place names: Penwerres, Penwerres = in Budock Rynsy = Rinsey, in Breage.