

PLACE-NAMES AND SHOP NAMES:
WEST END, WEST HAMPSTEAD AND HAMPSTEAD WEST,
AND THE SHOPS ON WEST END LANE

In this article I discuss place-names and shop names. They are taken together here for contingent reasons: I gathered information on them in the same place and at the same time. The place-names - 'West End', 'West Hampstead' and 'Hampstead West' - have been applied, at different times, to the same location, i.e. present-day West Hampstead in London. The shop names are those to be found in 1988 in West Hampstead's main shopping street, West End Lane.

In discussing the names by which a particular part of London has been, is now, and perhaps one day will be known, I do not try to document fully the historical process by which this location has changed - and may again change - its name. Rather I try merely to indicate some of the variety of factors involved in the naming of one particular place. While the ultimate arbiters of what a place is to be called are presumably local and national governmental bodies, the process by which a name first comes to be used, becomes known and becomes established is more complex. I try here to indicate some elements of that process and its results, as well as some of the complexity of the present and recent situation.

As for shop names, I try below to reveal some 'rules' underlying shop-naming. In particular I suggest a correlation between types of goods sold and types of names.

West Hampstead can be summarily described as a middle-class commuter suburb in the northwest part of London, from the centre of

I should like to thank here the traders of West Hampstead who have discussed with me the matters raised in this article, local residents (particular those at Ambleside), and the staff of the Camden Local History Library at Swiss Cottage. I should also like to thank Gerd Baumann for his helpful comments on an earlier draft.

which it is a fifteen-minute train ride. West Hampstead is bordered to the east by wealthy and fashionable Hampstead, to the north by mixed-class and unfashionable Cricklewood, to the west by equally unfashionable Brondesbury, and to the south by working-class Kilburn, with its large Irish and Afro-Caribbean communities. West Hampstead is not a well-known part of London; it has no particular attraction for tourists or visitors, though it has many advantages as a residential area.

West End Lane and West End

Running through West Hampstead is West End Lane. Today this thoroughfare is in effect made up of three or four distinct parts. The central section runs southwards from West End Green to the junction with Quex Road and Abbey Road. The northern part of this section, from the Green to the underground station, is a busy shopping street, known as 'The Lane' to at least some older local residents. The other two sections run almost at right angles from the northern and southern ends of the central section. To the north-east is a short section leading to the Finchley Road, to the south-west is a winding, narrow lane leading to the A5 (Kilburn High Road).

When asked why West End Lane is so called and why it should take such a meandering route, local residents confessed to having little idea, having, not surprisingly, not thought about it much, if at all.¹ Occasionally someone suggested the possibility of it having something to do with central London's famous 'West End' (i.e. Mayfair, Piccadilly etc.) - that the road led or used to lead to it, for instance, which is not in fact the case. A few people recalled that there are a North End and a South End in the neighbourhood and thought that West End Lane might have something to do with these. This is, in a sense, so.

The area around what is now the northern central section of West End Lane, and in particular the area around West End Green, was at one time the location of the hamlet of West End, recorded as being in existence at least as early as 1535. West End was so named for being at the western end of the manor and parish of Hampstead, just as North End was in the north and South End was in the south. West End Lane was so called as it was the lane running from

¹ Those responsible for compiling information on Hampstead street names for the local history society found that 'surprisingly few residents seemed to know the story of their own houses and streets or were aware of the historical interests around them' (CHS 1975: 8). This might make one doubt what seems to be a general assumption that history should be drawn on for street-naming and similar activities. Those responsible for deciding such matters seem to think that the past, and historical names, are more 'real' than the present, and newly invented names, whereas for 'the people in the street' the historical associations are often irrelevant.

Hampstead village down the hill to West End and on through the hamlet to Kilburn to join the old Watling Street, thereby providing what was a longer, but apparently at times much quicker, alternative route for the inhabitants of Hampstead to get in and out of London.

Except in the name of West End Lane itself, the name 'West End' hardly survives in present-day usages. There is still a West End Green, which was at the centre of the old hamlet, and there is a West End electoral ward, the borders of which very roughly follow those of the old hamlet. There is also still the parish of West End, Hampstead, with its Emmanuel Parish Church just north of the Green. One might expect the name to survive, or to have been resurrected, in the names of local businesses, such as the shops on West End Lane. There is a 'West End Green Bookshop', which stands opposite the Green, and the names of two other shops, 'That Shop on West End Lane' and 'West End Lane Supplies: D.I.Y. Centre', refer directly to the name of the street on which they stand. There are two more, 'West End News' and 'West End Stationers', whose names might be thought to refer to the old village. In fact, though, these names have nothing to do with that West End, rather their owners have drawn on their shops' locations on West End Lane to justify names which echo the sophistication of central London's West End.

The name 'West End' as such, then, has virtually disappeared. And why not? There is no requirement that historical names should be preserved. They are only if they serve some purpose. While one can imagine the name 'West End' being revived in an attempt to give a sense of a village community to the area, this does not yet seem to have been attempted. An idea of the possibilities to be found in exploring local historical associations can be gained from the brief introductory text of an advertising feature about the shops of West Hampstead published in a local newspaper a few years ago: 'A century ago, West End Lane was lined with ancient trees, with hayfields beyond. Such rural scenes are no more and the street has, instead, become a busy shopping centre.'² Even the survival of 'West End Green' as a name may now be under threat. In its advertisement at the underground station a local hotel refers to its position as being by 'West End Lane Green'.

West Hampstead

The village of West End disappeared towards the end of the nineteenth century as the railways and suburban development came to this part of the northern outskirts of London. In 1871 West End station was opened, in 1879 West Hampstead underground station, and in 1888 West End Lane station. In 1870 there were some 700 inhabitants of West End, but by 1891 there were some 14,000 inhabitants of West Hampstead. For how long the name 'West End' survived in

² From the *Hampstead and Highgate Express*, 20 September 1974, p.8.

any usage other than those already discussed above is not clear. By 1896 there was, it seems, a West Hampstead Town Hall. While historians of Hampstead and its environs frequently refer, improperly, to the area before its development as 'West Hampstead', they never, quite properly, refer to the area after development as 'West End'. It seems that virtually from the moment of its being built it was seen as wholly inappropriate to call the commuter suburb 'West End'. It is as if the transformation of the area was so great that a different name was required. One assumes that the railway boards in naming their stations, and the developers in wanting to attract buyers for their flats and houses, opted for 'West Hampstead' (and perhaps even thought the name up) as a more suitable and attractive name than 'West End'. The latter might have been thought potentially confusing for railway passengers and of less interest to property buyers than 'West Hampstead'. If the fashionable associations of 'West End' (as in central London) were considered, they were not paramount when it came to naming the new suburb.

Some of the associations of the name 'West Hampstead' over the years can be gained from a perusal of the accounts that those who have lived in the area have given of it. One of West Hampstead's most famous sons was the novelist Evelyn Waugh. Both he and his brother Alec were born there, and they and their father Arthur all published brief reminiscences of the place in their respective autobiographies.

Evelyn recounts that he was born in 1903 in a house 'in a cul-de-sac called Hillfield Road, near the Hampstead cricket ground, off the Finchley Road' (1983 [1964]: 22). As Davie, the editor of Waugh's diaries, points out, this description is 'mildly misleading'. Though Davie unequivocally locates the place of Evelyn's birth in 'Hillfield Road, Hampstead' - no qualifying 'West' here - he also points out how 'Hillfield Road is less sequestered than Waugh's phrasing implies, and nearer to the Hampstead Cemetery than to the cricket ground'. And he goes on: 'This part of west Hampstead, bordering Kilburn, was developed in the 1880s by a firm of speculative builders for the *petite bourgeoisie* who could not afford to live higher up the Hampstead slopes' (Davie 1976: 3). Davie makes clear that it was not Hampstead that Waugh was born in - though his use of the lower-case 'w' in 'west' is less accurate than it might be - but 'west Hampstead, bordering Kilburn'.

Evelyn's elder brother Alec seems to have been less concerned to establish Hampstead as his birthplace, and in his autobiography writes straightforwardly of being born 'in West Hampstead' (note the use of the upper-case 'W'). Alec describes Hillfield Road as 'one of the least known streets in London ... I doubt if one London clubman in a hundred would have heard of it' (1967: 12). He recognizes that 'it was not socially a good address; it catered [in 1898] for middle-class families with incomes of £500 to £700 a year' (ibid.). His father, he says, wanted to live in Hampstead for its fresh air - he was asthmatic - and because some of his friends lived there. As 'he was the last person to place store on writing-paper', West Hampstead would apparently do for Arthur Waugh.

Indeed, and as his elder son describes, Arthur Waugh seems to

have been relatively unconcerned about his address. He and his wife started married life in a flat above a dairy near to the Finchley Road station, later moving to 'a small house in West Hampstead', where Alec and Evelyn were born (Arthur Waugh 1931: 281). Later, when this house became too small for their needs, they moved the short distance to North End - 'the idea of coming into a village was a sheer delight to us, after twelve years in the thick of West Hampstead' (ibid.: 234-5). Of these addresses, Arthur Waugh writes of having lived in Hampstead all his married life. The dairy would in fact have been in St John's Hampstead (an area bordering Hampstead proper to the south, and separating Hampstead and South Hampstead) or West Hampstead, Hillfield Road certainly in West Hampstead, and though North End was originally a village to the north of Hampstead village, it soon became - at least as far as the Post Office was concerned - part of Golders Green.³ The story goes that to ensure a more fashionable postmark on his letters, Evelyn would walk up the hill to Hampstead to post them (CHS 1975: 31).

The relation of West Hampstead to Hampstead is clearly a problematical one. Reference to an extract from a classic anthropological text may help to explicate the problem. To help his readers grasp the point of his discussion of the Nuer word *cieng* (roughly translatable as 'home'), Evans-Pritchard wrote in *The Nuer* (1940: 136):

its precise significance varies with the situation in which it is spoken. If one meets an Englishman in Germany and asks him where his home is, he may reply that it is in England. If one meets the same man in London and asks him the same question he will tell one that his home is in Oxfordshire, whereas if one meets him in that county he will tell one the name of the town or village in which he lives. If questioned in his town or village he will mention the particular street, and if questioned in his street he will indicate his house.

On this model, therefore, one might expect a resident of Hillfield Road, West Hampstead, to respond to such questioning in London by saying that he or she lives in Hampstead, only specifying West Hampstead when so questioned in Hampstead. This is not, however, the case. A resident of Hillfield Road, or of any other street in West Hampstead, cannot in any circumstances and in all honesty say that he or she lives in Hampstead. It would be considered misleading or pretentious to give one's address as Hampstead when one lives in West Hampstead; at least, it would by anyone with local knowledge.

³ The variety of ways in which official and quasi-official bodies such as the Post Office and the Gas and Electricity Boards divide up the country for their own purposes results in a confusing plethora of names. For British Telecom, West Hampstead is part of an area they call 'West End'. I assume it is an area extending from central London's West End, centred on Mayfair and Piccadilly.

In reporting an interview with the novelist Doris Lessing, a contemporary literary resident of West Hampstead, Lorna Sage refers to 'unsmart West Hampstead' (Sage 1988). Sometimes one hears it described as 'the poor man's Hampstead' or as 'north Kilburn' or 'east Kilburn'. West Hampstead clearly is not, whatever some of its residents would like it to be, Hampstead; but nor is it Kilburn - nor Cricklewood nor Brondesbury. Indeed it is perhaps only in not being any of these other places that it finds its identity. Alec Waugh noted that at the turn of the century 'West Hampstead was a half-way house' between 'the affluence that lay a few miles to the west and south in Mayfair and Belgravia and the poverty and destitution that were to be found only a few yards away in Kilburn' (1962: 12). He claims not to have been aware of this as a child and introduces the comparison as deriving from the perspective of 'a modern sociologist'.⁴ A walk from one end of West End Lane to the other today would confirm the modern sociologist in such a view of West Hampstead as a half-way house between the affluence of Hampstead and the poverty of Kilburn.

That West Hampstead is not Hampstead does not, however, stop some of West Hampstead's traders taking Hampstead's name in vain. On West End Lane one can find a 'Hampstead Jewellers', a 'Hampstead Flatlets', a 'Hampstead Leather and Goods', the 'Hampstead Pine Company' and the 'Hampstead Boulevard Restaurant'. Of these businesses, only the last two are up-market, the first two being unarguably down-market. One would be most surprised to find a 'Brondesbury Bakers', 'Cricklewood Chemists' or 'Kilburn Kitchens' in West End Lane.

While West Hampstead is not a political entity,⁵ being larger than an electoral ward and smaller than a constituency or borough (though West End is still a parish), its 'official' existence is attested by a number of institutions. There are the railway stations, now all called 'West Hampstead' ('West Hampstead Underground Station', 'West Hampstead North London Link' and 'West Hampstead Thameslink'). There is a bus terminus and turnaround at West End Green; buses heading towards it show 'West Hampstead: West End Green' as their destination. There is a 'West Hampstead Library', a 'West Hampstead Branch Office' of the Post Office, and 'West Hampstead' branch offices of two of the major national banks. There are also a 'West Hampstead Community Centre' and a 'West Hampstead Housing Centre'. There are even directional road signs

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It was in West Hampstead, incidentally, that Hannah Gavron found the bulk of the middle-class sample for her sociological study of *The Captive Wife* (1966).

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West End was part of the manor and parish of Hampstead and later of the borough of Hampstead. West Hampstead was part of the borough of Hampstead, and with Hampstead became part of London in 1900. On 1 April 1965 Hampstead, including West Hampstead, became part of the London Borough of Camden. No resident of West Hampstead would say that they were a resident of Camden unless they were engaged in a discussion concerning local councils and rates.

to West Hampstead on the Finchley Road.⁶ Surprisingly, perhaps, only one of West End Lane's shops uses 'West Hampstead' in its name: 'Kays Fruits of West Hampstead'. It seems that when West End Lane's shopkeepers want to specify their geographical locations in the names of their shops, 'Hampstead' has more appeal than 'West Hampstead'.

Hampstead West

While it may now be difficult to discover the very first use of the name 'West Hampstead', there is no denying the speed and completeness with which it replaced 'West End'. The latter seems to have been inapplicable to the new world that was created in this part of London, and as nothing remained of the old village the name virtually disappeared. It is, however, possible now to record what seems to be the very first public usage of a potential new name for the same area. On the corner of West End Lane and Iverson Road, near to the West Hampstead (North London Link) station, a new block of shops and offices is being built (May 1988). Hoardings around the site announce the fact and describe it in big red letters as being in 'Hampstead West'. This unusual usage (apart from names of railway stations and electoral constituencies, I can think only of Haverfordwest as an example of such a construction of an English place-name) is presumably meant to sound more upmarket than 'West Hampstead'. Whether it actually does so (as opposed to sounding pretentious) and whether it will help the developers to sell the offices and shops I am not in a position to say. It is also too early to say whether this new usage will be adopted by other institutions and individuals. One might expect estate agents and other property developers to take it up; some already seem to use 'NW6' (West Hampstead's post code) in preference to 'West Hampstead' when advertising homes for sale in the area.

If other institutions do take up 'Hampstead West', 'West Hampstead' might well disappear as 'West End' did. But one suspects that this process would take somewhat longer, for while the area is changing as property prices increase and a more upwardly mobile population moves in, the changes cannot, in the foreseeable future at least, be as radical as those that saw West End physically, conceptually and nominally replaced by West Hampstead.

Shop Names in West End Lane

I know of no official rules governing the choosing, establishment and use of shop names. There seem to be no restrictions at all,

⁶ To add to the confusion, West Hampstead is the location of the Hampstead Cemetery and the Hampstead Synagogue. Whether these are situated outside Hampstead proper merely for reasons of space or for some more 'symbolic' reason I do not feel able to say at present.

*Table 1: Slogan, Personal and Family Shop Names
in West End Lane in 1933 and 1988*

	1933	1988
Slogan	35 (24.5%)	72 (61%)
Personal	3 (2%)	14 (12%)
Family	105 (73.5%)	31 (27%)
Total	143	117

though one suspects that already established names cannot be used for shops in the same line of trade, and that obscene or blasphemous names cannot be used. Here I make a stab at revealing the existence of some unconscious 'structuralist' rules underlying the naming of shops on West Hampstead's West End Lane.

I have mentioned above, in passing, some of those shops on West End Lane which refer in their names to aspects of local geography such as 'West End Green Bookshop'. Other businesses make use of topography in their names: 'The Corner Shop' (a newsagent and confectioner's) stands on a corner; '303' (a record shop) is at number 303 West End Lane; and 'Inglewoods Chinese Restaurant' is in part of the buildings called Inglewood Mansions. Names which make use of geography or topography are examples of what I call, for want of a better term, 'slogan' names. They can be contrasted with those shop names which make use of the two other types of name identified here, i.e. family and personal names. Family names were the most common form in the past as the comparison between the numbers of such names in West End Lane in 1933 and 1988 in Table 1 shows.⁷ This relative increase in the number of slogan and personal names may reflect an increase in the use of both slogans and personal names in British life in general and of greater informality in many areas of social and economic life.

Today, slogan names can be drawn, it seems, from virtually any source, and shopkeepers' accounts of how they came to choose the names of their shops can be interesting, though as they tend to be personal and idiosyncratic I do not want to deal with them here. However, two possible patterns are worth mentioning. The three shops on West End Lane with self-referential names - 'The Save Money Shop', 'That Shop on West End Lane' and 'A Boring Old Hardware Shop' - all happen to be run by first- or second-generation central European immigrants. Two grocery-cum-general stores run by south Asian immigrants have names formed anagrammatically from the

⁷ For a reminiscential account of the shops and shop names of West End Lane in the 1920s, see Lindsay 1978.

initial letters of the names of the family members who run the business (viz. 'Atlanta' and 'Marks'). Two others, 'Gems' and 'Alps', might, I suggest, have been named originally in the same way; even though they are now under new management, they have kept the same names.⁸ Whether these two patterns are widespread, and what significance they would have if they were, I cannot say.

Another pattern, on which I wish to concentrate here, emerges when one attempts to correlate the type of name, i.e. whether slogan, personal or family, with the type of business conducted by the shop, i.e. with the type of goods sold. If we concern ourselves for present purposes only with businesses selling foodstuffs, we find under 'personal' names the following: fruiterers ('Kays Fruits of West Hampstead', 'Naidoos'); take-away outlets ('Jason's Fish Bar'); restaurants and cafés ('Dominiques', 'Don Antonio's Trattoria', 'Jenny's Burger Bar' and 'Charlotte'); a patisserie ('Alexis' - a conscious adaptation from 'Alex's'); and a delicatessen ('Mo's'). Under 'family' names we find butchers ('Kingstons', 'John Stuart'); a fishmonger's ('Rowe'); and greengrocers ('Gerrards', 'Farrants'). Under slogan names we find take-away outlets ('Sizzles', 'Domino's Pizza', 'Perfect Pizza'); restaurants ('Bridge Café', 'Taste of India', 'Inglewoods' and 'Hampstead Boulevard'); grocers-cum-general stores ('Daily Needs Store', 'Gems', 'Buybest'); and a health-food store ('Peppercorns').

As is clear from an examination of these lists, only those businesses selling ready-to-eat food, whether cooked or raw, have personal names. Those businesses selling unprocessed, raw, inedible food have family names. Those businesses selling processed food which must be cooked to be edible have slogan names. Such a pattern may be represented *à la* Lévi-Strauss as in Figure 1. It is most remarkable that fruiterers and greengrocers fall so neatly into this pattern, for they sell in fact virtually, if not exactly, the same range of goods but, representing themselves as either one or the other (i.e. as sellers of raw but ready-to-eat fruit or as sellers of raw and inedible vegetables), only use a personal name for the shop if they are fruiterers.

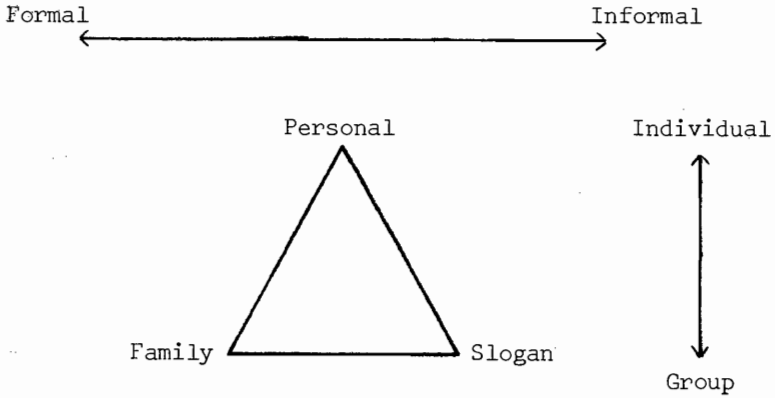
It seems, therefore, as if family names are appropriate to businesses dealing with unprocessed natural products which must be culturally processed before being consumed (though it seems that family names can be used for other types of food business). Personal names are appropriate to businesses dealing with foods, whether in their natural or cultural state - unprocessed or processed - which are ready-to-eat, and cannot be used for other types of food businesses. Slogan names are appropriate to businesses selling culturally processed foodstuffs, whether ready-to-eat or not. They cannot, it seems, be used for businesses selling raw and unprocessed food; it is difficult to imagine a butcher's shop called 'Flesh and Blood' or 'The Chop Shop'.

The shops on West End Lane today provide only a minute sample

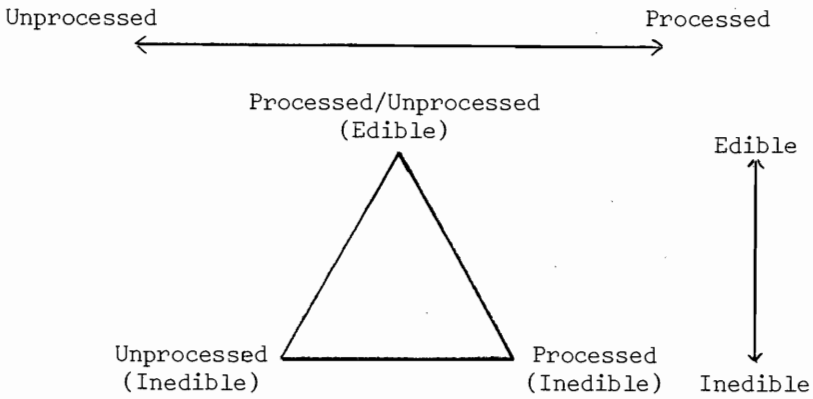
⁸ I leave aside here the problem of apostrophes in shop names and refer to the names of shops on West End Lane by the form of name they use (though not always consistently) themselves.

Figure 1: Diagrammatic Representation of Types of Shops and Types of Shop-Names

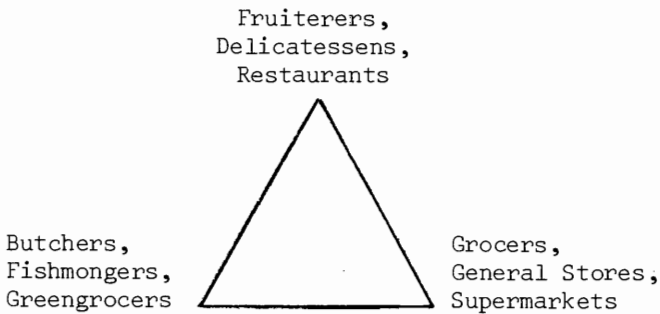
a) Type of Name



b) Type of Food



c) Type of Shop



of contemporary British shop-naming practice. That from the West End Lane data one can produce an intellectually diverting structuralist model is pleasurable for the student of shop names. Whether it has any greater significance than this I cannot say. I shall, however, leave the reader to ponder the fact that the only other type of business on West End Lane which uses personal names in the names of shops deals with a most problematic and anthropologically rewarding human product. In 1933 there were 'Maison Paul' and 'Maison Gladys'. Now in 1988 there are 'Paul's' (the same Paul in fact) and 'Antonio's'. Why do hairdressing salons so often have personal names?

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