

## Do *-ingas* Place-Names Occur in Pairs?

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As outlined in the paper by John Dodgson (Dodgson, 1966), place-names ending in *-ingas*, originally assumed to indicate the earliest Anglo-Saxon settlement, are now believed to indicate an area associated with a named group of people. Where the first element is a personal name (N), the place-name may mean 'settlement of the followers of N'. Where the first element refers to some topographical feature (x), the name is more likely to mean 'settlement of the dwellers by x', whatever the feature may be. Why one particular settlement within an area should have received a name of this type when others did not is uncertain and there may be different explanations for different cases.

One explanation, applied to the places Reading (*Rēad-ingas*) and Sonning (*Sunna-ingas*), is that these lie on either side of the boundary between the two areas and the settlements were given these names so as to mark the territorial limits between one area and the other (Gelling, 2001). These two names are unique because early documents survive to indicate the territory of the *Sunna-ingas* and demonstrate that Sonning lies on the western edge of their territory, next to Reading. If similar pairs occur elsewhere, it seems likely that they might have a similar rationale, but without early records this cannot be proven. The purpose of this study is to examine the distribution of such place-names in the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex to see whether they occur in pairs which could be explained by the same reasoning.

An initial collection of names was obtained by reading the *Dictionary of English Place Names* (Ekwall, 1960) and extracting those of the required type. The process is imperfect and the collection is incomplete, but extra names noted from maps have been cross-referenced with Ekwall. Another source was John Dodgson's paper and this had a detailed list for Essex. A paper by Margaret Gelling (Gelling, 1992) gave some information about the Suffolk names and indicated that several of the names in Ekwall are in fact singular (*-ing* not *-ingas*) and so these have been omitted from this study. Finally PN Nf 2 covers a small area along the east coast of Norfolk; PN Nf 3 was published just in time to be included.

On the maps, those place-names with a personal name as the first element are indicated by a solid circle and those relating to a topographical feature by open circles. Possible pairs are joined by a line. Rivers are indicated by a solid line and ancient roads (mainly Roman) by a broken line.

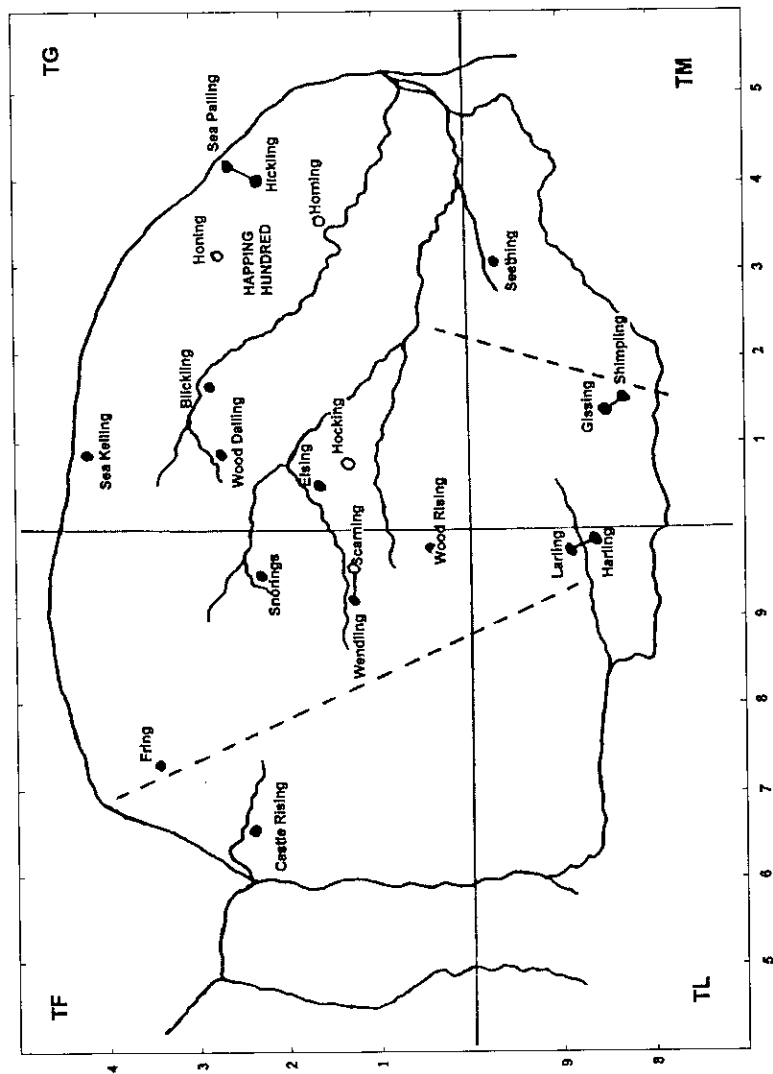
### Norfolk (Map 1)

**Happing** (\**Hæp-ingas*) hundred is a large area on the north-east coast and the parish of Happingburgh is said to be named from the same man. This hundred also includes two other such names, **Palling** (\**Pælli-ingas*) and **Hickling** (*Hicel-ingas*) and this suggests that the territory originally occupied by the followers of Hæp was smaller than the later Happing hundred. Palling and Hickling are a possible pair and suggest that the followers of Pælli occupied the coastal strip while those of Hicel occupied the area inland of this and including Hickling Broad. The coast is being eroded in this area and so Palling would originally have occupied a larger area.

Two more pairs of names occur in the south of the county. The first pair consists of **Larling** (\**Lyrel-ingas*) and East **Harling** (\**Herela-ingas*). They lie on either side of the river Thet which flows south-west to join the Little Ouse at Thetford. The other pair are **Gissing** (\**Gyssa-ingas*) and **Shimpling** (\**Scimpel-ingas*). Unlike most of the *-ingas* names in Norfolk, they do not lie near a river, but there is a Roman road to the east of the pair. The last pair is less certain because one of the names is said to be derived from a topographical feature rather than a personal name. These villages are **Wendling** (\**Wændel-ingas*) and **Scarning**, which lie next to each other along a tributary of the river Wensum to the west of East Dereham. The problem here is the derivation of Scarning. Ekwall gives the early spellings as *Scerninga* in Domesday, *Scerninges* in 1199 and *Skerning* in 1253 and interprets these as coming from *scearn* 'dirt'. Coates takes this further, and speculates that it may be from the same element in a Scandinavianised form \**Sce(a)rningas*, "amounting to 'dung-heaps'" (1997: 43). Another possibility is that the place-name derives from the name of the nearby stream.

The remaining names in Norfolk appear to be isolated examples rather than pairs. **Dalling** or Wood Dalling (*Dealla-ingas*) lies alongside the Blackwater, a tributary of the river Bure. **Wood Rising** has three possible derivations — *hrīs-ing* meaning 'brushwood place' or *hrīs-ingas* meaning 'people of the brushwood' or *Risa -ingas* from the personal name Risa. This lies next to a Blackwater river, which runs into the river Yare. The modern name Wood Rising tends to support the 'brushwood' etymology for this name. For **Castle Rising** in the north west of the county, the same options are possible. Brushwood is less likely on the coast, but if it did occur then it is unusual enough to be worthy of comment. Castle Rising lies alongside the Babingley river and originally lay on the coast, although it is now a few miles inland.

**Fring** (\**Frēa-ingas*) lies at the place where the Pedders Way crosses the Heacham river, while **Kelling** (\**Cylla-ingas*), in the north, lies on the coast. **Elsing** (*Elesa-ingas*) lies close to the river Wensum. Great and Little **Snoring** (\**Snear-ingas*) lie in the valley of the river Stiffkey, while the surrounding



Map 1: -ingas names in Norfolk.

villages are on slightly higher ground. **Blickling** (*\*Blicla-ingas*), further to the east, lies close to the river Bure. **Seething** (*\*Sitha-ingas*) lies in the south-east of the county and the river Chet forms part of the parish boundary although the village itself is on slightly higher ground overlooking the river valley.

The remaining three names are derived from topographical features. **Hockering** is derived from *\*hocer-ingas* and so means 'settlement of the dwellers by the hill or hump' and it is situated on higher ground above the river Tud. **Horning** may have the meaning 'settlement of the dwellers by the horn (sharp bend) in the river' and it lies by one very sharp bend in the river Bure, while Coates (1997) identifies two more such bends so that the parish is surrounded by 'horns'. Horning Ferry, a short distance south east of Horning, crossed the river to Woodbastwick. **Honing** probably means 'settlement of the dwellers by the *hān* (boundary stone), or *han* (rock, hill)'.

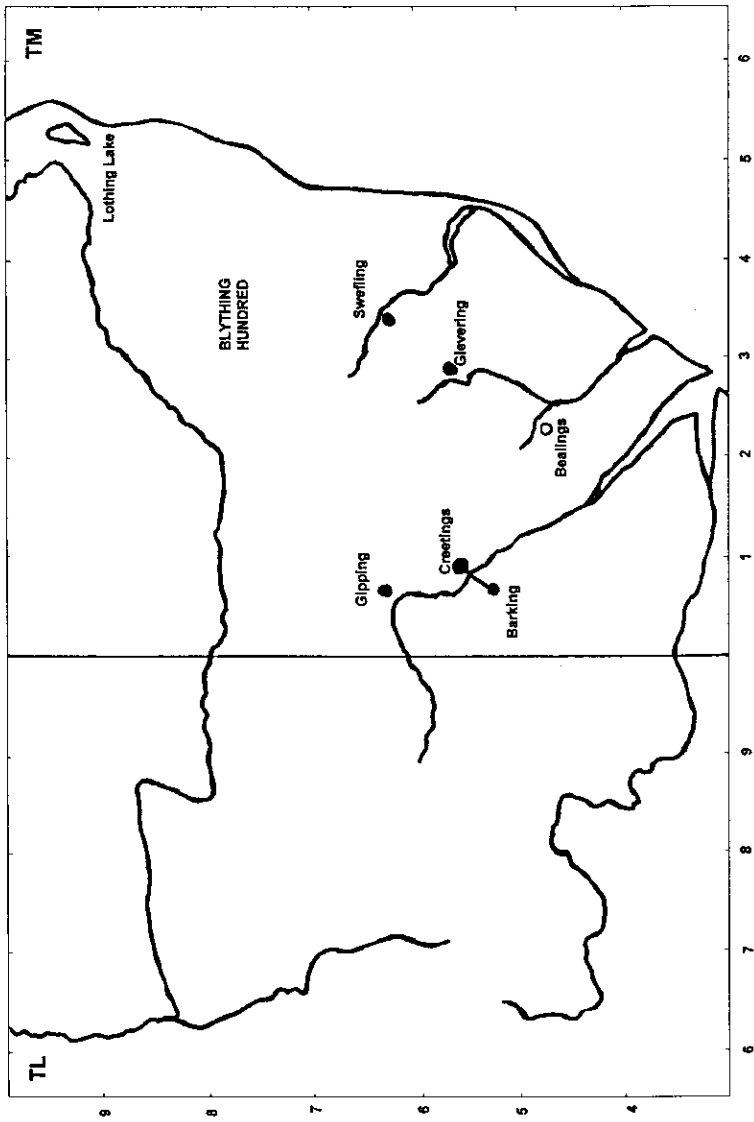
### Suffolk (Map 2)

There is a cluster of three of these names around Stowmarket. **Barking** (*\*Berica-ingas*) and the **Creetings** (*\*Cræta-ingas*) probably form a pair, while **Gipping** (*Gyppa-ingas*) is some distance to the north. Barking and Creeting St Mary lie on either side of the river Gipping, which probably took its name from the village of Gipping.

**Bealings** (*bēl-ingas*) probably means 'people of the funeral pyre' and may denote a group who practised cremation while their neighbours preferred inhumation. There is some evidence for cremations nearby, although it is unusual in this area (Copley, 1988, 46–7). The Bealings (Great and Little) are situated on two tributaries of the river Deben between Ipswich and Woodbridge (and Sutton Hoo).

**Glevering** (*\*Glēawfriþ-ingas*) is not a modern village or hamlet, but survives in the name Glevering Hall, next to the river Deben. Similarly **Swefling** (*\*Swiftel-ingas*) is further north and lies alongside the river Alde. **Lothing** Lake is said by Ekwall to take its name from Old Lothing (now Mutford) and may be derived from *Hlūd-ingas*. It lay in Lothing Hundred and was next to the hundred of Lothingland. Lothing Lake is marked on the OS map just inland from Lowestoft while Mutford (TM 48 88) is a few miles south-west of this. **Blything**, another hundred name, takes its name from the river Blyth.

**Beckling** (*Becclinga* in Domesday and *Beclinges* in 1183) appears in Ekwall with the derivation *Beoccel-ingas*, 'the settlement of Beoccel's people'. However the 1986 translation of the Suffolk Domesday (Rumble, 1986) does not identify *Becclinga* with any modern village and if the location is lost, then it is impossible to comment on its position.



Map 2: -ingas names in Suffolk.

**Essex** (Map 3)

To the east of Colchester and close to the Suffolk border, lies **Tendring** (the etymology of which is uncertain, but may be associated with *tynder* 'fuel'). This is the name of both parish and hundred, and the hundred meeting place was on Tendring Heath (PN Ess 325). This could form a pair with **Frating** (\**Fræta-ingas*).

Just to the west of Colchester lies **Crepping** (\**Cryppa-ingas*) which survives as 'Crepping Hall' just outside Wakes Colne on the banks of the river Colne. This is an isolated example. However a short distance further south are a pair of names — **Messing** (*Mæcca-ingas*) and **Feering** (\**Fēre-ingas*) which lie on either side of the Roman road from Colchester to Chelmsford.

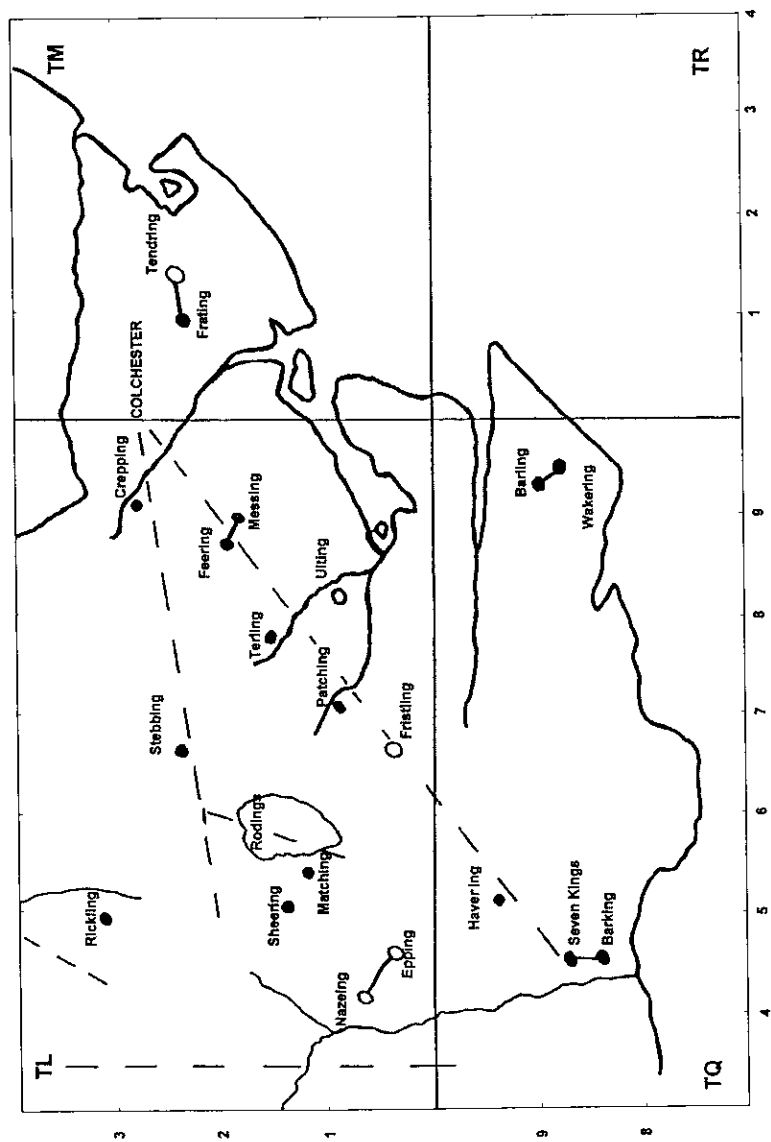
There is a group of names indicating the territory of the **Rodings** (\**Hrōða-ingas*) and both **Sheering** (\**Scear-ingas*) and **Matching** (possibly *Mæcca-ingas*) lie close to this and may form pairs with each other and/or the Rodings.

**Nazeing** (*næss-ingas*) and **Epping** (*yppe-ingas*) seem to form a pair. These names do not appear to be derived from personal names in the same way as the other pair, but seem to suggest that the ness-dwellers and the *yppe* or upland-dwellers identified themselves as separate groups with distinct territories and the boundary of these territories lay between Nazeing and Epping.

Two names occur to the north of Chelmsford, and the river Ter or its older name the river Ult. **Ulting** (*Ult-ingas*) lies on this river (which forms part of the parish boundary), close to its junction with the river Chelmer and takes its name from the river. **Terling** (*Tyrhtel-ingas*) also lies along side the river Ter, which derived its present name by back-formation from Terling.

**Rickling** (*Ricola-ingas*) is an isolated name not far from Saffron Walden. **Stebbing** (*Stybbā-ingas*, or possibly *stubbyngas* 'settlement of the dwellers by the tree-stumps') lies to the west of Braintree and north of Stane Street (Roman road). **Patching** Hall (\**Pæcc-ingas*) lies in Broomfield parish and in the northern outskirts of Chelmsford. **Fristling** is another isolated example and is an interesting case because Ekwall gives the derivation *fyrshlincas* or 'furze-covered hills' while Dodgson and Reaney include it as *Fyrstel-ingas*. Fristling Hall, north-east of Ingatestone, lies on slightly higher ground and might once have been covered in furze. Patching and Fristling are near the Roman road running south-west from Colchester, but are too widely spaced to be considered as a pair.

**Seven Kings** (*Seofeca-ingas*) in Ilford is close to **Barking** (*Berica-ingas*) and might have formed a pair, although *Seofeca-ingas* is a doubtful specimen. **Havering-atte-Bower** (\**Hæfer-ingas*) is not far from them, but the whole area is so built-up it is hard to comment on these. Finally, in the extreme south-east of the county lie one pair of *-ingas* names, **Barling** (\**Bērla-ingas*) and Great and Little **Wakering** (*Wacer-ingas*).



Map 3: -ingas names in Essex.

## Conclusions

It is clear from this study that in the three counties studied some of the *-ingas* names do occur in pairs, but the majority (possibly two-thirds in the counties studied) occur as isolated examples. Norfolk and Suffolk do have a number of places which were re-named by Danish and other settlers, and so a few of their singles may once have been pairs, but it is unlikely that this could explain all of these isolated names. Some other explanation is needed to account for these.

One possible explanation might be that these were meeting places for the group in the same way as the later hundreds had their meeting places, and this gave the name to the settlement. However the number of names which lie on navigable rivers or on the coast suggest another possible derivation. If the names were given by travellers approaching by boat, then the settlement situated nearest to and controlling the point of entry to the area might be given a name which indicated this — so the settlement at the landing place giving access to the territory of the followers of Blicla might become *Blicla-ingas* and later Blickling. Others lie near or on Roman roads, which could have had the same significance for travellers approaching along the road. The *-ingas* place-name could have indicated the settlement where travellers from outside entered the territory occupied by the people known by this name.

## Acknowledgement

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## References

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**Appendix**  
**Place-names used in this study**

<b>Modern name</b>	<b>OS grid ref.</b>	<b>DEPN</b>	<b>Etymology</b>
<b>Norfolk</b>			
Blickling	TG 17 28	49	Blicla-ingas
Castle Rising	TF 66 24	389	Risa-ingas
(Wood) Dalling	TG 09 27	138	Dealla-ingas
Elsing	TG 05 16	165	Elesa-ingas
Fring	TF 73 34	188	Frēa-ingas
Gissing	TM 14 85	197	Gyssa-ingas
Happing Hundred		217	Hæp-ingas
Happisburgh	TG 37 31	217	Hæppes-burh
(E. & W.) Harling	TL 99 86	220	Herela-ingas
Hickling	TG 41 24	238	Hicel-ingas
Hockering	TG 08 14	243	hocer-ingas
Honing	TG 32 27	248	hān-ingas
Horning	TG 36 16	251	horna-ingas
Kelling	TG 09 42	270	Cylla-ingas
Larling	TL 98 89	288	Lyrel-ingas
(Sea) Palling	TG 42 26	357	Pælli-ingas
Scarning	TF 96 13	407	scearn-ing
Seething	TM 31 97	411	Sītha-ingas
Shimpling	TM 15 83	417	Scimpel-ingas
(Gt & Lt) Snoring	TF 95 33	429	Snear-ingas
Wendling	TF 92 13	506	Wændel-ingas
Wood Rising	TF 98 04	389	hrīs-ing or Risa-ingas
<b>Suffolk</b>			
Barking	TM 07 53	26	Berica-ingas
Creting (St Peter, St Mary & All Saints)	TM 09 56	129	Cræta-ingas
Gipping	TM 07 63	196	Gyppa-ingas
Bealings	TM 23 48	32	bēl-ingas
Glevering	TM 29 57	199	Glēawfriþ-ingas
Swefling	TM 34 63	456	Swiftel-ingas
Lothing Lake	TM 53 93	305	Hlūd-ingas or Luda-ingas
Lothing Hundred		305	
Beckling		34	Beoccel-ingas
Blything Hundred		50	Blyth-ingas from the river-name

Mod. n.	OS grid ref.	DEPN	PN	ESS	Hundred	Etymology
<b>Essex</b>						
Barking	TQ 450 835	26	88		Becontree	Berica-ingas
Barling	TQ 933 895	26	178		Rochford	Baerla-ingas
Crepping	TL 902 288	129	383		Lexden	Cryppa-ingas
Epping	TL 460 025	167	22		Waltham	yppe-ingas
Feering	TL 872 195	176	389		Lexden	Fere-ingas
Frating	TM 090 230	187	338		Tendring	Fræta-ingas
Fristling	TL 665 025	188	259		Chelmsford	fyrh-hlincas/ Fyrstel-ingas
<b>Havering-atte-</b>						
Bower	TQ 512 932	226	111		Becontree	Hæfer-ingas
Matching	TL 525 120	318	45		Harlow	Mæcca-ingas
Messing	TL 897 187	323	396		Lexden	Mæcca-ingas
Nazeing	TL 415 065	337	25		Waltham	næss-ingas
Patching	TL 705 090	359	241		Chelmsford	Pæcca-ingas
<b>(Broomfield)</b>						
Rickling	TL 495 310	386	532		Uttlesford	Ricola-ingas
<b>Seven Kings</b>						
(Ilford)	TQ 455 871		99		Becontree	Seofeca-ingas?
Sheering	TL 505 139	415	50		Harlow	Scær-ingas?
Stebbing	TL 663 240	440	457		Hickford	Stybba-ingas?
Tendring	TM 140 240	463	351		Tendring	tynder-ingas?
Terling	TL 772 150	463	296		Witham	Tyrhtel-ingas
Ulting	TL 817 087	486	299		Witham	Ult-ingas
Wakering	TQ 945 875	491	203		Rochford	Wacer-ingas
<b>(Gt &amp; Little)</b>						

**The Roding group (all in Dunmow Hundred, DEPN 391, PN Ess 490)**

Modern name	OS grid ref.	Etymology
Abess Roding	TL 573 115	Hrōða-ingas
Beauchamp Roding	TL 580 099	Hrōða-ingas
Aythorpe Roding	TL 582 152	Hrōða-ingas
Berners Roding	TL 591 095	Hrōða-ingas
High Roding	TL 605 175	Hrōða-ingas
Leaden Roding	TL 595 133	Hrōða-ingas
Margaret Roding	TL 599 120	Hrōða-ingas
White Roding	TL 563 135	Hrōða-ingas