

Patriotism - that's what's in a name

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Two towns in the region are among the highest in the country when it comes to the number of residents with English surnames.

Researchers have discovered Barton-Upon-Humber and Brigg are among the top towns in Britain for having the highest percentages of residents with English surnames. Barton came in at 61st place and Brigg, 22 places lower, in the 1,500-strong league table compiled by boffins at University College London.

In comparison Scunthorpe lived up to its cosmopolitan history by finishing in 320th place - way behind Ripley, Derbyshire, in first place.

The five-year study into English monikers by the team led by Richard Webber, a professor in the Department of Geography, has also pin-pointed thousands of North Lincolnshire families to their places of origin.

Professor Webber said more than 25,000 names were studied and of those 32 were found to be more common in Scunthorpe than in the rest of Britain.

Scunthorpe's top name-sharing families include: The Drurys (or the Drewrys), Markhams, Stamps, Hornsbys, Coys, Barnabys, Leckeyes, Kenningtons, Chafers Goodhands, Sheardowns, Towls, Buttricks, Arrands, Pidds, Laisters and Spindleys.

The 10 names most common to Brigg, but rare in the rest of the UK, are: Fillingham, Brocklesby, Beacock, Havercroft, Hunsley, Horstead, Tock, Morwood, Munday and Waterlow.

The top seven names in Barton are: Barley, Kinsley, Spittlehouse, Credland, Birkett, Holberry and Grimbleby.

Professor Webber said he believed the research would help establish future migration and ethnicity patterns in the UK.

"There is nothing new about the idea of classifying names in this way," he said.

"However we do believe this project is the first to aim to classify so many names on a consistent basis and in doing this to use such a fine level of name classification.

"One of the principal aims of the project has been to identify cultural, linguistic and economic divides.

"Most surnames give some indication of the geographical origin of a person's ancestors. It is something for which everyone will have a reaction.

"Everyone has their own name and all are interested in where it came from and what has happened to it."

Professor Webber said North Lincolnshire families interested in helping the research should contact the website at www.originsinfo.com

In North Lincolnshire it is thought most of the population gained their surnames somewhere between 1100 and 1300.

The main purpose of the surname was to distinguish between individuals with shared common names such as Paul, Richard and Daryl.

In the area falling between the Humber and the Tyne it was common for families to be named after their fathers, so names like Thompson, Davidson and Donaldson came into being.