

# Oxford Reference

## The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland

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## Smith

**Variants:** SMITHE, SMEETH, SMYTH, SMYTHE, SMYE, SMY, SMITHS

- **Current frequencies:** GB 546960, Ireland 18612
- **GB frequency 1881:** 416438
- **Main GB location 1881:** widespread
- **Main Irish location 1847–64:** widespread

**1** English, Scottish: occupational name from Middle English *smith* 'smith' (Old English *smið*), denoting a worker in metal, especially iron, such as a blacksmith or farrier. Early examples are also found in the Latin form FABER. See also SMITHER. Post-medieval bearers may belong under (2).

### Early bearers:

#### England

Ecceard Smið, about 975 in Tengvik (Durham); Ælfword þe Smith, about 1100 in Tengvik (Somerset); William le Smyth, 1275 in Assize Rolls (Somerset); Radulphus le Smyth', 1379 in Poll Tax (Fakenham with Thorpland, Norfolk); Dorathia Smith, 1538 in IGI (Bayford, Herts); Esabell Smith, 1538 in IGI (Kirkby Lonsdale, Westm); Joan Smith, 1538 in IGI (Sandwich, Kent); Johis Smith, 1542 in IGI (Hennock, Devon).

**Scotland** Alan Smyth, 1398 in Aberdeen Council Register (Aberdeen); Jonet Smith, 1557 in IGI (Errol, Perth); Janet Smith, 1572 in IGI (Dunfermline, Fife).

**2** English: locative name, occupational name from Middle English *smith*, *smethe* 'smithy, forge' (Old English *smiðde*, *smeðe*). The surname may be topographic, for someone who lived in or by a blacksmith's shop, occupational, for someone who worked in one, or toponymic, for someone from a place so named, such as Smeeth (Kent) or Smitha in King's Nympston (Devon). Compare SMITHEY.

**Early bearers:**

Laurence de Smethe, 1275 in Hundred Rolls (Kent); John de la Smythe, 1311 in Assize Rolls (Devon); William atte Smithe, 1313 in Ancient Deeds i (Sussex); John atter Smythe, 1330 in Subsidy Rolls (Devon); Robert atte Smyth, 1332 in Subsidy Rolls (Sussex); Guydo atter Smytthe, 1333 in Subsidy Rolls (Devon); Ralph atte Smythe, 1370 in Assize Rolls (Devon); Willelmus atte Smethe, 1377 in Poll Tax (Fairfield, Kent); Johannes de Smethe, 1379 in Poll Tax (Sheffield, WR Yorks); Johan atte Smithe, 1379 in Poll Tax (Mountfield, Sussex); Willelmus atte Smythe, 1381 in Poll Tax (Bramley, Surrey).

**References:**

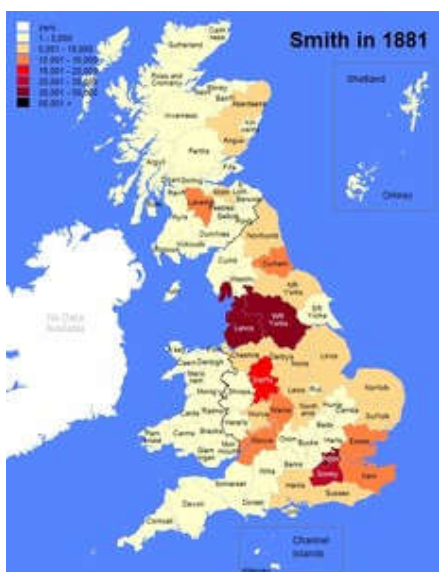
Place-Names of Devon pp. 255, 386, 644.

**3** The English surname has absorbed, by assimilation and translation, cognates and equivalents from many other languages, including Dutch SMIT and German and Jewish (Ashkenazic) SCHMIDT.

**Early bearers:**

Franz Smith, born in Germany, in Census 1851 (Marylebone, Middx); Abraham Smith, 1857 in Great and Hambro Synagogue Births (London); Peter Smith, born in The Netherlands, in Census 1881 (Swansea, Glamorgan); George Smith, born in Sweden, in Census 1881 (Wavertree, Lancs); Frederick Smith, born in Dresden, Germany, in Census 1901 (Hammersmith, Middx); Samson Smith, born in Russia, in Census 1881 (Middlesbrough, NR Yorks); Harris Smith, born in Poland, in Census 1881 (Saint George in the East, Middx); Jacob Smith, born in Poland, in Census 1881 (Bromley, Kent); Hyman Smith, tailor's machinist, born in Poland, in Census 1891 (Norwich, Norfolk); Wodak Smith, hairdresser, born in Poland, in Census 1911 (Islington, Middx).

**4** Irish, Scottish: in Scotland and Ireland, sometimes adopted for Gaelic **Mac Gobhann**, Irish **Mac Gabhann** 'son of the smith', see MCGOWAN.



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Smith, 1881 frequency.

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