

Oxford Reference

The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland

Patrick Hanks, Richard Coates, and Peter McClure

Publisher: Oxford University Press

Print Publication Date: 2016

Print ISBN-13: 9780199677764

Published online: 2016

Current Online Version: 2016

eISBN: 9780191781797

Swan

Variants: SWANN

- **Current frequencies:** GB 8363, Ireland 730
- **GB frequency 1881:** 7711
- **Main GB location 1881:** widespread in England and Scotland
- **Main Irish location 1847–64:** Antrim and Down; Meath

1 English: occupational name, status name from Middle English *swan(e)*, *swon(e)* 'swineherd; peasant; male servant' (Old English *swān*). Compare SWAIN, with which this name was thoroughly confused, as in Thomas Swan, 1543, Henry Swane, 1545, Brydgett Swayn, 1575 in IGI (Rye, Sussex). Some post-medieval bearers may belong under other senses.

Early bearers:

Thomas le Swan, John le Swon, 1327 in Subsidy Rolls (Suffolk); Walter le Swon, Stephen le Swan, 1296 in Subsidy Rolls (Sussex); Ricardus le Swon', 1379 in Poll Tax (Broughton, Hants); John Swan, 1539 in IGI (Hampstead Norreys, Berks); Robert Swan, 1542 in IGI (Metheringham, Lincs); Robert Swan, 1559 in IGI (Ickleton, Cambs); Robert Swan, 1560 in IGI (Shipbourne, Kent).

2 English: relationship name from the Middle English personal name *Swan*, an anglicized form of Old Scandinavian *Sveinn*. Compare SWAIN. Some early bearers may belong with (1).

Early bearers:

given names

Suannus faber, 1177 in Pipe Rolls (Cumb); Suan' filius Arkill', 1219 in Assize Rolls (Yorks).

surnames Eduuardus filius Suani, 1086 in Domesday Book (Middx, Essex); Hugo Suan, 1176 in Pipe Rolls (Suffolk); John Swann', 1221 in Assize Rolls (Shrops); Gilbert Swan, 1260 in Assize Rolls (Cambs).

3 English: locative name for someone who lived at the sign of the Swan.

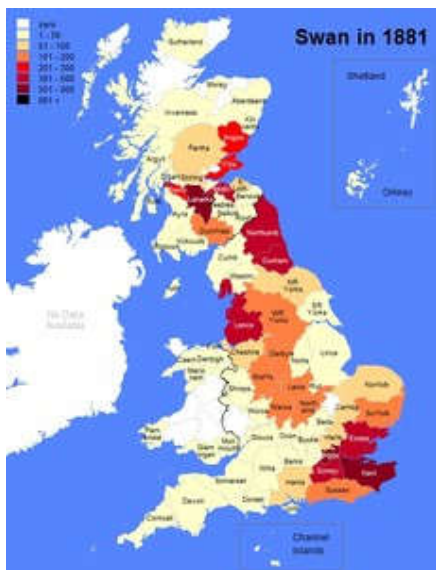
Early bearers:

Godfrey atte Swan, 1344 in London Pleas; Thomas atte Swan, 1364 in London Letter Books G.

4 Irish: in Ireland, also an anglicization of **Mac Suibhne** (see under SWEENEY), as well as an adoption of the Old Scandinavian personal name in (2).

Early bearers:

John Swan, 1664 in Hearth Money Rolls, Ireland (Lislot, Armagh); John Swann, 1664 in Hearth Money Rolls, Ireland (Mullaghglass, Armagh); Art McSwany, 1664 in Hearth Money Rolls, Ireland (Dromart, Armagh); James Swan, 1665 in Hearth Money Rolls, Ireland (Tullybryan, Monaghan); Hugh Swann, 1796 in Flaxgrowers Ireland (Cumber Upper, Derry); Alexander Swan, 1796 in Flaxgrowers Ireland (Tedavnet, Monaghan).



[Click to view larger](#)

Swan, 1881 frequency.

© Archer Software

Copyright © 2020. All rights reserved.