

urchfont

by any other name



URCHFONT - THE YEAR 2000
As enduring as this stone-
let there be respect for the Earth
and Peace for our People.

A History of the Parish

One Hundred and Eleven Different Ways of Writing 'Urchfont'...

Archeffonte (1303)	Erchesfunt (1223)	Orchefonte (1531)	Urchesfunte (1242)
Archeffounte (1502)	Erchffunt (1567)	Orchefunt	Urseant (1575)
Archeffunt	Erchfont (1396)	Orchefunte (1284)	Urshent (1564)
Archefont (1557)	Erchfonte(1377)	Orchesffounte (1553)	Ursheont (1655)
Archefonte (1572)	Erchffount (1517)	Orchesfunte (1259)	Urshfont (1686)
Archefount (1564)	Erchfount (1546)		Urshhaunt (1543)
Archefounte (1557)	Erchynfount (1337)	Uchefount (1545)	Urshont
Archefunta	Erdefunte (1267)	Urcheffont (1274)	Urssyant
Archefunte (1179)	Erkesfunte (1175)	Urcheffount (1531)	Ursyant
Archesfunte (1179)	Ershfont (1712)	Urchefont (1559)	Ushant (1695)
Archfunte (1589)		Urchefonte	Ushfont
Archfounte (1564)	Herchesfunt	Urchefount (1577)	Ushont (1755)
Archisfunte		Urchefounte (1547)	
	Icheffont (1344)	Urchent	Vchesfunt (1580)
Earchfount (1605)	Iercheffonte	Urchefownte (1575)	Vrchefont (1643)
Eoricsfunta	Ierchesfunte (1086)	Urcheont(1648)	Vrchefonte (1548)
Erceffaunt (1536)	Irchisfunte	Urchesffonte	Vrchefount(1543)
Ercheffont (1500)	Irchesfunte	Urchesfont	Vrchesfont
Ercheffountt (1536)		Urchesfunte (1316)	Vrchesfunte
Ercheffunte	Jerchefont	Urchesfunte (1289)	Vrchfounte (1550)
Erchefond (1547)	Jerchesfont	Urchevante (1628)	Vrchfont
Erchefont (1500)	Jerchesfunte (1086)	Urchevaunt	Vrchfount(1582)
Erchefount (1547)		URCHFONT (1580)	Vrchfounte
Erchefounte (1536)	Lerchesfunte (1377)	Urchfunte (1589)	Vriciant
Erchefunt (1394)	Lerchesfount	Urchfounte (1633)	Vrichesfunte
Erchesfont (1205)		Urchford (1742)	Vrichesfunt
Erchesfonta	Orcheffounte (1546)	Urchiant (1655)	Vrshaunt (1572)
Erchesfunte (1384)	Orcheffunt	Urciant (1765)	Vrssyant (1539)
Erchesfount (1470)	Orchffunte (1428)	Uricheffunt	Vshent (1610)
		Urchefount	
		Urchesfunte	Yerchesfunte

How Wiltshire got its Name

The County of Wiltshire dates back to the 9th century; to the times of the Danish raids when the kingdom of Wessex was divided into six provinces each of which had an official head - the ealdorman. In the year 802 an ealdorman named Weohstan led a body of men described as the Wilsaetan against invaders and, it seems, the Wilsaetan took their name from their town of Wilton. Records then suggest that Wilton, in 878, gave its name to Wiltunscire - nowadays accepted as the earliest spelling form of Wiltshire (from Wiltshire County Council Centenary handbook).

Chapter One

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

One Hundred and Eleven Different Ways of Writing 'Urchfont'

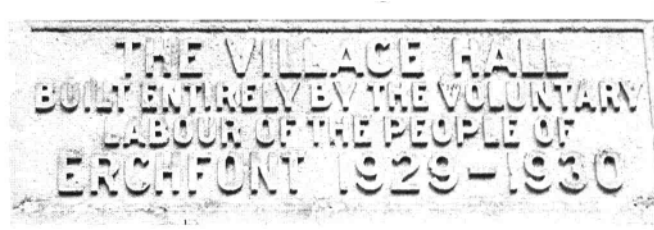
The written word URCHFONT (as currently spelt) can be traced back at least 420 years, but the name itself, variously pronounced and even more variously written, goes back even further. The 'font' part of the name almost certainly derives from the Latin 'fons, font~' meaning spring or springs (Old English font, fonta or funt). Today there is a spring down in The Bottom, colloquially known as 'The Font', which is always running even in times of drought, and maybe this is the spring which has given Urchfont its name.



The 'Urch' part of the name may derive from the Anglo Saxon name 'Eorich', 'Eardric' or Eric, so giving us the meaning 'the springs on the land of Eric'. Alternatively, it has been suggested, it derives from 'erche' (an old dialect word for deer) thus giving the meaning 'deer spring'. The deer is still part of the village logo.

Whatever the original meaning of the name, through the ages documents have revealed an extraordinary number of variations in the way the name was spelt or written.

Even as recently as the 1930s the spelling ERCHFONT was commonly used and it is this spelling which appears on the plaque



over the front door of the Village Hall.

Peter Thorpe has made a special study of these different spellings, at the latest count there were 111 alternatives. The list shows the spelling of (or alternative ways of spelling) the name of the Parish so far discovered: there may be more! Dates in brackets indicate the year in which a particular spelling was first used in documents seen by Peter Thorpe and the other spellings are from lists compiled by Hamilton Rivers-Pollock (one time owner of Urchfont Manor) in the 1930s and by Miss Margaret Harding in the 1950s. As to pronunciation, it has to be borne in mind that the 'ff' in old writing would have been pronounced something like 'sf'.

All very confusing.