

THE ME. OCCUPATIONAL TERM RINGERE

According to Bertil Thuresson's Middle English Occupational Terms (Lund, 1950), p.181, the occupational name Ringere is a derivative of OE hringan 'to ring', and thus signifies 'one who rings; esp. a bell- or change-ringer'. P. H. Reaney's Dictionary of British Surnames (2nd edn, London/Boston, Mass., 1976), s.n., follows suit. No doubt it was Thuresson's desire to provide antedatings to Murray's New English Dictionary that prompted him to opt for the one suitable meaning recorded in NED rather than consider the possibility that the word base need not in this case be a verb stem but might be a noun, OE hring 'ring'. That ME ringere could also mean 'ring-maker' is demonstrated by an informative entry for the London Eyre of 1276, edited by Martin Weinbaum for the London Record Society (London, 1976). Item 491 concerns a plea of the Crown in 1274-5 which reports that

Robert le Ringerer (sic) complains of Martin le Criour and Walter Hervy that on Walter's orders Martin went to his house at Flete, entered it by force, and took and carried off his goods and chattels, namely a brooch (firmaculum) and about 300 rings of latten.

In defence, Walter Hervy (Mayor of London at the time of the supposed offence) claims that he ordered the seizure of the goods because certain London goldsmiths had complained that Robert 'made brooches and rings of latten and set in them precious stones, such as sapphires and other stones, which is against the law and custom of the City' (ibidem).

The otiose final -er of Ringerer is probably to be explained as a copyist's mistaken expansion of a final flourish, a slip occasionally found in this and in other medieval London documents.

UNIVERSITY OF HULL

A fertile year for amateur(ish) anthroponymology: not all memorable, some unrepeatable. The very bulk of material potentially available makes it all the more grievous that - apart from our Editor and last year's generous topo (now revealed as our own, our very own Magister Ratoun) - helpers with the name-harvest have been few.

En passant, the most emphatic démenti possible must be given to the canard that your scribe barely escaped being eaten after losing a mouse-race: athletic competition has never, even in youth, entered into my activities.

Nascitur . . . *

Of all recent events, that most provocative of anthroponymical antics has been the birth of the presumptive next-king-but-one. Although even hoi polloi had had a good six months' notice of the nominand's arrival, the parents took a week to come out with the traditional, familial sequence William Arthur Philip Louis. Perhaps an Anthroponymer Royal is needed to jolly things along.

Perhaps not; perhaps some of us misheard the public silence. For the royal genealogist [caps. ?] was recorded as commenting, 'It seems clear that William is the Princess's choice; she is a woman of decision and strong will, likely to have her way in all matters on which she feels strongly' [quoted by M. Lassiter, Our Names, Our Selves (London, 1983), p.37, from Guardian, 29.vi.82].

Be that as it may, in the interim the loyal subjects went to town. Bookies opened books, with George reportedly favourite at evens, whereas Kevin and Trevor commanded longer odds. Because (as regular readers will know) only a limited range of English papers reaches Muritania and because no correspondents filled the breach, a comprehensive market-report could not be compiled: regrettably, for it would have demonstrated what the nation feels about its name-stock. A rare glimpse of The Sun revealed that bets had been laid, at 1000-1, on Elvis, Bjorn and Canute [24.vi.82, p.5].

Journalists speculated in their own ways. Philip Howard dwelt on the 'tricky political judgment' involved ('Rest, rest, perturbed spirit of Queen Victoria; but not Albert, I hope') [The Times, 22.vi.82, p.5]. Miles Kington satirized populist notions: for instance, of a 'name that pleases the ethnic minorities, like Winston or Abdul' [ibidem, 24.vi.82, p.14]. Another joker, in the Guardian, urged the claims of Norman (the 'fish-knife' name), adducing its incidence among current Cabinet members [25.vi.82, p.13]. One letter-writer quite baffled your reporter by asking, 'How could any patriotic Englishman whose son was born during the World Cup ever consider calling him anything other than Brian?' [Grauniad, 25.vi.82, p.12]: in this context the only Brian to spring to the scribal mind is The Eye's son of 'Brenda' and nephew of 'Yvonne' - relevant perhaps, but scarcely in the best of taste [perhaps the Editor can explain the allusion].

Post-baptismal comment, although more voluble than greeted Princess Anne's more noteworthy naming of her daughter as Zara [see, however, a letter to The Times, 20.vi.81], found ribaldry damped down. Some ventured to recall that the most recent King William, IV of the name, had been the original Silly Billy [see, e.g., The Times 'Diary', 29.vi.82, p.10]; but fewer, that The First had been The Bastard. Gay News reportedly set a Christmas-quiz question too unedifying to perpetuate [see Guardian,

* No mus, dear readers, is ever ridiculus.

20.xii.82, p.9].

As for the landslide forecast in national naming-patterns [e.g., in Daily Mail, 24.vi.82], the 'Christian names of 1982' tabulated by The Times's correspondents in fact showed William dropping from second place to third [6.i.83, p.11]. What does 1983 hold?

Credo Quia Impossibile . . .

A propos of fashions, Grace Kelly's death elicited from Leslie Dunkling a comment upon her anthroponymical influence, stemming partly from her 1956 rôle of Tracy Samantha Lord and partly from adoption of her surname as a girls' first-name: 'The latest available figures, based on first-name usage by the Smiths in England and Wales, show that Kelly is currently the fourth most popular name for girls' [letter to The Times, 17.ix.82; but The Times's correspondents list neither Kelly nor Samantha nor Trac(e)y in the first ten]. Once in circulation, of course, any name spreads by imitation of secondary models, with no necessary awareness of the original; and the babies of the late '50s are now well of an age to be mothers, aunts and godmothers, let alone film-stars in their own right.

Eheu . . .

Back in December 1981, while Princeling William was as yet but adumbrated and innominate, a Guardian leader-writer lamented, for anthroponymical reasons, the passing of Sir Hannibal Publius Seicluna (of the Malta Museum). The real action, he remarked, occurs at the tail-ends of the name-charts, not at their much-publicized heads:

'The sudden popularity of Jason and the more modest burgeoning of names like Barnaby, Reuben and Seth have scarcely been documented, let alone explained. Why is Jason chosen, when Caractacus, Vortigern and Morcar remain excluded? (We do not mention Vercingetorix, for, though it has many other attractions, it is a difficult name to shout across a playground [But a shortened *Versy could most felicitously be punned into *Vic(e)y - S.]).

'Are small boys in the West Riding still christened Jabez? This month's Yorkshire Post has never a Clara or a Mabel or a Florence to replace those that have died. The Ediths and the Ethels, the Horaces and Herberts, the Idas and Ivys and Noreens seem to be fading away as well. There was a time when Ends bloomed, profuse as daisies [Why no capital? - S.], among the primary classes of the North, but how many interrupt the serried ranks of Darrens and Karens and Sharons today?' [29.xii.81; as usual, silently abbreviated and consequently repunctuated].

This threnody resolved itself in a loyal hope that summer might bring a Prince Cyril or Clarence or else a Princess Mildred or Edna to 'shake British parents out of their trudging conformity'. That, alas, was not to be.

Baptizo Te . . .

Writers' own names continued to preoccupy them. For his parents' choice Joel Barnett was grateful:

'I was given the Hebrew names for Joseph, Maurice, Henry. This satisfied tradition. But my mother wanted something better for me: Joseph or Joe was not good enough for her son, and, as the English name Joel could perfectly properly be a derivation from the Hebrew, it was Joel that duly appeared on the

birth certificate. I have always been grateful to my mother for setting me apart from the Joes of this world. The only slight disadvantage is that Joel sounds like Gerald on the telephone' [Inside the Treasury (London, 1982), pp.4-5: a contribution from the Mousehole-Sharer].

Henry Stanhope, although rejoicing at his name's rise to seventh place in The Times's correspondents' tables, felt a gratitude less whole-hearted:

'Henry! to the cartoonist is a little man with a toothbrush moustache and half-moon glasses, washing up in a frilly apron while his virago of a wife slumbers . . . At school I would gladly have swapped the dynamo on my bike for a name like Bob, or Bill, or - as it was in Wales - Glyn, Gwyn, Bryn, or even Geraint. Being called Henry was only one up on being Christopher Robin. It is, however, a name one has grown into -'.

And he mused on its 'celebrated' bearers: Irving, Cooper, Kelly [?], Jackson [???], Kissinger, and Shaw's Higgins [The Times, 13.i.83, p.10].

Retrospectively, confidences like these justify parental anxieties (as shared by the Waleses) to choose a name unexceptionable in the milieu envisaged. What gives those anxieties their edge is the multiplicity of milieux: a problem unlikely to be squarely faced by the average supermarket Name-Your-Baby book, whose target readership consists by definition of those most over-sensitive on the subject. Elsewhere comment is bolder:

'It comes as something of a blow to be told that one's alma mater, lovely Exeter University, is nowadays infested with Sloane Rangers - known as Wellies, on account of their propensity for wearing green wellington boots. The main charge against them (apart from having names like Lucinda and Piers, a serious matter in itself) is that they are obnoxious, possess "aggressive vowels", and, when buying a drink, place the money on the counter rather than hand it to the barman' [Sunday Telegraph, 14.viii.83, p.16].

Frankness perhaps needs a humourist's licence. Unhappily, How to be a Wally (London, 1983) seems to ignore this aspect of social-marking, and The Complete Naff Guide (London, 1983) is on this score miserly to the point of uselessness, the only names it stigmatizes being Arnold, Arthur [!], Nigel and Tina [CNG, p.19; we have not heard the last of Tina]. By contrast, The Official Sloane Ranger Handbook (London, 1982) not only lists the names favoured (mostly, pacè aggrieved Execestrians, ones unexceptionable in any milieu) but then, with syntax passing strange, itemizes the unacceptable:

'In the garden of live flowers, Daisy, Flora and Pansy are Sloane, Lily and Heather very unSloane ("They christened her Marigold and hoped she would"). Sloane Rangers have not yet reached the days of Waynes and Roses. Sloanes are never called Celtic names unless Irish or Scottish, and then few: never Kevin, Keith, Sean, Blodwen, Kelly, Brigid. Nor Saxon [sic] names: Walter, Harold (except Harold Macmillan). They are never called the poncy names that intellectuals saddle their children with: Lancelot, Torquil, Peregrine, Jennet, Io, Perdita, Hepzibah. Never called film-star names: Dawn, Marilyn, Rock, Merle, Kim, Tab [???], Clint, Charlton. Though they scorn lower-middle-class names (which is to say Celtic names and film-star names), Sloanes perversely rather like housemaids' names: Mollie, Polly, Kate, Betsy, Betty, Elsie and Alice. Never called footballers' names: Bobby, Frank, Ron, Les,

Terry, Dave. Never called after jewels: Emerald is too grand for Sloanes, Ruby and Pearl are for cleaning women, Amber's a joke. Finally, they are never called names which are "too" biblical, smack of flagrant Popery, or otherwise go off the deep end of ecumenism: Bernadette, Marie, Annunciata, Ignatius; Samuel, Leah, Ruth; Dora, Patience, Christian' [OSRH, p.59].

Oh, the relief of getting a good honest whiff of social prejudice!

And, a propos of those 'housemaids' names', an historical sidelight on the naming of what were surely Sloane Rangers avant la lettre:

'It was odd, Lady Diana Cooper pointed out, that the Christian names of the women Duff most admired - Daisy and Betty and half-a-dozen others [TLS, 7.x.83, p.1079, adds Biddy and Mollie] - should happen to recall the nomenclature of an English dairy-herd; and she sometimes referred to them as "Duff's moos" ' [Sunday Telegraph, 18.ix.83, p.14, from a review of Durable Fire (London, 1983), an edition by Artemis Cooper (named, in translation, after her grandmother) of her paternal grandparents' letters].

Onomantica

A name may, some believe, do more than mark social status; it may rule one's fate [cf. NOMINA V, p.77, and VI, p.44]. N'exagérons rien: these powers (if such powers indeed there be) must mainly reside in given names. However apposite a surname to its bearer's rôle in life (Mr Fish, of the Thames Water Authority, presenting a prize to a successful angler; Mr M(a)cGregor striking terror into the warren-workers; Cardinal Sin out-Firbanking Firbank), to attach to these phenomena over-much weight might be unwise.

One name-bearer who, until damaging a knee (now happily reported on the mend), lived well up to expectations was the son born on 4 April 1981 to Mrs Moss [see NOMINA V, p.78], dubbed Precocious: five times out, five times a winner - twice before your scribe's own admiring eyes. There's a baby full-sister at home [The Times, 6.iv.83, p.30; Lady Tavistock makes the birth-announcements, she says, because 'one has to treat one's animals like one's children - to teach them to set their sights as high as possible' (ibidem, 11.vii.83, p.9)]; but so far no further news has been noted from big sister in Kentucky, Pushy by name and also, in her racing days, by nature [cf. NOMINA VI, p.43]. The most appalling hipponym of the year must be Newmarket Sausage (absit, O absit omen); but Our Lady runs it close. As for the outcome of the General Accident 2,000 Guineas promised for 1984, we can but pray that the name may appease, not tease, the Furies.

The year's prime instance of the destiny-shaping power of names (apart, that is, from the dubious case of one plumber's mate, a lab'rer that's known as [lu:]) must be a young person reportedly daughter to a Mr Wilbur Stark and now celebrated for performing unclad [see, for instance, Sun, 7.x.82, p.10; another of our Editor's felicitous trouvailles].

The influence may, of course, as a reviewer observed in The Times, go a contrario:

'We all know the faithless Faiths and the unvirginal Virginias, deeply flippant men called Ernest, charming malleable Victors. The question of the urges which impel us to rise above the more constricting names our parents give us cannot help but strike, and should delight, the reader of Prudence Glynn's absorbingly imprudent survey: Skin to Skin' [14.x.82].

With surnames too some bearers defy their apparent destinies, among them an apprentice flat-race jockey called Eatwell.

Theories of name-influence often go beyond etymology, or associations with previous bearers, into the occult, invoking numerology and horoscopy. Wandering in the Auvergne (though not warbling like a Kiri), your reporter chanced upon an hypothesis which, specifically denying any element of 'magic', located the power of names in their sonorities:

'Imagine a child always called (in both senses of the word) by the same musical phrase, played on the same instrument: a bassoon, say, with its misty and melancholy note. Wouldn't he identify himself with that sound, becoming dreamy and fanciful? A child summoned by trumpet-calls would, on the other hand, become alert, vigorous and flamboyant. The human voice is such an instrument; every name spoken becomes a musical phrase. Karl is more abrupt than [Fr] Charles; Pierrot less so than Pierre. Pet-names often, but not always, involve as it were a "muting" of the voice: a loving call of Frédérî will naturally evoke from the child a reaction very different from that to an angry shout of Fred!' [P. Daco, in C. Mercier, Les prénoms: un choix pour l'avenir (Verviers, 1979), pp.12-14].

Alas, William Arthur Philip Louis of Wales sounds for all the world as though being mumbled through cold porridge: hardly a crisp stop-consonant, and certainly not a trumpet-note (let alone a fanfare), in the whole thing.

Familiar in Whose Mouths?

Whether or not a baptismal name shapes, or at least forecasts, the personality, a nickname encapsulates it, at all events as externally perceived. Politicians - even those not openly inviting the public to (a semblance of) over-familiarity [cf. NOMINA VI, pp.46-7, cf.50] - are especially subject to this form of characterization. Whether or not their intimate friends call them Candle-Ends may seldom be divulged, but any third-person sallies by colleagues are avidly seized by the Press. Thus Norman St-John Stevas (N.B., the middle element is never dropped) reportedly dubbed his Party-Leader (or Leaderene) The Blessed Margaret and, alternatively, TINA (from her own slogan: 'There Is No Alternative'); and look where it got him. The Press's own inventions have, by contrast, to be borne as part of the price of power. The simplest are demotic hypocoristics: Mr Wedgwood-Benn may choose to be known as Tony, but one doubts whether Mrs Thatcher and Viscount (Mr) Whitelaw much relish the bandying-about of Maggie and of Willie. Others are more picturesque: Mr Michael Heseltine's Tarzan, for instance. And the fun needn't stop there: thus, The Times 'Diary' recommended an allusive revival of a discarded street-name: 'Until 1969 the road in which Michael Foot - affectionately known as Worzel Gumidge - has his home was officially known as Worsley Road' [9.xi.82, p.12]. Affectionately? By The Eye? Perhaps so, for the Diarist's colleague Philip Howard has independently proposed,

'as a tentative political axiom, that nicknames are in effect friendly, whatever their intention. Boadicea, intended as an insult, is in election time a compliment and an asset. From Peanuts and Tricky Dicky to The Iron Lady and Worzel Gumidge, the sobriquet is a sign of familiarity, which is as near as a politician is going to get to affection. I worry about those, like Roy Jenkins, who do not [But what about Woy? - S.] attract them' [The Times, 1.vi.83, p.12].

For Royals, one may spare more sympathy: born with little choice but to live in the public eye (not to mention the Private one), they indeed enjoy consolatory riches, but without the power that anaesthetizes insulted politicians. A full study of royal by-naming would, first, single out those forms, like Gloriana, propagated quasi-officially. Others, like the Tum-Tum given to Edward VII, began in private, third-person use among the courtiers, becoming public only with the latter's memoirs [see P. Magnus, King Edward the Seventh (London, 1964), Penguin edn. pp.124, 220]. The modern media pick upon the more defenceless of the clan, such as the Queen's two youngest children, mocking whatever traits supposedly distinguish them from the ruck: Andy's alleged frolics with Miss Stark et aliae inspire a rhyming jingle, while his younger brother appears as Educated Edward or as Steady Eddie, according as his A-levels or the supposed contrast between his behaviour and Andrew's comes uppermost in the mind [Sunday Express Magazine, ? ix. 82, p.23]. Dare one recommend the occasional flick of a riding-whip? For William, at all events, The Palace has had the foresight to proscribe from the outset, and for reasons ranging from politics to propriety, all public resort to hypocorism.

Within their own circle, in contrast, the royals by all accounts revel in pet-names of all kinds, nicknames and hypocoristics alike: not an easy topic for a scribe without the entrée to explore (nor should it be). Such scrappy evidence as becomes public all points that way. For instance, a 'press-conference' held by Princeling William during his parents' tour of New Zealand in summer '83 revealed his father's name for him to be Wills. The Queen, it is generally accepted, was as a child called Lilibet. Alongside the Lall-names, characterizations too are current coin: thus, Diana is said to call Edward Scooter after the ever-helpful Muppet [Sunday Express Magazine, loc.cit.]; and Edward VII's Tum-Tum seems, according to a Radio 3 talk of Frederick Raphael's caught by the Editor [14.iv.83], to have been revived within the family for the young Prince Charles. It may perhaps be doubted whether the Fog allegedly bestowed on one in-law by his Sandhurst comrades [cf. OSRH, p.19] is much favoured; but among his Service comrades Andrew is said to be called H, short for HRH &c. By such usages, and especially by limiting their currency, the family and their true intimates can preserve a privacy within their over-public lives; perhaps too they can compensate themselves for their occupational liability to change of public name. Could it even have been that for HRH Prince Andrew one of Miss Stark's attractions was her ready-made nickname, apparently exclamatory but in fact ascribed to a childhood fondness for pigeons [Sun, loc.cit.]?

Nom de Guerre (Lasse)

Mr Raymond Taylor, of Downham Market, has changed his name by deed poll to Tinker Taylor: 'Ever since I was a lad,' he said, 'I've been nicknamed Tinker and no-one knows me by the name of Raymond; so I've decided to make it official' [Sunday Telegraph, 23.i.83, p.40].

Volgarisation

i) Mr Arthur Scargill's punning President Ray-Gun cannot be effectively translated into Russian ['Albany', Sunday Telegraph, 4.ix.83, p.2]. His plutonium blonde, on the other hand, can, as Adrian Room has pointed out: the Russian for 'platinum blonde' being platinovaya blondinka, the Scargillism could be analogously rendered as plutoniévaya blondinka. Russian satirists, added Room, find gletcher 'glacier' a handy rhyming nickname for the Iron Lady, whose surname they pronounce Tetcher [letter, ibidem, 11.ix.83, p.12].

ii) The Times 'Diary' again:

'The Russian scholar Vladimir Voina deplures the confusing transliteration of English literary names into Cyrillic: "The famous scientist Thomas Huxley had a no less famous son, whom one presumed was also called Geksli like his father. Nothing of the kind: judging by pronunciation confirmed here, this son was Oldoss Khaksli." Even the English have this problem, he adds: "They have no idea whether to call the well-known political activist Lord Home, Houm or Hume. We spell it Khoum or Xoym"' [4.v.83, p.14].

iii) And again:

'Geidar Aliyev, the Azerbaijani secret policeman who is the talk of Moscow, has quietly Russified his name to assist his ascent. It was as Ali rza oglu Aliyev that he was appointed First Secretary of the Azerbaijan Communist Party in 1969. Last year, as a full member of the Politburo, he was referred to as Geidar Aliyevich Aliyev, the Russian patronymic replacing his Turkic given name. Now he is Deputy Prime Minister . . .' [5.i.83].

Oh, The Heavy Change!

If not an instrument of destiny, a name is at very least a badge of identity, to be swapped only at the bearer's peril:

'That Lord Swinton never caught the popular imagination is in part attributed to the fact that he kept changing his name. His great-grandfather, George Lloyd, started it all by marrying an heiress, Alicia Graeme. Swinton was born Philip Lloyd-Graeme, and spent the first forty years of his life with that name, becoming a Cabinet minister in due course, until his wife, Mollie Boynton, inherited a huge estate in Yorkshire, when he promptly became Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister. Nine years later he changed his name again to Viscount Swinton' [book-review in Sunday Telegraph, 12.xii.82, p.10].

Changing a name can incommode others beside its bearer (a possibility some try, not always successfully, to exploit: for instance, the Mr Tarquin . . . Biscuit-Barrel who, having lost his deposit at Crosby in 1982 [see NOMINA VI, p.43], in 1983 stood, with similar outcome, for Cambridge City as Mr John Dougrez-Lewis). A notable illustration involved last April's avatars of the Master of Peterhouse, with every paper from The Thunderer down adopting a like formula: Lord Dacre of Glanton, the former Professor Hugh [or, H.R.] Trevor-Roper (in the event, he'd have been better to be less explicitly identified, but that's neither here nor there). Lord D. himself, despite not only acquiescing in his new name but having probably helped to devise it, continues to sign articles and reviews with his old one. What makes it odder is the pre-existence of two Lady Dacres: not only Brigadier Gerard's full-sister but also Rachel, twenty-seventh holder of a barony created in 1321 (possibly the former's godmother, for she is often to be seen leaning on Newmarket's paddock-rails; and certainly wife of the playwright William Douglas-Home) [see Sunday Telegraph, 22.v.83, p.2; cf. Complete Peerage, IV, 1-18, and VI, 287-9].

The Dacre and Swinton experiences throw into sharper perspective a topic broached last year but less straightforward than then made to look: married women's surnames [NOMINA VI, p.46]. Admittedly, marriage being no more compulsory (though somewhat more frequent) than elevation to the peerage, women suffering name-change on this account may likewise be accused of having at least acquiesced in their fates: as Queen Mary, veteran of four name-changes but only one marriage, pointed

out when she remarked of a woman credited (if that be the mot juste) with seven changes-by-marriage, 'Ah, but, whereas mine have been by accident, hers have been by enterprise' ['Albany', Sunday Telegraph, 20.xi.83, p.2]. The inconvenience - potentially blighting (Swinton-wise) some 51% of the population - that results from this convention is hardly lessened by the growing prevalence of such serial polyandry. Only recently have the problems got any airing, and much obscurantism remains. Leslie Dunkling, for instance, wrote in 1981 a chapter on 'Changing Names' without mentioning marriage, despite its being far and away the commonest cause of such change, and elsewhere in the same book his attempts to seem up-to-date on the topic were shallow [Our Secret Names (London, 1981), pp.38-48, also 36-7, 107-8]. As for Simon Hoggart, the Looking-Glass concept of 'reality' he invoked when referring to 'Harriet Harman (in real life Mrs Dromey)' was weird even for a Punch columnist [21.ix.83, p.16].

Reform is urgent; but devising it will not be easy. The seemingly obvious course, for each marriage-partner to keep her/his own name, makes too uncertain a provision for any offspring (one couple called Snow and Watson is on record as having anagrammatized for their young the surname Stowan). And this, it seems, is where courage often fails. What then to do? The Observer found Alison Lurie agonizing [20.ii.83, p.27]. Hyphenating the two surnames merely postpones the crisis for a worse one when the new generation comes in its turn to propagate; besides, many of the Left-wingers active in this movement find all double-barrels unacceptably upper-crusty. Furthermore, if both parents either adopt a double-barrelled form or else, renouncing all previous appellations, cleave to a joint invention, then divorce (with or without remarriage) entails an identity crisis for both former partners instead of for just one. There is yet another possible scheme, evidently much in the air, in so far as recommended not only by Miss Lurie but also by Miss Lassiter: for each partner to keep her/his own name and to transmit it to any children of her/his own sex. 'Anyone can adopt this system straightaway,' asserts Miss Lassiter, nevertheless confessing that over her own daughters' name she's yielded to common custom; nor, despite moving in likely circles and being indefatigable in questionairing, can she yet cite any couple as practising what she preaches [ONOS, pp.77, 98-9]. In Hampstead, perhaps, such usages might soon pass muster; but how long before they gain the day in Halifax and Hawick?

Now, lest anyone suspect this column of being swayed by the zoonym's grammatical gender, an item to show the old conventions as sometimes obnoxious to men. Under the rubric 'Miss-nomer', The Times 'Diary' (what else?) reported how

'Pam Hardyment, spokesperson for the nation's mistresses, is now reverting to her maiden name Arnold. Her former husband, Peter Hardyment, has been besieged by telephone calls about his relationship with Pam and has asked her to change her name' [18.xi.83, p.14]

Not such a misnomer, though: it may have been her borrowed adverb that has made Miss Arnold so bold.

'La Truie n'anoblit pas le Cochon'

For an eventual ennoblement of Margaret Thatcher (Roberts), pre-election skittishness inspired some allusive suggestions, including Lady Falklander ('It has a familiar ring') and Lady Tumbledown [The Times, letters, 12, 14 and 19.i.83]. From this latter sprang the further sally: 'Does this mean that Dennis [sic] would become Lord Bluff Cove?' Alas, no. We've already noted that the hereditary

Baroness Dacre's husband is not a Lord Dacre (whether that limits or multiplies the confusions remains a moot point). The 'reverse discrimination' her own peerage involves embarrasses The Baroness Trumpington, of Sandwich in the County of Kent (olim known as Mrs Barker):

'It does seem ludicrous to have a son who is an Honourable and a husband who is plain Mr. We did have long family discussions as to whether I should change my name. Barker sounded so boring, with lots of Lady Barkers married to Sir Barkers' [Sunday Telegraph, 19.vi.83, p.11].

She seems, incidentally, never to have thought of reviving her real name.

This problem too ricochets onto the bystanders: not, of course, in Muritania, where sexual discrimination is unknown, but all too often in our more backward sister-colony of Mustélique. How, in such cases as the Barkers', to order a joint address to the spouses (a point on which Debrett's Etiquette is silent): as A. de la Pole-C*tte, Esq., and The Baroness de la Pole-C*tte, of Westfield Dextra; or 't other way about? What style, moreover, best befits a peeress's plebeian consort (pretty certainly, the Stoates, of Wildewood Sinistra, would favour Mr rather than the De la Pole-C*ttes' Esq.)? Ah me, the simplest, though not the cheapest, solution may be to send separate Christmas cards (for her, addressed to The Lords', Santa Claus borne aloft by a hot-air balloon; for him, a weary weasel washing up after a wassail).

Guy of the Year

Attention having been drawn to the sexual imbalance in the Honours Lists, 'Why not,' suggested Ned Sherrin, 'Doll as a title to supplement Dame?' [The Times, letters, 20.vi.83, p.11].

Autre Temps . . .

Fifteen years ago (the Editor has reminded me) a female author, admittedly then stricken in years, could write in these terms:

'I should like also to complain about the offensive reference to myself as Mrs Q. D. Leavis. I am in fact Mrs F. R. Leavis, or alternatively (professionally) Q. D. Leavis, or even Dr Q. D. Leavis. Mrs Q. D. Leavis would imply that I am a divorcée, which is not the case' [Listener, 21.iii.68, p.378].

To-day the style Mrs Leavis insisted on is among those arousing ire, subordinating as it does identity to respectability.

The likeliest trigger of all for such an outburst is now Ms: execrated by some, demanded by others [e.g., Lassiter, ONOS, pp.72-3]. It's hard to see where its merits can be supposed to lie: in the context where Miss is (not without reason) least acceptable, that of motherhood, Ms, with its implications of something to hide, hardly mends matters. It is, besides, hardly less politically-loaded than Comrade or Citoyen(ne): witness Simon Hoggart on its doctrinaire adoption by some 'female Labour MPs' [Punch, loc.cit.], and likewise the unaccustomed style used in The Times for designating some women speakers at Labour Party conferences [e.g., 7.x.83, p.4]. Exceptionally, almost inexplicably, The Times's 'Engagements' column recently listed among fiancées a Ms Beauchamp; the text revealed the surname to be her father's. The neologism has also been slithering not only into journals whose editors should know better [e.g., English Studies LXIV (1983), 94, 184] but even into contexts where anyone should know better, witness a recent reference to Peter Rabbit's creator as

Ms Potter [Sunday Times (Business News), 10.vii.83, p.68] - perhaps a joke that misfired. Soon we'll be hearing of Ms Tabitha Twitchit, Ms Thomasina Tittlemouse and Ms Tiggywinkle; come to think of it, the marital status of none of these ladies is entirely clear, and the style of Ms Rebecca Puddle-Duck might suit that palmiped who urged upon her sister-in-law Jemima the advantages of leaving one's eggs to be hatched under the auspices of the St-- I mean, the farmer's wife (there seems indeed an undue number of single-parent families in the Potter oeuvre).

A different avant-garde usage appeared in The Times's reference to 'Mr Peter Reger, the managing director and husband of Miss [Janet] Reger' [19.i.83, p.26]. Is Miss now the honorific for any woman of enterprise? Or did Peter - like a virtuous apprentice marrying the master's daughter - take Janet's surname?

Certain of these avant-garde styles distress the traditionally-minded. Thus Anthony Lejeune:

'The fact that Mrs Thatcher is a woman has virtually no political significance. Nevertheless she is entitled to the normal courtesy due to her sex. Am I alone in finding it offensive when I see or hear her referred to starkly as Thatcher, without benefit of any prefix?' [Telegraph Sunday Magazine, 14.viii.83, p.9].

Better by far, one might think, a surname innocent of prefix than one devalued by Ms; but Mr Lejeune is indeed not alone. A week or two later Mary Kenny uttered a similar plaint against the 'new and ugly vogue of calling women writers only by their last names, as Gaskell, Austen, . . .'; she did, however, allow

'a few cases where a surname alone fits the subject, without diminishing the lady's dignity: Carbo was, somehow, a tribute to her unique stature; and De Beauvoir should be given the same billing as Sartre, since they richly deserved one another. If you are aiming to insult, of course, using only a woman's surname fits the bill perfectly - notice that all those Trotskyist magazines always speak of Thatcher' [ibidem, 18.ix.83, p.13; for a headline containing a handle-free Thatcher, cf. p.1].

Watch out, Miss/Ms/Mrs Kenny! When Anthony Burgess essayed, in a TLS review, a similar petulant protest ('There is only one Shelley, and he was a poet; there was only one Lessing, and he was a German'[18.iii.83, p.256]), he was promptly punctured:

'If the reason for denying Mary Shelley and Doris Lessing the titles of Shelley and Lessing is that these are already owned by ones greater than they, what possible excuse can there be for insisting on first names in cases like Mansfield, Woolf, Gaskell, where no previous incumbents exist?' [ibidem, letter from Nora Crook, 1.iv.83, p.328].

Burgess's usage, Crook objected, denied women writers full professional status. The only stand he could then take was on the principle of 'unripe time':

'I am still not ready to talk about "Austen's fiction", though I have moved on from the polite Miss to the familiar Jane. The use of the plain surname in Britain is sanctioned chiefly by male schools and clubs. It has the wrong tone for ladies. Presumably I have to be taught to be impolite' [ibidem, 15.iv.83, p.379].

Odd that such a cosmopolitan, proudly-polyglot gentleman as Mr Burgess should have

no more idea than old Dobbin snorting his grassy greeting that courtesy lies in trimming one's manners to meet the other's expectations ('No, Mr Dobbin, your off FORE . . . NOT with the shoe still on! . . . What's that you neighed? You'd rather I took up snorting?').

Not all current problems of protocol are sexually based. A TV review by Russell Davies suggested other criteria, describing William Burroughs, whose 'windowless apartment in the Bowery is called The Bunker, its drawers and cupboards concealing an armoury of blackjacks, flick-knives and well-greased pistols' and whose 'friends, mostly literary mice lucky to have got away uningested, happily call him Bill or Willie, which is rather like calling the Hound of the Baskervilles Fido' [Sunday Times, 27.ii.83, p.56]. This first-person address constitutes, be it noted, a genre quite distinct from the third-person 'over-familiarity' with politicians and royals we discussed above. Several of the Sunday Telegraph's correspondents have echoed - actually in response to Mr Lejeune's already-cited piece on handles - this column's comments of last year on medical manners: one recorded her 'surprise, even dismay' when 'a very young doctor addressed me - a woman over 70 - as Renée' [21.viii.83, p.10; cf. NOMINA VI, p.47]; another recalled hospital stays when 'the familiarity reduced us all to being bodies in beds' and her recent relief at being 'dignified with my own name, Mrs Thorp' [28.viii.83, p.8]; a third confessed himself 'a little taken aback when asked if I was The Cartilage or The Hernia' [4.ix.83, p.10; quite, but oughtn't he to have been glad they didn't just go ahead assuming he was The Amputation?]. It brings small comfort to recognize that, throughout the medical world, these Siamese-twin diseases of depersonalization and over-familiarity are endemic, sometimes in third- as well as first-person: thus, in January 1983 a hospital spokesman giving bulletins on a newsworthy adult patient consistently, unblushingly, called him, not Mr Waldorf, but Stephen.

Initial Reticences

'A set of initials may look more impersonal than a Christian name, but - contrary to what you might expect - it also tends to be more distinctive: P.G. could only be Wodehouse [or Tips. - S.]; E.E. [rectè : e.e.] belongs to Cummings as surely as A.A. belongs to Milne' [John Gross, Observer, 29.v.83, p.33].

A set admits of no reshuffling (so that *D.Q.Leavis or *Mrs R. F. Leavis would not so much constitute further unacceptable variants as seemingly refer to someone other than the late Queenie): predictably so, it might be added, seeing that the names represented have a fixed order. Combinations noted as especially frequent include A.J. (Ayer, Balfour, Cronin, Liebling, P. Taylor, A. Symons, et alii) and W.H. (Auden, Hudson, Smith).

'Acrology' needs more systematic study, urged Gross, generously leaving many questions unasked. Most signally neglected is the historical dimension: has anyone observed exactly when it was that first-names became subsidiary enough to be regularly reducible in this way? Then, why the variations? Trollope had little choice but to spell out his Anthony; but why was Surtees R.S., while Dickens was Charles? Why (space-saving apart) any resort to initials? As smoke-screen or as stalking-horse? Often enough, of course, it's just to suppress an unfashionable Ermytrude or Marmaduke, or else to make a mystery out of a commonplace; but socio-onomastics also comes into it. When remarking on J.B. as 'associated with archetypal bosses' (but overlooking the classic instance in old advertisements for Blue Nun), Gross should

have added that this style - less stiff than Mr Stoate, let alone Sir, yet less intimate than the first-names it represents - seems an apt one for address from rising juniors. For a woman to use initials produces an almost transvestite effect: a trick sometimes used by writers (e.g., P.D. James and A.S. Byatt) as well as by those having epistolary dealings with individuals or organizations suspected of bias. A columnist referring to 'Molly Kaye's The Far Pavilions' parenthesized archly, '(does calling her Molly rather than M.M. make you feel in the know?)' [The Times, 3.x.83, p.8]: like calling Forster Morgan rather than E.M., it may feed the speaker/writer's amour-propre; hardly the audience's.

So far there seems some truth in calling initials 'the trimmings of status'; but this is so only with first-names. Quite other are the implications of reducing just the surname, as when signing a card Jemima P. -D. (instead of plain Jemima, or J., or J. P. -D., or especially J. Puddle-Duck) or when referring to Mrs S. (more frequent, I think, than Mr S.).

Nomina Sacra

The Times 'Diary' yet again, for it's been flirting with blasphemy [21-8.vi.83]. A reader reported that a request to Directory Enquiries for the number of Jesus College had been met by 'How are you spelling Jesus?'; by degrees (si vous me passez l'expression), this led to Sir Harold (now Lord) Wilson's reminiscences of the Three Crosses of Jesus: the chief steward or Hot Cross, a Scottish philosopher known as St Andrew's Cross, and the chaplain - the only one actually answering the 'phone as Cross of Jesus - dubbed Holy Cross.

On the other tack, the headmaster of Downside told how his request for the number of Christ's College had foundered on an enquiry whether, as Christ's wasn't listed, Jesus [we're now at The Other Place] would do instead (the operator proved to have been spelling Christ's without the h).

This was all topped off by two tales: one of an erstwhile vicar of Holy Trinity, Blackpool, went to answer his 'phone just by quoting his church's dedication, until one day the bishop responded with, 'How nice to get through without saying one's prayers!'; the other of a mother's bulletin on her son, who, she said, had 'been at Christ's Hospital; but now he's gone up to Jesus.'

Such a pity that a few weeks later the august journal itself proffered, under 'University News', a reference to Corpus Christie College [6.viii.83, p.8].

Ars insolita, sed Vita jocunda

Be not abashed to send in your funnies, good my harvest-mice: at very least the Editor and I, in that order (for we are far indeed from being, as one toiler in the onomastic vineyard has imagined, one and the same), shall enjoy our chortles before casting forth for the burning any tares of mere coincidence. What we shall most thankfully receive will be instances of people thinking (or NOT, as the case may be) about any aspect of naming-processes, at any level from the specific to the general, but with a bias towards the social: for instance, that firm of builders boasting itself (on TV) as DryCon, the Northamptonshire club for young people called Youth of Bretton (YOB for short), those myriad hostelrys flaunting their Golden Fleece signs, the Virgin record-emporium declared [Blessedly?] 'Xmas-free Zones', and a shop-keeper self-confessed as I. Cheetham. In Spring '83 our Editor caught from a Radio 4 'Any Questions?' session a neat socio-onomastic side-stepping of an etymological

impertinence: a questioner having announced herself as Jane Pruddock [?Prydderch], David Jacobs enquired, in the manner of a tourist confronted with an 'historical curiosity', 'Where did your name come from?', only to find himself skewered with the shaft, 'From my husband!'

Because we seek to portray naming-processes sur le vif (and with major place-names it's a bit late in the day for that) our trifles must for the most part remain, as our title indicates, anthropo(or, zoo)nymical; yet need not be narrowly so. The play of mind is all; and it is everywhere. The sharp-eyed topo so helpful last year (now revealed as the learned Magister Ratoun) noted a Lincolnshire signpost reading TO OLD BOLINGBROKE AND MAVIS ENDERBY , on which an unofficial hand had added, 'a son' [for non-toponymists: Mavis here in fact derives from the Anglo-Norman manorial prefix Malebisse]. Mary Whitehouse - that princess forever a-toss upon peas - reportedly petitioned her local council for a change of road-name from Dead Lane to the no-less-quadrilateral Dede Lane [The Times, 'Diary', 5.i.83].

No council or committee can, proverbially, tell a horse from a camel. The management of Haywards Heath's new shopping-complex, blaming its unpopularity on the 'sleepy image' of the name Priory Walk [sed vigilate et orate! - S.], has sought to rechristen its urban white elephant with a country-sounding name, The Orchards [Evening Argus, 7.x.83, p.7, cf. 10.x.83, p.6; again our thanks to Master Ratoun]. Nor is British Rail always on the right track:

'Sir, Well over 20,000 Cornishmen will want to know the reason why, without warning or consultation, Bodmin Road Station has had its name changed to Bodmin Parkway. It appears that people will then know they can park there. They might as well change Paddington Station to London Clampway' [letter to The Times, 14.xi.83, p.11; cf. the official reply (too prosy to print), ibidem, 19.xi.83, p.9].

One micro-toponymic outcome of last spring's electoral chassé-croisé you may each interpret as you will:

'The names of political and revolutionary leaders will not be immortalized on a sedate private housing-estate after a decision by Cardiff City Council to allow the streets to be named after songbirds' [The Times, 9.ix.83, p.3].

But, when we constantly hear of 'Sellafield (formerly Windscale)', we all know but too well what to think.

On again with our motley! Perish the thought that one should soil one's paws with trade, yet product-names too have socio-psycho-onomastic bearings. Teams of volunteer crossword-fanatics, plied with wine and prompted by a 'clued-up computer', are enlisted for excogitating a lager-name like Briggan, implying the drinker to be 'a little bit of an outlaw' [Sunday Times (Business News), 1.v.83, p.72] (by the same token, the non-alcoholic Barbican must be meant for the teetotal City culture-vulture). Not all the publicity-men's pitchforks can ward off some Schadenfreudian slips like the celebrated Slime's Mould for a wet, blue cheese (not advised for Cabinet ministers). But, ah, the poetry of their successes: how many an autumn evening has seen one's whiskers set a-twitch by reverberating recommendations for AVENGE ('kills ALL your Wild Oats'), with their hint of gentlemen-farmers savouring, as they don - or sip - their night-caps, the Latin-based punning.

Yet too many onomasticians sour the brew: witness another micro-toponymic contretemps reported from among the South Saxons by our ever-diligent Master Ratoun. The landlord of an alehouse entitled The Gay Highlander held a contest for the

devising of a less equivocal new name, and from the many witty inventions did choose The Sussex Coaster. Alas, this too (so our more worldly correspondent doth assure your scribe) beareth canting connotations . . . A propos, an odd itinerary was recalled as published, according to the then custom, by a noble aesthete rumoured to be entangled with Vita Sackville-West's friend, Violet Trefusis (née Keppel): 'Lord Berners has left London for the Isle of Man' ['Albany', Sunday Telegraph, 11.ix.83, p.2].

SOURIS

Institute of Onomastics,
University College of Muritania.

VERONICA SMART, Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles: 28: Cumulative Index of Volumes 1 - 20, published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press and Spink and Son, Ltd.: London, 1981, xl + 118 pp., £24.00.

This Index shows at a glance the range of material available in the first twenty volumes of SCBI: they contain catalogues and photographs of coins from the earliest British examples up to the beginning of the eighteenth century, and include the following series: Ancient British, Anglo-Saxon (including Vikings of Northumbria), Norman, Plantagenet, Hiberno-Norse, Anglo-Irish, and later issues from Edward IV to William III, as well as miscellaneous associated Continental, Kufic and Roman coins. Although these volumes do not include material from the Stockholm Systematic Collection or the British Museum Collection, they constitute a corpus which, as Smart claims (p. ix), 'must easily exceed in quantity any individual collection published elsewhere'.

That this corpus is made so accessible by the layout and contents of the Index will be of immediate value to the student of numismatics and of British history. Simply from the Index itself, without recourse to the several volumes of SCBI, one can see, for instance, what mints operated under what kings, what moneyers operated at what mint, and even whether the same moneyer may have operated at more than one mint (although, given the currency of some OE names, especially in the later period, such an observation must be made with circumspection: for instance, the Godwine whose name appears on coins from Colchester in the reign of Edward the Confessor may, or may not, be the same Godwine who appears for Maldon in the same period). But the Index is also crucial to the student of philology, for it gives ready access to a body of material, viz. personal- and place-names on coins, which has long been recognised as vital to the study of language variation in the history of English, but which up till now has not been available in such complete form.

The present review concentrates on the significance of the Index for the student of philology: primarily, of onomastics and phonology; and confines itself to assessing briefly the value of the material, and of its treatment in the Index, for the study of the Anglo-Saxon (AS) series and the evidence for OE offered by this series.

The data recorded on coins is obviously limited: viz., spellings of personal- and place-names; but the philological value of the names derives from their formation from lexical items whose etymologies can (on the whole) be traced: e.g. the elements of the dithematic OE personal-name Leofwine are seen to be related to OE leof, 'dear beloved' and wine, 'friend'.

The value of the AS coin-evidence for the study of OE lies mainly in the following:

- a. The very quantity of different OE personal-names (of the moneyers) represented on the coins far outnumbers that found in any single document. It therefore gives ample material for the study of, for instance,
- (i) principles of OE name-formation: for example, hypocoristic formations, such as Dodda; compounding, as in e.g. Leof + wine; formative suffixes, e.g. -ing in Lifing;
 - (ii) influx of non-native names, especially Continental Germanic (CG) and Scandinavian (Scand.), and the introduction of bynames;
 - (iii) possible variation in (i) and (ii) according to period and region.