



Names Places People

SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Photo Competition:



As I said in the last issue, the only glory for the winner of our photo completion is publication in this newsletter. Many photos have been sent in, but the winner has to be Katrin McClure's photo of our president Dónall Mac Giolla Easpaig, who became King of Athenry, at least for a day, on our visit to Athenry Museum.



The runner-up would have to be Graham Collis's photo of our intrepid

conference secretary in the stocks also at the museum.

And just to confirm that SNSBI conferences are not all work and no play, here is another photo by Katrin, this time of 'out of hours' activities.

Linda Corrigan (editor)



Newsletter NS. 5 Autumn 2012

Hello and welcome to the second SNSBI newsletter for 2012.

In this issue we have a report of the annual conference in Athenry, an interesting photo for our 'competition' slot and plenty of information about conferences, books and websites which have come to my attention during the last six months.

This is also the time for me to put out a challenge to members to volunteer as a 'guest editor' for this newsletter for the autumn issue of 2013. I am likely to be out of the UK for much of autumn 2013 and not in a position to put out the newsletter. I am happy to supply the template and any information which has come my way to the guest editor and I will take back the reins again, ready for the spring issue of 2014. It will be too late to start looking for a 'guest editor' next spring, so now is the time to start thinking about it. If you think you can rise to the challenge, please drop me an email and we can take things from there.

Quite a few members have now got in to the habit of contacting me with snippets of information about books, meetings etc. but there is always room for more. If you have names-related news please do get in touch, send me the details and I will do my best to fit it in.

I am also now building up a stock of photos which I will be able to use to change the banner at the top of this newsletter on an annual basis, and use in other parts of future newsletters. Please keep them coming in. I hope that you enjoy this newsletter and that you will consider volunteering to edit it next autumn.

Linda M. Corrigan (editor)

CHARITY NO. 0177455

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2012-13

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(Conference Secretary)

Dr Veronica Smart

Stop Press:

SNSBI Autumn Study Day

Saturday 17 November 2012 to be held in Chester (venue to be confirmed), 10.30am - 4.30 pm

Speakers will include

Jennifer Holt, The Lancashire Place

-Name Survey

Tom Swailes, Field-names in

Cheshire

Stephen Moorhouse

Shaun Tyas, Football club

nicknames

Further details from and all enquiries

to **Chris Lewis**

<chris.lewis@sas.ac.uk>

SNSBI Committee Meeting

9.15 am Saturday 17 November

2012 (venue to be confirmed) prior

to above mentioned study day.

Further details and enquiries to **Julia**

Stanbridge

<treasurer@snsbi.org.uk>



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SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Conference reports:

The 21st Annual Conference of the Society for Name Studies of Britain and Ireland took place at the Raheen Woods Hotel in Athenry County Galway Ireland between March 30 and April 2, 2012. Situated on the outskirts of this small Irish town the hotel proved an excellent venue with good facilities and staff who were both hospitable and capable. We owe a big vote of thanks to **Nollaig Ó Muraile** and **Liam Ó hAisibéil** for masterminding the organization and smooth running of what proved to be a stimulating and fun filled long weekend which fully lived up to our expectations. The Conference programme was both varied and erudite with an emphasis on Irish and Scottish studies including place-names, personal names and genetic material. We were again blessed with two excursions instead of the customary one and Liam's relatively optimistic weather forecast was not too far wide of the mark.

The Saturday programme was rich in Irish content with **Conchubahr Ó Cruaíoch**'s paper on Sligo Townlands and surnames leading us off. Later in the morning **Pat McKay**'s paper on Lough Neagh place-names revealed that the view from his bedroom window was the starting point for his mythological journey which included "interesting" origin myths for the lough. **Isobel Ryan** took us on a ground breaking literary excursion into the work of Peig Sayers and **Cathy Swift** ended the morning session in her own inimitable fashion with some genetic insights. The morning was not exclusively Irish, however, as the session was enriched by **Duncan Probert** with his Domesday Book paper and then **Simon Taylor** travelling entertainingly on "the Road to Meikle Seggie".

The evening sessions began with a speculative paper on *-ia* suffixes in Anglia which was given by **Keith Briggs** and led to some interesting jousting with Peter Kitson and probably a points victory for Peter. The final Irish paper of the day was given by **Aengus Finnegan** on the more local names from Lough Ree and he received well-earned approbation. The late sessions on the Saturday brought the Project reports and suitably included Welsh, Scottish and Irish reports plus the FaNUK update on family names.

Although the fare provided on the Saturday was a hard act to follow, the Sunday contributors managed to pull it off. Now firmly established in Wales, **David Parsons** asked some searching questions about Irish place-names in Wales, followed by **Kay Muhr** (and **Patrick Hanks**) on "Exchanging Names". The final session of papers on the Sunday started with **Guto Rhys** in Pictland and he was followed by our host **Nollaig Ó Muraile**'s thoughts on royal connections in Irish place-names. **Cáit Nic Fhionnlaóich** fittingly ended the morning session with her work in County Donegal and with a twinkle in her eye.

Traditionally our conferences are not all about sitting down and our two excursions gave us both fresh air and fresh insight. On the Saturday we had a walking tour of Athenry led by **Jim McKeon** which included the Athenry Heritage Centre located in St Mary's Collegiate Church and opened by Bertie Ahern in 1999. (see photo competition winner). This proved to be a "hands on" experience in respect of medieval artefacts with Liam for one ending up locked into in a neck and hands stocks-no doubt because of some sin in a past life. The town was founded by

a Norman – Meiler de Bermingham -in the 13th century and he and his successors were buried in the now ruined Dominican Priory of SS Peter and Paul. The Berminghams may of course have a Birmingham connection but Barbinghem in the Pas-de-Calais has a 9th century attestation as Bermingahem so the Norman ripples may go further than first thought. Sharp eyed visitors noticed the medieval swastika graffiti in the Priory.

The Sunday coach excursion was an equally enlightening experience. The first of our two stops was at Clonmacnoise in County Offaly and



situated on the River Shannon.
Photo by *Katrin McClure*
Founded in the 6th century and

now largely in ruins the monastery had become the most famous in Ireland by the 9th century and welcomed visits by scholars from all over Europe as well as receiving less welcome visits from Irish, Viking and later Anglo-Norman raiders. At some distance from the main monastery the Nun's Church which excited particular interest from the more adventurous of our party who, ignoring the protective barrier around the renovation work went 'under the wire' no doubt in an attempt to commune with the long departed sisters.

Our second stop was at Clonfert Cathedral said to have been founded by St Brendan in 563AD and also reputed to be his burial place, with a commemorative plaque in the graveyard. A striking Romanesque doorway with the carved heads of saints sculpted into niches (see next page) is a key feature of the cathedral, and perhaps has resemblances to old



SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

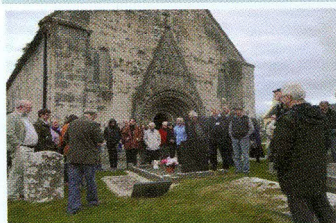


Photo by
Katrin
McClure

Celtic practices.

The conference was rounded off on Sunday evening by an impromptu concert given by conference members who played a motley collection of instruments previously concealed about their persons and to an appreciative audience of both society members and locals.

Report by **Graham Coliis**

Ceardlann Logainmneacha 2012 - Placenames' Workshop 2012

was held at Dublin City University (DCU) on the 24/25th August last and focused on the theme:
Management and dissemination of toponymic data online.

The conference was officially opened by **Dinny McGinley TD**, Minister of State for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. During his opening speech Minister McGinley confirmed funding for the next phase of the development of **logainm.ie**, the website of the Placenames Database of Ireland. Among the material to be added to the website will be an archive of sound recordings made by The Placenames Branch during field work in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. The Minister, a native of the Donegal Gaeltacht, also noted that the archive includes a recording of his own late father in conversation with **Dónall Mac Giolla Easpaig**. This material is sure to generate much public interest.

A co-presentation from Ordnance Survey Ireland and **Brian Ó Raghallaigh** of Fiontar (DCU) demonstrated MapGenie Éire, an Irish Language version of the OSI

online mapviewer, which it is hoped will be integrated into **logainm.ie** in the next year. Speakers from Scotland, Wales, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Estonia and Québec demonstrated their respective place-names' databases and gave reports on toponymic research in each country. These included **Jacob King** and **Gwyn Jones** who will be familiar to SNSBI members from past conferences. **Crystal Sholts** from Google Maps explained Google's preference for authoritative data and 'ground-truth' on its maps, while **Dermot McNally** of OpenStreetMap outlined the advantages of 'crowdsourcing' in building such databases. **Michal Boleslav Měchura** discussed the specific difficulties Irish place-names cause for database searches, and outlined some possible solutions. The workshop format allowed for extended discussions following each paper and it was during these sessions that the huge potential for cooperation among the various stakeholders in the areas of mapping, toponymy and database management emerged. **Sirkka Paikkala's** distribution maps of place-name elements in Finland were particularly indicative of this potential. The keynote speech, given by **Helen Kerfoot**, Chair of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), introduced us to endonyms and exonyms and placed the standardisation and dissemination of placenames in a global context. The co-organisers, Fiontar and the Placenames Branch, deserve credit for providing a forum for a thoroughly stimulating and timely discussion of issues technical and toponymic. Report by **Aengus Finnegan**, NUI

News:

Snippets from the media:

Drawing to your attention any name-related news which may have passed you by. Many thanks to readers who have alerted the editor to these items.

From The Telegraph 02/03/2012
Falkland island named 'Craig Island' after last soldier to die in war. The parents of the last soldier to die in the Falklands War have been given one of the isles and named it 'Craig Island' after their son. Full article at:
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/southamerica/falklandislands/9118520/Falkland-island-named-Craig-Island-after-last-soldier-to-die-in-war.html>

From The Telegraph 02/03/2012
Historians mock Exmouth's claim to be home of Lady Hamilton
A seaside town's claim to be the home of Lord Nelson's notorious lover has been mocked by local historians who say there is no record that she ever lived there. Full article at:
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/howaboutthat/9118517/Historians-mock-Exmouths-claim-to-be-home-of-Lady-Hamilton.html>

From The Guardian 26/04/2012
Dull, Boring and Whynot - a gallery of places with silly names
To celebrate the twinning of the Perthshire village of Dull with the Oregon town Boring, here are some other places with unfortunate – even plain obscene – names
Full article at:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2012/apr/25/silly-placenames-dull-and-boring?intcmp=239>



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Research Projects & Websites:

Research Projects:

The AHRC-funded project "Family Names of the United Kingdom" (FaNUK) reached its halfway point at the end of March 2012. The project aims to provide linguistic and historical explanations for around 45,000 current surnames with a wide variety of cultural origins, and to arrange for their online publication. Progress has been excellent, and we have so far created acceptable database entries for around 28,000.

We have opened collaborations with The National Archives, Family Search International, and individual scholars and lay researchers, including members of the Guild of One-Name Studies, with a view to amassing more electronically medieval and early-modern indexed surname data, and have already received some additional support for this from the British Academy for indexing the surnames in the fourteenth-century poll taxes as a distinct project whose deliverable can be exploited by FaNUK.

FaNUK has been publicized and reported on widely: at three annual meetings of the Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland (2010-12), the workshop "Family names – from concepts to methods" (Musée de l'Homme, Paris, 2010), the 24th International Congress of Onomastic Sciences (Barcelona, 2011), the Ivar Modéer seminar (Uppsala, 2011), the Gerald Aylmer seminar (Institute of Historical Research, London, 2012), and the Kent Archaeological Society (2010, 2011), and the Euralex lexicography conference (Oslo, 2012), as well as BBC Radio 4 (2010 "Today

Programme" and 2011 "Word of Mouth"). The Paris paper has been published as:

Coates, Richard, and Patrick Hanks (2012) The new Family Names of the United Kingdom project. In **Pierre Darlu** and 17 other authors, The family name as socio-cultural feature and genetic metaphor: from concepts to methods. *Human Biology* 84.2, 169-214 [at 183-188]. Submitted by **Richard Coates**

Websites: *which may have escaped your attention*

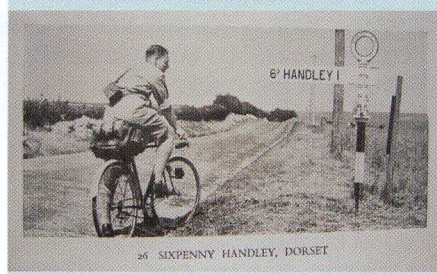
Personal Names

History from Headstones

Search the largest collection of online gravestone inscriptions in Northern Ireland. Our database contains over 50,000 inscriptions from over 800 graveyards in counties Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone. <http://www.historyfromheadstones.com/index.php?home>

Comedy corner

Some readers may have been aware of a thread on the English Place-Name List about money in place-names. A wider readership might be amused by this delightful photo courtesy of Keith Briggs and Julia Stanbridge from **H. G. Stokes, English place-names**, 2nd ed., Batsford 1949



News:

SNSBI People:

Professor Raymond Page, born September 25 1924, died March 10 2012.

Many members of the society will have known Professor Page who died earlier this year. His obituary in the Daily Telegraph described him as "the world's leading expert on, and decipherer of, runes, the angular lettering originally used by Germanic tribes on the edge of the Roman Empire – and the obsession of many a modern-day mystic." The writer further goes on to say that "With his Introduction to English Runes (1973), however, Page provided a foundation to their study that deals with runes from the briefest inscription roughly incised on the anklebone of a deer, to extended use on monuments such as the Ruthwell Cross, now in Scotland." The full obituary can be found at:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/9158876/Professor-Raymond-Page.html>

Dr Bill Richardson

Many members will remember the paper given at an SNSBI conference some years ago by Bill Richardson and will be pleased to see the announcement, in 2012, of his "PhD by Published Works: **Place-Name Corruption on Early Maps and Charts, and in Early Sailing Directions especially its relevance for solving problems in the History of Cartography.**"

Dr Richardson works in the School of Humanities (Spanish), at Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia.

SNSBI Newsletter

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SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Publications

Please note that this is simply a listing of items of potential interest to members. Listing here does not imply any opinion regarding quality, academic rigour etc. Where appropriate, reviews will appear in **Nomina** in due course.

Recent Publications:

Australian National Placenames Survey, *Place-Names Australia*. Newsletter of the Australian National Placenames Survey, June 2012. This and earlier issues can be downloaded at:
<http://www.anps.org.au/news.html>

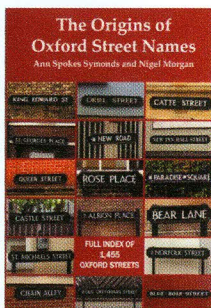
The **Celtic Congress**, has just published the *Proceedings of the 2009 Congress* held at Sligo, when place-names were the theme of the weekend. The volume (*Logaimneacha/Place-Names*) contains papers by scholars well-known to SNSBI, including Simon Taylor, Art Ó Maolfabhail, George Broderick and Hywel Wyn Owen.

Xavier Delamarre, *Noms de lieux celtique de l'Europe ancienne (-500 / +500) : Dictionnaire*, Editions Errance (4 April 2012). Keith Briggs notes that "British names are included (though he [Delamarre] manages to discuss **londinion** without explicitly telling us that this is London!)."

Elisabeth Okasha, *Women's names in Old English*, Farnham: Ashgate 2011. xiii+136pp. Important work has been done on OE women's names by Carole Hough, and the PASE project (www.pase.ac.uk) now provides a reliable corpus. This new book is not, however, the grand synthesis that its title might suggest; rather, Okasha is mostly concerned with one simple question: if we take the

names of people for which there is independent evidence of their femininity, what do we see in the pattern of grammatical gender of their names? It turns out (unsurprisingly) that only very few anomalies arise; grammatical gender nearly always follow natural gender. Examples of anomalies are *-mund* and *-noð*, both grammatically feminine but used for men's names. A book like this has great value in providing all the data relevant to its question in a convenient form, and furthermore should stimulate further work; for example, on the type of inflections used for personal names when they form part of place-names.
 Submitted by **Keith Briggs**

Symmonds, Ann Spokes and Morgan, Nigel. *The origins of Oxford Street Names*. Robert Boyd publications Oxford 2010. 224p £11.95.



This book is divided into two halves. The back half is an index of street names giving facts and figures on a good proportion of Oxford's Streets, both inner city and suburban.

The front half is a miscellany of articles on Oxford street names on topics such as Oxford's lost church streets, snobbery and street names, apostrophes and spaces, and missing names (no Tolkein Street in Oxford).

In keeping with its type, this book approaches its material from the social historical perspective and not the onomastic. That said, it is particularly informative on modern street naming practices; one of the authors being on the Oxford City Council's Highway Authority and

responsible for naming the Blackbird Leys Estate. Whilst a book for the layman, the articles are obviously well researched and well written and the book is lavish in its use of black and white photography. The bibliography runs to 3 pages and there is much to interest anyone with an interest in street naming not just those who know Oxford.
 Submitted by **Julia Stanbridge**

Forthcoming events:

Cymdeithas Enwau Lleoedd Cymru/Welsh Place-Name Society's annual day-conference will be held in Glamorgan's new **Archives Offices in Cardiff on 6 October 2012**. The conference organiser is Hywel Wyn Owen and another SNSBI past president, Gwynedd Pierce, will be inducted as the WPNS's first Honorary President. The 2013 day-conference will be held in Bangor on 5 October.

Old Oswestry Landscape and Archaeology Project Sixth Annual Seminar 'Ruling and Dividing' Offa's legacy in the Northern Marches. Saturday 27th October 2012 10.15 am to 4.00 pm. At The Marches School, Morda Road, Oswestry,



SY11 2AR. Tickets £10.00. Speakers include: **Ian Bapty MA**, **Margaret Hill BEd MPhil**, **David Stephenson MA DPhil**, **Damian Tyler BA MA PhD**, **Martin J. Ryan Ph D**. For further details and booking form please contact Heather Hidden: Tel: 01691 662602 email: heather.hidden@btinternet.com



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More Forthcoming Events:

Wuffing Education at Sutton Hoo November 10, 2012, Study Day The History of Suffolk Place-Names. Keith Briggs.

Study Days start at 10.15am and finish around 4.15pm allowing time for further discussion and/or viewing the site. The cost is £38.00 including: entrance, parking, lectures, tea & coffee. Lunch can be bought at the NT restaurant or packed lunches can be taken. Prior Booking essential.
Phone 01394386498
www.WuffingEducation.co.uk

Cardiff University/ Prifysgol Caerdydd: SMA Student Colloquium 8-9th November 2012

We are pleased to announce that the 2012 Society for Medieval Archaeology Student Colloquium will be held at Cardiff University. The event aims to provide a platform for postgraduates and early career professionals to present and discuss their current research. Undergraduate students are welcome to attend.
REGISTRATION: Student members of the society: FREE! Non-student members: £20 For more information: www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk or medieval.archaeology@googlemail.com

SPNS

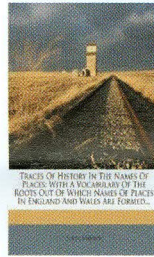
The autumn day conference of the Scottish Place-Name Society will be held at Augustine United Church, Edinburgh, on Saturday 3 November 2012. Speakers are expected to include Ellen Bramwell, Alice Crook, Pete Drummond, Leonie Dunlop, Peder Gammeltoft, Alison Grant, Bill Patterson and John Wilkinson. For further details, see the SPNS website <http://www.spns.org.uk/> or contact

the SPNS Convener, Carole Hough
<carole.hough@glasgow.ac.uk>

SNSBI Annual Conference 2013, Glasgow.

The first circular for this event is enclosed with this newsletter. For any queries or enquiries please contact Carole Hough
<Carole.Hough@glasgow.ac.uk>

More Publications:



Edmunds, Flavell,
*Traces of History
in the Names of
Places with a
vocabulary of the
roots out of which
names of places in
England Wales are
formed.*

Longmans, Green and Co.,
London, 1869. 303pp. Reissued by
Lightening Source UK Ltd, 2010.
From £15 Amazon.

Early scholarly works on British place-names are rarely encountered in the bookshop but an original 1869 edition of this book was a chance find in a Hay-on-Wye bookshop.

The author, who lived in Herefordshire, published in various volumes of the *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club*, the historical and archaeological society in Herefordshire. He was sub-editor (and briefly editor) of the *Hereford Times* between 1847 and 1874. He's called 'a good botanist, and a scholar of various scientific attainments' in the *Transactions* in 1907 (thanks to John Freeman for this information).

The book is part lament for what is yet to come (some 50 years hence with the founding of the EPNS) and part enthusiastic attempt to pre-empt such work. The first 122

pages deal with place-names in England and Wales in themes. The second part is a glossary of "all the root-words out of which the place-names now existing in England and Wales have been formed".

Whilst the work shows a serious devotion to the subject, the author does not appear to have a wealth of early texts and forms at his disposal which leads to few of his assumptions making it through into the place-name dictionary today. He does however demonstrate a competency in both Anglo-Saxon and Welsh which he applies to his own "...strictly inductive" approach to etymology. His method is simple: pick the most obvious language and go with the most likely meaning. If elements of a name are possible in more than one language, then go with the majority. He then goes on to flout his own rules on occasion leading to some entertaining etymologies ("Ouse" is an Anglo-Saxon river name describing what the water does in the muddy bits).

"Unattested" is not in his vocabulary and Amesbury must therefore (despite the obvious language being Anglo-Saxon) be named after Aurelius Ambrosius.

This is a well written book recommended for anyone with an interest in the history of the subject and a reminder of where we were with it 150 years ago.

Submitted by **Julia Stanbridge**

Last chance to buy:

The Scottish Place-Name Society committee has decided that, from now on, *Cultural Contacts in the North Atlantic Region: The Evidence of Names* should be sold at the substantially reduced price of £5.00 per copy plus postage. If you are interested please contact:

Carole Hough
<Carole.Hough@glasgow.ac.uk>