



# SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## Book early for Bridgend

**SNSBI 29th Annual Spring Conference**, 17-20 April, 2020, **Heronston Hotel, Bridgend, Glamorgan**



Plans for the 2020 Spring conference are coming together. The first circular should be sent out soon, if not at the same time as this newsletter, and it would be very much appreciated if you could book your places by paying a deposit as soon as possible after the circular comes out. All details on how to register will be on the circular.

The conference will be held at the Heronston Hotel, which is roughly 1 mile south of the centre of Bridgend. It is a 20-minute walk or a 10-minute bus journey from Bridgend train station. The cost for the full weekend will be £370 per person, which includes accommodation, use of leisure facilities, all meals, and the coach excursion to St Fagans National Museum of History. A day rate of £190 is also available.

If you are interested in presenting at the conference, please see the Call for Papers on the back page.

## Newsletter NS. 19 Autumn 2019

*Hello, and welcome to the 19th issue of the SNSBI newsletter.*

*I am both pleased and nervous to be taking over the editorship from Linda Corrigan. I hope that I can continue to write newsletters of the same high quality that she has produced over the years.*

*As the originator of the SNSBI newsletter, and the editor since the publication of the first issue (except for two issues), Linda has been responsible for keeping members up to date with relevant news since 2010. She has also been a valued member of the society's committee, and I am sure that the entire SNSBI membership would be happy to join me in thanking Linda for all she has done for the society so far.*

*I am very happy to be a SNSBI committee member again, having been secretary from 2015–18. I resigned from the post so that I could focus on relocating, becoming a parent, and starting a new job, all at the same time. Now things have settled down, I am confident that I can give the society and the newsletter the attention they deserve.*

*Many thanks to those who have offered photos, reports, news items and conference notices for this issue. Please do continue to send anything that you think may be of interest. I hope that you enjoy this issue. Please feel free to contact me with any feedback.*

*Harry Parkin (editor)*

CHARITY NO. 0177455  
OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE:  
2019-20

### President:

**Professor Carole Hough**

### Vice-Presidents:

**Professor Peter McClure**

**Professor Diana Whaley**

### Hon. Secretary:

**Dr Rebecca Gregory**

### Hon. Treasurer:

**Ms Julia Stanbridge**

### Nomina Editor:

**Dr David Parsons**

### Webmaster: **Dr Keith Briggs**

### Newsletter Editor:

**Dr Harry Parkin**

### Publicity Officer:

**Dr James Butler**

### Committee:

**Dr John Baker**

**Mr John Briggs**

**Dr Aengus Finnegan**

**Ms Kishli Laister-Scott**

**Mr Joshua Neal**

**Dr Eleanor Rye**

**Ms Jessica Treacher**

## Stop Press:

### Last chance to book for:

- **SNSBI Autumn Day Conference, Saturday 19 October 2019, King's Manor, York**

- **SPNS Autumn Day Conference, Saturday 2 November 2019, Three Villages Community Hall, Arrochar**

*more details on back page*



BETHANY CRESCENT A.H. BOULTON

# SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## Conference reports: 1

**SNSBI 28th Annual Conference**, 26-29 April 2019, **University of Nottingham**  
Report by **Joshua Neal**

The twenty-eighth annual SNSBI Spring Conference was organised by **John Baker** and held at the University of Nottingham, which is home to the Institute for Name-Studies (INS) and the English Place-Name Society (EPNS). Seventy-one delegates attended the conference and enjoyed a programme that showcased a wide variety of onomastic research. The conference began, as



(Photo by Jeremy Harte)

(University of Nottingham) spoke about Laxton in Nottinghamshire – one of the locations of this year’s excursion (see below) – and its unique status as England’s last remaining open-field village.

**David Parsons (University of Wales)** opened the Saturday programme with a paper highlighting some puzzling place-names from Oswestry in Shropshire, a bilingual area near the England-Wales border; he provided solutions for some of these difficult names and for others appealed to the collective knowledge of the conference-goers.

**Justin Ó Gliasáin (Dublin City University)** spoke about the microtoponyms in Offaly East and Offaly West in County Kildare that form the basis of his research, and discussed the various textual sources he has collected his data from so far. Following these opening papers, **Joshua Neal (University of Nottingham)** and **Jessica Treacher (University of Nottingham)** gave a report of this year’s Postgraduate Workshop (see written report starting on p.4).

After the morning coffee break, **Jennifer Scherr** spoke about a corpus of c. 140 names in **-ford** that have been collected during research for a forthcoming dictionary of Somerset place-names; she discussed the classification of these names according to Gelling and Cole’s (2014) **The Landscape of Place-Names** and highlighted some names with uncertain meanings. **Ann Cole** spoke about her research on ‘directional **tūns**’, e.g. Astons, Eastons, etc., that forms part of a project led by **John Blair (University of Oxford)** concerning clusters of **tūn**-names; this research is investigating whether these names are functional. **Richard Coates (University of the West of England)** gave a paper on the name (and naming of) Shirehampton, historically in Gloucestershire, that highlighted the difficulty of that name in particular and the challenges of onomastic research more generally.

**Fred Puss (University of Tartu)** opened the post-lunch session and spoke about Estonian peasant names of English origin, namely the historical circumstances that led to



John Baker at Southwell (photo by Jeremy Harte)

usual, with an after dinner opening lecture on the Friday evening. **John Beckett**



## SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

nineteenth-century peasants being given surnames such as 'Bastard', 'Karpenter', 'Potter', etc. **Peter McClure (University of Nottingham)** spoke about the various 'phantoms, doppelgängers, shape changers, imposters and victims of mistaken identity' that he has encountered while editing the **Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland**, e.g. an example of 'Price' mistaken for 'Puce', and the skills onomasts require to avoid such errors.

**Eila Williamson (University of Glasgow)** presented a paper that detailed the findings and challenges encountered during the three-year **Recovering the Earliest English Language in Scotland: Evidence from Place-Names** project, and the implications for the Survey of Scottish Place-Names project; this paper also highlighted the outreach activities associated with the project. **Mícheál Ó Mainín (Queen's University Belfast)** and **Frances Kane (Queen's University Belfast)** spoke about the evidence for connectedness with Scotland in the place-names of east Ulster in light of the geographical proximity between County Antrim and the south-western highlands and a shared Gaelic language. **Liora Bigon (Holon Institute of Technology)** spoke about the Euro-

centrism of place-name research that affects understanding of sub-Saharan Africa and the 'global south' more widely, and the methodologies involved in the 'de-Eurocentrisation' of onomastic scholarship in these areas.

**Robert Briggs (University College London)** gave a paper on the Old English element **-ing<sup>4</sup>**, commonly glossed as 'associated with', and discussed his research focused on documentary sources which aims to provide the 'most appropriate' translation of the element. **William Patterson** spoke about the problematic etymology commonly provided for the place-name Romanno in Peeblesshire 'monks' earthwork, high status dwelling surrounded by an earthen rampart' (< Scots Gaelic **ràth + manach**) and other alternatives in the historical and geographical context.

On Saturday evening, **Lesley Abrams (University of Oxford)** gave The Cameron Lecture for 2019, a biennial lecture hosted by the EPNS in memory of **Kenneth Cameron**. This lecture compared how place-names have been used to construct historical narratives of early medieval Scandinavian settlement in England and

Normandy. Prof Abrams spoke about a number of factors – historical, sociological, ideological, etc. – that have affected the reception and understanding of Scandinavian settlements in England and Normandy. The lecture was followed by a wine reception.

The Sunday programme began with this year's AGM meeting (see minutes).

**Keith Briggs** opened the first Sunday session with a paper showcasing thirteenth-century Ipswich surnames he has collected from documentary research, which contributes to the tradition of regional surname studies. **Jeremy Piercy (University of Lincoln)** spoke about personal name evidence to support the theory of hereditary minting practice in eleventh-century England, with familial insularity offering



*Laxton field-walk (photo by Diana Whaley)*



## SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

stability to the craft.

**Mairéad Nic Lochlainn (Dublin City University)** presented a report for the current phase of the Logainm.ie (**The Placenames Database of Ireland**) and Meitheal Logainm.ie projects including statistical analysis, place-name examples, and future plans. **Pádraig Ó Cearbhaill (The Placenames Branch)** spoke about Irish place-names associated with death, in particular the distribution of generic elements such as **fert(ae)**, **lecht**, **túaim**, etc.

This year's excursion was organised by **Richard Jones (University of Leicester)**. The trip began with a field-walk in Laxton, the village introduced to the delegates on Friday evening. Dr Jones led a tour which included viewing fields that belong to the open-field system, the remains of some medieval fish-ponds,

and the village church. The excursion continued to Southwell, where delegates were able to explore the Minster and debate the correct pronunciation of 'Southwell'.

Following a short rest and a conference dinner, **Thomas Clancy (University of Glasgow)** spoke about a project he is engaged with for the **Galloway Glens Landscape Project** along with Simon Taylor and Gilbert Márkus. The project is a place-name survey of seven parishes in Kirkcudbrightshire that will lead first to an online database and then a full survey volume. **Jeremy Harte** gave the final paper of the conference, exploring 'supernatural presences' in place-names; this paper considered whether references to goblins, etc., are literal descriptions based on supernatural

beliefs or imaginative fictions.

This year's conference concluded with a book launch hosted by **Paul Cavill (University of Nottingham)** for his (2019) **A New Dictionary of English Field-Names**, which features a foreword by **Rebecca Gregory (University of Nottingham)**. This book is an exciting addition to the study of English microtoponymy and builds upon the research of the late John Field. The book launch ran with a wine reception sponsored by the **English Place-Name Society**.

### Conference reports: 2

#### SNSBI Postgraduate Workshop 2019

Report by **Jessica Treacher**

The sixth SNSBI postgraduate workshop took place before the 2019 SNSBI spring conference at Nottingham. It was organised this year by **Joshua Neal** and **Jessica Treacher**, both PhD students at the Institute for Name-Studies. The workshop continued the tradition of encouraging learning and creating connections between students researching place-names, as well as introducing onomastics as a discipline to students from different



Laxton field-walk (photo by Diana Whaley)



## SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Workshop attendees (photo by Jessica Teacher)



Forest. At the visitor's centre we met **Steve Home**. Steve is a member of **Friends of Thynghowe**, an organisation that investigates and protects an ancient meeting place in Sherwood forest now known as Hangar Hill, which is situated at the convergence of three parishes. Steve is an experienced archaeologist and has participated in several digs at Hangar Hill, which have revealed much about the prehistoric origins of the site. He explained how we can be sure, through place-name evidence and historical records, of the continuity of the hill's use as an assembly site for over a thousand years. The account of the 1816 perambulation of the Manor of Warsop mentions Hangar Hill as an assembly site even in the nineteenth century, and Friends of Thynghowe walk these bounds every year to preserve the tradition and bring community awareness to the significance of the site. We discovered through a number of test runs that the acoustics of the hill, where two of the three parish boundary stones can still be seen, are certainly favourable as a platform for addressing large groups of people.

The participants of the workshop on both Thursday and Friday found the experience rewarding and enlightening. We all learnt a lot from each other and from

medieval-based scholarly backgrounds. This year we had international attendees from England, Scotland, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Canada and the USA studying at both PhD and Masters level.

The workshop began on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> of April and twelve eager participants met in Nottingham city centre to begin a street and pub names tour led by **Paul Cullen**. Unfavourable weather drove us inside the pubs and much of the afternoon was spent discussing the heraldry behind pub names and studying maps of the development of Nottingham's districts and streets. Paul provided excellent resources

and brilliant explanations of naming practices, which informed experienced and novice attendees alike. He also regaled us with a fantastic rendition of a locally composed folk song on the street names of Nottingham and asked us to identify which street had been incorrectly etymologised (unsurprisingly it was **Fletcher Gate**). An added benefit to the workshop was that it provided the opportunity for students from different universities and backgrounds to discuss their research and share their experience of onomastic studies.

On Friday morning thirteen of us caught the bus from Nottingham to Sherwood



BETHANY CRESCENT A.H. BOULTON

# SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

our guides. The feedback from students who had never considered the field of onomastics before was very positive and we hope to see some of them at place-name related events in the future. We would like to express our thanks and gratitude to Paul Cullen and Steve Horne, and also to the SNSBI who generously subsidised travel costs and the Thursday evening meal.

If you would like more information on Friends of Thynghowe and the history of Hangar Hill please visit: <http://www.thynghowe.org.uk/>

## News



SNSBI is on Twitter!

[@SNSBI\\_official](https://twitter.com/SNSBI_official)

If anyone wishes to get in touch with news, interesting articles, upcoming events, etc., please send us a message over Twitter or e-mail [promotions@snsbi.org.uk](mailto:promotions@snsbi.org.uk)

Many thanks to our Publicity Officer, **Dr James Butler**, for getting the account up and running.

## Nomina Bibliography

The **Nomina** bibliography team encourages members to send details of publications dealing with names in Britain and Ireland to [biblio@snsbi.org.uk](mailto:biblio@snsbi.org.uk) for inclusion in the annual bibliography. The team would particularly welcome information about books and book chapters, and articles in journals that don't regularly publish onomastic content. If it's not obvious why a publication will be of interest to SNSBI members from its title, a sentence or two outlining the onomastic content would be an enormous help!

## Practical onomastics



A group of final year students of English language at the University of the West of England (UWE), with **Prof. Richard Coates**, was commissioned to come up with names for the various ponds on UWE's main Frenchay campus. A report was delivered and we await administrative action! The same group has been asked to suggest names for the hitherto mainly unnamed streets on the campus.



**Places in mind.** Apologies to Vanda Grigorovich, the apparent artist

<https://en.pixword.net/help/5-Letters/id-5655.html>, no copyright statement for base image

Manipulated by Richard Coates



## SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

### Westmeath Field Names Recording Project

Field names in Ireland usually only survive in the oral tradition and are often known to just a handful of people. Some few have been recorded on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century estate maps, in folklore collections, and in Ordnance Survey records. The majority remain unrecorded and are in danger

to include a further five parishes. This project is funded by **The Heritage Council of Ireland**, and **Westmeath County Council**. The project coordinator is **Dr Aengus Ó Fionnagáin (University of Limerick)**.

An information booklet outlining the results from 2018 can be downloaded from the website: <http://aengusfinnegan.ie/field-names/>



**The Closh** < An Chlais 'the pit'  
(clais 'a pit'; clais ghainimh 'a sandpit' etc.)

of being lost as farming changes, with less and less people working the land on a daily basis. A pilot project was undertaken in 2018 to record field names in two parishes in **Co. Westmeath**, using a community-led approach. In 2019 this has broadened out

Some of the c.1000 names collected to date may be viewed here: <https://meitheal.logainm.ie/westmeath-field-names/>

Follow the project on twitter: <https://twitter.com/NamesField>

Names Places People

"CAMBRIAN VIEW"  
WHIPCORD LANE  
← FRONTAGES

BETHANY CRESCENT A.H. BOULTON

### Voprosy Onomastiki

The editorial board of the journal **Voprosy onomastiki (Problems of Onomastics)** is pleased to inform you of the publication of **Vol. 16 (2019), Issue 2**. Free of charge on the journal's website: <http://onomastics.ru/en/content/2019-volume-16-issue-2>

#### Articles include:

**Toorians, L.**

*Probable and Possible Celtic Names in North Holland: Huisduinen, Texel, Den Helder, Helsdeur*

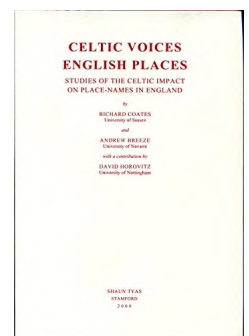
**Dzitssoity, Yu. A.**

*On the Etymology of the Ethnic Names Alan and Allon.*

This is just a sample of the articles available. Please visit the website for a full list (Ed.)

### Publications news

Shaun Tyas has advised the editor that **Celtic Voices, English Places** by **Richard Coates** and **Andrew Breeze** with a contribution by



**David Horovitz** is soon to go out of print. He has recently opened the last box, so get your hands on a copy while you still can!

tel: 01775 821542

email: [shaun@shauntyas.myzen.co.uk](mailto:shaun@shauntyas.myzen.co.uk)

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.



# SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland Essay Prize

1. A prize of £100 will be awarded annually for the best essay on any topic relating to the Society's interests.
  2. Submissions are invited from students and other researchers. The prize will normally be awarded to those who do not have a track record of scholarly publication.
  3. Essays should be about 5,000 words in length.
  4. Essays should in some way make an original contribution to the subject.
  5. Essays should be double-spaced, with pages numbered in a single sequence of arabic numerals, and should include a bibliography of source-material used and of books and authors cited.
  6. Two electronic text copies of the essay should be submitted by August 31 each year to [secretary@snsbi.org.uk](mailto:secretary@snsbi.org.uk). One of these copies should be anonymised (i.e., with all information which may indicate the author's identity removed) for refereeing purposes.
  7. Entries will be blind-refereed and the final decision made by a panel normally consisting of the President, the two Vice-Presidents and the Editor of Nomina, who may consider it for publication.
  8. Provided an essay of sufficient merit is forthcoming, the winner will be announced at the next AGM, held in the spring of the following year.
- Entries should be sent to the Honorary Secretary: Dr Rebecca Gregory, [secretary@snsbi.org.uk](mailto:secretary@snsbi.org.uk)

## Forthcoming Events

### SNSBI Autumn Meeting and Study Day, 19 October 2019, King's Manor, York

The provisional program on 'Vikings and Names' covers place-names, personal names, and the ongoing legacy of Scandinavian speakers in language, literature, and culture, with contributions from **Jack Hartley, Peter McClure, Josh Neal, David Parsons, Eleanor Rye, Matt Townend, and Pragya Vohra.**

The conference fee is £20 for SNSBI members, £10 for student members. Please book soon, as the registration deadline is 15 October.

Visit [snsbi.org.uk/2019\\_York.html](https://snsbi.org.uk/2019_York.html) for more information.

### Scottish Place-Name Society events

**Autumn Day Conference, 2 November 2019, Three Villages Community Hall, Arrochar**

**Spring Day Conference & AGM, 2 May 2020, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Isle of Skye**

For more information visit [https://spns.org.uk/category/conferences/future\\_conferences](https://spns.org.uk/category/conferences/future_conferences)

Names Places People

"CAMBRIAN VIEW"  
WHIPCORD LANE  
← FRONTAGES

BETHANY CRESCENT A.H. BOULTON

## Call for papers

### SNSBI 29th Annual Spring Conference, 17-20 April, 2020, Best Western Heronston Hotel, Bridgend

Proposals are invited for twenty-minute papers and short project reports on any aspect of name-studies in Britain and Ireland.

Abstracts of no more than 200 words should be sent to Dr Rebecca Gregory at the address listed, by 31 October 2019. Informal enquiries are also welcomed.

Proposals for papers should be sent to:

Dr Rebecca Gregory  
School of English  
University of Nottingham  
NG7 2RD

[rebecca.gregory@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:rebecca.gregory@nottingham.ac.uk)

**SNSBI Autumn Meeting and Study Day, 2020  
University of Leicester**

**SNSBI 30th Annual Conference, 2021,  
University of Limerick,  
Ireland**

SNSBI Newsletter  
Contact details  
email: [newsletter@snsbi.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@snsbi.org.uk)  
Website: <http://www.snsbi.org.uk/>