SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES

in BRITAIN AND IRELAND

CONFERENCE NOTICES

2022 Spring Conference
Saturday 9 April 2022
Online, 09:45–17:00
Book via eventbrite

The 2022 SNSBI spring conference will be held on Saturday 9 April 2022, via Zoom. The programme incorporates papers on personal names, major and minor place-names, and comparative research from a range of speakers in Britain and Ireland and beyond. The event is free for SNSBI members, and non-members can register for £5. For more information, see page 5 of this newsletter.

2022 Autumn Conference

The society intends to hold a one-day in-person Autumn conference in either Leicester or Nottingham. It is likely to take place in October 2022. Please continue to check your emails and the SNSBI website for more details.

Newsletter NS. 24
Spring 2022

Welcome to the 24th issue of the SNSBI newsletter!

Apologies that the Spring newsletter is out a little later than usual for the second year in a row. I always plan to release it in February, but I'm afraid this just wasn't possible for a variety of reasons.

Very many thanks to all of those who have contributed to this issue. In particular, I'd like to draw your attention to pieces by Kathryn Bullen (pp. 3-4) and Pat McKay (pp. 6-7), which summarise some fascinating public-facing onomastic work. I received a lot of material for this issue, more than I have been able to include, and for that I'm very grateful. If you sent me anything that isn't included in this issue, I will endeavour to include it in the next one.

Do take a look at the Spring conference programme on page 5. There's an excellent selection of papers, as well as a social event planned for the evening, and there's still time to register! See the SNSBI website for more details.

Harry Parkin (editor)

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2021-22

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SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Conference report

SNSBI's 30th Anniversary Conference

Report by Diana Whaley

SNSBI's autumn conference 2021 celebrated thirty years since the Council for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland formally metamorphosed into the SNSBI at a day conference in Manchester University on 26th October 1991.

Originally planned for Leicester, the 2021 Autumn Conference had to be transformed into a Zoom event because of the continuing Covid situation but, as with the Spring Conference 2021, being online meant that it had a very good, and international, audience.

The conference had the title of 'Expanding Horizons in Name Studies' and surveyed developments in onomastics past, present and future. The morning session was devoted to 'Names in the Community', chiming with current SNSBI ambitions to extend our outreach, and featured papers by Rhian Parry ('Collecting and of sharing toponyms in Wales'),

Katie Hambrook ('Promoting public engagement with place-name studies'), Susan Kilby ('Urban communities, street-names, and challenging histories'), Sara Uckelman ('Getting onomastics into schools'), Nic Coombey ('Finding the field-names of Borgue, Dumfries and Galloway)' and Aengus Ó Fionnagáin ('Community-led collection of minor place-names and the Westmeath Field Names Project 2018–21'). The geographical and conceptual range of material was fascinating and the speakers offered truly inspiring examples of community involvement in research, and of sharing the fruits of research with a wider public.

The afternoon session, 'Name Studies in Britain and Ireland, 30 Years On', took the form of a round-table discussion chaired by Carole Hough, in which speakers reflected on developments in onomastics over the last three decades and looked to the future. We were fortunate to hear magisterial overviews from Richard Coates, Peter McClure, Kay Muhr, Simon Taylor and Hywel Wyn Owen. Further details of the day, including abstracts and slides from some papers, can be found in the 'Meetings' section of the SNSBI website.

The surname *Science*

By Keith Briggs and Peter McClure

Nicknames denoting properties of the body and used at first as bynames, such as Large, Short, Grey, and Armstrong, were very common in the medieval period. Those denoting more abstract qualities of the mind were less common; examples are Noble, Reason, Faultless, Constant, and Comfort. All these names, and many similar ones, survive as modern surnames. By contrast, the use of abstract nouns as given names is generally a product of the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods; the earliest examples in England of feminine names such as Amity, Patience, Peace, Temperance, and Unity in Gwyneth Nair and Jennifer Scherr's article `Especiall vertues': abstract qualities and women's names in England*, 1540–1850 (Nomina 35, 21-47) come from parish registers of 1538. It is thus a surprise to find the surname *Science* in a document of c.1430 from rural Suffolk – the image shows *Ranulph' Science* and *Joh'nes Science* of Darsham.

We think these men bear metronyms; they are surnamed from the given name of their mother, or possibly a more distant female ancestor. This interpretation is supported by

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the surnames *Matild* and *Katelyne* (the common Middle English form of Katharine) in the same list. *Science* as a feminine given name is found from the middle of the thirteenth century in Cornwall and England. The name is French in form, and was a noun meaning 'knowledge, wisdom', close to the modern sense.

The surname *Science* appears no longer to survive, but it was listed in Reaney & Wilson, *A Dictionary of English Surnames* (1991), where its etymology is erroneously assumed to be identical with the unrelated names Sanchia, Cynthia, and Sens, thanks to Withycombe's rather muddled entry for Sanchia in her *Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names* (3rd edn 1977). The second edition of the *The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland* will have a corrected and updated treatment of the name.
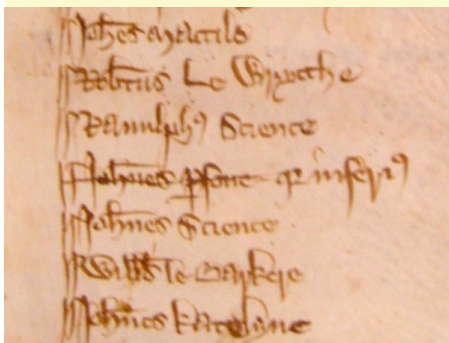
Illustration 1: HD1032/2/1, a court roll of c.1430 from Leiston Abbey. Reproduced by permission of Suffolk Archives.
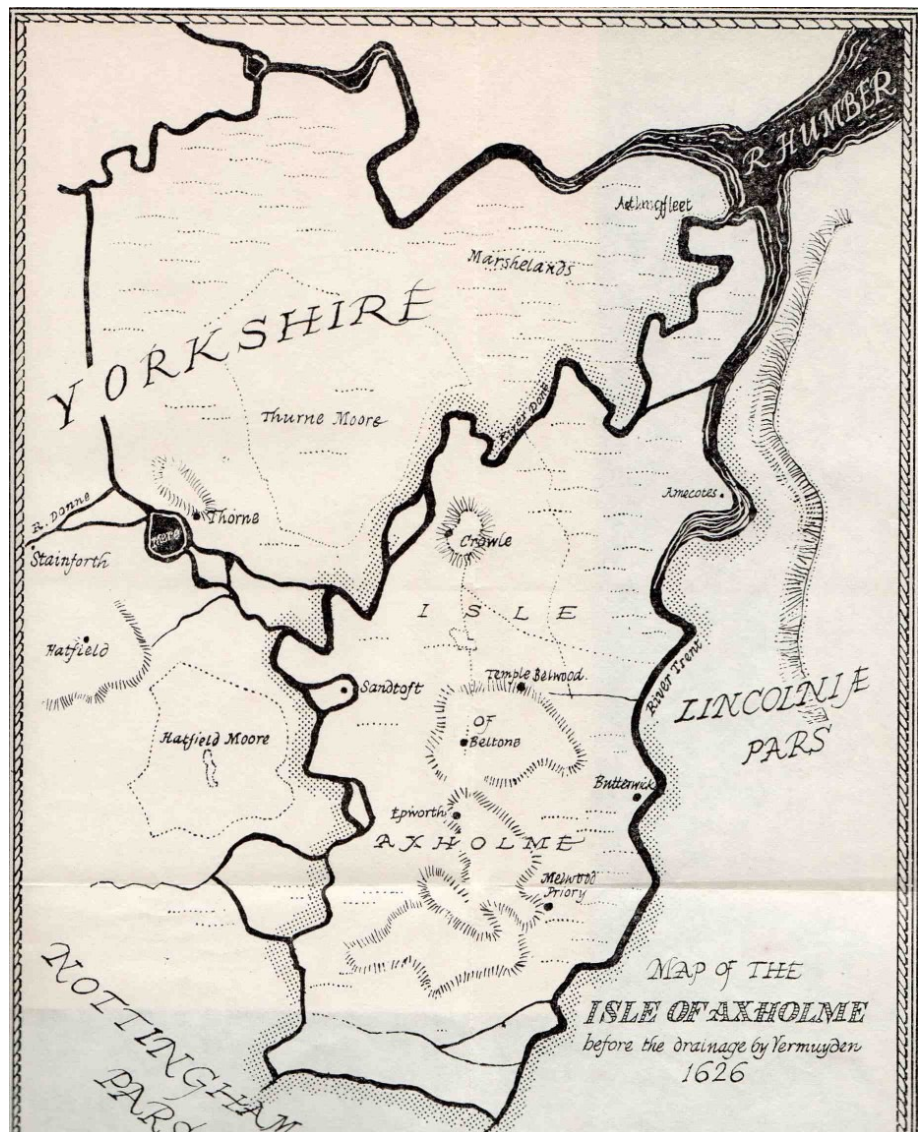
Placement at the Museum - Place-Names on the Isle of Axholme

By Kathryn Bullen

What is it like to work behind the scenes at a museum? As a PhD place-name researcher at the University of Nottingham, I wanted to find out more.

Placement opportunity

Keen to gain experience working within a museum environment, I also wanted to share some of my research findings with the local community. Happily, a placement opportunity arose at the North Lincolnshire Museum. In October 2021 I joined the project team helping to organise the forthcoming

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exhibition on the Isle of Axholme. The exhibition opens in March 2022 and runs until October 2022. It aims to celebrate the great work of the Isle of Axholme and Hatfield Chase Landscape Partnership and will mark the end of their funding. It will help reconnect the local community with their unique local landscape and heritage.

One of my buzzwords is community engagement. Over the last couple of years, I have taken part in many of the landscape partnership's workshops and events. These have ranged from archaeological digs to historical building surveys and more. I have built up a network of local historians and links with local/national organisations, including Historic Lincolnshire, Project Wildscape, the British Association of Local History, the Digital Museum, and the recently formed North Lincolnshire Heritage Network. I hope to expand this network during the museum placement.

The placement so far

My placement at the North Lincolnshire Museum is funded by Midlands4Cities (part of the Arts and Humanities Research Council) from October 2021 to October 2022. I have chosen

to spread the placement part-time over 13 months, which works out at around 2 days per week. In this way I can appreciate the full process of organising, managing and delivering an exhibition.

The first 6 months of the placement are being spent developing accessible materials and designing the exhibition space. I am working in conjunction with the museum and liaising with other members of the project team. I have written and prepared five panels for the exhibition, which are currently with the graphic designer before printing. By joining regular museum team meetings, I am appreciating the diverse work of museum staff who work in a variety of venues in North Lincolnshire. I have gathered useful skills by completing relevant local authority training, attending a public history course, and successfully passing my project management foundation
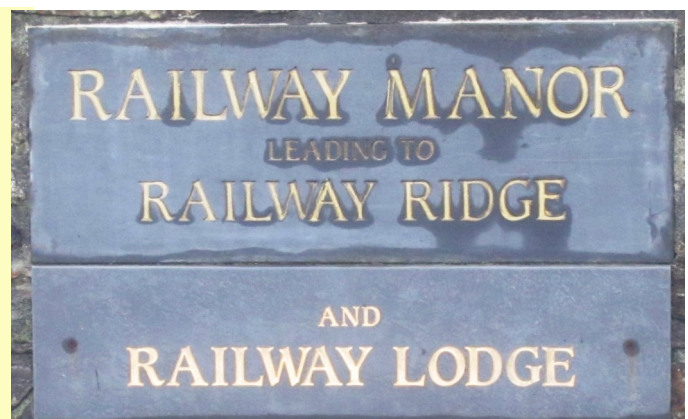
award.

Once the exhibition goes live, the remaining 7 months will be spent delivering the project to the wider community. Presentations and workshops will be offered alongside partnership and museum staff. To complement the visual exhibition, I aim to produce a digital offer with a focus on Axholme place-names, which will encourage the local community to engage online with the exhibition. I will be creating interactive place-name quizzes and material for children and adults. In addition, I will be offering a presentation relating to place-names in the Isle of Axholme. This will show some of the evidence of Axholme's watery landscape from place-names and will also ask how what we know of the past can help manage future environmental challenges.

Please take a look at the 3D exhibition link here: https://virtualtour.bee3d.co.uk/tour/north-lincolnshire-museum.

Odd pics 1
from Jeremy Harte

A series of railway-related names in Gunnislake, Cornwall

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2022 SNSBI Spring Conference Programme 9 April 2022

09.45–10.00 Welcome

10.00–11.00 Session 1: English place-names

James O. Butler, Chris Donaldson, Fiona Edmonds and Ian Gregory: *The influence of the Ordnance Survey on the Lake District's namescape*

Masaya Takuma: *Is Misdon in Devon a really "misty" place?*

BREAK 15 minutes

11.15–12.15 Session 2: Irish place-names

Russell Ó Ríagáin: *Finding the Dál Riata in Ireland: the evidence of named places*

Justin Ó Gliasáin: *Fearann in minor place-names in the Civil Parish of Kildare*

LUNCH BREAK 60 minutes

13.15–14.15 Session 3: Scotland

Colin Mackenzie: *Lake as a stream-name in southern Scotland*

James Brown*: Nic and Mac: Gaelic lingering in eighteenth-century Carrick*

BREAK 15 minutes

14.30–15.30 Session 4: Comparisons and reconstructions

Andrea Bölcskei: *Settlement names of ecclesiastical reference in the Hungarian and English languages: a comparative perspective*

Guto Rhys: *The pronunciation of certain Pictish personal names*

BREAK 15 minutes

15.45–16.45 Session 5: Entertainment and ceremony

Keith Briggs: *The names of medieval minstrels*

Jeremy Harte: *Gospel truths: Rogationtide processions in place-names*
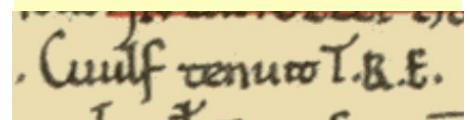
CLOSE of main conference

20.00–21.00 online social event (including a short performance of medieval music)

For more information, including abstracts for each of the talks, see:
snsbi.org.uk/2022_spring_online.html
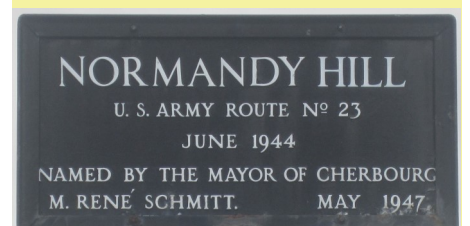
Culf - Culpho

By Keith Briggs

The Suffolk place-name Culpho is believed to contain the personal name *Culf*, combined with the element *hōh* 'hill-spur'. The personal name occurs in Domesday Book in the form *Cuulf* in Gloucestershire (image from folio 165a). It survives as the modern surname Culf, which is most frequent in Suffolk and Essex. The van of Lewis Culf was photographed in Waldringfield, only 8km from Culpho.

Odd pics 2 *from Jeremy Harte*

Normandy Hill, Saltash, Devon

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Fig. 5 Ballyronan Rd

Fig. 6 Mayogall Rd

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MID-ULSTER COUNCIL
SIGNAGE PROJECT

By Pat McKay
Ulster Place-Name Society

In the late 1970s townland names were dropped from Northern Ireland postal addresses in favour of road names and house numbers, resulting in the loss of a great number of townland names from rural postal addresses. The name of each rural road is now displayed on a sign at the beginning of the road. In many cases the road is named from the townland in which the sign is situated (*see fig. 1*).

Fig. 1 Ballynamullan Rd

However, since many rural roads pass through a large number of townlands, the names of many townlands have now been rendered redundant. In 1986, a prominent Orangeman named Drew Nelson from Banbridge in Co. Down, aware of the historical importance of our townlands, persuaded his local district council to add to each road-name sign the name of the townland in which the sign stands (*see fig. 2*). On a long rural road, a sign bearing the name of the road will often appear a number of times and in

Fig. 2 Moorfield Rd

a number of different townlands (for example, where the road intersects another road) and thanks to Mr Nelson's efforts the names of many townlands in Banbridge Council area (now part of the larger Borough Council of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon) are on display on road-name signage, though still redundant in postal addresses. Many other local district councils in Northern Ireland (though not all) decided to follow Banbridge in displaying the townland name on all road-name signage (*see figs 3 and 4*).

Fig. 3 Upper Kildress Rd

Fig. 4 Leaghan Rd

In 2016 Mid-Ulster District Council decided to go a step further and add Irish-language versions of the road names and townland names to the signage (*see figs 5 and 6)* and I was asked to supply the council with Irish-language versions of the names. Figure 5 shows an early

example of the bilingual signage and Figure 6 shows an example of the latest design.

Mid-Ulster District Council is one of Northern Ireland's eleven 'super councils' which were established in 2015 to replace the twenty-six smaller District Councils which had replaced the old County Councils in 1973. The 2017 version of the Collins Road Map of Ireland does not show county boundaries in Northern Ireland and serves to highlight the fact that in Northern Ireland the county has sadly joined the barony, civil parish and townland as historical administrative units which have been rendered redundant. Mid-Ulster District Council is made up of the former district councils of Magherafelt, Cookstown and Dungannon/South Tyrone. It stretches from the river Bann at Toome westward to the village of Fivemiletown on the Tyrone/Fermanagh border and includes two thousand road names.

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Providing Irish-language versions of two thousand road names, as well as of the relevant townland names, proved quite a challenge. Names of English-language origin (usually names of streets in towns) were the most straightforward since they usually involved direct translation, e.g. Golf Terrace/*Ardán Gailf*, Bridge Street/*Sráid an Droichid*, Castle Drive/*Céide an Chaisleáin*. Providing Irish-language versions of road names which are derived from townland names was an altogether more demanding proposition. Fortunately I was not starting from scratch as I was able to draw on the some very valuable earlier research. This included the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project's www.placenamesni.org website, my former colleague Kay Muhr's research on the townland names of the old Dungannon Council area, ongoing research by Brian Devlin, a Ph.D. student in Queen's University on the place-names of part of the Mid-Ulster Council area, and, most relevant of all, the Ulster Place-Name Society's Street and Road Names Project.

At the beginning of the Project I was sent a spreadsheet containing a list of all the road names in the Mid-Ulster Council area and asked to supply Irish-language

versions of all the road names and relevant townland names. As the start of work on erecting the signage could not be delayed until the research on the origin of all the names was completed I was supplied periodically with a list of the names which were shortly to appear on the signage. When I was not under pressure to supply information for these 'urgent' lists, I was able to work on the main list of names on the spread-sheet. Last Spring I had the satisfaction of returning to Mid-Ulster Council a completed version of the spreadsheet, containing Irish-language versions of all two thousand road names as well as the names of the relevant townlands. Rather naively I believed my task was done, but not so! New postal addresses are of course being created all the time and in no time I was sent a list of names in new housing developments for consideration. Who was it that said that an onomast's work is never done?

In conclusion I would like to draw attention to an interesting trilingual piece of signage which though in Mid-Ulster is not part of the Mid-Ulster Council signage project. It is the 'name plate' of the village of Pomeroy in Co. Tyrone (*see fig. 7*). The name of the village

appears to be from Old French *pommeroie* or *pommeraie* meaning 'apple orchard' (more likely from the derived surname Pomeroy) and this has been translated into Ulster-Scots as *Aippleschaw* which represents *aipple* 'apple' + *schaw* which can only be a variant of *shaw* 'wood, thicket'. The Irish name of the village is not connected with this name. It is *Cabhán an Chaorthainn* 'round hill or hollow of the rowan tree' and it refers to the townland of Cavanakeeran in which the village is situated.
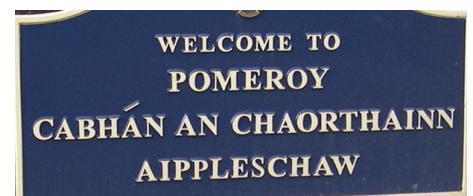

Fig. 7 Pomeroy trilingual sign

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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 31 October each year to 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

Events

Onomastics Online

A series of talks offered by the International Council for Onomastic Sciences (ICOS)

From their website:

"Onomastics Online is a series of online lectures dealing with important timely topics related to names and naming. Given by distinguished scholars from various academic backgrounds, the lectures demonstrate the importance and the multidisciplinary nature of onomastic research. Established in 2022, Onomastics Online also addresses the gap of sharing onomastic ideas, caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the cancellations of scientific meetings.

The lectures can be followed either in real time via Zoom platform […], with a possibility to participate [in] the Q&A session afterwards, or afterwards on YouTube. Recordings of the lectures will be published on the ICOS YouTube channel usually within a couple of days."

For more information, including details of upcoming talks and links to abstracts, visit icosweb.net/onomastics-online/

British Association for Local History (BALH) Events

Discounts Available

BALH offer a number of talks and events throughout the year on topics that are likely to be of interest to SNSBI members.

SNSBI members are entitled to discounts to these events. If this is of interest, please contact the BALH treasurer for a discount code.

Details of BALH events can be found here: balh.org.uk/events

Odd pics 3
from Keith Briggs

ABC-Straße, Wismar, Germany

"local tradition attributes the name to a school having been located on the street"

Forthcoming events

SNSBI Autumn Day Conference, October 2022

SNSBI Spring Conference, Bridgend, 14-17 April 2023

SNSBI Newsletter
Contact details
email: newsletter@snsbi.org.uk
Website: http://www.snsbi.org.uk/