

Lastingham, all three of them seventh-century foundations, is that, while the *Peartaneu hām* continued to be called Partney,⁵⁹ the *Hagustaldesēg hām* and the *Lastingaew hām* became respectively *Hagustaldeshām* and *Lastingahām*, today's Lastingham and Hexham.

⁵⁹As, *mutatis mutandis*, did Bardney, Chertsey and Selsey.

Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland

Second Annual Study Conference: Preston, 1993

The second annual study conference organized by the Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland was held at Alston Hall near Preston, Lancashire, from 2 to 5 April 1993. Dr Mary Higham and Mrs Mary Atkin, who drew up the programme, took some pride in showing how well such an event could run in a non-university environment. Excess of demand over supply of single rooms caused some participants to be lodged, rather palatially, in neighbouring farmhouses; fortunately the weather, while not exactly good, was at least co-operative. Proceedings began on the Friday with introductory remarks by Bill Nicolaisen (Aberdeen), the president, about the Society, and by Mike Patterson, vice-principal of Alston Hall, about the house (the common tale of one built as a family house in the nineteenth century which no family in the twentieth could afford to run; we still found a pleasant family atmosphere about the place). The first lecture was also local, Dr Alan Crosby (Preston) on the historical-geographical background of the Ribble Valley, dominated, as the Sunday excursion was to be, by Pendle Hill seen from various directions.

On the Saturday Mícheál Ó Mainnín (Belfast), who thought that names of physical features in the island of Ireland had been unduly neglected, spoke about 'The mountain-names of County Down', concentrating on the great variety of names of the Mountains of Mourne. Tomos Roberts (Bangor), on 'Late naming-patterns in Anglesey and Caernarfonshire', treated changes in naming-habits from the early nineteenth century, mainly of houses and hamlets (plus one famous railway station). Judicious anecdotes from George Borrow and biblical concordances provided documentation for some of the names. Dr David Postles (Leicester), 'At Sørensen's invitation: the patterning of patronyms in Leicestershire and Rutland c. 1245-1525', concerned mainly the distribution of the suffix *-son* in those counties. Mrs Ann Cole (Oxford) spoke about place-names which might advance information on road conditions to 'The Anglo-Saxon traveller'. She showed that *stānweg* significantly often connotes helpfully firm (rather

than unpleasantly hard) stone underfoot, examined with some striking pairs of slides of normal and flooded conditions for meres and difficult river-crossings, and argued for the presence at places called *draegtūn* of ox-teams available for the specific purpose of dragging mired carts to firm ground. Dr George Redmonds (Huddersfield) revealed that Lancashire surnames in Yorkshire were 'A genealogist's nightmare': being not quite local they were often very much distorted, and early modern families in these parts often operated with two or three surnames simultaneously anyway, so that even when a place-name is clear in form it can be quite misleading in content. Dr Oliver Padel (Truro) spoke on 'Surnames in Wales in the fourteenth century'. The Welsh did intriguing things with English name-elements, e.g. *Hopkin* should be a diminutive of *Robert*, but in the common genealogical form of Welsh personal names it nearly always applies to fathers, hardly ever to sons, in the material examined.

There were reports on current place-name work in England (Carole Hough and John Field), Scotland (Ian Fraser), Wales (Gwynedd Pierce), Ireland (Dónall Mac Giolla Easpaig), Northern Ireland (Kay Muhr). Something was currently happening in the Isle of Man (Gillian Fellows-Jensen), not much just now in Cornwall (Oliver Padel). It seemed that Belfast is the leader in computerizing place-name surveys, though things are also happening in Ireland, Wales and England. The Belfast system uses personal computers, the Nottingham one a mainframe, so that they are not immediately compatible. The point was made strongly in the general discussion on Sunday evening that the level at which compatibility is necessary is in the format for exchange of information. The representatives of the various place-name surveys agreed to continue consultations about this. Personal names evidenced on coins too are being turned into a database (Veronica Smart). The other main topic in the general discussion was the effect of proposed local government changes on county archives. there is some danger of many being split up; it was generally felt that for various reasons that would be a disaster. At the A.G.M. the process of winding up the old Council for Name Studies, the Society's predecessor, was completed; integration of the new Society's membership-list with that of subscribers to *Nomina* is in hand. Tribute was paid to the memory of Bedwyr Lewis Jones, vice-president of the Society, who died suddenly during the year.

On the Sunday Dr William Richardson (Flinders, South Australia) moved up the coast from his previous piece on the Wolf Rock (in *Journal of the English Place-Name Society*, 24) to trace the history of names for groups of rocks near islands of Pembrokeshire, 'The Smalls, Hats and Barrels'. Misreading of charts in foreign languages and popular etymologizing of names so misread emerged as more important sources of early modern mariners' names than local tradition or than primarily oral tradition in any language. Victor Watts (Durham) spoke on 'The place-name Hexham: a mainly philological approach', perversely finding most attraction in theories he thought probably weren't true. Simon Taylor (Edinburgh) spoke on the onomastic evidence for the sequence(s) of languages in medieval Fife. His title, 'Babbet and Bridin Puddin', might at first have seemed to allude to the range and quality of food at Alston Hall, but Babbet was a place and Bridin Puddin a man. Teeth and things they can attack recurred in some epithets of people, and when to general mirth one documentary source was renamed 'the Pit-Bal Terrier'. Apart from circumambulating Pendle the afternoon excursion visited Whalley, both the abbey ruins and the churchyard, where Dr A. G. James (Wigan) demonstrated figures that were and were not there on three tall stone crosses, and compared various authorities' extravagant renderings of them. The sun had come out by then, not however from the ideal direction for art history. English place-name specialists were moderately happy about the rounded hill (**brævel*, cf. Old Norse *brváll*) of Whalley, but there was animated discussion about the *hoh* of Clitheroe.

P.R.K.