



# SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## Book early for Norwich March 2015

The society's spring conference inspires members in many ways. The 2002 conference visit to Lindisfarne inspired John Wilkinson to draw the cartoon below. Other members may be inspired to attend by reading about the 2014 conference on pages 3-5 or the post-graduate workshop on page 2.

Whatever motivates you, please take note of the urgent need to book for next year's spring conference by 31 October 2014, if you wish to have accommodation. Some members may be aware of the increasing difficulty in finding reasonably priced conference accommodation. This year, the society has had to pay a deposit already and will lose this if bookings are not confirmed. The first circular and booking form is enclosed with this issue. Please act quickly.

## Newsletter NS. 9 Autumn 2014

### **Editor's letter**

*Hello and welcome once again to the SNSBI Newsletter. This issue will be appearing earlier than usual to accommodate sending out the first circular for the 2015 conference, enclosed within. Please do take note of the early booking date.*

*In this issue we have two great reports about the 2014 conference and the post-graduate workshop which preceded it. They take up most of the space and rightly so. The enthusiasm with which younger members are prepared to give their time to write about their enjoyment of these events, gives great hope for the future of onomastics.*

*Sadly, we have had to say goodbye to some older members and colleagues this year. However others have broached the airwaves and drawing board in attempts to reach wider audiences—read on for more details.*

*I hope that you enjoy this issue and I look forward to hearing any items of news which might grace future issues.*

Linda M. Corrigan (editor)

**CHARITY NO. 0177455  
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2014-15**

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## Stop Press: last chance to book

**A Tribute to Margaret Gelling**  
SNSBI Day School  
Saturday 25 October 2014  
The Gateway, Chester Street,  
Shrewsbury. For ticket availability please contact  
Julia Stanbridge on  
[treasurer@snsbi.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@snsbi.org.uk)

See also Page 8 for other imminent events





# SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## Post-Graduate Workshop Report:

### SNSBI Postgraduate Workshop by Rebecca Gregory

The second SNSBI postgraduate workshop took place immediately before the main conference at Gregynog. It was organised by **Emily Pennifold** of the Centre for Advanced Welsh & Celtic Studies at the University of Wales, and jointly run by Emily and **Dr David Parsons**.

The workshop built on some of the issues discussed at the 2013 workshop in Glasgow, incorporating sessions on some of the topics suggested by last year's participants. Many students returned for this year's workshop, along with some new faces, with researchers at all levels from MA to the late stages of PhD research.

Participants arrived on the afternoon of Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April, and the remainder of the afternoon was spent introducing ourselves and our research to the rest of the group. This informal session helped to create a friendly and collaborative atmosphere, as well as to clarify the kinds of issues each participant hoped to discuss and the problems

they were facing with their research or had faced in the past.

Databases were an aspect of research which many participants in the Glasgow workshop had requested some assistance with, so on Thursday morning, David Parsons ran a database workshop. We discussed best practice, and looked at some examples of databases in use for different research projects which had been created in a variety of ways by different people.

Participants were encouraged to ask questions about their own databases, and it became clear that many people shared the same problems and concerns; solutions were suggested by David as well as other by students based on their own experience. Later on the Thursday, we were treated to a tour of Gregynog's extensive library (*see photo below*) and Emily showed us some fascinating



maps of the Gregynog area, some incorporating field-names from tithe maps. Emily had devised a Place-name walk to take place that afternoon, and showed us some of the interesting names to look out for along the way. The three-mile walk took us from Gregynog to the nearby village of Bettws Cedewain, where we enjoyed a fantastic dinner, plus a drink or two. The walk itself was unfortunately subject to some very Welsh weather, although we stayed in good spirits despite the rain, and managed to spot some interesting signposts along the way!



(above: we walk in the rain)  
On the Friday morning, Emily and David ran a session about GIS mapping software, both the kinds of software available and the potential uses for it. Again, participants were encouraged to discuss and demonstrate their own use of GIS, and it was (continued on page 3)



# SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

incredibly useful to see the ways in which we were all employing (or hoping to employ) the technology in our own research. After spending the afternoon in further discussion, we used our newly-improved GIS skills to create a map of our Place-name walk to use in our report to the conference that evening.

All the participants found the workshop to be incredibly useful, and in addition to the theoretical and practical skills we learnt, it also proved to be a great opportunity for networking and discussion of research. Another workshop for postgraduate and early career researchers is planned for 2015, so if you'd like to register your interest or to make any suggestions on themes or content, then please do get in touch with the organisers. (See box)

We would also like to thank the society for their generosity in funding this workshop to enable it to run for a second fantastic year.

## Stop Press

The next postgraduate workshop will take place on the 26th–27th March, in Norwich. Please contact the organisers (Eleanor Rye and Emily Pennifold) at [snsbipostgrad-workshop@gmail.com](mailto:snsbipostgrad-workshop@gmail.com) for more details and costs.

## News:

### Nomina

After many years of hard work on the *Nomina* bibliography, **Carole Hough** has passed on this responsibility to **Eleanor Rye** and **Alice Crook** who will now be compiling the bibliography, with assistance from **David Parsons** and **Aengus Finnegan**. Eleanor and Alice would be very grateful if members of the Society could send details of any publications they would like including in the bibliography, particularly if these are not published in Place-Name journals. If you have any publications you would like including, please email Eleanor and Alice the details using the dedicated email address [biblio@snsbi.org.uk](mailto:biblio@snsbi.org.uk).

## News:

### People:

**John Moore BA FSA FRHistS 1937-2014 (26 June)**

Many members will be sorry to hear of the death of John Moore a former contributor to *Nomina* on the subject of medieval prosopography (2 papers) in *Nomina* 16 and 18. He was a founder member of Avon Local History and Archaeology and a most

senior and respected local historian. He was Research Fellow in Local History at the University of Keele and Lecturer in Economic History at the Universities of Strathclyde and Bristol, where he also taught many extra-mural courses in Local History. This summary of his career appears on the back of his latest very useful and accessible handbook, *Counting People: a DIY manual for local and family historians* (Oxbow Books, 2013):

**Nicholas Peter Brooks, Emeritus Professor of Medieval History at the University of Birmingham 1941-2014 (2 February).**

Professor Brooks' work on the Charters of Christ Church Canterbury (2013) has been of great value for names scholars as have his many other published works. Many members will remember him as an inspiring teacher and speaker. For further details see: <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/mar/06/nicholas-brooks>

**Reminder!** hand in your Spring Conference booking form at the Shrewsbury Day Conference, October 25th and save on postage.



# SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## SNSBI 23rd Annual Conference. April 2014: Gregynog Hall Report by Aengus Finnegan

The 2014 Easter Conference opened to an extraordinary rendition of the conference venue's history by **Prys Morgan**. Delegates assembled in the former billiards room at Gregynog Hall sat rapt as **Professor Morgan** expounded on the fascinating pedigree and origins of its past owners, including a notable and pioneering 'concreteophile' who gave the house its present mock-tudor appearance (referencing *Concrete Quarterly* for details).



(Photo: K McClure)

Afterwards many of those present found their way down through Gregynog's internal labyrinth to the Cellar Bar for a first taste of Blayney's Brew, named in honour of the last of the Blayney family to own the house, about whom **Professor Morgan** had given us so many curious details.

Proceedings recommenced early on Saturday morning with a most interesting lecture by **Carole Hough** on the *Body Metaphor in Place-Names*, a very frequent and recurring theme in topographical contexts, regardless of language. Next up, **Alison Burns** brought us into the Scots-speaking *Farmhouses of Aberdeenshire* and recounted through recordings and reminiscences all the joys and hardships of onomastic fieldwork. **Richard Morgan** followed with a comprehensive look at *Welsh and English Place-Names in Montgomeryshire* while **John Baker** mapped out Welsh and other influences on the *Toponymy of Shropshire*, on the opposite side of the border.

After lunch delegates were afforded the opportunity to roam freely in Gregynog's grounds, searching in vain for elusive mobile-phone coverage, or taking in the beautiful pastoral surroundings and the spring air. Activities resumed with a detailed illumination by **Alice Crook** of the many difficulties and ambiguities presented by truncated and anglicised *Personal Name-forms in old Scottish Parish Registers*. This was followed by this

author's paper on the *Co. Offaly Associated Surname Feighery*, which threw up some similar issues. Following this, **Graham Collis** brought us across to the channel to the formerly well watered, but now extensively drained and levéed *Lumbres Canton in northern France* in search of *Anglo-Saxon Place-Names and other Toponymic traces*. Graham's paper was illustrated with some very interesting maps.



(A full house. Photo B. Corrigan)

The oft-cited 1881 census <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/census-records.htm> surfaced again to great effect in **Paul Cullen's** fascinating analysis of *Kentish Surnames*, refining, improving and often confirming through distributional and toponymic analysis the remarkably prescient contentions of some early pioneers in the (continued on page 5)



## SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

field.

After a good dinner, delegates were treated to reports from the postgraduate workshop which had preceded the conference. This was followed by a perambulation through the highways and byways of *Old-English Main Road Names*, ably led by **Peter Kitson**.

At some point in the afternoon **Shaun Tyas** and his books had appeared at the back of the conference room, but for those who chose not to linger about his table, a by now slightly more familiar trail led to the Cellar Bar where a convivial atmosphere soon prevailed, enriched by an enthusiastic, impromptu and very impressive singing and music session which occupied a corner of the bar.



(photo K. McClure)

A not excessively late night for most was followed by a good breakfast and the AGM where the baton was passed in a business like manner to the

succeeding officers of the committee.

Three project reports made up the first session of the day. **Rhian Parry** spoke about the current activities of the *Welsh Place-Name Society and farm and field names in Arddudwy*. **Katie Hambrook** reported on her research on *Field-Names and Minor Toponymy in Oxfordshire* which offer glimpses of the past landscape of the area. **Patrick Hanks** announced the imminent completion of the first phase of the *FaNUK Project* and also revealed that a fresh tranche of funding will allow the scope of the project to be widened to include surnames with just twenty bearers.

The completion of the reports saw us once more enjoying tea and coffee in the oak-panelled Blayney room, and following this necessary interlude, we were treated to two papers with a Welsh theme. **John and Sheila Rowlands'** paper on the *Development of the Welsh Surname System* was very informative, entertaining and something of an eye-opener. The simultaneous translation of **Angharad Fychan's** paper worked very well and it

might be worthwhile to try and follow this good example at future conferences in Ireland and Scotland. The paper itself looked at the curious names of a number of precipitous and cavernous places in mid-Wales and reminded this writer of *Sciorrhach go hlifreann* ('slide to hell'), a steep ravine on the north side of Killary Harbour, Co. Mayo.

A good crowd reassembled after lunch for the conference excursion to Clun. The trip across the border (passing Offa's Dyke) and into England involved a surprising degree of ascent and descent, testing our coach somewhat. On arrival, **Chris Lewis** gave members a full run-down of the highlights of Clun and the remnants of its medieval heyday, from the front of the bus.



(Clun Castle, Photo K. McClure)

Having explored the castle (and watched **Simon Taylor** racing around the motte in (continued on Page 6)



## SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

the rain), the very ancient church, the lovely old bridge (minus some of its parapet after a recent incident with a cattle-lorry, we were told), many members dutifully converged on the town museum which had been opened especially for us. Agricultural implements of local manufacture featured prominently but it was an antique flute which caught one member's eye. The 1830s flute was soon released from its glass case, and no better man than **Pat McKay** to get a few surprisingly clear notes out of it after who knows how many years.



(The museum Photo K. McClure)  
Back at Gregynog proceedings recommended after dinner with a short series of project reports. This author spoke about the impending revamp of logainm.ie, **Veronica Smart** discussed her research on bibliographical

commentary on *Anglo-Saxon Moneyers' Names* and **David Parsons** gave a great illustration of the power of crowd-sourcing in his report on the *Cymru 1900 Place-Name Transcription Project*.

**Thomas Owen Clancy** brought the weekend's academic programme to a close with a very interesting lecture on *Saints in the Scottish landscape*. It has been dryly observed that many of the saints commemorated in place-names in Ireland may safely be added to 'the pantheon of unattested early-Irish saints', whose real existence is questionable. This lecture outlined all the unique challenges which hagionyms present both in terms of the derivations of the place-names themselves and the difficulties of site-identification (including mention of a seemingly unlikely but ultimately saintly 'business park').

At this point members headed for the bar and drained the last stocks of Blayney's Brew in the house dry.

Congratulations are due to **David Parsons** and **Emily Pennifold** for organizing a great and memorable conference at Gregynog.

### SNSBI Website News:

The new website is going from strength to strength. Webmaster Keith Briggs would like to appeal to member to contact him with updates to their areas of interest and recent activities. He is aware that some members' interests are very specific and have not been altered for some years even when they have moved on to other topics.

Please do take time to look at the Members' Interests section and send Keith any updates to your profiles. You can contact him on :

[webmaster@snsbi.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@snsbi.org.uk)

### Onomastics on the Radio

**Professor Richard Coates**, well known to many society members, appeared on 'Fry's English Delight' on BBC Radio 4 on 11 August. A very entertaining broadcast discussed 'capital letters' and their use in names. The broadcast will be available for download on the BBC i-player for a year, if you have the technology.



(Photo: Nick Baker)



# SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## Norna Symposium, Caen Report by Keith Briggs

In April 2014, NORNA (Nordiska samarbetskommittén för namnforskning) held its 44th symposium in Caen on the topic of *Scandinavian names and naming in the medieval North Atlantic area*. This continued a long tradition of the society's interest in the study of Scandinavian place-names and personal names, as spread in the Viking period outside the home area.

The host institution was the Université de Caen, which has specialists in Normandy dialect studies and French vocabulary of Norse origin. Holding the meeting in Normandy made it natural to have several talks on the local Scandinavian place-names, which are particularly dense in Calvados. Thus we heard (amongst others) from **Peder Gammeltoft** on *toft*, **Gunnstein Akselberg** on *tuit*, **Gillian Fellows-Jensen** on names in *-ville* with a Scandinavian personal name as specific, as well as more general place-name surveys from **Elizabeth Ridel** and **Stéphane Lainé**. English comparisons were made by **Eleanor Rye** (Middle English microtoponyms) and **Keith Briggs** (*Scandinavian elements in Suffolk minor*

*place-names*).

The toponymic excursion was to the Cotentin peninsula, with stops in Le Homme (<*holm(r)* 'island'), Néhou (<*Nial-holm*), Briuebec (<*brekka-bekk(r)* 'slope stream'), Octeville ('Otto's settlement') and Cherbourg (obscure first element).

The conference had a very friendly feeling and the local organizers are to be thanked for an excellently run meeting.

### News:

Press items of onomastic interest which you may have missed.

### *The truth about Game of Thrones and 'medieval' baby names*, by Helen Castor

Medieval names are back in fashion, says a survey by parenting website Netmums – great news for a medievalist like me! Not so much, it turns out once I look at the list.

It starts promisingly enough with those Anglo-Saxon stalwarts Ned (Edward) and Alfred, and for girls some plausibly Norman French options: Alianor, Agnes and Beatrice. After that, I'm lost.

To me, Cassandra says

Trojan war or Jane Austen's sister. I've never come across a medieval Englishwoman going by that moniker, nor a medieval Englishman (or anyone else, for that matter) answering to Peyton or Alderney.

For the rest of this article see <http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/apr/27/game-of-thrones-medieval-baby-names>

The same subject is discussed in the *Sherds* section of Current Archaeology, 293, p. 45

### Recent Publications: (a note from society member Alan James)

The final version of my study, *The Brittonic Language in the Old North: a Guide to the Place-Name Evidence*, is now housed at, and may be downloaded from, the website of the Scottish Place-Name Society: <http://www.spns.org.uk/bliton/blurb.html>

The work brings together notes on P-Celtic place-name elements to be found in the regions between the Forth and Loch Lomond in the north and the Humber and Mersey in the south, which I assembled in the course of twelve years' research on the history of the Brittonic language in southern Scotland and northern England between the fifth and twelfth centuries.



# SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## Forthcoming events:

**4 October 2014**

The Welsh Place-Name Society Annual Conference, Swansea University. Various Speakers including **Oliver Padel**

**7 October 2014**

Lancashire Place Name Survey Annual General Meeting at Lancashire Archives. Refreshments will be available in the Meeting Room at Lancashire Archives (Bow Lane, Preston) from 18:00 followed by the AGM at 18:30. Subsequent to the AGM (19:00) there will be a talk by: **Dr. David Parsons**(University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh & Celtic Studies) entitled **Lancashire and the Celtic Languages**.

The talk is open to all - not just members of the LPNS. The fee for the talk will be £5 (no reductions). Attendance at the AGM is free.

**1 November 2014**

Scottish Place-Name Society Autumn Day Conference at Summerlee Heritage Museum, Coatbridge

Speakers will include:

**Peter Drummond, Peder Gammeltoft and James Hibbert-Hingston.**

Further details from

[Carole.Hough@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Carole.Hough@glasgow.ac.uk)

**8 November 2014**

**Guild of One-Name Studies**

**One-Name Studies:**

**The Next Stage**

**10:00 am - 4:00 pm**

Whether you're a beginner or well on your way toward collecting the core records for your surname, how can you improve your study? Join us in Burgess Hill, West Sussex to consider the context and objectives of your study and to pick up useful tips on analysing and sharing it. We'll bring together experts who can help you to become a better one-namer, including **Helen Osborn** of Pharos Tutors who will open the seminar and **Dr Eilidh Garrett** from The Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure. Further details from: <http://one-name.org/>

**7-9 April 2015**

**Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies (MANCASS) Easter Conference**

***Manhood in Anglo-Saxon England***

To be held at Hulme Hall, University of Manchester. Proposals for 20-minute papers on this topic are invited. Topics will include, but are not limited to: Male identities and constructions of masculinity; Literary presentations and

representations of manhood; Laws and Penitentials; Male sexualities; Manhood and Archaeology; Representations of masculinity in Art.

Submissions (approx. 300 words) on these and related subjects to reach MANCASS by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

Please send submissions and direct enquiries to the conference director, **Dr Charles Insley**, Department of History, University of Manchester

[charles.insley@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:charles.insley@manchester.ac.uk)

*Editor's Note: The MANCASS Conference for 2014 was on the subject of **Womanhood in Anglo-Saxon England** and included several interesting papers on both place and personal names.*

**Future SNSBI Conferences:**  
In the pipeline are:

**2015:**

- Spring Conference, Norwich (see circular enclosed)
- Autumn day conference in Newcastle (date and venue to be announced)

**2016:**

- Spring Conference in Ireland (to be confirmed)

SNSBI Newsletter

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