



BETHANY CRESCENT A.H. BOULTON

SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Spring 2020 conference in Bridgend is postponed

Message from Rebecca Gregory, Hon. Secretary:

Dear SNSBI member,

I'm writing to inform you that, after long and thoughtful discussions, the SNSBI committee has made the difficult decision not to run the SNSBI spring conference in Bridgend on the planned dates in April. This is due to the ongoing and rapidly-developing situation with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), and we believe that this is in the best interests of our members, speakers and delegates.

We have rearranged the conference to the weekend of 16–19 October 2020 (the weekend planned for the society's one-day conference in Leicester). Further information about the rearranged conference will be circulated in due course, and booking will be reopened soon. However, if you were not due to attend the Bridgend conference this spring, but would like to register your interest for the new October dates now, please do let me know (secretary@snsbi.org.uk).

This will also mean that our AGM will not be able to take place in its usual form. The committee is considering the best option to allow an AGM to take place in these difficult circumstances, and I will be in touch about this in the near future.

All best wishes,

Becca

Newsletter NS. 20 Spring 2020

Hello, and welcome to the 20th issue of the SNSBI newsletter.

My apologies that this issue has been circulated a little later in the year than usual. Unfortunately this could not be helped, but I hope to keep to the normal timetable of distribution in the future.

As announced, the SNSBI Committee has reluctantly postponed the Bridgend conference to October 2020, and will continue to monitor the national situation very carefully as they plan for that and other future events.

This is obviously a very uncertain time for lots of people, for a number of reasons. I hope that the content of this newsletter at least provides some temporary relief from the difficulties we are all experiencing.

I'm very grateful to those who have offered material for inclusion in the newsletter. If anyone has anything that they think may be of interest to SNSBI members, please do forward it on to me.

Harry Parkin (editor)

CHARITY NO. 0177455
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2019-20

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You might be interested in an article on the BBC FUTURES website on “the tricky politics of naming the new coronavirus”

“if the wrong [name] sticks, it could cause a diplomatic crisis”

For more information, see

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200214-coronavirus-swine-flu-and-sars-how-viruses-get-their-names>



SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Conference reports

SNSBI AUTUMN MEETING AND STUDY DAY
19 OCTOBER 2019, KING'S MANOR, YORK

Report by Harry Parkin



King's Manor

The 2019 SNSBI autumn day conference was held on 19th October 2019 at King's Manor, York. Even though this was a crucial day for rugby fans and followers of the Brexit debate in Parliament, the event was well attended, with very few spare seats in the conference room.

After initial greetings and conversations over coffee and tea, the conference was officially opened at 1030 by **Matthew**

Townend (University of York) and **Carole Hough** (University of Glasgow), who welcomed the delegates. Carole, who also chaired the first session, thanked the conference organisers, especially Matthew Townend and **Diana Whaley** (Newcastle University), before introducing the first speaker, **David Parsons** (University of Aberystwyth).

David's paper, 'The Vikings and the Cross', examined the place-name evidence for the introduction of the word *cross* to England, showing that the establishment of this word in the English language was the result of a complex process. A range of historical, philological and onomastic evidence was presented, and the date at which the term found its way into the English language, outside of a Hiberno-Norse context was discussed. One question that David suggested he would like to explore further is how *cross* came to be the standard term, rather than some development of Old English *rōd*.

David was followed by **Joshua Neal** (University of Nottingham), who presented a paper titled 'Old Norse *bý(r)*-names in Britain: cores and peripheries', looking at the distribution of Old Norse *bý(r)* using a range of onomastic evidence. He presented a number of heat maps, showing that Lincs and Yorks contain

some areas where names in *bý(r)* are particularly common. Joshua also looked at the elements combined with *bý(r)*, showing the frequency with which certain personal names were combined with the generic. The paper showed how heat maps can be used to understand the wider distribution of particular place-name types in greater detail.

The next session, chaired by **Rebecca Gregory** (University of Nottingham), began with a paper from **Ellie Rye** (University of York) titled 'Norðmen and their names? Languages and dialects in contact in Viking Age England'. She compared some of the minor place-names in the Wirral with others in the West Ward of Westmorland Barony, showing that there were a significant proportion of Old Norse elements in the Westmorland evidence, while Old English elements were in the majority in the Wirral. It was suggested that this could be due to different levels of language contact in either area, but that comparison of frequencies of certain cognates showed that the influence of contact was complex. Old English *brād* was much more common than the Old Norse cognate in both regions studied, but Old English *sīc* was more common than Old Norse *sīk* in the Wirral while the Old Norse term was the more frequent in the West Ward.

The next paper, "Who do you think they were?" Using place-



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Shaun Tyas' book stall



names to understand migration in Viking Age Cleveland', was presented by **Pragya Vohra** (University of York). She looked to the place-name evidence to understand more about Cleveland, noting that there is relatively little information on the area in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the Norse Sagas. She found a fairly high number of place-names with Old Norse origins, and others with both Old English and Old Norse elements. It was commented that the topography of the region is similar to other sites of Scandinavian settlement in other parts of the world, and this might have been part of the reason why the Scandinavians appear to have been attracted to the area.

After the lunch break, the next session was introduced by **Judith Jesch** (University of Nottingham), with the first paper given by **Matthew Townend** (University of York), who spoke about 'The Vikings and the

Victorians and dialect'. He discussed how a range of sources from the Victorian era show that there was a widening interest in all things Viking. As academic interest in Viking history increased during this period, dialect evidence from the north of England began to be analysed in greater detail, but a number of the studies produced at this time have not been widely available, and so there is a large body of evidence from the late 19th and early 20th century for the influence of Scandinavian on English dialects that is yet to be studied.

Following Matthew was **Jack Hartley** (University of Oxford), who gave a paper titled "He scratched those words on the rocks": Norman Nicholson and Norse heritage in twentieth-century Lakeland'. He discussed how identity can be analysed through an onomastic lens, looking at how Norman Nicholson's use of place-names in his poetry can be linked with the representation of regional identity. The evidence showed that his sense of place was drawn from local names of Old Norse origin, and that his use of Norse-influenced dialect terms emphasised a sense of Norse heritage.

The final session was chaired by **Patrick Hanks** (University of the West of England), who introduced **Peter McClure** (University of Nottingham). Peter's paper was titled 'When

strangers became family: thoughts on the Old Norse contribution to the English personal name stock, C9th-C19th', and looked at how inter-ethnic transference of Old Norse and Old English given names, primarily through mixed-ethnic godparenting, could have been seen as a means to integrate Viking and Anglo-Saxon families. This led to a multilingual given-name stock in the Middle English period, which can be analysed to understanding more about the concentration of Viking newcomers in different parts of England. Peter noted that the modern distribution of surnames from Old Norse given names is different to the Middle English distribution of Old Norse origin given names recognised by Cecily Clark, but that this discrepancy can be accounted for through a consideration of geography, social class, migration, and the difference between given names and surnames as sources of historical evidence.

Some final remarks were made by Diana Whaley, who closed what was a very interesting and enjoyable study day.



Peter McClure presenting his paper



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Member news

Many congratulations to SNSBI member Chloé Colla and her husband Adam who welcomed baby Gabriel Augustine on 17 September 2019.

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

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

'Frome tops list of most difficult to pronounce place names in the UK', according to a BBC article of 24 September 2019. Other names in the top 10 include Godmanchester (Cams), Woolfardisworthy (Devon), and Quernmore (Lancs).

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 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!

Odd pics 1



Ellough, Ellough, Ellough
manipulated by Keith Briggs

Names Places People



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An apple's kin

Richard Coates

When I moved to Bristol in 2006, in one of my first bouts of gardening I unearthed a metal label saying "Wealthy", which looked like a promising, if improbable, augury. The findspot suggested that it had belonged to a nearby apple tree, but I had never heard of a Wealthy apple. Nonetheless the label also said "Laxton Brothers Bedford". This was Britain's leading pomological company, which traded from 1888 to 1957. Further research indicated that Wealthy was the mother-line of Laxton's Fortune and the father-line of Laxton's Epicure. So that seemed to settle it. Shy Wealthy had found fame through its offspring.

But it didn't end there, and the back-story is worth telling from an onomastic perspective. Wealthy turned out to be a "little-known American variety". The first Wealthy was a cross of a Siberian Crab-apple with an indeterminate scion bought from a merchant in Bangor, Maine, grown in Minnesota by the horticulturalist Peter Gideon in 1868 – his last throw of the experimental dice. It was a



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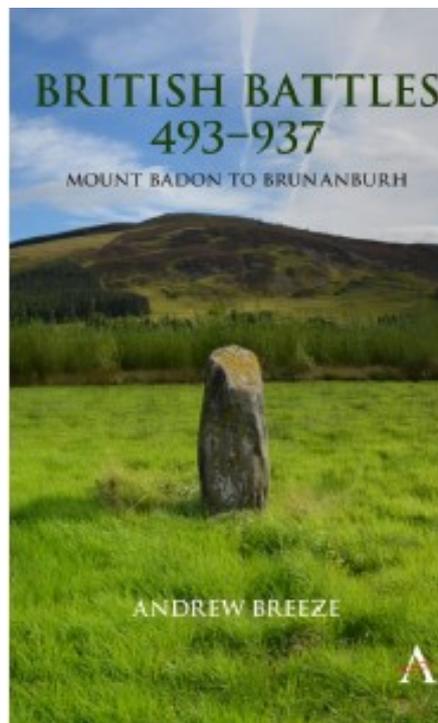
double six: Wealthy, accidentally bred to survive in harsh Minnesota, became one of the first American apples to be grown commercially. In England, it was popular with nurserymen between the two world wars – which looks right for my quite elderly tree.

Gideon never expected to get wealthy – he was a state employee, and shared all his horticultural expertise freely. But he named his sole successful apple after his wife, Wealthy Hull Gideon. If I am to believe the accolade recorded by the Minnesota state historian, I have the Gideons to thank for “the best apple produced by man [sic] since Adam and Eve departed from the Garden of Eden.”



Recent publications:

British Battles 493–937: Mount Badon to Brunanburh by **Andrew Breeze**. London: Anthem Press. £80



Information from the publisher:

“Correctly locating for the first time conflicts from Mount Badon to Brunanburh, ‘British Battles 493–937’ revolutionizes our understanding of early British history”.

See anthempres.com for further information.

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 4**, free of charge on the journal’s website: <http://onomastics.ru/en/content/2019-volume-16-issue-4>

Articles include:

Prósper, B. M.
Language Change at the Crossroads: What Celtic, What Venetic, and What Else in the Personal Names of Emona?

Kovács, É.
Toponymic Findings in Latin-language Medieval Hungarian Charters: Classification, Structural and Motivational Features.

Lipatova, A. P.
Cognitive Strategies of Self-naming Among Schoolchildren (Gender Aspect).

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

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.



Names Places People



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. 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

Odd pics 2



A colourful and pleasing Pleasington sign in Lancs. Taken by Jeremy Harte

Forthcoming Events

The **27th International Congress of Onomastic Sciences** will be held in **Kraków, Poland**, from 23 to 28 August 2020.

The main topic of the Congress is the interdisciplinarity of onomastic research, and talks will take place in a number of locations belonging to the Jagiellonian University.

For more information visit icosweb.net

The **Modern Language Association (MLA) Conference** will be held in **Toronto, Canada**, from 7 to 10 January 2021.

As part of this conference, the **American Name Society** will be chairing a panel with

the literary theme 'Toponyms and Literaryscapes'.

For more information visit mla.org

[At the time of printing, there was no indication that these conferences might be cancelled or postponed. However, you might like to keep an eye on the websites provided in case things change - Ed.]

This section of the newsletter usually provides brief details on future SNSBI conferences. Due to the postponement of the Spring 2020 conference in Bridgend, previous plans for the society's conference programme may be changed. Keep an eye on the SNSBI website and emails from the society for updates - Ed.

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