



## SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Below: View from boat trip up the Fowey at the 2009 Conference. (More inside).



Below: Delegates gather at the 2010 conference. Bottom: A view of Tenby Castle from the Sunday trip (more inside)



'A place-name society for Wales? On 20 November 2010 under the auspices of Cymdeithas Edward Llywd Society, a day conference will be held at Plas Tan-y-bwlch, near Maentwrog. In addition to a series of papers on place-names in Wales, the conference will consider the feasibility of establishing a place-name society for Wales. The conference will be opened by the Welsh Assembly Government's Minister for Heritage. Several SNSBI members will be involved, and the key-note address will be given by Professor Hywel Wyn Owen.'

### Newsletter NS. 1 Autumn 2010

Welcome to the first in the new series of SNSBI newsletters. The aim, for the present is to produce two issues per year in the spring and autumn. The purpose of the newsletter is to keep members up to date with people, events and items of interest. It will therefore have brief reviews of conferences, mentions of new publications and projects, and notifications of new posts and sadly of deaths. However, full reviews of both conferences and publications will continue to appear in **Nomina**. I am reliably informed that there has been no newsletter since January 2009, so for this issue there will be some catching up to do. Some of the 'news' will therefore be 'old news' to many members but there may be some who haven't heard it all. If there is any item of news that you feel should have been included or any future items or announcements, do please get in touch (e-mail address on the back page) and I will include them in future issues.

In future, it would be good to distribute this newsletter electronically to as many people as possible which would, of course, save the society money in terms of both printing and postage. If you would like to receive it this way, please email me and I will compile an email distribution list.

I hope that you enjoy the newsletter in its new format. Comments, suggestions and contributions for the next issue will be gratefully received.

Linda M. Corrigan (editor)

CHARITY NO. 0177455  
OFFICERS:  
2010-11

President: Prof H W Owen  
Vice-Presidents: Dr O Padel  
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Mrs P Combes (Conference secretary)  
Dr L Corrigan (Newsletter editor)  
Dr P Cullen (co-opted)  
Ms K Hardcastle  
Prof C Hough  
Ms S Laffin (Webmaster)  
Mr P Tempan

### Stop Press

Scottish Place-Name Society  
Autumn Conference,  
Royal Hotel, Bridge of Allan,  
13th November 2010.

Speakers: John Harrison, Pete McNiven, Stephen Digney, Eilspeth Wills, Rhian Parry, Tiber Falzett, Guy Puzey and Jacob King.

<http://www.spns.org.uk/>

Organiser contact:  
[mchael.ansell@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:mchael.ansell@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

**SNSBI Committee meeting will take place during the conference**

### Stop Stop Press

See bottom of column 1 for details of a 'A place-name society for Wales?'



## SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

### Conference Reports:

The plan is that, in future, brief reports of the annual conference and any study days will appear in this newsletter followed by more detailed reports and publication of some papers in **Nomina**. This should keep members up to date but also allow time for more detailed material to appear later. For this issue of the newsletter only, there is a backlog of conference reports to catch up on.

### 2009 Annual Conference, Falmouth

By plane, bus, train and car a total of 56 members and guests gathered at the Greenbank Hotel, Falmouth, Cornwall, on the Friday evening of 27 March 2009. Our accommodation was sumptuous by and the meals were excellent. Several people were heard to mutter that if we weren't careful we might come to expect such luxury.

The weekend produced some excellent papers taking us from the landscape of medieval Cornwall to townland names and burial monuments in Ulster, via Anglo-Saxon England, the Celtic fringe of the Roman Empire, dystopian literature, the *Vita Sancti Columbae*, Old English poetry, Elizabethan Patent Rolls, Scarborough and several places called *Maidenwell*, before returning to Cornwall.

The packed programme also included a session on project reports and the whole was rounded off by a river trip on the Fowey (another view below). On the way we saw, seals and viewed the site of our leader's attempt to walk on water. At St. Mawes, on the return journey, delegates ate the tea-rooms out of scones and the pub had a few customers too.

Many thanks are due to Oliver Padel for organising the conference.



### Day School, Salford, November 2009

On Saturday 14 November, a crowd of members and local interested parties met at the delightfully titled 'Old Fire Station' on The Crescent, Salford. It is one of the old municipal buildings which has now become part of the university. The geographical distribution of names discussed was largely confined to the North of England, in deference to the venue. Subjects covered, included the history of Lancashire place-names, 'unofficial' place-names in 19th and 20th century Lancashire several papers on personal names looking at the Viking legacy in northern surnames, Gaelic personal names in the north and personal names in place-names. An unusual paper covered the politics of naming pubs and locomotives, which took us into areas not hitherto addressed by the society. It was an excellent day and thanks are due to Maggie Scott for her organisation and forbearance.

### 2010 Annual Conference, Carmarthen

Luxury continued to be the theme for our accommodation and meals at the Ivy Bush Hotel, Carmarthen, when 74 SNSBI members and guests met there on 12 March 2010. This time our host was Prof. Hywel Wyn Owen who deserves many thanks for both for his organisation of the event and his valiant and successful efforts to keep the programme on time. Many of the papers had a Celtic feel to them and for the first time SNSBI entered the world of simultaneous translation with a paper given in Welsh with translation for those who needed it. Papers covered Welsh place-names, field names and personal names as well as Irish place-names, tribal boundaries, names from the *Ora Maritima* and street names in Belfast. Scotland was represented by homonymous brothers in the Hebrides, Pictish names and the names of episcopal seats. England featured in papers on the contrasts between English and Welsh place-names, names on Offa's Dyke and some fanciful Lincolnshire names. Further afield, papers touched on Danish place-name research, British naming habits in New Zealand and Welsh names in Patagonia.

### Perceptions of Place: English place-name study and regional variety, 23-27 June 2010.

#### J. Scherr

Around 50 delegates congregated at Ancaster Hall, University of Nottingham, for this important conference celebrating the recent AHRC-funded work of the Institute for Name Studies, in association with the English Place-Name Society. The conference was dedicated to those much-missed scholars and EPNS Council members, Margaret Gelling, Karl Inge Sandred, and Victor Watts.

We came from as far afield as Moscow, Navarra, Heidelberg - and Exeter and Aberdeen - to enjoy four and half days of an excellent programme, with more than 20 speakers. The key-note papers included place-names and settlement archaeology, linguistics, and landscape terminology; personal names - and women - in place-names; and the Celtic and Scandinavian, and Scottish and Irish contexts. Shorter papers covered a variety of topics ranging from local names and dialects, religion, hill-forts, a proposed new location for *Hægelisdun* - to footpaths - and cuckoos!

On the Friday morning, Paul Cullen was our guide for an excursion through the White Peak district of Derbyshire, to Tideswell and Youlgrave, just in time to admire the very local tradition of well dressing, and to catch those wells whose colourful clay boards of petals and pebbles, berries and leaves, hadn't totally dried out in the heat of the previous few days. At Youlgrave, we were treated to an archetypally English buffet lunch by the local WI: lemonade, sandwiches, sausage rolls, cakes and tea. We were especially pleased to hear that the ladies remembered miners returning with yellow-streaked faces: perhaps confirming one postulated meaning for Youlgrave, 'yellow pit', and thus a reference to Roman lead mining in the locality. (continued page 3, column 2)

#### Continued from Column 2.

Project reports were the feature of Sunday evening after the excursion to Tenby led by Professor Prys Morgan. On the way back, we viewed a statue to a Morgan ancestor, a socialist riot leader.



## SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

### Update from FaNUK

Richard Coates

The AHRC-funded project Family Names of the United Kingdom is now under way at the University of the West of England, lasting till March 2014. Its purpose is to create a database of current surnames, initially all those with 100 current bearers or more, and to give etymological explanations of them. These explanations will be accompanied by historical, geographical and demographic information with the aim of identifying their probable source and relating this to their current distribution, thereby providing users with the means to refine genealogical work. The database will in due course be made publicly available. Whilst the project is essentially one of linguistics rather than family history as such, the researchers will be sensitive to any high-quality genealogical information they may receive, especially that which secures a connection between a modern name and medieval bearers.

The lead researcher is Patrick Hanks, and the principal investigator Richard Coates. There are two full-time research associates, Simon Draper and Paul Cullen, and a full-time PhD student, David (Harry) Parkin. The project will benefit immensely from input from a team of consultants knowledgeable in the languages represented in the British Isles. Considerable work on the historical side has already been done by Peter McClure and Kay Muhr, and others will be added to the team in due course. The expertise of the database team at Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic, has been indispensable in the crucial initial stages.

### News:

#### Snippets from the media

Drawing your attention to any name-related news which may have passed you by.

#### RIP County Names? BBC News magazine.

#### What's the point of counties? 4 August 2010.

Official postal addresses may soon no longer have county names on them. So is our link to counties steadily being eroded? And does it matter?

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-10853705>

#### Plus ca change?

#### 1066 and all those baby names

#### BBC News magazine . 4 August 2010

Norman names such as William, Henry and Alice have been popular for 1,000 years. Why did the English copy their invaders?

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-10776581>

*(Continued from Page 2, Column 3)*

Later that evening we enjoyed the conference barbecue in the grounds of Ancaster : just the thing for a warm summer evening in the middle of a packed conference schedule.

The EPNS held its AGM during the conference, a departure from its normal practice of alternating annually between London and Nottingham. During a gap in the proceedings, Paul Cavill auctioned a number of books from Margaret Gelling's library (surplus to EPNS library needs) in aid of EPNS funds. Although this was inevitably tinged with sadness, we felt that Margaret herself would have enjoyed the competitive bidding, and approved of distributing her books amongst her friends.

### News:

#### SNSBI people

#### Margaret Gelling OBE

As most members of the society will know, Margaret Gelling died on 24 April 2009. Her funeral was held in Exeter where she had been living in a nursing home on 13 May 2009. Margaret Gelling was chair of SNSBI's predecessor, the former Council for Name Studies in Great Britain and Ireland, from 1976-79. As a stalwart of the society and a prominent feature of many conferences, she will be much missed. A full obituary will appear in **Nomina**.

#### Dr. Margaret Faull OBE

The Director of the National Coal Mining Museum for England, Dr Margaret Faull, was invested with her OBE at Buckingham Palace by HRH the Prince of Wales on Friday 27 November 2009. Dr Faull received her OBE for services to the industrial heritage, including her work at the National Coal Mining Museum for England.

#### Dr. Alexander R. Rumble

Alex Rumble retired from his post of Reader in Paleography and Director of MANCASS at the University of Manchester, in September 2009. He is now pursuing and publishing his continuing research interests.

**Below: Conference delegates at Nottingham**





# SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

## Research Projects & Websites:

**Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba ~ Gaelic Place-names of Scotland**  
National Gazetteer of Gaelic Place-names

<http://www.gaelicplacenames.org/>

**Bunachar Logainmneacha na hÉireannFiontar: The Place-names Database of Ireland**

Work commenced on Phase I of the project in April 2007 and the Place-names Database of Ireland was launched at the beginning of October 2008. Phase II of the project will be completed at the end of 2010.

<http://www.logainm.ie/>

**Landscapes of Governance:**

**Assembly sites in England 5th-11th Centuries.**

UCL Institute of Archaeology  
A three-year interdisciplinary venture bringing archaeology, place-names and written sources together for the first time in a comprehensive national research project.

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/project/assembly/index.htm>

**Related forthcoming events:**  
**Anglo-Saxon Assembly, 25-27**

March 2011 at the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education, Rewley House, Oxford. Speakers include: Dr S. Semple, Dr A. Reynolds, Dr A. Sanmark, Dr S. Brookes. Dr J. Baker.

<http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/>

**Moot and Hundred Meeting-**

**Places, 10 April 2011** at the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education, Madingley Hall, Cambridge. <http://www.conted.cam.ac.uk/component/courses/?view=course&cid=3526>

**Shetland ForWirds**, a group dedicated to promoting and celebrating Shetland dialect. This unique dialect has both Nordic and Scottish roots.

<http://www.shetlanddialect.org.uk/>

## Publications

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.

## Recent Publications:

**The Vikings and Victorian Lakeland: the Norse medievalism of W.G. Collingwood and his contemporaries**

Author : Matthew Townend  
CWAAS (Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society)  
Series : Extra Series XXXIV, 2009  
Available from CWAAS

**Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary: With additional material from A Thesaurus of Old English** [Hardcover]

Christian Kay (Editor), Jane Roberts (Editor), Michael Samuels (Editor), Irené Wotherspoon (Editor)  
OUP Oxford; Har/Chrt edition (22 Oct 2009)

## Forthcoming publications:

**Place-names, Language and the Anglo-Saxon Landscape (Publications Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies)** [Hardcover]

Nicholas J. Higham (Editor), Martin J. Ryan (Editor)  
Boydell Press (20 Jan 2011)

**The Book of English Place Names: How Our Towns and Villages Got Their Names** [Hardcover]

Caroline Taggart (Author)  
Ebury Press (28 April 2011)

**Inis Eoghain - The Island of Eoghan: The Place-Names of Inishowen** [Paperback]

Seoirse O' Dochartaigh (Author & Publisher) (24 September 2010)

**Bolton Place Names** [Paperback]

Sara Vernon (Author)  
Amberley Publishing (1 Jun 2011)

## Forthcoming events:

### SNSBI:

Autumn committee meeting at SPNS conference, Bridge of Allan, Stirling. 13 November 2010

**Annual Conference 2011**

University of Kent, Canterbury, 15-18 April

Further details to follow from Conference Secretary.

## Other organisations:

The McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research,  
University of Cambridge

**Place-names and landscape: recent research**

26 February 2011

Contact: Dr Susan Oosthuizen

Email: [smo23@cam.ac.uk](mailto:smo23@cam.ac.uk)  
post to HERC, c/o McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research,

Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3ER.

Phone enquiries (office hours only) 0758 3151685

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

**Anglo-Saxon Monasticism**

11-13 April, 2011

Contact:

Dr. Francisco J. Alvarez-Lopez  
[Fran.Alvarez@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Fran.Alvarez@manchester.ac.uk)

**Leeds International Medieval Conference:** includes

**Rich Names, Poor Names: Social Status and Naming Patterns in the Middle Ages**

11-14 July 2011

Email: [imc@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:imc@leeds.ac.uk), <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/imc>

SNSBI Newsletter

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