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GREGORY TONER & MÍCHEÁL B. Ó MAINNÍN, *Place-Names of Northern Ireland*, general editor Gerard Stockman, vol. 1, *County Down*, I, *Newry and South-West Down*. Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast: Belfast, 1992. xxii + 217 pp., £20.00 hardbound, £8.50 paperback.

A. J. HUGHES & R. J. HANNAN, *Place-Names of Northern Ireland*, general editor Gerard Stockman, vol. 2, *County Down*, II, *The Ards*. Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast: Belfast, 1992. xxi + 301 pp., £20 hardbound, £8.50 paperback.

These two volumes represent a new development in place-names publication in Ireland, in that they are the first fruits of the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project set up with funding from the Department of the Environment in 1987, and, more recently, with support from the Central Community Relations Unit. This series is therefore the first attempt at a complete survey of Northern Ireland place-names based on original research into the historical sources. The establishing of a Research Group in the Department of Celtic at Queen's University has proved to be crucial to the overall success of the project. This group, led by Professor Gerard Stockman, is composed of R. J. Hannan, Dr Art Hughes, Dr Kay Muhr, Mícheál Ó Mainnin and Dr Greg Toner. Ellis McDaniel was part of the group from its inception until 1990. The group was originally commissioned to carry out research into 'the origin of all names of settlements and physical features appearing on the 1:50,000 scale map, to indicate their meaning and to note any historical or other relevant information'. This brief was later extended to include work on all the townlands of Northern Ireland and to bring the work to publication.

After a general introduction, which includes a brief history of place-name study in Ireland and a short note on research methods, spelling, pronunciation and sources, the reader is given brief directions on how to use the book. For an academic publication, this is a

compact and readable section, and will appeal to a non-scholarly readership which may be unfamiliar with onomastic publications.

The remainder of the introductory text includes a brief historical account of Co. Down, as well as sections of the county covered by each volume. This basically covers such information as early sources, land-holding, ecclesiastical foundations, and a brief discussion on key names.

Each settlement name is discussed in detail, with a tabulated list of early forms, accompanied by Irish forms, local pronunciation, derivation and map reference. The appendices contain useful accounts of Irish grammar relevant to place-names, and a note on Irish land units. Primary and Secondary Bibliographies are followed by a glossary of technical terms, an index to Irish forms of place-names with a pronunciation guide, and finally, a place-name index for use with the relevant Ordnance Survey maps.

As a format, this is difficult to fault. The project was designed from the outset to be readily adaptable for ease of publication. This reviewer is well aware of the many technical problems which the team encountered over the years, all of which have been successfully surmounted. The regular production of volumes is, therefore, very warmly welcomed, as it represents, perhaps for the first time in Britain, a project which has been adequately funded from government sources, carried out by a competent and highly-motivated team of young scholars, and published in an attractive series which will, undoubtedly, meet with a large public demand. It is particularly important that such projects serve the community directly, in this day and age. Place-name studies can have a wide popular appeal, and this series of volumes should meet this more than adequately. It is, after all, the lay user that funds such research and publication, and it is largely pointless producing a volume which will be over-complex, poorly formatted, and therefore unintelligible to the layman. The Northern Ireland Place-Name Project has made an excellent start in its publication programme, and we look forward keenly to subsequent volumes in years to come.

I. A. FRASER

MÍCHEÁL B. Ó MAINNÍN, *Place-names of Northern Ireland*, general editor Gerard Stockman, vol. 3, *County Down*, III, *The Mournes*. Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast: Belfast, 1993. xxi + 246 pp., £20 hardbound, £8.50 paperback.

This is the third volume of the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project, following hard on the heels of Volume I and II (reviewed above), and living up completely to the high standards set by its predecessors. The author, Mícheál Ó Mainnín, was co-author of vol. I (Newry and South-West Down), and so is particularly well qualified to cover the adjacent territory of the Mournes. The format of vol. III differs slightly from this, however, as well as from vol. II (The Ards), in that, after dealing with the townland names of the three parishes (Kilkeel, Clonduff and Kilcoo), it has a long section entitled 'The Mournes', which steps outside the framework of parish and townland, to deal with the names of the many physical features-mountains, hills and rivers-in what is popularly known as 'The Mourne Mountains' (not 'The Mountains of Mourne', as the famous song would have it). This area, in fact, straddles not only the three parishes dealt with in this volume, but also the parishes of Clonallan and Kilbroney, dealt with as parishes in vol. I.

One of the many admirable features of this series is the care it takes to explain and document ownership and boundaries of all kinds, and to use these boundaries, especially those of parishes and baronies, as a framework for the presentation of material. If the landscape is the skeleton of place-name studies, then ownership and boundaries are the sinews and tendons, and must be given due prominence in any attempt to understand fully the meanings of place-names. Although vol. III departs from the parish and townland structure in its 'Mourne Mountains' section, it fits it so clearly into the overall ecclesiastical and political structures that it presents the reader with no problems.

This is not to say that the reader always has it easy; when you are dealing with units such as the two parishes of Clonduff and Kilcoo, which lie in the upper half of the barony of Iveagh Upper, Lower Half, things are never going to be that much of an easy ride. But the clear and systematic format of the volume, coupled with the lucid, scholarly style of the text, make such complexities as painless as they possibly can be.

There were one or two things, however, which I felt could have made things even easier for a complete novice in the field of Northern Ireland place-names and geography such as myself. In the discursive passages such as the introductions to the baronies and parishes, it would be useful if places which appear in their historical forms could also be modernised. For example, on p. 9 the names in the list of the parcels of land 'held by Irishmen' in the fourteenth century around Greencastle are given only in their fourteenth-century forms: Le Cragwill is not obviously Cranfield, nor would it have occurred to me to link Le Frewe with Tullyframe, unless I had chanced upon it as a possible form listed under that name.

Connected with this is the need for a complete place-name index which notes every occurrence of a particular place-name in the text, and not just the page on which it is given 'the full treatment'. This is especially necessary since important information about a place is sometimes included in introductory texts but is not repeated under the name itself.

While on the thorny subject of indexes, important place-names such as Iveagh, although discussed at length in the text, are not indexed. There is also a marked lack of cross-referencing between volumes. I appreciate that each volume is to be as self-sufficient as possible, something highly desirable in any series dealing with such localised material as place-names. It is fair enough that the section of vol. III entitled 'The Barony of Iveagh: Iveagh Upper, Lower Half' is virtually a reprint of the section of vol. I, 'The Barony of Iveagh: Iveagh Upper, Upper Half', containing all the basic information concerning its history and etymology. However, what is not repeated in vol. III is the forty-eight forms of the name, dating from 761 A.D. until c. 1672. This omission is really only fair enough if we are told where we can find this full list, but unfortunately we do not seem to be given this information. Iveagh, incidentally, derives from the tribal name Uí Echach, and it first appears (in 761) latinised as nepotes Ecach (III, 67, and I, 46!).

These are, however, small short-comings which can, to a large extent, be rectified by a full index when the whole of County Down, or even Northern Ireland, has been completed. That would also be the most appropriate point at which to tackle indexes of elements and personal names, and to analyse fully the spread and interaction of the

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different languages (Irish, Norse, Norman-French, Scots and English) which contribute to the place-names of Northern Ireland.

One final point about these exemplary volumes. I find green as the cover-colour for the series most appropriate. It reflects well what this scholar of Scottish place-names feels every time he looks at them, apart, that is, from immense admiration—envy!

SIMON TAYLOR

Utgava og atgongd, edited by EIVIND WEYHE; NORNA-Rapporter vol. 52. NORNA forlaget: Uppsala, 1992. 96 pp., no price stated.

Our colleagues in NORNA, the Scandinavian association for name-studies, continue to have an enviable publication record of two or even three volumes a year. This volume consists of papers read at their symposium at Torshavn in May, 1992. It has the novelty of a title and foreword in Faeroese, but the papers are in the main Scandinavian languages, with English summaries. Naturally, the place- and personal-name material dealt with by the NORNA members is predominantly Scandinavian, but it is seldom that their deliberations have nothing to teach foreign workers in the field, by way of approach, criticism or method. This volume, particularly, speaks to us all, treating, as it does, the topics of collection of material, storage, retrieval, accessibility and eventual publication.

Several of the papers give an update on the current state of the various national surveys, and common themes emerge, such as how to cater for the conflicting demands of users, and the degree to which exhaustiveness is possible in publishing source-material. Many of the papers are concerned with methods of entering place-name material into an electronic data-base, either as an official record or as a research tool. In spite of the language difficulty, a perusal of the English summaries, in combination with the plentiful illustration of examples, would be sufficient to indicate how problems similar to some of our own have been tackled.

VERONICA SMART

J. FIELD, A History of English Field-Names. Longman: London and New York, 1993. xviii + 285 pp., 25 plates; £29.00 hardbound, £12.50 paperback.

John Field has written a delightful book, one which grips the attention throughout. He brings to his subject a breadth of knowledge and a wealth of experience which manifest themselves in the range of the materials presented and in his solid base of detail concerning such aspects of our past as agricultural practices, crops, land tenure, early transport, industrial processes, and the superstitions and folk customs of our ancestors. Not only has Field recreated our landscape and its past with bold and sure brush strokes, but his attention to minutiae is equally confident.

The volume is one in a new series entitled Approaches to Local History, 'written by experts for a student and lay readership'. Field has responded to this brief splendidly. There are eleven carefully organized chapters with such general themes as 'Common fields and the process of enclosure', 'Woodlands and wild life', 'A living from the land', 'Transfer and transplantation' and 'Religion, folk customs and assembly places'. Each chapter is thoughtfully subdivided so that the one styled 'Buildings, transport and manufacturing industry' contains such sections as 'Churches and chapels', "Bells on the undulating air", 'The furnishings of the church', 'Schools, colleges, almshouses and hospitals', 'Dragons and their hoards', 'Roman and other roads', 'Wayside features, causeways, bridges and fords', 'Canals, railways and air transport', 'Industrial use of land' and 'Mines, quarries and other excavations'. The wealth of this single chapter is an indication of the nature of the others. As well as a general index to take the student to particular aspects of field-names, there is also an invaluable index of the individual field-names used as examples in the text. The text itself is illustrated throughout with what are, for the most part, excellently chosen photographs. The paperbacked edition which I received for review is beautifully printed on a glossy paper and bound in an attractive cover.

There are imperfections, not all attributable to the author. So, for example, the reproductions of the early maps do not always show up well. Plates 2.1 and 2.2 are particularly poor. The problem is really size: one wishes to be able to decipher all of the names in their

contexts without resorting to a magnifying glass. The plates are numbered throughout, but very rarely are such numbers signalled in the text. While the illustrations are well placed in relation to content, such is the text's detail and interest that one usually has read on past the relevant portion illustrated by the plate before the realization dawns that there is a related picture to extend one's understanding.

Too often, the author takes knowledge for granted, so that no proper explanation is provided for student or layman. For example, no precise clarification of Waterships or Water Sheeps is offered (p. 48). Given the popularity of Adams's Watership Down, this is an odd omission. In the examples cited for 'heath', Bruerie is listed without gloss (p. 70). Nor everyone these days has a knowledge of such arcane Latin. Catsprey is 'meadow where wild cats were to be found' (p. 75). Why? As an element, pré is not explained until p. 95. We are told that 'toads are referred to also in such names as Podmore' (p. 78), but there is no explanation of the name's specific, padde. Why is a warlot so called (p. 93)? An etymology is needed. How does bastard come to describe a particular feature of landscape (p. 96)? Of reed (breod), 'early spellings in Rud- are to be expected' (p. 71). Why? Gledwing or Gleadwing is taken to allude to the wing of a kite (p. 140). The reason is not stated, although Old English gleoda would not spring readily to the minds of most lay readers. These few examples are representative of a tendency in the work.

In attempting to be all-inclusive, Field produces some odd bedfellows. For example, *cheesecake* and *rye loaf* are discussed in a separate paragraph within the section 'References to apparel' (pp. 138–39). In his efforts to be simple for the student, he oversimplifies to the point of incorrectness. So, for example, his assertion that '*Tye* is limited to south-eastern counties' (p. 24) is untrue. It occurs in both major names and field-names in the East Midlands. That '*sleight* is limited to southern counties' (p. 119) is also incorrect. It too occurs in the East Midlands. There is the occasional obvious philological error not picked up in proofing, as for example 'Old English *leirr* "clay" (p. 35). The word is, of course, Scandinavian. Or 'OE *rum*' (*sic*) for *rum* (p. 207). Such oversights extent to names, as Spotbrough (*sic*) for Sprotbrough (p. 180).

By its very nature, a work of this sort is inclined to produce lists. This is fine as long as the lists are constructive in providing variety and positively extending one's understanding. But sometimes, Field's collections take over. Typical is the listing by name of eight parishes in which the simple Beck Close occurs (p. 48). Similarly with *slade* (p. 47). The space would better have been employed in providing those missing explanations for names where the student or lay reader has been left wondering.

For all the above minor shortcomings, this is a lovely book for the local historian. John Field has handled the immense variety of his materials for the most part with a sure touch. He is at his best when relating field-names to agricultural practices of the past. I found his chapter 'A living from the land' fascinating in its exposition of the nature of traditional fertilizers, of soil-conditioners, of the use of fire and water, of varieties of cereal and fodder crops, and in its insights into the exploitation of farm animals. Field has given firm order and meaning to the wealth of evidence recorded in the EPNS county surveys. One looks forward to any work he may yet undertake on the field-name evidence that will become more easily available for study via the developing Leverhulme place-names database at the University of Nottingham. As it is, I am extremely pleased to add this especial example of 'Field on Fields' to my bookshelves.

BARRIE COX

Ägonamn. Rapport Från NORNA:s sjuttonde symposium på Svidja 24–26 maj 1991, edited by GUNILLA HARLING-KRANCK and LARS HULDÉN; NORNA-Rapporter vol. 50. NORNA förlaget: Uppsala, 1992. Also published as Studier i Nordisk Filologi, 71 (Helsingfors). 207 pp., no price stated

The seventeenth NORNA-symposium, held at the University of Helsinki's experimental farm in 1991, was devoted to the discussion of field-names. As was only to be expected with fifteen contributors coming from countries ranging from fertile agricultural lands such as Denmark and Scania to windblown island-groups such as Shetland and the Faeroes and a northern land of lakes and forests such as Finland, the printed papers are rather heterogeneous. This makes it difficult to draw valid comparisons between the material they present. Several contributors analyze bodies of material from specific



geographically-restricted areas, dividing the generics employed in the names into various categories, and attempting to draw conclusions about such features as the age and stability of the field-names as a body and the reasons for the popularity of individual elements in certain areas. These papers are naturally of greatest interest to those specifically concerned with the nomenclature of these areas.

Some contributors treat the names in a wider context. Botolv Helleland (pp. 155–75) carries out a semantic analysis of the various categories of field-name occurring in Eidfjord in Hordaland (Norway), and goes on to show how the names can provide much valuable information about the natural and cultural history of this area. Tuula Eskeland (pp. 51–60) demonstrates how field-names of Finnish origin on Solør (Norway) are to be associated with settlers from eastern Finland who occupied land here at the end of the sixteenth century, and cleared it by means of the slash-and-burn technique. Eivind Weyhe's study of field-names in a settlement district in one of the southernmost of the Faeroe islands (pp. 61–78) throws a good deal of light on the conditions under which farming was carried on here, as well as on the ownership of land.

A few studies concentrate on individual field-name generics and their significance in the context of settlement history. Lilliane Højgaard Holm (pp. 133-45) argues that the word bøli, which normally denotes a settlement when it occurs in Danish place-names and which occurs once in the Danelaw in the parish-name Newball in Lincolnshire, would also seem to have been used to coin field-names in Denmark, as it certainly was in Sweden. In his study of the Swedish field-name generic -nöten in Allbo härad in Småland (pp. 147-54), Staffan Fridell shows how this element, which is cognate with Old West Scandinavian nautr 'gift', familiar to us from such names as Aðalráðsnautr in Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu, a name bestowed upon a cloak given to Gunnlaugr by King Æthelred II of England, would only seem to occur in areas which had been settled in the Viking period or earlier. This suggests that the field-names in -nöten denote a phenomenon for which there was an economic or legal basis in the old settlement, but not in areas of post-medieval colonisation.

Bent Jørgensen (pp. 115-31) looks at field-names from an unusual angle. Since most of the names recorded in old sources are found in lists that were compiled for some administrative purpose, little is

known about how the names were employed by the farmers themselves. The publication in recent years of a number of diaries kept by Danish farmers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, has thrown new light on the function of the names in the daily life of the farm.

Of particular interest to readers of Nomina is Gunnel Melchers' paper on the names of the rigs in the runrig system of cultivation in Shetland (pp. 177-90). Very few of these names have been published, but Melchers notes that many were recorded by Jakob Jakobsen and John Stewart. Jakobsen's lists are now stored in Landsbókasavn in Tórshavn, while Stewart's material is in the Shetland Archives in Lerwick. It is to be hoped that funding will be found for the publication of this material, preferably while there are still informants alive who are familiar with some of the names and can point to surviving rigs. Gunnel Melchers records comments on individual names and on the use of rigs for cultivation that she was able to record in Shetland in the eighties. Since the majority of the names would seem to have been coined out of Norn linguistic material, their meaning is sometimes obscure to present-day informants, but this means that their interest is all the greater to those whose concern is with linguistic traces of the Scandinavians in Shetland.

The Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland might consider holding a conference devoted to field-names. The experience gained from the symposium in Finland and the present report suggests that the topic needs to be defined very strictly if any generally valid conclusions are to be arrived at. In the meantime, all those who are interested in the study of field-names are warmly recommended to study the proceedings of the Finnish symposium to see the kind of topics that are being discussed in Scandinavia, and could well be discussed in the context of the British Isles. Each paper in the proceedings is followed by an English summary, and the maps and lists of name-forms included make it fairly easy for anyone with a modest knowledge of one of the Scandinavian languages to profit from a perusal.

GILLIAN FELLOWS-JENSEN

Studies in Honour of Kenneth Cameron, edited by THORLAC TURVILLE-PETRE and MARGARET GELLING, Leeds Studies in English, new series, 18. School of English, University of Leeds: Leeds, 1987. 272 pp.

Kenneth Cameron, in his retirement from the Chair of English Language at the University of Nottingham, has been presented with a volume of unusual richness. It contains twenty-one papers, as well as appreciations of Professor Cameron's work at Nottingham and in place-name studies, and a bibliography of his publications 1956-85. Almost all the papers deal with names or naming, the exceptions being a conservative reading of the Prologue to Wynnere and Wastoure, persuasively advocated by Thorlac Turville-Petre, a discussion by George Parfitt of the style employed by Ben Jonson in The Forest, and a discursive essay by Tom Paulin on the function of regional variants of English in literary texts, sometimes over-written but often illuminating. Other papers deal with names and naming in literary works. R. I. Page returns to the vexed problem of King Alfred's æstel, eliminating some errors, and discussing the collocations of the word and its lemmata. Christine Fell gives an account of the history and use of the modern English word 'viking', an early nineteenth-century literary loan from Scandinavia, and of earlier terms for the Vikings, illustrated by a bottle-label for (American) 'Viking' vodka. Elizabeth Watson analyses the implications of terminology used for trappings at the ceremonial arming of the hero in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Walter Nash gives a witty discussion of Tennyson's creation or re-creation of Arthurian toponomy. More generally, Ronald Carter discusses naming as a feature of stylistics in beginning to tell a story, and Margaret Berry discusses it as a feature of discourse analysis.

Two papers deal primarily with personal names. John Insley discusses possible or plausible regional variations in the giving of personal names, and Veronica Smart establishes a probable etymology of the unique moneyer-name *Goldcyta* as containing the bird-name 'kite'.

The other papers deal specifically with place-names. Margaret Gelling and David Miles assemble the evidence for place-names containing Old English references to eagles, and John Field the evidence for place-names containing similar references to crops: both

therefore give valuable historical material. A. D. Mills argues plausibly, but rather one-sidedly, for alternative interpretations of a number of field-names as containing personal names. Legal aspects of toponomy are discussed by Alexander Rumble, on the interpretation of the Old English term boc-land appearing in names such as Buckland, and by Victor Watts, on the toponomastic evidence for assigning land by lots. Problems of interpreting individual place-names are discussed by Cecily Clark (on the codretum at Little Roborough), John McN. Dodgson (on Hattersley in Cheshire and Hothersall in Lancashire), Gillian Fellows-Jensen (on York), and Oliver Padel (on Trewen, Herriard, Treswell, Rose-in-the-Valley and Stroat). More speculatively, Karl Inge Sandred, in a very stimulating paper, discusses the formation and possible original function of the place-name Ingham in East Anglia.

The general standard of these papers is extremely high, and although it is often possible to conceive of alternative interpretations, there is little here with which to quarrel. The volume is photoprinted from typescript, and, although unhandsome, it is extremely accurately typewritten; when Leeds Studies in English moves to the 'new technology', it is devoutly to be hoped that they can maintain this high standard of accuracy. Many of the papers illustrate rather than resolve the problems under discussion, but they demonstrate the vitality and quality of scholarship presently applied to English toponomastics. Since this vitality is largely attributable to Kenneth Cameron's own leadership in the English Place-Name Society and at Nottingham, this volume forms a very fitting tribute to him.

PAUL BIBIRE

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N. Scott Catledge and Carole Hough

[Editorial note: this is not a complete bibliography, since it concentrates on England and on related areas on the Continent and in English-speaking parts of the New World; but it is hoped that it may be useful to readers. Future bibliographies will aim to contain better coverage of Celtic material, and less Continental and New World material, since these are adequately covered by other bibliographies. Items for inclusion in future bibliographies should be sent to Dr Hough, Department of English Language, University of Glasgow, 12 University Gardens, Glasgow G12 8QH]

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Nominal Value

by Ratoun

It's so easy to resist calling these pages 'What's in a name?' Why can't everyone else resist too?

Rational considerations

That doesn't mean we shouldn't ask the question. Some pretty weird ideas about names are in circulation, and will not lie down and die. If they are words for individuals, for instance, why are there so many Sarahs and Williamses and Newtons and Coldharbours?

And those interested in names don't seem to agree what the limits of the subject-matter might be. I recently came across some publications of the North Central Name Society. Among the articles are one on names in proverbs (including Friday and Indians), another at least partly devoted to the discussion of general names (said to include foolish, fat, yellow, cow and tiger), and one on legal definitions of sodomy. If we take this as representative of our field of study, then clearly onomastics shades into lexicology or the study of words as vocabulary, and we have no delimitable subject matter of our own as name-scholars.

Most of us, I reckon, take names to mean 'proper names', which would rule a fair number of articles in NCNS publications, or *Names*, out of court. Can we agree what it means for a name to be proper?

The Rat's Tale: Properhood is a state of mind

We might consider getting off the hook by saying, not that proper names are expressions for individuals (i.e. expressions that denote individuals), which is palpably untrue; but that they refer to individuals on particular occasions of use. This is mainly true; but not restrictive enough, since the tall bloke from over the road drinking a vodka and tonic is likely to do the same whilst not being a proper name except in the peculiar parlance of philosophers. The key idea is that of SENSE. Proper names have no sense. The meaning of the tall bloke (etc.) depends on the senses of its (one or more) constituent words in order to have any effect in context. The meaning of Sarah, Bond Street, The Isle of Dogs (etc.) has no such dependency, because these expressions have no sense. So far, so good; many scholars would agree so far and

say that this view is common coinage. But it still isn't adequate. The crucial cases are those names which look like fully meaningful expressions of a language, but appear to function as proper names. Take the old vicarage. This can obviously be an ordinary English expression. Is it a proper name when applied to the famous house in Grantchester? If so, then we have to accept that one and the same expression may or may not be proper. I think this is right. Common expressions may become names, this much is uncontroversial; such place-names as Gravesend (Northants.) originated in ordinary expressions (æt þæs grafes ende in a charter of 944)-they became proper. There are consequences which are indications of their change of status-in the case of Gravesend the preposition and article disappear, and in the case of The Old Vicarage the word old receives a prosodic prominence which it probably would not have in We live at the old vicarage. So to delimit what counts as a proper name, we have to ask if we can recognize when an expression has become proper. My answer is: there may be no overt sign, but and expression is proper when it is used to refer, or is understood, without appeal to the sense of the words that make it up. That is what proper MEANS. Whether an expression is proper depends on the state of mind of the speaker or hearer at the moment of its use. When an expression is used only properly, then it might reasonably be called a name (until it gets deproperized again, as in a right little Hitler or the Athens of the north). Try this out on your friends and make your party truly memorable.

Regular readers of *Nomina* may have noticed the absence of the lightness of touch of your previous deeply-lamented colleague. What do you expect from a species with a chip on its shoulder? If you disagree with my opinions, write to me and I'll carry on the discussion in future issues until you agree.

Ratatouille

Lest *Rattus norvegicus* should be ascribed the self-absorbed seriousness unfairly wished on all Scandinavians by English folklore, let us squint at the world through the squinch of names for a while. Only the juiciest, my fellow onomasts! Let us revel in the 200th birthday celebrations of the municipality of Bastard, Ontario—since antiquissima maxime sunt honoranda, surely the oldest and most respectable Bastard in the world.

Embarrassed by your name?

By now, everybody must know about the Thomas Crapper who perfected a sanitary installation in the nineteenth century. Less well known is John Harington's anecdote (1596) about the lady's maid who brought her mistress word that a visitor, Mr Jacques Wingfield, had arrived, but could only bring herself to say, 'not without blushing, that it was Mr Privy Wingfield'. It is not without relevance that Harington was the perfector of a predecessor of Crapper's contribution to western culture, and wrote about it in his Ajax (i.e. a jacques). The name Jacques slid off the anthroponymic map shortly after this (except among the French, who are notoriously unreceptive to jocques). Will John (now out of the top 10 male names for the first time since the smart set closed the font lit to Ecgnod and Eorconweald), and also Lou, now go the same way? How can the singer Lou Rawls hold his head up? And by what spite has a block of flats near my own nest been called John Court (viewed from a distance until I was sure that the bricks were not laid in rat-trap bond)?

Your previous columnist would never have presented this indelicate stuff, but what do you expect from a species with habits like mine?

Before we move on . . .

Are we led by our surnames into avenues that would not otherwise have attracted us? Is it coincidence that two leading British neurologists have been called *Brain* and *Head*? Yes, it is, and don't let anybody tell you different, not even Eric Berne in his *What do you say after you say hello*? Surely he is right that given-names can display parental aspirations, and that those aspirations amy have an effect on the child. But purely inherited surnames? It is as well that no-one these days even has to consider living up to *Strokehose* or *Gildenballocks*, or even raunchier blush-inducers that I save for when conversation flags.

Hipponymy

As a small token of regard for Dame Souris's interests, let us spend a moment on hipponymic syntax. Horse-names seem to have been getting more complex recently, the model being set for verb-phrase sized names by *Hail the Pirates* some years ago and continued by his progeny. Examples of unusual syntax will be gratefully collected and systematized for use in a future 'Nominal value'. The first truly

baroque name that I can remember was the complex adjective-phrase attached to a beast called *First for your Thirst* some 25 years ago, when I was still trembling under the woodshavings in the corner of the loose-box. This was the current slogan of the Wrekin Ales, as I recall. The next owner obviously didn't like the commercial overtones and renamed it, after the metropolis the A5 near Penkridge, *Go Gailey*. The times they are a-changin'.

Orchestronymy

'For fame is of this character. It goes by the sound of names.' Hilaire Belloc declared this in The Four Men, but this Englishman of the papal persuasion would probably have balked at illustrating his insight with the material which follows. One of the publicity coups of recent years must be that of the Canadian rock band Drop Kick Me Jesus. They found themselves in (a Canadian) court defending themselves against twin charges of being utterly shocking and of seeking publicity by being utterly shocking. They were acquitted, on the scarcely-credible grounds that their name was simply the title of a no doubt utterly-devout song by Bobby Bare: 'Drop Kick Me Jesus (through the Goalposts of Life)' (Brighton Evening Argus, 3/2/94, p. 9). (The case would never have been brought in the United Ratdom, where names such as The Jesus and Mary Chain and Creaming Jesus lower luridly on stickers on nearly every boarded-up shopfront; nor in Italy, where one can surround one's glutei maximi with Jesus Jeans.) The Canadians carry on a notable tradition of recent years whereby song-titles have been appropriated as proper names by bands, the most famous instance being Right Said Fred. This is an illustration of the practical usefulness of Ziff's Law (that the default interpretation of any arbitrary string of words is a proper name, i.e. an expression that has no sense, ut supra), now that it is not cool to use simple plural expressions as names for groups of people any more.

Rock-band names come to my attention through my offspring—I would say my ratling-hopes, if I had not overheard Dr Gelling say that this should be pronounced 'rat-chops' (absint omina, floreant NOMINA).

More ratiocinations in the fullness of time.

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