



Names Places People

SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Photo Competition:



As I said in the last issue, the only glory for the winner of our photo completion is publication in this newsletter. Many photos have been sent in, but the winner has to be Katrin McClure's photo of our president Dónall Mac Giolla Easpaig, who became King of Athenry, at least for a day, on our visit to Athenry Museum.



The runner-up would have to be Graham Collis's photo of our intrepid

conference secretary in the stocks also at the museum.

And just to confirm that SNSBI conferences are not all work and no play, here is another photo by Katrin, this time of 'out of hours' activities.

Linda Corrigan (editor)



Newsletter NS. 5 Autumn 2012

Hello and welcome to the second SNSBI newsletter for 2012.

In this issue we have a report of the annual conference in Athenry, an interesting photo for our 'competition' slot and plenty of information about conferences, books and websites which have come to my attention during the last six months.

This is also the time for me to put out a challenge to members to volunteer as a 'guest editor' for this newsletter for the autumn issue of 2013. I am likely to be out of the UK for much of autumn 2013 and not in a position to put out the newsletter. I am happy to supply the template and any information which has come my way to the guest editor and I will take back the reins again, ready for the spring issue of 2014. It will be too late to start looking for a 'guest editor' next spring, so now is the time to start thinking about it. If you think you can rise to the challenge, please drop me an email and we can take things from there.

Quite a few members have now got in to the habit of contacting me with snippets of information about books, meetings etc. but there is always room for more. If you have names-related news please do get in touch, send me the details and I will do my best to fit it in.

I am also now building up a stock of photos which I will be able to use to change the banner at the top of this newsletter on an annual basis, and use in other parts of future newsletters. Please keep them coming in. I hope that you enjoy this newsletter and that you will consider volunteering to edit it next autumn.

Linda M. Corrigan (editor)

CHARITY NO. 0177455

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2012-13

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Stop Press:

SNSBI Autumn Study Day

Saturday 17 November 2012 to be held in Chester (venue to be confirmed), 10.30am - 4.30 pm

Speakers will include

Jennifer Holt, The Lancashire Place

-Name Survey

Tom Swailes, Field-names in Cheshire

Stephen Moorhouse

Shaun Tyas, Football club nicknames

Further details from and all enquiries to **Chris Lewis**

<chris.lewis@sas.ac.uk>

SNSBI Committee Meeting

9.15 am Saturday 17 November 2012 (venue to be confirmed) prior to above mentioned study day.

Further details and enquiries to **Julia Stanbridge**

<treasurer@snsbi.org.uk>



Names Places People

SNSBI SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Conference reports:

The 21st Annual Conference of the Society for Name Studies of Britain and Ireland took place at the Raheen Woods Hotel in Athenry County Galway Ireland between March 30 and April 2, 2012. Situated on the outskirts of this small Irish town the hotel proved an excellent venue with good facilities and staff who were both hospitable and capable. We owe a big vote of thanks to **Nollaig Ó Muraile** and **Liam Ó hAisibéil** for masterminding the organization and smooth running of what proved to be a stimulating and fun filled long weekend which fully lived up to our expectations. The Conference programme was both varied and erudite with an emphasis on Irish and Scottish studies including place-names, personal names and genetic material. We were again blessed with two excursions instead of the customary one and Liam's relatively optimistic weather forecast was not too far wide of the mark.

The Saturday programme was rich in Irish content with **Conchubair Ó Cruaíoch**'s paper on Sligo Townlands and surnames leading us off. Later in the morning **Pat McKay**'s paper on Lough Neagh place-names revealed that the view from his bedroom window was the starting point for his mythological journey which included "interesting" origin myths for the lough. **Isobel Ryan** took us on a ground breaking literary excursion into the work of Peig Sayers and **Cathy Swift** ended the morning session in her own inimitable fashion with some genetic insights. The morning was not exclusively Irish, however, as the session was enriched by **Duncan Probert** with his Domesday Book paper and then **Simon Taylor** travelling entertainingly on "the Road to Meikle Seggie".

The evening sessions began with a speculative paper on *-ia* suffixes in Anglia which was given by **Keith Briggs** and led to some interesting jousting with Peter Kitson and probably a points victory for Peter. The final Irish paper of the day was given by **Aengus Finnegan** on the more local names from Lough Ree and he received well-earned approbation. The late sessions on the Saturday brought the Project reports and suitably included Welsh, Scottish and Irish reports plus the FaNUK update on family names.

Although the fare provided on the Saturday was a hard act to follow, the Sunday contributors managed to pull it off. Now firmly established in Wales, **David Parsons** asked some searching questions about Irish place-names in Wales, followed by **Kay Muhr** (and **Patrick Hanks**) on "Exchanging Names". The final session of papers on the Sunday started with **Guto Rhys** in Pictland and he was followed by our host **Nollaig Ó Muraile**'s thoughts on royal connections in Irish place-names. **Cáit Nic Fhionnlaóich** fittingly ended the morning session with her work in County Donegal and with a twinkle in her eye.

Traditionally our conferences are not all about sitting down and our two excursions gave us both fresh air and fresh insight. On the Saturday we had a walking tour of Athenry led by **Jim McKeon** which included the Athenry Heritage Centre located in St Mary's Collegiate Church and opened by Bertie Ahern in 1999. (see photo competition winner). This proved to be a "hands on" experience in respect of medieval artefacts with Liam for one ending up locked into in a neck and hands stocks-no doubt because of some sin in a past life. The town was founded by

a Norman – Meiler de Bermingham -in the 13th century and he and his successors were buried in the now ruined Dominican Priory of SS Peter and Paul. The Berminghams may of course have a Birmingham connection but Barbinghem in the Pas-de-Calais has a 9th century attestation as Bermingahem so the Norman ripples may go further than first thought. Sharp eyed visitors noticed the medieval swastika graffiti in the Priory.

The Sunday coach excursion was an equally enlightening experience. The first of our two stops was at Clonmacnoise in County Offaly and



situated on the River Shannon.
Photo by *Katrin McClure*
Founded in the 6th century and

now largely in ruins the monastery had become the most famous in Ireland by the 9th century and welcomed visits by scholars from all over Europe as well as receiving less welcome visits from Irish, Viking and later Anglo-Norman raiders. At some distance from the main monastery the Nun's Church which excited particular interest from the more adventurous of our party who, ignoring the protective barrier around the renovation work went 'under the wire' no doubt in an attempt to commune with the long departed sisters.

Our second stop was at Clonfert Cathedral said to have been founded by St Brendan in 563AD and also reputed to be his burial place, with a commemorative plaque in the graveyard. A striking Romanesque doorway with the carved heads of saints sculpted into niches (see next page) is a key feature of the cathedral, and perhaps has resemblances to old

