SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME NEWS
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The Newsletter of the

SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME SOCIETY
COMANN AINMEAN-AITE NA H-ALBA

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WELCOME to issue 6 of *Scottish Place-Name News*, with notice of our third **AGM and Conference** to be held in **Edinburgh** on Saturday 8 May (details attached).

NAMES AND BOUNDARIES

was the title and theme of the Society's November 1998 Conference held in the A.K.Bell Library, Perth, and attended by 60 people.

There follow summaries of all the talks, except for Dr David Munro's *'Perambulating the Marches: Disputed Boundaries and Division of Commonty as Sources for the Toponymy of the Lomond Hills'*, which it is hoped to publish in a future Newsletter.

Unfortunately one of the advertised speakers, John Kerr from Atholl, was unable to attend due to illness. He has kindly agreed to give his talk, 'Along an Atholl Boundary', at the May 8 Conference in Edinburgh. Our Convenor, Ian Fraser, swiftly and ably filled the gap. with a paper entitled:

PLACE-NAME BOUNDARIES - WHERE AND WHY?

Ian began his paper with a discussion of the two commonest boundary-elements in Scottish place-names, Gaelic *crìoch* (genitive *crìche*), and Scots *march*, to be found on, for example, parish and estate boundaries, as well as on the boundaries of Lowland farms and Highland crofting townships. He then discussed those names containing Scots *threip* 'dispute', which combines with a wide range of elements such as *wood, land, syke, muir, rig, inch.* {1} The disputes usually arose because the places in question lay on or near a boundary. The walking of disputed boundaries not only provides richly detailed

medieval charters but also colourful stories from more recent times of boys having pain inflicted on them at key points along the march so that they would remember exactly where the boundary ran. For example at certain points along the complex and contentious boundary between Lewis and Harris pits were dug, which were filled with charcoal, {2} and at each of these sites a boy from either side was beaten with birches, so that they would remember the march to their dying day.

Footnotes

{1} For more on *threip* in place-names, including a distribution map, see pp. 68 & 71 of G.W.S. Barrow, 'The Uses of Place-names and Scottish History - Pointers and Pitfalls', in S. Taylor ed. *The Uses of Place-Names* (Edinburgh, 1998), 54-74.

{2} (Char)coal is mentioned several times in a boundary charter of 1466 describing the marches of lands near Blairgowrie PER belonging to Scone and Coupar Angus abbeys. At six carefully described points along the marches are set up a stone cross and a pile of stones with (char)coals (*crux lapidea et congeries lapidum cum carbonibus*). The coal was no doubt put in the ground as a hidden marker, just in case the cross and the pile of stones were moved. See *Charters of the Abbey of Coupar Angus*, ed. D.E. Easson (SHS 1947), ii no.140 (pp.59-60) [Ed.].

NAMES ON THE EDGE: HILLS AND BOUNDARIES

Place-names are usually studied within territorial areas, but valuable insights may be obtained by looking at names 'on the edge'. Although the Conference paper included discussion on both the **cant* and *din* {1} elements, this summary will deal only with **cant*. {2} Dr O.J. Padel, in his *Cornish Place-Name Elements* {3} discusses this element, noting it is "obscure, perhaps 'district, region' or 'edge, border'". It is not a common element, but examples so far examined support the second interpretation. **Cant**, in Cornwall, for example, lies on the north bank of the Camel estuary, on the southern border of Trigg Hundred. Research further north confirms this.

The identification of boundary points recorded both in the 1307 perambulation of Burton-in-Lonsdale Chace, {4} and linked documents indicate a territory much older than the perambulation-date suggests. A prominent natural feature used as a boundary point in the eastern section of the boundary is **Pen-y-Ghent**. The name comprises two British place-name elements: *pen* 'top, head, end' {5} and **cant*, which would suggest this 1307 boundary point, also on the boundary of the former British district of Craven, existed several centuries earlier. The same element found in **Cant Beck** ['burn'] and its tributary **Blind Cant**, {6} close to the north-western boundary, indicates this section was also in existence much earlier. **Mere Syke Close**, adjacent to Cant Beck, indicates boundary continuity through to the later period with the element *mere* 'boundary'.

On the present Lancashire/ Yorkshire boundary (the earlier boundary between Blackburn Hundred and Morley Wapentake) lies **Cant Clough**, with its headwaters at **Harestones**, {7} in close proximity to **Mereclough**. Scotland, too, provides examples: close to the Roxburghshire boundary is **Pennygant** [NY44 99] surely linguistically identical to Pen-y-Ghent; and the **Cant Hills**, north of Shotts, Lanarkshire, {8} provides yet another example.

The research cannot be conclusive, covering so few examples, but must help rid the **cant* element of some of its obscurity.

Footnotes

{1} The Welsh cognate of Gaelic *dùn* 'hill, fort'.

{2} It is hoped that a full version will appear in *Nomina* 22.

{3} *English Place-Name Society* vol. lvi/lvii (1985), 37.

{4} Details of the research on this boundary were published in *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 66 (1994), 91-105.

{5} *Place-Names on maps of Scotland and Wales* (Ordnance Survey, 1981), 22.

{6} E. Ekwall, *The Place-names of Lancashire* (Manchester, 1922), 166, suggests *blind* as 'dark, obscure'. I am grateful to Dr Hywel Wyn Owen and John Wilkinson for an alternative *blaen* (Welsh) 'edge, end, source of river'.

{7} The adjective *hare* ('grey, hoary') in Scottish place-names usually refers to boundary features.
{8} John Wilkinson kindly pointed out this reference.

Dr Mary Higham,
Clitheroe, Lancashire

WHY ISN'T WHERE IT IS, WHERE IT WAS? The case for Geographical Information

The term 'geographic information', or GI, has, over the last few years, evolved to refer to digital information or data that is spatially referenced and is produced for use in Geographical Information Systems (GIS). GIS, in turn, have been defined as 'computerised systems for the integrated handling of spatially-related data', i.e geographic information, {1} one of the output options of which may be a map - such as Ordnance Survey 1: 50 000 scale Colour Raster, or Strategi, or 1: 1250 scale Land-line Plus; but also choropleth thematic maps based on digitised boundary data (DBD). All of these can be put, and viewed, together in a GIS (although it could be messy!). Basically, a GIS handles spatially-related data as a series of transparent layers. These can be in the form of one or more points; arcs; polygons; or raster. {2} Because we know their spatial relationships, points (for example) can become points *in* polygons and/or points *on* rasters, and so on. This means that in using a GIS you can have your cake and eat it – layer by layer, and these layers can be added or removed as required. {3}

GI is, however, as much about socio-economic attributes as topography. Attributes attach to points, arcs, polygons, and raster images. They relate information about the objects which these features represent. E.g. the number of inhabited houses enumerated in Forgandenny in 1871, was 151, while the number of males enumerated in Kinross in the same year was 2,328. Attributes, in other words, enable us to make use of real world spatial objects or abstractions represented in a GIS.

This then raises the question – '*why isn't where it was, where it is*'? The answer being, of course, that we have to use abstract representations of the real world in order to create the further abstracted digital representations held in a GIS. In other words, there are problems; such as inaccurate sources, lack of systematic projection, arbitrary scales, bending, warping, etc. And all of these problems tend to be more pronounced the older the source material. Because of this, the measurement of change over time is usually more intractable than any other problem. Yet all of these problems can be eased with comprehensive information on placenames – their precise location(s) and how they vary from source to source and over time.

When it comes to digitisation, you cannot do better in terms of scale than that used by the original source. But the usefulness of that source is enhanced through digitisation. The geo-referencing necessary in the process provides the ability to relate other, similarly geo-referenced information, not least placenames, using them as key links between sources and over time. Most important, perhaps, is that when a source has been digitised its usefulness, and the possibility of its being made available, to a wider audience is enhanced enormously. In other words, using a digitised version not only helps to preserve the original source, it also enables the creation of 'new' resources from old, and history to be made more accessible.

Footnotes

{1} Mather, P., 1991, *Computer Applications in Geography* (Chichester).
{2} 'Raster' data are pictures or images formed from pixels. A point is a point. Arcs and polygons are vectors (lines) formed by joining two or more points which, in the case of a polygon, denote the boundary of an enclosed area or region.
{3} Note, however, that, given the increasing commodification of data, there are likely to be various copyright owners of the different layers!).

Donald J. Morse,
Edinburgh University Data Library

Note: there is a project called **The Great Britain Historical GIS Programme** based at the Department of Geography, Queen Mary & Westfield College, University of London, which has been working for some years to create a computerised record of the changing boundaries of Britain from parish level upwards: a historical Geographical Information System. To date their work has mainly covered the last 150 years but they have recently received a small grant from the Pilgrim Trust to investigate how they could take their work further back in time, possibly as far as 1086. It has so far confined itself to England. For more information see
http://www.geog.qmw.ac.uk/gbhgis

For another GIS-related item, see Lionacleit piece below p.9.

GHOSTLY BATTALIONS: ANGUS PLACE-NAMES IN A POEM BY DON PATERSON

14:50: Rosekinghall

(Beeching Memorial Railway,
Forfarshire Division)

The next train on Platform 6 will be the 14:50
Rosekinghall — Gallowshill and Blindwell, calling at:

Fairygreen — Templelands — Stars of Forthneth — Silverwells —
Honeyhole — Bee Cott — Pleasance — Sunnyblink —
Butterglen — Heatheryhaugh — St Bride's Ring — Diltie Moss —
Silvie — Leyshade — Bourtreebush — Little Fithie —
Dusty Drum — Spiral Wood — Wandershiell — Windygates —
Red Roofs — Ark Hill — Egypt — Formal —
Letter — Laverockhall — Windyedge — Catchpenny —
Framedrum — Drumtick — Little Fardle — Packhorse —
Carrot — Clatteringbrigs — Smyrna — Bucklerheads —
Outfield — Jericho — Horn — Roughstones —
Loak — Skitchen — Sturt — Oathlaw — Wolflaw — Farnought — Drunkendubs — Stronetic —
Ironharrow Well — Goats — Tarbrax — Dameye —
Dummiesholes — Caldhame — Hagmuir — Slug of Auchrannie —
Baldragon — Thorn — Wreaths — Spurn Hill —
Drowndubs — The Bloody Inches — Halfway — Groan,
where the train will divide

> *God's Gift to Women* by Don Paterson, printed with the permission of Faber and Faber Ltd.

Railways and trains are everywhere in Paterson's work, and at first glance the poem might be read as an elegy for the passing of a rural network. A quick look at the map, however (O.S. Landranger 53 and 54) will show that only a quarter of the place-names are actually on or near a railway, dismantled or in operation. Clearly, Paterson is organizing these names along a different theme, and the *Forfarshire Division* of the subtitle nudges the reader along a fruitful track. *Division* suggests a military unit, and the lay-out and shape of the poem resemble that of a village war-memorial. In *14: 50: Rosekinghall* Paterson mingles names which mean something with names whose sounds suggest a meaning the words do not normally have. He skilfully juxtaposes names in order to build up further layers of significance. The whole poem has a shape and progression, from the sunny pastoral of the names of the first four lines, hinting at seasonal order and stability, to the chilling names at the end of the poem, as though the shadow of war were creeping across the Forfarshire countryside.

Don Paterson is not the first poet to use place-names without other parts of speech to achieve a semantic effect, and I

am grateful to Ian Higgins for drawing my attention to a poem by Louis Aragon, written during the Occupation of France, and published in *La Diane Française* by Seghers in 1945. In 'Le Conscrit des Cent Villages', place-names like *Sommaisne*, *Sommeilles* and *Sommerance* inevitably call up the ghost of the Somme; while *Angoisse, Adam-les-Passavant*, *Passefontaine* and *Treize-Vents* suggest, in Ian Higgins' words, the 'life of a fugitive or a Resistance courier, hunted, afraid, elusive, constantly on the move.' ('Tradition and Myth in French Resistance Poetry' by Ian Higgins, *Forum for Modern Language Studies* vol.1 no.1, January 1985, pp. 45-58).

Don Paterson's poem, too, has a strong forward movement, but his place-names hit the ear like the tramp of infantry. After names that hint at bucolic dalliance in l. 4, the first suggestion of war, of military gear being taken off the shelf and cleaned, is neatly conveyed in *Dusty Drum*. More *Drum* names are used further on to suggest the sounds of infantry and cavalry on the move. The other three names in line 5 suggest the disorientation and discomfort experienced by the new recruit, while *Red Roofs* might be the barracks, or else the last, heart-wrenching glimpse of home. Arrival in *Egypt* is immediately followed by the first casualty, in the ominously juxtaposed *Formal/Letter*, while the lyrical euphemism of *Laverockhall* is immediately exposed by *Windyedge*.

Paterson paints a whole scene by ordering a sequence of names. From *Framedrum* to *Clatteringbrigs* we hear the army moving off then being held up by a laden and reluctant horse, and we hear its hooves as it is coaxed over the bridge; in the *Outfield* to *Roughstones* sequence the poet relies on his readers' knowledge of an Old Testament story while simply giving the key words, *Jericho* and *Horn*. The reader must make the necessary associations between *Outfield* and *Roughstones*, and then sees the encircling army and the collapsing walls of the city. While *Egypt* and *Jericho* would almost certainly be Biblical names, *Smyrna* might derive from an actual incident in the First World War. Embedded in the fabric of the poem, such names lend exotic colour, forcing the reader to imagine actual landscapes and colour them in.

Loak - Skitchen - Sturt, which have no obvious meaning, are nevertheless harsh and explosive, and *Oathlaw* gathers the line into a string of oaths from a hard-pressed soldier. In the last five lines, the names grow ever grimmer, redolent of the cruelty, pointlessness and degeneration of war: *Wolflaw - Farnought - Drunkendubs*, while a name like *Goats* conjures up soldiers dying like cattle; dying in shell-holes like *Dummiesholes;* killed by a sniper's bullet: *Slug of Auchrannie*; drowning: *Browndubs*; crawling *The Bloody Inches*, but able only to get *Halfway*, and die with a *Groan*. It comes as a shock to remember that these are all names of villages, farms, hills, or other landscape features in Angus, so completely does Paterson shape them into a hellish landscape of the imagination. But then, when a country goes to war, there is scarcely a village that does not afterwards have names of its own to remember.

Anna Crowe, St Andrews

ANGUS PLACE-NAMES (NORTH-EAST)

While preparing a database of the place-names of the Angus Glens I was advised by a Society member to consult C.P. Will, *Place Names of Northeast Angus*, published by Herald Press, Arbroath, 1963, which covers in great detail the parishes of **Edzell, Lethnot** and **Navar**, and **Lochlee**. I had the utmost difficulty in procuring a copy, since it apparently had a short run and has long been out of print. The Committee has agreed to a suggestion that Will's book (68 pages plus a 6-page index compiled by me, with illustrations by the late Colin Gibson) be prepared for re-issue to interested Society members. It is estimated that £5 per copy would cover the production costs, including p. & p.

The late Mr Will was a solicitor who lived in Edzell, and a self-confessed *aficionado* whose hobby was the local

place-nomenclature. Although his derivations can often be disputed, he gives many early forms and usually clearly states reasons for his conclusions. Will's local knowledge was prodigious, and there may be other members who will find his book as enjoyable and informative as I did.

David Dorward, St Andrews

Requests for copies should be made, along with cash or cheque for £5 to the Scottish Place-Name Society [address above].

ARGYLE: ISLAY

As a by-product of the Finlaggan Archaeological Project, a database on Islay has been developed for the Finlaggan Trust by Roger McWee, David Caldwell and Nigel Ruckley, and is now installed on a computer in the Finlaggan Visitor Centre. It has information and images of people, places and traditions on Islay. It is hoped to license other versions of this ISLAY CULTURAL DATABASE to run in other research centres in the near future.

The database includes the 6000 place names recorded in the Ordnance Survey name books, with grid references. The modern day spellings are also given, as well as earlier variations recorded in a remarkable series of rentals and other documents extending back to the 15th century. The database is in MSAccess, is fully searchable, and can be used to produce distribution maps.

The authors would be happy to make this place name material available to a serious researcher or student prepared to work on it, and make a written contribution on their research to the Finlaggan publication. *For more information please contact* ***Dr David H Caldwell****, National Museums of Scotland, Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 1JF. Tel 0131 247 4068 < dhc@nms.ac.uk>*

AYRSHIRE

James Brown*, a recent member of the Society, writes of his work in* ***Carrick, Ayrshire:***

I have become entranced by *Project Pont* through the enthusiasm and research of Professor McKean and my restoration proposals for Baltersan Tower-house, Kirkoswald parish, AYR. The original manuscripts by Pont of this area, sadly, do not seem to exist, so I am researching the origins and meanings of place-names on the North Carrick map in Blaeu's *Atlas Novus* of 1654. There are over 530 names to investigate including the delightfully enigmatic "Poggyrodd"! My working title is "One drew over the Cuckoo's Nest" from the glorious name of *Net Whowaig* or *Geik's Seit* (Gowk's Seat), which is mentioned in Watson's *Celtic Place-Names.*

The last native Gaelic speaker here reputedly died when Robert Burns was 2 years old. Carrick was once part of the Lordship of Galloway, so there is a long period of Gaelic-speaking, possibly in 2 directions, from Galloway northwards and Argyll southwards.

There is a fair sprinkling of Welsh from the kingdom of Strathclyde of course, and Northumbrian influences too. Ayrshire Scots still flourishes in everyday speech here, so capturing the sounds of these ancient names is that bit easier. I will be consulting local residents, including a 92-year-old in Girvan !

This place-name work coincides with my research on the Kennedies of Baltersan and their immediate contacts.

The Baltersan url is :-
http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/baltersan/index.htm

More details of ***Project Pont*** *can be obtained from Map Library, NLS, 33 Salisbury Place, Edinburgh EH9 1SL* <maps@nls.uk>

WESTER KITTOCHSIDE: THE MICROTOPONYMY OF A LANARKSHIRE ESTATE

Summary of a paper given by Simon Taylor*, University of St Andrews, at the SPNSociety AGM Conference, Bearsden, May 1998.*

In January 1998 the Edinburgh firm of John Renshaw Architects won the tender to the National Trust of Scotland for a historic buildings and landscape survey of

Wester Kittochside Farm in East Kilbride parish, Lanarkshire. The NTS, in partnership with the National Museums of Scotland, plans to develop the farm-house, steading and lands of Wester Kittochside for a new National Museum of Scottish Country Life, which at the moment is housed at Ingliston by Edinburgh. The aim of the architect's survey is to present the NTS with a detailed inventory of the estate, since the estate itself would be not only the framework of the museum, but the chief exhibit. With admirable enlightenment, the architects decided to include a toponymic survey of the estate as part of their tender, and with equal enlightenment the NTS accepted the tender. The speaker was seconded from the St Andrews Scottish Studies Institute for a few days to carry this out.

The talk began with a brief history of the lands of Kittochside. The estate now known as Wester Kittochside in fact forms only about a sixth of the original lands of Kittochside, these lands being divided into East and West Kittochside in the 14th century. Wester Kittochside was only part of the western half of Kittochside, most of which had been acquired by the Reid family by the 17th century. In the second half of the 18th century, one branch of the Reid family built the present house and steadings now known as Wester Kittochside, and it remained in their possession until 1992, when they gifted it to the National Trust.

The estate takes its name from the Kittoch Water, a tributary of the White Cart and, whatever the derivation of 'Kittoch' (no doubt Celtic), 'Kittochside' must be considered a Scots name, and cannot have been coined before around 1200, when Scots was first introduced into the area. In fact within the lands of Kittochside every name so far identified derives from Scots, as do many of the surrounding farms, such as Philpshill, Highflat and Rogerton, suggesting that settlement in this area during the centuries when Cumbric (till c.1000) and Gaelic (till c.1200) was spoken in Lanarkshire was extremely sparse.

A rough definition of the 'microtoponymy' of the title might be 'the place-nomenclature which never makes it on to the Ordnance Survey maps', thus field-names and other minor names known only in the immediate locality. In the case of Wester Kittochside, these were mainly derived from a 1858 estate plan, which contain such field-names as The Short Croft and the Long Croft (indicating old Infield); Queys Park (containing Scots *quey* 'heiffer'); Stockcraigs (Scots *stock* 'tree-stump' or 'trunk') and the unexplained Fauselands (?Scots *fause* 'false, deceitful).

Note: The new museum at Wester Kittochside is due to open in April 2000.

A PICTISH CHRISTIAN HEALING WELL IN PERTHSHIRE?

In *The Ghost o' Mause and other Tales and Traditions of East Perthshire* (Edinburgh 1995), Maurice Fleming tells of a holy well a few miles north of Butterstone by Dunkeld in the heart of Old Pictland, to which folk from all the airts used to resort for cures into the 19th century (against the Reformation and 17th century persecution), on the first Sabbath in May. While the date hints at pagan Beltane, the well itself is firmly lidded against malign influences by its Christian label of *Sancta Crux Well* 'The Well of the Holy Cross', although in Scots it goes by the aguish-sounding name of *Grews Well*, a title which, as Fleming notes, 'strips it of all its glamour.'

Aye. But the name is not Scots.

Fleming (and modern folk-etymology) may have confused it with Scots *grew/grue* 'to shiver' and 'horrible' (cf *gruesome*), but the true name is doubtless as old as the cross which used to sanctify the well (whatever its date). In 1657, again according to Fleming, one Christiane Reat was accused of travelling to *gruis well* 'and ascriving more vertew to that well upon that (the first Sabbath in May) or to any other well upon any other day.' [*sic*] She was ordered never to use the

well again after public repentance the next Sunday.

The name of the holy spring actually preserves the Pictish equivalent of Welsh *crwys* 'cross' (< Latin *crux*) in its lenited or mutated form *grwys* (which would indeed have been spelt *gruis* at a much earlier date). The 'Pictish' treatment of *crux* is in fact identical to the Welsh: compare Welsh *Y Crwys* (Three Crosses) near Swansea, *Pant-y-Crwys* 'Cross-dell', and *grwys* itself, a form dating from the 14th century at least [*Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru: The Welsh University Dictionary*]. Our name survives on the 1:50000 OS map as *Grewshill* PER NO 048488.

Katherine Forsyth has already laid the spectre of non-Indo-European Pictish's late survival (to c.9th century), which had haunted the corridors of academe for almost half a century in its final tortuous form [*Language in Pictland* (Utrecht 1997)]. Might this old Pictish cross mark the last resting-place of the scholarly notion that 'Pictish' P-Celtic was anything other than a dialectal form of the tongue spoken all over Britain when the Romans arrived, which became 'Cumbric' besouth Forth, itself no different from the oldest Welsh?

John Wilkinson, West Lothian

STIRLINGSHIRE (EAST)

***John Reid**, a member from Stenhousemuir, on a local history journal which he helped to found in 1981.*

Calatria is a periodical published by Falkirk Local History Society. Its purpose is to disseminate sound research in fields such as history, archaeology, genealogy and place-names. The Editorial Committee is always happy to receive articles for consideration for publication. These must be based on original research with supporting references, and should be sent to the Editor, *Ian Scott, 11 Neilson Street, Falkirk.* Obviously the journal is largely confined to matters of interest to the greater Falkirk area, but material of a more general nature may be considered. All of the editorial work is voluntary and, as the Society is non-profit making, it will be appreciated that no payment is made for contribution. Subscription details can be obtained from the Editor at the above address.

[This is an excellent journal, with much of interest for the toponymist: many early forms of place-names, and the reconstruction of medieval parishes and other administrative units in the Falkirk area - Ed.]

SIGNAGE OF THE TIMES

Since bilingual road-signs started to appear in the Western Isles and parts of the adjacent mainland, controversy has arisen over the choice and spelling of some of the Gaelic. It was perhaps inevitable; for despite being heir to one of the world's oldest literatures, Gaelic popular literacy is a relatively new phenomenon which has developed after the Anglicised form of place-names became established in documentary use - not that English signage is without its own controversies!

Bilingual signage is likely to spread, as indicated by the plan for Gaelic-English signing in the Scots Parliament building, reflecting the modern distribution of Gaelic-medium education and of learners and speakers. SPNS has been in contact with two councils about bilingual signage programmes under consideration, Perth & Kinross and Highland, which has formed a sub-committee to look at the textual issues involved. SPNS was invited to be represented on this sub-committee.

The SPNS response was as quick as the Council's need for haste, and the national committee agreed to form a signage sub-committee of its own, consisting of the society's convener Ian Fraser and committee members Dr Simon Taylor and Peadar Morgan, with Peadar as representative on the Highland Council sub-committee. The SPNS have been greatly helped in the two signage programmes so far addressed - trunk road signs in Skye & Lochalsh and street names in central Dingwall - by the expertise and advice of SPNS members Roy Wentworth in Wester Ross and Dr Richard Cox of Aberdeen University Celtic Department.

SPNS has stressed the importance of local knowledge and consultation (whilst recognising the pressures of time under which Council decisions need to be reached and implemented), and urged the contracting of field workers for each programme. This suggestion has been adopted by the Highland Council sub-committee, and is being discussed by the Council hierarchy.

These developments coincided with the decision of the Scottish Place-Name Database working group to include fields for agreed present-day Gaelic and Scots forms of names, which can act as a national repository and encourage consistency. The SPNS sub-committee also hopes that its work will build up a national standard on various orthographic issues as they peculiarly affect toponyms - based of course on modern Gaelic spelling conventions.

Agreed principles so far include combining elements where stress falls on the initial element, with suspension of the matching vowel quality and *sd>st* rules where appropriate (eg *Staoineabrig, Ròmasdal*); the accent to be shown on capital letters; *Achadh* to always be spelt in full; *Mac* family names (as opposed to genuine patronymics) to be written as one word, two caps (eg *Baile MacAra*).

Principles currently under discussion, in relation to the Dingwall street names, include a Gaelic form of the generic *Place* - to stick to *Ionad* as previously used (but now applied to shopping, sport and soup & sandwich "Centres"), to go for an indigenous alternative, or to adopt the Irish term *Plàs*? *Answers, helpful suggestions and SAE for approved lists to date to Peadar at: SPNS, c/o CLI, 62 Àrd Shràid, Inbhir Ghòrdain, Siorrachd Rois IV18 0DH - it'll get there (if you mind the code!).*

Peadar Morgan (Committee Member)

MEAL DO NAIDHEACHD, SGOIL LIONACLEIT!

Congratulations to the Lionacleit Community School, Benbecula, which in Autumn 1998 was awarded the Association for Geographic Information (AGI) School Prize for its plans to carry out a community project with the help of local residents to identify Gaelic place-names for features in the landscape in the southern islands. A report, written by Ms D. Freeman, Chair of AGI, states that it provides scope for creative and imaginative work with GIS to preserve the Gaelic names and English translations on digital base maps in conjunction with pictures of the landscape and comments from the interviews. The project, which was planned by a group of 14 to 16-year old pupils, fulfilled all the criteria for the UK-wide prize, sponsored by the Environmental Systems Research Institute and the Ordnance Survey.

NAME-CHANGE IN IRELAND

In the Republic of Ireland the 1946 Local Government Act includes a procedure for changing a place-name. If someone doesn't like the name of the place they live in, they can propose a new one, organise a plebiscite of the householders directly affected and, if a majority vote for it, the new name replaces the old. An example of this was when in the 1970s the residents of Connolly Crescent in Naas, Co. Kildare, sucessfully voted to change the name of their street to Lakeside Park! (From S. Hickey and L. Kenny, *Naas - its highways and byways, names and boundaries*, Naas 1996).

A good idea for a Scottish Local Government Act? What do SPNSoc members think?

INTERNET NEWS

***Henry Gough-Cooper**, 'our man on the Internet', writes:*

The Society's web site was last updated on 14 January 1999. The most substantial change was the result of a suggestion from Richard Heath that all the site pages should link back to an index page; therefore, the principal address for the site is now

http://www.st-and.ac.uk/institutes/sassi/spns/index.htm

although the former address

http://www.st-and.ac.uk/institutes/sassi/spns/spnstop.htm
is still active and accessible.
Other changes include new links to ICOS (see below), Katy Jordan's Holy Wells Web site,
and some other minor additions.

The web continues to develop apace: recent innovations being free web servers (Dixons started this trend which has now spread to supermarkets like Tesco) and the growth of internet commerce through "secure servers" (protects confidential information for billing - they hope !!). Some of the booksellers linked to from your Society's site now have "one-click ordering" facilities, and Amazon.com (the American parent) now has Amazon.co.uk (its UK offspring).

Tucked away in the $1.77 trillion dollar budget proposal submitted recently by President Clinton was a small item that could help bring digitized versions of photographs, memorabilia, documents and an assortment of other items from the nation's cultural treasure trove into American classrooms. Clinton asked for $30 million for the creation of a "digital library for education." SCRAN is trying to make sure Scotland does not get left behind in this area (would they had the Americans' budget, though) !

ICOS (International Council of Onomastic Sciences) now have a website:
http://fuzzy.arts.kuleuven.ac.be/icosweb
This started as a modest information page but now seems to be growing into a fully-fledged site: worth keeping an eye on but amateurs will hope it does not become too exclusive !

EDINA (Edinburgh Data and Information Access)
http://edina.ed.ac.uk/index.shtml
seems to have a large number of interesting features. It contains bibliographic, geographic and Research data. Especially the geographical sub-sites: 'Ordnance Survey Strategy' and 'UKBORDERS' may be potentially important. Unfortunately, this is another site that is apparently only accessible to the academic fraternity.

Thanks to Peder Gammeltoft (Denmark) for suggesting this site.
LANDSCAPE HISTORY
is still being published. Contact the editor, D. Hooke, for details (School of Geography, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT, England).
This information is available on the new **BIAB** Website:
http://www.britarch.ac.uk/biab/jnlfull.html
(Homepage:
http://www.britarch.ac.uk/biab/index.html)
NOTE: **BIAB** = BRITISH AND IRISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY
BIAB WEB PAGES
http://www.britarch.ac.uk/biab/
The BIAB web pages have been re-designed and considerably expanded. They now contain everything you ever wanted to know about bibliographic data for Britain and Ireland.
Comments or suggestions on your Society's web site to Henry Gough-Cooper e-mail: <100041.326@compuserve.com>

THE MEANING OF LIFF

Those with an interest in the east Perthshire place-name 'Liff' (in the parish of Liff and Benvie, just west of Dundee) should not get over-excited: the little book with the above title will enlighten them not a jot. Written by Douglas Adams (of *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Universe* fame) and John Lloyd, and published in 1983 by Pan Books and Faber and Faber, it is an amazingly silly book, with, for a toponymist, a most alarming introduction.

> 'In Life (and, indeed, in Liff), there are many hundreds of common experiences, feelings, situations and even objects which we all know and recognize, but for which no word exists.
>
> On the other hand, the world is littered with thousands of spare words which spend their time doing nothing but loafing about on signposts pointing at places.
>
> Our job, as we see it, is to get these words down off the signposts and into the mouths of

babes and sucklings, and so on, where they can start earning their keep in everyday conversation and make a more positive contribution to society.'

Its 191 pages contain such typical examples as 'Mellon Udrigle: the ghastly sound made by traditional folk-singers' or 'Poges: the lumps of dry powder that remain after cooking a packet soup.' And so it goes on, and on, and on. Get back to the signposts, that's all I can say. (Ed.; thanks to Ian Higgins for bringing this work to my attention.)

ICOS XIX (1996)

A reminder to members that the above 3-volume set, which contains the proceedings of the XIXth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences held in Aberdeen (August 1996) is still available at the special price of £25 (regular price £30) + £5 p. & p. (UK) or £6 elsewhere. *Orders (with cheques payable to 'University of Aberdeen') to be sent to Prof. W.F.H. Nicolaisen, Dept. of English, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen AB24 2UB.*

THE SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN & IRELAND

is holding its annual conference this Spring in Sheffield from March 26-29. The programme will include Jon Coe (**Place-names of the Book of Llandaff**), Margaret Gelling (**Place-names of the Pennines**), Gillian Fellows Jensen (**Scandinavian Settlement-names in East Anglia**), Kay Muhr (**Family names in place-names in Northern Ireland**) and Tania Styles (**English place-name vocabulary**). Registration and full board for residents from Friday dinner to breakfast on Monday, including the Conference dinner on the Sunday night and a coach tour to Chatsworth will be around £135 for SNSBI members, and £140 for non-members. Students are invited to apply for a contribution towards costs to the Treasurer Dr Mary Higham (address below).

More information from the Secretary Ms J. Scherr, SNSBI, Queen's Building Library, University of Bristol, Bristol BS8 1TR.

The Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland (SNSBI) has a Britain and Ireland-wide membership with an interest in both place-names and personal names. It produces an annual journal called ***Nomina***, and holds a lively and varied Annual Conference over a Spring weekend.

Annual Membership of SNSBI costs £15 (£5 for students), which includes a copy of ***Nomina***. *For more details, contact Dr Mary Higham, 22 Peel Park Avenue, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 1ET.*

NORMANDY NEWS

In *Scottish Place-Name News* no.5, we printed the following: "Within the framework of the Raphaël Programme, the District of la Hague and the School of Normandy Studies ('l'Office Universitaire d'Etudes Normandes' **O.U.E.N.**), Caen, are organising, in partnership with the Scottish Place-Name Society, a Conference entitled **'The Viking Maritime Heritage in North-West Europe'**; *Date*: 30 September - 3 October, 1999; *Place*: Omonville-La-Rouge, canton de Beaumont-Hague, by Cherbourg, France."

It should be pointed out that the SPNSociety is not a joint organiser of the above Conference, as the above paragraph suggests. However, it has supported this important project since its inception, and individuals closely involved with the Society are also involved in the Conference.

For more information about the Conference, please contact Conference organiser Elisabeth Ridel c/o O.U.E.N., Université de Caen, F-14032 Caen, France tel. 0033 (0)2 31 56 62 97 fax 0033 (0)2 31 56 64 30 (or British contact Simon Taylor, SASSI, University, St Andrews KY16 9AL tel. 01334 462942 fax 01334 463334).

SCANDINAVIANS AND EUROPE 800-1350:

CONTACT, CONFLICT AND CO-EXISTENCE

The Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Hull, is holding a conference at the University of Hull on 22-23 May 1999. The theme of the conference is the various forms of contact between Scandinavians and Europeans in the medieval period, as evidenced in a range of sources. What impact did Scandinavians make on European culture and society and what impact did Europeans make on Scandinavian culture and society? The papers will contribute to our understanding of the range and the nature of contact between Scandinavians and Europeans during and after the Viking Age.

There will be several contributions of special interest to toponymists: Gillian Fellows Jensen on *Scandinavian settlement in the British Isles and Normandy: What place-names reveal*; Andrew Jennings and Arne Kruse on *Onomastic evidence for Norse settlement in* ***Kintyre***; and Peder Gammeltoft on *Contact or conflict? What is conveyed by the island-names in* ***Orkney*** *and* ***Shetland****?*

It is planned to publish the conference papers in the Centre for Medieval Studies' series *Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe* (published by Brepols).

The deadline for registration is 31 March. More information is obtainable from:

Kathy Holman/Jon Adams, Dept. of Scandinavian Studies, University, Hull HU6 7RX; Tel: 01482 465015
<k.h.holman@selc.hull.ac.uk> ***OR***
<j.adams@selc.hull.ac.uk>

DIRECTORY OF MEMBERS

In Newsletter no. 2 (Spring 1997) a Directory of Members of the Society was published, with postal, fax and e-mail addresses, and notes on relevant interests and publications. This was followed by an up-date in Newsletter no. 3. It was intended to produce up-dates, with new members and changes of address, to be included in future Newsletters from time to time. However, at its meeting in Dec. 1998, the Society's Committee decided that it would be more practical to produce a separate Directory of all the membership as of Spring 1999, with the same details as in the previous Directories. This would mean that all the membership would be included in one document, rather than scattered throughout several Newsletters. These will be prepared for the May 1999 AGM, and will be available there price £1 (or from the Society + 30 pence p. & p.).

If anyone does not want their name, their address, or any other detail included in this projected Directory, please let the Newsletter Editor know by 20 April 1999 (address on p.1).

WHAT'S ON around Scotland?

- ***ABERDEENSHIRE***

  20 February till May: 'Names in the North-East', Prof. W.F.H. Nicolaisen. Meets four times, one Saturday a month (10.00-16.00), starting 20 Feb.. *For more information contact the Centre for Continuing Education, University of Aberdeen tel. 01224 272449.*

  21 April: 'Place-Names of Deer', a talk to the Buchan Field Club by Simon Taylor; **7.30 pm, Mintlaw Academy, Buchan.** All welcome.

  29 May: As part of the Pictish Arts Society Conference in Aberdeen, Prof. W.F.H. Nicolaisen will be giving a paper 'Pictish Place-Names in the North-East'. *More information from PAS, c/o 27 George Square, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh EH8 9LD.*

- ***DUNDEE***

  17 March: 'Place-Names and the Past', (concentrating on the place-names of Abernethy), Simon Taylor; **2 pm, Dundee University Tower Block, Perth Road.** All welcome.

- ***EDINBURGH***

13 March: 'Place-Names from Oral Tradition', a lecture by Ian Fraser to the Saltire Society, **1.15 pm, St John's Episcopal Church Hall, West End Edinburgh**. Contact Tony Dilworth on 0131 447 1918.

8 May: Scottish Place-Name Society AGM and Day Conference in Edinburgh. See separate Registration form attached.

- ***EAST LOTHIAN***
  18 March: 'Place-Names of Lothian' a talk to Haddington's History Society by Ian Fraser, **7.30 pm, the Town House, Haddington.** *Contact: Convenor Arthur Reid on 01620 824369.*

18 March: 'The Archaeology of Place-names', Simon Taylor, St Andrews Archaeology Society lecture: **8 pm, School 1, St Salvator's Quad.**
Non-members of the St.A. A.S. £1.

17-24 July: Summer School, St Andrews 'In the Footsteps of the Picts', led by Simon Taylor. Explores various sources of knowledge about the Picts, including place-names.
More information from Centre for Continuing Education, University, St Andrews KY16 9AH tel. 01334 462202.

PLEASE LET THE EDITOR KNOW ABOUT ANY TALK OR OTHER EVENT WHICH WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO THE MEMBERSHIP.

Please note that back copies of* Scottish Place-Name News *are available from the Society for £1.50 (which includes p. & p.). Issue no.2 contains a Directory of Members, with their interests and publications, up-dated in issue no.3.

Dead-line for material for next Newsletter:
20 August 1999

Recent Publications

(a) Books

Dorward, D. ***Dundee**: Names, People and Places* (Edinburgh 1998) [see Newsletter no.5 p.13]

Forsyth, K., *Language in Pictland* (Utrecht 1998) [see Newsletter no.5 p.13]

Maclean, C. *Isle of **Mull**: Placenames, Meanings and Stories* (Dumfries 1997) [see Newsletter no.5 p.5]

Hamilton of Gilbertfield's translation of *Blind Harry's Wallace* (Edinburgh 1998), 224-5 (edited by Elspeth King) [distribution map of Wallace place-names pp.224-5]

(b) Articles and Chapters in Books

Barrow, G.W.S. 'Religion in Scotland on the eve of Christianity' in *Forschungen zur Reichs-, Papst- und Landesgeschichte*, edd. K. Borchardt and E. Bünz, Part 1 (Stuttgart 1998), 25-32 [a study of ***nemeton***-place-names in Scotland].

Breeze, A., `Etymological notes on ***Kirkcaldy***, *jocteleg* "knife", *klaugh* "trouble", *striffen* "membrane" and *cow* "hobgoblin"', *Scottish Language* 16 (1997), 97-110 [`The Fife place-name *Kirkcaldy*' at 97-99].

Drummond, P., 'Scottish Hill-Names - the Irish connection', *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* 1997.

Drummond, P., 'Scottish Hill-Names - the English connection, *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* 1998.

Gammeltoft, P., 'Sowing the wind? Reaping the crop of ***bólstaðr***', *Northern Studies* 33 (1998), 25-35.

Gough-Cooper, H., 'Some notes on the name "**Ninian**", *Transactions of the Dumfries and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society* 72 (1997), 5-10.

Hall, M., Henderson, I., Taylor, S., 'A Sculptured Fragment from **Pittensorn** Farm, Gellyburn, Perthshire', *Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal* 4 (1998), 129-44 [section on place-names of the area of the find, 139-41]

Hutcheson, A.M. (Greg), 'Dusan Dlòcan sa Chàrn/ A Dozen Dlòcans in the Sledge', *Cothrom* 17 (Foghar 1998), 11-14 [full text of A.M.H.'s talk to the Scottish Place-Name Society's Conference in Glasgow (May 1998) on place-names of **Balquhidder**]

Keillar, I., '**Macallan** - the parish that never was', *Moray Field Club Bulletin* 16 (1988), 16-20.

Jennings, A., 'Iona and the Vikings: Survival and Continuity', *Northern Studies* 33 (1998), 37-54 [includes material on ***papar***-place-names; for which see also MacDonald, A(idan), 'On 'Papar' names in north and west Scotland', *Northern Studies* 9 (1977), 25-30]

MacGregor, N., 'Air Dailthean Srath Spè/ On the Meadows of the Spey', *Cothrom* 16 (Samhradh 1998), 18-21 [on place-names and traditions of **Strathspey**]

MacGregor, N., 'Fo Sgàil a' Chàirn Ghuirm / In the Shadow of Cairngorm', *Cothrom* 17 (Foghar 1998), 28-32 [sequel to the above article]

MacGregor, N., 'Far am Biodh an Sprèidh/ Where the Cattle would be', *Cothrom* 18 (Geāmhradh 1998-99), 38-40 [sequel to the above article]

Proudfoot, E. and Aliaga-Kelly, C., 'Towards an interpretation of anomalous finds and place-names of Anglo-Saxon origin in Scotland', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 9 (1996), 1-13

Proudfoot, E. and Aliaga-Kelly, C., 'Aspects of Settlement and Territorial Arrangements in South-east Scotland in the Late Prehistoric and Early Medieval Periods', *Medieval Archaeology* 41 (1997), 33-50 [heavy use of place-name evidence and several place-name distribution maps]

Stone, J.C.: 'Robert Gordon and the Making of the First Atlas of Scotland', *Northern Scotland* 18 (1998), 15-29 [see Newsletter no.5 p.13]

Taylor, S., and Henderson, J.M., 'The medieval marches of Wester Kinnear, **Kilmany** Parish, Fife', *Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal* 4 (1998), 232-47.

Taylor, S., 'Place-names and the early church in Scotland', *Records of Scottish Church History Society* 28 (1998), 1-22.

Please let us know about any articles we may have overlooked, or forthcoming articles which should be included in the next issue.

SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME SOCIETY

Annual General Meeting and Day Conference, Saturday 8 May, 1999

Announcement and Call for Reports

The Annual General Meeting of the Society, together with a Day Conference on **'Place Names in the East'**, will take place on Saturday 8 May, at the David Hume Tower, University of Edinburgh, George Square, Edinburgh from 10.00 a.m. (Registration) to 4.30 p.m.

The cost of £12 (£10 for unwaged) includes coffee, lunch and tea. We are also asking for the renewal of annual subscriptions (£5) at the same time.

Speakers will be John Kerr (**'Along an Atholl Boundary'**), William Patterson (**'Place Names in East Lothian'**) and David Dorward (**'Exploring the Place Names of the Angus Glens'**). As at previous conferences, there will be a Forum for members to report on activities, research and projects in progress. Please indicate on the booking form below if you would like to give a report, or, if you cannot be present, to submit a report to be read by a member of the committee, and the approximate length of time required (up to twenty minutes).

Since it is often difficult to fit in informal discussion at the AGM, we will organise a post-conference gathering. Further details will be forthcoming on the day.

Scottish Place-Name Society

AGM and Day Conference, Edinburgh, Saturday 8 May, 1999

Name: .....

Address: .....

I shall/shall not attend the AGM and Day Conference in Edinburgh on 8 May 1999.

I wish to give/submit a short report (approx. ..... minutes) on the following topic:

.....

I enclose a cheque payable to 'The Scottish Place-Name Society' to cover:

Attendance at the AGM and Conference (£12, or £10 for unwaged) £.....

My annual subscription for May 1999 – April 2000 (£5) £.....

TOTAL: £.....

Please tick if you require a receipt: .....

Please tick if you are interested in a post-conference gathering: .....

Please return this form by 27 March to: I.A. Fraser, SPNS (C), School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh, 27 George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9LD.

SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME SOCIETY

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Scottish Place-Name Society will be three years old at the next AGM (May 1999) and the constitution states that 'Officers and committee members retire annually and are eligible for re-election, up to a maximum of three successive years, unless otherwise recommended by the Committee. The Convener shall be elected for up to three successive years.'

The present Convener, Ian Fraser, therefore, is due to demit office and you are invited to nominate a new Convener:

Nominee: _____

Proposer: _____

Seconder: _____

Having served for the three years indicated in the Constitution, Doreen Waugh (currently Vice-Convener and acting Secretary) and Carole Hough (currently Treasurer) have indicated their intention to resign from the Committee. Nominations are, therefore, invited for three vacancies on the Committee, although please note that the people elected will not necessarily be required to act as Vice-Convener, Treasurer or Secretary.

Nominee: 1._____

2,_____

3._____

Proposer: _____

Seconder: 1._____

2._____

3._____

Please note that nominations must be made in writing and signed by the nominee, proposer and seconder. Nominations must be received by the Secretary prior to the Annual General Meeting. Please mark envelope **'SPNS Committee Nomination'** and send it to **Doreen Waugh, SPNS Secretary**, at the following address:

Scottish Place-Name Survey, School of Scottish Studies, 27 George Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9LD.