

SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME NEWS

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The Newsletter of the

SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME SOCIETY
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The postal address of the Scottish Place-Name Society is:

c/o School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh EH8 9LD.

Newsletter Editor: [This issue] S. Taylor, St Andrews Scottish Studies Institute, University, St Andrews KY16 9AL.

[Next issues] Ian Fraser, School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh EH8 9LD.

Membership Details

Annual Membership £5, to be sent to Peter Drummond, 2 Albert Place, Airdrie ML6 6DT

Website

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

WELCOME to issue 8 of *Scottish Place-Name News*, with notice of our **AGM and Spring Conference** to be held in **Perth** on Saturday 13 May 2000. Full details and registration form are included with this issue.

THE EDITOR SIGNS OFF

Having been responsible for the last (and first) 8 issues of *Scottish Place-Name News*, I think the time has now come for me to have a break from this Newsletter, and it from me!

In the absence of any other forum for what is becoming an ever livelier and more productive membership, the duties and functions of the Newsletter are becoming more and more diverse. Its chief function is of course to keep members informed of relevant talks and conferences, especially those organised by the Society, as well as to carry academic, topical, political and literary items of toponymic interest.

Another important function is to carry summaries of the papers given at the Society's twice-yearly Conferences. The high quality and detailed nature of these papers is such that it is becoming more and more difficult to do them justice, quite apart from all the other excellent material that is now being produced relating to Scottish toponymics. All this points in the inevitable direction of a Scottish Place-Name Journal.

In the meantime the toponymic community in Scotland must make do with publications in neighbouring Northern

Ireland (*Ainm*) and England (*The English Place-Name Society Journal*), wherever there is relevant overlapping or analogical material, as well as the Society of Names Studies in Britain and Ireland's journal *Nomina*, and such academic journals as the *Innes Review* and *Scottish Language*, which are increasingly carrying material of direct toponymic relevance. Another important role of this Newsletter is to keep the membership informed of relevant articles in these and other publications.

Looking back over the first 8 issues of *SPNNews*, I am very aware of their lack of illustrations, given the very visual nature of much toponymic material. Partly it must be due to my unadventurous design instincts. Deadlines and other commitments never seem to allow enough time for me to get to grips with the more ambitious aspects of design. Besides, a limit on the size of the newsletter is imposed by postal rates, and the fact that every issue has more than enough written material also discourages me from trying out more imaginative design, thus making it easy for me to make a virtue out of a short-coming.

I would like to thank all of you who have contributed to *Scottish Place-Name News* during my time as editor, and who have done so much to make it into the lively and varied publication it has, in my biased opinion, become. I hand over editorship to Ian Fraser, convenor of the Society, and wish him well. I am sure he will find working with all of you as stimulating and as rewarding as I have done.

Simon Taylor

NOVEMBER 99 CONFERENCE

Organised by one of the Society's honorary *presides*, Prof. W.F.H. (Bill) Nicolaisen, in the University of Aberdeen, this enjoyable and interesting occasion was attended by around 40 people from all over Scotland and beyond. Mr Douglas Fraser spoke first, on **Pictish and Gaelic Place-Name Elements in Buchan**, drawing on the wealth of detailed analysis in his unpublished M.Litt thesis 'An investigation into Distributions of *ach*-, *bal*- and *pit*-

Place-Names in North East Scotland', (University of Aberdeen, 1998) [in which 'North-East' is in fact everything east of a line drawn between Perth and Inverness]. The sooner the results of this admirable piece of work are published, the better.

The second paper was given by Dr Richard Cox of the Department of Celtic, Aberdeen, whose paper '**Thoughts about the Type *Burn of***' convincingly argued that prepositional constructions, using for example Norse *á* 'on, at', are probably behind many place-names containing 'of' in areas where there was extensive Norse-speaking presence such as the Western and Northern Isles. His paper will form part of a chapter entitled 'Norse Place Names in Gaelic Scotland: Syntax as a Chronological Marker' in a forthcoming book *One Cultural Province: Comparative Irish-Scottish Studies*, (provisional title), edited by Cathal Ó Hainle and Donald (2001).

The third paper, by Mr Edwin Martin, on the recording of place-names on the **Mar Estate, Deeside**, is usefully summarised below by the speaker himself.

The day concluded with a stimulating paper by Prof. Bill Nicolaisen himself, entitled '**The Earliest English Place-Names in the North-East**'. This looked at both the date of introduction and the nature of Older Scots place-names in Aberdeenshire, summarising his recent article 'The Earliest English Place Names in North East Scotland', *Northern Scotland* 18 (1999), 67-82.

CARTOGRAPHIC and TOPONYMIC RESEARCH ON THE MAR ESTATE

Summary of the paper given by Edwin Martin, Aberdeen, November 1999.

I outlined the results of my research of maps of the Mar Estate in Upper Deeside as compiled or printed by Pont (1583-90), Gordon (1630-40), Blaeu (1654), Farquharson (1703), Moll (1725), Winter (1743), Roy (1747-55), Arrowsmith (1807) and Ordnance Survey 6 inch (1866, 1903, 1971) as well as the current OS 25000 (Pathfinder) series.

Place-names were listed on a hand-out with their various spellings, and attention was drawn to omissions and exclusions from map to map. Reference was made to Rental Lists of the Mar Estate, going back to the early 1700s, with further variations in spelling.

It was suggested that omissions and inclusions would be influenced by the scale and purpose of the map and that spellings were a phonetic rendering of a Gaelic name as it sounded to an English or Lowland Scottish cartographer.

There seemed to be a deliberate policy to introduce Gaelic spellings on the 1866 OS 6 inch map and a return to Anglicised spellings on the 1903 revision. Was this peculiar to 'Royal Deeside' or were there similar instances in other parts of the country?

Ordnance Survey does not appear to have a written policy for the inclusion or exclusion of place-names on maps. In Upper Deeside complete ruins are named and occupied houses are not.

I expressed the hope that the SPNS would be consulted by Ordnance Survey as part of the £42 million mapping update of Great Britain, reported in *The Times* on 30 March 1999, particularly as the update proposes to make more use of Gaelic place-names.

The talk concluded with 'translations' of Gaelic place-names on the Mar Estate. Did the early inhabitants get it right? Do the Gaelic words and phrases give a true interpretation of what we see? Or have things changed so radically over the years that the names now have no meaning?

Edwin Martin

Re Ordnance Survey, a representative has indeed been in touch with the Society, as well as with other bodies and individuals concerned with Gaelic place-names in Scotland, as part of the above-mentioned consultation. More on this in a future Place-Name News.

For a comprehensive study of the place-names of this area, see the excellent Place Names of Upper Deeside, A. Watson and E. Allan (Aberdeen 1984).

SCOTTISH HILL NAMES: THE INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS

'Scotland in Europe' is a party political slogan: 'Europe in Scotland' summarises the work I've done on hill-names in the last few years. In 1991 the Scottish Mountaineering Club (SMC) published my *Scottish Hill and Mountain Names* (1). Both they and I were pleasantly surprised by how well it did, going quickly to a second edition and still selling today: proof, if it were needed, of the great popular interest in place-names. Since then, most of my work in this field has been on exploring the diverse European origins of many Scottish hill-names in a series of articles in the SMC's annual Journal (2).

Hekla in Uist is a flagship (a longship?) of the Norse inheritance in hill-names of the Scottish islands and the north-west seaboard: there is of course a more famous Hekla, the volcano, in Iceland, and one in Norway - the cowed one, from its plume of cloud (or smoke). But the Norse flotilla is extensive: not just the ubiquitous element *fjall* which became *-field*, *-fiold*, *-val*, *-shal* and *fell* on its journey south; but also elements like *bjerg*, *kambr*, *gnupr*, *stakkr* and *stor*, the root of such Scottish hill-names as Nutberry, Kame, The Noup, The Stack of Glencoul and The Storr. The Cuillin (of Skye, and Rum) is the Gaelic echo of the Vikings' cry of *Kiolen* (a keel, upturned, used in Norway and Iceland for ranges) on sighting these rocky reminders of home.

Irish Gaelic is of course the father of so many Scottish names. But in comparing the parent-child relationship, it was clear that the offspring was no mere chip from the block. The classic Irish hill-name, *sliabh*, that dominates the Mountains of Mourne, hardly landed here but it faded to oblivion, whilst *beinn*, that mightiest of Scottish hill-names, comes from a little corner of Connemara where the hills are not even O'Munros in height. Two-thirds of the sixty-plus Scottish Gaelic hill-elements have no apparent Irish ancestor (eg *sgurr* or *stob* or *monadh*), and some Irish hill-elements failed to survive the crossing (like

mas or *ceide*), while many other apparently similar words have different meanings altogether (eg *carn*, a burial cairn in Ireland [and much of Lowland Scotland], is a pointed hill in Lochaber, and a rounded hill on Deeside). On the other hand the totemic hill-name of Ben Gulabin, found all over Scotland and linked to the legendary Diarmaid, has its source towering above Yeats' grave near Sligo.

Old English is a tap-root of many Scots place-names. The word *hill* itself which (unlike the other generic English word *mountain*) is found in literally thousands of individual hill-names, including some high examples like Kirriereoch Hill. One of the great ironies is that this archetypal English word for high ground is a prophet without honour in the Lakes, England's highest ground, where but two of the highest 200 peaks are called hill! *Law* and *knowe* are two other common Scots hill-elements with Old English ancestry of a fairly pure sort, while others like *fell*, *dod*, and *rig* have Norse great-uncles on that side of the border.

Finally, I turn to the Indo-European connection, searching for deeper roots. If you want to ponder on the connections between Scottish Gaelic hill-name elements like *meall* and *torr*, to hill-words in Catalan and Breton, French and Icelandic, English and Italian: or, to reflect on the apparent connection between Scotland's peaks Groban, Crib Law and Cruban Mor with the Mongolian *khrebet*, via Russian's *krebet*, Slovak's *hreiben*, French's *grepon*, Breton's *kribenn*, Welsh's *cryb* . . . then you must turn to the 1999 SMC Journal for more detail than space permits here.

Peter Drummond

(1) *Scottish Hill and Mountain Names* is available at £9.95 from any good bookseller, or from the author at same price (p&p incl.) from 2 Albert Place, Airdrie ML6 6DT.

(2) *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journals* nos 187-190, for 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 - 'Scottish Hill-names - the Scandinavian/ Irish / English / Outer Mongolian Connection' respectively.

ABERDEENSHIRE

See various papers given at the Aberdeen Conference, summarised above pp. 2-3.

EAST LoTHIAN

In William Patterson's piece on East Lothian place-names in SPNews no. 7 (p. 5) mention was made of a possible cill- ('church') place-name **KILMURDO**. This name, which no longer appears on OS maps, has in fact some remarkably early attestations, and points to a very non-ecclesiastical derivation.

The name first occurs in the 13th-century record as *Carmurdac* (written *Carnundac*) or *Karmurdath* (or *Karmurdach*): *The Lanercost Cartulary* ed. J. M. Todd (Surtees Society no. 23, 1997), pp. 85, 190. Perhaps the 'prominent natural knowe' really was a fort of some kind, or perhaps *caer* (*car*) was used as a nickname? The name appears with a note in the OS Name Book for Dirleton parish, mentioning i.a. stone coffins.

Geoffrey Barrow

CARMINSTAN

On a recent first-time visit to a house at Gifford, East Lothian, I noted that as well as the numbered address as used by the occupants it bore a sign with the name 'Carminstan'. Was this perhaps after some previously unheard of but linguistically intriguing hillfort? Well, no: apparently the previous owners had three dogs: Caroline, Minetta and Stanley.

William Patterson

INVERNESS-SHIRE: GLENGARRY AND GLENQUOICH

Place-Names of Glengarry and Glenquoich, Edward C. Ellice (1898), Reprint of the 1931 Edition, Glengarry Visitor Centre (1999), 163 pp. hardback £19.99.

First published in 1898 and later revised in 1931, *Place-Names of Glengarry and Glenquoich and their Associations* was compiled by Edward C. Ellice (1858-1934), last of the Ellices to live in Invergarry House as laird of the large

estates of Glengarry and Glenquoich, which stretch westwards from the Great Glen.

A classic of its kind, this volume is made available as a limited edition reprint of the 1931 revision. It is ? by Glengarry Visitor Centre, which recently opened on the site of the old inn next to Invergarry Hotel.

Ellice, a Gaelic-speaking lover of all things Highland, approaches the study of place-names from the perspective of the well-read, benevolent laird who wishes to 'encourage the people of these glens to keep up the old local traditions'. It is essentially a local history that uses the place-names as the vehicle for researching and transmitting a wide-ranging compendium of anecdotes, personal recollections and local lore, as well as explanations as to the origin and meaning of names.

The core of the book takes the reader through the four districts of Glengarry, Aberchalder, Ardochy and Glenquoich, exploring in turn mountains, loch, rivers and other place-names. Each chapter is prefaced by a brief general introduction that provides a useful background to aspects of geology, natural history, land-use and general history.

Liberally illustrated with sketches of local characters and accompanied by an indispensable fold-out map, Ellice's eclectic study concludes with a series of appendices that reflect the fact that the author is the owner of a great estate. Notes from the Glenquoich game-book and 'Extracts from the Visitors' Book at Glenquoich reveal something of the early Victorian fascination with the Highlands, while the section 'The Birds of Glengarry' by Murdoch Matheson, gamekeeper and deerstalker in Glengarry, provides the natural historian with a rare account of over 130 species of nesting bird. Despite Ellice's uncritical approach to the study of place-names and his lack of reference to some material, this book remains a compelling read after 100 years. If anything, it reminds us of the value of place-names in unlocking the memory of

places and in revealing the many facets of the wider environment.

David M. Munro

INVERNESS-SHIRE: SOLLAS, NORTH UIST

Ainmean Aiteachan Sgire Sholais by Catriona NicIain. A collection of approximately 350 place-names of the Sollas district, North Uist, with notes and information. Gaelic text, 14 maps, 21 colour photographs.

Available price £9 + 70p p. & p. from the author, 18 Drynie Terrace, Inverness IV2 4UP or Mrs P. Johnson, Sollas, North Uist.

PERTHSHIRE: SANCTA CRUX WELL

A short footnote to the discussion of this name in the last issue of *SPNNews* (no. 7): I had a quick look for it in the Ordnance Survey Original Name-Books (held on microfilm in the library of the RCAHM, Bernard Terrace, Edinburgh: public access), but could find neither this name nor 'Grews Well' (nor 'Grews Hill') in the Name Book for Dunkeld and Dowally parish. It was a very perfunctory search, and perhaps I missed it. Can anyone help?

Also, more on this well can be found on http://www.heartlander.scotland.net/gallery/..\\dac\\book_Story_22.htm

Editor

And still on the subject of wells..... ?

BULLION IN SCOTTISH PLACE-NAMES

Place-names containing the word 'Bullion' are found in central and southern Scotland and in the North of England, but at present there is no consensus regarding their origins. The names have not been considered together as a group before, and it is hoped that this may shed some light on the theories that have so far been suggested.

Old Irish *bullán* 'bowl, hollow' can be ruled out because there are no occurrences of *Bullion* names in the current Gaelic-

speaking areas of Scotland and the distribution map also includes parts of England.

Angus Macdonald identifies two 'Bullion Well[s]' in Ecclesmachan WLO derived, he argues, from the Scots present participle *bullyand* 'boiling', because of the manner in which the spring bubbles out of the ground. It would, however, be very unusual to find a present participle as place-name. I have been building a corpus of the Germanic elements so far identified in Scotland, and although it includes around five hundred entries at present, it does not contain any examples of present participles. Furthermore, names such as Bullionfield in Angus and Bullion Rigg in Northumbria have no obvious connection with wells or springs, and so this seems an unlikely solution.

A third possibility is a connection with an English dialectal term *bullyon*, defined in the supplement to Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* as 'a quagmire, bog; dangerous ground'. Unfortunately there is little evidence for the existence of this word, which was omitted from the main dictionary because its authority was unsatisfactory.

A fourth possibility is the word *ballion*, defined by Jamieson as 'a reaper who...gives assistance to any party which is falling behind in work'. However, many of the names that include the element *bullion* occur as simplex names, and this would be an unlikely use of an occupational term. In my own corpus of elements, there are many instances of occupational terms like 'baxter' and 'smith' but they are always followed by a generic such as 'croft' or 'land'.

Finally, I would like to examine a 19th-century suggestion. The Feast which celebrated the translation of St. Martin of Tours was once known throughout Scotland as *Martin Bullion's Day*, or simply *Bullion's Day*. The Bullion Well, in Ecclesmachan WLO is mentioned in J. M. MacKinlay's *Folklore of Scottish Lochs and Springs* (1893), and he makes a connection between the saint's name and this spring, and Bullionfield in Angus.

Dedications of springs to saints including Bridget and Ninian can be found all over the British Isles, and so the association of springs and wells with Martin Bullion is not implausible. The use of 'Bullion' in reference to St. Martin can be traced back to the French *Saint Martin le bouillant*, from the Latin form *Martinus bulliens*. Meaning 'boiling', it referred to the fact that this Feast fell in the heat of July, in contrast to the saint's main Feast-day, on 11 November. In Selkirkshire and Aberdeenshire, Fairs were held in the name of St. Martin Bullion, and this provides another possible link between the distribution pattern of these names and local traditional culture.

In this small survey it has not been possible to establish a firm etymology for these names. However, a number of previous suggestions have been ruled out, and this in itself takes us further towards an understanding of this group of names. I have so far had little success tracing early spellings, but I have been able to establish that some date back at least as far as the seventeenth century. Other references may be waiting to be discovered, and if anyone here knows of any, or has any views on the derivation of the 'Bullion' names, I should be grateful for information.

This piece was first presented as a short paper at the SPNSoc. Conference in May 1999. Since then I have indeed discovered some other Bullion names, and I am particularly grateful to John Reid for supplying me with the records of early spellings for some of the Scottish names.

Maggie Scott

Dept. of English Language, University of Glasgow, <9340861s@student.gla.ac.uk>

GOWFAN NAMES

In my golfing days, which ended while I was still a teenager, I would take my mind off my score, as it entered treble figures, by savouring the names of the holes painted neatly in thick black letters on each tee-box. The course was Aberdour in Fife, the time the 1960s. I particularly liked those which recorded local names that had otherwise fallen into disuse, but were

current when the course was established around 1900: names such as *Ainslie's Pier*, the name of a ruined jetty on the Donibristle Estate, or *Kinniker* the name of a small wood (containing, I later discovered, Scots *cunningar* 'rabbit warren'). Usually such names refer to a feature lying beside (or under!) a particular hole, though sometimes also to a more distant feature visible from that hole.

Apart from when Paul Lawrie won the Open last year, my interest in gowf has since been confined to the names of holes, and I now have a small collection of score-cards from clubs which obligingly put the name of the hole beside the other, more prosaic, information such as par and distance. As Dr George Philp of *Scotsoun Productions* reminded me recently, the names of holes can also contain some fine examples of Scots in the form of advice or warning, such as *Fair Dunt*, *Muckle Clour* or *Dinna Fouter*, the last the name of a hole at Turnberry. Dr Philp is collecting such names, and would appreciate any examples SPNSoc. members might have. Dr Philp writes: "Some 10 years ago, in the company of the late Bill Graham (author of *The Scots Word Book*), I walked over the ground laid out for the second nine holes at Blackcrest Course, Thornhill DMF to enable us to make appropriate suggestions to the committee, who had approached us for help in this matter. Our nomenclature met with approval, as many of our descriptions are to be found on the club card today."

He adds: "Who decides on these names? Is there a member of each Club committee responsible for the choosing of the terminology? Are the names ever reconsidered, or are they forever fixed? I would appreciate the thoughts of gowfers on the names given to the holes on their own courses, especially those in Fife."

Dr Philp would be pleased to hear from any SPNSoc. member on this topic and can be contacted at 13 Ashton Rd., Glasgow G12 8SP.

Editor

And while on the subject of gowf, SPNSoc. member Kenneth Fraser sent in a brochure for yet another holiday cottage

development beside St Andrews called Balmashie! Is it a plot to confuse place-name studies, he wonders. Where will it end? Pitputter? Driverton? Aucheniblick?

VOICES OFF THE MAP: PLACE-NAMES IN A POEM BY EDWIN MORGAN

Canedolia

An Off-Concrete Scotch Fantasia

oa! hoy! awe! ba! mey!

who saw?

rhu saw rum. garve saw smoo. nigg saw tain. lairg saw lagg.
rigg saw eigg. largs saw haggs. tongue saw luss. mull saw yell.
stoer saw strone. drem saw muck. gask saw noss. unst saw cults.
echt saw banff. weem saw wick. trool saw twatt.

how far?

from largo to lunga from joppa to skibo
from ratho to shona from
ulva to minto from tinto to tolsta from
soutra to marsco from
braco to barra from alva to stobo from
fogo to fada from gigha to
gogo from kelso to stroma from hirta to
spango.

what is it like there?

och it's freuchie, it's faifley, it's
wamphray, it's frandy, it's
sliddery.

what do you do?

we foindle and fungle, we bonkle and
meigle and maxpoffle. we
scotstarvit, armit, wormit, and even
whifflet. we play at crossstobs,
leuchars, gorbals and finfan. we scavaig,
and there's aye a bit of
tilquilly. if it's wet, treshnish and
mishnish.

what is the best of the country?

blinkbonny! airgold! thundergay!

and the worst?

scrishven, shiskine, scrabster, and snizort.

listen! what's that?

catacol and wauchope, never heed them.

tell us about last night

well, we had a wee ferintosh and we lay on
the quirang. it was
pure strontian!

but who was there?

petermoidart and craigenkenneth and
cambusputtock and
ecclemuchty and corriehulish and
balladolly and altnacanny and
clauchanvreachan and stronachlochan and
auchenlachar and
tighnacrankie and tilliebruaigh and
killieharra and invervannach
and achnatudlem and machrishellach and
inchtamurchan and
auchterfechan and kinlochculter and
ardnawhallie and
invershuggle.

and what was the toast?

schiehallion! schiehallion! schiehallion!

From *Selected Poems* by Edwin Morgan, printed by permission of Carcanet Press.

What the reader notices at once is that something is *going on* here at a level of meaning that seems to bypass that of ordinary discourse. A supreme attentiveness to language is felt to be at work, with every place-name milked for meaning or associations it might convey to the ear or eye, on its own or in association with its neighbours. There is a mercurial, shifting quality, a celebratory nervous energy that makes the hair stand on end when you read the poem aloud. Some kind of dialogue is going on between two or more speakers, of which one seems to be a stranger, asking for and receiving information or reassurance from another who seems to be part of a larger group. To whom might these voices belong?

One of the abiding concerns of Edwin Morgan's poetry is to voice the unvoiced, to endow with speech those —whether people, creatures, or things—who cannot speak for themselves. As he says in an interview with W.N. Herbert, '[t]he world, history, society, everything in it, pleads to become a voice, voices!' (*Gairfish*, 1:2). In his poem, 'Afterwards', a Vietnamese child speaks; in other poems, an apple, a hyena; the sounds of Prospero's island, the Glasgow starlings; and Shakespeare in the moving 'Instructions to an Actor'. It should come as no surprise, then, to find he may have given a voice to the place-names of Scotland, to Caledonia—or rather *Canedolia*.

One of the great strengths of Morgan's poetry is that it comes at the world obliquely, from a different perspective, and this oblique stance, as Robyn Marsack has suggested in her essay, 'Edwin Morgan and Contemporary Poetry', may be conditioned by his homosexuality. He has said that it is always the human story that attracts him, and many of his poems give dramatised speech to those on the margins of society. *Canedolia* is 'Caledonia' re-arranged, seen from a different perspective, and this anagram gives us the first hint that we should prick up our ears for all possible forms of word-play. 'Canedolia' itself sounds as though it might mean 'the howling of dogs', and the first line of the poem, with its monosyllabic, almost consonant-less cries, does indeed sound like that.

The answer to the first question, '*who saw?*', couples together place-names which are still monosyllabic, but more complex. The question also suggests that these are entities capable of seeing. Some conjunctions seem to involve like with like, as in 'rigg saw eigg', while others seem to offer an attraction of opposites, as in 'nigg saw tain', or 'garve saw smoo'. Given that 'garve' [Gaelic *garbh*] means *rough*, and that 'smoo' sounds like *smooth*, we know that meaning will be found at the level of near-pun. That what is going on here is actually an exuberant and joyful coupling becomes clear as body-parts start

emerging, with legs and hair entangled in 'lairg saw lagg. . . largs saw hagg', and a lusty tongue going about its business. Moreover there are parts that more often go unmentioned, except as obscenities, but which are here given voice and recognition: 'unst saw cults. . . weem saw wick. trool saw twatt.'

What is intriguing about the answer to the question, '*how far?*', is the way place-names ending in *o* and *a* are paired. These words have the look of first names in a Romance language—men's names ending in *o*, and women's in *a*. Moreover they are arranged back to back: the repeated pattern is 'from *o* to *a* from *a* to *o*' throughout the stanza, with no dividing punctuation. Notice that alternative couplings may take place on the back of the rhythm; on the off-beat, as it were, couplings like 'to *a* from *a*' and 'to *o* from *o*' are accommodated like a rich syncopation, with near-rhyme or full rhyme, as in 'to stobo from fogo', or 'to minto from tinto'.

Asked, '*what is it like there?*', the Canedolian comes up with words that have the look and feel of adjectives. What they all share is a kind of lack of definition, a comfortable, fuzzy quality. Even the 'och' at the beginning of the line sounds as though the speaker feels it would be impossible to convey in a word what the essence of *canedolia* might be, but that it might be all of these things—a generous, compendious kind of place.

As for '*what do you do there?*', the names suggest that congress of the most uninhibited and imaginative kind takes place, from the obvious 'foindle and fungle' and 'bonkle', and the physicality of 'we scotstarvit, armit, wormit, and even whifflet', to the ludic infantilism of 'we play at crossstobs, gorbals and finfan', and the teasing precision of 'if it's wet, treshnish and mishnish'. 'Scavaig' suggests *stravaig*, while 'tilquilly' reminds us of the old Scots word for penis—*quilly*.

The three sonorous names epitomising '*the best of the country*', are suggestive of clear-sightedness, air, daylight, and an outspoken confidence in sexual orientation; while '*the worst*' are more like sneers and

snorts of disapproval—sounds suggestive of tightly-pursed mouths, and the twitch of net curtains. Indeed, it may be the catcalls of homophobia that are heard in 'catacol', whose taunts the stranger is invited to disregard as worthless or stale.

The phrase, 'we had a wee ferintosh' evokes the ghost of an old whisky, once made by Duncan Forbes of Culloden, an anti-Jacobite, who was afterwards granted a licence to distil whisky when taxes made this prohibitive to anyone else; and, remembering that the parish of Strontian gave its name to the radio-active element, strontium 90, it is tempting to feel that the pleasures of lying 'on the quirang' (the sound of a springy divan?) are potentially dangerous. Ever playful, Morgan dares us to ignore or pursue such historical resonances.

You will not find 'petermoidart' or any of his companions on any map, except one of 'canedolia', of course. All these names have been allowed to indulge in linguistic promiscuity and swap their usual partners for others. Some have done a straight swap, like *peterculter* and *kinlochmoidart*, but others, more daring, have ventured further afield, or even come to the party on their own. You will look in vain for 'hannish' —'machri's usual partner—and have fun deciding whether 'tillie' has been partnering 'whally' and 'tudlem'.

What is interesting is how natural these new couples sound, as though the land of 'canedolia' had space enough for all. In the poem's final lines, homophobic abuse is mischievously and wittily recuperated: as the reply to '*what was the toast*' rings out three times, we imagine glasses being raised, and the effect of this upward movement is to make us see Schiehallion. itself - *the fairy hill of the Caledonians* - rising up before our eyes.

Anna Crowe
Selected Poems by Edwin Morgan can be obtained from CARCANET PRESS LTD, 208-212 Corn Exchange, Manchester M4 3BQ.

INTERNET NEWS

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

Firstly....THE BEAST ITSELF

If statistics are your thing, OCLC Web Characterization Project has some interesting figures

<http://www.oclc.org/oclc/research/projects/webstats/index.htm>

For instance, from the OCLC "June 1999 Web Statistics" survey of Web Size:

Number of Web Sites: 4,882,000 (+/- 3%) [in 1997 it was 1,570,000.]

Number of Unique Web Sites: 3,649,000 (+/- 3%) [in 1997 it was 1,230,000]

For all other enquiries.....

The best search engine I have yet come across has to be

<http://www.alltheweb.com/>

FAST: all-the-web, all-the time. Looking for something? Look here first!

NEW DISCUSSION LIST

A new electronic discussion list has been established under mailbase. The list, history-digitisation, is concerned with the digitisation, whether as an image or a fully machine-readable document, of historical material. Particular emphasis will be placed on the application of Optical Character Recognition technology to 'difficult' material.

Increasingly there are efforts to add content to the WWW. The UK government, through the New Opportunities Fund, has recently announced a £50,000,000 initiative to create digital resources. Much of this material will be of a historical nature. This poses unique problems - the material may be of poor quality and hence difficult to capture, in may be rare and fragile. This list aims to bring together experts in the field of digitising historical material and academics who have projects in mind.

To join history-digitisation go to
<http://www.mailbase.ac.uk/lists/history-digitisation/>

MAPPING UTILITIES

<http://164.214.2.59/geospatial/products/>

DTED/dted.html

At the above the National Imagery and Mapping Agency offers a clickable map to select one degree squares (rectilinear projection) of the world. The chosen squares are displayed as 628 x 590 pixel color GIF files, roughly 15 cm squares. These can be copied and pasted to make whatever coverage you wish. You may wish to stretch these vertically to the proper proportion of latitude to longitude.

The GIF files are accessed directly at

<http://164.214.2.59/geospatial/products/images/n53e0.gif>

(This example generates North 53 degrees latitude, East 0 degrees longitude.)

The map legend is at

<http://164.214.2.59/geospatial/products/DTED/legend.jpg>

The Millennium Map

<http://www.millennium-map.com>

may be of interest. According to the blurb on the site, the Millennium Map is a complete aerial photographic survey of the UK. High-definition, colour photographs to a nominal scale of 1:10,000 are acquired for the whole of the UK by a carefully planned flying programme. The photography complies with the demanding RICS specification, required by most professional users.

The Ordnance Survey at

<http://www.ordsvy.gov.uk/freegb/index.htm>

have freely downloadable maps in four formats, with or without county boundaries.

And you might want to look at a utility called "mappad" which is downloadable from

<http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/paleo/softlib.html>

This has a range of maps of almost all parts of the world, including the outline of Britain and related areas. The supporting NOAA site is also very good.

NORTHERN IRELAND

The Archaeology Data Service (ADS), in conjunction with Environment and Heritage

Service (part of Department of the Environment Northern Ireland), is delighted to announce that an on-line version of the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record is now available through the ADS catalogue at

<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/>

The SMR contains over 14,000 references to the archaeology of Northern Ireland and will have particular relevance to researchers interested in the Irish Sea zone (Ireland, Isle of Man, NW England, Scotland and Wales). As examples, there is a wealth of data about crannogs, souterrains and early monastic sites.

A new spatial descriptor has been introduced for use with a 'Where Search'. The 'Townland' still has a strong cultural significance in many parts of Britain and Ireland and will be an essential search term for these areas.

WALES

Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments has recently launched a web site at:

<http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk>

ON-LINE JOURNALS (AKA "e-JOURNALS")

Check out the website of **Living Spring Journal** (LSJ), the new e-journal for **holy wells**. It's up and running at <http://www.bath.ac.uk/lispring/journal/front.htm>

Unlike print journals, you will not, for the time being, have to pay a subscription to read LSJ - access is free to all over the WWW.

FINALLY...Scots Origins

www.origins.net

run the Official Online Genealogical Database in conjunction with the General Register Office of Scotland. Along with information regarding how to access the official pay-per-view database, the site also contains other research tools and resources.

All the best for the noughties!

The Society apologises for any difficulties you may have had recently in accessing our website. This was due to a little local problem, swiftly solved by Dr Julian Crowe of St Andrews University IT Services, to whom many thanks.

ON THE TRAIL OF KENTIGERN: ADDENDUM

Following on the piece in SPNNews no. 7, I have now had a second opinion on the p-n TREGONDERN, from M. Bernard Tanguy of the Centre de Recherche Bretonne et Celtique at the Universite Bretagne Occidentale (Brest).

He gives 1386 TREFFGONDERN, 1508 TREFFGONDERN, and says it is composed of *treb* + eponym *Condern* < older *Cunotigernos* [i.e. Kentigern], but there is no indication whether the eponym is of a saint or a layman, and the name is not otherwise attested as the name of a saint in Brittany.

He therefore confirms my doubts about the weird etymology proposed by the Institut Géographique National, and agrees the *Cunotigernos* personal name appears here.

Henry Gough-Cooper

SIGNING ON THE DOTTED LINE

The SPNSoc. Gaelic Signs sub-committee hasn't lain dormant since its first report in this Newsletter a year ago. Highland Council and more recently its Perth & Kinross equivalent have been furnished with more place-name proposals by Ian Fraser, Simon Taylor, Richard Cox, Roy Wentworth and sub-committee convenor Peadar Morgan, with ScotRail being a further likely beneficiary.

Railway stations dotting the map between Perth and Inverness are now expected to join those further north and west in featuring their Gaelic names - not yet those on the lines east and west, so putting off the final reckoning on the proper Gaelic for Gleneagles. *Gleann Eaglais* looks the obvious, but unlikely ('glen of churches'?!), answer, especially

when you read in the toponymic study of the area by SPNS-member Angus Watson, *The Ochils* (Perth & Kinross District Libraries 1995), that the *gl* in the second element is unknown to the historic record before 1664. *Gleann Eagas*, from a river-name??

The local council's Gaelic Officer has asked for and been given other names too, which he hopes to promote in Council business and signage. In Highland, lists have been requested and given once signage has already been agreed; thus the Wester Ross footpath signs, Highland library names and Skye roundabout baptism since the last report have all had to be produced at such speed that there would have been less danger of broken necks if we'd erected the signs ourselves. At least, that's our excuse for any mistakes....

That and the more fundamental point always stressed - if mostly in vain - by the sub-committee that the local authority should always give Gaelic users resident in the location a say in deciding the final signage forms. Non-local expertise has been called in, though, with Professor Nancy Dorian in the USA kindly looking back over her notes from her days studying the Gaelic dialect of East Sutherland to provide two separate witnesses to *Drochaid a' Bhonnar*, thus challenging the evidence handed down from Professor W.J. Watson that Bonar Bridge represents *Drochaid a' Bhannath* ('bridge of the bottom ford'). One of the many issues which has made the sub-committee's work so interesting!

Peadar Morgan

NORMANDY NEWS

The conference organised in Normandy on *The Viking Maritime Heritage in Western Europe*, with which readers of the *SPNNews* will be familiar, passed off successfully from 30 Sept. to 3 Oct. 1999. It was the first event to be held in the brand-new, high-tech conference centre beside the little village of Flottemanville-Hague near Cherbourg. The local population showed its lively interest in the

subject, with daily attendances of between 100 and 150 people.

The SPNSociety was well represented, with 8 members giving papers. One whole day was devoted to toponymy, especially maritime, with contributions by R. Cox (Aberdeen), D. Mac Giolla Easpaig (Dublin), R. Lepelley (Normandy) and D. Waugh (Edinburgh). The proceedings of the conference will be published by Caen University Press at the end of 2000.

I have also written a full report of the Conference in French in *Archéologia* 362 (Dec. 1999); also a short article on the Viking nautical heritage in Normandy in the bulletin of OUE (Office Universitaire d'Etudes Normandes). Let me know if you would like a copy by writing to me at OUE, Université de Caen, 14032 Caen Cédex, France.

Elisabeth Ridel

IDEOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

It would be impossible to examine **Language, Imagination and Landscape in the Gaelic of Ireland and Scotland** for a couple of days without encountering many examples and explanations of place-names. And of course the subjects of this international, multilingual conference at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in Skye last September all served to put place and name in context.

Place-names were, as Prof Donald Meek argued, part of the "emotional geography", and a "symbol of empowerment", for the 19th century Skye poetess Màiri Mhòr. And as such, should could elevate the rather featureless Beinn Li into become an enduring symbol of land agitation. But as Meg Bateman pointed out in her contribution, the personalising of hills had been all but unknown in the Gaelic poetry of the previous century.

The political line was continued by Tim Robinson, a "geo-poet" (his term) and writer and hill-tramping cartographer of the Irish west. The map, any map, represents "ideological interventions" in the feminine landscape by male - always male - cartographers. The OS intervention had been one of colonialism, conquest and

control, he said, the anglicisation of place-names (far more complete in Ireland than in Scotland) rendering them "chronologically dull and semantically null".

Not that names preserved in their original form are always semantically positive at first sight. Rob Ó Maolalaigh used the example of Gaoir na Rainich, shout of the bracken, in Raasay to demonstrate this. Without local lore (or comparable lore elsewhere) the reference to shouting from this spot to draw the attention of the ferryman would be opaque. He examined the wide use of imagination in naming, and highlighted the lack of research into the "dialects" of the Gaelic place-names of Scotland and Ireland.

Iain MacInnes, ex-School of Scottish Studies, as ever had interesting insights to contribute. Looking at the various words for "wilderness", he saw *aonach* [assembly, market] as having extended its meaning to open moorland and occasionally the high tops by dint of the worldwide practice of holding gatherings on land between communities. And I am particularly indebted to him for apparently confirming my suspicion that the Dirrie More on the Ullapool road is not "the big climb" of Watson and general belief, but An Dìthre(i)bh Mòr - the big wilderness.

Congratulations to Wilson McLeod of Sabhal Mòr and Máire Ní Annracháin of Maynooth for jointly organising an excellent and enjoyable conference, and a useful reminder that place-names should not be viewed in isolation: always ask whose ideology they represent!

Peadar Morgan

DEATHS

It is with great regret that we have to announce the deaths of two members of the Society: Mr Robert Robertson of Pitlochry, who attended the inaugural meeting of the Society in St Andrews in February 1996; and Mr Alan Small, formerly of the Geography Department, University of Dundee. Alan Small was author and editor of several place-name and place-name related articles and books, including (with M.B. Cottam) 'The distribution of

settlement in southern Pictland', *Medieval Archaeology* 18 (1974); (as editor) *The Picts, A New Look at Old Problems* (1987); and (with R. MacDonald.) 'Pre-burghal Dundee', *Scottish Geographical Studies*, eds. A. Dawson *et al.*, 134-43 (1993).

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations are extended to two Society members who have recently successfully finished place-name related Ph.D. theses: Anke-Beate Stahl, University of Edinburgh, on the place-names of Barra; and Peder Gammeltoft, University of Copenhagen, on the place-name element *bólstaðr*.

ANGLO-SAXON PLANT-NAME SURVEY SYMPOSIUM

A multidisciplinary symposium on plant studies relevant to the early medieval period will be held at Glasgow University 5-7 April 2000. Of especial interest to toponymists will be Dr Della Hooke on *Trees in the Landscape: Evidence from Anglo-Saxon Charters*, Dr Carole Hough on *Place-Name Evidence for Anglo-Saxon Plant-Names*, Prof. Hans Sauer on *The Morphology of the Old English Plant-Names*, and Prof. Cathair O'Dochartaigh on *The Structure of Plant-Names in Irish*. For more information write to Conference and Vacation Office, University of Glasgow, 3 The Square, Glasgow G12 8RR, tel. 0141 330 5385 or e-mail <conf@gla.ac.uk>.

Full details can also be found on <http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/EngLang/ihs/ projects/plants.htm>

END-NOTE FROM ULSTER

The *Irish News* of 18 10. 99 reported that new street signs in Ulster Scots erected by Castlereagh council, Northern Ireland, were ripped down by loyalists who thought they were in Irish Gaelic. No sooner had the signs been erected on walls at Tullyard Way in a lavish ceremony attended by beaming council chiefs than they were pulled down by loyalists on what they

thought was an anti-Irish mission. The offending sign read Tullyard Way, with the Ulster-Scots version Heichbrae Eirt below. A local councillor was quoted as saying 'It was the residents who requested the signs and when they were put up we informed them by letter. But a lot of people weren't quite sure what language they were in.' Thanks to Kay Muhr of the N.I. Place-Name Project for sending in the cutting. No wonder the locals were confused! She also sent in a job advertisement from the *Belfast Telegraph* of 23.11.99 for an Equality Schemes Manager. It appeared in 4 languages: English, Irish, Chinese and Ulster Scots, which last showed the same fantastical qualities as the sign-post in Castlereagh, the job title appearing as Eeksi-Peeksie Skame Heid-Yin. Crivens!

PONT IN LANARKSHIRE

The next PROJECT PONT SEMINAR will be held at New Lanark on SATURDAY 1 APRIL 2000, 10.15 - 16.30.

This seminar, the fourth in the series of Project Pont Seminars organised by the National Library of Scotland, explores a wide range of subjects relating to Timothy Pont's 16th century maps of Scotland.

Topics include architecture and archaeology, towns and place-names (of Lesmahagow in particular), surveying methods and symbols, and analysis of the maps themselves. Three papers are also of local Clydesdale interest. Following requests after the last seminar, Jeffrey Stone will start the day with an overview of Pont and his maps, particularly aimed at people who have not attended previous seminars.

COST £15.00 per head to include: sandwich lunch, morning & afternoon tea or coffee; registration forms available from NLS (Map Library), 33 Salisbury Place, Edinburgh EH9 1SL, Tel 0131-226 4531.

SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND CONFERENCE

The 9th annual conference of the SNSBI will be held at the University of Wales,

Bangor, 28 April – 1 May 2000. The programme includes Peder Gammeltoft (**Scandinavian place-names in the Hebrides**), and Maggie Scott (**Privick – a Scottish place-name**); also Richard Coates (**Toponymic databases**); Diana Saunders (**Anglian place-names in Huntingdonshire**); Della Hooke (**Place-names and land-use in the Conwy valley**); John Koch (**early Celtic names**); and Dónall Mac Giolla Easpaig (**Banchoer**). There is level access to the conference room, and all buildings used. *Registration and full board for residents from Friday dinner to breakfast on Monday, will be £145.00 for SNSBI members, £150.00 for non-members. More information from the Secretary, Jennifer Scherr, Hon. Secretary, SNSBI, c/o Medical Library, University of Bristol, University Walk, Bristol, BS8 1TD. Tel: 0117 928 7946.*

<J.Scherr@bristol.ac.uk>

NEW LEAFLETS

The SPNSociety now has a new, improved leaflet. If you would like some to help spread the word, for example at local history societies or local libraries, please contact the Society at its Edinburgh address. You can also collect them at the AGM and Conference.

WHAT'S ON around Scotland?

• AYRSHIRE

April: Celebrating Ulster's Townlands Exhibition (for details of which see Newsletter no. 7 p.11). For most of April this will be at the McKechnie Institute, Girvan.

• EAST LoTHIAN

25 March: Family History Fair, Town House, Haddington. This is a series of lectures and workshops given by a number of speakers, including Rosemary Bogwood, Ian Fraser (Place-Names), Dorothy Kidd (Scottish Life Archive), Ian MacDougall (Scottish Working People's History Trust), Diana Webster, NLS Map Library and Diane McNicoll, local surnames researcher.

- **FIFE**
9 March: 'Place-names of West Fife' (with special reference to Beath parish), Simon Taylor, Kelty Heritage Group: 7 pm, Moray Institute, Kelty.

- **GLASGOW**
March: "Celebrating Ulster's Townlands" Exhibition (for details of which see Newsletter no. 7 p.11). For most of March this will be at the Department of Celtic, Glasgow University (George Service House, 11 University Gardens). More information from Celtic Department Secretary on 0141 330 4222.

5-7 April: Anglo-Saxon Plant-Name Survey Symposium, Dept of English Language, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8QQ.
 See above p. 13 for more details.

KIRKCUDBRIGHTSHIRE

8 April: "Strathclyde: Birth and Death of an Ancient Kingdom", a day conference at the Community Centre, Castle Douglas. Speakers include Daphne Brooke. More information from Helen

Lonie, Department of Adult and Continuing Education, 59 Oakfield Ave., Glasgow G12 8LW Tel. 0141 330 4394.

- **LANARKSHIRE**
1 April: 'Pont and the Place-names of Lesmahagow Parish', Simon Taylor, part of Project Pont Day Conference at New Lanark, for which see above p. 14.

- **LEWIS (STORNOWAY)**
3-7 April: Gall-Ghaidheil: The Western Isles in the Viking World. See Newsletter no. 7 p. 13 for more details or contact Mary MacLeod, Arc-eòlaiche nan Eilean, Museum nan Eilean, Francis St., Stornoway HS1 2NF (tel. 01851 703242).

- **PERTH**
13 May: AGM and Day Conference of the Scottish Place-Name Society. See attached sheet for details.

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.).

<p>Deadline for material for next Newsletter: 20 August 2000</p>
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Recent Publications

- Clancy, T. O., 1999, 'The foundation legend of **Laurencekirk** revisited', *Innes Review* 50, 83-8.
- Downie, D. A., 1999, *Street Names in the Village of **Kemnay*** (Kemnay) [available from Time Pieces, Kirkstile, Kemnay AB51 5PS. Price £3.75].
- Durkan, J., 1999, 'The place-name **Balmaha**', *Innes Review* 50, 88.
- Fraser, D. M., 1998, 'An investigation into Distributions of *ach*-, *bal*- and *pit*- Place-Names in **North East Scotland**', unpublished M.Litt thesis, University of Aberdeen.
- Fraser, I. A., 1999, *The Place-Names of **Arran*** (Glasgow) [just out; more on this in next Newsletter]
- Macquarrie, A., 1996, 'An eleventh-century account of the foundation legend of **Laurencekirk**, and of Queen Margaret's pilgrimage there', *Innes Review* 47, 95-109 [discussion and translation substantially reprinted in Macquarrie *The Saints of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1997, 216-22].
- Morgan, P., 1999, *Rùm: Island Place-Names/Rùm: Ainmean Àite an Eilein* (with separate map) (Scottish Natural Heritage, Rùm) [see *SPNNews* 7, p.6].
- Newton, M., 'The Sense of Place in the Gaelic Tradition (as localised in **Strath, Isle of Skye**), *John Muir Trust Journal and News* 25 (Summer 1998), 22-6.
- NicIain, C., 1999, *Ainmean Aiteachan Sgìre Sholais* [see above p.5].
- Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 'The Earliest English Place Names in **North East Scotland**', *Northern Scotland* 18 (1999), 67-82.

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

Scottish Place-Name Society Comann Ainmean-Aite na h-Alba

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND DAY CONFERENCE PERTH SATURDAY 13 MAY 2000

You are warmly invited to attend the AGM and Day Conference of the Society, which will be held in the A.K. Bell Library, York Place, Perth. The programme is as follows:-

- 10.30** Registration and Coffee
- 11.00** Arne Kruse, Department of Scandinavian Studies, University of Edinburgh: "**Norse Topographic Settlement Names in Western Scotland**".
- 11.45** William Milliken and Doreen Waugh: "**Flora Celtica**".
- 12.30** Lunch
- 13.30** AGM
- 14.00** David Caldwell and Roger McNee: "**The Islay Database**".
- 14.45** Angus Watson: "**Place-Names and the Structures of Lordship in Monzievaird, Perthshire**".
- 15.30** Short Reports
- 16.00** Tea and Disperse

Please inform the Secretary, Morag Redford, (tel. 01828-627958), if you wish to present a short report (10 minutes maximum).

Costs: The charge for the day is **£15.00**, to include coffee, sandwich lunch and afternoon tea. The cost is **£12.00** for students and unwaged. Please complete the attached form, and return it with your remittance to: Carol Smith, SPNS(C), School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh, 27 George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9LD, **by 3 May 2000**. Cheques should be made payable to '**Scottish Place-Name Society**'.

SPNS AGM and Day Conference, Perth, Saturday 13 May 2000

I wish / am unable to attend the AGM and Conference in Perth on 13 May 2000.

I enclose fee of £_____, for _____ places.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Tel. No. _____

SPNS/PERC

