



PROGRESS IN IRISH NAME STUDIES, 2022-23

ULSTER PLACE-NAME SOCIETY 02 DECEMBER 2022

AN BRAINSE LOGAINMNEACHA/THE PLACE-NAMES BRANCH, DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, CULTURE, ARTS, GAELTACHT, SPORT, AND MEDIA, DUBLIN

The Placenames Branch has seen a major change in personnel this past year with the retirement of Dr Pádraig Ó Cearbhaill and his replacement as Chief Placenames Officer by Conchubhar Ó Crualaoich. The Branch has also benefitted this past summer from the appointment of Aindí Mac Giolla Chomhaill as Higher Placenames Officer. It is intended to appoint a further Placenames Officer in the near future.

Proofing began on the draft placenames order for Co. Carlow during the summer, and research on the two remaining parishes in Co. Kerry which remain to be scrutinised by the Placenames Committee will begin soon. Attention will turn to either Co. Donegal or Co. Cavan next year. As always, much time last year was spent on answering queries and correspondence on place-names. Dr Ó Crualaoich has also been continuing his personal research on Co. Wexford and is collaborating with Kevin Whelan on a book on the Irish in north Wexford just before the Plantation which draws on his personal knowledge of surnames in the county (as will be known to readers of the society's journal, *Ainm*.)

LOCUS PROJECT, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

The Locus Project has been based in the Department of Early and Medieval Irish, UCC, since 1996 with the remit of updating and replacing *Onomasticon Goedelicum Locorum et Tribuum Hiberniae et Scotiae*, the standard (but very outdated) dictionary of Irish (and some Scottish) place- and tribal names, which was compiled by Edmund Hogan and published in Dublin in 1910.

The Project secured funding from Mr Brian McCarthy, the Board of FEXCO and St Finnian's Trust in late 2018, and this allowed for the funding of the Brian McCarthy Doctoral Scholar (Mr Cian Ó Cionnfhaidh) and for the employment of the Brian McCarthy Postdoctoral Fellow (Dr Riona Doolan). Dr Doolan brought her work on place-names in 'F' to a conclusion in September 2021 while Mr Ó Cionnfhaidh will be submitting his doctoral thesis on place-names in 'L' in December 2022.

The last fascicle of the Dictionary to appear was published in December 2020: *Historical Dictionary of Gaelic Placenames / Foclóir Stairiúil Áitainmneacha na Gaeilge, Fascicle 8 / Fascúl 8 [Druach-Duthaire]*, edited by Pádraig Ó Riain, Kevin Murray and Emma Nic Cárthaigh. Volume 9 is nearly complete (on place-names in 'E and F') and it will be published in mid-2023.

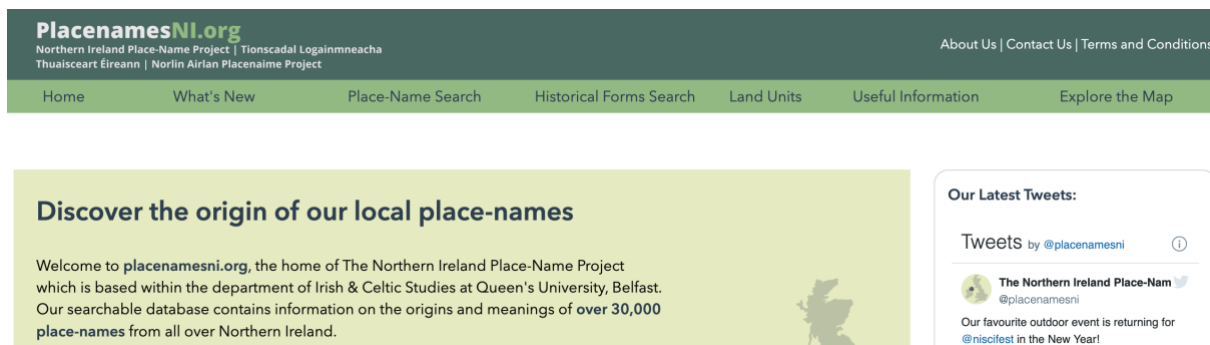
TIONSCADAL LOGAINMNEACHA THUAISCEART ÉIREANN/NORTHERN IRELAND PLACE-NAME PROJECT

The Northern Ireland Place-Name Project (NIPNP) has had no funding since 31 December 2022 and the emphasis this past year has been on applying for more funding from government. This has been successful and two new appointments will be made in January 2023 (one for 18 months and one for 12 months). Also, the involvement of Mícheál Ó Mainín and Frances Kane in the project which will commemorate 200 years of the Ordnance Survey in Ireland in 2024 (*OS200: Digitally Remapping Ireland's Ordnance Survey Heritage*) has helped to progress some elements of the work of NIPNP in the absence of funding. The OS project (<http://go.qub.ac.uk/IrelandMapped>) is led by Prof. Keith Lilley in Geography at Queen's and involves partners in the University of Limerick (including a fellow toponymist, Aengus Finnegan, who has been a guest lecturer of the society in the past).



OS200 'Summer Roadshow' event at The Marble Arch Caves, May 2022

NIPNP's online database (www.placenamesni.org) was returned to Queen's from Land & Property Services in 2021 and has been developed and enhanced by ESRI with funding obtained from government. However, as the database had been neglected for a number of years, it requires further enhancement. The new period of funding will be devoted to revising the suggestions made to townland names over the course of the previous project and providing Irish forms of street names when required by public bodies. With this in mind, the street names on the UPNS website have been copied into the NIPNP database in order to facilitate this new programme of work.



Updated website and online platform for NIPNP database

MID-ULSTER COUNCIL SIGNAGE PROJECT

For the past number of years Pat McKay has been supplying Mid-Ulster District Council with Irish-language versions of the names of roads and streets as they appear on signage within the Council area. As well as displaying the name of the road or street, each sign includes the name of the townland in which the sign is situated and the work has also involved providing an Irish-language version of each of these townland names. Mid-Ulster Council area is an extensive one, stretching all the way from the Bann at Toome to Fivemiletown on the Tyrone border with Fermanagh and incorporating some two thousand road and street names. Pat has now completed the original task but the work is ongoing (and endless!) as he is still tasked with supplying Irish-language versions of names of roads and streets for new postal addresses which of course will never cease to be created. As well as names of townlands which appear on road-name signage the Project involves providing interpretations for all townland names in the Council area (roughly 1,380 names) and he is still engaged in this task. Fortunately, he has been able to draw on excellent earlier research carried out on part of Mid-Ulster Council area by former colleague Dr Kay Muhr and, more recently, on Dr Brian Devlin's excellent doctoral thesis on the names of the townlands of the barony of Loughinsholin (2021).



*Dr Brian Devlin celebrating completion of his PhD on the place-names of Loughinsholin,
July 21*

A DICTIONARY OF ULSTER PLACE-NAMES (new revised edition)

Pat McKay is working on a revised and enlarged edition of the *Dictionary of Ulster Place-Names* which is to be published by the Ulster Historical Foundation. The first edition of the Dictionary was published by the Institute of Irish Studies in 1999 with a second edition published by Cló Ollscoil na Bannríona in 2007.

Our sincere thanks is owed to Kevin Murray, Conchubhar Ó Crualaoich, and Pat McKay for their input into the update.

We also wish to extend our congratulations to former society president, Kay Muhr, on the publication of *The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names of Ireland* (in collaboration with Liam Ó hAisibéil of the University of Galway) in 2021.



Kay Muhr and Liam Ó hAisibéil launching 'The Oxford Dictionary of Family names of Ireland'

Mícheál O Mainnín,
Chair, UPNS