

# The Ordnance Survey Name Books: 'a treasure-trove' for Toponymists

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Scotland's Ordnance Survey Name Books of the 1840s to the 1870s provide a wealth of material for place-name studies. While containing information about the orthography, meanings and derivations of the names applied to the places and objects surveyed, they also give an insight into the ways in which the various county surveys were conducted, and tell us about the people who took part in the survey process. This paper aims to provide an overview of this source through an examination of a selection of name books, now readily available in digitised format on the ScotlandsPlaces website along with transcriptions, made possible through an ambitious crowdsourcing project. It discusses the types of evidence that can be found in the name books, the similarities and differences in recording at both county and parish level, and considerations that need to be made by researchers when using the name books.

In December 2013 and January 2014 an exhibition on the Ordnance Survey Name Books was held in the National Records of Scotland (hereafter NRS) at Register House in Edinburgh. This was specifically timed to celebrate the launch of the online resource of the Scottish name books on the ScotlandsPlaces website.<sup>1</sup> The 'treasure-trove' quotation in the title for this paper comes from press releases at the time. Simon Taylor, renowned Scottish toponymist, is reported as saying:

The books are a unique resource for understanding the evolution of Scotland's complex place-nomenclature, as well as nineteenth-century perceptions of place, language, environment, archaeology and culture. ScotlandsPlaces, by making them so widely and easily accessible, has opened up a treasure-trove of material for local and national historians, both lay and academic.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Scottish name books can be found online at <https://scotlandspplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ordnance-survey-name-books/>. This is a revised and expanded version of a paper delivered at the conference, 'Hence the Name: Sources for place-name and personal name research in Scotland', held jointly by the Scottish Records Association and Scottish Place-Name Society at the Scottish Storytelling Centre, Edinburgh on 17 November 2018. I am grateful to the two anonymous referees for their comments and helpful suggestions for its improvement and to my colleagues on the REELS project at the University of Glasgow for their support and encouragement.

<sup>2</sup> 'Victorian Scotland's ordnance survey name books put online', *BBC News*, 5 December 2013, <https://bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-25238563>.

Tim Ellis, the then chief executive of the NRS, also used the ‘treasure-trove’ description, declaring that, ‘The Ordnance Survey Name Books are a rich resource for research into the history of places throughout Scotland and a treasure trove of fascinating insights.’<sup>3</sup> What was especially worth celebrating at the time of the launch was the work of the many transcribers who had enthusiastically contributed to enhancing the resource, so that it is not only images of the name books themselves but also crowdsourced transcriptions which are contained on the website.<sup>4</sup>

The aim of this paper is to introduce the Scottish name books, describing their structure and giving some examples of their content, in order to demonstrate their value to researchers of place-names in particular, but also to those whose research focus is that of personal names. Furthermore, the paper will also highlight a range of issues that all researchers need to take into consideration when using the name books in their research.

The Ordnance Survey name books are the surveyors’ notes recording information about the names or places that appear on the Ordnance Survey first edition of the 6 inch map sheets and in a number of cases the 25 inch map sheets.<sup>5</sup> The survey was conducted on a county basis and there are name books for thirty-two counties, beginning with Wigtownshire, surveyed from 1845 to 1849, and ending with Orkney and Shetland, surveyed in the late 1870s. There are 1,831 books in total,<sup>6</sup> with a variation in the number of volumes per county from seven (Nairnshire, Clackmannanshire and Buteshire) to 187 (Ross & Cromarty). In many counties, the books are arranged by parish or by detached parts of parishes (as is the case in Clackmannanshire and Berwickshire); in other counties individual volumes can include more than one parish and parish names can be divided

<sup>3</sup> ‘Ordnance Survey Name Books for Scotland now available online’, *History Scotland*, 11 December 2013, <https://www.historyscotland.com/articles/family-history/ordnance-survey-name-books-for-scotland-now-available-online>. The same phrase was used two years later in an Irish context, regarding Ordnance Survey correspondence, when the O’Donovan letters were described in the following way: ‘For anyone interested in local history in rural Ireland they are a magnificent treasure trove’: J. Grenham, ‘Irish Roots: John O’Donovan’s glorious letters’, *Irish Times*, 7 December 2015, <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/irish-roots-john-o-donovan-s-glorious-letters-1.2453436>.

<sup>4</sup> Coincidentally, earlier that year in September 2013, all aside from four panels of the 161-panel Great Tapestry of Scotland had been first exhibited, having been completed by a similar crowdsourced project in the sense that embroiderers from local groups all over Scotland contributed to this stitching project which aimed to illustrate key events, people and places in Scotland’s history. Panel 61 entitled ‘The Ordnance Survey Begins’ depicts the Ordnance Survey at the start of its surveying and mapping work across Scotland in the aftermath of the Jacobite rebellion in the mid-eighteenth century: see <http://scotlandstapestry.com>. See also A. Moffat, *The Great Tapestry of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2013), 266–7.

<sup>5</sup> The National Library of Scotland provides comprehensive online availability of OS 6 inch and 25 inch maps of Scotland at <https://maps.nls.uk>.

<sup>6</sup> The figure is 1,834 if the three Ayrshire volumes each containing two parts are counted as six separate volumes.

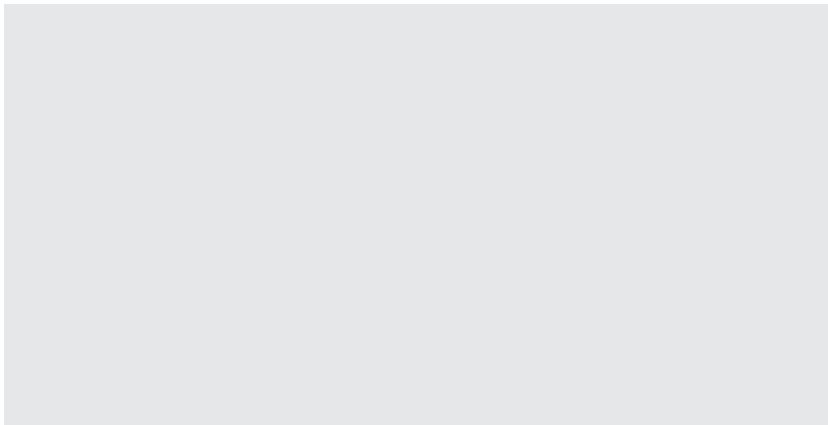


Figure 1 Numbers of volumes of Ordnance Survey Name Books and of 'places' per county.

throughout several volumes (such as in Fife and Kinross-shire). Unfortunately, a number of the Perthshire name books were destroyed during an air raid in the Second World War. The number of volumes for any one county does not always correspond with the number of 'places' for that particular county, though, as can be seen in Figure 1. The term 'place' used by the ScotlandsPlaces website applies to individual entries in the name books, so the numbers displayed in the graph include not just names of settlements, water features and topographical features which are typically included in place-name surveys, but also buildings such as post offices and banks, plus entries relating to archaeological discoveries.

The Ordnance Survey's place-name policies for the first edition of the 6 inch map sheets in Scotland had developed from previous methods adopted in surveys in England, Wales and Ireland.<sup>7</sup> Prior to around 1820 there had been little examination of place-names by authorities with the exception of some limited checking by a few landowners and local clergy, but between 1820 and 1840 increasing reliance was placed on field surveyors, who were asked to find out meanings of place-names and to make reference to authorities (both people and written sources) to verify spellings.<sup>8</sup> It is likely that name sheets were in use in England from the mid-1820s, although the earliest surviving example of an English or Welsh name sheet dates from c. 1835. The earliest surviving name book (formed of printed name sheets, each containing four columns, sewn together) is from Doncaster and dates to c. 1839.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Histories of the Ordnance Survey include: (ed.) W. A. Seymour, *A History of the Ordnance Survey* (Folkestone, 1980); T. Owen and E. Pilbeam, *Map-makers to Britain since 1791* (London, 1992); R. Hewitt, *Map of a Nation: A Biography of the Ordnance Survey* (London, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Seymour, *History*, 60–2, 105–7.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

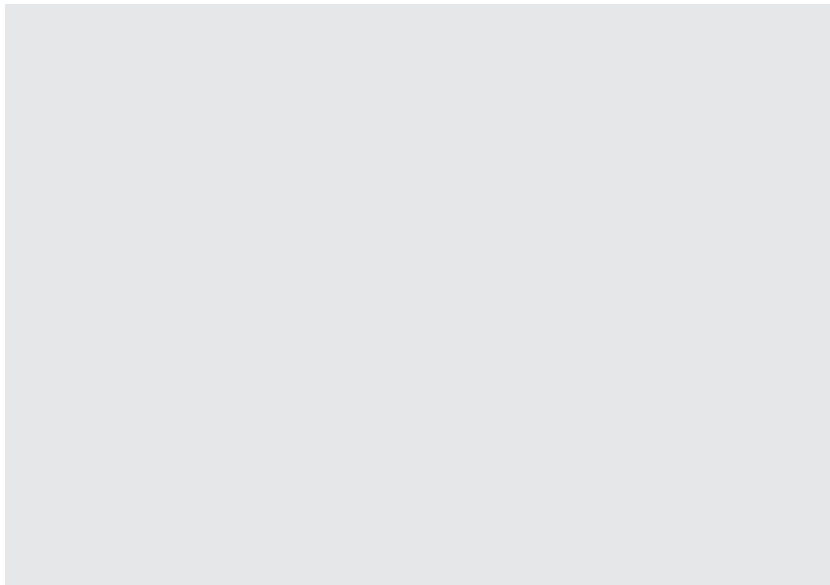


Plate 1 Example of five-column format from Berwickshire Name Books (Crown copyright, NRS, OS1/5/12/29).

By the time of the Scottish survey the name book system had further advanced, but there still remain variations in the structure of the Scottish name books. Three different formats can be found. The first version is the five-column format, as seen, for example, in the case of Berwickshire, a county surveyed between 1853 and 1858 (Plate 1). The columns are headed: 'List of Names as written on the Plan', 'Various modes of Spelling the same Names', 'Authority for those modes of Spelling', 'Situation', 'Descriptive Remarks, or other General Observations which may be considered of Interest'. In this final column the amount of information can vary: sometimes all that is included is a simple description of a building, but in other cases there can be former names given or a definition of the meaning of the name, together with precise detail about what the name refers to.<sup>10</sup> The name of the surveyor tends to be written in the top-right hand corner of the Berwickshire name books. In contrast there are name books with six columns, such as in Wigtownshire and Kirkcudbrightshire, among the earliest counties to be surveyed in the 1840s. The respective column headings are similar to those of the first format, but an additional column is headed,

<sup>10</sup> For example, definitions of the precise stretch of a river to which a name applies or the extent of a moss are notably helpful to toponymists, especially in the case of names that are no longer in use or in instances where the landscape has undergone considerable change.

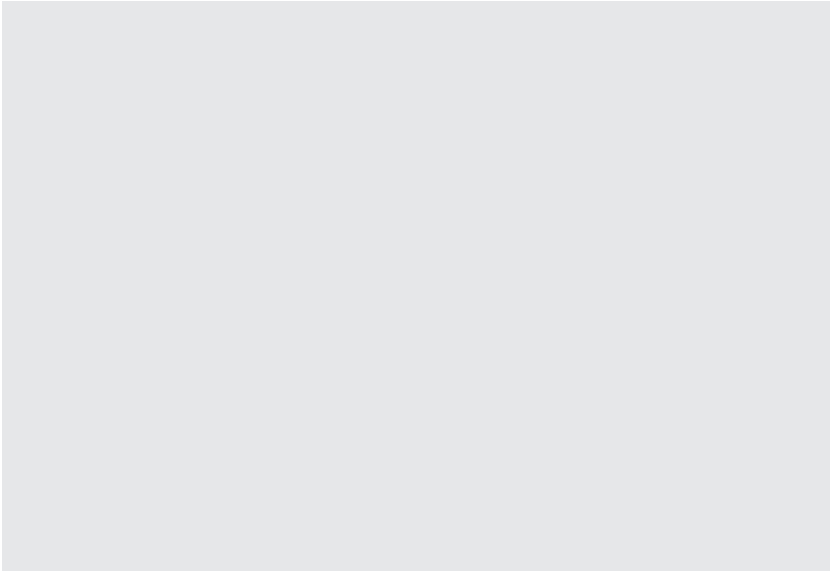


Plate 2 Example of six-column format from Kirkcudbrightshire Name Books (Crown copyright, NRS, OS1/20/141/35).

‘Orthography, as recommended to be used in the new Plans’ (see Plate 2). A third type of format can be found, more usually in Highland parishes. This field survey format contains the column headings: ‘Received Name’, ‘Object’, ‘Description’, ‘Township or Parish’, followed by ‘Authority for Spelling’ with sub-columns for ‘Name’ and ‘Address’. To confuse the situation further, the format can vary within individual name books: at least one of the Haddingtonshire name books, that for the parish of Haddington, contains the field survey format in addition to the six-column format. Many of the names are duplicated in this book, but the individual entries are not identical.<sup>11</sup>

The Scottish name books list as authorities both people and written sources, in accordance with the earlier Ordnance Survey practice noted above. Later Ordnance Survey *Instructions to Field Examiners* (1905), which draw on earlier guidance from at least the mid-1870s onwards, specifies in detail the people who were considered to be reliable authorities: the clear preference was for the wealthier and more educated members of local society (such as landed gentry, clergy and schoolmasters) with a noted steer away from reliability on small farmers and cottagers. Emphasis is also placed on the value of the written or

<sup>11</sup> The county of Haddingtonshire was surveyed in 1853–54. For the field survey format in the Haddington parish name book, see NRS, OS1/15/22/73–118. Duplication of names within individual name books is a feature to be found in name books for other counties too.

printed form of place-names, from sources such as estate maps, valuation rolls and newspapers.<sup>12</sup> The authorities employed had implications for the forms of name chosen, especially in bilingual areas, including parts of Wales, Ireland and Scotland, where issues of anglicisation, standardisation and translation arose.

With a choice of nearly 2,000 Scottish name books and nearly 300,000 ‘places’ or entries, this paper has to be selective in its examples of content. In line with the ‘treasure-trove’ quotations cited at the outset, three names from a map of an imaginary Treasure Island – Pirate’s Retreat, Blue Lake and Hangman’s Tree – were chosen with a view to searching for similar names in the name books using the powerful search engine on the ScotlandsPlaces website.

There is not an exact match for Pirate’s Retreat to be found in the Scottish name books. The closest is *Dickmont’s Den* in St Vigean’s parish, Forfarshire (Angus), which is described as, ‘A Very remarkable natural Valley, east from The Blowhole, Inclosed within rugged steep Cliffs, and said to have been once a favorite resort of a Celebrated Pirate named Dickmont.’<sup>13</sup> In the Shetland name book for Dunrossness parish *Fitful Head* is described as, ‘A large precipitous headland on the west coast of Shetland about 25 miles south from Lerwick and 4 miles north of Sumburgh Head the most southern point of the mainland. It is made famous by Sir Walter Scott’s “Pirate” as the supposed residence of “Norna of Fitful Head”.’<sup>14</sup> These descriptions give detail not only of what the referent is, but include legendary material plus a literary reference.

<sup>12</sup> Colonel Duncan A. Johnston in *Instructions to Field Examiners* (Southampton, 1905), 27–9, Section I, paras 169–71, details the requirements regarding authorities for names and name sheets for the 25 inch map scale. These are repeated at 47–9, Section III (Revisers’ Addendum), paras 248–61, and are quoted and discussed in Seymour, *History*, 176. For discussion of the *Instructions* and earlier guidance, see also C. W. J. Withers, ‘Authorizing Landscape: “Authority”, Naming and the Ordnance Survey’s Mapping of the Scottish Highlands in the Nineteenth Century’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 26 (2000), 532–54, at 535–8.

<sup>13</sup> NRS, OS1/14/80/124. Other named pirates include: Captain Proby, an English pirate (NRS, OS1/2/10/23, *Kilberry Castle*, Kilcalmonell and Kilberry parish, Argyll); a Danish pirate named Kutcher (NRS, OS1/5/8/7A, *Kutcher’s Hole*, Cockburnspath parish, Berwickshire); Kennedy the pirate (NRS, OS1/7/2/27, *Grave Yard & Vault*, Canisbay parish, Caithness); Gow the pirate (NRS, OS1/23/4/35, *Carrick House*, OS1/23/4/41, *Caithness Geos*, OS1/23/4/142, *Maltbarn*, Eday parish, Orkney; OS1/23/22/136, *Site of Whitehouse*, Stromness parish, Orkney).

<sup>14</sup> NRS, OS1/31/9/22. Sir Walter Scott’s *The Pirate* is mentioned several times in the name books, including in the entries for Orkney, Hoy and Graemsay parish: NRS, OS1/23/10/78, *Green Hill*, NRS, OS1/23/11/39–40, at 40, *Dwarfie Stane*; Kirkwall and St Ola parish: NRS, OS1/23/12/71–3, at 73, *Earl’s Palace*; Stronsay parish: NRS, OS1/23/24/47, *Well of Kildinguie*, NRS, OS1/23/24/157, *Odin Geo*. See also NRS, OS1/29/28/1–10, at 7, *Melrose (Parish)*, Melrose parish, Roxburghshire; NRS, OS1/31/1/271, *Brough*, Burra parish, Shetland; NRS, OS1/31/9/32, *Thief’s House*, NRS, OS1/31/10/210, *Jarlshof (In Ruins)*, Dunrossness parish, Shetland.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Blue Lake cannot be found as a name on its own, but it is found in a few instances as a translation from a Gaelic name. Two examples from Inverness-shire and one from Ross and Cromarty counties can be cited. In the parish of Ardnamurchan, Inverness-shire, *Linne Ghorm* is described as, ‘This name signifies “Blue Lake or Pond,” and applies to that portion of Loch Shiel, immediately south of “Creag an Uisge”’,<sup>15</sup> while for *Loch Gorm* in the Inverness-shire parish of Urquhart and Glenmoriston, the name book states: ‘Applied to a small loch situated about ¾ Mile west from Loch nam Bad. It signifies The Blue Lake, and is on the property of the Earl of Seafield.’<sup>16</sup> In Logie Easter parish in Ross and Cromarty, *Loch Gorm* is described as, ‘A small loch situate about ¼ mile N.E. of Brenachie. Sig. [i.e. Signification] – “Blue lake”’.<sup>17</sup>

There are a range of place-names with *hangman* as their specific element – albeit not a Hangman’s Tree. Several in Argyll relate to topographical features such as rocks or hills, and their Gaelic names are translated into English within their entries as was the case in the Blue Lake entries discussed above. In Killean and Kilchenzie parish, there is *Stac a’ Chrochaire* (‘The Hangman’s Rock’), described as ‘A steep projecting rock. The authorities quoted, say that it is handed down by tradition that people in ancient times had been executed here.’<sup>18</sup> Similarly in Mull is *Creag a’ Chrochadaire* (‘Rock of the Hangman’), which according to the name book,

Applies to two large rocks at the road side a short distance S.W. of Aros Castle. The tradition of the district states that one of the McLeans of Duard hung 18 men to a beam laid across the top & extending from one rock to the other.<sup>19</sup>

As for hills, *Cnoc a’ Chrochadaire* (‘The Hangman’s Knoll’), Kilcalmonell and Kilberry parish, Argyll, is stated as being, ‘A Commanding eminence, immediately north west of “Cretshengan.” Tradition says nothing as to the origin of the name.’<sup>20</sup> While not overtly explaining the reason behind the name *Hangman’s Brae* in the parish of Cruden, Aberdeenshire, the description (‘This name is applied to a very steep portion of the Aad Braes, and close to the Gallow Hill’) hints that this was understood to be the route the hangman took on his way to or from the site of the gallows.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast to these examples which highlight the steepness and rockiness of sites used for hanging and, in the earlier examples, cite tradition and legend, is

<sup>15</sup> NRS, OS1/17/10/122.

<sup>16</sup> NRS, OS1/17/57/33. A further sentence in a different hand adds: ‘It is on the Boundary between the parish of Urquhart and Glenmoriston and that of Kiltarlity and Convinth.’

<sup>17</sup> NRS, OS1/28/25/26.

<sup>18</sup> NRS, OS1/2/13/40. The description further adds the following quotation from the New Statistical Account: ‘A projecting cliff called Stac-a-Chrochaire, or hangmans rock where it is said, criminals were suspended by the neck with very little ceremony.’

<sup>19</sup> NRS, OS1/2/45/7.

<sup>20</sup> NRS, OS1/2/10/9.

<sup>21</sup> NRS, OS1/1/22/71.

an example from southern Scotland in Kirkbean parish in Kirkcudbrightshire, where *Hangman Hill* is described more simply as, ‘A small hill on the farm of Ladyland its surface consists of arable land’ (see Plate 2).<sup>22</sup> As well as providing information about land use at the time of the survey, as in this case, changes in land use over time can be specified too. For example, *Hangman’s Croft* in Rothes parish, Morayshire is said to have ‘the appearance of having been at one time cultivated, but it is now planted in fir’.<sup>23</sup>

There are also examples of *hangman* names which relate to water features. In Forres parish in Morayshire, *Hangman’s Well* is explained as, ‘This name is applied to a well situated in the corner of a small Croft about ¼ mile East from the Town of Forres. Tradition says this Croft formed part of the emoluments in connection with the office of Hangman.’<sup>24</sup> In Perth parish in Perthshire, *Hangman’s Well* received its name, according to the name book, because the ‘hangman’s house formerly stood close to this well’.<sup>25</sup> The final example is that of *Hangman’s Grains* which is given as an alternative name for *The Slogs*, the name that makes its way onto the map and thereby becomes the official name. *The Slogs* in Kildrummy parish in Aberdeenshire is described as, ‘This name is applied to two small streams or grains, which flows into the Burn of Corchinnan and is sometimes called the Hangman’s Grains but The Slogs is the name generally applied.’<sup>26</sup> It is noticeable that the final informant, Rev. John Christie, renders the name as ‘The Sluggs or Hangitman’s Grains’.

These examples of ‘treasure-trove’ give some flavour of what can be found in the name books based on a thematic search, and the variety of textual detail and information across different counties. However, the name books also contain information about archaeological treasure and sometimes even contain sketches of the items concerned.<sup>27</sup> Examples of sketches include a coin, possibly of the reign of Edward I, found in 1822 in a hoard of coins and rings by workmen constructing a dyke in Strathdon parish, Aberdeenshire;<sup>28</sup> a sculptured stone found on ‘the south wall of the church near the roof on the east side’ about ten years before the date of the name book for Bourtie parish, Aberdeenshire;<sup>29</sup> the remains of a tower (*The Borg Pict’s Tower (Remains of)*, Reay parish, Sutherland);<sup>30</sup> and a bronze spearhead found in 1864 in Watten parish, Caithness.<sup>31</sup> Not all

<sup>22</sup> NRS, OS1/20/141/35. The name book also informs us that ‘on its summit is the site of an ancient cairn, of which see description’, referring to the entry for the cairn on the previous page (NRS, OS1/20/141/34).

<sup>23</sup> NRS, OS1/12/18/121.

<sup>24</sup> NRS, OS1/12/13/1/15.

<sup>25</sup> NRS, OS1/25/63/12.

<sup>26</sup> NRS, OS1/1/47/15.

<sup>27</sup> For Ordnance Survey procedure regarding antiquities, see Seymour, *History*, 174–5.

<sup>28</sup> NRS, OS1/1/81/168.

<sup>29</sup> NRS, OS1/1/10/42.

<sup>30</sup> NRS, OS1/33/20/239.

<sup>31</sup> NRS, OS1/7/12/164.



of the sketches are of archaeological finds, though; for example, other sketches include part of a railway line (*Dumbartonshire Junction Railway*, Old Kilpatrick, Dumbartonshire).<sup>32</sup>

In addition to names of places, the Ordnance Survey name books are a rich resource for information about people. The surveyors' names and status (whether that be their rank in the Royal Engineers Corps or as Civilian Assistants) can be found in a number of name books as can information about staff working for the Ordnance Survey in its mapping office. The authorities include local landowners, ministers, house owners, gardeners, shepherds and fishermen, a notably greater range of people than those recommended in later Ordnance Survey directives.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, the type and number of people listed as authorities in the Scottish name books can vary from county to county and from parish to parish within counties. Those remarked on in descriptions can be local people, such as tenants living in a property, or legendary or literary figures, as seen already. Scholars who are working on family history or local history will find much of value in the name books for their research and there is potential for more work to be done by researchers of personal names and family names.

In relation to people a final category is personal names in place-names or, to use the terminology recently adopted and developed by Sofia Evemalm, 'anthropo-toponyms'.<sup>34</sup> The name books can be particularly valuable here for place-name scholars as they can help to identify individual people or families for whom places are named. One example from Berwickshire is *Georgefield* in Coldstream parish, described as, 'A substantial built farm house with suitable outhouses, a small Garden, & a large arable & pasture farm attached. It is the property of Mr George Wilson. Coldstream.' George Wilson, identified as 'Chemist Coldstream', is listed as the first of the authorities for *Georgefield* (see Plate 1).<sup>35</sup> Local historians have identified him with the Chemist to the Dispensary, who was the inventor of the world's first sheep-dip.<sup>36</sup>

Having presented an account of the structure and content of the Scottish name books, it is necessary to move on to thinking about some issues that are worth considering when using this source in place-name research. First is the reliability of the names – how authentic are they? As mentioned earlier, this also raises the thorny issue of anglicisation of names, a topic that has been discussed at length in regard to the Irish Ordnance Survey in particular.<sup>37</sup> One way of

<sup>32</sup> NRS, OS1/9/15/41.

<sup>33</sup> See n. 12 above.

<sup>34</sup> S. Evemalm, 'Theory and practice in the coining and transmission of place-names: a study of the Norse and Gaelic anthropo-toponyms of Lewis', unpublished PhD thesis (University of Glasgow, 2018), <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/8751/>.

<sup>35</sup> NRS, OS1/5/12/29.

<sup>36</sup> Coldstream & District Local History Society, *Second to None: A History of Coldstream* (Coldstream, 2010), 87.

<sup>37</sup> See especially J. H. Andrews, *A Paper Landscape: The Ordnance Survey in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, 2nd edn (Dublin, 2006); G. M. Doherty, *The Irish Ordnance Survey: history, culture*

determining whether Scots names have been anglicised is, of course, to look at other contemporary sources, such as poetry (where use of rhyme can help with determining pronunciation) and in the case of salmon cast names on the River Tweed, an independent list.<sup>38</sup> As for Gaelic names, consideration needs to be given to the orthography that has been adopted. Questions of authority arise, especially concerning whether native speakers of the language were included among those interviewed by surveyors.<sup>39</sup> An insight into the treatment of Gaelic names can be seen from some later memoranda, dated 1895, noted on the Aberdeenshire name books. One such note reads:

Memo. for revision of the 6. inch & 1/2500 Plans: The pencil notes in this Book are by Mr James McDonald, The Farm, Huntly, wherever they are initialled 'J McD'. He is the best authority on the names of Aberdeenshire, – & his remarks if any alteration is made should be generally followed, especially as they tend generally towards restoring the names as originally collected. This District is not now Gaelic speaking. Other un-initialled pencil Remarks are by Mr Carpenter formerly Gaelic Examiner for the Ordnance Survey. And the Remarks in Ink on Slips attached to the leaves are by Mr A Macdonald Examiner in OS's branch who is the present Gaelic Examiner for the O. Survey. They generally give the correct Gaelic orthography of the names; but I do not think any alterations should be made in this direction in the names of this district. J Farquharson Col 25/9/95<sup>40</sup>

Aside from what this quotation reveals about treatment of Gaelic names, though, this example also highlights that the name books for the first edition maps also contain later additions, and that these often demonstrate the ways in which those revising the maps for the second edition engaged with the earlier name books.<sup>41</sup>

As has been seen above in the discussion of *The Slogs* alias *Hangman's Grains*, the name books reveal the existence of alternative names. Another example that can be cited here is the case of Whitewisp Hill, in which correspondence shows how and why the decision was made to favour this name over its alternative. This hill is on the boundary of not only two parishes but two counties. In the entry for *Whitewisp Hill* in the Clackmannanshire name book for Dollar parish, the variant forms of the name are given as *Whitewisp Hill* (by Mr Thomas Bradschaw,

*and memory* (Dublin, 2004); S. Ó Cadhla, *Civilizing Ireland. Ordnance Survey 1824–1842: Ethnography, Cartography, Translation* (Dublin and Portland, OR, 2007).

<sup>38</sup> E. Williamson, “‘hence the name’”: Berwickshire parishes along the Anglo-Scottish Border as described in the Ordnance Survey Name Books’, *Journal of Scottish Name Studies*, 9 (2015), 83–96, at 89–90; E. Williamson, ‘Names of Salmon Pools in Berwickshire’, *Onomastica Uralica*, 12 (2018), 87–100 at 89, 95–6.

<sup>39</sup> An important study in this regard for the Scottish Highlands is Withers, ‘Authorizing Landscape’.

<sup>40</sup> NRS, OS1/1/81/230.

<sup>41</sup> As a result of significant objections to the Gaelic names chosen for the first edition maps, a Scottish Place-Name Committee was set up in the 1890s under the auspices of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society to advise on Gaelic orthography for the revised editions of the maps; see Seymour, *History*, 193.

Mr John Clark, Mr Hugh Munro, Stobie's County Map and Johnston's County Map); *White Wisp* in the Old Statistical Account and simply *Wisp* in the New Statistical Account. It is described in the name book as,

A large round hill, steep towards the east, south, and west, but falling off with a very gentle slope towards the north. Probable height from its base fifteen hundred feet. The name is said to be derived from a small strip of whitish rough pasture on its south side and near its top. Property of Sir Andrew Orr, Harvieston House.<sup>42</sup>

The equivalent entry in the Perthshire name book for Glendevon parish offers a slightly different description: 'A considerable eminence lying on the southern boundary of this parish, but having its top or summit in the common parish. It is covered with rough pasture & forms one of the Ochil range.'<sup>43</sup> The name given by two authorities (Reverend William Cunningham and Mr Guild), and originally accepted as the name on the plan, is *Garchel Hill*. However, the first part of this name has been scored out and replaced with 'Whitewisp'. A note dated 21 November 1861 beneath the name reads: 'Altered at O.M.O [Ordnance Mapping Office] on the authority of a note from Capt. Pratt R.E. [Royal Engineers] dated Perth 19th Nov[embe]r 1861.'<sup>44</sup>

Captain Pratt's note itself is attached to the previous page of this name book. It reads:

Will you have the goodness to cause Garchel Hill to be erased on Plan 15 Sheet 127 of the Parish of Glendevon County of Perth and to write in place of it Whitewisp Hill. It was found, in the examination of Dollar Parish that Whitewisp Hill is the correct name, and as the parish boundary crosses this hill it is necessary to have the Glendevon plans corrected, as I presume they are not published.<sup>45</sup>

The eventual case was that *Whitewisp Hill* is the name to appear on the published OS 6 inch first edition map. However, close by it on the map is the name *Garchel Burn* for a water feature in Glendevon parish. Indeed, the entry above that of *Garchel Hill* in the Glendevon name book is for *Garchel Hill Burn*, which has been altered to *Garchel Burn*.<sup>46</sup> It can be a particularly interesting and revealing exercise then to look at names that straddle the boundaries of parishes and/or counties.<sup>47</sup> One official name has to be chosen for the map.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>42</sup> NRS, OS1/8/5/14.

<sup>43</sup> NRS, OS1/25/35/87.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> NRS, OS1/25/35/86.

<sup>46</sup> NRS, OS1/25/35/87.

<sup>47</sup> Another example is that of the salmon cast *Haugh Pool* (also known as *Haugh Side*) shared by the parishes of Mertoun, Berwickshire and St Boswells, Roxburghshire. See Williamson, 'Names of Salmon Pools in Berwickshire', 96.

<sup>48</sup> Once a name was chosen, it was not a simple matter for it to be altered. According to the 1905 *Instructions*: 'For place names which have already appeared on the O.S. maps, and which it is considered necessary to alter or omit, the best possible authority should

Traces can be found of apparent name changes during the process of the survey. For example, in the name book for the Berwickshire parish of Westruther there is a scored-out entry for *Wedderlea Cottage* which reads: 'A newly erected cottage one storey high, with a small vegetable garden attached, It is the property of Lord Blantyre and is occupied by Robert Ramage.' One of the three authorities listed is 'Robert Ramage, Occupant'. Beneath this entry is written in a different hand and ink the following note: 'This name has been changed to "Cralaw" See Page – 26.'<sup>49</sup> The entry for *Cralaw* on page 26 describes it as: 'A neatly built cottage on Wedderlie farm. It is occupied by William Anderson, Shepherd and, the property of Lord Blantyre.'<sup>50</sup>

It is noteworthy that these two entries are written by different surveyors: that of *Wedderlea Cottage* in the hand of John W. Rodgers and that of *Cralaw* in the hand of John Kiernan, a sergeant in the Royal Engineers. It is possible that the cottage changed occupants and its name between separate visits of the two surveyors, or perhaps there had been an occupancy dispute. The fact that a James Allen, Westruther is one of the authorities for the first name while a James Allan is one of the authorities for the second, and could be the same individual, would increase the likelihood of the first scenario. Furthermore, since 'William Anderson, *Cralaw*' is listed as one of the authorities for the *Cralaw* name it is even possible that it was the shepherd William Anderson (occupier of the property) who was responsible for the renaming.

The name books also provide evidence of missing or omitted names from the OS 6 inch first edition maps. For example, the St Boswells parish name book dated 1859 contains an entry for *Bridge Stream*, described as, 'This name applies to a fishing cast in the "River Tweed" it is situated between "Merton Bridge" and "Broomend Stream".'<sup>51</sup> However, the map that was published for St Boswells parish four years later in 1863 does not contain this name. The reason for the omission is explained in a note beneath the entry for *Bridge Stream* in the name book. It reads: 'Cancelled to agree with the Published Plan of Merton.'<sup>52</sup> Mertoun parish had been surveyed in 1858, with its map being published in 1862, and was therefore an earlier survey than that of St Boswells. To avoid discrepancies between the parish maps this additional name had to be excluded.

House names seem to be particular casualties of omission from the maps. There are a number of cancellations from the parish of Row in Dunbartonshire as explained in a remark:

be obtained, and no place name should be changed unless at least two *good* authorities ... approve in writing of the change': Johnston, *Instructions*, 29 (para. 171 (d)).

<sup>49</sup> NRS, OS1/5/40/19.

<sup>50</sup> NRS, OS1/5/40/26.

<sup>51</sup> NRS, OS1/29/38/12.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* There are a few other similar examples from St Boswells parish of names that are to be omitted from the plans for the same reason. See Williamson, 'Names of Salmon Pools in Berwickshire', 96.

The examiner in the field having gone to excess in writing the Names of private cottages &c on the Traces, Major Bayly R.E. has selected the names of the principal Houses &c which are written on the Plans, and the others he has cancelled, so as to avoid confusion in detail by writing too many minor names.<sup>53</sup>

A similar attitude towards house names is given in the description of Bothwell in Lanarkshire,

Bothwell is full of new names, known only to the Proprietors. Every | good cottage bears some vanity name, which, if all were written, would render the Plan a mass of confusion. An instance of this may be seen from the house adjoining the Post Office, on the west side being named by the Pr. [Proprietor] ‘Sebastopol Cottage’ & the one on the opposite side ‘Bothwell Hall’; again in ‘Green Street’ there is a neat house called ‘Springbank’, & many others too numerous to describe are scattered throughout the entire village, even in the old part between the Post Office and the Ph. [Parish] Church. These names, even were there room to write them, would serve no purpose, as in all probability the whole of them will be changed for something more pleasing in the course of a year. In short, the whole of the names not written are known only to the occupiers. Care has been taken to affix no name that is not proper, well known or likely to become so.<sup>54</sup>

Occasionally names appear on the map, but not in the corresponding name book,<sup>55</sup> and a name can appear in the index of a name book when there is no individual entry for it within the same name book.<sup>56</sup> There are also occasionally examples of minor differences, such as an apostrophe that is on the map or name book but not vice versa.<sup>57</sup> Subsequent editions of the map can be seen to correct minor errors.<sup>58</sup>

The Ordnance Survey Name Books are indeed a ‘treasure-trove’, not only for toponymists, but for researchers of nineteenth-century society more broadly. While the name books can confirm or assist in determining etymologies of place-names, they merit the attention of those interested in folklore, social history, archaeology, and the administrative procedures of the Ordnance Survey, to list just a few topics. The examples that have been discussed earlier in this paper are only a small proportion of the riches to be found within the many Scottish

<sup>53</sup> NRS, OS1/9/17/104.

<sup>54</sup> NRS, OS1/21/5/99–100.

<sup>55</sup> For example, *Edgarhope Moor* in Lauder parish, Berwickshire which can be found on the OS 6 inch first edition map (Berwickshire sheet XIV), but not in the corresponding name book for the parish (NRS, OS1/5/28).

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, index entry for *Ashfield*, Duns parish, Berwickshire (NRS, OS1/5/15/114).

<sup>57</sup> One example is that of Maiden’s Stone in Mordington parish, Berwickshire, which appears on the OS 6 inch first edition map (Berwickshire sheet XII) as *Maidens Stone*, but as *Maiden’s Stone* in the name book (NRS, OS1/5/34/9).

<sup>58</sup> Catcairn Bushes, Mordington parish, Berwickshire (see OS1/5/34/14) appears erroneously on the OS 6 inch first edition map (Berwickshire sheet XII) as *Cateairn Bushes*. The OS 6 inch second edition map corrects this.

volumes and there is a need for more detailed study to exploit the resource to its full potential.<sup>59</sup> Having the name books so readily available online and searchable opens up many possible avenues for researchers to explore and, in the future, it will be easier to compare the Scottish name books with the surviving name books from northern England.<sup>60</sup> As has been discussed above, though, the source is not a static one, with evidence for name changes occurring as the survey took place, as well as supplementary notes and memoranda being added as later surveyors engaged with the original records. Nor is the source a uniform one, with differences in recording practices from surveyor to surveyor, and in selection of local informants and correspondents, not only from parish to parish, but also within and between counties. Nevertheless, the variations, omissions, questions of authority, are all aspects of the name books that contribute to making them such a ‘treasure-trove’.

<sup>59</sup> There have been relatively few studies of the Scottish name books to date. Exceptions include those of Withers (see n. 12 above) and Williamson (n. 38 above). For a brief summary of the work of the Ordnance Survey in nineteenth-century Scotland, see C. Fleet, M. Wilkes and C. W.J. Withers, *Scotland: Mapping the Nation* (Edinburgh, 2011), 144–5. See also C. Fleet and C. W.J. Withers, ‘A Scottish paper landscape’, [https://maps.nls.uk/os/6inch/os\\_info1.html](https://maps.nls.uk/os/6inch/os_info1.html).

<sup>60</sup> A welcome development is that of the project ‘Northumberland Name Books: Places and People c.1860’, led by Diana Whaley, Professor Emeritus of Early Medieval Studies, Newcastle University, that aims to digitise, transcribe and make available online the Northumberland name books. These were among the few to survive from the English survey, most of which were destroyed during the Second World War.