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For the first time, abbreviations for counties, languages, county place-name surveys, and other frequently-cited publications can be found in the back of this volume.

The Bibliography for 2017 will appear in *The Journal of the English Place-Name Society* 51 (2019).

**Vanessa Greatorex and Mike Headon, eds (2014), *Field-names in Cheshire, Shropshire and North-East Wales. Recent work by members of the Chester Society for Landscape History* (Chester: Marlston Books / Chester Society for Landscape History). ISBN 978 0 9549705 5 0. Paperback, 127 pp. £5.00.**

This collection of nine articles plus an introductory chapter by members of the Chester Society for Landscape History both showcases the work of the Society's Field-Names Research Group, and serves as an absorbing introduction to field-names and their study for the general reader.

The introduction by Vanessa Greatorex (pp. 5–24) is accordingly aimed at the non-specialist, and introduces field-names, their study, and the wealth of information they contain. Most of this introduction is devoted to an overview of field-name types, broken down into categories such as 'size and shape', 'plants' and 'legalities', with ample illustrative material drawn from existing publications, particularly *English Field-Names* (Field 1972). Place-name elements are usually provided where names are no longer transparent, although greater consistency in this respect would have improved the clarity of the introduction in places. For instance, for Mark Hays (Minsterley, Shropshire), appropriately discussed under 'Boundaries and disputes' (p. 22), the element OE *(ge)hæg* 'fenced in enclosure' is given, but not OE *mearc* 'a boundary'. This is particularly unfortunate as readers may associate the name incorrectly with OE *ge-mære*, which is given to explain the preceding and following names. Similarly, inclusion of a few more early spellings (the importance of which is set out at the beginning of the chapter) would have made the material easier to follow for a reader who does not have place-name reference works to hand. Whilst the decision not to give these consistently is very reasonable in cases where names are transparent, in other cases the lack of early spellings obscures the interpretations given. The name Edenbro (*Enedebergh* 1290; Field 1972: 69) is a case in point. The 1290 form is not provided and without it it is not at all apparent why Edenbro derives from OE *ened* 'duck' (not *ered* as given) and *beorg* 'hill, mound'. Otherwise, however, the introduction is a clear, accurate and engaging foundation for the volume's material.

Three of the shorter contributions in the book supplement the introduction—with its material drawn from across England—with accounts of field-names from parishes in Cheshire and surrounding areas. Field-names from the Cheshire parishes of Backford and Barrow are discussed by John Hess (pp. 25–30) and Breta Lloyd (pp. 31–33), and Harry Bradley lists and comments on field-names from Ludford, Shropshire (pp. 80–81). Material in these chapters is drawn in large part

from tithe documentation. David Kennils' more extensive chapter on field-names from Erddig near Wrexham (pp. 67–79), however, collects and interprets material from a range of published and unpublished sixteenth- and seventeenth-century documents, contextualised within a discussion of the history of the estate. Two further short contributions consider field-name survival. T. A. Daley's chapter (pp. 61–66) assesses the extent to which field-names were repurposed as street-names from six Wirral townships during late nineteenth-century and mid-twentieth-century urban expansion. A contribution by Tony Bland (pp. 103–4) lists survivals and adaptations of field-names recorded in seventeenth-century documents into the nineteenth century in Tarvin (from documents not amongst the sources used in PN Ch).

The contributions outlined thus far serve as an ideal introduction to the richness of field-name material, especially its value in tracing local environmental, agricultural and tenorial history. The longer contributions may be of particular interest to those already familiar with the study of field-names.

Michael Taylor's chapter (pp. 34–60) on the field-names of Thelwall provides and interprets names from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century documents (mostly not excerpted in PN Ch). There are occasional slips in interpretation that could have been avoided. Warps (c.1845) beside the Mersey, for instance, seems more likely to be dialect *warp* 'land built up by the deposit of silt' (cf. OE *wearp*), as suggested in PN Ch 2 139 for Old Warps in the same township, than dialect *warple*, *wapple* 'bridle-path, (cart-)track' (< OE *\*werpels*) as suggested by Taylor (p. 44) from the existence of trackways in the area. Nevertheless, overall the interpretations are sound, and the resulting history of land-use and agriculture that is sensitive to local environmental contexts in Thelwall is highly interesting and convincing.

Mike Headon's chapter 'Harrow fields in Cheshire, Shropshire and North Wales' (pp. 82–102) tests the hypothesis that ME *harwe*, ModE. *harrow* and Welsh *og* 'harrow' in some field-names might refer to two or more tine-like projections on a field. The corpus (which includes historical spellings of the field-names) includes a handful of names that the author later rejects (p. 97) as instances of *harrow* (the names in question are more plausibly explained as containing local surnames), and it would have been preferable to exclude these earlier to restrict the fields examined to a more accurately defined corpus. This quibble aside, Headon's investigation is methodical and his findings convincing. The author finds some support for his hypothesis, but more support for a suggestion made by Briggs (2010: 58) that the element might refer to a triangular-shaped field. However,

several of the names cannot be explained as references to a triangular or tined shape, and Headon concludes by plausibly proposing that other motivations for the word's use in field-names are likely.

Tom Swailes's article 'Fields in the Forest of Macclesfield' (pp. 105–24) uses evidence from field-names alongside cartographic and documentary sources to explore woodland extents, timber-use and land-use in the late medieval and modern periods. Place-name material is not always satisfactorily treated. Swailes gives the first element of the place-name Hursdfield as OE *heord* 'herd' or *hirde* 'herdsman' without further comment, an interpretation which seems to be novel; the specific is usually interpreted as OE *hyrdel* 'hurdle' (PN Ch 1 106–7; CDEPN 324). There may be a case to be made for one of Swailes's interpretations, but at the very least it should be acknowledged that it is far from accepted. The information about woods, cleared land, enclosures and so on contained in the field-names themselves could also be more fully exploited—field-names are more frequently used to localise features or names from documents without discussion of their semantic content (though there is more discussion of the names themselves in the closing pages of the chapter). Nevertheless, overall this is an excellent demonstration of the value of field- and minor name evidence in investigating historical land-use.

Overall, this is an engaging volume that offers both an introduction to field-names for the toponymically uninitiated, and fascinating accounts of historical land-use and environment in Cheshire and neighbouring areas using field-name evidence for beginner and expert alike. Drawing on evident familiarity with the localities they discuss, the contributors provide much valuable context for the field-names. The volume's numerous helpful and attractive maps and photographs allow the reader to understand and visualise these landscapes. Extremely useful, too, is the inclusion of material not previously published in several of the contributions to the volume. As noted, there is some inaccuracy in place-name interpretations given, and readers are therefore advised to check these interpretations in other reference works. This is all the same a very informative volume demonstrating the valuable contributions to place-name study and local history that local groups examining field-names can make.

**Eleanor Rye**

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## References

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 Field, John (1972), *English Field-Names. A Dictionary* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles).

**Hanks, Patrick, Richard Coates and Peter McClure<sup>1</sup> (2016), *The Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland*, 4 vols<sup>2</sup> (Oxford: Oxford University Press). ISBN 978 0199677764. Hardback, 3136 pp. £400.**

## Overview

FaNBI is the product of a major research project based at the Bristol Centre for Linguistics of the University of the West of England in Bristol. It is a collective work with Patrick Hanks as editor-in-chief, Richard Coates as principal investigator and Peter McClure as principal etymologist. They and their collaborators are to be congratulated on a remarkable intellectual achievement which will remain a standard work of reference for philologists, historians and genealogists for many years to come.

The need for a modern successor to Reaney and Wilson's surname dictionary (DBS, DES) has long been felt. A major defect of Reaney and Wilson was that it contained a good many Middle English forms, but in a substantial number of cases lacked entries for the later Middle Ages and the Early Modern period. Consequently, it has a curiously disjointed appearance, often with no continuous run of forms to link the medieval spellings with the modern surnames to which they are supposed to belong. A further defect is that Reaney and Wilson give no information about the regional distribution of surnames. As the title of the third edition of Reaney's dictionary (DES) indicates, the work is primarily concerned with English surnames and does not deal with the new surnames resulting from twentieth-century immigration. It is true, as is indicated by FaNBI (1 ix), that there are standard works on surnames in Scotland, Ireland and Wales, but FaNBI is the first comprehensive dictionary covering the whole of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. FaNBI has a substantial introduction by Hanks, Coates and McClure, with contributions by Harry Parkin (1 ix–lxi), which is followed by an eminently useful glossary of linguistic and other terms (1 lxiii–lxxiii), the list of sources (1 lxxv–cxvii)

<sup>1</sup> with Paul Cullen, Simon Draper, Duncan Probert, Kate Hardcastle, Harry Parkin, Kay Muhr & Liam Ó hAisibéil.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Aaron–Cushing; 2 Cushion–Joynson; 3 Joynt–Radclyffe; 4 Raddie–Zwart.