The Placenames Database of Ireland and its local and family history benefits
(Pádraig Ó Cearbhaill)

The Placenames Database of Ireland is a bilingual database which is the result of collaboration between the Placenames Branch in the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and Fiontar, the Irish-language school in DCU.[1] The Placenames Branch provided the requisite dataand Fiontar the technological expertise. The database is accessible free of charge to the publiconthe logainm.ie website and serves around 150,000 searches each month.[2]Work commenced on the project in April 2007 and the Database was launched publicly in October 2008.

Initially the main objective of the project was to make available through the internet Irish names of placenames that had been validated by the Placenames Branch, searchable under both Irish and English versions.As we shall see, the accessible data has been greatly developed beyond its core function. There is at present a total of 108,280 English placenames in the database and Irish names are given for 85,576 of these. The main reason for this disparity between the number of Irish and English-language names is becausethe research required to recommend Irish versions

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[1]This is the text of a lecture which was prepared for the 'Back to our past' event in the RDS, Dublin on 18 October 2013. I wish to thank Mairéad Nic Lochlainn for her assistance in preparing the presentation.

[2] This figure was given by Michal Boleslav Měchura and Brian Ó Raghallaigh, 'The logainm.ie Placenames Database of Ireland: software demonstration' in Mairéad Nic Lochlainn & Brian Ó Raghailligh (eds.), *Placenames Workshop 2012: Management and dissemination of toponymic data online* (2012) 115. The data which I have provided in the course of this lecture was collected in October 2013.

of placenameshas not been completed.[3]There are also about 300 monolingual Irish names in the database. The latter are either historical names such as **Teafa,** earlier **Tethba** – a former territory in parts of Longford, Westmeath and Offaly, or else non-administrative features thatare unrecorded on the Ordnance Survey large scale maps, such as **Seascann Bhearach ShéamaisMhaighréide** in the Donegal Gaeltacht, meaning 'the bog or marsh of Séamas Maighréide's heifer'!

This corpus of placenames includesall of thetraditional administrative names within the island of Ireland that are arranged in the hierarchical structure of townland, parish, barony and county, as well as the more modern electoral division names. Administrative names constitute the greater part of the data of geographical names, about 68,000 names. I should mention that the total number of townland names in the placenames data of 61,110 is somewhat lower than that given by Rev. Charles Reeves for instance in a well-known paper of his entitled, 'On the townland distribution of Ireland',[4]the figures for whichwere based on the Census of 1851.Reeves' total figure is 62,205. The main reason for this difference is as follows: where an original single townland unit is divided between two or more parishes, we have counted the underlying townland as one name when the different townland sections are in the same electoral division, whereas each adjoining section is regarded as a separate townland in the Census of 1851 and in subsequent alphabetical indexes of townlands.For instance *Bunkey* / **Bun Caoith**in Co.Limerick, which means 'mouth of the swamp', is entered as two separate townlands in the Alphabetical Index to the Townlands of Ireland which was prepared in connection with the Census of 1851, 1871 and so on. Although these two townlands are situated in different parishes they are contiguous and are basically one land-unit. Both divisions formed part of a single District Electoral Division in the Townland Index that subsequently accompanied the Census of 1901.The two divisions of *Bunkey*are therefore regarded as one townland in the placenames database.

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[3]Placenames of English origin which, although they have been researched, have not been translated into Irish--such as Moneyparktownland in Co. Tipperary--are excluded here, because monolingual toponyms of this type are entered as both English and Irish names in the database.
[4] Published in *PRIA* vol. 7, part 14 (1861) 473-90.

Bunkey / **Bun Caoith**
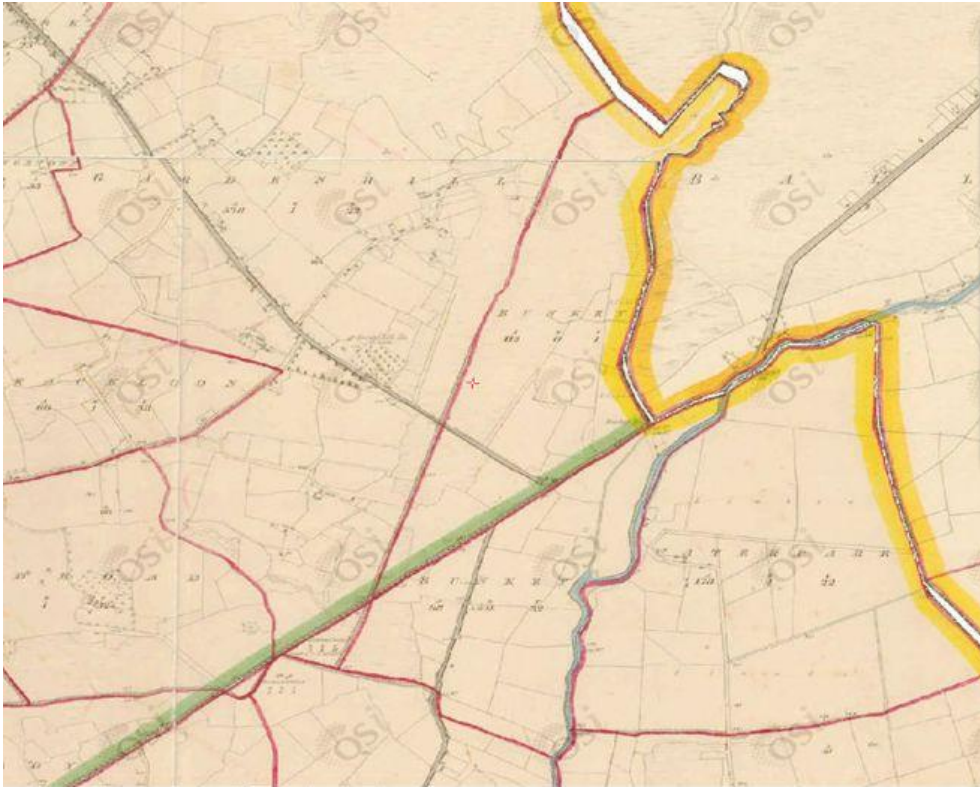
The other principal types of placenames in the database are classified as follows. There are about 11,000 non-administrative names of geographical (or physical) features in the database at present, such as names of lakes, islands, rivers, rocks, hills, mountains, bays and promontories etc. There are also about 2,500 names of man-made features in the database, such as names ofecclesiastical sites and graveyards, castles,ring-forts and other enclosures, various historic monuments, quays and piers, bridges, roads etc.

Current database contents: **61,110** townlands **23,840** streets **3,491** electoral districts **3,271** minor features **2,567** civil parishes **2,225** population centres **1,737** lakes **1,117** islands and archipelagos **945** rivers **850** towns **799** rocks **589** hills **499** bridges **381** mountains and mountain ranges **346** baronies **305** wells **244** monuments **229** sub-townlands **218** houses **216** ecclesiastical sites **195** man-made features **183** strands **179** features **178** bays **175** points, tips **165** promontories **159** graveyards, cemetaries, burial grounds **142** villages **121** crossroads **117** castles **117** streams **112** valleys **112** enclosures **107** woods **107** creeks **105** localities **91** fields **81** roads **76** cliffs **61** passes **51** harbours **42** quays, piers, wharves **40** cairns **36** bogs **32** counties **28** waterfalls **28** estuaries **27** hamlets **25** channels, sounds **25** holes **23** caves, souterrains **19** standing stones **17** tombs **16** coombs **12** hollows **11** canals **10** sandhills **81** other geographical units

An important part of these non-administrative names are those of the Gaeltacht areas, over 6,000 in all, whose names appear in English on the Ordnance Survey large-scale maps at the scale of six inches to one mile. These were researched by the Placenames Branch and their Irish-language forms were given legal status by a Placenames Order made in 2011. All of the placenames orders that have been made,as well as draft placenames orders awaiting further consultation or scrutiny, are available on the logainm website.

Over3,000 names are classified as population centres, towns, villages and hamlets inthe database. The Irish forms of many of these names were originally published in *Ainmneacha Gaeilge namBailte Poist* (The Irishnames of the post-towns of Ireland) in 1969 and they were also included in the *Gazetteer of Ireland* (1989). A revised edition of the *Gazetteer of Ireland* is available on thelogainm website, under information resources, publications.

There is a small number of house names in the database, about 270 in all, for which information or an Irish name was requested at some stage. One such example is *Kilteragh* in Foxrock, which was formerly the home of Sir. Horace Plunkett. The name is derived from **Cill Tí Céire** in Irish meaning literally,'the church of the house of **Ciar'**;the latter was a female saint. **Teach Céire**, the house or church of **Ciar**, which was the original name, can be traced back to the 13th century and is probably much older than that. The name also partially survives in the townland name of *Kerrymount*in Foxrock

I will mention one furthertype of name that is of common occurrence, namely streetnames—there are about 24,000 suchnames in the database at present for which Irish versions have been recommended, this is from a total of 49,000 streetnames in the state according to figures supplied by the Ordnance Survey of Ireland.Streetnames are usually linked in our database to the town or city and county in which they are located. Copies of a number of publications in PDF form in which streetnames are discussed can bedownloaded from the logainm website, such as an introduction to published lists of the streetnames of South Dublin and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

At the level of microtoponymy, the number of surviving geographical names of features in Ireland is enormous, especially if we include field names. Here are a few examples of published material containing such names:about 1962/3 a collection of names was made by the Placenames Branch in the parish of **An Rinn**, Co. Waterfordwhich appeared in book-formin 1975. About 1,400 names were collected in 22 townlands, including coastal features, and field names.[5] In the same year a collection of about 800 placenames from **Cill Ghallagáin**townland in Co. Mayo was published by Séamas Ó Catháin and Patrick Flanagan,entitled*The Living Landscape: Kilgalligan, Erris County Mayo*.Anothermore recent collection of minor-names or micro-toponyms from the same Gaeltacht area in north Mayo has also been published by Uinsíonn Mac Craith and Treasa Ní Ghearraighentitled, *Logainmneacha agus Oidhreacht Dhún Chaocháin / The Placenames and Heritage of Dún Chaocháin* (2004).Many of these microtoponyms are not marked on the Ordnance Survey maps and are not necessarily entered in our database. Further placenames are however being added to the database.An additional list of about 1,000 minor names of natural and artifical features in Co. Limerick which were collected in the course of field-work in the

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[5]A PDF version of this collection, entitled *Logainmneacha as Paróiste na Rinne, Co Phort Láirge*, is available on the website http://www.logainm.ie/eolas/?uiLang=ga#15

early 1970s were added to the database during 2012 and 2013. One such name which isn't recorded on the Ordnance Survey maps is **Tobairín an Duine Bho(i)cht**, 'the little well of the poor man', for instance.
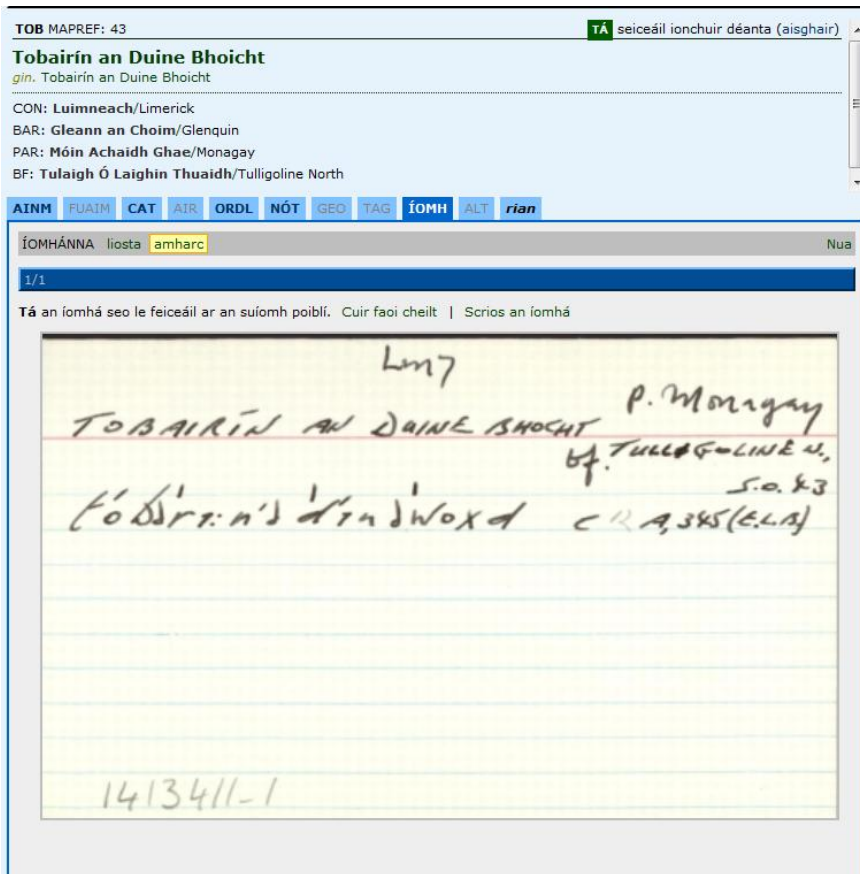
While researching the placenames of Co. Kerry, I recently inserted some names of coastal features from the Glenbeigh area that were collected from local informants in 1969 by Breandán Ó Cíobháin, a former member of the Placenames Branch.Here are a few examples, firstly of names whose Englishor anglicised forms appear on the Ordnance Survey maps: *King's Head*, known as **Faill an Rí** in Irish, literally 'the cliff of the king' or possibly'of the heather'; *Feaklecally* / **Fiacail Caillí**, a coastal rockwhich means 'the hag's tooth';*Cooslarbaun* / **Cuas na Lára Báine** which means 'the cove of the white mare' and **Smulc an Mhadra**, meaning 'the snout of the dog', the name of a rock which isn't recorded on the Ordnance Survey map—it doubtless describes the rock's shape. Ó Cíobháin has also published a large collection of microtoponyms, about 4,000 names in all, which he collected in the Dunkerron baronies of south west Kerry,entitled *ToponomiaHiberniae I-IV*(published in the period 1978-1985).[6]

The following information about placenamesis included in the database: A national grid reference is given for all townlands in the State, as well as forsome other placenames.

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[6] Some further collections of micro-toponyms have been discussed by Nollaig Ó Muraíle in the following review article, 'Irish placenames; the current state of research', *Éigse* 38 (2013) 273-305.

Thegeographical location is marked on the accompanying map browser of Ireland. Both of these aspects of the website are to be further developed by Fiontar in the current phase of the project, which is set to include the coordinates of townland names in Northern Ireland and improved maps.We hope to work in liaison with the Northern Ireland Place-Names Project (for which see www.placenamesni.org) and Ordnance Survey Ireland respectively to provide this updated information.

I would like at this stage to give you some examples of two further interesting features that are accessible through the website, explanatory notes and archival records. There are more than 7,000 entries at present which have some form of explanatory note: many give a literal translation of the name, such as the note appended to*Clownagh*/ **Cluain Each**, a townland inCo. Armagh, 'pasture of (the) horses'; or the townland of *Clay* / **Cliath**, in the same county where this basic formula has been expanded, 'The longer form of this placename was Lorga Chléithe, 'long low ridge of (the) hurdle': cf. the historical references 'b:lurgacley' (1609), 'Lurgaclea' (1660c)'.

county	**Ard Mhacha**/Armagh
barony	**Ard Mhacha**/Armagh
civil parish	**An Céide**/Keady

townland	**Cliath**
	gin. Chléithe
	non-validated name
	(Irish)
	Clay
	(English)
	This is in Northern Ireland

Sub-units

   lakes (1)

Explanatory note

   ❝ *hurdle*
   The longer form of this placename was **Lorga Chléithe**, 'long low ridge of (the) hurdle': cf. the historical references 'b:lurgacley' (1609), 'Lurgaclea' (1660c)

Archival records

   text records

Permanent link

   http://www.logainm.ie/56186.aspx

Anexample of a short note which gives the origin, rather than the meaning of a placename is: *Fox-and-Geese*townland in Co. Dublin: 'Named after a public house'.[7]

The following is an illustration of a longer note in whichthe origin of a name is discussed; it deals withthe village of *Gracehill*in Co Antrim or**Baile Uí Chinnéide** in Irish: 'The Irish nameof the village is the same as thetownland name in which it is situated, **Baile UíChinnéide**/**Ballykennedy**, "the townland of Ó Cinnéide". JamesO'Laverty, *An Historical Account of the Diocese ofDown and Connor*, volume III (1884)explains the origin of Gracehill as follows: "Gracehill is the name given to the village erected in the townland of Ballykennedy by the Moravians, a sect established by a German, Count Zinzendorf, who died in 1760. A colony of this sect was established in Ireland, about the year 1746, by one of their ministers, named

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[7] All of the notes were initially written by the staff of the Placenames Branch, both past and present. Aindí Mac Giolla Chomhghaill deserves special mention for the preparation of much of this material.

Cennick. In 1755 they obtained from Charles O'Neill, of Shane's Castle, a lease, renewable forever, of their present holding'.

Various explanatory notes, such as the foregoing,provide references to further published information on the origin of placenames.*Canningstown*, a village in Co. Cavan--which was so-called in the nineteenth century—is another such example. On the first edition of the Ordnance Survey six inch map of Co. Cavan which was surveyed in 1835 a bridge named*New Bridge*is shown, adjacent to a collection of houses corresponding to the location of *Canningstown*.The following note on the origin of the latter name is included in the Revised Ordnance Survey Namebook (1878),: 'The name of this village was changed [from New-Bridge seemingly] by the proprietor Lord Garvagh, now deceased, about 30 years ago ... He calledit after his surname Canning. It is well-known by the name of Canningstown inthe village and the surrounding country'. The Canning family first received land in Ireland duringthe Ulster Plantation. The surname is derived from the family's place of origin, namely All Cannings and Bishop's Cannings in Wiltshire, England.George Canning, who was prime-minister of the United Kingdom in 1827, is descended from this family.In the present instance the explanatory note on the website refers to an article about the placename which was published in the Journal *Dinnseanchas*, volume 1 (1965).

The Placenames Branch has created a large archive of historicalplacename forms since its inception and some of this evidence is now available on the website.ThisArchival Record consists of either scanned images or text records in searchable format of some of the historical source material. The inputting of both types of historical records is on-going. The scanned images are either of hand-written index cards or of typed A4 sheets. Scanned historical records have been added to 30,481 placenames to date and text records in searchable format have been added to 29,915 names.

An illustration ofthe historical evidence of a name which was written on index cards is*Ardee*town in Co. Louth or **Baile Átha Fhirdhia**, the ford where **Fear Dia(dh)** is said to have met his death at the hands of **Cú Chúlainn**. The scanned images that followprovidemany references to theplacename, especially from Irish-language sources over a long period of time, as well as including the recommended Irish spellingfrom various publications of the early twentieth century. As you can see the historical evidence is not set out in chronological order.

ARDEE   Co. Louth.

Bar. Ardee; Par. id ___   O.S. 14,17.

baile áta firdiad   e.p.   BAILE ATHA FHIRDIADH   É.p. 1955
baile áta fhiadiað   L.
    át firdia   Loz a.
Baile atha fhirdiaidh   F.M.
Baile an fhirdhiadh   É. ph
áth fhirdia   F.M.   C. mac f   S. mac a.
        áit firðra   S-O.   P. mac z. C.
    át firðra   I 128 Joyce (who gives Ahirdee from L.H.)

Ard firdhiadh (?)   onom. (?)
Baile átha fhirdiaidh mac Damáin   onom. (FM)   77[b] FM IV 980

áth fir Diad   Ann. Inf.   (1315.1)
át firðiað   — oirean ğaedzenei   Lmoc C.
Baile át firðiað   pod.

An 132302 P PO 33493 1

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⑭

Ardee

co h Áth miult frisa n-abar Áth fir Diad
                Compert C. Culainn 118/48
ardí .s. Athriath (barúntacht)   23 E 26 1730   l. 329
atharde, athriath baile 7ba gcionnachtaibh glon. Rossa Comáin
    ibid, l. 333 Ach tá X ar an imeall roimis ages
    iré Athlúain leis in chúntas díreach céanna an
    chéad bhaile eile ar an liostr.
    Athriagh ibid 342

I mBaile-áth-fhir-dia.   RIA 23E12.100 (... Cuarta)

Baile-áth-fheardia   23E12.419 (amhrán)
"Baile-áth-fheardia, Ardee, is now contracted into
Baile-áth-riadh."   ib. (nóta)
do bhaile-átha-fhir-dhia   3B 38.39 (prós)
a shárughadh bhaile-áth-fhir-dhia   ib. 42 (amhrán)
PO 33493 bhaile-á-fhir-dhia   3B 38.124 (amhrán)

Roche /**Dún Gall** is another example of a placename in Co. Louth, the historical evidence for which is accessible on-line. *Roche,* meaning rock in French, refers to a rocky outcrop on which an Anglo-Norman castle was built in the thirteenth century, whereas the Irish name **Dún Gall** means fortress of the Anglo-Normans. In this instance thescanned image has the more modern format of a typed page.This is followed below by some of the historical evidence which is now accessible intextual format.The evidence is chronologically presented in these two images.

(báile fearainns)

	ROCHE		Dún Gall
1278–80	La Roche		CD I II,
1301	of the Rock		Plea R.,
1332	Roch, le Roche; la Roche; le Roche		Verdun, 421; 422, 433
1318	de Rupe		Dowd. D, 51, 52
1366	le Roche		" 239
1396	le Roch		" 338
1407	Roche		" 367
1427	Roch		Reg. Swn, 60
1431	? Ross (nó Carrickma<u>cross</u> ?)		" 134
1538	the Roch		Dowd. D, 541
1540	Roche		Mon. P., 238
1545	"		F. Hen. 450
1553–4	"		F. PH & M, 20
1581–2	the Roich		F. Eliz, 3810–11
1583–4	Roiche		" 4289
1614	Roch		Inq. 6 J.I.
1627	Roche		Inq. 10 C.I
1640	"		Inq. 49 C.I
1644	"		Inq. 50 C.I
1655	Roach (Par.)		DS
1658	Roatch Par., Roach		Inq. LP, 35
1659	Roth		CN, 466
1664	Roch		Hmr, 511
1670c	Roach Parish		BSD, 239

1407	Roche	· Dowd. D, *Leathanach 367*
1427	Roch	· Reg. Swayne, *Leathanach 60*
1431	?Ross	· Reg. Swayne, *Leathanach 134*
1533-34	Roche	· F, *Leathanach 20*
1538	the Roch	· Dowd. D, *Leathanach 541*
1540	Roche	· Ir. Mon. Poss., *Leathanach 238*
1545	Roche	· F, *Leathanach 450*
1581-2	the Roich	· F, *Leathanach 3810-11*
1583-4	Roiche	· F, *Leathanach 4289*
1614	Roch	· Inq. Lag. (Lú), *Leathanach 6 Jac.I*
1627	Roche	· Inq. Lag. (Lú), *Leathanach 10 Car.I*
1640	Roche	· Inq. Lag. (Lú), *Leathanach 49 Car.I*
1644	Roche	· Inq. Lag. (Lú), *Leathanach 50 Car.I*
1655	Roach	· DS
1658	Roatch, Roach	· Inq. LP, *Leathanach 35*
1659	Roth	· Cen., *Leathanach 466*
1664	Roch	· HMR (Lú), *Leathanach 7:511*
1670c	Roach Parish	· BSD, *Leathanach 239*
1683	Roach	· Hib. Del.
1777	Roch & Kane Parish	· TS
1836	P(aráiste) Dh(ún) gh(ál)	· pl:AL
1836	dun gall, fort of the foreigners	· OD:AL
1836	dún gáll	· pl:AL
1836	Roche Roach (bf)	· AL

Longford town, Co. Longford is another example from the database of the two types of archival records, scanned image and text.

Archival records
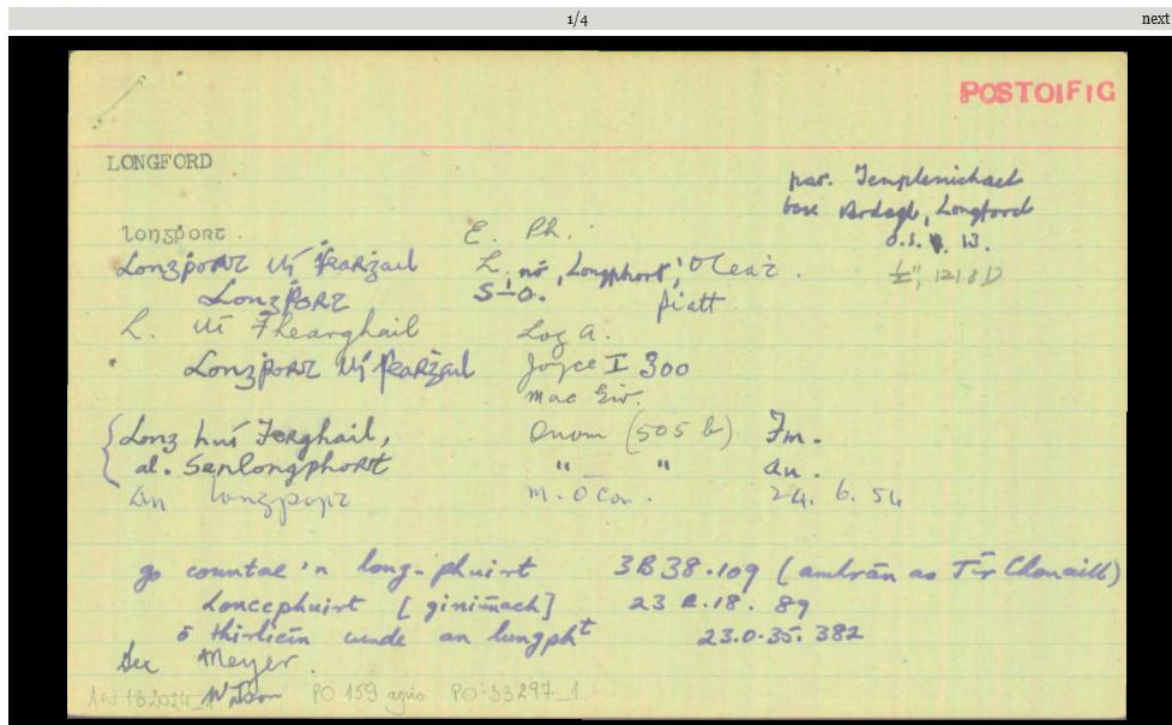
1430	...gur an Senlongport...	· AU III, *Page 108*
1448	...triur brathar do bhraithribh longpuirt ui fearghail dég...	· ARÉ, *Page iv, 956*
1581	Longford	· F, *Page 3829*
1583	Longeford	· F, *Page 4153*
1587	Longford	· F, *Page 5107*
1590	the town of Longford (Richard Staines)	· F, *Page 1661*
1595	gabhadh leó an longport	· ARÉ VI, *Page 1964*
1603	Longford (Donnogh O' Carhe, clerk)	· CPR, *Page 29b*
1604	Longeford (Rosse O' Ferrall)	· Inq. Lag. (Lo), *Page 1 Jac.1*
1612	the abbey of Longford	· CPR, *Page 246a*
1612	3 cartrons of Longforde in the south side of the river	· Inq. Lag. (Lo), *Page 3 Jac.1*
c.1616	Longphort Uí Fherghail a ainm ar asé ba dúnarus dósaidhe 7 don ti no bhiodh hi ccennus na criche dia chenél	· Beatha Aodha Ruaidh, *Page 90*
1616	The monastery of Loncourt otherwise Longford	· CPR, *Page 287a*
1620	the abbey of Longford (Sir Francis Aungier)	· CPR, *Page 452a*
1620	Longford 3 cartrons lying on the north side of said river (Sir Francis Aungier)	· CPR, *Page 452a*
1620	Longford 3 cartrons lying south of the river of Longford (Sir Francis Aungier)	· CPR, *Page 452a*
1623	The site, ambit, and precinct of the late monastery or house of Brothers of Loncourt alias Longford	· CPR, *Page 562b*
1629	Longford	· Cotton Map
1632	vil' de Longford'	· Inq. Lag. (Lo), *Page 9 Car.1*
1654-56	the towne of Longford	· CS X, *Page 47*
1654-56	the river of Longford	· CS X, *Page 46*
1654-56	the towne of Longford	· CS X, *Page 48*

As you have undoubtedly observed, the historical archive of placename records is taken from many different sources. There are over 6,500 sources in the unedited bibliography that we have compiled so far--this includes quite a few reduplicated abbreviations; it is envisaged that a full list of sources and abbreviations will be provided before long.

I have already mentioned some of the additional features that are available on the logainm website, such as Placenames Orders and various publications that can be downloaded from the site. A glossary of words commonly found in Irish placenames is also included, such as **abhainn**, 'river', **achadh**, 'field', **beith**, 'birch' etc., together with relevant examples of placenames from the database.

Common Irish elements in placenames

Irish word	English meaning	Examples
abhainn (ALSO: abha)	*river*	An Abhainn Mhór, An Abha Mhuimhneach, Bun Abhann Dalla, Cois Abha Móire
achadh (ALSO: -ach)	*field*	Achadh an Dá Chora, Garbhachadh, Ardach
aill (ALSO: faill)	*cliff*	An Aill Mhór, Dún Aille, Dumha Cinn Aille, An Fhaill Dearg, Faill an Fhraoigh, Cnoc na Faille, Mucaillte
ard	*height; high*	Ard Mhacha, Cluain Ard, Baile an Aird
áth	*ford*	Áth Dara, Béal Átha Liag
bá	*bay*	Bá Fhíonáin
baile	*townland, town, homestead*	Baile Átha Cliath, An Leathbhaile Mór
bán	*white; lea-ground, grassy*	An Bán Fionn, Bántír, Na Bánta Buí, Glasbhánta, An Bhinn Bhán
barr	*top*	Barr an Fheadáin, Gleann Bhairr
beag (ALSO: big)	*small*	An Baile Beag, Na Cealla Beaga, An Ghráinsigh Bhig
béal	*opening, approach, mouth*	Béal Feirste, Béal an Átha, Cuan Bhéil Inse
bealach	*way, pass*	Bealach Conglais, Maigh Bhealaigh, Oirbhealach
bearna (ALSO: bearn, bearnaidh)	*gap*	Bearna, Líos Dúin Bhearna, An Bhearnaidh, Bearn Mhín
beith	*birch*	Barr Beithe, Coillidh Bheithe
binn (ALSO: beann)	*peak, cliff*	Binn Éadair, An Bhinn Mhór, An Bheann
both (ALSO: boith)	*hut, cell*	Both Mhíde, Boith Shalach, Achadh Boithe Néill, Botha Buí
bóthar	*road*	An Bóthar Buí, Baile an Bhóthair, Gabhal an Dá Bhóthar, An Seanbhóthar
breac	*speckled*	An Baile Breac, An Leargain Bhreac
buaile (ALSO: buailidh)	*cattle-fold, summer-pasture*	Buaile na Scornaí, Cnoc na Buaile, An Ardbhuailidh
buí	*yellow*	An Bábhún Buí, An Lorgain Bhuí
bun	*(river-)mouth, bottom(-land)*	Bun Raite, An Bun Beag, Bun Caoith, Mín Bhun Abhann
caiseal	*stone ring-fort*	Caiseal, Caiseal na gCorr, Gleann Chaisil, Cnoc na gCaiseal
caisleán	*castle*	Caisleán Cnucha, Baile an Chaisleáin
caoin	*pleasant, fair*	Cluain Caoin
caol	*narrow; a narrow; marshy stream*	An Caol, An Drom Caol, Loch na dTrí gCaol,

Various books, articles and other publications about placenames are included in the Information resources which would be of benefit to genealogists or local historians, such as a PDF version of *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* by Samuel Lewis (1837).

Modern sound recordings of the country's principal placenames, in Irish and English, are also given—these provide a regional guide to pronunciation and 22 counties have been undertaken to date. The names of baronies, parishes, electoral divisions, population centres and the main physical features are included. Apart from modern recordings of important placenames, a sound archive of recordings made by the Placenames Branch is also available on the website. It contains more than 1,200 hours of audio recordings in Irish and English, mainly from the 1960s and 1970s. The recordings were made in 24 different counties and placenames were collected from more than 4,000 informants. The archive includes some valuable recordings from native Irish speakers in areas where the language has since disappeared. The audio material and its catalogue were digitised in 2009 anda limited database of the digitised catalogue is available to the public. Anyone wishing to listen to a particular recording is asked to submit a written request.

Educational resources based on placenames for primary, post-primary and third level students have been developed by Fiontar, with the assistance of toponymic researchers. This material is also available on the website.Another feature on the website allows users to submit queries on individual placenames.

I would now like to say a little more about the Information resources on the website, especially the maps.These are photographed images of various historical maps from the latesixteenth to the twentieth century—either the original maps or copies of the original maps--which are in the possession of the Placenames Branch. The following is a portion of an interesting map in Irish of the countrywhich was printed and published in 1938 by 'Stát-Oifig na Léarscáilidheachta' ('the State mapping office'). The Irish names were attributed to two well-known scholars,An tAthair Pól Breathnach (Fr. Paul Walsh) and 'Fiachra Éilgeach' or Risteárd Ó Foghludha.
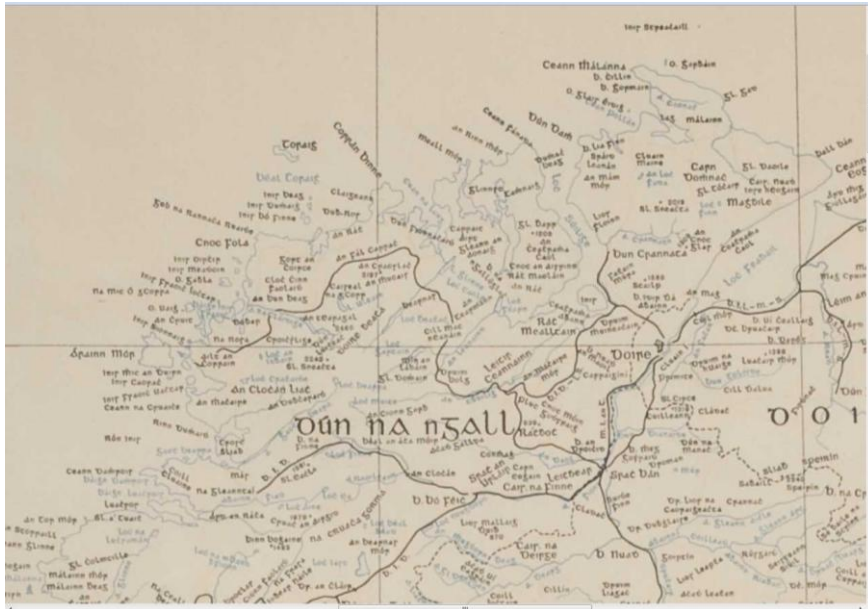
'Waterford and environs' by Patrick Leahy which was published in 1834 is an example of a city plan which was published prior to the Ordnance Survey maps.

We have also included a number of the county maps surveyed inthe eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many of which were undertaken at the instigation of the grand juries—the Co. Kildare map which was surveyed by John Noble and James Keenan and published in 1752 is one of the earliestcounty maps of the 18th century. The northern half of the county is reproduced below. Theinteresting picture inthe upper right hand corner depicts'a prospect ofthe great match run on the Curragh, September 5th 1751 for 1,000 guineas' between two named horses.[8]
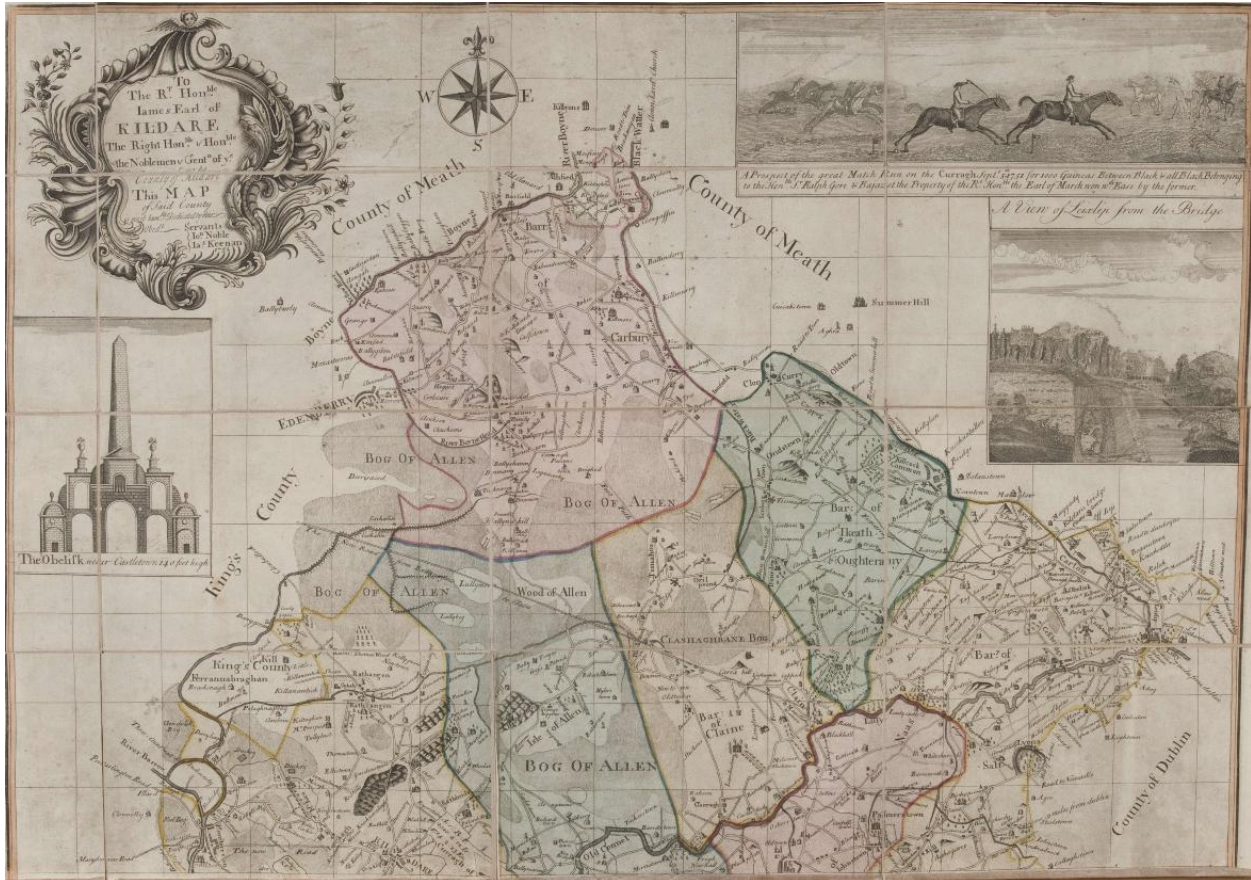
Maps such as these can provide us with valuable information about placenames. An example that springs to mind isa query which we received about 'Tooriskillan' in Co. Westmeath. Although that particular placenamewas recorded in the Tithe Applotment Books of the early nineteenth century, it `doesn't occur on the Ordnance Survey mapof Co. Westmeath which was first surveyed in 1837.'Tourshilanne' (sic)washoweverprinted on William Larkin's Map of Co. Westmeath [1808], a section of which is reproduced below, and it seems to be located within the moderntownland of Noughaval, parish of Noughaval, barony of Kilkenny West.We were then able to find earlier anglicised examples of theplacenamein seventeenth century sources, such as ('Tenoriskillana' (leg. 'Twor ...') on the Down Survey barony map and 'Towriskillane' in the Books of Survey and Distribution.The original Irish name was probably **Tuar Uí Scealláin**, meaning 'the paddock / cultivated field of Ó Scealláin'.

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[8] For further information on pre-Ordnance Survey maps and land surveyors, such as the foregoing, see for instance, J. H. Andrews, *Plantation Acres: An historical study of theIrish land surveyor* (1985).

For much of the remainder of this lecture, I am going to look at some examples of personal names and surnames in placenames. It can sometimes be difficult to decide whether the specific element of a placename is a personal name, a noun or an adjective. The adjective **dubh**, 'black' is of common occurrence in Irish placenames. It is found in the townland name *Annaghduff* / **Eanach Dubh** in Co. Cavan for example, meaning 'black marsh'.**Dubh** is also an early Irish personal namewhich must originally have been an epithet.Historical references to*Annaduff,*a parish and townland in the neighbouring county of Leitrim,are consistent with apersonal name in this particular placename: the death of the abbot**Mac intShair**, 'abbasEnaich duibh' is recorded in the Annals of Ulster in the year 767 and in the Annals of the Four Masters in 762 ('abb Eanaigh Duibh'). The two previous references provide us with examples of the placename in the genitive.Two further references to the placename in Irish are recorded in the Annals of Connacht. The placename is preceded by a preposition governing the dative case in both cases, 'icEnachduib' meaning 'at EnachDuib', and Duib is morphologically consistent with the genitive form of the name Dub, now spelt Dubh in Modern Irish.**Dubh** is also the name of a river on the Leitrim /Sligo border which is recorded in Irish sources from about 700AD. In fact our earliest reference to the river is a Latin translation of the name, *Niger*, which is preserved in Tírechán's account of St. Patrick in the Book of Armagh; its name, spelt **Dub**in Old-Irish, was subsequently recorded about a century later in a series of notes (or 'notulae') about persons and places connected with St. Patrick in the same manuscript.The river name is known as the *Duff* in English and it is also found in the following townland name which is partly situated in Co.

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Leitrim and partly inSligo, **Bun Duibhe** / *Bunduff*, 'the mouth of the Duff' where it enters Donegal Bay. The last-mentioned name was recorded in Irish in the Annals of the Four Masters under the year 1494.

By virtue of the extant historical evidence, it was possible in the foregoing examples to classify the grammatical function of **dubh** aseither, anadjective, a noun or a personal name.Without undertaking proper historical research, one cannot reliablyextract the underlying Irish forms of many of our placenames from the modern English or anglicizedspelling. We can illustrate this point by looking at the name*Clonarney*, which is a civil parish and townland in Co. Westmeath. The Irish word **airne** is preserved in quite a number of Irish placenames as qualifier, notably in the name *Killarney*, Co. Kerry. This is usually interpreted as 'the church of sloe(s)'.[9] However the final word could also be an oblique form of**ára**, meaning a kidney or a ridge in placenames.[10]The same word, **airne (áirne)**, seems to underlie the final part of Clonarneytownland in Co. Cavan.[11] On the other hand, early examples of*Clonarney* in Co. Westmeath show that the final element of this parish andtownlandis a personal name.The placename is recorded as **Cluain Ernáin** in the afore-mentioned'Notulae'related to St. Patrick in the Book of Armagh. The location of this early placename was correctly identified by theillustrious placenames scholar Fr. Paul Walshwho concluded that, 'The English form [Clonarney] came from Cluain Earna, Erne or Erna being the simple form of Ernán'.[12]

The difficulty of correctly interpreting Irish placenames is often compounded by the fact that when we come to analyse the majority of extant names, we have torely to a large extent on anglicized or English spellings to discover the original Irish name.

Even when we carefully glean the historical evidence of placenames, it isn't always possible to decide if the specific element of certaintoponyms is a personal name or a noun. A good example of this uncertainty in meaning is illustrated by the two distinct townlands in Co. Leitrim called *Roscunnish* / **Ros Conais**. Although **conas** (genitive **conais**) is an Old-Irish word, meaning 'strife, contention',the form **conais** could also be the genitive of an early Irish personal name,**Cú Ois**(or **Conas**). Another example of a placename element which could either be a personal name or a noun is **lomán**, which we find for instance in four different townlands spelt *Drumlumman* or *Drumloman*that are located in countiesCavan and Leitrim—**lomán** means a bare tree and it is also a personal name. There is no such ambivalence in the case of *Derreennalomane* / **Doirín an Lomáin** in Co. Cork, which means 'the little oak-grove of the bare tree', or presumably in the case of other placenames where **lomáin** is preceded by the definite article.

Blakestown in Co. Dublin is an example of an Irish placename of English origin in which there is uncertainty whether the specific element is a surname or not.The name is discussed in an explanatory note on the logainm.ie website. At first glance, one would imagine that this placenamecontainedthe English surname Blake followed by town, which would be in-keeping

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[9]See P. W. Joyce, *Irish Names of Places* I (1869) 518 for instance.

[10]*Killarney* (Co. Kerry) has been tentatively translated as 'church of ridge' in the following publication, Pádraig Ó Riain, Diarmuid Ó Murchadha, Kevin Murray (eds.), *Historical Dictionary of Gaelic Placenames* 3 (2008) 125. See the following footnote also.

[11]The final element of *Clonarney* (Co. Cavan) was interpreted as **áirne**, 'ridge', genitive singular of **ára** by T. S. Ó Máille, 'Ára mar Áitainm', *Galvia* 4 (1957) 56 ff.

[12] P. Walsh, *The Placenames of Westmeath*(1957) 82, n.2.

with the structure of many otherplacenames ofEnglish origin in Co. Dublin.However, there isn't any reference to *Blakestown* prior to the beginning of the nineteenth century and it would seem that thistownland was previously known as *Black Stahenny*(with variant spellings). *Stahenny* is now known as *Castahenny*which is located to the west of *Blakestown*. A number of possible derivations for the placename are considered in the accompanying explanatory note on the logainm.ie website, from which I have extracted the following: 'The name Blakestown[may be] simply a modern rationalisation of Black Stahenny or ... an entirely different name (a sub-denomination, perhaps) which was substituted for Black Stahenny because of the similarity of form ...'.[13]

One of the obvious results of researching placenames is our ability to correctly identify a surname or a personal name. Here are a few examples: The correct Irish name of*Lismakeegan*townlandin south Leitrim, between Leitrim village and Carrick-on-Shannon, is **Lios Mhic Cagáin** in modern Irish. This underlying Irish name is clear from historical evidence, such as *Lessemockagan* (dated 1585), *Lismakagan* (1590) etc. John O'Donovan, the greatplacenames scholar of the nineteenth century,correctly identified the surname in the Ordnance Survey Parish Namebook (1836) where he recorded theplacename in Irish as **Lios Mac Cagadhain**. O'Donovan further noted that **Mac Cagadháin**,which is the 'Classical' orEarly Modern Irish spelling of the surname, was lord of the territory of Clann Fearmhoighe in Bréifne according to a Topographical Poem composed by Seaán Ó Dubhagáin in the 14th century.[14] This territory now comprises the valley of Glenfarne in north Co. Leitrim.On the other hand the surname which is preserved in the townland of *Carrickmakeegan*, which is also in south Leitrim, near Ballinamore, is of a different origin.This again becomes evident from early historical forms of the name, such as, *Carrickemakygan* (1585), *Carrimckegan* (1622), *CarrickMck Egan* (1660c), **Carraic mic caogain** (1836). The last-cited example of the placename was written inpencil in the Ordnance Survey Namebook. John O'Donovan suggested two surnames (or patronymics) in this instance which he considered to be the original Irish name, **Carraic Mic Thadhgain** and**Mac Cagadhain**. Both names are incorrect in this instance. The historical evidence corresponds, in our view, to **Carraig Mhic Aogáin.**the family of**Mac Aogáin**, earlier **Mac Aodhagáin**, was a well-known legal family who worked for many ruling families in post-Norman Ireland and it is interesting to note that the death of Brian Mac Aedacain, 'ollambretheman na Brefne', (.i. the chief judge of Breifne) is noted in the Annals of Connacht in 1390—his patron was presumably O'Rourke.

We have already noted that**Dubh**occurs in placenames as an adjective, as a proper name and as a river name. Brian Ó Cuív, in one of his articlesabout Irish personal names, discussed various epithetsof this type, i.e. substantivised adjectives which are sometimes preceded by the definite article and applied to persons.[15]One of the documented examples he gave was Niall Ó Raighilligh who was slain in 1256 and who is referred to as An Caoch Ó Raighilligh, meaning 'the blind-one'.His descendants were known as **Clann Chaoich**, a name which has survived as thebarony name of *Clankee*in Co. Cavan. There are also a number of other placenames inwhich **An Caoch**is preserved, such as *Killakee* / **Coill anChaoich** in Co. Dublin and *Attinkee*/ **Áit Tí**

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[13]The original note was written by Nollaig Ó Muraíle.

[14]James Carney (ed.), *Topographical Poems by Seaán Mór Ó Dubhagáin and Giolla-na-naomh Ó hUidhrín* (1943) 24.

[15]B. Ó Cuív, 'Aspects of Irish personal names', *Celtica* 18 (1986) 151-84.

an Chaoich in Co. Offaly, meaning 'the house site of An Caoch'. The personal name **Giolla Caoch**, literally meaning 'blind servant',seems to occur in the placename**Baile Ghiolla Chaoich**/ *Ballyhullenkeague*in Co. Cork.

Dall also means blind and it is used in toponymy to refer to people in the same manner as **caoch** —note the following well-known places which illustrate its use:**Tuar an Daill** / *Dooradoyle*in Co. Limerick (meaning 'paddock / cultivated field, pasture of the blind person') and**Lios anDail**l / *Lissadill*in Co. Sligo. The placename*Ballymacadoyle* / **Baile Mhic an Daill** near Daingean Uí Chúis, Co. Kerry is of interest for a number of reasons.The evidence shows that **Mac an Daill**, literally 'son of the blind person',functioned either as a patronymic or personal name in this instance: note the following historical example of the name and its association with the placename for instance,'Karrielmcldill of Bale McIdyll'(dated 1585). In a book which dealt comprehensively with the placenames of the Dingle Peninsula, its author An Seabhac (otherwise Pádraig Ó Siochfhradha),referred to local folklore about a certain**Mac an Daill** who was said to have lived in this place.[16] It is also worth noting that thetownland of **Baile Mhic an Daill** was also known as*Harperstown* in the sixteenth and seventeenth century and indeed, according to the folklore of the district,**An Dall** or **Mac anDaill** was a famous harper.

Aside from epithets, nicknames are also preserved in our placenames. I will confine myself to one further example from our database, namely a crossroads spelt*Pedar a Voher's* on the Ordnance Survey map at the scale of six inches to one mile of Co.Cavan. This minor name is undoubtedly an anglicisation of **Peadar an Bhóthair**, a nickname presumably meaning 'Peter of the road'; the namehas been perpetuated in Percy French's song about 'Eileen Oge, the pride of Petravore'.

I would like to say a little about women's names in Irish placenames. They are of much rarer occurrence than men's names.One particular class of women's names (and of men's names also of course)is that ofsaints which are often preceded by ecclesiastical elements to form placenames such as,**Cill Ghobnait**, **Teampall Eithne**and other such names on the logainm web-site, or they mayalso be commemorated in the names of holy wells such as, **Tobar Bhríde**. Certain placenames refer to females who belong to Irish mythology, such as **Cnoc Áine** / *Knockainy*in East Limerick or the many monuments called**Leaba Dhiarmada agus G(h)ráinne** / *Dermot and Grania's Bed* which are found in various parts of the country. Occasionally both a personal name and a surname are found in one placename, such as the townland of *Ballyshanedehay* / **Baile Sheoin de Hae** in Co. Limerick or *Richard Taaffe's Holding* in Co. Louth, which preserve in each case a personal name and surname of Anglo-Norman origin. Placenames of this structure, containing the first name and surname of a female are even rarer than their male equivalent.In order to illustrate this type of placename, I have included three non-administrative geographical names which are located in different Gaeltacht areas of Munster which have women's personal names and surnames:*Carrigillaunyrahily* / **Carraig Léin Ní Rathaille**,located near Darrynane in South Kerry (the first name may be a shortened form of **Eiléanóir**);[17]*Cooslismoneen* / **Cuas Lís Móiníl** in Dún Chaoin (**Lís** comes from **Eilís**) and*Tobar Peg Moynihan* / **Tobar Pheig Ní Mhuimhneacháin** in the parish of Inchigeelagh, Co. Cork.

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[16]An Seabhac, *Triocha-Céad Chorca Dhuibhne* (1939) 37-8.
[17]Rev. Patrick Woulfe, *Sloinnte Gaedheal is Gall, Irish names and surnames* (1923) 211.

There are many other interesting aspects of personal names and surnames in Irish toponymy that we could consider, such as names of foreign origin, as well as patronymics and population names. These will have to wait for another occasion.