HOME AND AWAY

EXPLOITING THE CORPUS OF NI PLACENAMES FOR CULTURAL TOURISM
NORTHERN IRELAND PLACE-NAME PROJECT
QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY, BELFAST

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INTRODUCTION: NIPNP

• name studies in Britain & Ireland:
• Dublin, Glasgow, Nottingham, Aberystwyth

• origin of NIPNP in QUB
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

• enrichment of cultural life: recording, preserving and publishing online the corpus of NI place-names and their historical background

• enhancement of understanding of aspects of language and history as preserved in these names

• creation of space: to encounter linguistic and cultural diversity through the exploration of connection between place and people (of whatever linguistic or ethnic origin)
CORPUS OF NAMES

• 30,000 place-names

• varying linguistic origin
• Irish, English, Scots, Norse…

• distinct Ulster flavour: combination of the first three
LAYERS AND HIDDEN DEPTHS

- Belfast
- Hillsborough
- Stormont

- Ballytrustan < Ir. *Baile Throstáin* < Eng. *Thurstans*
BELFAST

- Maine (USA)
- Prince Edward Island (Canada)
- Christchurch (New Zealand)
DERRY-LONDONDERRY

- Vermont (USA)
- Nova Scotia (Canada)
- New South Wales (Australia)

- Londonderry Island, off Tierra Del Fuego in Chile

- Derry & Londonderry, New Hampshire (USA)
NIPNP QUERIES

• recent example: Arnprior, Ontario (west of Ottawa)

• enquiry: origin and meaning of Ballygallum in Co. Down
• family emigrated, 1822 to Peterborough, NE of Toronto
• husband, 50; wife 42 (from Wilmont in Co. Antrim)
THE RESOURCE

• geographical coverage
• categorisation of names
• mapping interface

• search facilities
• explanatory paragraph: the ‘story’ of the name
SEARCHING FOR ROOTS

- places from which emigrants originated
- names in wills and deeds, bibles, gravestones etc.
- place-names which have been lost or which are now spelt differently or have new names
THE STORY OF BUSHMILLS

• the settlement and James I
• whiskey production and the foundation of the distillery
• exploitation of place and its associations in advertising
• what of ‘sacred water’!
• Bush, Boyne, Lagan and divine cows!
CULTURAL TOURISM

• integrated resource: geographical, historical & linguistic data in one website
• exploitation in collaboration with community groups

• NIPNP & Lough Neagh Partnership: publication and signage
• Sustrans Cycle Trail: names encountered by walkers & cyclists
• engagement with cultural diversity of the Lough
FURTHER EXPLOITATION

- virtual portal or gateway to Northern Ireland
- ‘Tourism Ireland’: North-South co-operation online
- access at strategic public locations: touchscreen and other technology
- addition of a photographic gallery
Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland