

Lancashire Place Name Survey

Newsletter September 2022

<http://lancspns.weebly.com/>



Please send notes & queries, reviews of events, information about place names research, and any other news to: j.masters1@lancaster.ac.uk

Welcome

Welcome to the September 2022 Lancashire Place Names Survey newsletter, in this edition we have some exciting content to share with you. In this edition, you will find:

Invitation to attend our much-anticipated **AGM and Annual Lecture, 19 October 2022**.

The Regional Heritage Centre have announced an **exciting new season of history events**.

A new local history publication from Lancashire Archives.

This year marks **100 years since the publication of Eilert Ekwall's *The Place-Names of Lancashire* in 1922**. To celebrate the occasion Professor John Insley has kindly shared a detailed account of Ekwall's career as a philologist and the legacy of his work on Lancashire's place names.

LPNS AGM 2022 and Annual Lecture

We are happy to announce the date of the next Lancashire Place Names Survey annual general meeting has been set for **7pm Wednesday 19 October** and will be directly followed by the annual lecture.

The event will be hosted virtually via Zoom, and the web link will be made available via our website ahead of the meeting.

In preparation for the AGM the committee have drafted a new constitution that is appropriate to a small organisation. The draft of the new constitution will be circulated via email to all members ahead of the AGM on 19 October for your review before the membership are asked to cast their vote on its endorsement.

This year's **lecture will be presented by Dr Christopher Donaldson and Dr James Butler** of Lancaster University who will share with us some of their findings from a fascinating project that explored the influence of the Ordnance Survey on the Lake District's 'name-scape' focused on the parish of Grasmere as part of a broader digitisation project of the extant Name Books.

We are looking forward to seeing as many of the LPNS membership at the event, albeit virtually, and experience Grasmere's landscape and a rare insight into Victorian cartographic methods through the OS Name Books brought to light by an important project and what promises to be a captivating talk.

The Influence of the Ordnance Survey on the Lake District's 'Name-scape'

How did the names we find on Ordnance Survey (OS) maps get there? Who was it who chose those names? Who decided how they should be spelled? What do those names reveal about the history of the places they describe? What, by the same token, do those names conceal? In this talk, we'll delve into these and other questions by reporting on work completed as part of a research project at Lancaster University: 'Envisaging Landscapes and Naming Places: the Lake District before the Map'.

This project has taken an important first step towards the complete digitisation of the OS Name Books for Cumberland and Westmorland by completing a proof-of-concept case study focused on the Name Books for the parish of Grasmere. In our talk, we shall explain how this case study was conceived and conducted, and we shall consider the extent to which Victorian developments and priorities (as well as errors in the OS's cataloguing process) influenced the maps through which people have experienced the Lake District for more than 150 years. We shall also discuss the choice of authorities for the names listed in the OS Name Books, and we shall assess what those choices reveal about Victorian society in and around Grasmere.

The Regional Heritage Centre Launch New Season of Study Events



The Regional Heritage Centre based at the Department of History, Lancaster University has recently announced a fantastic schedule of historical events for their new season of Study Days and lectures that start from October 2022. Here are details of the first two of many exciting events to look forward to.

The first calendared event is a Study Day devoted to the **new Police Museum at Lancaster Castle on Saturday 15 October**. The event offers a fantastic group of speakers led by curator Sabine Skae outlining the origins and development of the museum and similar institutions, the Greater Manchester Police Museum and Archives. The event also includes a private tour of the museum. Booking for this event in-person event is now open, and available via the RHC website <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/regional-heritage-centre/events/> where you will also find more information on upcoming events and booking information.

On **Saturday 26 November** the RHC are hosting a full Study Day at Carlisle Cathedral to mark the 900 year anniversary since its foundation in 1122 by Henry I as an Augustinian Priory. There is a fascinating schedule of speakers that include distinguished historian of Carlisle Dr Henry Summerson; Marta Alberti presenting on evidence for early Christianity from Vindolanda; Professor Janet Burton (University of Wales) will be speaking about Carlisle priory and the Augustinians in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Britain; and Professor Fiona Edmonds (Lancaster University, and Director of the Regional Heritage Centre) will contribute a paper on the

Church in early medieval Carlisle. This is an in-person event, and booking will open soon, so stay tuned for more information on the RHC website.

The RHC is preparing a special programme of events in 2023 to celebrate their 50th anniversary since the foundation of their predecessor organisation, the Centre for North West Regional Studies in 1973, so don't miss out on what promises to be an exciting year for regional history in North West England.

Lancashire Archives Launch New Local History Magazine

Lancashire Archives have announced it will be publishing a new local history magazine called *Archives* to promote studies of Lancashire's local history. The magazine will be published twice-yearly and sold in library, museum and archive venues operated by Lancashire County Council throughout the county.

Lancashire Archives welcome submissions on the history of Lancashire, its people or places from ancient times until the present day and hope to curate a mix of formal research and personal stories of local history from a broad range of contributors. If you are interested in contributing to future publications, please visit their website <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives/archives-and-record-office/> or telephone 01772 533039 for more information.

Eilert Ekwall and Lancashire Place-Names



This year marks the centenary since the publication of Eilert Ekwall's important study of Lancashire's place names. To mark the occasion, we are delighted to share with you a detailed essay written by Professor John Insley of Universität Heidelberg, and EPNS editor for Lancashire on Ekwall's career as a philologist and his scholarly contributions to the study of Lancashire's place-names.

Bror Oscar Eilert Ekwall, 1877-1964. Source: Swedish Portrait Archive

Eilert Ekwall, by Professor John Insley, Universität Heidelberg, EPNS editor for Lancashire

Ekwall the Philologist.

The classic account of Lancashire place-names is that of Eilert Ekwall (1877-1964), *The Place-Names of Lancashire* (Manchester, 1922), which also provided a methodological pattern for the early volumes of the English Place-Name Society's survey. Nowadays, Ekwall is best known to a broader audience through his invaluable *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, which went into four editions between 1936 and 1960, and his *English River-Names* of 1928, though he also published important monographs on the Old English place-name elements **-ing** (1923, 2nd ed. 1961) and **-wīc** (1964). Ekwall's publications are listed in an excellent bibliography compiled by the late Olof von Feilitzen in 1961.

Ekwall began his career as a philologist in the German neogrammarian tradition. His Uppsala PhD. thesis (in English) of 1903 was about the etymological elements in Shakespeare's vocabulary. Ekwall was a regular contributor in the years before the First World War to such German periodicals as *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Englische Studien*. Ekwall was also a prolific reviewer across the whole range of English linguistic history. For example, his detailed review of the first volume of Otto Jespersen's *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles* (Heidelberg, 1909) in *Beiblatt zur Anglia* 21 (1910), 321–331, is a classic of its kind. In this context, we should note that somewhat later, in 1914, Ekwall published an admirable concise grammar of Early Modern English, *Historische neuenglische Laut- und Formenlehre* (An Historical Phonology and Accidence of Modern English) which went into several editions and was translated into English in 1975 as *A History of Modern English Sounds and Morphology*.

It should be remarked that Ekwall continued to publish on the general linguistic features of English long after his primary interests had become centred on English place-names. For example, in 1945, he published an article on British and American pronunciation, and in 1923 he reviewed Karl Brunner's *Die Dialektliteratur von Lancashire* (The Dialect Literature of Lancashire) for *Beiblatt zur Anglia*. Returning to Early Modern English, in 1958 he reviewed E.J. Dobson's monumental *English Pronunciation 1500–1700* for *Review of English Studies*. A typical early publication of Ekwall in the field of the historical grammar of English was his *On the Origin and History of the Unchanged Plural in English* (1912). Perhaps his earliest contact with onomastic research was a short review of R.E. Zachrisson's *A Contribution to the Study of Anglo-Norman Influence on English Place-Names* (Lund, 1909) in *Moderna språk* 3 (1909).

Ekwall's Early Work on Lancashire.

Ekwall's earliest publication on Lancashire place-names was his extensive review (in English) of Henry Cecil Wyld in collaboration with T. Oakes Hirst, *The Place-Names of Lancashire* (London, 1911) in *Beiblatt zur Anglia*

23: 6 (June 1912), 177–191, though he indicated (p. 179 n. 1) that he had already been working on Lancashire place-names for some time. In the Wyld-Hirst compendium, the etymological dictionary of Lancashire place-names was the work of Wyld, while the list of elements was compiled by Oakes Hirst. Ekwall was justly critical of their inadequate use of source materials – in particular, he pointed out that they had not realized the full potential of such printed sources as Farrer’s edition of the Chartulary of Cockersand Abbey or the Lancashire Inquests published by the Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire. He also pointed out the insufficient treatment of river-names by Wyld and Hirst and castigated their failure to appreciate the importance of the Celtic element in Lancashire toponymy. A major failing of the Wyld-Hirst book is its rigid concentration on etymology at the expense of any examination of situation and topography. This, combined with deficiencies in the treatment and interpretation of the sources, led to obvious errors. An example of this is that he took the first elements of ALTCAR (parish, West Derby H) and COCKERHAM (parish, Lonsdale H) to be the hypothetical personal names **Alta* and **Cocer*, respectively, when, of course, as Ekwall demonstrated (review 186), they contain the river names ALT and COCKER.

Ekwall was deeply interested in the use of place-name material for historical dialectology. In his review of Wyld-Hirst, he touched on the question of the Middle English boundary between Southern/Midland [ɔ:] and Northern [a:] as reflexes of OE [ɑ:] in words like ModE *oak* < OE *āc* or ModE *stone* < OE *stān*.¹ He treated this in more detail in an article of 1913, “Die Ortsnamenforschung ein Hilfsmittel für das Studium der englischen Sprachgeschichte” (The Study of Place-Names – an Aid to the Study of the History of the English Language), *Germanisch-romanische Monatsschrift* 5 (1913), 592–608. On the basis of place-name spellings, Ekwall took the Ribble to be the boundary between Northern [a:] and Midland/Southern [ɔ:]. Many years later, in 1938, in an article in the Dutch journal *English Studies*, Ekwall returned to the [a:]/[ɔ:] boundary. Again, using place-name evidence, he showed that in Lancashire this boundary ran from the mouth of the Ribble to Ribchester, then forked north to Longridge Fell and turned east to the Hodder whose course it then followed down to the Ribble valley. Ekwall’s results were generally confirmed by Kristensson in 1967 in his investigation of the Lay Subsidy Rolls of 1327 and 1332, but this boundary shifted northwards in the later Middle Ages, as was demonstrated by the great Austrian historical grammarian Karl Luick who placed it at Cockerham at the end of the Middle Ages.

In 1917, in his *Contributions to the History of Old English Dialects*, Ekwall demonstrated that the area where OE (West Mercian) *wælla*, -e, ME (West Midland) *walle* for OE **wella**, -e ‘spring, stream’ was current was coterminous with the ancient dioceses of Hereford and Lichfield and, therefore, had its northern

¹ Old English [ɑ:] was a long open back vowel as in Modern English *father*. Its Northern Middle English reflex [a:] is a long open front vowel with a similar position to short **a** in Northern English *man*. Middle English [ɔ:] is a long rounded open back vowel corresponding to the sound represented by **aw** in Modern English *law* and **a** in *almost*.

boundary on the Ribble. This in turn would tend to support Peter Hunter Blair's belief that the southern frontier of Northumbria lay on the Ribble rather than, as been suggested by Nick Higham, on the Mersey.

The Place-Names of Lancashire — A Critical Approach.

Ekwall was acutely aware of the need to compare English material with Continental Germanic and Scandinavian material. He was also fully aware of the importance of the Celtic element in English place-names, especially in areas like Lancashire where the English settlement was late. There are one or two minor technical difficulties inherent in Ekwall's book, such as the absence of an index of personal names found in place-names, but these are relatively trivial problems. Perhaps more serious is the fact that there is relatively little field name material presented. Post-medieval material is rare, which is odd because Ekwall was fully aware that such material could have linguistic significance.

It is also the case that pre-Conquest material is rare in Lancashire and that we are often forced to make assumptions about dating. For example, the name element **–word** 'an enclosure' is generally regarded as early – certainly largely from before the Viking period. In Lancashire, the earliest spellings for some names of ancient type are late. For example, RODDLESWORTH in Leyland parish, whose first element is the Old English personal name *Hrōð(w)ulf*, a name not recorded independently after the ninth century, is first recorded in a record of c. 1160. FAILSWORTH in Manchester parish is first recorded in 1212 in the Book of Fees. Ekwall (PN La 36) took the first element to be OE ***fēgels** 'a bar serving as a lock', but here it is necessary to go back to Wyld-Hirst 122, where a personal name OE **Fēgel* or **Fægēl* is suggested. This name has an exact parallel in Old High German *Fachilo*, which is found in a ninth-century confraternity book from St Gall in Switzerland.

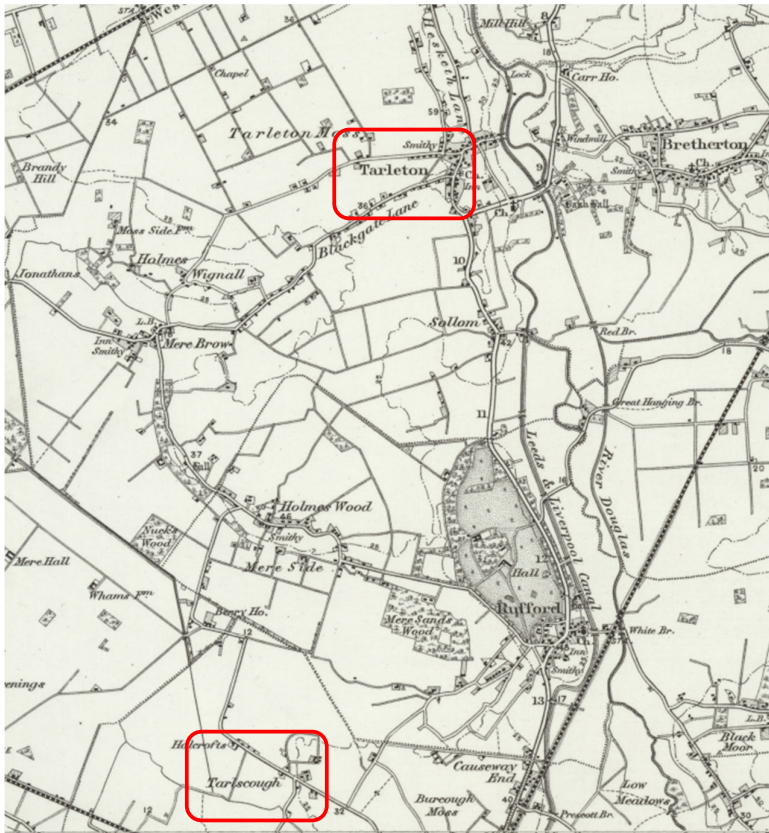
Ekwall relied exclusively on printed sources, which means that his work did not tap the vast amount of medieval field name material available in local private deeds, not to mention that provided by rentals and estate surveys in the early Modern period. Thanks to the efforts of the Chetham Society and the Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, Lancashire was in a far better position than many other counties with respect to ancient material. Important cartularies, like those of Whalley, Furness and Cockersand were available to Ekwall, and William Farrer and John Brownbill had already published the eight volumes of the Victoria County History for Lancashire. The important Burscough cartulary was not available to Ekwall, since it was only edited in 1970. The position was less satisfactory with regard to the public records — the Feet of Fines and the Assize Rolls are still only available in the calendars of the Record Society done at the beginning of the twentieth century, though a check done for me by Lisa Liddy in The National Archives suggests that they are fairly accurate in their rendering of the name material. Important calendars, like those of the Record Society for the De Hoghton deeds (1936) and the Norris deeds (1939) were of course not available, and the Book of Fees, with its important inquest of 1212 was available to Ekwall only in the unsatisfactory Record

Commission edition of 1807, the definitive modern edition being published by the PRO in the period 1920-1931. All place-name scholars have to work with calendars, and the standard of some of them, such as those of Lumby for the De Hoghton and Norris deeds, is very high. In this context, it should be noted that the unpublished calendars kept in Lancashire Archives in Preston can now be accessed on The National Archives website.

Some Linguistic Components in Lancashire Place-Names

In Ekwall's day, the linguistic components operating in Lancashire were recognized as Celtic (British and Irish), Anglian and Scandinavian. We are in an incomparably better position today as regards handbooks. Quite apart from the 96 volumes of the English Place-Name Society, we have such works as Max Förster's *Der Flußname Themse und seine Sippe* (The River-Name Thames and its Relatives) (Munich, 1942) and Kenneth Jackson's *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh, 1953), both of which help us attempt to negotiate what is a minefield for non-Celticists. A further factor is that since Ekwall's time, thanks to the work of Hans Krahe and his pupils, such as Bill Nicolaisen and Wolfgang P. Schmid, a pre-Celtic form of early Indo-European has come to be recognized in river-names throughout Western Europe. It has long been recognized that the Lancashire river-name *Wyre* belongs to this category. Ekwall followed H. M. Chadwick in linking it to the German river-name *Weser* and derived it from a stem **wisur-*. In his book on English river-names, published in 1928, Ekwall took the name to belong to a root **Wigor* of obscure etymology. He was notably chary in not committing himself to a specifically British origin. Krahe has shown that the *Wyre* belongs to an Indo-European root ** μ eis-/* μ is-* 'to flow, to run' and indeed compares it with the *Weser* and with such river-names as the *Vézère* in the Dordogne and the *Vesdre*, a tributary of the Ourthe in Belgium, the base of such names being **Visera*, an extension of the root with an *-r*-suffix.

This brings us to the question of TARLETON and TARLESCOUGH. Both place-names are characterized by regular *-a-* in the stem syllable and by initial *T-* in the majority of early spellings. It was a tenet of received wisdom that the first element of *Tarleton* and *Tarlscough* is a Scandinavian personal name *Paraldr*, a side-form of the common ON *Poraldr*. Ekwall supported this etymology by pointing to late medieval south-east Norwegian parallel forms, but these result from a sound development which took place from the late 13th century onwards, so, for chronological reasons, they cannot have influenced the English names. However, Ekwall also pointed to the lost medieval place-name *Thoraldestub* [in Scarisbrick] 1303, and cited a form *Tharoldstube* 1398. This form is taken from the Calendar of the Scarisbrick deeds done at the end of the



Part of OS map showing Tarleton and Tarlscough. Source: National Library of Scotland, Ordnance Survey One-Inch, England and Wales, Revised New Series, Sheet 75, 1896.

would have survived as a semantically obscure name, **Tærle*, in the Anglo-Saxon period and have attained the status of a *tūn* or settlement (Tarleton) with dependent woodland (Tarlscough) after the Scandinavian settlement (ON *skógr*). Whereas the name of the Douglas is British **dubo-glasso-* 'black stream', the part of its course on which Tarleton stands is called the ASLAND (*Asklone* before 1217, *Askelon*, *Eskelon* before 1250, *Asteland* 1550, etc.), which is a compound of ON *askr*, *eski* 'ash(-tree)' and ON *lón* 'sluggish or slow-flowing body of water'. Ekwall needlessly associated the second element with the Scots dialect word *lane*, which, though of similar meaning to ON *lón*, is of Gaelic origin. There is an evident semantic contradiction between the Indo-European root **ter/-*tor-* 'quick, strong' and the idea of slowness and sluggishness inherent in ON *lón*. I can only explain this as resulting from a change in the nature of the course of the Douglas around Tarleton. After all, the Indo-European river-name **Tar-la-* is far more ancient than the Anglo-Scandinavian *Asland*.

This last name brings us to the Scandinavian settlement, which has been the subject of extensive work since Ekwall's time. Ekwall himself made important contributions in the form of his monograph *Scandinavians and Celts in the North-West of England* on the Hiberno-Norse element in North-West England (1918) and his articles on the survival of the Scandinavian language in England (1930) and the extent of the Scandinavian settlements (1937). But we have to be careful what we mean by Scandinavian England. The great Anglo-Saxon

nineteenth century by the Reverend Edward Powell. If one checks the deed itself, we find that the form is *Thoraldestubbe*, and hence Ekwall's parallel form vanishes. This being said, there remains the question of the etymology. I have suggested that we are concerned with an ancient river-name based on the Indo-European root **ter/*tor* 'quick, strong' and extended with an *-l-* suffix and originally denoting some part of the course of the Douglas. This river-name **Tar-la* cannot be Celtic, because Indo-European */o/* remains in Celtic, but it has parallels in such river-names as the *Taro*, a tributary of the Po in Emilia or the *Thérain*, the name of a tributary of the Oise. This old river-name

historian Sir Frank Stenton spoke of the ‘true Danelaw’ between the Tees and the Welland, and more recently Michael Samuels has spoken of the “Great Scandinavian Belt” encompassing Cumbria, part of north Lancashire, the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire. In this area, Scandinavian speech probably survived in places into the 12th century. In Lancashire, for example, we see the survival of the Scandinavian *u*-declension genitive in *-ar* in *Osmotherley* < ON *Ásmundarhlāw* ‘Asmund’s mound, hill’, a compound of ON *Ásmundr* and OE *hlāw*, in Ulverston parish. Outside this area, we may find this genitive reduced to *-a-*. The Scarisbrick deeds provide us with two forms from Longton in Penwortham parish which may be promising, namely, *osbernecroft* 1302 and *osberniscroft* 1303. This name is a compound of the Anglo-Scandinavian personal name *Ōsbeorn* and ME **croft**, and the second of the two forms is unexceptional, containing the normal Northern ME genitive in *-is*, but the first form poses the question whether we are in fact concerned with a field name of some antiquity, an original Anglo-Scandinavian *Ásbjarnarcroft* ‘Ásbiǫrn’s croft’, which had become progressively anglicized as Scandinavian receded in the early years after the Norman Conquest. We do not know, but we can only hope that in the course of the survey we find more names of this time to allow comparison. Until this is done, we have to register this name as a compound of ME *Osbern* < Anglo-Scandinavian *Ōsbeorn* < ON *Ásbiǫrn* and ME **croft**. A further morphological feature which indicates Scandinavian influence is the survival of the dative plural **-um** in such place-names as LYTHAM < OE *hliðum* ‘at the slopes’ (PN La 155) or WESHAM < OE *westhūsum*/ON *vesthúsum* ‘at the western houses’ (PN La 153). Here we should note that the place-name HUSUM is well attested in Jutland and in the formerly Danish areas of northern Frisia.

Conclusion

I want to conclude this paper by looking at one or two etymologies which strike me as difficult. AINSDALE in West Derby Hundred is attested relatively early. In Domesday Book, it appears as *Einulvesdel* and we have such Middle English forms as *ainoluesdal*’ c. 1230, *ainolvisdale* 1240 x 1247, etc. Ekwall favoured derivation of the first element from an unrecorded ON **Einulfr*, though he mentioned that an OE **Ægenwulf* had also been suggested. Later he changed his mind and favoured the English etymon. This can be dismissed out of hand, because a personal name element *Ægen-* does not occur in Old English. I would rather suggest that we are here concerned with the Continental Germanic name *Einulf* from Frankish *Agin-wulf*. This name is attested in Domesday book in Shropshire and Yorkshire. and would fit the early forms of Ainsdale.

A similar case where outdated information long led scholars astray is that of URMSTON (*Wermeston* 1194, *Urmeston* 1212, *Wurmeston* 1219). Here Ekwall (PN La 37) postulated an East Scandinavian personal name *Urm*, a side-form of *Ormr*, which is the most common Scandinavian personal found in medieval Lancashire. Modern research has shown that a form *Urm* was unknown in medieval Denmark and the first

element of URMSTON is an unrecorded Old English personal name **Wyrm*. This is paralleled by the weakly inflected *Wurma*, noted in the preliminary matter to the Exeter Book of Old English poetry in a record dating from c. 1100, and we should also not forget that a mythical Old English *Wyrmhære* occurs in the Old English poem *Widsith*.

An account of this kind can only hope to touch on some of the problems and is by its very nature fragmentary and impressionistic, but I hope that I have indicated some of the problems and possibilities involved in the linguistic evaluation of Lancashire place-names, and the need for a modern survey which exceeds Ekwall's terms of reference in that it takes in the wealth of field and minor names for which there is abundant evidence in medieval and early modern records.

Professor John Insley, Universität Heidelberg, EPNS editor for Lancashire

LANCASHIRE PLACE NAME SURVEY

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