‘WE’RE GOING THROUGH CHANGES’
TRANSITION IN ABERDEENSHIRE FIELD-NAMES

ALISON BURNS

INTRODUCTION

This article discusses field-names in Aberdeenshire with a particular focus on the methodology used to collect them and the evidence of change in the corpus. The field-names discussed here were collected as part of my PhD research at the University of Glasgow, resulting in the thesis *Field-names of North-East Scotland: A Socio-Onomastic Study* (Burns 2015). This paper firstly aims to show that place-names – and in particular field-names – benefit from new methodological approaches and further study; secondly, that field-names contain a wealth of information about how place is constructed by inhabitants of an area. A socially binding memory of place is created yet this name type also shows that place can be temporal – able to morph and adapt to reflect progress and change in real time.

This article is divided into seven sections. This introduction (1) is followed by a section on the background of field-names (2); previous research (3) then outlines existing literature and research on field-names. An introduction to rural Aberdeenshire is presented in the fourth section (4) and the methodology is introduced in the fifth section (5) with more in-depth discussion of sources consulted and the aims, objectives and problems encountered with devising and implementing a new method of name collection using socio-onomastic interviews. The final section (6) focuses on name changes evidenced in the data and the presentation of two case studies – *Cornyard* names and *Ward* names. The conclusion is presented in 7.

BACKGROUND

In onomastic terms, field-names can be classed as microtoponyms – defined by the International Council of Onomastic Science (ICOS Onomastic Terminology, 2019) as a ‘name referring to smaller objects like fields, pastures, fences, stones, marshes, bogs, ditches etc., and in general used locally by only a limited group of people’ (ICOS, 2019). This can be contrasted with a macrotoponym, a ‘proper name of a larger geographical or administrative unit of land’. Field-names can also be classed as rural names, that is, ‘the names of uninhabited, delimited objects in rural settings and surroundings’ (Kuhn 2016, 135). Rural names tend

to reflect the language spoken in the area at the time and are less likely than macrotoponyms to be included in published records. These factors, coupled with changes in the rural landscape that may trigger changes in field-names, mean that rural names are considered to be at risk of disappearing without ever being recorded – and with them the older landscape features, flora and fauna, field uses and references to people that they contain. Indeed, the research area in Aberdeenshire was, in part, selected because of the threat of a Compulsory Purchase Order being placed on farmers which would have resulted in land on the Menie Estate, Balmedie, being sold to make way for a golf resort (*The Scotsman* 12/11/2010). Field-names in Aberdeenshire are part of the oral tradition and few historical records preserve them. Therefore, changes in land use and ownership can render names irreversibly lost.

Throughout Scotland, the every-day usage of field-names is in decline as economies have moved out of the countryside and into the cities and methods of farming have been modernised; it is therefore mainly older members of the farming communities that retain the names. The data collected as part of the PhD research provides a unique insight into life in these communities as they reflect the shared culture of their bestowers and users. The names are dependent on the inhabitants and as the lives and society of the inhabitants change, so too do their names. Field-names are often used by small groups such as a cluster of neighbours, or even by a single family or an individual. Their use in these circumstances shows that naming is an integral part of navigating and sharing environments, regardless of how small the community.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Traditional onomastic name studies have largely focussed on major names and these have typically been collected by authoritative figures. This can have the effect of creating a research environment where those interviewed may want to give the ‘correct’ form of a name or be tempted to use a more standard form than usual. The largest place-name survey in the United Kingdom – the Survey of English Place-names – is the principal project of the English Place-Name Society (The University of Nottingham). The survey began to include some field-names (around 800) in 1933 in the Northamptonshire county volume (Gover, Mawer and Stenton 1933). Since then, the inclusion of field-names has become standard practice, with longer and longer lists appearing with each publication. However, these are not indexed which is a major draw-back for finding items for comparison. Scottish county name surveys have been

conducted mainly by two AHRC-funded projects based at the University of Glasgow, yet are still in their infancy and do not include field-names in any systematic way. This results in some useful inclusions in certain areas but not in others, which hampers comparative discussions. However, there is a limited number of field-names discussed in *The Place-Names of Fife* Volume 2 (Taylor with Márkus 2008) includes 4 pages, *The Place-Names of Bute* (Márkus 2012) covers eight farms comprehensively and *The Place-Names of Kinross-shire* has a two page section on field-names in the introduction (Taylor with McNiven and Williamson 2017, 68–9.)

In the case of field-names Scotland has few written records. England has a higher number of historical records for field-names such as the Tithe Apportionments and Map (following the Tythe Commutation Act 1836), which detail landowners and occupiers along with numbered plots described in the apportionments (The National Archives). English field-names have been organised in more detail by John Field in his works *A History of English Field-Names* (1993) and *English Field-Names, A Dictionary* (1972) (and see now also Cavill 2018). The Scottish Field Name Survey (University of Edinburgh) houses the largest collection of field-names in Scotland and contains names collected in the 1970s and 80s, mainly from lowland Scotland including Galloway, the Borders, Dumfries, Galashiels and Midlothian. The country coverage is inconsistent and the focus was on southern Scotland, with 123 farms from Dumfriesshire discussed but only six in Aberdeenshire. This gap in the record coupled with political land sale issues in the Balmedie area in Aberdeenshire prompted an attempt to collect field-names for a Master's research project, which covered eight farms (Burns 2010). This data was later incorporated into a PhD thesis: *Field-names of North-East Scotland: A Socio-Onomastic Study* (Burns 2015) which covers 88 farms in Aberdeenshire.

ABERDEENSHIRE AND THE RESEARCH AREA

The research area is located in Aberdeenshire in the North-East of Scotland. Two communities were selected, one to the north of the city of Aberdeen and one to the south. Present-day county boundaries (post 1996) define the whole area as Aberdeenshire, although the area to the south was previously Kincardineshire (pre-1975), and would have been regarded as quite separate from Aberdeenshire when many of the informants were growing up. The region is the largest contiguous block of arable land north of Yorkshire, covering approximately 1.3 million acres (Cook 2008). The area was selected because,

despite its rich farming heritage, only six farms had been surveyed by the Scottish Field-Name Survey, meaning that the majority of field-names from the region had never been recorded and discussed. The selection of the area also had personal incentives: my grandparents were farmers in the parish of Udny – which allowed me ‘insider’ access to the farming communities to collect the data. All the participants were local to the area and had dense social networks (Milroy 1980; Krueger 1994; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; Eckert 2000), which made my personal links all the more valuable to gain their trust (see below, ‘Methodology’, for more detail about the data collection method). Participants were aged between 60 to 80 years and largely male (80%), although women were often present in the background – sometimes pitching in if something had been forgotten or left out. All participants had lived locally all their lives.

A variety of Scots known as The Doric is spoken in the area. The use of Scots as a language label brings with it historical complexity and a host of social and political issues. Several participants insisted that the Scots that they speak deserves official language status. To reflect this, Scots (Sc) spellings have been selected rather than translating the names to Scottish Standard English (SSE). It should be noted that there are a multiplicity of forms of Doric (Kynoch 2004, v) and as with all Scots language, no standardised spelling system exists. In creating the first written record of the names in the corpus, a number of acceptable spelling options were available and the spellings reflect the decisions of the researcher.

The major names of Aberdeenshire are comprised of three main languages: Pictish, Gaelic, and Scots; a detailed description of the language situation across Scotland can be found in Taylor (2002). The field-name corpus contains name elements from Scots (87.9%), Gaelic (0.2%) and Old Norse (0.1%). The speakers that provided the names in the corpus were older members of the community who typically speak a more traditional form of the language and as Smith (2000, 445) notes, the language of North-Eastern Scotland is associated with a rural lifestyle which generally implies ‘cultural and linguistic conservatism’. As such, we can expect that the names they use will reflect earlier forms of the language than those coined by younger speakers.

METHODOLOGY

As discussed above, the lack of published written records including field-names demanded that field-work in the form of recorded interviews be conducted to

collect the names. Of a total corpus of 1255 names discussed in the PhD thesis, only 447 (36%) field-names can be found in historical records. This made a traditional onomastic deep dive of the early forms impossible. Current field-name studies draw on the onomastic tradition of walking the land, using a mix of OS maps and audio recordings to capture the necessary information, including pronunciations. While most agree that local inhabitants should be consulted and interviewed where possible, these onomastic studies rarely document a robust, replicable methodology to conduct the interviews. From my own experience of collecting the data for my Master's research project (Burns 2010), the approach to and quality of the interviews can have an enormous bearing on the material collected.

The initial steps taken by the researcher determines whose place-names – and with them whose histories, cultural reference points and mnemonics – are captured and preserved. In my earlier attempt to collect field-names, many farmers declined to take part because they regarded me, the researcher, with suspicion: we were different ages, different genders and I was an outsider to their community with a different accent, dress-code and occupation. When farmers did agree to take part, it was not always easy to establish rapport and this can have the effect of limiting the information provided and cutting explanations short. Therefore, to collect the field-names of Aberdeenshire, I created a new methodology that aimed to apply the sociological traditions of identifying participants and conducting oral interviews. The sources for the Aberdeenshire field-names are living people and this demanded that the method for collecting the names had to be designed to elicit as much information as possible.

Many sociolinguistic studies address the methodologies for data collection in greater detail than classical name-studies and sociological approaches to toponyms have begun to appear in recent years (Vuolteenaho and Berg 2009; Scott and Clark 2011). Socio-onomastics is gradually establishing itself as a field of study and provided a frame-work for me to establish my own approach. In order to collect the Aberdeenshire field-names, a socio-onomastic method was devised specifically for the project, drawing on approaches in sociology and socio-linguistics. As the names exist primarily in the oral tradition, the method used to collect data should necessarily draw on a framework that allows speech to be recorded as it is used in the speech community.

Several tools more commonly used in sociology and sociolinguistics were incorporated into the method. The first step was to embed myself in the

community as a 'second order network contact' or, in other words, the friend of a friend approach (Milroy 1980) to successfully recruit participants. Sociological studies acknowledge that researchers entering a community that is not their own must try to minimise differences between themselves and the research participants to avoid influencing informants. This is well documented in Eckert's study of Belten High (Eckert 2000) and I experienced this first hand in my early attempts during my Master's research. As respondents in my study were predominantly males over the age of 70, age, gender and accent served to highlight that I was different. To minimise this perception and build trust I spent long periods of time in the research area – often for several weeks or months. Over time, a network is established which allows participants to introduce me to other potential interviewees as a friend of a friend and this increases the chances of securing an interview. Gatekeepers – trusted 'insiders' in the community who then introduce or recommend the interviewer to their social network – were used to gain the trust of the informants. The 'snowball' technique (Eckert 2000, 71) was then employed to recruit participants. This means that during blocks of interviews, relatively few were scheduled in advance. Rather, the interviewer relies on participants creating links in the community and supporting the setup of the next interview, for example, by phoning a friend. These techniques served to reduce the effect of the 'observer's paradox' – the idea that observing 'natural' speech does not elicit natural speech. A more in-depth description of the method can be found in Burns (2015, 62–110). The methodology allowed a corpus of names to be recorded, with the names being used in relaxed speech, as they would be in everyday life. The conversations yielded local insight into why the names were given to particular pieces of land and how and why they change.

Once farmers had agreed to take part in the study, the second step was to employ the interviewer as learner technique (Labov 1984, 40). This strategy involves the interviewer presenting themselves as an 'acceptable incompetent' (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995, 89) and by asking questions in a colloquial and open-ended manner. Semi-structured interviews were used and were augmented by OS Explorer maps (1 : 25000) which show field boundaries. For example, I would begin by opening the map and asking standardised background questions about the participants and then only use my remaining questions if there was a gap in conversation. Often, the remaining questions were not required as follow-up questions can be asked in a more conversational style, but they served as a checklist to ensure that all the required information

was gathered at each interview. The method employed to collect the field-names reflects the idea that names provide a sense of belonging in a community; their meanings and associations are reserved for those who understand the culture and language of the place and it is up to the researchers to immerse themselves in the place and culture in order to study the place- or field-names. This aspect of toponymic research can make the study of names more challenging and it must be ensured that the researcher can connect with the community of name users. As my previous experience had taught me, even once in conversation with interviewees, it is necessary to continually put them at ease. The easiest way to achieve this was to bring my grandparents to the interviews. This allowed me to set the sessions up as a relaxed conversation, with the OS Explorer map on the table as a visual aid. I used minimal pre-set questions and only raised additional questions to clarify location or ask for more information. This approach yielded rich qualitative data over several hours, which allowed for both the names and also stories and tales about the area and the people associated with it to be recorded. Even if explanations are not necessarily historically or etymologically correct, they offer insights into the community and how they interact with the land.

The field-names in the Aberdeenshire corpus show that names allow the landscape to take on personal meanings and cultural associations and it is this that transforms landscape into place. The method used to collect the names allows an insight into places as lived-in entities and interpreted by a specific community at a particular point in time. The study of names and identity continues apace and the benefits of using interviews to capture qualitative data on the topic are outlined in Aldrin (2016, 382–394). The framework provided by sociology and sociolinguistics provides a set of tools that can make collecting name data possible in communities where the researcher does not live and allows practical steps to be taken to minimise differences between the interviewer and interviewees. As onomastics in Scotland continues to grow as an academic pursuit it is important to approach the collection of oral data with clear and replicable methods.

NAME CHANGES

As outlined in my introduction, name changes in microtoponyms and rural names are common. In the Scottish context, the phenomenon of change has also been discussed by Drummond (2009, 13) who noted a high rate of name change in Scottish hill names: ‘what is more remarkable about hill names is

their degree of apparent change, with nearly a quarter of the hills having undergone some alteration in the space of less than a century'. The Aberdeenshire field-names do not match this level of change, yet a broadly similar pace for change can be seen. This section discusses change in more details and presents two case studies: *Cornyard* names and *Ward* names will be presented to evidence the speed with which names can morph and adapt and how this links field-names to communities and individuals.

It should be noted that in the corpus of Aberdeenshire field-names, only 36% can be said to be 'historical' – that is to say that there is some kind of evidence that dates the names to before the present day (for example, estate maps or land sale records). Only one follow-up interview was conducted on the same land, 2 years apart. Therefore, it is possible that many more names could have undergone change but the approach taken does not allow us to see this.

In the Aberdeenshire corpus of field-names collected for the PhD there are 1255 field locations yet 1556 head-forms. Therefore, 301 locations have at least two head-forms (or variants). In fact, 59 locations have three variants, eleven have four, and three have five. Over all, almost a quarter of the locations have multiple name variants (24%). Compared to major names, this variation is high. The very nature of variation invites the possibility that the names become less effective if more than one variant exists: one of a place-name's primary functions in a working environment is to designate a specific location that is mutually understandable to the users. The higher the number of the variants, the more room for error in understanding. Although the informants did not comment on the issue of variants directly, interviews where more than one name-user was present, showed that locations with more than one form could cause disagreements:

Extract 1

Farmer 1: Well, now, that was actually, these were actually two fields and it was man [Farmer 2] that took down the fence. So that one's The Cottar House Field.

Farmer 2: No, Cottar Hoose is further down.

Farmer 1: No man, it's in the middle of the two fields. That, these were two fields at one time. You made them into one. Because that was the cottar house, for the workers.

Extract 1 shows that variation can be caused by changes in the physical landscape. The farmer has changed the layout of the fields by combining two into one. The change is within living memory and creates a scenario where there can be two names for one place. In this example, the physical feature of the cottar house wins out in the name form.

Extract 2

Farmer 1: That's The Aul Hay Field [Old Hay Field].

Farmer 2: And this little one, what you call Aul Hay Field, we would have called that Dump Field.

Farmer 3: No no, that was The Mast, oh aye, Dump Field that's right aye.

Farmer 4: Well, I call that Old Setaside.

Farmer 2: It's got the dump on it so we call it.

Extract 2 involved four speakers – the farmer, his wife and their two sons. The names they each provide all refer to the same piece of land (with the exception of The Mast which has a different location). Examples such as this are interesting in terms of name use. The group of users is relatively small – only 4 people – and they use the names to communicate to one another about particular locations. Yet during their conversations, it is accepted among them that they can each refer to the same place with a different name. However, it is the two sons that run the farm and the variation has arisen because the younger generation do not remember that the location used to be used to bail hay. For them, its use as the dump for spare farm equipment is the more prominent feature. It also makes sense for the older generation and hence the name exists with more than one variant and will gradually be replaced by just one – Dump Field. My hypothesis is that this makes it more likely that one form will win out over the others and that the initial variation is a precursor to change. It should be mentioned here, however, that there is a distinction between names that have changed and names that have been preserved or lost. The use of oral interviews allowed this variation to be captured and challenges the perception that names must just exist in one, standardised form.

The Scottish field-name data shows parallels with English field-names and Finnish field-names because the lexical meaning of the name elements is critical to the use of the name. According to some name scholars (Mill 1872 [1906]; Sørensen 1958; Pamp 1985; Van Langendonck 2007, 7), names cannot contain meaningful lexical items. Field-names modify this theory. Evidence

from Finland (Ainiala 1992, 106–115) shows that field-names undergo change if the name ceases to describe its referent sufficiently well:

the name Hevoshaanpelto ‘The Paddock’ (1969) no longer seems very appropriate since there have not been any horses there for decades. Instead the field is nowadays called Peräpelto ‘Yonder Field’, since it is beyond the lands belonging to the farm (Ainiala 1992, 113).

This example shows that the meanings of certain names do determine the denotation and that users access the lexical sense of the expression.

Similarly, the Aberdeenshire data also shows that the meaning of a name can directly influence whether the name has longevity or is changed. The English data (Field 1993) evidences that name change seems to be linked more to land use changes and alterations to physical structures. However, England has a higher number of historical records for field-names such as the Tithe Apportionments and Map (following the Tythe Commutation Act 1836), which detail landowners and occupiers along with numbered plots described in the apportionments (The National Archives). Multiplicity and change in field-names is also a theme covered by Cuthbertson (2018), whose thesis discusses the extent to which the language used in the onomasticon represents the everyday lexicon. Cuthbertson’s research shows that lexical transparency in field-names is evidenced from four farms in Kinross-shire that were surveyed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as well as during the 1970s. Only one farm [Briglands] retained the names from the earlier sources in the more modern recording of the 1970s, and only three out of nine were still in use. The example of Wood Park becoming Railway Park following the building of the railway and Meadow becoming Pylon field following the building of a pylon (Cuthbertson 2018, 87) are a case in point. Eleven fields (across nine farms) have more than one name in use at the same time. The flexibility of variation in current use and the changes seen in the Kinross-shire and Aberdeenshire examples demonstrate that there is an ‘enduring connection with the lexicon’ (Cuthbertson 2018, 288) and that field-names are representative of everyday language. Variation in the Aberdeenshire data can stem from the methodology employed for capturing the information.

The methods used in the data collection had significant advantages in terms of being able to record the names in conversation rather than asking informants to provide a written form. Requesting a written form forces informants to select

one form and one spelling. The sociolinguistic interviews create the time for a more conversational approach where the names are discussed in various contexts and can be returned to again on multiple occasions. The method uses an 'interviewer as learner' technique advocated by Labov (1984), which removes the pressure on informants to be 'right or wrong' and creates the space for a free-flowing conversation. The interviews allow the informant to embrace plurality and variants were recorded from certain individual's interviews and also from asking several people. The sources available for names also influence variation and change. The Aberdeenshire field-names are not written into records and this may have a bearing on whether the informants consider them to be 'proper names' at all. When arranging interviews with respondents without written field documentation, whose names survived only in oral form, they would make comments such as 'we don't have names really' and 'but you want proper names – we only have the names of parks [fields]'. The resulting interviews demonstrate that on most occasions such respondents did use names, yet their immediate interpretation of 'proper names' was biased by the mode of transmission. For some users, the oral context seems to equate to a lack of formality and this makes it acceptable to manipulate their forms and change them more regularly to suit their needs.

In the course of some of the interviews a name will often appear in several different forms. One reason for this is that speakers would often code switch for my benefit. This means that they would translate the name from Doric into a more standard form. For example, Back o' the Cottar Hoose becomes Back o' the Cottage. Such examples show that participants are aware that the names they use have strong dialectal features that may not be apparent to the non-native ear. However, in attempting to translate the names, their meanings can sometimes become obscured. A cottar house is the small home of a farm worker which is owned by the farm. This has a slightly different meaning to a cottage. Toponymic research requires an engagement with the life of the people who coin and use names; a good knowledge of the culture is required to conduct the research and to interpret the data.

Since field-names are used on working farms, they are often transparent in meaning and they must function as a communication tool to allow a group of individuals to find a particular place. Over the centuries, the rural landscape has undergone considerable changes, and this study brought together a group of informants who had witnessed modifications to farming practices, machinery and administration within their lifetimes. Two groups of names –

cornyard names and *ward* names – evidence the impact such modernisations have had on the nomenclature and these are used here as a case-study. Table 1 shows the *cornyard* names.

Table 1

	Headword	Variant 1	Variant 2	Variant 3	Variant 4
1	Cornyard Park				
2	The Cornyard Field	Cornyard			
3	Cornyard	North Bean Hill (1863)			
4	Cornyard Park	The Cornyard (2011)	The Cornyard Park (2011)	The Back Park (2011)	The Back (2011)
5	Cornyard				
6	The Cornyard				
7	The Cornyard Park				
8	The Cornyard				
9	Cornyard				
10	Cornyard Park	The Cornyard	Cornyard		
11	Cornyard				
12	Cornyard				
13	Corn Yard Park (no longer in use)	Abeen the House			
14	Cornyard Park (no longer in use)	The Een Next Dutch Barn			
15	Cornyard	Garage Park			

Cornyards were used for corn-stacks: structures which stored corn out of the reach of rodents such as mice and rats. Corn-stacks stopped being used around the 1960s when combine harvesters became widely available. Therefore, for some farmers, these names no longer described their referents suitably well. As is evident from table 1, ten examples were still in use at the time of the interviews, which demonstrates that change in practice does not always equal a change in the name. However, examples 13 and 14 show that the *cornyard*

name has been replaced with a new name that is deemed more suitable. For all of the informants interviewed, cornyards were familiar – they had memories of them in use. However, they were the last generation to have used them in practice. Example 4 refers to a location where the farmer was interviewed on two separate occasions, two years apart. During the second interview, the farmer referred to this location as The Back Park. The interview extract is as follows:

Extract 3

Interviewer: Oh you don't have a Cornyard Park either. I think that's the second most common name.

Farmer: Oh! I called it The Back Park. It's Cornyard.

Interviewer: So it is Cornyard?

Farmer: It's funny now. I've changed that over the years, since we didn't have a Cornyard and that's very interesting that. Isn't that interesting! It was always The Cornyard Park. And I think I told you that the last time.¹ Help my goodness. I hadn't realised I'd done it. You know? The Cornyard is no longer relevant and it's just round the back but it's The Back Park... The Cornyard Park. I didn't realise I was saying that. I wonder when I changed. I just subtly must have changed. Maybe it was speaking to the next generation who don't know what a corn yard is. I'll bet you they don't know what a cornyard is. We happened to have a combine [harvester] fairly early in 1961. In other words, when my boys were born. So they never knew a cornyard, they never saw a stack. But quite a few people, maybe ten years later still had stacks and binders and things.

The farmer was not aware that he himself had changed the name. Changing the name was a choice, yet the farmer had not consciously registered or thought about the change until the specific comment was made by the interviewer about *cornyard* names. The farmer changed the name so that the users would have a shared understanding of the semantic meaning of the name. Not all field-names are semantically transparent yet this example shows that the meaning can have importance. It is likely that the *cornyard* names that have changed to something else show a change in farming practices and machinery in progress

1. The farmer is referring to a previous interview.

– the last generation to use that farming practice are gradually giving way to a younger generation who have only known machines. Although not all the names have changed, the formation of new variants may suggest that in the coming years, *cornyard* names will have gone out of use. A similar example can be seen in *ward* names; examples are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

	Headword Form	Variant 1	Variant 2
1	Plaiden Ward Haugh	Bogland Haughs† (1802)	Plaiden Ward† (1802)
2	Plaiden Ward	Cossach Park† (1802)	
3	Nether Ward	Farthest Awa Park	
4	Upper Ward	Farthest Awa Park	
5	The Loch Ward	Wet Bottom	
6	South Ward		
7	Ward Park		
8	Green Bottom Ward		

A ward is an enclosed piece of land used primarily for pasture (CSD). The term became obsolete during the Improving Movement or Agricultural Revolution (Alexander 1952, xxxix). This was the process of moving from the infield (fertile land) and outfield system (poorer quality land often used for communal grazing) and enclosure of previously open fields (Bangor-Jones 2011). Examples 2 and 3 refer to two locations that were merged into one. With the advent of larger machines and more automation, it was practical to have larger fields and merge several smaller fields into one are. This benefitted ease of access with the machines. The example here shows that although the name changed, both the earlier forms and the new form are directional in relation to the farm house. The motivation for bestowing the name did not change; it is no longer the ward on the upper part of the farm, but it is the field that is located furthest from the house.

Parallels with the *cornyard* and *ward* names can be seen in Ainiala's work (1992, 113; see also Hevoshaanpelto discussed above). Just like in Aberdeenshire, the old name has ceased to describe the referent sufficiently and a new name has been given. Indeed, other examples of name changes (see Table 3) in the Aberdeenshire data show that names that have been changed within living

memory are transparent in meaning. However, in some cases, the meaning is only immediately apparent to those that live in and are familiar with the community. This has parallels with Cuthbertson's (2018, 88) findings from Kincardineshire, for which he argues that field-names reflect the everyday lexicon and that the field-naming system relies on denotative meaning. Understanding the full significance of field-names is a privilege reserved only for those who understand and belong to that community.

However, a collective understanding borne out of belonging to a particular community can be gained during the socio-onomastic interviews. The background and interpretations from local inhabitants can often explain names that are not semantically clear. Table 3 contains examples of names from the Aberdeenshire corpus that have changed. The name elements are not necessarily semantically transparent, yet they still contain meaning for local users and when the meaning or connections are no longer relevant for the speech community, these too change. Example 8, Heed the Hill, was previously Mores Park (from an estate map). The farmer did not know why Mores Park had once been the name and had bestowed a semantically transparent name instead. This example uses a Scots form of *head* which is common to areas of Scotland but not necessarily further afield. Example 16, Stoothies, is named after the farm Newton of Old Meldrum which is known locally as Stoothies. Stoothies does not appear in written records or on Ordnance Survey maps but rather is a nick-name bestowed by the local community. Those interviewed had no understanding of why the name was given, but said it had always been known as Stoothies when they were growing up and that the farm name Newton of Old Meldrum would only be used for business purposes and that everyone knew it by Stoothies. Example 11, Cowie Field, likely contains a personal name. This field is now known as Old Tree. The local residents no longer know the Cowie family so the prominent landscape feature has been used as the name instead. Example 19, Government Field, was uncultivated until World War Two. The Government demanded that the land be cultivated to help relieve food shortages. The farmers refused and as a result, the government employed someone to work the land for them. This field is now known as The Winter Barley Field. The older name is an interesting reminder of times gone by, yet the practical nature of farming means that the current crop has superseded the earlier name. They are examples of place becoming locale as defined in the Dictionary of Human Geography (Gregory, Johnston, Pratt, Watts and Whatmore 2009, 540) which states that 'place is continually emergent' and

involves some kind of transformation – the landscape and its features take on a more personal meaning and have histories and stories attached to them that help transform the landscape into ‘place’.

Table 3

	Field Name	Historical Name/s
1	Back Hill	Ragwood Park (1841)
2	Barn Door Park	Daimey Park (1841)
3	Big Park	The Rocks Park
4	Bothy Park	Gowkhill (1710)
5	East Garden	Garden Shed (1863)
6	Fifteen Acre	Field Mixed Boynds
7	Front Smiddy	Smithy Park (1841)
8	Heed the Hill	Mores Park (1841)
9	Hough	East Damiey Park (1841)
10	Lethenty Park	Salmon Brae Park (1841)
11	Old Tree	Cowie Field (1710)
12	Philipstoun	Burnbutts (1710)
13	Quarry Park	Gouk Hill (1710)
14	Stable Park	Cattie Shed (1863), Stable (1969)
15	Steading Field	Cistren Field
16	Stoothies	Newton of Old Meldrum
17	West Garden Park	Bean Hill (1863), West Garden (1969)
18	West Garden Park (1969)	South Bean Hill (1863)
19	The Winter Barley Field	Government Field

CONCLUSION

The evidence presented in this article shows that field names are a valuable resource for the discussion of place as well as toponymics. The interview extracts demonstrate that name users and those who bestow the names often attach histories, stories and cultural aspects to them as well as topographical information. The socio-onomastic methodology developed for the thesis for which the data was collected allowed unique insights to be gathered during spoken interviews. The influence of the researcher is not something that is discussed in most onomastic surveys, yet I hope to have shown here that it should be an important consideration as it questions the objectivity of any researcher and of the data that they collect. Sociological issues such as age, gender and background of the researcher can impact the type of information

given by informants and sociolinguistic techniques can usefully be applied to limit the influence of the researcher during data collection. The method of collection allows the names to be used as a rich, qualitative resource – something that is not always possible in traditional studies of major names. The personal connections between name users and the landscape contribute meaning to names and also shed light on the connection between lexicon and onomasticon. Names cannot always be gathered from historical documents yet names that are part of the oral tradition also contain valuable information. The data collected in Aberdeenshire shows the intricate relationship between names and the stories and lives of those that live there and use them, as well as their more practical purpose to designate a particular piece of land and use the names successfully to communicate.

The name changes in the corpus remind us that place is temporal, as place is constructed by the inhabitants of locales. The oral nature of these names appears to give the users a greater level of freedom to bestow them according to their own associations with place, and adapt them, albeit subconsciously, when it suits their needs. The data discussed in this paper was collected 6–9 years ago now and it is likely that if I returned to the study area, many of them would have changed again. We are going through changes of life and landscape and it is fitting that this is reflected in our nomenclature and acknowledged in onomastic research.

REFERENCES

- Ainiala, Terhi, 1992, 'On Perpetuation, demise and change in place names', in *You Name It. Perspectives on Onomastic Research*, ed. R. Pitkänen and K. Mallat (Helsinki), 106–115.
- Aldrin, Emilia, 2016, 'Names and Identity', in *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming*, ed. Carole Hough (Oxford), 382–394.
- Alexander, W. M., 1952, *The place-names of Aberdeenshire* (Aberdeen).
- Bangor-Jones, M., 2011, 'Settlement, Society and Field Systems in the Improvement Era', in *A Compendium of Scottish Ethnology, Farming and the Land*, ed. Alexander Fenton and Kenneth Veitch (Edinburgh), 133–152.
- Burns, Alison, 2010, 'Field-names of Aberdeenshire', unpublished MLitt Essay, University of Glasgow.
- Burns, Alison, 2015, 'Field-names of North-East Scotland: A socio-onomastic study', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow,
<http://theses.gla.ac.uk/6424/>.

- Cavill, Paul, 2018, *A New Dictionary of English Field Names* (Nottingham).
- Cook, P. L. and Partners, 2008, 'Agriculture in Aberdeenshire, looking to the future', in *Enterprise*, ed. A.C.A.S. (Aberdeen: The North East Scotland Agriculture Advisory Group).
- CSD: *The Concise Scots Dictionary*, editor-in-chief Mairi Robinson (Aberdeen, 1985).
- Cuthbertson, Katherine M. E., 2018, 'The use of name evidence in lexicography: comparative analysis of onomastic data for historical and contemporary Scots', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, <https://theses.gla.ac.uk/74257/>.
- Drummond, Peter, 2009, 'Place-name losses and changes – a study in Peeblesshire: A comparative study of hill-names and other toponyms', *Nomina* 32, 5–18.
- Eckert, Penelope, 2000, *Linguistic Variation as Social Practice: the linguistic construction of identity in Belten High* (Oxford).
- Field, John, 1972, *English Field-names: a dictionary* (Newton Abbot).
- Field, John, 1993, *A History of English Field-names* (Harlow).
- Gover, J.E.B., Allen Mawer and F.M. Stenton, 1933, *The Place-Names of Northamptonshire* (Cambridge).
- Gregory, Derek, Ron Johnston, Geraldine Pratt, Michael Watts and Sarah Whatmore, eds., 2009, *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, 5th edition (London).
- Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson, 1995, *Ethnography: principles in practice* (London).
- ICOS Onomastic Terminology, 2019: International Congress of Onomastic Science, 'List of Key Onomastic Terms': <https://icosweb.net/publications/onomastic-terminology/>
- Kuhn, Julia, 2016, 'Rural Names', in *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming*, ed. Carole Hough (Oxford), 135–143.
- Krueger, Richard A., 1994, *Focus groups: a practical guide for applied research* (London).
- Kynoch, Douglas, 2004, *A Doric Dictionary: two-way lexicon of North-East Scots: Doric-English, English-Doric* (Edinburgh).
- Labov, William, 1984, 'Field methods on Linguistic Change and Variation', in *Language in Use*, ed. J. Baugh and J. Sherzer (Englewood), 43–70, <http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~wlabov/L560/Labov1984.pdf> (accessed 19/11/2012).

- Márkus, Gilbert, 2012, *The Place-Names of Bute* (Donington).
- Mill, J.S., 1906 [1872], *A System of Logic*, 8th edn (London).
- Milroy, Lesley, 1980, *Language and Social Networks* (Oxford).
- Pamp, Bengt, 1985, 'Ten Theses on Proper Names', *Names: A Journal of Onomastics* 33, 111–118.
- Scott, M.R and Clark, A.J, 2011, 'Directions in English Place-Name Studies: an invitation to debate, with a case study of Salford Quays', *Nomina* 34, 27–50.
- Smith, J., 2000, 'Synchrony and Diachrony in the Evolution of English: Evidence from Scotland', unpublished PhD thesis, University of York.
- Sørensen, Holger Steen, 1958, *Word-Classes in Modern English, with Special Reference to Proper Names* (Copenhagen).
- Taylor, Simon, 2002, 'Reading the map: understanding Scottish place-names', *History Scotland* 2, 49–51.
- Taylor, Simon with Gilbert Márkus, 2012, *The Place-Names of Fife Vol. 5, Discussion, glossaries and edited texts: with addenda and corrigenda of volumes 1–4* (Donington).
- Taylor, Simon with Peter McNiven and Eila Williamson, 2017, *The Place-Names of Kinross-shire* (Donington).
- The National Archives, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/tithes/> (accessed 7/3/2020).
- The Newsroom, 12/11/2010, 'Donald Trump's plea to homeowners on the Menie Estate', *The Scotsman*, <https://www.scotsman.com/news/donald-trumps-plea-homeowners-meanie-estate-1696362> (accessed 7/3/2020).
- Van Langendonck, Willy, 2007, *Theory and Typology of Proper Names* (New York).
- Vuolteenaho, Jani and Terhi Ainiala, 2009, 'Planning and revamping urban toponymy: ideological alterations in the linguistic landscaping of Vuosaari suburb, eastern Helsinki', in *Critical toponymies: the contested politics of place naming*, ed. Lawrence D. Berg and Jani Vuolteenaho (Farnham), 227–252.