

This is a formal request for a place at the Digital Gazetteer Research and Practice Workshop to be held at UC Santa Barbara. In addition to this expression of interest I attach a two-page résumé.

I am director of the Centre for Data Digitisation and Analysis at Queen's University Belfast. The Centre's main interest is the development of scholarly spatially referenced historical electronic research resources, and the exploitation of these large datasets in research using GISc. I have been involved in many large-scale projects relating to the construction of e-resources and their utilisation including the Great Britain Historical GIS, where I was a co-applicant on its main Economic and Social Research Council funding award; the associated 'popular' Vision of Britain Through Time incarnation of the GBH GIS with a variety of multimedia materials all referenced by place; the development of the Database of Irish Historical Statistics, which resulted in a significant publication mapping and analysing the geography of the 1840s Irish Famine; two new projects digitising, and associating by place name, medieval British sources including the 1086 Domesday Survey and a multitude of later medieval materials; a project which digitised and spatially referenced the first map of the whole of Britain – the Gough Map dating from around 1350; and the construction of three text-based resources containing geographical information – a virtual library of materials relating to the Act of Union between Britain and Ireland, a large repository of British and Irish Parliamentary Papers, and an e-version of the debates held in the Northern Ireland Stormont Parliament from 1921 to 1972. What is common to all these e-resources is that they can be referenced, and associated, by location.

In addition, I am co-author of a Cambridge University Press book that will be published in 2007 examining the use of GIS in history and geography research. I am an active member of the UC Berkeley based Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative chairing ECAI's Scholarship and Content Committee and the E-Publications Committee. At Queen's University I head the Spatial Technologies Research Forum, a body created by Senate to promote GIS across the humanities and arts as well as the traditional disciplines in which the technology is used. I am editor of *Humanities Computing*, which supersedes the Edinburgh University Press journal *History and Computing*. The re-launched journal will have a strong multimedia GIS bias.

My primary interest in gazetteers is the potential to use them to associate disparate e-resources, such as those briefly described above, in space and time. As such elements of the workshop which focus the components of gazetteer services and on interoperability are particularly relevant. I recently received funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council in the UK to hold a workshop on 'GIS e-Science' to discuss whether GIS technology might form the basis for organising and interrogating the rapidly developing range of e-resources in the Arts and Humanities, e-resources that are always, or almost always, referenced in space. It was quite clear from the workshop that if GIS was going to make a contribution to e-Science with relation to the Data Grid an effective way of linking information by location was vital. There are obviously many ways of expressing location as, for example, a defined polygon composed of administrative boundaries (as with the Great Britain Historical GIS or the Database of Irish Historical Statistics), a set of co-ordinates forming an arc or point (roads, rivers and castles as in my Gough Map project), or, and most commonly, an amorphous poorly conceived sense of location normally referred to by a place name (as with the Domesday GIS, the Medieval British Isles 'Domesday II' project, the various Parliamentary Paper projects etc).

In the UK I am leading a consortium (including AHDS, AHDS History, UC Berkeley, IUPUI, Portsmouth University and Nottingham University) that is making application to the Arts and Humanities Research Council under their e-Science grant call. AHRC have focussed the call on the development of e-Science infrastructure or substantial primary research using e-Science methodologies. The project I am working on does both. It will develop a comprehensive hierarchal place name gazetteer and use the gazetteer to advance

understanding of place-name geographies. The proposal will take the ongoing work of the English Place-Names Society (EPNS) which, since 1924, has been engaged in the painstaking collection and analysis of all the England's place-names, including the names of administrative units, settlement sites, topographical features, field-names and street-names. These names are extraordinarily revealing about the cultural and social patterns of English history: the suffix 'by', for instance, can be seen to chart the Scandinavian settlements of the ninth and tenth centuries, while Celtic survival in Anglo-Saxon England is marked by recurrent instances of Walton 'the settlement of the Welsh'. Topographical names and field-names record changes in landscape (e.g. extent of former woodland) and land-use. And so on. Fortunately for modern scholarship the EPNS has systematically collected place-name spellings from a wide array of textual sources: these spellings are arranged chronologically and related to their modern forms (where these survive). Shifting spellings of the same name are dated; wholesale replacements of the name are recorded. The history and derivation of the name is discussed and where possible explained. This material is printed in, to date, over 70 volumes of the Survey of English Place-Names, which are highly regarded as standard reference works. They are of immense value to the study of history, with either a national or local focus, language, geography, archaeology, family history and genealogy, literary studies, and many other disciplines that need to understand the geographical and environmental contexts of the subjects they study or the places they live and visit. Few reference works can claim such a wide audience.

One could not hope to find a more exhaustive or detailed gazetteer recording variant spellings as they appear in a vast array of historical documents, and arranged within a basic hierarchical structure. It is our intention to take the EPNS work and create an electronic gazetteer and use the rich holdings of AHDS to associate e-resources by location and chronology. Through a number of AHDS-held sources it will be possible to develop a range of potential footprints for the places recorded by EPNS – sources such as the Great Britain HGIS and Kain and Oliver's work which will provide polygons, will co-ordinates developed from medieval Lay Subsidies and the *Taxatio* and point location files created by various Domesday scholars will allow the utilisation of various point coverages and Campbell's work on medieval England goes further and develops pseudo-polygons from point data.

Of less interest to the UCSB workshop, but to satisfy AHRC requirements, and demonstrate the importance of the gazetteer, the etymology and distribution of place names will be examined. Much work on this has been carried out by EPNS and others. What has not been possible in the past however, is the ability to link place names to a range of existing e-resources containing historical socio-economic and environmental data which can help to explain place name geographies. As well as demonstrating the potential of e-Science and the Data Grid, the project also provides an exemplar showing how gazetteers can associate sources and result in new scholarship.

Participation in the workshop will inform and enhance our AHRC grant application which will put gazetteers at the core of much research in the humanities and social sciences in the UK. It will allow me the opportunity to brief colleagues on our plans and discuss possible collaborations. It will also assist me to brief ECAI content affiliates of developments in the field. Finally, *Humanities Computing* would be extremely interested in featuring, at the very least, a report of the workshop in a future volume of the journal. To assist in my funding my attendance at the workshop, assistance towards the cost of travel and accommodation would be exceptionally helpful.