

SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME NEWS

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The Newsletter of the
SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME SOCIETY
COMANN AINMEAN-ÀITE NA H-ALBA



*The narrow flat-topped sea stack separated by sheer drops from the rugged Bowdun Head between Stonehaven and Dunnottar Castle is known as Dunnicaer, with other spellings including Dun-na-caer. It has intrigued antiquarians and archaeologists since incised stones with patterns resembling well-known Pictish symbols, but not typical and suspected to be early, were found in 1832 by some adventurous local lads. An Aberdeen University dig this year, using mountaineering techniques for access, has found traces of defensive works of imported stone and oak, and dating evidence for short-lived occupation in the 3rd to 4th century AD, when the flat area would have been greater before losses to erosion. A particular interest for us in SPNS is in how, and when, this little piece of rock came by its name which appears to be composed of two familiar elements, dun and *kair, which both have connotations of enclosure and defence. Anyone know any early records of the name?*

The current postal address of the Scottish Place-Name Society is:

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Membership Details: Annual membership £6 (£7 for overseas members because of higher postage costs), to be sent to Peter Drummond, Apt 8 Gartsherrie Academy, Academy Place, Coatbridge ML5 3AX.

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A WORD FROM THE COMMITTEE

The two conferences every year are for many the high spots of the Society's activities, so the committee tries to ensure a balance between accessibility for the greatest number and opportunities for those living away from the Central Belt to attend conferences without too much travel. As compared to the dark days of November, the long days of early May give an opportunity to hold spring conferences farther from the main centres of population, when some of those attending may wish to combine attendance with sightseeing or more active pursuits. Hence the choice, for instance, of Rothesay next spring.

However, knowledge of venues able and suitable to accommodate our likely numbers, and of local catering facilities, is essential before a commitment can be made to hold a conference in a particular place. The necessary look at possible venues for suitability, and personal contacts with organisations providing venues and catering, are not often feasible for committee members living far from potential locations.

If you feel that your home area has been neglected despite reasonable access and facilities, can suggest suitable venues, and would be willing to take on some of the necessary arrangements, the committee would be very happy indeed to hear from you.

STANDS ALBA WHERE IT DID? Who were the Scots of the Albannach- names in Scotland?

The Great Glen, *An Gleann Mòr*, has a second name: **Glen Albyn**, *Gleann Albann*, 'the glen of *Alba*'. It first appears in print in 1857, with typesetting error for a combined *Gleann Mòr na h-Albann*, 'the great glen of - *Alba*'.

Alba is the Gaelic name for Scotland. But in Early Gaelic, *Albu*, Greek *Albion*, applied to the island of Britain. The name may have been appropriated by the new Picto-Gaelic kingdom to accommodate two distinct Celtic cultures and the new east-leaning locus of its Gaelic political elite. This medieval kingdom was in Latin *Scotia*, 'the land of the Gaels', also appropriated from a wider geography. And the title of Duke of Albany was created in 1398 for the king's brother.

The kingdom was originally based in the east, north of the Forth. Cumbrian Strathclyde and Northumbrian Lothian were added in the early 11th century, but the heart of the kingdom was *Alba*, *Scotia*, Albany. For instance, the justiciars of *Scotia* remained distinct from those of Lothian and of Galloway till the end of the 13th century.

But what of the North and the West? The 13th-century *De Situ Albanie* describes the kingdom of *Albania* as resembling the shape of a human, with "the mountains and deserts of Argyll" forming its head, but the outstretched arms being "the mountains that divide *Scotia* from Argyll". This conceptional divide is the watershed, with **Breadalbane**, *Bràghaid Albann*, 'the uplands of *Alba*' and **Lòcha Albannach**, '(River) Lochay associated with *Alba*', on its eastern slopes.

The ridge itself was formerly **Drumalbin**, *Druim Albann*, 'the ridge of *Alba*', Latinised as *Britanniaë Dorsum*. There is still an upland farm called **Drumalbin**, but in South Lanarkshire. Uniquely among the *Albann*-names, W.J. Watson tentatively suggests for this an unattested genitive plural, 'of the men of *Alba*'. But it may be a second remnant of 'the ridge of *Alba*', with *Alba* in its original sense of the island of Britain.

But why would an *Albannach* ‘a person of *Alba*’ warrant specifying in Scotland? To modern eyes, *Albannaich*, plural, were not abroad, unlike those commemorated (from the campaigns of Edward Bruce?) in two Irish places, **Carnalbanagh**.

Some names do have the modern sense. In Skye is **Uaigh an Albannaich**, ‘the grave of the *Albannach*’; but this for The Scotsman newspaper, a copy of which was ceremoniously buried here in the 1880s because of its pro-establishment stance. **Sgùrr an Albannaich** in Arisaig is a small peak on the boundary of the land of MacDonald of Glenalladale, in contrast with **Sgùrr an t-Sasannaich**, ‘the conical hill of the Englishman’, on the neighbouring estate owned by a Mr Astley in the mid 19th century. A similar contrast may explain the pairing of **Allt an Albannaich** and **Allt an t-Sasannaich** in north-west Sutherland.

Without a contrasting name is **Coire an Albannaich** in Ardchattan, though just below a possible estate boundary. It is unlikely that **Beinn an Albannaich** in Sunart is named for a boundary; but if so, it may relate to the township of **Scotstown**, a name dating to after 1733 and probably coined by the neighbouring immigrant mine workers. Clearly not a boundary indicator is **Loch Albanich** (1755), an upland mill-dam in Argyll, though it is unknown as to whether the reference is to the miller, his clients, the technology, or something else. Three coastal names cannot be boundaries, but neither do they make good landing places: the reference in **Camas an Albannaich** on Seil, **Geodha an Albannaich** in Lewis, and **Alt an Albannaich** in Islay, may be to individuals, or even a vessels, deposited by the sea.

Three names with the genitive plural all refer to a minor topographical nose, or hill-spur: **Sròn nan Albannach** in Jura, **Sròn Albannach** in North Kintyre, and **Strone** in Mid Argyll (1564 *Stronnynalbynich*). *Sròn*-names do not generally refer to groups of people, other than folkloric Fingalians or deer-forest wardens. None of the forester spurs extend from a plateau, so they are best explained as indicating boundaries, not deer-traps.

There are three instances of **Allt nan Albannach**. That in Easter Ross, now **Scotsburn**, crucially demonstrates a cross-over to “Scot” (1607 *Aldainalbinache* a.k.a. *Scottismenisburne*). The Scots may have been in the nearby pre-Reformation chapel of Logie Easter, while **Scotsburn** in Moray runs near the abbey of Kinloss, and **Scots Burn** in Lanarkshire is an estate boundary near the abbey of Lesmahagow. But there is no evidence of an essential religious link for either “*Albannach*” or “Scot”.

A second **Allt nan Albannach** is on the boundary between East and West Sutherland. Maybe those in East Sutherland were considered distinctly *Albannaich*, but, if a boundary-name, the *Albannaich* may have been more local, and on either side of the watershed.

The third *Allt nan Albannach* is south of the early kingdom, in Carrick. W.J. Watson thought the name contained the genitive singular. But it resembles the genitive plural for the first hundred years or so of records (1588 *Altenalbenoch*), before becoming identifiable as modern **Alton Albany**. There is an even earlier associated name (1434 *Achnyalbenach*), which if not garbled *allt*, refers to a local *achadh* ‘field’ or *àth* ‘ford’.

Penalbanach in Mull indicates land valued at a *peighinn*, ‘penny Scots or Norse’; possibly with loss of a medial article. **Tòrr an Albannaich** on Loch Nevis may be for **Tòrr nan Albannach*, given the two 1856 Admiralty forms for the islet, *Rudha tor na Albannach* and *Eilean Albannach*.

The implication, if not the certainty, is that the label *Albannach* referred to someone from the area of *Scotia*. If not anyone from *Scotia*, it is conceivable – but purely speculative – that into the Late Middle Ages, as Gaelic receded in the east, it came to specify someone from *Scotia* who primarily spoke the ascendant language of that region, Scots.

Most settlement-names with “Scot” seem to come from the surname (itself originally a label for immigrants to Southern Scotland from *Scotia*?). A slowly dynamic linguistic boundary between Gaelic and Scots is otherwise evidenced, with reference to Gaelic

speakers. In Caithness, meanwhile, **Scotscald** demonstrates self-referencing defensive ethnicism by speakers of Scots, in a manner normally found in the many *Gàidheal*-names elsewhere coined by an embattled Gaelic community.

Many of the other Scot-names may refer to traditional technology; others to the finalised national border. But others again, relate to *Scotia*. **Scotstoun** and obsolete **Scotstown** in West Lothian may have this reference to Scotian incomers, as may obsolete **Scottistoun** in Paisley. (**Scotstoun** in Glasgow is in a pocket of Renfrewshire on the Scotian side of the Clyde, but as a possession of the Montgomeries of **Scottistoun** is probably a transferred name.)

More clearly, we have medieval **Scottewatre** for the river Forth and **Scots Sea** for the firth, and probably **Scotwad** for the strategic crossing of the Fords of Frew. **Scots Sea** is recorded as late as 1682, so these were, or became, markers of a Scotian boundary of identity, rather than a political, cultural or linguistic boundary.

So if **Glen Albyn** is a late name, why apply this to somewhere less than central to the modern concept of *Alba*? If early, why is it in the northern extremity of the island of Britain? Or could it be that it marked, at some point in between, the northern boundary of identity of Scotia?

Dr Peadar Morgan - for details of names, see the database in 'Ethnonyms in the Place-names of Scotland and the Border Counties of England', <http://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/handle/10023/4164>

Much merriment was caused this summer when someone realised, and publicised through the media, that something crucial was missing from a sign which welcomed visitors to Rothesay (*Baile Bhòid*, 'town of Bute') with the Gaelic: "*Fàilte gu Baile Bhòid – An doras gu bòidhchead Eilean Bhoid*". Instead of "Welcome to Rothesay – the gateway to beauty of island of Bute" the omission of the *fada* or length marker, in the final word, turned the name into 'Penis Island'.

FIFE DATA BASE ONLINE

With a grant of £1,500, awarded by the John Robertson Bequest, the Department of Celtic & Gaelic, University of Glasgow, has put in place the structures for an on-line and fully searchable database of Fife place-names, using data and analysis from the 5-volumes of Simon Taylor with Gilbert Márkus, *The Place-Names of Fife* (Shaun Tyas, Donington: 2006-2012), hereafter *PNF*, the last 4 volumes of which were the result of an AHRC-funded project based at the University of Glasgow (also Celtic & Gaelic).

The award employed Brian Aitken, the Digital Humanities Research Officer for the School of Critical Studies, to create an on-line database, which was successfully completed in November 2014. It can be viewed on:-

<http://fife-placenames.glasgow.ac.uk/>

It contains 3,242 place-name records and 23,051 historical forms (so on average each place-name has just over 7 forms).

All the 3,242 head-names contained in the *PNF* volumes can be searched by individual volume (1-4) or altogether. Moreover, the data in these 4 volumes, in which the place-names of all 61 pre-1975 civil parishes are surveyed and analysed, have been augmented and corrected through the incorporation of the Addenda & Corrigenda in *PNF* 5 (pp. 572-624).

Various features were incorporated, including a rudimentary search facility to allow search by place-name in combination with the other fields in the tabular view; and an easy-to-use 'edit' feature that will allow the updating of the fields and correcting of any errors. Also all place-names can be searched according to earliest date of recording.

The next stage for which funding is to be sought will add a mapping facility, elements glossary and a more user-friendly front-end.

There is of course much more information in the published volumes, including detailed parish introductions and important medieval texts edited and translated, some for the first time. While *PNF* 1 is now out of print, vols.

2-4 are all still available from all good bookshops, at a bargain price!

Simon Taylor, University of Glasgow
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LUCKY SLAP – A UNIQUE PLACE-NAME

Lucky Slap (NO 477394) in the parish of Monikie, Angus is a tiny hamlet, mostly of fairly modern houses along with the site of what was once a filling station/garage within living memory.

David Dorward in his 2004 *The Sidlaw Hills* considered it to be Scots, meaning happy valley.

The place-name is first recorded on William Roy's map of 1747-52 as *Lucky Slap*. It next appears on John Ainslie's 1794 map of Angus as *Luckystap*. I wondered if he had made a transcription error here from his notes, mistaking an "l" for a "t". If so, this is more or less repeated on John Thomson's 1832 map of Angus where it is recorded as *Lucky step*. I have never heard locals pronounce the name this way so I am highly suspicious of the "t" creeping in here where an "l" was and is once more.

As they say, it makes an "l" of a difference, especially when you are trying to understand the meaning of a place-name! Much of Thomson's work slavishly copies Ainslie, so this supports my thinking.

In 1832 when the road from Dundee to Brechin was being improved, Andrew Jervise the noted Brechin antiquarian mentions it in one of his papers published in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (PSAS 1859 II p196). He refers to the place-name as *Lucky's Slap!* The *Slap* part of the name was interpreted by Dorward as an opening in the Sidlaw Hills, although it is more usually used in building and joinery circles when a door or opening is "slapped" into a wall.

But what or who was Lucky?

The first edition of the Ordnance Survey, published in 1868 but surveyed in 1858, has it as *Lucky slap* and interestingly it is marked as

a public house. This was very likely a popular stop or turnpike on the road for travellers climbing the Sidlaw Hills out of Dundee en route to Brechin.

This spelling continues to the present, but upon examining the Name Book (1857-1861) on the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments Commission's Scotland's Places website, I discovered that there was originally an apostrophe after *Lucky* which was not transferred to the map!

The Name Book records the informants of the name as Mr. and Mrs. Alexander, James Mitchell Esq and James Sturrock. It continues with the following description – "Is a public house on the old Brechin road. There is no entertainment, merely for the purpose of selling spirits, occupied by James Sturrock. The property of James Mitchell Esq. John Picton" (signature at foot of page)

John Jamieson (Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language) gives several meanings for lucky, most interestingly one of which is the mistress of an alehouse.

I can vouch for its use in the former Northesk Arms, latterly the Lobster Pot in Auchmithie, (St Vigeans, Angus), now sadly closed. At the time of the visit by Sir Walter Scott in 1814, one Mrs. Lucky Walker was the proprietor. It is tempting to suggest that the "Lap" part of the name had its origin in the local word "lappie" meaning a place in which cattle or dogs could drink. Perhaps this also applied to humans?

This would give us Lucky's Lap rather than Lucky's Slap, which makes no difference to the sound and pronunciation of the name.

Norman Atkinson

The Place-Names of Fife, by Simon Taylor with Gilbert Márkus

Vols II-V still available; normally £24 each incl. UK p&p, but £22 to SPNS members. Contact Shaun Tyas at 01775 821542, by e-mail to pwatkins@pwatkinspublishing.fsnet.co.uk, or by writing (with cheque to 'Shaun Tyas') to 1 High Street, Donington, Lincolnshire PE11 4TA.

BOOKS FROM SPNS

In the Beginning was the Name Selected Essays by Professor W.F.H. Nicolaisen

393 pages; price £12.00 plus P&P.

For further information on this wide-ranging selection of essays by a pre-eminent scholar, and how to order it, please see the Scottish Place-Name Society website:

<http://www.spns.org.uk/IBWNorderform.html>

Cultural Contacts in the North Atlantic *Region: The Evidence of Names*

edited by Peder Gammeltoft, Carole Hough
and Doreen Waugh

To clear remaining stocks, the price of this volume is now £5.00, plus £2.50 postage and packing (UK only). Please send a cheque payable to SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME SOCIETY to: Professor Carole Hough, English Language, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8QQ

The Place-Names of Midlothian

Dr Norman Dixon's previously inaccessible and still important PhD study of 1947, with Introduction by Simon Taylor outlining more recent approaches to some of the names.

(Midlothian here is the pre-1975 geographical county including Edinburgh and Musselburgh.)

515 pages. £10, plus £2.50 postage and packing (UK only). Please send a cheque payable to SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME SOCIETY to: Professor Carole Hough, English Language, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8QQ

JOHN KERR

It is with sadness that I have to intimate the death of John Kerr of Old Struan on 20th July 2015 at the age of 83. John had devoted much of his later life to researching and disseminating every aspect of Atholl history, social, legal, agrarian, toponymic. Along with his wife, Patricia, he was a stalwart member and supporter of the Scottish Place-Name Society from its early days, giving a paper to an SPNS Conference in May 1999 entitled

'Along an Atholl Boundary'.¹ He was also a Fellow of the Scottish Society of Antiquaries, and an honorary research fellow at the Centre for Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Glasgow.

John, a Londoner by birth, was a regular holiday visitor to Applecross in the 1960s but interest in that area was superseded through a chance encounter with Alec MacRae, then the proprietor of the Blair Atholl garage, when he stopped in passing to buy petrol. They quickly discovered a mutual interest in old roads and local history, which led to a lifelong friendship. Through Alec, John became a member of the Gaelic Society of Inverness in 1972 and gave eight papers on various aspects of Atholl history over the following years. What was initially a holiday interest became a lifetime passion and after renting summer accommodation every year from 1984, he lived full time in Old Struan from 1990.

John's study-area was north Atholl, roughly defined by the medieval parishes of Blair, Kilmaveonaig, Lude and Struan, later combined as the civil parish of Blair Atholl. Over time John familiarised himself not only with every corner of this large Highland parish, but also with its rich documentary archive, in both public and private hands, above all that held at Blair Castle. It was his intimate knowledge of both landscape and archival material that made him such an outstanding local historian, combined with the fact that he was an excellent communicator, both through the spoken and written word. He gave lectures around the country, and published on a wide range of Atholl history, as his bibliography, set out below, eloquently testifies.

However, he took local history to a new level through *The Atholl Experience*. In collaboration with his wife, Patricia, also a local historian, he brought together in a

¹ A summary of this can be found in *SPNNews* 7 (Autumn 1999), 3-4 (<http://www.spns.org.uk/CiPerth.html>). A more detailed study of this boundary appeared in his article with the same title in *Nomina* 13 (1990), 73-89.

systematic, comprehensive and user-friendly way all the documentation, sources and images which they had collected and researched for his books, articles and lectures over a period of more than 40 years.

The Atholl Experience consists of 42 Volumes in 93 archival boxes. Officially launched at Old Blair on 1st August 2007,² it was presented to the A. K. Bell Library in Perth. It is digitised, and the intention is to make it available on the web.³

John's passion for Atholl history was deeply rooted in the landscape. Upland Atholl is full of the founs and names of deserted shielings, and I think it is safe to say that John had visited every one, and knew each one by name.⁴ Atholl is also crisscrossed with old estate boundaries, all of which were marked and carefully observed. Boundary stones with initials such as R for Robertson of Lude or A for Atholl were once found even on the most remote moors, but are now largely lost under the heather. However, by careful study of estate plans, as well as by days of walking, John managed to locate literally dozens of these.

As a millennium project in conjunction with the Blair Charitable Trust and Fealar Estate, he also located all the 19th-century milestones which once marked the miles on five of the estate tracks leading out from Blair Castle, including those in Glen Tilt as far as the county boundary with Aberdeenshire, where there were 13 in Atholl and two across the Falls of Tarf on the Fealar side. In all, seven new stones were set up and carved with the relevant numbers to replace the missing ones, while those that had tumbled were reset upright.

² The event received prominent coverage in *The Times* of 2 August 2007, under the head-line in broadest journalese: 'Meet John Kerr, Scotland's walking Doomsday Book!' An account of the launch can also be found on <http://www.spns.org.uk/CtPerth.html>.

³ See <http://www.pkc.gov.uk/athollexperience> for more information.

⁴ To try to help understand the meaning of the local place-names he studied Gaelic at the City Lit in London for three years but never claimed to be fluent!

In his later years, when he was unable to walk the long, rough ways to shielings and along boundaries, he organised a series of walks for a small, enthusiastic group of Athollites and Fifers, myself among the latter. He would brief us carefully on everything we might see along the way, supplying us with the relevant extracts from the 25-inch Ordnance Survey maps. With generous cooperation from the Atholl Estate, which included the use of a state-of-the-art Discovery to access the furthest-flung corners of Atholl, John and Patricia would drive us to the starting point, make sure we were going in the right direction, then at the end of the day meet us with tea and cakes and drive us back to Old Struan or Blair for an evening meal.

Our side of the bargain was, apart from not getting lost, giving a full illustrated report of all shielings visited and boundary stones located. In this way we were able to cover in a day what could otherwise easily have been a several-day hike, such as the Minigaig Pass and Comyn's Road from Atholl to Speyside, Glen Tilt to Linn of Dee, and Glen Tilt via Fealar Lodge to Strathardle.

The first of our Atholl walks was in 2002, and, with the occasional lapse, they became treasured annual events until the last one in 2012.

Simon Taylor



John Kerr (far right) with Patricia Kerr and John Kennedy, Dalnaspidal, making sure the group was going in the right direction.

Photo: Simon Taylor.

SHETLAND ISLAND NAMES – a dynamic group

A short illustrated article with this title is available online at:

https://www.academia.edu/14536700/Shetland_Island-Names_a_dynamic_group?auto=download&campaign=weekly_digest

It is by Dr Peder Gammeltoft of Copenhagen University, a familiar figure at SPNS conferences, who recently spent two weeks in Shetland archives researching early forms of the island names.

RECENT PhDs

Congratulations on two recent awards of PhD degrees:-

Burns, Alison, 2015, ‘Field-Names of North-East Scotland: a socio-onomastic study’, unpublished PhD, University of Glasgow. <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/6424/>, with database including individual fields on Google Earth maps on <http://www.alison.itester.dk/>

Rhys, Guto, 2015, ‘Approaching the Pictish Language: Historiography, Early Evidence and the Question of Pritenic’, unpublished PhD, University of Glasgow.

ANCHOVIE HILLS, MARYLAND – A TOBACCO PLANTATION AND A PERTSHIRE ABBEY

Thanks to Prof Stephen Driscoll (Historical Archaeology, Glasgow University) for passing on this gem to us, via Simon Taylor:-

Near Brandywine, Maryland, USA, is the Anchovie Hills Wildlife Sanctuary. Despite appearances, this name has no connection with small oily fish found in the Mediterranean Sea and on pizzas. The name goes back to one Alexander Magruder who settled on the Patuxent River in the mid 17th century and made his fortune from growing tobacco. He called his estate *Anchovie Hills*, using his version of *Inchaffray*. This was the location of a former abbey in Strathearn, Perthshire, already decayed and secularised before the Reformation of 1560. The

connection is that Alexander’s father was chamberlain to James Drummond, Lord Commendator of the abbey estate.

A’ Ghàidhlig air Aghaidh na Tìre - Ainmean-Àite an t-Sratha, An t-Eilean Sgitheanach

Tha ainmean-àite an t-Sratha, ann an ceann a deas an Eilein Sgitheanaich, dlùth-cheangailte ri aghaidh na tìre agus ri beatha nan daoine a th’ air a bhith a’ fuireach an seo fad linntean. Tha feartan oirthire, cnuic agus àitichean togte air an ainmeachadh gus sgeulachdan, cur-seachadan, agus beatha làitheil a chomharrachadh; tro bhith a’ rannsachadh an cuid brìghean agus eachdraidh, thig mion-fhiosrachadh mu bheatha nan daoine a dh’fhuirich ann am follais.

Gaelic in the Landscape - Place-names of Strath, Isle of Skye

The place-names of Strath, in the south of Skye, are intimately connected with the landscape and the lives of the people who have lived here for centuries. Coastal, hill and man-made features have been named to reflect stories, past-times, and daily routines; by exploring their meaning and history, many details of past lives are revealed.

FREE from Scottish Natural Heritage/ Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba

<http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/gaelic/Gaelic%20in%20the%20landscape%20-%20Isle%20of%20Skye.pdf>

Format : 36 pages; 6.37MB

Published in 2015

RAASAY PLACE-NAMES BOOK

Urras Dualchas Ratharsaidh/Raasay Heritage Trust offers a series of publications whose sales support the project to build a Heritage Centre. (Enquires to osgaig@lineone.net.) We hear that direct sales of Rebecca S MacKay’s place-name study *Gach Cùil is Cèal / Every Nook and Cranny*, covering Raasay together with Rona, Fladda and Eilean Taighe, have gone so well that it is now available only through a well-known online seller of books and just about every other non-food item.

TWO TOPONYMS IN TOROSAY (KILLEAN) PARISH, MULL

I focussed in this paper on two settlement-names in the district of Forsa which will be analysed in full in my forthcoming PhD thesis at the University of Glasgow. The thesis is a study of settlement-names in Torosay (Killean) parish. Forsa is the district which comprised the north-easternmost part of this parish and extended from Gruline (NM547398), at the head of Loch na Keal in the north, along the Sound of Mull coastline to Scallastle (NM699381), a short distance north-west of Craignure in the south; Craignure is the Caledonian MacBrayne port from which the ferry sails to Oban. Forsa is consistently recorded as a district-name in the earliest fiscal evaluation of the area, an assessment-unit lying within the lands of Maclean of Lochbuie, whose stronghold was Moy Castle (NM616247). Forsa survives as the existing name in Glen Forsa (NM624375), a glen which runs roughly north-west and south-east and extends for around 11.5km from the Sound of Mull to Torness (NM649326) in Glen More. I owe thanks to Dr Simon Taylor and to Professor Thomas Owen Clancy for comments received during the preparation of this article.

Callachally (NM591422) *G call* + *G coille* ‘hazel-wood’.

Callachally is the name of the modern farm lying on the west side of the River Forsa (NM599433), this hydronym also including the existing name Forsa as its specific. The NGR recorded for Callachally here is of the self-catering property known as Callachally House, the building to which the name Callachally refers in the Ordnance Survey [OS] record. The modern farmhouse lies a short distance to the north-west at NM590423.

The toponym is pronounced [ˈkaləxl̩]. Its earliest historical forms are as follows:

calchelle 1494 National Records of Scotland [NRS] C2/13 no. 114 [pennyland; identified as Callachally in *ALI* no. A42; see also *RMS* ii no. 2200]

Callo hailze 1509 NRS E38/339 [16s 8d; cf. *ER* xiii p. 213]

calchele 1538 NRS C2/26 no. 124 (1) [pennyland; see also *RMS* iii no. 1745]

calchele 1538 NRS C2/26 no. 124 (2) [pennyland]

Calchele 1542 *RSS* ii no. 4732 [pennyland]

I propose that the toponym’s second element, its generic, is *G coille* (feminine), gen. *coille*, ‘a wood, woodland’, in Old Gaelic [OG] *caill* or *coill*. The proposed specific is *G call* (masculine), also *coll*, ‘hazel’. The medial *o* of the 1509 form is proposed to represent the epenthetic vowel which is a feature of modern pronunciation.



Callachally House is centre-of-shot and surrounded by trees; the modern farmhouse is the building to its right. Photo: Iain Thornber.

The modern reflex of *call* is *calltainn* but *coll*, the Old Gaelic term, is recorded in a number of compound appellatives, including *coll-choille* ‘hazel-wood’ (Dwelly). The form of the specific and the toponym’s noun-noun close-compound structure, in which specific precedes generic, highlight the possibility that Callachally could be a name of relatively early date; however, *coll-choille*, or *call-choille*, is clearly a pre-existing compound of a type which cannot in isolation be considered diagnostic of date. To Callachally may be compared *leamb-choille* ‘elm-wood’, the pre-existing compound which probably lies behind *Leuchath FIF (NT157828) (Taylor with Márkus 2006, 272–73, and 2012, 168). Given the existence of this pre-existing compound, the possibility that Callachally was a relatively new coinage when recorded

in 1494 should also be considered. There is hazel both in the vicinity of Callachally House and in the scrub which lies on both sides of the modern A849 to the north.

A toponym of direct comparison may be Gallchoille ARG (NR767903) in North Knapdale which Peadar Morgan has etymologised as including *G call* and *G coille*. I owe thanks to Peadar for highlighting this toponym after my paper at the Inverness conference and for information from his personal database. Morgan has also pointed out that Gallochoille ARG (NR653479), the name of a cottage on the island of Gigha, may be a transferred name from North Knapdale.



The locations of these settlement-names at either end of Glen Forsa, Mull.

*Teamhair (NM642336)

G teamhair ‘sacred place; height, eminence, place with a view’.

As the asterisk illustrates, this is a reconstructed name. It is proposed that the name was coined in reference to a large mound in the southernmost part of Glen Forsa, just over 1km north-west of the aforementioned Torness (NM649326) in Glen More. The top of the feature is visible above the trees of a modern Forestry Commission plantation from the modern road through Glen More, the main route south to the Ross of Mull from Craginure and east Mull. The name Ceann Chnocain refers to the feature in the OS record. No settlement-name is recorded in this area on Joan Blaeu’s seventeenth-century map.

The proposal here is that *G teamhair*, or OG *temair*, was coined in reference to this feature, subsequently coming to refer to the settlement in this part of Forsa. The ruined

settlement in the area is referred to as Coire Ghaibhre (NM640344) from the eighteenth century and this name appears likely to have displaced the earlier *Teamhair. The historical forms clearly illustrate that Coire Ghaibhre is a toponym of separate etymology, as opposed to a reformation of the earlier name. The earliest of these forms are as follows:

chowour 1494 NRS C2/13 no. 114 [halfpennyland; see also *RMS* ii no. 2200 and *ALI* no. A42, where the name is unidentified]

Tuochir 1509 NRS E38/339 [8s 8d; see also *ER* xiii 213]

chowour 1538 NRS C2/26 no. 124 (1) [halfpennyland; cf. *RMS* iii no. 1745]

chowour 1538 NRS C2/26 no. 124 (2) [halfpennyland]

Chowoure 1542 *RSS* ii no. 4732 [halfpennyland]



The mound above the trees looking NNW from the modern road in Glen More.

Photo: Alasdair C. Whyte

The predominant initial *ch* is proposed to represent /t'/; given the consistency of *ch*- across three separate sources, the *Tuo-* of the 1509 form is considered likely to represent this same phoneme. The consistent medial *w* is proposed to represent /w/ for intervocalic broad *mh* in Gaelic, the *ch* of the 1509 form apparently also representing medial *mh*, given the consistent *w* across the other sources.

In modern Gaelic, *teamhair* is both an adjective, a variant of *tèmhaidh* ‘pleasant, agreeable, delightful, quiet’, and a feminine noun, defined variously as ‘time, season, in season (Sutherland and the north coast); a covered or shaded walk on a hill’ (Dwelly). OG *temair* is understood to derive from the

Indo-European root **tem-* ‘cut’ (Mac Giolla Easpaig 2005, 448; see also Watson 1905, 286). Mac Giolla Easpaig (2005, 441) has proposed that places denoted by the name *Temair* in Ireland were originally pre-Christian cultic or religious sites, possibly of a specific nature, and that the term itself as a toponomastic generic used to refer to sites of sacred character. There are over twenty confirmed instances in Ireland (Ó Muraíle 2005), including the illustrious Tara/Teamhair in County Meath, the most renowned of the traditional royal centres of Ireland, a royal cultic site with a series of mythological and Otherworldly aspects.

The coining of a name in this element referring to a conspicuous feature of the Forsa landscape might reflect perception of this feature as a sacred place. In contrast to many of the Irish examples, the site of **Teamhair*, Mull, has not been subject to archaeological investigation.

Mac Giolla Easpaig’s analysis has also illustrated, however, that the meaning and derivation of the name *Temair* would have been opaque to speakers of Old Gaelic (2005, 427). The term has thus developed various associative meanings, including those attached to the modern Gaelic adjective highlighted above. Irish *teamhair*, a common appellative, is defined as ‘height, eminence, place with a view’ (Mac Giolla Easpaig 2005, 427). A derived figurative sense could, therefore, lie behind Mull’s **Teamhair*. Watson (1926, 505) defined the element as “an eminence of wide prospect standing by itself”, in reference to proposed Scottish examples in Glen Casley SUT and in Islay ARG (1926, 505). For discussion of the Islay name, see Whyte 2014 (143–45). Considering the renown of names comprising this element elsewhere, identification of **Teamhair* as a transferred name cannot either be ruled out. Close analysis of the earliest historical forms places the toponym in the corpus of *teamhair*-names.

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GAELIC BÙRN AS A GENERIC ELEMENT IN THE NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND

The Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue gives two meanings for Sc *burn*:

1. A brook or stream. Frequent in early place-names
2. Water, esp. for use in brewing.
Frequent in north-eastern records after 1600.

The word with the second meaning above was loaned into Gaelic as a lexical item at some point and now exists as *bùrn*, meaning ‘(drinking) water’. (Cf. Dwelly pp. 142–3) Although currently considered a term primarily featuring in Lewis Gaelic, this word was once much more widespread and appears as a specific element in a number of place-names. For instance:

Allt a’ Bhùirn “The fresh water stream” is so called from its being used by the people of Lairig for household purposes. OS Name book Argyll OS1/2/50/130

Dal-bhuirn Invercauld – dal-vurn ‘would be a field liable to flooding: Diack MS2276 [Dail a’ Bhùirn] Aberdeenshire

“**Tota Bhuirn**” signifies Water Roofless Mall: OS name book Ross OS1/27/39/51

Less well known however, is how the element was also borrowed into Gaelic with the first meaning ‘a brook or stream’. The sole evidence for this loan is in place-names, to which we now turn.

For reasons of space, only those names of which I am reasonably certain are included below. There are a number of other names which are less certainly of this type and other names which are ‘false friends’ e.g **Burnturk** P **brun* / **bren*, ‘hill’ + P **turc* (*Brenturk* c.1245) Taylor 261–2.

BURN BEG NJ453452 ABD (Cairney) W

Burn Beg 1874 OS 6 inch edn.

ScG *beag*, adj. ‘small’

“A small stream rising in the Moss of Ardonald and flows into the Burn of Cairnie near the Duelties” OS namebook OS1/1/12/51 Aberdeenshire

This is a tributary of the Burn of Cairnie. Almost 2 km downstream another tributary is called Small Burn (NJ470447). (settlement: *Smallburn* Gordon map 26)

BURNCRUINACH NJ502352 S

Burnecrunnache 1609

Burnecruinack 1685

Burn-cruinach Chalmers [*Cruin-ach* in Irish denotes a round field (O’ Brien and Shaw in no *Cruin*) so Burn-cruinach the rivulet of the round field or the round field of the rivulet.]

Burncruinach 1822

Burncruinach 1832

Burn Cruinach 1874 OS 6 inch edn.

[bArn’krunək] Pronounced Burn Croonek: Alexander 1952, 191

(burn-crunak D) / (? Bùrn cruinneachaidh ‘spring of meeting, assembly. / Bùrn crūnyach = water gathering (Downie) D.): MS2494 Aberdeen Spec. Coll.

? ScG *cruinneach*, ‘convexity’

This is a settlement on Shield Burn. It is interesting to note that one of the meanings of *crun* is ‘boss of a shield’.

There are a number of parallels with this specific in *allt*, see Morgan 2011, 43. Morgan implies this is not *cruithneach*, ‘pict’, but possibly *cruinneachadh* ‘gathering’ “With intransitive application, accumulation of mist or low cloud might explain both the noun and the toponyms.”

BURNERVIE NJ591518 S

Burnervie 1811

Burnervie 1841

Burnervie 1959

ScG *airbhe*, gen *h-eirbh*, ‘wall, boundary’

BURNERVITE S

Burn(e)write 1610

Burnervite 1632

Burnevite 1658

Burnervite 1662

Burnevite 1662

Somewhere in the vicinity of NO5263, mentioned alongside Lochetie (Lochty) and Balconnel. Possibly Burnfoot at NO539674 at the foot of an unnamed burn.

BURNGARNIE NJ779369 S

Burngairn 1691

Burngarney 1790

A tributary of the Burn of Slateheugh is called Den of Burngarnie.

BURN GAULY NJ323390 W

Burn Gauldy (settlement) 1841

Burn Gauly 1872 OS 6 inch 1st edn.

ScG *gobhal*, gen. *goibhle*, ‘fork’

The name of this burn above the Bridge of Fittie is the Burn of Fittie. A similar form is seen in Burn of Gowal (NO242799) (*Goal B.* 1794) and Gaul Burn (NJ428357).

BURN HERVIE NJ733194 W

Settlement = Burnhervie

Burn Ervie 1820

small stream called *Burnervie* 1834-45

Burn Hervey 1869

Burn Hervie 1901

Settlement =

Burnervie, or *Burnharvey* 1875

Burnhervie 1901

ScG *airbhe*, gen (*h*-)*eirbh*, ‘wall, boundary’

[bArn’ervi]. Pronounced Burn Ervie. Alexander 1952, 191

This may suggest an underlying *Bùrn na h-Eirbhe*. The OS Namebooks say it “... forms the boundary for a considerable distance between the parishes of Inverury and Chapel of Garioch.” (OS1/1/42/81) Although not named, its course it referred to as a march from Braco to its foot in a charter of c. 1179 (*RRS* 1153-65, p. 162). This would make it consistent with *G airbhe*.

See Burnervie above.

BURN LEVENIT NJ478625 W

Settlement = Burnlevenit

?? *Burnaluiff* 1610

Burn Levenet 1841

Burn Livinet 1841

Burnlyvenet 1851

Burn Levanet 1861

Burn Livenit 1870

Burn Livenet 1871

ScG ?*leamhnach*, ‘abounding in elms’ *leamhnaid?* *leamhnachd?* *Lìobhanaid?*

The 1610 element is the only mention of this name, and it is not otherwise known. The index to the Sheriff Court Records contains the word *Burnahuiff*. Diack (Place-names of Pictland 1, 123) discussed this name as Livenet, ignoring the generic element. He derives this from *lìbh*, ‘pour forth’; +*naid*. This derivation should be treated with caution however, but nonetheless it may have the same root as the Livet and Leven. If this were the case, this would possibly be the only name in the corpus to demonstrably have a

specific element older than the generic element in question.

BURN LOISHKEAN NJ216458 W
Knockando

KraigLuoi/kēn c. 1591

Bend lusken 1761

Burn Loishkean 1874

“A small stream rising on the south of the Hill of Stob flowing in a Southward direction until it unites with the Bain of Rochoish, the name is corrupted from the Gaelic of the Frogs Stream” OS Namebook Morayshire OS1/12/3/102 [*Losgann* written in pencil above the form *Loishkean* as the headform.]

The Pont name of c. 1591 presumably reflects *Creag* + *Loisgeann* and possibly denotes Cairn Cattoch. Despite the Namebook’s derivation from *losgann* or *loisgeann*, ‘toad’, a derivation from a word relating to G *loisg*, ‘burn’ with the idea of a beacon or a hill from which fire is burnt may be more appropriate, with the *Creag Loisgeann* of Pont being the primary feature. (Thanks to Peadar Morgan for this suggestion).

BURN MUCKARTY NJ648481 W

Burn Muckarty 1850s

Burn Mackarty 1871.

The original form of the name in the OS namebooks was Burn Muckarty, which was transcribed in error as Burn Mackarty onto the maps. It was later changed again to Burn of Mackarty. See Adair’s 1720 *Muckarste* for modern day Taymount as a parallel. Cf also Muckhart / Muckart Parish

BURNORRACHIE NO877917 S
Kincardineshire

Orachieburne 1663

Burn Aribh[?] 1747-55

Burn of Orachie 1846

Burnorrachy 1869

“Oraiche. Abounding in gold” (Gaelic): OS namebook Kincardineshire OS1/19/10/78

This burn is currently named Burn of Muchalls. Settlements on its course are called Burnorrachie and Burnorrachie Croft. For

further discussion of the RMS form, see Burnapheppy. It is suggested the RMS form is in error. For the derivation, it is possible that is is ScG *uarach*, ‘place of waterfalls’, the same as Burnwarroch.

BURN ROY NJ235416 W

Burn Royen x2 1761

Burn Roy 1874

ScG *ruadh*, ‘red’

This burn has Burntown on its course and Bogroy (NJ237428) is nearby. As well as Bridge of Burnroy. It is very close to Burn Loishkean. At NJ235442 in Archiestown and just by Burn Roy is a house called Alt-Na-Roy.

Although the Namebook says that the Well of Whiterashes is the source of Burn Roy, the burn splits in two and at the source of the other branch is Roy’s Well (NJ24004577). Could this relate to the red water in the well, i.e. Tobar Ruadh and Tobar an Ruaidh on Skye? It is perhaps of note that nearby Bogroy is a Chalybeate Well.

BURNSHANGIE NJ952547 S Strichen

Burnshangie 1649

Burnshangie 1841

[bʌrnˈʃaŋi]: Alexander 1952, 28

ScG *seang*, ‘slender’

This is not a watercourse although Alexander notes ‘[t]here is a small stream here with a crooked valley’: Alexander 1952, 28

BURN TREBLE NJ373318 BNF W

Settlement = Burntreble

Burntreble (Settlement) 1841

Burn Treble (Watercourse) 1869

Burntreble (Settlement) 1912

B. Treble (Watercourse) 1912

?? ScG *triopall*, ‘bunch, cluster’

Downwards from the junction of “Blind Stripe” and “The Burn of Badchier NJ361334 The stream is the “Charrach Water” Burntreble NJ372319 only refers to the small farm near where “Charrach Water”, “Cach na Muin”, and Burn of Findouran meet:

Information from the Scottish Place-name Survey⁵. 1987

This settlement of Burntreble does broadly sit at the meeting of three watercourses, Cachnamuin Stripe, Burn Treble and Burn of Findouran. These three burns are at the head of Charach Water, which could have been the original name of Burn Treble. Place names of Strathbogie: "Burn treble... comes from the Gaelic *triopall*... and here evidently means the 'burn of gathering or meeting'".

BURNWARROCH NS845957 W

Burnwarroch 1864

? ScG *uarach*, 'place of waterfalls'

This watercourse flows through Warrock Glen. It flows from the foothills of Dumyat sharply out of the Ochils and would fit the name well.

The distribution of these names, broadly with the exception of Burnwarroch, is entirely in the North East of Scotland: chiefly North Aberdeenshire and Moray. It is perhaps of note that this distribution corresponds to the distribution of 'Burn of X' names as they exist in the Highlands. This correspondence requires further study.

It would appear that Sc *burn* was borrowed into Gaelic (as *burn*) twice, the first time meaning 'fresh water', and exists in the lexicon today. It was also borrowed in the North East meaning 'brook, stream' probably by 1500 (1609 earliest attested form). It was a very late borrowing which does not seem to have survived as Gaelic died out in the area not long after. This is one more example of toponymy uncovering otherwise unknown words or meanings.

Dr Jacob King (from his talk at Inverness)

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Further Bibliography and references for early forms are available on request.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The SPNS Autumn 2015 conference will take place in Linlithgow on Saturday 31 October: details and application form on flier with this newsletter. It is intended to hold the Spring 2016 conference at Rothesay on Bute.

The SNSBI (Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland) has arranged its Spring 2016 conference for Maynooth west of Dublin, on 15-18 April. www.snsbi.org.uk

The Scottish Society for Northern Studies (SSNS) has its annual day conference and AGM in Edinburgh on 21 November. <http://ssns.org.uk/events/conferences.html>

ATTENTION ALL STUDENTS!

Grants of up to £125 for students of onomastics to attend conferences are still available from the

CULTURAL CONTACTS FUND -

information from

http://www.spns.org.uk/News09.html#Cultural_Contacts_Fund or the current

coordinator of the steering committee,

Professor Carole Hough:

carole.hough@glasgow.ac.uk.

Some of the proceeds from sales of 'In the Beginning was the Name' are being used to fund an annual

NICOLAISEN ESSAY PRIZE

of £75 in honour of our Honorary Praeses, Professor Bill Nicolaisen. Students are invited to submit original work of around 5,000 words on any onomastic topic by the deadline of 31 December. Submissions should be sent electronically to the Society's

Convener, Alison Grant, at

alison@barnhillweb.co.uk.

The winner will also be invited to give a paper at an SPNS conference.

Life Membership of SPNS

The committee has agreed to create a new membership category, that of Life Membership of the Society, for £80. If you would like to become a Life Member, please contact the Treasurer Peter Drummond, addresses below. If you have already paid for a 3-year membership, any outstanding credit balance can count against the £80 fee (e.g. if you paid £15 in Spring 2014, you have £10 credit which means you'd only pay £70 for Life membership).

peter.drummond@btinternet.com;

8 Academy Place, Coatbridge ML5 3AX

DAVID MACDONALD, DINGWALL

Shortly before this issue was ready for print, members of the committee were sad to learn of the recent death of David MacDonald of Dingwall, a stalwart SPNS member who did great work for place-name and local history studies in his home area. Those who attended the conference at Dingwall in November 2011 may remember that he and his wife Sandra took in hand the local organisation of the very successful day, capped by a thoroughly enjoyable and informative walk around the town and its outskirts on the following gloriously crisp and sunny morning. David managed to attend the conference at Inverness in May this year.

A 'CRACKER' OF AN ETYMOLOGY

This summer there was media publicity for a campaign to have a preservation order placed on a 'crack' willow tree that – allegedly – is some 200 years old and where a town and its name originated. The town is Carnoustie, Angus, where the tree stands tall between a back lane and a disused public toilet. According to the local lore a shipwright and salmon fisher, while gardening, absent-mindedly left his 'dibble' (stick for making small holes for planting) in the ground; it took root; it became a *craws' noustie* where crows made their nest; and the town that sprang up around it took that name.

It's a shame that this origin myth, in the plausibility scale, is somewhat below Santa Claus climbing down your lum on Yule E'en. A *nest* is a *nest* in Scots as in every English dialect; maybe there is some confusion with *noust*, a place where boats are laid up out of the water. And there are many records of the name from long before this supposed origin of the town, including *Carnowis* 1510 and *Carneustie / Carnuysty* 1595. General Roy's Military Survey map (mid 18th century) has *Cornisty*. Alas, the specific, presumably following Gaelic *càrn*, 'cairn', remains obscure. (Name forms for Carnoustie from Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba's online data base.)