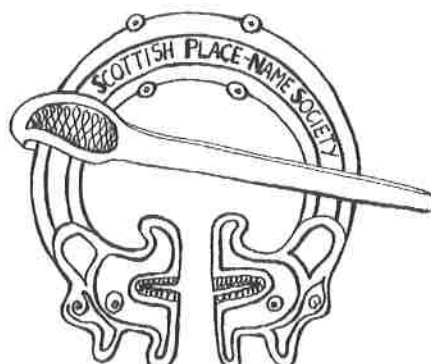


# SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME NEWS

No.5

Autumn 1998



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

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

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## Membership Details

Annual Membership £5, to be sent to Carole Hough, Department of English Language, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8QH.

**WELCOME** to issue 5 of *Scottish Place-Name News*, with a full report on our AGM and Conference held in Glasgow 2 May 1998; also with details of our **November Conference** (Sat. 7th) to be held in **Perth** on the subject of **Place-Names and Boundaries**: - details and registration form on the final page of this Issue. For lack of space some items have been held over till next issue. They are, however, mostly on our website <http://www.st-and.ac.uk/institutes/sassi/spns/spnstop.htm>

## AGM and CONFERENCE

The Society's second AGM was held at St Andrews College, Bearsden, Glasgow on 2 May this year and was attended by around

40 people. It coincided with the Society's fourth day conference. Vice-Convenor, Doreen Waugh, opened proceedings by welcoming all present, some of whom had travelled from as far afield as Copenhagen and London to be there. She also thanked Carole Hough for having done much of the work of organising the day and the venue.

**Committee:** The office-bearers remain the same. Three Committee Members stood down: **Dauvit Broun**, **Graham Caie** and **Barbara Crawford**. The Convenor thanked them warmly for their contribution to the Society in its infancy. All three will remain closely involved in the work of the Society in various ways, above all in relation to the Scottish Place-Name Database Project. Two new Committee members were elected: **Peadar Morgan**, Director of *Comann Luchd-Ionnsachaidh [CLI]* (for learners and supporters of Scots Gaelic) and editor of *Cothrom*, CLI's bilingual quarterly; and **David Munro**, Director of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society. The Committee now consists of:

**Ian Fraser** (Convenor)

**Doreen Waugh** (Vice-Convenor and Secretary)

**Carole Hough** (Treasurer)

**Simon Taylor** (Newsletter Editor)

**Maggie Mackay** (Carnegie Place-Name Database Project Liaison)

**Peadar Morgan**

**David Munro**

**Morag Redford**

The Treasurer reported that the 1997-98 accounts show a healthy balance of £1,553.19. This largely reflects membership payments from the Society's 260 members, as well as some donations kindly received from members. The Treasurer did, however, note that the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews had borne the costs of producing and distributing the first 3 Newsletters as gestures of goodwill towards the Society. The Society itself had borne the cost of the recently distributed Newsletter no.4.

The Newsletter Editor repeated his message to last year's AGM, to the effect that the increasing interest in and high-quality debate, research and writing on Scottish place-names more than warrant the production of a Scottish place-name journal. He hopes, therefore, to put together a proposal to bring to next year's AGM for the launching of such a journal under the auspices of the Society in the year 2000. In the meantime, the Newsletter will continue to appear twice-yearly.

Full minutes of the AGM will be available before the business meeting at next year's AGM. Anyone wanting to see them beforehand, please send a stamped addressed envelope to the Secretary, Dr Doreen Waugh, 7 Barnton Gardens, Edinburgh EH4 6AF.

**The Conference** itself was brimming with papers and reports, summaries of which now follow:

### **MONKLAND PLACE-NAMES**

Peter Drummond, Airdrie, spoke of the research he had done for his booklet of the same title, stressing the importance of linguistic context and early forms for each name, the assistance given by occurrences of similar names elsewhere, and the

theoretical and practical help given by books like W.F.H. Nicolaisen's *Scottish Place-Names* (1976) and by professionals like Ian Fraser.

The Monklands is no more; the area researched in the 1980s was swallowed up into North Lanarkshire in the 1990s. It includes Airdrie, a Gaelic name (there are 3 other Airdries in Scotland) and means either *ard ruighe* 'height of (the) slope' or *ard àirighe* 'height of (the) sheiling', both of which would apply, especially the former, describing the slope down from the Slamannan plateau, a reminder of how important it is to fit a name into its landscape-context. Being Gaelic Airdrie represents c.25% of the area's names. Most of the others are Scots, with no Norse, Pictish or Anglian names, and only a tiny number of Cumbric ones, like Papperthill. Hence the suggestion is unlikely that 'Airdrie' is Cumbric, containing as its second element Cumbric *tref* 'farm-stead'.

Contextual clues also apply to the attempt to find the meaning of Coatbridge, first recorded in 1750. Research has shown that from the 13th century the land was owned by the Colt family, sometimes known as Coats, and the estate generated place-names such as Coatdyke, Coathill, Coatbank and Nether and Over Coats (!). So Coatbridge was simply the bridge on the Coats estate.

Other points touched on included the fact that Gaelic names here appear to be the southern limit of the Central Belt's Gaelic, since much of Lanarkshire southwards has very few; that *Gart*-('farm, enclosure for arable') names (e.g. Gartsherrie) are very numerous; that *Drum*-names are regularly applied to low hills right across the Central Belt; and that the area's farm-names, extant and extinct, are a rich vein of Scots names (e.g. Auldshiels, Palacerigg, One's Mailling, Townhead and Laverock Knowe). He also gave example of myths about local names: Bargeddie, a village on the banks of the Monklands Canal, is not for example named after a bargee named Edward, but comes from earlier *Balgaddeis* (1587).

*Balgedy* (1654), Gaelic *baile* 'farm' + *gead* 'strip of arable land', and coined long before there was a canal.

He concluded by looking at spoken, unmapped names, like the long-gone tram terminus in Airdrie still known as 'The Terminus'. Monklands, a former mining and industrial area, had many of these spoken names, such as pits called The Hard Egg, The Wee Jean, and the Hoor in the Park (respectively for the nature of the rock, the intemperate foreman's virago wife, and the improper name of the colliery officially known as 'Lady Anne', properly named after the wife of Sir John Wilson!)

FOOTNOTE: **Monklands**, a medieval parish now split into Old and New Monklands, has been the subject of more toponymic interest than many other parts of Scotland, since in the last 11 years there have been two books published on its place-names. Firstly there is Peter Drummond's own book *Placenames of The Monklands* (Monklands 1987). Secondly there is Stephen McCabe's *An Etymological Guide to the Placenames of the Monklands* (Nivelles, Belgium 1992). Anyone interested in both or either of these books, please write to the Newsletter Editor.

### SOME THOUGHTS ON PLACE-NAMES IN WEST PERTSHIRE

A. McGregor (Greg) Hutcheson, Collace, Perthshire gave a paper with this title, which included a recording of one of the last native speakers of Gaelic from Balquhiddy. The full text of his paper will appear in the next issue of *Cothrom* (no.17) entitled 'Dusan Dlòcan sa Chàrn / A Dozen Dlòcans in the Sledge' (pp11-14). In the same issue is also an article by Neil MacGregor on **Strathspey**, 'Fo Sgàil a' Chàirn Ghuirm / In the Shadow of Cairngorm' (pp.28-32), which includes much toponymic material.

Individual issues of *Cothrom* cost £3, and are available from CLI, 62 High Street, Invergordon, Ross-shire IV18 0DH Tel./Fax 01349 854848.

### THE TRUMPETERS OF BEMERSYDE:

AN OLD ENGLISH PLACE-NAME  
ELEMENT RECONSIDERED

Carole Hough, Glasgow: The place-name Bemersyde in Berwickshire is a compound of OE *bēmere*, generally taken to mean 'trumpeter', and OE *sīde* 'hillside' or 'seat' (Johnston 1934 and 1940; Williamson 1942). This paper reconsiders the range of meaning of OE *bēmere* in order to illustrate the contribution that place-names make to our knowledge of Anglo-Saxon vocabulary and the history of the language.

OE *bēmere* (West Saxon form *býmere*) also occurs as the first element of the English place-names Bemerhills, Bemerton and *Bemerehill* in Wiltshire, Bemersley in Staffordshire, and *Bemerherste* in Middlesex, and in a Wiltshire boundary marker *to bymera cumbe*. These are traditionally interpreted as 'hill of the trumpeters', 'farm of the trumpeters', 'clearing of the trumpeter', and 'valley of the trumpeters'. It would appear from this evidence that the trumpet was a popular instrument in Anglo-Saxon times, generally played out of doors. However, other sources (history, literature and archaeology) present a weight of negative evidence that makes it unlikely that these place-names refer to trumpeters in a literal sense.

As in Modern English, many Old English words were polysemous, developing extended or alternative meanings in different contexts. Whereas one meaning may be represented in literary sources, another is often preserved in toponyms. One area of vocabulary represented more fully in the place-name corpus than in the extant literature is that of the common names given to birds and animals in the Anglo-Saxon vernacular. I suggest that OE *bēmere* should be understood in a transferred sense to designate a type of bird with a trumpet-like voice. Since bird-names often combine with topographical generics, the interpretation is plausible in the place-name contexts.

The call of the male bittern is known in Modern English as a *boom*. The same word

is used of the buzzing of bees or beetles, but its etymology is unknown. I suggest that it may descend from the same origins as the homonym *boom* 'a long spar', which is related to OE *bēam* 'wood' as well as to cognates in other Germanic languages. OE *bēme* 'trumpet' is also etymologically related to OE *bēam*, used in the sense of 'something made of wood, a wooden trumpet'. A link in the chain may be provided by the use of the word *beming* to refer to the buzzing of bees in the work of the early-sixteenth-century Scots poet Douglas. There is clearly a connection between this and the use of *bum*, the Scottish equivalent of *boom*, to refer to the hum of bees in present-day usage. I suggest that the use of the word *beming* in Douglas' writing makes it possible to trace the derivation of *boom* or *bum* back to OE *bēme* 'trumpet'.

If my proposal of an etymological link with ModE *boom* is correct, OE *bēmere* may represent either a bird-name or an alternative word for a bee. Three of the place-name generics found in combination with OE *bēmere* also occur in combination with OE *bēo* 'bee' in English place-names, while other references to vallies frequented by bees occur in Beeslack, Midlothian, and Beecraigs, West Lothian (MacDonald 1941). Bemerton and Bemersyde might designate places noted for the production of honey, an interpretation supported by comparison with the Berwickshire *Milchesid* (1189), explained by Williamson (1942) as 'hillside of rich pasture, which produced a good yield of milk'.

However, I think it more likely that OE *bēmere* refers to a type of bird. OE *bēo* is well represented both in place-names and in literature, so there is no apparent reason for an alternative word for a bee to be used in toponyms. The term *rāre-dum(b)la* 'bittern', on the other hand, is recorded only rarely in Old or Middle English, mostly in glossaries, and occurs neither in English nor in Scottish place-names. A different name may therefore be postulated for demotic use. A useful research tool is *A Thesaurus of Old English* (Roberts and Kay, 1995), where the grouping of the

material by subject makes it possible to identify gaps in the known vocabulary of Old English. There are many gaps in the areas of bird- and animal-names, reflecting a bias in literary sources towards unusual and exotic creatures rather than farmyard animals and indigenous fauna. Most significantly, there is no common term for a bittern in the literary corpus of Old English. One must have existed, and it is reasonable to turn to place-name evidence in an attempt to supply the deficiency. The French loan-word *bittern* is not recorded in English before the fourteenth century, and may have replaced an OE *bēmere*, *býmere*, the etymon of ModE *boomer*, which is still in use as an alternative name for the bittern (Jackson 1968). The place-name Bemersyde, with its English cousins, may provide the link that enables this etymology to be established.

#### Note

A more detailed discussion of the English place-names referred to in this paper will appear in C. Hough, 'Place-name evidence for Old English bird-names', *Journal of the English Place-Name Society* (forthcoming, 1998).

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### **WESTER KITTOCHSIDE: THE MICROTOPYNYMY OF A LANARKSHIRE ESTATE**

Simon Taylor, St Andrews. A summary of this talk has been held over till next newsletter due to lack of space.

### **ISLE OF MULL: Placenames, Meanings and Stories**

This is the title of a new book by Society member Charles Maclean which he presented to the Conference. It is well-produced, with excellent black-and-white photographs, representing a long labour of love on the part of the author, whose family roots run deep into the Island. It claims to be a comprehensive list of all Mull place-names, both mapped and unmapped, and I defy anyone to disprove this, since it contains literally thousands of names, each one usefully provided with a 6-figure O.S. grid reference. To quote from Mr Maclean himself:

"This book contains all the mapped and many unmapped placenames throughout the Island of Mull, together with their meanings. There are also many stories of why some of these places were given their names. It consists of 170 pages, size A4, packed with these names...

It is divided into five chapters, each dealing with a different aspect of the countryside e.g. Settlement Names and Hydronymy, plus an additional chapter on unmapped names."

*ISLE OF MULL: Placenames, Meanings and Stories*, C. Maclean (Dumfries 1997). The price is £10 (+ £2.95 p. & p. in UK), obtainable from: C.D. Maclean, 34 Castledykes Road, Dumfries DG1 4SW (Tel. 01387 269843).

### **GERMANIC ELEMENTS IN SCOTTISH PLACE-NAMES**

At the day conference and AGM of the Society this year, Maggie Scott gave the following outline of her PhD at Glasgow University.

The working title for my thesis is *Germanic Elements in Scottish Place-Names*, and its aim is to examine the

contribution of Scottish place-names to the lexicon of Old English, Middle English and Old Norse.

Scholars such as Ann Cole, Carole Hough and Margaret Gelling, have shown that English place-names are a valuable source of evidence for the early history of the language. Their work has far-reaching implications for Scotland, and there is now a need for Scottish place-names to be re-interpreted in the light of their discoveries.

The surveys of individual areas of Scotland conducted by N. Dixon, A. Macdonald and M. Williamson, and more recently by S. Taylor, and the archives of the Scottish Place-Name Survey, provide much material which relates to the place-names of Scotland. I am currently extracting relevant information from these valuable resources in order to assemble a corpus of the non-Celtic vocabulary which has so far been identified in the place-names of Scotland.

The earlier studies continue to provide raw material which can be used for further research, but some of the interpretations they contain now require updating, particularly in the light of the recent work on English place-name elements. I intend to address this problem by undertaking a systematic study of the Germanic vocabulary so far identified in Scottish place-names, using the full range of comparative evidence available to elicit an up-to-date interpretation for the names. My study will be primarily concerned with the place-names of Southern Scotland, because of the linguistic stratification of this area. In the north of Scotland, many of the ON names represent areas of primary Scandinavian settlement, and therefore deserve separate consideration.

Once I have assembled the corpus of the non-Celtic vocabulary of the place-names of Scotland, I will then proceed to a detailed examination of the usage and range of meaning of each place-name term, using linguistic and topographical evidence as well as comparative material from English and Continental place-names and from literary sources.

Particular attention will be paid to the following:

- a) Terminology unattested or of low incidence in the literary corpus, for which place-name evidence is therefore of unique importance. For example, the substantive use of OE *græg*, is not recorded in the written sources but in certain place-names *græg* has been identified as meaning 'a grey animal'. This element was usually taken to mean 'badger', based on the usage of *grey* in the fifteenth century. However, in 1995, a study based on detailed analysis of the place-name evidence from England suggested that 'wolf' is a more likely interpretation of *græg* than 'badger'. OE *græg* also appears in Scottish place-names, for example Milne Graden in Coldstream parish ROX, and Scottish evidence may prove decisive in our conclusions about the range of meaning of this element.
- b) Terminology of uncertain application in English place-names, for which the Scottish evidence may prove crucial for interpretation. For example, the ON element *almenn* 'everybody' may occur in Almondbury in the West Riding of Yorkshire. However, this is far from certain. There are several Scottish names which may or may not support this interpretation, and may lead to firmer conclusions about the possible uses of *almenn* in the place-name corpus of the British Isles.
- c) Terminology unrepresented in English place-names, for which the Scottish evidence is again particularly important. For example, Fiddler's Croft in Linlithgow, West Lothian, is likely to contain OE *fipele*, which is not recorded in Smith's *English Place-Name Elements*.
- d) Terminology whose range of application in English place-names or in the literary corpus has recently been subject to revision. The studies mentioned by Cole, Gelling and others have resulted in a fundamental reassessment of the significance of a number of place-name terms; while similarly the fascicles published to date of the *Toronto Dictionary of Old English* and the *Ann Arbor Middle English Dictionary* (Kurath

and Kuhn) have identified words and meanings that were unknown to earlier scholars. In 1982 Cole examined the uses of OE *denu*, meaning 'a valley', and she concluded that *denu* was generally used to describe valleys which were long, narrow and steep-sided. It would therefore be interesting to re-examine the many occurrences of *denu* in Scottish place-names, in the light of this more specific definition.

e) Terminology recorded in place-names earlier than in the literature. In Dixon's thesis, the first element of Restalrig MLO is explained as the dialectal word *lestal* 'mire', and, if correct, its usage in this place-name predates its use in literature by four hundred years. This kind of etymological investigation can uncover a vast amount of information concerning the early history of our language, and the Scottish evidence may prove crucial for the interpretation of the elements which fall into all of these categories.

Following the conference, I received several informative and enthusiastic communications from members of the Society. Angus Watson and W. W. Gould both drew my attention to the existence of another name containing OE *fipele*, and Peter Drummond had some interesting comments to make on the subject of Scottish hill names. I would like to thank them, and other members for their valuable correspondences and encouragement, which is much appreciated by this raw postgraduate student.

**THE HISTORICAL  
THESAURUS OF ENGLISH  
AS A TOOL FOR PLACE-  
NAME RESEARCH**

Professor Christian J. Kay, Department of English Language, University of Glasgow, gave a short report on The Historical Thesaurus of English, a conceptually organised dictionary of the vocabulary of English from Old English to the modern period. Words are collected from the Oxford English Dictionary and from Anglo-Saxon dictionaries, then arranged in

semantic categories, moving from very general concepts such as Emotions or the Universe to specific ones such as individual feelings or names for parts of the landscape.

The primary purpose of the Thesaurus, started by Professor M.L. Samuels in 1965, is to supply data for historians of English interested in semantic change. However, the nearer we come to completion, the more it becomes apparent that our data will also be useful to scholars in other fields, such as Onomastics. Most obviously, the onomast in search of an etymology may find inspiration in the lists of synonyms for particular concepts which the Thesaurus contains. Thus, the user who looks up the 34 words currently listed under *Promontory, point of land* will find entries such as OE *gara, hoh, nose, and sceat*, which form part of the common word-stock of English and Scots, as well as the more familiar *ness, head and horn*. All of these words occur as place-name elements, as for instance *hoh* does in the Borders names of Kelso, Minto, Fogo and Pittlesheugh, or *sceat* in Aldershot and Bagshot. Seeing the possibilities collected together in this way may be suggestive in cases where the etymology is unclear.

As my colleague Carole Hough showed in 'The Trumpeters of Bemersyde' (see above), the link between Onomastics and Lexicography is by no means one-way. The extant corpus of OE is skewed towards literary texts; our knowledge of the everyday spoken language of the Anglo-Saxons is much more limited. This deficiency can sometimes be remedied by onomastic evidence, since place-names are likely to derive from colloquial language. Thus to our list of OE words under *Hill* we were able to add words such as *canc, clacc, clop, cnyll, pamp* and *peac* on the basis of place-name evidence.

A separate thesaurus of OE has already been published, and is particularly relevant to those working on the Germanic place-names of Scotland. Fruitful sections for onomastic research include plant and animal names, farming, dwellings, and the supernatural. Although the parent project

will not be completed until after 2000, we are always willing to supply scholars with available data in either electronic or paper format. A list of categories and further information can be found on our Web site, <http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/EngLang/thesaur/homepage.htm>.

Jane Roberts and Christian Kay with Lynne Grundy, *A Thesaurus of Old English*, King's College London Medieval Studies XI, 1995, 2 vols., xxxv + 1555, ISBN 0 952211904.

### BEARSDEN TO CALIFORNIA, VIA EUROCENTRAL!

Under this 'geographically challenged' title, Glasgow-based SPNSociety member Andrew Currie made a short report on an aspect of the toponymic work he has been doing over the years. Given the focus and locus of this conference, he took a broad sweep through the heavily urbanized heartland of West-Central Scotland, peeling back the post-industrial mask to illustrate some typical etymological complexities of the many modern place names of this region.

From his professional cartographic background he likened this group of youngest names to the uppermost typographic layer of a map, and thus having the ease of access and familiarity of contemporary language. However his recent research has emphasized the importance of not making light of our 'modern names' but applying a full painstaking scrutiny.

To support his contention, he cited such examples as: **Bearsd**en originating as a whimsical reference to an 18<sup>th</sup>-c. boyhood lair, transferring to a local gamekeeper's cottage, and then only in 1863 adopted by a nearby new railway station that eventually through common usage was to label the growing suburb; **Clydebank** with three earlier 19<sup>th</sup>-c. Clydeside locations/functions before its current domain; **Mountblow**, like **Mount Vernon**, having 18<sup>th</sup>-c. 'tobacco lord' origins; **Anniesland** first mapped in 1791 but still obscure; **Maryhill** the 18<sup>th</sup>-c.

of Scottish maps and map-making, in addition to lists of maps ranging from early agricultural maps to railway maps. This 120-page volume also contained two brief chapters by John Mathieson on early surveying and the work of the Ordnance Survey in Scotland.

As a result of this publication details of additional maps were received and a second edition was published in 1936 by the RSGS. The work was further revised and extended with the inclusion of '*A History of Scottish Maps*' by the Society's Secretary Donald Moir. This was published as two volumes in 1973 and 1983.

An invaluable resource for those using maps in search of place-names, the third edition also notes the libraries where these maps can be found.

*Copies of The Early Maps of Scotland in 2 volumes (1973 & 1983) can be obtained from the RSGS, 40 George St., Glasgow G1 1QE. Cost £15 for the pair, including p. & p.*

### FIELD-NAMES AND ESTATE PLANS

Estate plans of the 18th and 19th century are an invaluable tool in our understanding of the evolution of the Scottish countryside, and a rich source of place-names, many of which became obsolete in this period of intensive agricultural change. An excellent introduction to these estate plans is the following article by B.M.W. Third: 'The Significance of Scottish Estate Plans and Associated Documents', *Scottish Studies* 1 (1957), 39-64.

### NOTES FROM THE SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME SURVEY

*In the second of these columns, Ian Fraser Director of the Survey, writes: Over the years, the Survey has accumulated a number of collections from members of the public who have worked in various parts of Scotland. Many of these have involved a great deal of research, mostly covering small areas, or even*

individual parishes. It is often the case that these researchers have access to specialised information in the form of manuscript collections in local libraries, and a number of them have included place-names gleaned from local informants, such as farmers, fishermen and others who are closely involved with the land and the coast. This is a small selection of these collections held by the Survey:

1 The Field Names of the former parish of **Melrose**, arranged by John Gilbert. This was completed by members of the Melrose Historical Association in 1980-83, and covers 51 forms. Sources for early forms of the farm-names include the cartulary of Melrose Abbey (*Melrose Liber*) and the Records of the Regality of Melrose (*Melrose Recs.*)

2 The Field Names of the parish of **Cockburnspath** BWK, by Gail Christey. This is a typed MS of 95pp., and includes transcriptions of tape recordings made from informants on names in the parish (1987.) An O.S. 1:25,000 map is included.

3 A Study of some of the Place-Names in the **Caddon Valley** SLK, by Iona MacCuish. This was a student vacation project completed in 1980, and consists of settlement names, topographic names, and a number of stories relating to names in the area, such as Moses' Well and Merlin's Cleugh.

4 Ainmean-Aite ann am Baranachd **Bhaile nan ceard** (Place-Names in the Barony of **Balnaguard** PER) by Sylvia M Robertson. This is unusual in that it is a project written in Gaelic, for the Certificate of Sixth Year Studies. Perthshire is not particularly well covered by place-name studies, and this was a nice collection of local names, backed up by recordings from informants, and including 6" O.S. map copies, as well as a copy of a 1755 plan of the area from the Charter Room of Blair Castle. In longhand, with xeroxed map copies.

5 A Collection of Field Names and Minor Names from **East Lothian** by David Sydeserff, 1996-98. This is a massive piece of careful investigation, listing field-names



from a wide variety of sources, including Sasines, 18th- and 19th-century maps and plans, and contemporary newspaper sources. Includes material on Haddington street-names, 'lost' names, duplicated names and much more. In longhand, with many farm plans in line drawings.

To consult any of the above, please contact Ian Fraser at the School of Scottish Studies, 27 George Square, Edinburgh University, EH8 9LD or phone him on 0131 650 4162/4161.

### SOME RECENT PUBLISHED WORK ON PLACE NAMES

*Ian Fraser writes:*

Jeffrey C Stone: 'Robert Gordon and the Making of the First Atlas of Scotland', *Northern Scotland* 18 (1998), 15-29. This article, by an acknowledged expert on Pont, Blaeu and Gordon, discusses Robert Gordon of Straloch and his role in the preparation of maps for J. Blaeu's *Atlas Novus* (1654.) While not directly an onomastic article, it is nevertheless important to our understanding of the development of the first atlas of Scotland, and contains much toponymic discussion.

David Dorward, *Dundee: Names, People and Places* Mercat Press (53 South Bridge, Edinburgh), Paperback, 164pp, £9.99. The author, a Dundonian, and a member of the Society, has produced a very readable book on the nomenclature of the city, both place- and personal-names, ranging from Abertay and Airlie to Wellgate and Wishart. The format is alphabetical and discursive, with much historical information and source material quoted in the text. It's a pity it lacks a bibliography as such, and there is no locational map apart from a reproduction of William Crawford's stylish and attractive plan of the city (1793.) These criticisms apart, Dorward's usual racy and informative narrative will make this a sure-fire success in the bookshops.

NOTE ALSO:

C. Maclean, *Isle of Mull: Placenames, Meanings and Stories*, (Dumfries 1997). See above pp.4-5.

K. Forsyth, 1998, *Language in Pictland* Stichting Uitgeverij de Keltische Draak, Postbus 2726, 3500 GS Utrecht, Netherlands. ISBN 90-802785-5-6. Paperback, pp. 48 + 4 colour plates, £7.40. Important book on early language in Scotland. Available also from Pinkfoot Press, Balgavies, Forfar, Angus DD8 2TH + 60 p. for p. & p.

### OLD SCATNESS AND ITS BROCH: SHETLAND

*Doreen Waugh writes:* A very exciting archaeological excavation has been in progress at Old Scatness, Sumburgh, Shetland since 1995 when Shetland Amenity Trust organised purchase of the broch site and developed the Old Scatness Project in partnership with the Department of Archaeological Sciences, Bradford University. The edge of the broch had been exposed in 1975 during the construction of a new airport road but it was not until after first stage of excavation that the real importance of the site became evident. As James Moncrieff of Shetland Amenity Trust says: 'In effect, the site is a chance time capsule combining an exceptionally high degree of preservation of artefact survival. The broch stands 4-5 metres high, but it is the emerging Iron-Age village which sets Old Scatness apart.' (1) For more on the archaeology of the site, see *Old Scatness Broch, Shetland: Retrospect and Prospect*, which tells the story so far.

Part of the Amenity Trust's vision for the future is to 'maximise public benefit and appreciation of the site and its context within the landscape.' (2) As part of this process, I have been asked to undertake a detailed study of place names in the vicinity of the site over the course of the next 3 years. Place names, unfortunately, do not extend back to the period of the brochs or the Iron Age: the earliest names probably date from the Viking period and confirmation of the presence of Vikings comes from artefactual evidence on the site. Place names do, however, have a great deal to convey about life in the environs of Old Scatness from the Viking period up to the present century and, this year, I have

interviewed several local informants who have provided background information on the names. I have also spent some time in the Shetland Archives where, as always, local archivist Brian Smith was able to point to useful documentary sources with some early name-forms. A great deal of work is yet to be done, but I am very pleased to have the opportunity to be involved in this major multi-disciplinary undertaking and I look forward to being in Shetland again next summer.

<sup>1</sup> Moncrieff, James (1998) *Old Scatness: The Vision for the Future. Old Scatness Broch, Shetland: Retrospect and Prospect*. University of Bradford/Shetland Amenity Trust, North Atlantic Biocultural Organisation, p. 44-45.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* p.47.

### TRIBUTE

**James MacIntyre Gunn**, who died on 9th May, 1998, was born in the village of Reay, Caithness in 1929. The family spent some years in Latheron, south Caithness, but returned to Reay in 1946, where Jimmy spent the rest of his life. He had a fund of information about many aspects of the history of **Reay**, but it is for his deep knowledge of local place names that I shall remember him. I spent many hours in his company discussing the land he knew so well and I was pleased to be able to assist, in the year before his death, with the place-name section of a compilation entitled '**A Northern Study**', available from The Northern Studies Centre in Halkirk, Caithness. The book is a memorial to a kind man who was always willing to share his extensive local knowledge. He will be greatly missed

Doreen Waugh

### *WHAT'S ON around Scotland?*

- **PERTH**

**7 November:** Scottish Place-Name Society Day Conference. See separate Registration form attached.

- **ST ANDREWS**

**13 February 1999:** *Picts, Kings and Chronicles*: a day-conference in honour of Dr Marjorie O. Anderson, on the occasion of her 90th birthday. Speakers will include GWS Barrow, David Dumville, Archie Duncan, Máire Herbert, and Richard Sharpe. For more details contact the School of History, St Katherine's Lodge, University, St Andrews KY16 9AL.

- **SHETLAND**

'Oral History, Names and Dialect in Shetland'. This course will be held in Lerwick on the following dates in 1999: 20 February, 17 April, 6 March, 20 March and 8 May, 1999. The course tutor is Dr Doreen Waugh and further information about the course is available from the University of Aberdeen, Centre for Continuing Education.

**PLEASE LET THE EDITOR KNOW ABOUT ANY TALK OR OTHER EVENT WHICH WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO THE MEMBERSHIP.**

*Please note that back copies of Scottish Place-Name News are available from the Society for £1.50 (which includes p. & p.). Issue no.2 contains a Directory of Members, with their interests and publications, up-dated in issue no.3. A further up-date will appear in the next issue, withheld this issue due to*

*lack of space.*

Dead-line for material for  
next Newsletter:  
20 January 1999