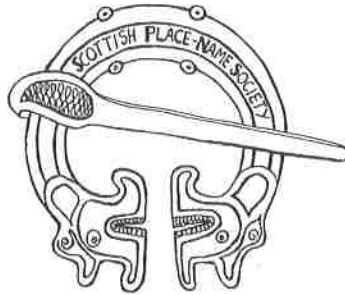


SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME NEWS

No. 12

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The Newsletter of the

SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME SOCIETY
COMANN AINMEAN-AITE NA H-ALBA



To illustrate our Aviemore conference with its "mountain" theme:

Garbh Bheinn, Ardgour.

Gaelic, rough moutain - a very precise description - and a concept echoed in the Alps'

Wildhorn, Wildstrubel, etc.

(Photo: Peter Drummond)

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EDITORIAL

The news that our AHRB application for funding for the Scottish Place-Names Database has been unsuccessful comes as a disappointment to those of us who are working in name studies. The current state of the discipline is one which members of the Society find highly frustrating, since the Scottish Place-Name Survey in the School of Scottish Studies (now the Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies of the University of Edinburgh) remains without a full-time post, following your Editor's retirement, though he continues to be an Honorary Fellow. The survey has been supported by the University of Edinburgh since the 1950s. It has shared the fruits of toponymic research with the wider public and has an important archive of place-name data, in text and on tape. Unfortunately, these splendid resources are now underexploited.

What can be done to rectify this situation? One of the possibilities is to approach the Scottish Parliament, by raising the profile of Scottish name studies among our parliamentary representatives, and demonstrating the clear need for government funding. After all, states like Norway, Denmark, Finland and Ireland, with populations similar to those of Scotland, have succeeded in funding their Place-Name Surveys adequately, and

sometimes generously. There is no reason why Scotland, with its resources and widespread interest in the subject, should not do the same. We may now have a unique opportunity to approach government with a viable package which could have an exciting spin-off in tourism, the "heritage" industries, schools and colleges, local government and many other sectors.

All this, however, requires effort and commitment. The Committee of the SPNS has since its inception been composed largely of people who have full-time jobs in fields other than name studies, and their work in connection with the Society has been carried out very much on a voluntary basis. The process of creating the right conditions for attracting such funding must be time-consuming, and will require the full support of the membership. It is important that our approach is non-political, and is seen to be so, not only by our members, but by the wider public. We therefore would be delighted to hear from you if you feel you have the time and expertise to further our efforts. The next twelve months could well be crucial to onomastics in Scotland.

We should not forget, however, that the Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies in the University of Edinburgh remains fully committed to support of the Scottish Place-Names Survey, and the senior staff, Professor William Gillies, Professor Donald Meek and Dr Margaret Mackay are continuing to press for advancement of the subject.

I.A.F

PLACE-NAMES GET POLITICAL

Simon Taylor writes: On 12 November 2001 the following question was put in the Scottish Parliament by Michael Russell MSP (SNP Shadow Minister for Children and Education) to Allan Wilson, then Deputy Minister for Sport, Culture and the Arts:

Index Heading: Education Department.

Research Funding

Michael Russell (South of Scotland) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Executive what action it is taking to prevent any cutback to the activity of the Scottish Place-Names Survey at Edinburgh University which may result from the current financial position of the survey. (S1W-19108)

Allan Wilson: The funding of the Scottish Place-Names Survey is a matter for the University of Edinburgh.

When this was brought to my attention I wrote to Mike Russell thanking him for bringing the matter up in the Scottish Parliament, informing him about the Scottish Place-Name Society, as well as mentioning the proposed Institute for the Languages of Scotland. I received a reply from him dated 29 November reiterating his concern about the uncertainty of the Scottish Place-Name Survey's long-term funding, and about the apparently complete lack of interest in the subject by the (by this time former) Minister. Russell had written to him, but is still awaiting a reply from the new Minister for Sport, Culture and the Arts, Lord Watson. Russell had also taken up the matter with Lord Sutherland, Principal of Edinburgh University, who indicated some concern at the Executive's view that it does not need direct funding, even for a project of this national importance, and despite the different attitude taken by the Governments of other countries.

The situation regarding Scottish Place-Names has deteriorated even further since Mike Russell's parliamentary question, as at the beginning of December 2001 it was learnt that the School of Scottish Studies (now the Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies) Arts and Humanities Research Board Resource Enhancement grant for the next phase of the Scottish Place-Name Database, to be based at the Scottish Place-Name Survey, had been unsuccessful. This would have at least ensured concentrated place-name research and development activity by two full-time researchers for the next three years. As it is, there is now no one employed to run

the Survey, although Ian Fraser, as an Honorary Fellow of the new Department, is continuing on a part-time, unpaid basis to hold the fort.

On 12 February Dr Dauvit Broun, Department of Scottish History, Glasgow University, Dr Margaret Mackay, Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies, Edinburgh University, and myself met with Mike Russell and his Parliamentary Assistant Alasdair Allan, to discuss the possibility of a campaign to draw attention to the woeful state of place-name studies in Scotland, both in absolute terms and in comparison with almost every other country in northern Europe. Watch this space for more information.

On a more personal note, Simon Taylor writes: This coming May I will not be standing for re-election to the SPNSoc. Committee. I have been on the Committee since the Society was founded in February 1996, and I know that if I do not step down now I will end up getting over-involved in this next phase (a phase which I think is very exciting and could be a real turning point in Scottish toponymics). But it needs the kind of commitment, and energy, that I know that I can no longer give. I have to finish two major projects which have been hanging over me for far too long, and I want to use this period of unemployment to get on with them, not to become involved in a major political campaign. One of these projects is the writing of a two (or even three!) volume work on the place-names of Fife, so it is not as if I am turning my back on toponymics. It is just that I have reached a point where I have to change the nature of my contribution to the subject. This will also mean that I will not be available for answering place-name queries, and that I will be cutting back drastically on my talks.

AVIEMORE CONFERENCE NOV. 2001

Simon Taylor and Pete Drummond write: 80 people attended the Scottish Place-Name Society Day Conference in the Aviemore Highlands Hotel, Aviemore, on

Saturday 10 November. Despite the Highland venue, and some wintry weather on the previous Thursday, which had closed the Drumochter Pass for a time, it was in fact one of the best attended since the first SPNSociety conference, held in St Andrews in May 1996. The theme was, appropriately enough for Aviemore, hill- and mountain-names. The scene was set by Dr **Seamas Grannd**, Department of Celtic, University of Aberdeen, a native of the area, who has done extensive place-name collecting from native Gaelic speakers of Strathspey and Badenoch. His paper, entitled **Some Place-names of the Northern Cairngorms**, began in the hills: *Am Monadh Ruadh*, known in English misleadingly as the Cairngorms - Cairngorm (*Càrn Gorm*) is the name of only one of the many summits in this massif - *Am Monadh Liath*, and *Am Monadh Gàidhig*, which name is better known in Scots and Scottish English as Minnygaig, as in the Minnygaig Pass, between Glen Tromie and Glen Bruar. He finished up in the new hotel complex at Aviemore, right outside the window of the conference room, stripping off the overlying trappings of Scotland's San Mauritz to reveal a Gaelic toponymy such as *Am Rèidh Fada* ('the long flat'), where the big car-park (formerly the ice-rink) now lies, *Cnoc na Ceàrdaich* ('knowe of the smiddy'), or *Uchd an t-Sithein* ('brae, literally breast, of the fairy hill'). By the river lay *An Dail Shuas* and *An Dail Shìos*, literally the upper and the lower haugh or water-meadow, but, as so often in eastern Gaelic, 'west haugh' and 'east haugh' respectively. He also spoke of the two distinct historical divisions of the area around Aviemore: Strathspey and Badenoch, the former being Grant country, the latter Clan Chattan, including the MacPhersons and the Mackintoshes; and each having its own distinct Gaelic. The boundary between the two ran immediately south of Aviemore, through a hollow known as *Slag na Caillich* ('hollow of the old woman', with *slag* being a local variant of *lag* 'hollow'). The place-name story connected with this name, found elsewhere in the Gaelic world, is that to settle a long-running boundary dispute between Strathspey and

Badenoch, two old women set off from each end of the respective territories, with the general agreement that where they met the boundary would be fixed: and they met in *Slag na Caillich*!

The next paper was by **Ian Mitchell**, author of *Scotland's Mountains before the Mountaineers* (Edinburgh 1998). Entitled **Scotland's mountain names – the view from Pont**, he examined representative examples of Pont's depiction and naming of some of the 350 hills to be found in Pont's manuscript maps. More details of this, and the few earlier references to Highland hills in Scots sources before Pont, can be found in Mitchell's chapter 'Pont and Scotland's Mountains' in the recently published and finely illustrated *The Nation Survey'd: Timothy Pont's Maps of Scotland*, ed. I. C. Cunningham (East Linton, 2001), pp. 93-110.

The third paper was given by one of England's leading toponymists, Dr **Margaret Gelling**, who, apart from all her other scholarly achievements, has more than anyone else got place-name scholars out of the library and into the landscape. The theme of her paper was that the topographic vocabulary of the early Anglo-Saxon settlers was highly nuanced and exact, and conveyed information not only about height and shape, for example, but also about potential for settlement and exploitation. The research which she and her colleague Anne Cole have carried out, and continue to carry out, in England should be an inspiration and a guiding light to everyone working in toponymics, since there is no suggestion that the Anglo-Saxons were unique in this precise usage of topographic terminology. A summary of her views, with several of the elements which she spoke about at the Aviemore conference, can be found in her chapter 'Place-Names and Landscape', illustrated by Anne Cole, in *The Uses of Place-Names* (ed. S. Taylor, Edinburgh, 1998), 75-100. A much more wide-ranging treatment can be found in Gelling and Cole's book *The Landscape of Place-Names* (Stamford, 2000).

The next paper was given by **Peter Drummond**, author of *Scottish Hill and Mountain Names* (Scottish Mountaineering Trust, 1991), entitled **Scottish Mountain Names – the European Connection**. His talk focussed on the European connections of Scottish mountain names. Its core was the substance of an article in *Scottish Place-Name News* no. 8 (Spring 2000), in turn a very condensed version of articles in the Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal (*Scottish Mountaineering Club Journals* nos 187-190, for 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 - 'Scottish Hill-names - the Scandinavian/Irish / English / Outer Mongolian Connection' respectively). He looked at examples of mountain elements from Norse (eg *ffall*, which fathered *fell*), Irish (eg *beinn*, a minor Irish hill-word that made it big in Alba) and Scots (eg *law*, which began as an Old English word for a burial mound but in Scotland means a big conical hill). He preceded this core with looking at how Robertson in 1869, W J Watson in 1916 (printed in his *History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland*, 1926), and W. F. H. Nicolaisen in 1976 (in his *Scottish Place-Names* revised edition 2001) had dealt with hill-names and the European connection. Robertson had devoted 25% of his book to hill-names, but denied any Eurolinks, even Irish! Watson, the great Gaelic scholar, had recognised the Irish connection but also devoted a lot of space to *monadh*, a word in which he saw links to Breton and beyond in Europe. Nicolaisen recognises the impact of the three Euro-languages on names, but his book does not say much n hill-names bar *sliabh*.

Pete finished by displaying a table showing just how many Euro-languages seem to have cognates for the Gaelic hill-words *torr*, *maol* and *meall*, *monadh* and *braigh*. He also left the audience considering possible links with Mongolian *khrebet* with the Scots Crib Laws and Gaelic Groban and Cruben hill-names - via other languages' *hreiben* (Slovak), *greben* (German), *grepon* (French), *kreben* (Breton) and *crib* (Welsh).

Scottish Hill and Mountain Names is available at £9.95 from any good bookseller, or from the author at same price (p&p incl.) from Apt 8, Gartsherne Academy, Academy Place, Coatbridge ML5 3AX

The final paper of the conference was Simon Taylor's **Sliabh/Slew in Scottish hill-names: a re-assessment**. The element *sliabh* is found in both Scottish and Irish Gaelic, with a wide variety of interconnecting meanings from a range of high hills, via mountain and upland moor to a species of hill-grass (in the Gaelic of Wester Ross, at least). Of all Scottish hill-name elements it is the most oft-quoted and overworked by historians and archaeologists. It owes its importance chiefly to the pioneering work of Professor W. F. H. Nicolaisen in the 1960s, since when no original work has been done on it. Because there seemed to be so few names with this element in eastern Scotland, Nicolaisen concluded that it belonged to a very early phase of Dalriadic settlement. The dense cluster of *sliabh*-names in Galloway, especially in the Rhinns of Galloway, led him to conclude that there was a pre-Norse stratum of Gaelic-speakers in that area. There was also the added point that *sliabh* seemed to mean 'moor' in Scottish Gaelic, as opposed to 'hill or mountain' in Irish, a meaning it seemed to have in the Rhinns as well, showing a closer affinity with Irish usage.

Taylor made four points:

- that there are far more *sliabh*-names in eastern Scotland than has hitherto been recognised, where it tends to refer to land over 250 metres;
- that in fact the dominant meaning of this element in Scotland, including the Rhinns, was in fact 'moor', 'upland', 'uninhabitable land', which was also one of the meanings of this element in Ireland;
- that it is so concentrated in the Rhinns of Galloway (as well as in western Argyll) because of the emergence of an Irish-sea language community in the later middle ages, strongly

influenced by Irish usage, in which *sliabh* was so common (around 100 place-names in the 6 counties, with the majority in Down, Antrim, Derry and Tyrone);

- (tentatively), the reason why it was a relatively rare place-naming element in central and eastern Scotland, was that it did not have a recognisable Pictish cognate, unlike other more common hill and topographical terms such as *beinn*, *creag*, *carn*, *strath*, all of which have obvious cognates in Welsh, and therefore probably in Pictish, and all of which are so dominant in Scottish toponymy.

He therefore disputed the fact that *sliabh* was only coined in the very early period of Gaelic settlement in Scotland, and so could be used as evidence for a pre-Norse (i.e. pre c. 800) settlement of Gaelic-speakers in the Rhinns of Galloway. This cluster of *sliabh*-names was probably created a considerable time later.

Simon Taylor would like to thank all those who after the Conference brought to his attention other Scottish sliabh-names which he had not known about. This was much appreciated, and will be fully acknowledged in any resulting publication.

FARM BOUNDARIES

Simon Taylor writes: RHP75001-79488 is a large and important collection in West Register House (Charlotte Square, Edinburgh). It is a series of OS 6 inch maps with the boundaries of all farms and estates clearly marked, as well as, in many cases, the quality and type of land. It covers most if not all of lowland Scotland. To quote from the pre-ambles in the WRH index: "The origins of the land classification maps and the farm boundary/types of farming maps lie in the rigorous requirement of World War 2, which precipitated the growth of agricultural planning." It was begun in 1944 and completed in 1951, though work continued on it up till 1954. Given the importance for toponymics of defining as

closely as possible the medieval boundaries of land-settlement units (as well as of land classification and potential), and given the basic conservatism of estate boundaries, this collection of maps is of great value to all aspects of settlement history and the study of place-name origin and development.

LINSHADER

*The following poem comes from a short cycle of poems by Stuart Kermack called **Linshader: Township in Transition**, published this year by Pinkfoot Press, Balgavies, Forfar DD8 2TH, price £1 including p & p. The cycle celebrates different aspects of the township in different verse forms: Geological (haiku), Meteorological (tanka), Ornithological, Onomastical (Spenserian sonnet) and Municipal.*

Onomastical

Línsetr, in Old Norse 'the Farm of Flax', and **Grímsstaðir**, grim 'Grímr's Stead', were reft
of land and language by grain-growing
Macs,
cow-boys, who had no place for linen-
weft.

Tob Collavig's bilingual, un-infeft
black-houses' ruined walls are standing
still;
Macaulay was so greedy people left
his lazy-beds just lying on the hill.

Na Muilne is in Gaelic 'of the Mill'
which Matheson dismantled for his
multure.

Co-OPerative crofting filled the bill,
Safeways are needed now into the future
in supermarket speak: for every week
Kinhoulavig heads through the hills and
up the creek.

Notes (by Stuart Kermack and Simon Taylor)

Linshader, part of Grimersta estate, Uig, among the low, round, wind-swept gneiss hills on the west coast of the island of Lewis, has always been in transition. There are ruins of black-houses (or

thatched houses) beside the bay of Tob Collavig, but in the 19th century Sir James Matheson destroyed the mill beside the fresh-water Loch na Muilne and the cottars were so oppressed by the labour that was demanded of them by his tenant that they all left in a body. In 1924 the farm was divided into crofts lying along the shore of Loch Kinhoulavig at the south end of East Loch Roag, but they are now barely economical.

In 1 Linshader, Gaelic *Linsiadar* or *Liseadair* (with nasalised *i*; see Watson 1904, 270), ultimately from Old Norse *lin* 'linen, flax' + *setr* 'farm'.

In 2 The generic element in Grimersta is from Old Norse *staðir* 'farm, settlement'. The first element is no doubt the Old Norse personal name, nominative Grímr, genitive Gríms.

In 5 Tòb is Gaelic An t-Òb 'the bay', òb 'bay' being a loan-word from Old Norse *hop(r)* 'bay, inlet', which also gives the Scots *hope* 'bay'.

In 14 Collavig has developed from the original Norse name for the deep inlet, the innermost part of which is called Loch Kinhoulavig (Ceann Chollavig). Both *loch* and *ceann* ('head, end') are Gaelic. Collavik itself would seem to be made up of Old Norse *kollr* 'rounded hill', and *vík* 'bay, creek'.

Stuart Kermack

References: Watson, W.J. 1904, *Place-Names of Ross and Cromarty* (Inverness; reprinted in paperback 1996 by Highland Heritage Books, Evanton).

WHAT'S ON around Scotland?

• **ANGUS**

22 March: 'Place-Names of the Angus Glens', David Dorward, Pictavia and the Pictish Arts Society, **7.30 pm, Brechin Castle Centre, Brechin.** More details from Craig Lafferty, Angus Council 01307 461460.

• **ARGYLL**

25 April: 'The Place-Names of Cowal', Simon Taylor, Dunoon and Cowal Heritage Society: **7.30 pm, The Red Cross Centre, George Street, Dunoon.**

• **EDINBURGH**

24 April: 'Scottish Place-Names: Planning the Linguistic Landscape', Davyth Hicks, **4.15 pm, Celtic Department, George Square, University of Edinburgh.** This talk will discuss issues affecting place names and signage and the need for policy and planning.

• **FIFE**

21 March: 'Place-Names of Dunfermline', Simon Taylor, Dunfermline Historical Society, **7.30 pm, City Hotel, Bridge St., Dunfermline.**

• **INVERNESS-SHIRE**

29 May: 'Place-Names of Kilmorack parish', Simon Taylor. Kilmorack Heritage Association, **7.30 pm, Church of Scotland Hall, Croyard Road, Beaulay.**

30 May: 'Place-Names of Kiltarlity and Convinth parish', Simon Taylor. Kiltarlity Community Council, **7.30 pm, Community Hall, Allarburn, Kiltarlity.**

• **PERTHSHIRE**

2 May: 'Pont in the Atholl Landscape', John Kerr, **7.30 pm, A. K. Bell Library, Perth.** By combining contrasting slides of Pont manuscript maps along with maps of later cartographers and modern photographs, the speaker will show mountains, rivers and settlements featured by Pont, highlighting changes and developments over the past 400 years.

This talk co-incides with the opening at the Library of **MAPPING THE REALM**, a touring exhibition organised by the National Library of Scotland which explores the

importance of Timothy Pont in the history of the mapping of Scotland. The exhibition will be open for viewing from 6.30 pm on the evening of the talk.

HOW MANY PIT- PLACE NAMES WERE THERE?

We would like to know how many *Pit*-place names appear in charters. An estimate of this number can be found using a simple statistical argument. Three things are needed: (i) a count of the *Pit*-place names on current maps; (ii) a count of the *Pit*-place names appearing in a representative sample of charters; and (iii) a count of how many *Pit*-place names from the charters still survive on current maps (the intersection of (i) and (ii)).

The statistical argument

On current OS Landranger maps there are 246 *Pit*-place names. What fraction is this of all historical *Pit*-names? We arrive at an indirect answer by finding the fraction of surviving *Pit*-names that appear in royal charters, specifically the charters contained in *The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland*, covering the period AD1306 to AD1668. It turns out that there are 300 *Pit*-names mentioned in these charters, but only 196 of them appear on current OS maps as current *Pit*-place names. The proportion of *Pit*-names from the *Register* surviving to OS maps is therefore $196/300 = 0.6533$ or nearly two thirds. If we may regard appearance on OS maps as being statistically unrelated to the appearance of a *Pit*-name in the charters, then we may argue that the 246 *Pit*-place names on current OS Landranger maps represent about two thirds of all *Pit*-names, implying an original total number of *Pit*-place names of $246/0.6533 = 377$ approximately.

How many *Pit*-names are false?

Needless to say, there are many difficulties with the above argument, but we will mention here just one - the difficulty in deciding if a *Pit*-place name is genuine or false. Simon Taylor

(Appendix 1 in *Nomina* 20) says that both *Pitfoddels* and *Pitdelphin* are false. Both appeared first in the charters with the prefix *Bad-* (*Badfothel* and *Badelphin* respectively), and only much later changed prefix from *Bad-* to *Pit-*. Despite this, I have included these two and many other potentially false *Pit*-names. In so far as I have consistently included false *Pit*-names, the estimate of 377 is an over-estimate and should be revised downwards. It would be a relatively simple matter to re-calculate all the above figures using only true *Pit*-place names.

Genetic Element Variation

However, Simon Taylor has raised another difficulty, which is a bit harder to deal with, that some *Pit*-names are subject to what he calls "Generic Element Variation". To illustrate this particular problem, consider the three modern placenames *Balcalk* (NO3939), *Balkello* (NO3638) and *Balkembak* (NO3938). The three are close to *Tealing* (NO4138), and indeed all three were at one time in the barony of *Tealing*. The names of these places, as recorded in the *Register of the Great Seal* and the *Retours*, show much variation.

Petkemmok / *Balkembak*

Superficially, *Balkembak*'s name appears to have changed at least five times: *Petcammo* (1513), *Balkemmak* (1557), *Petkemmok* (1561), *Pockemmo* (1583), *Polkembik* (1611) and *Balkembak* (modern). How many places are we talking about here? Is the answer five or, as Simon Taylor suggests, two? Basically, there appear to be two main variants within the time-span of *The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland* and the *Retours*: the prefix *Pet-* is used before about 1600, and *Pol-* between 1600 and 1700. The one exception to this is *Balkemmak* in a charter of 1577.

Balcalk

Balcalk was known as *Powcak* or *Polcak* until about 1700. The one exception is *Balcak* and it is noteworthy that this exception occurs in the same charter as the exceptional case for *Balkembak*.

Balkello

Balkello (and variants) appears at least 20 times in the charters. In 15 cases, the prefix is either *Bal-* or *Bo-*. Four of the five exceptions involve charters dealing with all three placenames *Balcalk*, *Balkello* and *Balkemback*, but giving all three the prefix *Po-*: for example *Polcak*, *Polkello* and *Pockemmo* in a charter of 1583. The fifth exception is a charter of 1561 in which *Balkello* and *Balkemback* are both given the prefix *Pet-* (*Pethallo* and *Petkemmok*).

The exceptions prove the rule

A pattern is easily spotted for these exceptions: **when there is an exceptional case in the charter, all three placenames have the same prefix.** In other words, the mistakes are only made when the same prefix is used for all three places.

Thus, the exceptions prove the rule: there is a tendency for these placenames to be given the same prefix, even when the true placenames have different prefixes. This is explicable in terms of confusion of sounds, for example as might be expected when an informant is a native Gaelic speaker and the scribe is a native Scots speaker. Even though the informant knows the difference between *Pol-*, *Bal-* and *Pit-*, the scribe may not be able to distinguish the sounds sufficiently, and renders all three in a single form.

Identifying variants

It is not always easy to identify places mentioned in the charters, let alone differentiate between variants. Apart from anything else, it appears that one piece of ground may be owned simultaneously by several people. Also, these people may use their own variants to describe the same place. Another difficulty, for me at any rate, is that the earlier charters are almost always written in Latin, and this is not a language with which I am familiar. Nor is my legal training up to the task. Though I have tried to make sense of the charters, I do not know exactly what is being described in many cases. For example, in 1612 when Thome Ogilvie gives his wife "**quartem partem villa et terrarum de Balkello**" does he give a specific

quartem partem of the **villa et terrarum de Balkello**, or does he transfer a **quartem partem** of the feudal income? The latter seems more likely, but the former would tend to create new placenames like *South Balkello*. Whichever applies, it seems to me that all fractions are fractions of the same whole, so that the names *Bokello*, *Balkello*, *Pethallo*, *Polkello*, *Balkillo* all refer to the same place (the last vestige of which is now called *Old Balkello*).

False Pit- names again

Approximately 10% of all *Pit-* names involve potential confusion with the prefix *Bal-*, but this is hard to measure exactly. Some instances are more likely to be false, like *Pitfoddels*, though even here we can never be certain. The name *Pethallo* has a very short life and is probably (but not certainly) a false *Pit-* place name, owing its existence to the similarity in sound of the prefixes *Bal-* and *Pet-*, and to the fact that it had a neighbour with a *Pit-* name (*Petkemmok*). On the other hand, three of the first four versions of *Petkemmok* have prefix *Pet-*, making this a likely (but not a certain) true *Pit-* name.

The first change from Pit- to Bal-

It is Nicolaisen's belief (*Scottish Place Names*) that "there is no recorded instance of a *Pit*-name being changed to a *Bal*-name between, let us say, the 12th and 18th centuries". Certainly, the phenomenon is very rare. Up to 1668 (the date of the last charter in *The Register*), there appear to be only two cases. *Petcammo* changed to *Balkemmak* in 1557, though only temporarily. The other case is *Petquhro* 1482 which changed to *Balnachroan* in 1642, the modern name being *Ballachroan*. The rest of the twenty or so *Pit-* to *Bal-* changes occur some time after 1668, and are mostly in Fife, Perth and Angus. On account of Nicolaisen's rule, it is even less likely that *Pethallo* is a true *Pit-* name, as that would require a change from *Pit-* to *Bal-* some time before 1472 (the date of the first instance of *Balkello* in *The Register of the Great Seal*).

Can you do any better?

It is not possible to be dogmatic about *Pit*-place names, so the reader may take much

of the above as very speculative until confirmed by competent authority. Indeed, readers well versed in Latin/Gaelic/Scots/Law would probably prefer to reach their own conclusions independently. The present author has assembled a Microsoft Access database pertaining to *Pit-* names, containing about two thousand extracts from *The Register of the Great Seal* and the *Retours*, along with geographic locations, OS coordinates of *Pit-* and *Bal-* names, and other related information. If anyone is interested in re-interpreting these charters, and is able to use Microsoft Access, he or she should contact the author for a copy of the database.

Bob Henery
7 March 2002

POSTBAG

Sir

HAG-STAG

I found the entry on Haggis Gap and Hoghouse interesting, because in Angus circa 1940-50 at least, the word "HAG" was used for the discarded limbs, branches, of usually hard wood trees after its trunk had been taken away.

COATIR HOUSES in Angus had a "HAG-STAG" for keeping Hag, [and also slabs from its sawmills,] until items dried out enough to be used as firewood.

The English Vernacular Dictionary gives "STAG" as a variation of "STACK" as in "HAY-STAG" so hag-stag is "WOODPILE" which would be true in my experience.

Forfar County Council had an advertisement on the BACK PAGE of its PEOPLES JOURNAL 11 OCTOBER 1919 on "HAG" and "BRUSHWOOD" for FUEL. So, the word HAG was still being used by the powers that be until 1919, and quite likely a good few years afterwards, but I haven't noticed it recently, but then my house is all-electric.

Yours Faithfully

Alan Craigie

of 18 Roseburn Gardens
Whitefield
Dundee
DD4 0UF
on 3rd December 2001

ps I also have a faint memory of the words "PEAT-HAG" being used as proper words in some publication 15-20 years ago. So "HAG" as a word is not absolutely archaic.

Dr May Williamson writes:

BULLION

The article by Dr Alan James in the Autumn 2001 Newsletter reawakened my interest in this term in place-names.

Angus MacDonald in his Place Names of West Lothian (1941) gives spellings for the Bullion Well in Ecclesmachan as *Bulzeon* and *Bulyeon* (1563 SRS) and suggests that these spellings represent the present participle of O.Sc. *builze*, "to boil, bubble". He also quotes *Bulzion* (1696) for a street name in Linlithgow.

No early spellings existed, naturally, for Bullion Road in South Queensferry and no spring or well is visible in the vicinity, but John Mason in his History of South Queensferry (1963) mentions a spring "where the mineral water bubbles up through the green", and Stuart Harris in his Place Names of Edinburgh (1996) locates a spring, a source of the Ferry Burn, to the north of the road but now covered by the approach road to the Forth Road Bridge.

Perhaps more interesting are two field names cited by MacDonald - Bullion Park in Newbigging and Bullions in Dalmeny. In neither of these is there a spring and there is no tradition of any industrial process involving boiling. The nearest example would be the salt pans at Blackness in the 15th Century.

However, the solitary example of *bullion* in DOST is the phrase *bullion breikis* for

trunk hose, from O. Fr. boulge "a bag, pouch, wallet", obviously containing the idea of bulging. Can it be that in those fields there were awkward bulges in the shape?

MELROSE

With this name I have never been happy. When in 1942 I was compiling my PhD thesis on the Non-Celtic Place-Names of the Scottish Border Counties I considered the name to be outwith my scope, but even so it troubled me that the stress was on the first element as in names of Germanic origin like Hawick, Dryburgh, Morham, etc., and also that the generic followed the specific, whereas the opposite is normally the case in names of Celtic origin.

LOCAL COUNCILS AND PLACE-NAMES

As a local historian with a great interest in place-names and their origins, I have been endeavouring over the past few years to research and record the many of the street names and long forgotten place names, associated with the village of Stonehouse, South Lanarkshire.

Recently elected as councillor for my village, I now have the opportunity and responsibility to preserve such ancient place names of the past, in naming new streets and developments in my ward.

Having seen housing developers suggest naming their development after their great granny, who has no connection with the community whatsoever, I believe councillors should be encouraged by their constituents, community councils and historical societies to preserve the many names and places which have in some cases been lost in the natural development of their community. As a councillor and local historian (34 years young!), I believe this will encourage interest and pride in our community, as well as recognising the achievements of others before us.

In the past month I have been successful in obtaining new street signs for the predominantly conservation area, replacing many old and deteriorating street signs, some of which date to the turn of the century.

There are some names associated with the village, of which I can find no explanation, and so it is all the more important to preserve such place names for future generations to learn of, in understanding the social and historical development of our community.

As councillors representing our communities we potentially have an important role to play in ensuring place names are not misused and are representative of the communities we serve. I would encourage all those with an interest in place-names to encourage their councillors to do likewise.

John Young

Local Councillor for Stonehouse

SPNS E-MAILS

Now that over half the membership appears to have an e-mail address, we have compiled a database that will allow the society to e-mail members about forthcoming conferences and the like. We sent out a trial e-mail to all member in our e-database in early December. Some members may have changed their e-mail address since notifying us last year, because some were returned address unknown - so if you did not receive one, perhaps this was why. If you did not receive this trial e-mail, but would like to be added to the database, simply e-mail a brief request to the treasurer, at peter.drummond@btinternet.com. The society will **not** make the directory available to any other organisation.

Peter Drummond

Treasurer

OBITUARIES

Professor Kenneth Cameron, CBE, FBA.

English place-name studies lost one of its most able scholars with the death of Ken Cameron on March 10th 2001. Born in Burnley, Lancashire in 1922, he was educated at Burnley Grammar School and at Leeds University, where he came under the tutelage of Bruce Dickins, himself a distinguished toponymist who was Honorary Director of the English Place-Name Society from 1946 to 1951. Ken was caught up in World War Two, in which he served as a pilot in the RAF, but he gained his doctorate at the University of Sheffield where he became, in 1947, Assistant Lecturer in English. In 1950 he was appointed to the staff of Nottingham University, becoming Reader in 1962, Professor of English Language in 1963, and Head of Department in 1984.

On the death of Professor A.H. Smith in 1967, Ken took over the Directorship of the English Place-Name Survey, which he held for 25 years. He successfully transferred the Society's library from University College London to Nottingham University, where he established it in permanent premises. Besides administering a busy and successful English Department, he found time to immerse himself in the work of the EPNS where he proved a powerful motivator and a source of great encouragement to all who were involved in name studies. He was instrumental in founding the Society's *Journal* in 1969, and saw 20 county volumes into publication.

Ken Cameron will principally be remembered by the wider public as the author of *English Place-Names* in 1961, revised and reissued several times (the most recent in 1996). This was a very readable and comprehensive general introduction to the subject, and remains a classic of its kind. His *Place-Names of Lincolnshire* in six volumes, with a seventh in preparation, and the three-volume *Place-Names of Derbyshire* (1959) will, however, be his main claim to

onomastic fame. These were detailed and comprehensive works of scholarship. He wrote numerous scholarly articles on place-names, making wide use of allied disciplines, including geography and geology. In this, he was much aided by his wife Kathleen, herself a geographer who died of multiple sclerosis in 1977. Ken nursed her with great care over her final illness, right up to her death.

He was awarded the CBE in 1987, and was awarded a Fellowship of the British Academy, as well as an Honorary Doctorate of the University of Uppsala.

An affable, gregarious and down-to-earth figure, Ken Cameron was a generous and warm-hearted personality, who never lost his Lancastrian accent. His contribution to English onomastics has been immense, and his influence will be felt by many students, colleagues and friends far beyond his native country.

I.A.F.

Daphne Brooke

On 11 March 2001 the Galloway historian and place-name scholar Daphne Brooke died. A key figure in the elucidation of the history and place-names of South-West Scotland, she had been due to give the opening paper at the SPNSociety Conference in Dumfries two months later. What follows is a version much abbreviated (by Simon Taylor) of an obituary written by Daphne's son Simon Brooke shortly after her death. For details of how to access a fuller version see the end piece to this article.

Daphne Brooke nee Parker was born into a middle class London family, became one of the first female high-flyers of the civil service, and a formidable campaigner on penal affairs; her last major contribution was to the history of Galloway.

She entered University College London in 1938, where she read history; she specialised in the early medieval period and studied Anglo-Saxon and Latin.

During the first year of the war she was evacuated to Aberystwyth, where she completed her studies, and where she first became interested in the Welsh language. After graduating she entered the Administrative Branch of the Ministry of Agriculture, where she soon became a pioneer, rising to be the highest promoted woman in the civil service by the time of her resignation, and serving as Principal to Lord Carrington when he was Parliamentary Secretary.

In 1953 she married another civil servant, Tom Brooke, and in 1963 the family moved to Edinburgh, when her husband was posted to the Department of Agriculture for Scotland. Daphne initially found Scotland a very foreign country; however, from 1965 the family rented a second home in the village of Auchencairn in Galloway. Auchencairn was to become a centre for the family, and directly gave rise to the two major interests of the second half of her life. She moved to the village permanently following the breakdown of her marriage in 1979, joining her son Simon, who was then running a pottery in the village.

One of the major interests which emerged from her relationship with Auchencairn was a reawakening of her interest in early medieval history, and this arose out of place-names. Daphne read Welsh, Anglo-Saxon and Latin, as well as a number of Romance languages. Coming to Galloway she quickly noticed the extraordinary variety of languages which provide place-names here. The cottage she rented stood adjacent to a field called 'Old Man' (Welsh: *haul faen*: 'sun stone') on a farm called 'Nether Hazelfield' (Old English, 'lower stony field') in a village called 'Auchencairn' (Gaelic: *achadh nan carn*: 'field (ploughland) of the cairns') in a parish called 'Rerrick' (Scandinavian: *hreyrr-eik*: cairn oak). At the time there had been little detailed study of the early medieval history of Galloway, because there were few documents, and such documents as did exist were obscure and written in difficult languages. Daphne saw that study of placenames provided a key to understanding population movement, and

through it understanding how Galloway had developed from the dawn of the Christian era to the fifteenth century.

This project became her primary preoccupation for the next thirty five years. With a scholar's single-mindedness and a civil servant's talent for organisation, she tracked down every document written about Galloway before 1500 AD, always seeking the original copy and reading it in its original language. In the process she catalogued many thousands of forms of many hundreds of place-names. The study took many years, and it was not until she was already old that it flowered into a series of academic papers and monographs, culminating in the publication of her book *Wild Men and Holy Places* in 1995. At the time of her death she was working on a further book on the immediately pre-Christian and early Christian period in Galloway.

The results of some of Daphne Brooke's original research on Galloway place-names have been put on the web by her son Simon Brooke, and can be accessed via the Scottish Place-Name Society Website (for address see front page of Scottish Place-Name News) by going to SCOTLAND COUNTY BY COUNTY, clicking on Kirkcudbright or Wigtownshire, then clicking on Daphne Brooke's 'Galloway Place-Names'. This will take you to Simon's own website, which hosts Daphne's database. Through it you can list all the recorded forms of a modern place-name; find all the instances of a place-name element (or rather a string of letters occurring in both the modern and the early forms); and list all the recorded place-names in a medieval parish. You can also access a fuller version of Simon's obituary of his mother via this website.

BOOK NOTICE

W.F.H. Nicolaisen's *Scottish Place-Names: Their Study and Significance*, first published by Batsford in 1976, has appeared in a New Edition. This is priced at £12.99, and has a John Donald imprint.

The main changes, compared with the original, are the inclusion of a short preface for this edition, and an additional bibliography (1976-2001) which runs to over 200 items, which will be a valuable reference in its own right. A more detailed review of this important work will appear in our next issue.

SHETLAND PLACE NAMES PROJECT

The Shetland Place Names Project has got off to a very encouraging start.

Since August, I have been working with local history groups, day care residents and individuals from throughout the isles to locate lists of names, maps and documents held locally, recruit volunteer recorders and identify potential informants. As many old names do not appear on maps or survive in documents, there is an urgency to record these before they die out all together. We are therefore concentrating on collecting these names first before moving on to check documentary sources and undertake linguistic analyses. We have attracted a great deal of interest and local groups and individuals are already enthusiastically noting down local names on copy maps and recording sheets.

The type of information we are gathering includes:

- place name, spelt as its sounds
- other names known by
- location, including grid ref. or pinpointed on map
- what feature is e.g. rig, burn, ruined house, craig seat
- information about the name or suggested interpretations e.g. named after an individual

Various recording techniques are being employed including the use of tape/minidisc recorders, maps and recording sheets, walking the ground, photographing sites and extracting information from documentary sources.

We have a good list of potential informants covering most areas, but are continuing to receive suggestions and information about maps or lists of names in private hands.

For further information contact:

Eileen Brooke-Freeman, Shetland Place
Names Project Officer

Shetland Amenity Trust, Garthspool,
Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 ONY

Tel: 01595 694688

Fax: 01595 693956

email: shetamenity.trust@zetnet.co.uk

SOCIETY FOR NAME STUDIES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

The Society holds its Eleventh Annual Conference in Henderson Hall, University of Newcastle upon Tyne from 5 - 8 April 2002. Speakers include Professor Bill Nicolaisen on "Thoughts on a North Germanic Toponymy", Dr Doreen Waugh on "The Old Scatness Project, Shetland", Dr Peter Gammeltoft, University of Copenhagen on names in -toft, Dr Carole Hough, University of Glasgow on "Onomastic applications of the word 'white'", your editor on "Scottish Surnames", and many others. Should you wish further information, please contact the Hon. Secretary of the Society, Miss Jennifer Scherr, c/o Medical Library, University of Bristol, University Walk, Bristol, BS8 1TD, tel. 0117 928 7946, e-mail: j.scherr@bristol.ac.uk.

END NOTE

Our Society's Autumn Conference, will be held in Glasgow, at a venue yet to be finalised, on **Saturday November 9th, 2002**. Further details will be given in our next issue.

Enclosed with this Newsletter, you will find a leaflet giving details of the proposed **Institute for the Languages of Scotland**. We would be grateful for any comment on this important proposal. Please contact **Lorna Pike** at the address on the back of the leaflet.



**Scottish Place-Name Society
Comann Ainmean-Aite Na h-Alba**

**Day Conference
Business Learning and Conference Centre
Lauder College
Halbeath, Dunfermline KY11 8DY
Tel: 01383 845042
Saturday 11 May 2002**

PROGRAMME

10.30 – 11.00	Registration and coffee
11.00 – 12.15	Dr Simon Taylor 'Welcome to Fotherif: an introduction to the toponymy of West Fife'
12.15 – 1.00	Ian Fraser 'Scottish field names: an attempt at classification'
1.00 – 2.00	Lunch
2.00 – 2.30	Society AGM
2.30 – 3.15	Dr Carole Hough 'Scottish surnames'
3.15 – 4.00	Short reports on work in progress – starting with two reports by committee members: Morag Redford: 'Place-names in Holyrood' Peadar Morgan: 'OS Gaelic Names Liaison Committee'
4.00 – 4.30	Tea

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The cost for the day will be £15.00 (cheques, payable to 'The Scottish Place-Name Society', to Ian Fraser at the address below by Tuesday 30 April) to include coffee, sandwich lunch and afternoon tea/coffee.

Name:

Address:

Topic of proposed short report:

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