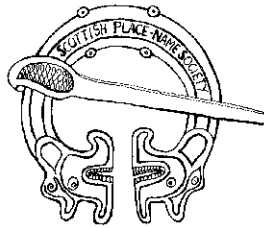


# SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME NEWS

No. 17  
Autumn 2004



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



*Springtime glimpse to the west, through the almost surrounding trees, from the ramparts of Craig Phádraig (the strange hybrid spelling seems to be customary) on the western outskirts of Inverness. The hill fort here is believed by many to have been a home of Pictish kings, and where St Columba visited King Brude or Bridei in the late 6th century. The autumn conference will bear separate talks about place-names in the vicinity of Inverness and those of Strathglass, hidden amid distant hills in this view.*

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### EDITORIAL

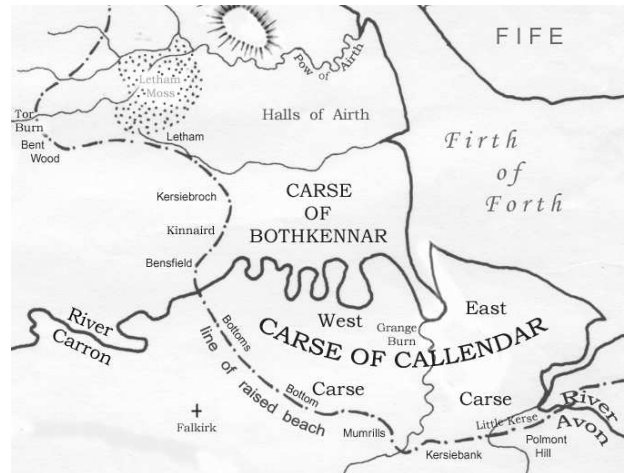
The late summer of 2004 will remain infamous in Scotland, though not only in Scotland, for the deluges which ruined crops, roads, property and holidays. In parts of the southern Highlands torrents have gashed hillsides down to fresh bedrock gleaming with mica, like polished steel. Thus it has not been the best ever season for exercising the brain on place-names fieldwork while exercising the lungs and limbs on the hills and tracks. However, there are always books to study, libraries to visit, and increasingly the internet to use as a resource for information and reference: more on this later in the Newsletter.

As we all know, public funding for place-names research in Scotland fails to compare with that in most of north-west Europe; perhaps the subject is too strongly associated with mediaeval history which is customarily, for the utilitarian 'modernising' tendency in educational politics, an exemplar of all that is useless, outmoded and in need of down-sizing. Nevertheless some distinguished research is being carried out, and we are happy to acknowledge recent academic achievements in this issue.

### ON THE CUSP

A great tract of alluvial land skirts the southern banks of the upper Firth of Forth. It stretches upwards from the River Avon to just above the confluence of the rivers Forth and Teith. Anciently this was called "the Carse of Stirling" with discreet areas being distinguished such as "Carse of Callendar" and "Carse of Bothkennar". The inner edge of the carse is marked by a raised beach, roughly lying between the 10 and 20 meter contour lines of the Ordnance Survey. This feature is recognised in a

number of place-names. Many of these have been coined in English but a few are recognisably Celtic in origin; some quite obvious in this context with others being less transparent. Obviously, the feature comprises three components: the overlying plateau (anciently known as the 'dryfield'), the level land at the foot consisting of carseland and the incline between these. Only the line from the River Avon [NS9581] to Kersie Pow [NS8690] has been studied in depth and so the present article is confined to that sector.



Starting with the plateau, we find the naming elements along the top tend to be those used of hills. Indeed, at the southern extremity, lying in the angle made by the River Avon and the Small Burn is Polmont Hill, possibly the *monaidh* of Polmont. Beancross [NS9279 - 1640 *Beincroce*; 1661 *Beinecorse*] is at a place where the escarpment protrudes out into the carse. It is possible that the first element is Gael. *beann*, 'top, hill' and, if so, the name may represent a corrupt *\*beann n' carse*: comparable with the name Kerse Hill. Between Falkirk and the River Carron the raised beach is very evident and is marked by KERSE HILL, [NS8980 - c1760 *Kersehill*] while close to there was THORNBERRY [NS9080 - 1760 *sic*]. This was part of the lands of Thorn and the name contains a generic deriving from OE *beorg*, ME *berȝ* 'hill'. Another hill element, Gael. *àrd* is found in the name KINNAIRD [NS8884 - 1164 x 1214 *Kinard*], an estate overlooking the Carse of Bothkennar. The name translates to 'hillhead' or 'hillend'. Either would fit here but it is worth remarking that there is no hill at that place other than the relevant feature. Following the raised beach northwards round from Kinnaird are HILL OF KINNAIRD [NS8785 - 1736 *Hill of Kinnaird*] and DRUM OF KINNAIRD [NS8785 - 1817 *Drum*] from Gael *druim*, 'ridge'. Less than

a kilometre away is DRUM OF SKAITHMUIR [NS8884 – 1668 *Drume of Skaithmure*]. Each of these sits on the plateau with the only eminence in sight being the raised beach.

Among the group of names that acknowledge the top of the escarpment is WINDYEDGE. Two instances of this name are recorded. One was a holding on Polmont Hill where the feature runs above and parallel to the Avon [NS9479 – c1590 *Windyedge*]. The other was to the north, in Larbert parish, where it lay above the Carse of Bothkennar [NS8884 - 1655 *Windie Edge*]. Standing at Windyedge on a bracing day soon brings the realisation that the meaning is literal. Both names are now lost although they survived into the nineteenth century. One of the principal highways from Falkirk led to the estate of West Kerse. Now called Kerse Lane, it was known formerly as RANDYGATE [NS891800 - 1620 *Randiegaitt*]. On reaching the carse it runs down the raised beach to cross the Ladysmill Burn by the RANDYFORD [NS900804 - 1508 *Randifurd*]. The defining root in each of these comes from OE *rand*, ‘edge, border, a brink, a shore’. An inland example of Randyford is found in the parish of St Ninians where the present-day bridge crossing the Endrick is approached down a steep slope. The Roman fort of Mumrills [NS9179 - 1544 *Momerillis*; 1552 *Munmerallis*], the largest on the Wall, lies on the promontory above Beancross. Sitting as it does on the escarpment it is possible that this problematic name also belongs to the edge group. It might reconstruct (albeit in a primitive form) to something like \**Min-mawr-ell*, on the basis of Welsh *min*, ‘brink, edge, lip’ and *mawr*, ‘big, great, high’ with the suffix *ell*, giving a meaning of ‘high edge place’. Just as *din* can become *don* [\**din-aven* > *Donavane* 1527] so too might *min* evolve to *mon* with –n- suffering elision. The terminal –s is due to the existence of two divisions: Acres of Mumrills lying on the carse and Braes of Mumrills on the raised part.

The slope of the escarpment is a conspicuous feature of the landscape that it traverses. As we should expect, therefore, many of the local names allude to it. Not surprisingly, the banks and braes are present. Close to the Avon at Polmont Hill is found CLERKSTON BANK [NS9579 - 1671 *Clarkstoun Banks*] lying on the lands formerly known as Clerkston but now Avondale. In that same area was KERSIEBANK [NS9379 – 1551 *Carsiebank*] (known today as

Inchyra Grange). This name implies an entity called Kersie at this place. We may compare it with Kersie in Airth parish which was (c1150) *Carsach*, ‘carse place’. Carsiebank is identical in meaning with the Celtic KERSEBROCK [NS867852 1547 *Corsbruke*] which place sits on the ledge immediately above the carselands north of Larbert. The second element is Gael. *bruich* (gen., *bruaich*), ‘bank’. Just outside the study area, a little to the north in a similar situation, is CARBROOK [NS8385 - 1477 *Carbroke*] which appears to have the same root as its terminal. On the lands of Dalderse lay SLEDBANK [NS8982 – 1638 *si*]. The origins of Sled- are recognisable in Norw. Dial. *slade*, ‘a slope’, ON *slade*, ‘a slight incline’ and the cognate OE *slad*, a valley. Further north, in the parish of Airth is found another unusual name (at least in the context of the study area): LINKFIELD [NS8886 1817 *si*]. This is from dial. English *link*, from OE *blinc*, ‘a ridge, a bank’. Examples of *brae* have been identified. BURN BRAE [NS9579 - 1574 *Burne Bray*] may incorporate a personal name as the resident local family there had the surname Burn. A little way to the north is CADGERS BRAE [NS9379 - 1879]. There are many “Cadgers Loans” in Scotland; one school of thought associates them with the carriage of grain to corn-mills. This would be appropriate in the local context as the road in question leads from the carselands of Abbotskerse to Polmont Mill, the baronial mill of that holding. ICEHOUSE BRAE [NS9178] is a modern creation, named from an ice manufactory operating there in the early twentieth century. One of the divisions of Mumrills was BRAES OF MUMRILLS [NS9179 - 1806 *Braes of Mumeralls*]. Part of the escarpment runs through the parish of Airth where it gave rise to the name LETHAM [NS896868 - 1392 *Latham*]. A commonly recurring place-name in eastern Scotland, it derives from Gaelic *leathan* ‘broad slope’. A common place-name element in Scotland is *bent* which is usually held to derive from ME *bent*, ‘long course grass, especially on moorland and near the sea’. Names having this element in Scotland are widespread. In the study area the one thing they have in common is a location on a bank or slope and it is not surprising, therefore, to find that Jamieson defines the word as “*bent*, the slope or ridge of a hill, a hillside”; it would seem to be a form of *band*, where the latter means ‘the ridge of a hill’. Stratman’s Middle English Dictionary defines it

both as ‘field’ and ‘hillside’. Certainly, it was used in this sense by Chaucer when he has one of his characters falling down the “bent” of a stream. [Robinson, F.N. (Ed), ‘The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer’, p934] Along the escarpment places having this element are: BENT OF BOTHKENNER [NS8982 1671 *Bent of Bothkennar*]; BENTS [NS886840 - 1817 *sic*]; BENTS [NS889843 - 1753 *sic*]; BENSFIELD [NS886840 - 1855 *Bentsfield*]; BENT WOOD [NS8385 - 1796 *the Bent Wood*].

At the foot of the raised beach was the *carse*. Here, between the Avon on the south and the Carron on the north, lay the great expanse of CARSE OF CALLENDAR [NS9379 - 1230 *Carso de Kalentyr*]. In the thirteenth century the thanedom of Callendar was divided and the estates of East Kerse and West Kerse emerged. A dependant holding of Holyrood Abbey. East Kerse came to be known as the barony of Abbotskerse. North of the Carron lay the CARSE OF BOTHKENNAR [NS8993 - 1359 *Cars de Buthkener*]. Surprisingly, apart from these major place-names, only one lesser division lying at the immediate foot of the escarpment incorporates *carse* into the name: Little Kerse. It is situated in a piece of carseland lying between the promontory of Polmont Hill and the Small Burn. Elsewhere other terms reflect the foot of the escarpment. At the place where the line crosses the East Burn of Falkirk a tract of arable land lying between the burn and the escarpment was known as BOTTOM [NS8980 - 1621 *Boddom*]. While ME *boðom* is usually associated with valley bottoms here it is applied to a very much one sided feature. Immediately to the north the lands of Mungall extend west to east and on the far side another stretch of carseland is named BOTTOMS [1755 - *Bottoms*]. In that same area were CUTBOTTOM [NS8982 - 1717 *Cuttbottom*] and LONGBOTTOM [1684 *Langbottom*] which may have been the component parts of Bottoms. Adjacent to this was FLOORS [NS8982 - 1760 *Floors*]. One of the most common naming elements in the carseland is *flat*. In Yorkshire, ON *flat* ‘a piece of flat level ground’ came to be used of a division of the common field. On the carselands there seems to have been a similar usage insofar as the places so named often emerged as discreet arable holdings. Close to Bottom was BURNSFLAT [NS8980 - 1621 *Burnsflat*] located beside Ladysmill Burn. Without doubt having some association with the mill was

LADYFLAT [NS8980 - *Ladyflat*], for it is given as an alias for the lands of Randyford which ford, it may be recalled, crossed the same stream. GALLOW FLAT [NS9179 - 1569 *Gallonflat*] is not as sinister as it sounds. It was associated with the Gallow Syke which flowed from the Gallow Hill, which last is most likely to be, ultimately, from OE *galla*, ‘a sore’, used in England in the names of wet spots in fields. The feudal situation in the immediate area would exclude this as a site of execution. In the corner between the Avon and the incline was HOWATFLAT [NS9481 - 1606 CRE *Howatflat*] which name has an adjectival form of *how*, ‘depression, low-lying piece of ground’. It may be compared with the farm in Bothkennar parish called Howkerse and is an indication of the perceptions of those who lived and worked these lands. MILLFLATTS [NS8882 - 1755 *Millflat*] lies beside the River Carron. These were part of the mill-lands of Mungall Mill, the baronial mill of the lands of West Kerse, and so the name is self-explanatory. Next to Millflatts, between the mill lade and the West Burn which feeds it, is a piece of land known as “the MULLOCH [NS8882 - 1847 *Mulloch*]. James B Johnston in his ‘Place-Names of Stirlingshire’ states that the name of this piece of meadowland was from Gael. *mullach*, ‘top’ (despite being less than half a kilometre from Bottoms and at the same altitude). An estate plan of 1765 names this piece of land “Haugh”. Perhaps if Mr Johnston had spoken the local patois he would have recognised that Mulloch actually represents ‘mill-haugh’.

John Reid

### PLACE-NAMES IN THE LAND O’ BURNS

*Notes from a talk at the Kilmarnock Conference.*

This ‘Robert Burns Trail’ visits Alloway, Mount Oliphant, Lochlea, Tarbolton, Mossiel, Mauchline and New Cumnock: all with strong associations with Burns and all found in that part of Ayrshire known as Kyle.

**KYLE:** *’Twas in that place o’ Scotland’s isle,  
That bears the name o’ auld King Coil,’*

Several place-names throughout Kyle are said to honour the king. However, Coilsfield (Quyltisfield, 1342) [1] and its proximity to the ancient Coilsholm Wood suggests G. *coille* ‘wood’ + suffix location ‘-us’ ‘field at the place by the wood’. Whereas Coilsholm (Kolyam, 1654) [2] is

*G. cuingleum* 'defile, gorge' - Coilsholm Wood forms part of the modern-day Ayr Gorge Woodlands.

**ALLOWAY:** Auleway (1324), Alwa K. (1654), similar to Alloa and Alva, from *G. allmbagh* 'rocky plain'. [3]

**MOUNT OLIPHANT:** Genealogical records show the Oliphant family in Mount Oliphant in 1741. Burns's father leased this property from William Ferguson, Provost of Ayr who lived nearby at Mount Ferguson, whilst Charles Dalrymple built Mountcharles close to Alloway Kirk. [4]

**LOCHLEA:** Lagolau(1307) [5] compares well with the numerous Loch o' the Lowes, Lowes Loch etc. found across Scotland. Lochly (1654)[2], Lochlie (1781). Local pronunciation varies from Loch-lee to Loch-lie suggesting *G. liath* 'grey' and *G. li* 'gloss of oil on water'.

**TARBOLTON:** Torboulton (1177) Torboltona, (1335)[6] *G. torr* 'hill' + OE *bopl-tun*, 'settlement of the lord's hall'. Further evidence of an Anglian settlement is found in a charter of 1335: 'John de Graham granted the patronage of the church of Torbolton, with the lands of Unzank, on which the church is built, to Robert de Graham'. [1] Unzank is OE *unthanc*, 'land held without consent', a common place-name element in Northumberland.

**MOSSGIEL:** Mosgavill (1588) *W. maes* 'open field, plain' *W. gaefel* *G. gabhail* 'holding'. [3] The farms of Mossgiel lie in the fork of the roads from Tarbolton and Kilmarnock to Mauchline, suggesting *G. gobhal* 'fork' as an alternative. Rabbie on the other hand may prefer Scots *gavall* 'to revel, live riotously'

**MAUCHLINE:** Machlind i Cuil , c.1130 Machline, a. 1177 Mauchelin, c. 1200 Mauchlyn. Traditional offerings include *G. magh lion* 'field of the flax', *G. magh* 'field' + *linn* 'pool' [7]. A more recent suggestion is *Macha* + *llyn*, [8] *where* Macha was a war-goddess, renowned for displaying the heads of her defeated enemies on poles, her trophies known as 'Macha's Acorn Crop'.

**NEW CUMNOCK:** Comenagh (1296), Comenoc (1307), Cumno (1440), Cumnock suggests Gaelic -ach > Scots -ock. Cumnock Castle stood at the confluence of the River Nith and Afton Water (in what is now the village of

New Cumnock) *G. comunn achadh* 'place of the confluence'[9]

### CORSENCON HILL, NEW CUMNOCK:

*'On Corsincon I'll glow'r and spell,  
And write how dear I love thee',*

Krosnacone(1205) *G. cros na con* 'crossing of the hounds' [3]. A later form Corswintoun (1488) [10] suggests *G. cor* 'rounded hill' + OE *swin-tun* 'pig-farm'. Fragments of a 9th Century Anglian cross were found nearby [11], whilst the neighbouring farm of Glenmucklam *G. gleann muclac* 'glen of the pig-farm' suggests that later Gaelic speaking settlers continued the tradition of pig-farming on the slopes of Corsecncon. Dalswinton, 20 miles downstream on the River Nith is *G. dail* + OE *swin-tun* [12].

Robert Guthrie

[1] James Paterson 'History of the Counties of Ayr and Wigton Volume 1, Kyle'

[2] Johan Blaeu, Atlas Novus, Coila Provincia

[3] W.J. Watson 'The Celtic Placenames of Scotland'

[4] A.M. Boyle 'The Ayrshire Book of Burns-Lore'

[5] Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland, Vol. V (Eds. C.G. Simpson and J.D. Galbraith)

[6] M. Scott 'Privick and Lickprivick' SPNS Conference 2000

[7] Statistical Accounts of Scotland, Ayrshire 1791-1799 and 1845

[8] T. Campbell 'Ayrshire - A Historical Guide'

[9] R. Guthrie @ www.new-cumnock.co.uk

[10] W. McDowall 'History of Dumfries'

[11] J. Stuart 'Sculptured Stones of Scotland, 2'

[12] W.F. H. Nicolaisen 'Scottish Place-Names'

### PLACE-NAMES AND THE SCOTS LANGUAGE - TOPONYMS AND LEXIS IN SOUTHERN SCOTLAND

*Summary of a talk at the Kilmarnock conference.*

The majority of known evidence for Scottish place-names does not pre-date the twelfth century, and many names are not found in the written record before the Middle Scots period. Consequently, the onomastic record of Scotland contains a wealth of information relating to the Scots language, and studies which compare onomastic and lexical evidence can yield great rewards for the onomastician and historical linguist alike. I have sought to demonstrate this in my recently completed PhD thesis at the University of Glasgow, from which the following examples are derived.

The West Lothian name Dyland was explained by Angus Macdonald in 1941 as 'dairy land', and

further lexical and onomastic evidence adds support to his interpretation. As noted by Carole Hough, Middle English *\*dey* ‘a dairy’ is ‘securely evidenced’ in English place-names. Middle Scots *dey* is also recorded by DOST in the compound *deynyff* ‘a dairywoman’, attested once in a text of 1598. The addition of *-nyff* ‘woman’ demonstrates that in Middle Scots, *dey* could also mean ‘a dairy’. However, the compound *dey-land* ‘dairy land’ is not attested in Scottish or English literary sources, and so the Scottish place-name evidence, together with the support of onomastic evidence from England, allows the identification of a previously unknown Middle Scots compound appellative *\*day-land*.

Motherwell in Lanarkshire is first recorded in the late fourteenth century (*Modyrmaile* 1363, *Modervale* 1373). This name has proven problematic, but it may be usefully compared with the modern name Mother Water in Wigtownshire and the lost Cheshire name *Modrelake*. The Cheshire name has been interpreted as containing an unattested Old English word *\*modor* ‘mud, bog’, cognate with words of similar form and meaning attested in Middle Low German and Middle Dutch. However, there may be a simpler explanation. The word *moder* is recorded in Middle Scots denoting the ‘source or fountainhead (of a river, stream or the like)’ from the early fourteenth century onwards. This usage is unknown in England. DOST cites a lost Scots place-name *Modirlech* (1325), and other quotations show similar compounds including *the modernmyre* (15<sup>th</sup> cent.), and *the auld moder burne* (16<sup>th</sup> cent.). From these examples it is evident that Middle Scots *moder* could be prefixed to other words denoting water or watery places, as *lech* ‘latch, small stream’, *myre* ‘mire’ and *burne* ‘burn, small stream’. I therefore suggest that similar collocations with the elements *well*, *water* and *lake* are found in the place-names Motherwell in Lanarkshire, Mother Water in Wigtownshire and in the lost Cheshire place-name *Modrelake*.

The material presented by the place-names of Scotland provides an invaluable resource for any investigation into the historical lexis of the British Isles. Scottish place-names are also an important resource for onomasticians, and as their study evolves, it is likely to have a significant impact on the understanding of the Germanic onomasticon of England. The place-names of Scotland therefore deserve greater

recognition as a valued national resource for onomastics and historical lexicography.

Maggie Scott

### REVIEW: THE GAELIC PLACE-NAMES OF CARLOWAY, LEWIS

Richard Cox’s doctoral thesis, a substantial tome of over 480 pages, has been published by the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies in 2002. As the author states in his preface, the volume deals with some 3000 Gaelic place-names recorded mainly in the area of West Lewis known officially as the Carloway Registry for Births, Deaths and Marriages. The area covers about 150 km<sup>2</sup>, and involves a total of 13 crofting townships, containing some 440 crofts.



*The still imposing remnant of the Carloway broch*



*Carloway landscape from beside the broch*

The challenge posed by collection, collating, and interpreting this corpus of place-names can only be imagined. The process of collection itself is protracted, fraught with pitfalls, and can be highly frustrating. After all, Richard Cox was dealing with a population which knows its ground extremely well, backed up as it was by generations of crofters, who had been steeped in an active and lively oral tradition, and who were among the most fluent Gaelic speakers in the Western Isles. Some 70 informants, a few of whom were born in the 1890s, provided the oral information. The documentary material ranged from Dean Monro (1549) to the Seaforth Muniments (1753-95) and early OS maps.

The book is divided into 13 sections, which cover: an introduction; an assessment of the origin, function and future survival of the place-name; syntax; onomastic structure; stress; morphology; prepositions; phonetic phenomena; Norse loan-names; the onomasticon; loan-words; and chronology. This is followed by appendices with documentary sources and bibliography, and then the Gazetteer, 245 pages long, completed by a Register of Elements, indexes of Lewis and Scottish Gaelic place-names, plus an index of words and other names.

The Gazetteer has a short introduction (pp143-4) which describes the layout. The grid references for each name are usually four digits, phonetic transcriptions are clearly laid out and defined, while translations, brief descriptions and derivations are appended, with any relevant documentation. With such a mass of data, it was clearly necessary to compress items into as compact a format as possible, but this reader found no difficulty in using the entries, since the overall layout is practical and methodical. Despite the need for compactness, those traditional explanations by informants have not been ignored. The delightful *Creagan na b-Ulaidh* (p257, item no. 1717) where an unsuccessful 'dig' for buried treasure took place, and *Leabaidh na b-Aon Ighn* (p308, no. 2513) where a jilted young woman fell to her death, are two good examples. Such entries add a very human touch to what might otherwise have been a technical account of the onomastic record.

But the entire work very much reflects the nature of a language (with its associated cultural tradition) which is on the verge of dying out. All languages develop, change and modify their structures, but minority languages are most vulnerable to being overwhelmed. The task which Richard Cox undertook over 20 years ago may well now be virtually impossible to emulate, since his informants then were aged over 70 on average, and the loss on tradition from one generation to the next is a recognised phenomenon, whether it is language, song or narrative.

This writer can say no further, but express a great debt of gratitude for a unique piece of research, lovingly carried out, and skilfully presented. The final word, however, could be with one of Richard's informants, Anne MacLeod, of South Dell, born in 1900. She said

of *An Tom Dubh*, a knoll not far from her house:

*'S ann thall an sin a chleachd e bhith!*  
'It used to be over there!'

Review by Ian Fraser

*The Gaelic Place-Names of Carloway: Their Structure and Significance.* Richard A V Cox, School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2002. Dublin, ISBN 1 85500 192 6, 484pp. No price stated.

### THE BLAEU MAP OF STIRLINGSHIRE: THE PLACE-NAMES



An extract from the Blaeu map of 'Sterlinensis praefectura' (with thanks again to the NLS for providing this and many other historic maps on its website – see later item in this issue.)

In an article divided between issues 18 and 19 of 'Calatria', John Reid (see first article in this Newsletter) has listed all the place-names on Johan Blaeu's 1654 map of Stirlingshire, for which the main source was the end-of-16th-century survey by Timothy Pont. The names on the map include some outwith the county itself: in all 373 names, of which 323 are in Stirlingshire, 31 in West Lothian and 14 in east Dunbartonshire, with a few in Fife, north Lanarkshire and Clackmannan.

After a brief explanatory introduction each name is listed by county, with a modern identification in all but a few intractable instances, a note of Pont's manuscript version where Blaeu made a wrong transcription, OS grid reference, and useful references for the first known record of the name. No doubt this part of the work would have been the most intensive in research effort and time, as no less than 43 sources are stated, besides 'Calatria' itself. Further value for place-name and historical research is added by notes of any appearances in the monuments inventory of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS)

or Fleming's *Castles and Mansions*, and of the latest recorded date where a name is extinct. In a very concise form the article thus provides all the most essential information. Just to look at a Blaeu map of another area, and to contemplate how demanding a similar exercise would be, is good enough reason to applaud this contribution to our field of interest. WP

'Calatria' is published biannually by Falkirk Local History Society. It mainly covers aspects of history and archaeology pertinent to Falkirk District but occasional articles of a more general kind are also included. Subscriptions and back-issues (except Nos. 1 and 8) can be had from the editor: Ian Scott, 11 Neilson Street, Falkirk, Stirlingshire.

### RECENT RESEARCH

"Over the past five years several doctoral theses relating to Scottish place-name studies have been completed. While some have been mentioned in *SPN News*, others have not. Here is as comprehensive a list as I have been able to compile, including work in progress. Please let me know if I have omitted anything."

Simon Taylor: <st4@st-and.ac.uk>

Peder **Gammeltoft** 2001, *The place-name element bólstaðr in the North Atlantic area*, published Ph.D., University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

Alison **Grant**, 2004, 'Scandinavian Place-Names in Northern Britain as Evidence for Linguistic Contact and Interaction', unpublished Ph.D., University of Glasgow.

Davyth **Hicks**, 2004, 'Language, History and Onomastics in Medieval Cumbria: An Analysis of the Generative Usage of the Cumbric Habitative Generics *Cair* and *Tref*', unpublished Ph.D., University of Edinburgh.

Berit **Sandnes**, 2003, *Fra Starafjall til Starling Hill: Dannelse og utvikling av norrøne stednavn på Orknøyene*, published Ph.D., NTNU Trondheim, Norway ['From Starafjall to Starling Hill: formation and development of Norse place-names in Orkney', an in-depth study of the Norse place-names of the parishes of Evie, Rendall and Firth on the west mainland of Orkney]

Maggie **Scott**, 2004, 'The Germanic Toponymicon of Southern Scotland: place-name elements and their contribution to the lexicon and onomasticon', unpublished Ph.D., University of Glasgow [focuses in detail on place-name elements which are unrepresented in England

and unrepresented in the literary corpus - also includes an extensive appendix of the 500+ Germanic (i.e. Old English, Old Norse and Scots) elements so far identified in southern Scotland]

Anke Beate **Stahl**, 1999, 'Place-Names of Barra in the Outer Hebrides', unpublished Ph.D., University of Edinburgh [covers place-names in the whole Barra island group, including Vatersay and Mingulay]

Angus **Watson**, 2002, 'Place-Names, Land and Lordship in the Medieval Earldom of Strathearn', unpublished Ph.D., University of St Andrews.

Ph.D.s in Progress:

Rachel **Butter**, on the early church in Argyll, including extensive use of toponymic evidence, Department of Celtic, University of Glasgow.

Jacob **King**, on hydronyms in Scotland, Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh.

Alan **MacNiven**, on Norse settlement on Islay, including extensive use of toponymic evidence, Scandinavian Studies Institute, University of Edinburgh.

Peadar **Morgan**, on ethnonyms in Scottish place-names, Department of Scottish History, University of St Andrews (part-time).

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**SP-NS Autumn Conference.** Saturday 27 November, Inverness: note that this is an unavoidable departure from the usual earlier date in the month. Flyers for this conference should be enclosed with this newsletter mailing, and bookings with cheques should be sent to Ian Fraser (SP-NS), School of Scottish Studies, 27 George Square, Edinburgh, as soon as possible. We hope to see many regular attenders there, as well as others more local to Inverness, who cannot often travel to more southerly venues.

The **SP-NS Spring Conference and AGM** will be held in the Borders, probably at Galashiels, and – subject to confirmation – on Saturday 7 May. Those not familiar with the Borders can look forward to a visit to a landscape which is as varied and fascinating as its toponymy, and almost everywhere has visible relics of thousands of years of human activity: many questions



remain to be answered, not least how and when the surprisingly large, and sometimes surprisingly located, minority of place-names of Gaelic origin came into being.

In accordance with the policy of spreading activities around the land, subject to considerations of accessibility, the Committee is minded to look for a venue for the **2005 autumn conference** in the Stirling/ Clackmannan area.

Please let us know, bearing in mind the customary publication times of March and October, of other conferences, lectures or events of potential interest to members.

### **CRUMBYSTRUDIR MYR**

An article in the Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society (vol 5, 1952) discusses a splendid series of documents in the large collection known as the Yester Writs. It concentrates on a boundary perambulation made in 1526 by arbiters in a dispute, which had been going on for more than two centuries, between Giffard and later Hay lords of Yester and the Prioresses of the Nunnery of Haddington. While presenting a solution to the sequence of places in the northern Lammermuir Hills named in the perambulation, it gives up on the 'Crumbystrudir Myr'/ 'Crumstruthermyr'/ 'myre of Crummerstruthir' as variously spelled in separate documents of that year, where there had been a related dispute about rights to dig peat. It was evident that the mire must be somewhere to the west of 'Carfra'/ 'Carfray' (now Carfrae) and east of the Hays' home estate of Yester with Duncanlaw. It obviously also had to contain peat resources worth arguing about between the Lord and the Prioress, not to mention a peripheral involvement of the Abbot of Newbattle who also apparently had a claim to part of the mire. Beyond noting the existence of the modern Myreside farm (NS537696) 1½ km north of Gifford (Duncanlaw is just east of the present village, itself a later relocation of the old settlement of Bothans which was farther south, nearer Yester Castle) and that any peat bog in that general vicinity must have been drained and improved into the fine farmland that it is now, no attempt was made to locate the splendidly archetypical Middle Scots 'Crumbystrudir Myr'.

This was an opportunity missed, because the name itself could hardly give more precise

directions to its location. 'Crumbly-' is reminiscent of Celtic formations such as Abercrombie in Fife, 'mouth of stream characterised by bend(s)' (Abbercromby 1270): Old Irish *cromb*, Gaelic *crom*, Welsh *crwm*, 'bent'. But there is also a likely Old English source with the same meaning, and very similar form, *crump/crumb* (German cognate *krumm*) for Scots words such as *crumby/crummie*, 'cow with crooked horns'. Whilst the exact linguistic provenance of this part of the name may be uncertain, there can be little doubt that we are looking for a feature with at least one distinctive bend.

As for the 'strudir' or 'struther', here too the kinship of OE and Celtic words is unusually visible. *Stróther* is a northern variant of *strōd*, for which a typical sense is 'marshy land overgrown with brushwood'<sup>1</sup>. In parallel, Gaelic has *sruth*, 'stream', with expanded form *srutha(i)r<sup>2</sup>*. Both pairs, like the rare Cornish element *streyth* (without cognates in Welsh or Breton)<sup>3</sup> are part of a large Indo-European family with the basic connotation of 'flow', and it is in Germanic that the sense of this branch of the family has shifted towards connotations of marshy ground. Nevertheless '-struther' place-names are associated with relatively low ground – which is also where streams would be found, often flanked by marshy strips with brushwood tolerant of damp conditions – and it is unlikely that the term ever extended to upland blanket bog. The addition of 'mire' to the name in question suggests that 'struther' by the early 16th century was already out of general lexical use in this area, and Crumbystrudir was fossilised as an appellation.

So: is there, between Carfrae and Yester lands and accessible to those living on both, a candidate for a substantial area of low-lying peat mire with brushwood vegetation, and of bent shape? The size and shape criteria are instantly satisfied by reference to any accurate and reasonably detailed map since the first OS survey in 1855, of which a small extract is shown below; most of it is in modern National Grid 1 km square NT5668. The tight bend is part of a sharply incised but largely level-bottomed valley which runs between the Gifford Water, to the south-west, and the Papanan Water, to the northeast. At the bend, roughly marking the watershed, the valley is at its broadest and its bottom is flat and at present quite heavily covered with damp-ground scrub, such as sallow

bushes, though with open patches containing plants such as meadowsweet which also thrive in very moist soil. It would be a reasonable presumption that this extensive hollow is filled with deep peat.

Certainly the southward continuation of this area held peat, because John Martine wrote in 1885 that the 8th Marquis of Tweeddale<sup>4</sup>, owner of the Yester estate, “accomplished a great work in deepening and cleaning out Danskine Loch thirty to forty years ago. A very large quantity of peat moss was taken out of it, and hauled up the steep banks in trucks by steam engines ...<sup>5</sup>” This is now within the 31.5 ha ‘Danskine Loch Site of Special Scientific Interest’ (SSSI). From this the outflow to the south joins the Danskine Burn, flowing down north-westward from the Lammermuir escarpment to join the Gifford Water. Danskine Lodge is on the downstream side of the Gifford-Duns road which passes the southern tip of the loch, and Danskine Farm is on higher ground to the south-east. The great William Watson<sup>6</sup> treated the name as ‘Dunskine’, without explaining his preference for that over the usual form, and speculated on a probable origin as Gaelic *Dun-sgine*, ‘knife-fort’. However, it is on record that there was a ‘Danskine Inn’, long gone by Martine’s time but once busy with travellers between Gifford and Duns, and a more plausible explanation that has been suggested is that the inn, and then the other features, were named from an inn-keeper with the still extant surname Danskine, originally someone from Danzig (German)/ Gdansk (Polish). Thus this name is probably relatively recent, and may have displaced older place-names. Moreover, with the massive expansion of estate woodland planting and the readier availability of coal after the 16th century, there would have been less reason to exploit a moss for its fuel, and thus to frequent it and keep its name in use.

The roads which are obvious on the 1855 map extract are still much the same, apart from a skin of tarmac and slight easing of bends. The more easterly is part of the route that links the former Nunnery’s granges at Carfrae, Newlands to the south (‘Nunland’ in 1327), and Garvald to the north. It crosses the mire at a narrow point in the hollow, perhaps the ‘slaik<sup>7</sup> brig’ mentioned in one of the 1526 documents – if so, presumably more like a gangway over the low-lying soft ground than an elaborate raised structure. It may also be here, according to Martine, although his

account relying on local tradition is not clear, that Cromwell on his march to Dunbar by way of Garvald in 1650 had to take slabs of stone from nearby quarries to extricate guns and carriages that had become mired in the bog; the 1855 map extract shows an ‘Old Quarry’ in its south-east corner.

Martine is not always accurate in matters of detail, and his reference to “a good extent of flat, boggy meadow-land” at “the south-east end of Danskine [*sic*] Loch” is a topographical impossibility; he must have meant the north-east end. Given the extent of scrub cover now and the partial cover shown on the 1855 map, in which the loch is described as ‘drained’, it may be that in Martine’s time better drainage had temporarily enabled the improvement of the main body of the moss to reasonable pasture. However, the overall impression must be that its natural vegetation, like its other characteristics, would fit the description of a ‘crumby strudir’.

Moreover, the southern end of Danskine Loch would have been little over 1 km by cart from Yester Castle. (It is clear from both the 1327 and 16th century documents that carts and wains were in local use.) Thus the importance to the Lords of Yester of access to the mire’s fuel resource is evident, given the corollary, interesting itself from the point of view of land use history, that timber was not then abundant in a landscape that is now magnificently wooded and has contained the tallest beech tree in Britain.

The series of documents contains much else of place-names interest, including some support for the idea that Yester may originally be a river name and not a settlement name, and the addition of another *inbhir* to the small tally of such Gaelic names in south-east Scotland, in the form of ‘Innerkent’ or ‘Innerkempe’; either version of the specific being a plausible ancient hydronym. But there is nothing that quite rivals ‘Crumbystrudir Myr’ for its eloquent declaration of its own character. (WP)

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Gelling and Ann Cole *The Landscape of Place-Names*, Stamford 2000

<sup>2</sup> DSL on-line, under *struther*: see below for website address

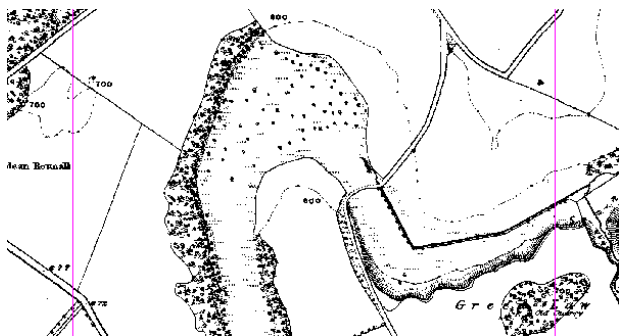
<sup>3</sup> O J Padel, *Cornish Place-Name Elements*, Nottingham 1985

<sup>4</sup> After the Reformation the Hays of Yester came into possession of former Melrose Abbey lands in Peeblesshire.

<sup>5</sup> John Martine, *Reminiscences and Notices of the Parishes of the County of Haddington*, 1890, republished Haddington 1999 (but quotation stated to be from a lecture given in 1885)

<sup>6</sup> W J Watson, *The Celtic Place-Names of Scotland*, 1926; reprint Edinburgh 1993

<sup>7</sup> Any of several of the definitions of *slack* in the Scots Dialect Dictionary might be apt: 'an opening between hills'; 'a pass'; 'a hollow'; 'a hollow, boggy place'; 'a morass'.



Extract from 1855 OS map: reproduced by permission of the Ordnance Survey

### USEFUL WEBSITES

The availability of websites containing vast resources of materials such as historic maps, documents and archaeological information has, in the last few years, opened up new possibilities in place-name studies, especially for those without convenient access to specialist libraries. No doubt many of us have personal wish lists for further additions, such as the Ordnance Survey Word Books or an on-line dictionary of mediaeval Latin as used in charters, though, regrettably, copyright considerations make it unlikely at present that doctoral theses will become accessible in this way. Some sites have been mentioned in SP-N News before, but it may be useful to note a few sites of more than local interest again, or for the first time:-

- a large range of early maps of Scotland held by the National Libraries, including Pont/Gordon/Blauu - [www.nls.uk/digitalibrary/map/early/counties.html](http://www.nls.uk/digitalibrary/map/early/counties.html)
- 'Dictionary of the Scots Language' (DSL), the combined resources of DOST (Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue) and SND (Scottish National Dictionary), invaluable for obscurer Scots place-name elements, e.g. *draucht* - [www.dsl.ac.uk/dsl/](http://www.dsl.ac.uk/dsl/)
- Royal Commission for the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) home page, which gives access to CANMORE (requires easy registration) for basic listing of archaeological sites and fuller information on major sites - [www.rcahms.gov.uk/](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/)
- mid 19th century large-scale OS maps, slightly awkward to navigate and sometimes not reproducing fine detail well, but still valuable for access to these meticulously surveyed and beautifully produced records for many areas before modern land-use changes - [www.old-maps.co.uk/](http://www.old-maps.co.uk/)
- access to the Ordnance Survey's glossaries of the

main place-name elements in Gaelic, Welsh, Scandinavian and Scots, to which members of SP-NS have contributed (worry not - the 'freefun' bit may look suspicious in an OS website address but it is definitely not one of those 'adult content' sites in disguise) - [www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freefun/didyouknow/placenames/index.html](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freefun/didyouknow/placenames/index.html)

- First and Second Statistical Accounts of Scotland (1790s and 1840s), which, variably according to whether the recording minister for a parish was diligent or perfunctory, sometimes provide valuable information, or amusing theories, on local place-names and antiquities - <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/stat-acc-scot/stat-acc-scot.asp>
- and not to neglect the Society's own site; the address is on page 2.

Let us know about other helpful general sites that you have come across, or more local sites on the lines of <[www.theglasgowstory.com](http://www.theglasgowstory.com)> or <[www.new-cumnock.co.uk](http://www.new-cumnock.co.uk)>.

### BOOKS, ARTICLES AND PROJECTS RELEVANT TO PLACE-NAMES

A word from the present editor: I would like to revive the practice in earlier issues of notifying members about recently published articles and books of Scottish place-name interest, as well as members' researches in progress. Other than the readily accessible series of articles by Simon Taylor in the two-monthly magazine 'History Scotland' and items reviewed in this issue, valuable contributions which have doubtless been made have generally escaped my notice; even for those on the academic grapevine, unlike me, it must be difficult to keep track of everything of interest. So references for inclusion in subsequent issues will be very welcome, as indeed will articles for publication, or reviews of published books. A browse through back issues reminds of many important insights and discoveries, in articles from occasional contributors besides the well known pillars of this Society.

A 1300 word article by David Ross on '**Peter Drummond's Bens: The Use of Place-Names as Locomotive Names on the Highland Railway, 1855-1922**' is perhaps of rather specialised interest for inclusion in the SP-N News, but the editor will be very happy to e-mail a copy and it will be available in print at the Inverness conference.

### 'A PIECE OF GROUND CALLED ANNA'

A royal charter of 1620 (in RMS) confirms grants of land to the Earls of Lothian, including the former monastic lands at Newbattle by Dalkeith. The abbey precinct came "*cum pecia terre vocata Anna*" immediately to the south. Just a pretty name, or a hint of an *andóit*, an even older church foundation?



*Is the scrub-covered, curving hollow, at NG reference NT5668, the lost 'Crumbstrudir Myr'? Wide-angle view from north-east: Lammer Law is on far left horizon. The viewpoint is beside the sharp corner of the road, at the top of the 1855 map extract. Carfrae farm buildings are, as would be consistent with Cumbric \*cair + bre, on the higher ground to the north-east. (Article, p9)*



*Summer evening view towards the Scottish, north-west, corner of the Cheviot Hills from an ancient route to Liddesdale and Carlisle from Roxburgh. Cheviot, like the river name Tweed and many other place-names in the Borders, is not yet explained beyond doubt: perhaps containing the Cumbric counterpart of Welsh cefn, 'ridge', but possibly pre-Celtic. There will be plenty of scope for lively discussion about local names over coffee and lunch at the next spring conference!*



*The majestic Slioch, between rainstorms typical of summer 2004, towers above Loch Maree in Wester Ross. The usual, but not uncontested, derivation is Gaelic sleagh, 'spear'. Timothy Pont, in his visit to the area in the late 16th century, was more concerned with recording the names of the many islands in the loch. This he called 'Lochew', explaining for us the modern Kinlochewe at its head, though "by sum it is cald Loch Mulruy", after the local saint, Mael-rubha. The late Roy Wentworth studied Pont's work at Loch Maree in a contribution to 'The Nation Survey'd: Timothy Pont's Maps of Scotland'.*

*Right: the unmistakable outline of the Eildon Hills will be a landmark for travel to next May's conference.*



*A new sculptured metal seat in the delightful village of Fordyce in the former Banffshire explains the name as (Gaelic) 'Fuar Deas – The Cold South'. Given the antiquity of the parish, associated with St Talorcan, and recent attention to \*fo-thir in various names of significant places in the North East as a Gaelicised form of a Pictish term for 'subordinate territorial unit' (literally 'under-land'), this derivation must be doubtful.*

