

SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME NEWS

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



*The River Braan in loud spate, seen from the viewing balcony of the 18th century romantic folly 'Ossian's Hall', in the imposing and publicly accessible woodlands of the Hermitage, close to the May conference venue of Birnam. Inside Ossian's Hall are pictures illustrating a short Gaelic poem which includes the phrase "Cluinn briathrachd na h-aibhne cabraich" – "Hear the words of the antlered river". The explanation for this apparently bizarre allusion is that Braan (Gaelic Breamhainn) refers to 'roaring', as of a stag. It has an interesting etymology. Like the stream after which a Roman military base at Bremeonium in the far north of England was named and the Afon Brefi (ancient Bremia) in mid Wales, it represents a Celtic branch of an Indo-European root *bhrem- associated with roaring or buzzing animal sounds. The River Breamish (Bromic, 11th century) in the Cheviot Hills may also be related. Bramer, what a French stag does, cannot be derived from the Latin cognate fremo 'growl, roar' and may therefore be a survival of Gaulish. English has not kept the Old English bremman 'roar', though German has brummen, 'growl, grumble, hum'. The relatedness of Polish brzmieć, 'sound, resound', is more apparent if the orthographic <ż> is ignored.*

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EDITORIAL

We can warmly congratulate the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project on its achievement in publishing on the internet its place-names database at <http://www.placenamesni.org/>. This is a very versatile resource and complements the very different style of online database already made freely available online at <http://www.logainm.ie/> by the Republic's Placenames Commission. Both are well worth exploration and will frequently be useful in researching place-names in Scotland. Their existence makes it the more frustrating that it has not yet been possible, through lack of funding, to make much progress recently towards developing the Scottish Place-Names Database into a similar resource free to all, as is a stated aim of this Society.

Ironically the admirable work based at Queen's University Belfast has been carried out against a background of insecurity about funding for the continuation of research and publication by the Project. We understand that there are possibilities of a reprieve, and very much hope that this will happen and not prove to be brief.

In the wider context, this is obviously not a time when any opening of financial floodgates for academic or other research can be expected, especially in the non-technological 'humanities'. Although we can appeal, for instance, to the relevance of our field of interest to attracting 'family heritage' tourists, of much greater importance to defending continued investment in name studies is their contribution to answering fundamental human questions of who we are and where we came from.

SCOTTISH GAELIC SANNDA AND ITS ALIASES

The Scottish Gaelic names *Àbbainn*, *Sannda* and *An Spàin* all denote the small island that lies off the southern tip of the Mull of Kintyre, within the parish of Southend.



From Robert Gordon's manuscript map of 'Cantyre', c 1636-1652



Sanda as shown on the Atlas of 1654, published by Johan Blaeu (thanks to National Library of Scotland)



From Ordnance Survey First Edition 6 inches to 1 mile, surveyed 1864-5. It is notable that Yl. na Gerac (Eilean nan Caorach) has been translated to Sheep Island. (Thanks to National Library of Scotland for online maps)

It is likely that both *Àbbainn* and *Sannda* are loan-names from Old Norse: one originally applying

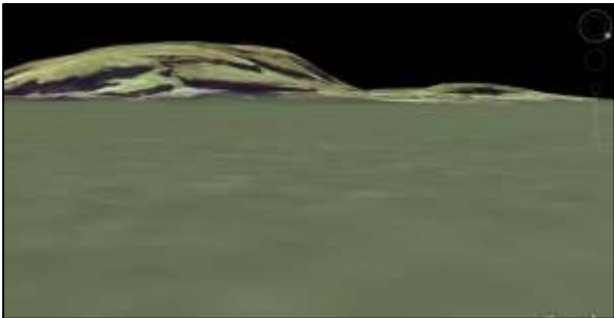
to the island itself (ON *Sandey* ‘sand-isle’), and the other to the natural harbour in the north-facing bay (ON *Hqfn* ‘haven, harbour’). The latter probably held greater significance for shipping as, in times of need, boats would have set course for the haven, *Àbhainn*, rather than the island, *Sannda*, and this may explain why *Àbhainn*, as opposed to *Sannda*, survives in Arran Gaelic.



Overhead satellite view of the island; the obvious ‘haven’ is the sandy bay on the north coast. (Google Earth)

While the onomastic meaning of *Àbhainn* transfers to the island in Gaelic usage, it is the original island name that is borrowed into Scots/English (*Sanda*), a fact which presumably reflects administrative usage.

The shape of the island as seen from the sea gives rise to the third name, *An Spàin* (‘the spoon’).

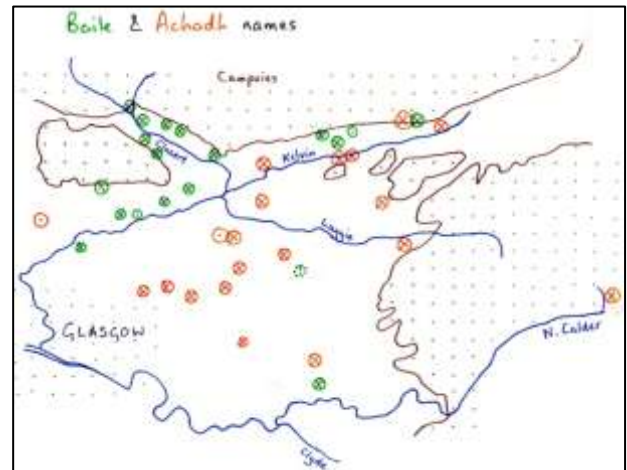


The shape of an upside-down spoon is evident in views over the water. (Google Earth)

In the early part of the 20th century, it is likely that the names *Sannda*, *Àbhainn* and *An Spàin* belonged to different user groups: *Sannda* to the islanders themselves and to the people of Kintyre – although English *Sanda* to officialdom; *Àbhainn* to the fishing communities of Kintyre and Arran; and *An Spàin* or *Spoon Island* to the people of south Arran and to a principally non-fishing, boating community.

Prof Richard A.V. Cox, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (outlining his talk to the November 2009 conference in Glasgow)

GAELIC FARM NAMES BETWEEN CAMPSIES AND CLYDE



Map of distribution of baile (*bal*) and achadh (*auchen*) names in the area. The lone baile in the south is now Bargeddie, the question-marked one in the centre is now Bedlay.

Arising from my initial Ph.D. work on place-names in the Kelvin basin, covering 8 parishes north and east of Glasgow, I presented some findings on the Gaelic farm or settlement names in the area, with a view to establishing some patterns. I began by showing some pictures of the landscape, most of which is characterised by rolling drumlins with badly-drained marshy ground or lochs in the dips, and in the north by the broad flood plain of the Kelvin, and from which the Campsie Fells rise steeply.



The rolling drumlin country, with badly-drained marshes or lochs in the dips, and in the distance beyond the Kelvin, the wall of the Campsie Fells.

Campsie parish, abutting these Fells, is rich in Gaelic names [see my note on *allt-* names, Newsletter 26, p.11], and from Campsie Glen down to the Kelvin there is a fine collection of Gaelic elements on display, including several *baile* (township, farmstead) names. But before plotting the *baile* names on a map of the area, it's

important to recognise that some come with false ID on them. For instance Baldernock, hamlet and parish name, was originally *Buthernock* (1200x1225, and 1504) or *Bothernock* (1532) – i.e. from *both* or *buth*, meaning, in this context, a church – and first appearing in the form *Baldernok* only in 1644.



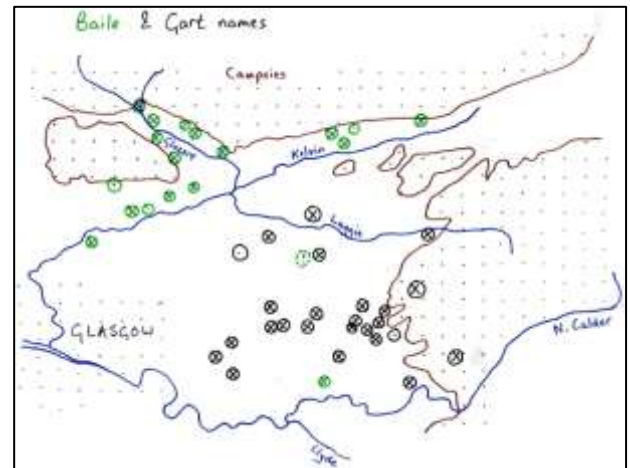
The River Kelvin, now tightly embanked to protect its wide flood plain

On the other hand, Barrachnie (in modern Glasgow city) was recorded in 1559 and 1587 as *Balrauchny* or *Balrachany*, but research (since the conference!) has shown the earliest form to be *Barrachnie* (1520, 1522 et seq.), so it really is a *bàrr* not a *baile*. Bargeddie's earliest forms from 1513 on were of the type *Balgade*, and whilst there was a brief flash of *Bargady* in 1541 (amongst a dozen *baile* forms in the 16th century), the shift to the modern *bàrr* form only really took place in the early 19th century. Another name appears to be a lost *baile*, in that Bedlay (near Stepps), has early forms *Ballain* (12th century, which Durkan says was pronounced *buthlane*), but the pronunciation might indicate an origin like that of Baldernock in *bùth*. And both Bedlay and Bargeddie share the geographic peculiarity of being very isolated from the *baile* grouping, as the map shows. Banton village and Bencloich farm were both *baile* bairns, christened respectively as *Ballintoun* (1511) and *Ballyncloich* (1421).

Names with *achadh* (field) invariably, in this area, appear in the form *auchen* or *auchin*. Unlike *baile*, the names have been little changed over the years, the only one adopting a misleading modern form being perhaps Auchenkilns (famous as a road bottleneck on the A80 until recently) which was *Auchenkil* in 1553, and has thus to do with a church rather than a pottery. [Since the conference, Bob Henery has directed me to sources which show that the earliest recorded form of Auchengeich (in the news

recently for the commemoration of the Auchengeich pit disaster of 1959) was *Edengeyth* or *Edingeych* in the 1520s.]

But what is striking about the *achadh* names, when plotted on a map, is their almost complete separation from the *baile* names. The former lie mainly north of the Kelvin (on what was probably better farmland), the latter overwhelmingly lie on the drumlin-and-marshy ground south of that river.



Map of the distribution of the baile (bal) and gart names in the area

Now Nicolaisen has argued in his *Scottish Place-Names* that *baile* was the earlier form of the two, indicating longer-established settlement, *achadh* being literally fields which were cultivated perhaps before permanent settlement. In this area, is it possible that in summer, there was a form of transhumance by the *baile* settlers of Campsie parish, across the flood plain of the Kelvin, to set up temporary huts and pasture animals or grow crops at the *achadh*, retreating in autumn back to Campsie parish before the winter floods effectively cut the parish off from the south (as happened regularly until the 19th century)? Certainly, the accompanying table would seem to indicate that the *baile* names were at least recorded on average considerably earlier than the *achadh* names – although of course the names may have existed long before they were first recorded in surviving documents.

I also looked briefly at the *gart* (garden, yard, enclosure) names, of which there is a typical lowlands cluster here, in the Cadder / Monklands areas. Some of the old forms derive from *gart an* (yard of / at), as in *Gartynkirk* or *Gartangaber*, and in modern forms this is sometimes shortened to *garn*, as in *Garnqueen* from *Gartimyne* 1520, and there are about a score in the cluster. As the map shows they are

quite distinct from the territory of the *baile* names, and indeed they barely overlap with the *achadh* names, lying mainly to the east and south of these latter. In terms of when they were first recorded, the vast bulk first appear in the 16th century, at about the same time that *achadh* names first appear, and like these latter their first notification post-dates all but a handful of the *baile* names.

Century	Bal-	Auchen-
12th	? Ballain c.1175	
13th	Ballencleroch c.1200 Balecorrach mid-13th	Auchynboll (for <i>Auchinvole?</i>)1365
14th	Ballyncloich 1421 Balgrochane 1458 Balcastel 1459 Baldorane 1464 Balmoloch 1470 Balglass 1486 Ballenkeir 1487	Auchenrewach 1451 x 1458
1500-1549	Balindrocht 1504 Balcharrage 1504 Ballintoun 1511 Balgade 1513 Baltimore 1543	Auchinnarne 1515 Achloch 1526 Auchinhoway 1526 Auchingeich (as <i>Edingeych</i>) 1522
1550-1599	Balmyldie 1560s	Auchenkil 1553 Auchinstarri 1553 Auchingray 1560s Achnairn 1590s Achinloch 1590s
17th	Baldou 1613	
18th		Auchenlech 1755 Achentiber 1755 Auchendevi 1777 Auchenvalley 1767 Achengree 1755 Auchinrevoch 1767
19th		Auchendale 1860

Earliest recorded forms and dates of bal and auchen names

This last fact appears to rule out a different era of settlement establishment, compared to *baile* places. What might be the case then is that the contemporaneous choice of *gart* or *achadh* as a place-name had more to do with cultural factors, to put it crudely linguistic fashion? I stressed right at the start of my talk that my research is at an early stage, and if I'm spared will conclude in 2013 – I will let you know then the definitive answer to the whys and wherefores of the *baile*, *achadh* and *gart* choices!

Pete Drummond (text summarising his talk at the Glasgow conference; also maps and photos)

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“Charge of the Temporalitie of Kirk Landis” and the parish of Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire’, Robin Campbell

‘Towards a Taxonomy of Contact Onomastics: Norse Place-names in Scottish Gaelic’, Richard A.V. Cox

‘The Role of Onomastics in Historical Linguistics’, Carole Hough

‘Balinclog: a lost parish in Ayrshire’, Gilbert Márkus

‘Place-names of Lesmahagow’, Simon Taylor

‘Neglected Topographic Names: ness-names in Orkney and Shetland’, Doreen Waugh

Varia

Alan G. James. ‘A Note on the Place-name Dreva, Stobo, Peeblesshire’

Jacob King, ‘Haberberui: An Aberration?’

Review article

Alan G. James, ‘Paul Cavill and George Broderick, *Language Contact in the Place-Names of Britain and Ireland*’

Reviews

Doreen Waugh, ‘Kristján Ahronson, *Viking-Age Communities: Pap-Names and Papar in the Hebridean Islands*’

Robert McColl Millar, ‘O.J. Padel and David N. Parsons, *A Commodity of Good Names: Essays in Honour of Margaret Gelling*’

Carole Hough, ‘Victor Watts, ed. Paul Cavill, *The Place-Names of County Durham Part One Stockton Ward*

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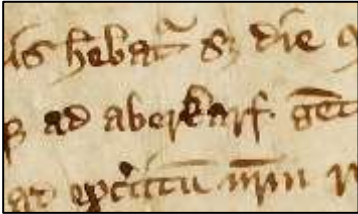
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ABERKARF

My talk at the Glasgow conference investigated the whereabouts and derivation of an *aber-* name which has hitherto gone largely unnoticed. This name is *Aberkarf*, not to be confused with

Aberkarf (now Wiston) in the Borders. This place-name is mentioned only once, in a document from 1336 called *Ferrerii Historia Abbatum de Kynlos* (Cotton MS Vespasian FVII f. 12). To my knowledge only Professor G. W. Barrow has discussed this name, identifying it tentatively as Cromdale in a footnote (*Kingdom of the Scots* 2003 p.48).



The mention of
Aberkarf in the
manuscript of
1336

Aber- as an element means a confluence and derives from a P-Celtic stratum in Scotland (and Wales). Since other existing Scottish *aber-* names have as their second element a river-name, and the names themselves are located at the confluence of that watercourse, it is reasonable to assume that we are looking for a place at the foot of a sizeable watercourse. Ideally the river name should be etymologically related to the term *karf*, or if not, then belong to a later stratum than P-Celtic.

The derivation is fairly straight forward and relates to:

Proto-Celtic: *karwo-* 'deer'; Old Welsh: *caru*, Middle Welsh: *carw*, Middle Breton: *caru*, Cornish: *caru*, Gaulish: *Caruus* [place name]; Proto-Indo-European: *k'erb₂-* 'horn' (see www.spns.org.uk/bliton forthcoming). Compare River and Glen Carvie in Aberdeenshire.

The manuscript is a Latin document describing the movements of Edward II on a military excursion to Scotland. It is a relatively detailed itinerary of places and distances. The actual context for *Aberkarf* is:

Sed die Martis sequente idem dominus noster unam modicam dietam videlicet octo leucarum usque ad Aberkarf

On the following Tuesday our lord (went) eight miles, a moderate day's ride to *Aberkarf*.

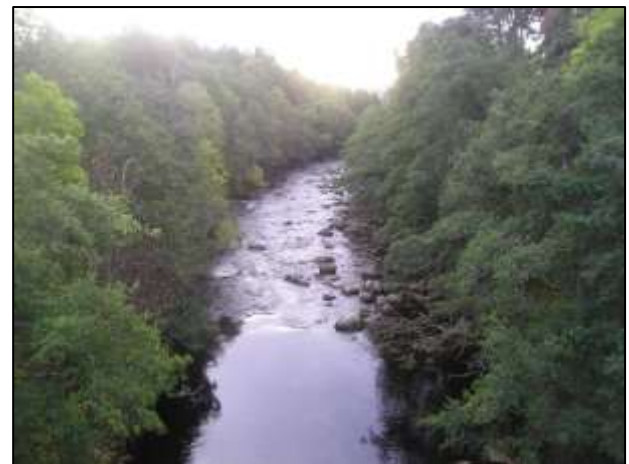
The earlier context makes it clear the starting point is Kincardine Kirk in Badenoch (map ref. NH 938 155) (*ecclesiam de Kynkardyn in Badenau*) and that they are travelling north. The term 'mile' here however needs some attention. This is a translation of the latin term *leuga* (league) which meant different things at different times and places. To find the length intended in this manuscript, I measured all the other distances

mentioned where the beginning and end points were known and compared them to modern miles. The ratio ranged from 1 to 1.4.

This would suggest that *Aberkarf* is between 8 and 11.2 modern miles north of Kincardine Kirk. Since we also believe that the name will be at a confluence of a sizeable watercourse, presumably on the Spey, the possible sites are narrowed down to six watercourses: Allt an Fhithich, Allt a' Choire Odhar, Kynlira Burn, Glenbeg Burn, Auchernack Burn and the River Dulnain. Of these, two can be removed since they have appropriate places at their foot which are on record from before 1336. These are Allt a' Choire Odhar which has at its foot Congash (*Cunenege*s 1226 Moray Reg. 70), and Glenbeg Burn, which has at its foot Inverallan (*Inueraldeny* 1124-1242 Moray Reg. 62). It is the proposal here that the River Dulnain is the river in question. On modern maps this has at its foot two places: Ballintomb and Curr (divided into a number of places). By its position on Pont maps, Ballintomb was probably once *Inverdulan:

Innerqulden or *Innergulden* c. 1591 Pont map 6r

Innertulnan c. 1591 Pont text 137r



The River Dulnain, a major tributary of the Spey (J King)

It is possible that Curr, on the south side of the Dulnain, represents *Aberkarf*:

?*Aberkarf* 1336 Ferrerii Historia Abbatum de Kynlos

Curre 1379 RMS no. 674 vol I

Corroo 1491 Chiefs of Grant Vol II no. 47

Cur 1532 Chiefs of Grant Vol II no. 82

Kurr or *Karr* 1591 Pont Map 6v

To claim this was the same place as *Aberkarf*, we have to first posit the loss of *aber* in placenames; an equivalent can be seen in present day Cawdor,

which is mentioned in:

Abbircaledouer 1238 Moray Reg. no. 40

Caldor x2 1380 Moray Reg. no. 159

Caldore 1421 Moray Reg. no. 188

Caldor 1455 Moray Reg. no. 195

The name *Cur* itself almost certainly comes from Gaelic *cùrr*, ‘corner’, ‘end’, representing a strip of land, often near confluences. It could however, have derived from an earlier **karf*, of particular interest here is the 1491 form *Corroo*. Following the derivation offered above, the term would be , if adopted into Gaelic, **carbhb*. Taking the existing term *tarbh*, ‘bull’ as an analogy, in this area this is pronounced [t^haru], and therefore **carbhb* may have been pronounced [k^haru] this could have been changed to [k^hu:ru] on analogy with the term *cùrr* (perhaps via the dative plural *cùrraibh*).



Extract from John Thomson's *Atlas of Scotland* (1820) showing the confluence of the Dulnain with the Spey at 'E. Cur'. (NLS maps)

Another possibility exists: that *aberkarf* is a MS error for **aberkar(ny)*. This is proposed because the course of the Dulnain was known once as *Glencarnie*:

Glantarnin c. 1206 RRS II no. 474

?*Kyncarny* 1232 Chiefs of Grant no. 5

Glenkerny 1280 Chiefs of Grant no. 10

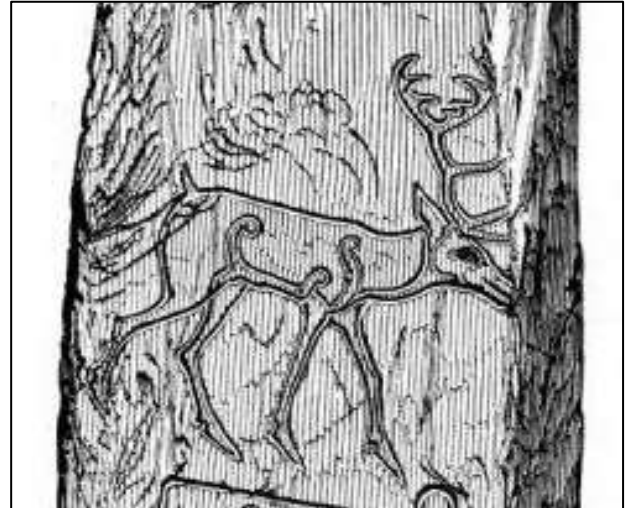
Glenkerny 1306 Chiefs of Grant no.12

Glenbarny 1362 Chiefs of Grant no.17

This would mean that the river Dulnain was once known as the **carnie*, running through *Glencarnie* with **Abercarnie* at its confluence. The meaning may be a metaphorical one from Gaelic *ceatharnach*, ‘hero, soldier’.

Whilst these two arguments are the most likely,

there is a third option: that *aberkarf* relates to a different watercourse entirely. Whilst there is little solid evidence to place it at any other site, it is noteworthy that, given that the name of the a river called **karf* would mean ‘deer’, there is a Pictish standing stone by the banks of Allt an Fhithich which contains the following image:



This Pictish standing stone is known as the Grantown stone and was found at NJ 045 301. It is currently at the National Museum in Edinburgh. (Mack, *A Field Guide to the Pictish Standing Stones* 1997 Balgavies, p. 33)

Jake King (summarising his talk at the Glasgow conference)

SHETLAND PLACE-NAMES PROJECT

Also at the conference Eileen Brooke-Freeman described the work of the Shetland Amenity Trust, which has benefited from a remarkable amount of community involvement and interest in recording large numbers of local names that were not on maps. Such names might otherwise soon have been lost, as the small-scale farming and fishing way of life for which they were coined fades out of memory. Further information is available online at www.shetland-heritage.co.uk/amenitytrust/placenames/placenames.html.

'THE PARADOX OF MEDIEVAL SCOTLAND 1093-1296'

At the November conference Professor Dauvit Broun and Dr Amanda Beam explained the paradox and the nature of this exciting AHRC-funded project based jointly at the University of Glasgow and King's College, London, which, though still in progress, is already throwing

unparalleled new light on this crucial period of Scotland's history. As a prosopographic study, its primary focus is of course people, but places are not neglected, and it will become a very important resource for the toponymist. Anyone working with sources relating to Scotland at this time, for whatever purpose, will find the POMS website immensely interesting and useful, both for detailed historical and diplomatic background, as well as for links to related sites. For full details, and <http://www.poms.ac.uk/>.

AUCHLYNE AND LIANGARSTON, PERTSHIRE .

P-Celtic and Gaelic *llan* and *lann* exist as place-name elements in Scotland, defined by W. J. Watson as meaning a field or enclosure (W J Watson (1926), 286). Where Watson identified the element in Scotland he invariably placed it in a secular context. *Llan / lann* as an element is common in Welsh, Cornish and Irish place-names associated with churches and religious enclosures. My postgraduate research looked at the possible survival of these elements in Scottish place-names in relation to ecclesiastical establishments or their enclosed property or land. One of the place-names I researched was Auchlyne in Glen Dochart, just north of the A85 road between Lix Toll and Crianlarich (OS Grid Ref: NN 513 293). The name of the present farm, probably the most significant farm in Glen Dochart, is pronounced auch – line with the emphasis on the second element. The first element represents Gaelic *achadh* meaning field or meadow. What of the second element *lyne*?

At the location, Blaeu's Map of 1654 and Moll's Map of 1732 show 'Lyn' and Roy's Map of 1747 shows 'Achloin'.



'Glen-Dochart' in Blaeu's map including 'Braid-Allaban' (thanks to NLS online maps)

Auchlyne is approximately five miles west of Loch Tay and the same distance east of Loch Dochart. It seems unlikely that it would have taken its name from Gaelic *linne* - lake, pool, pond. (Dwelly (1994), 590). The *lin* element is unlikely to relate to Scots *linn*, '1 a waterfall or cataract' or '2 a deep and narrow gorge' There do not appear to be any such features in the vicinity.



Auchlyne from Liangarston

Dwelly gives '*loinn, -ean*, s.m. The locative case of *lann*, used in place-names', and '*lann, lain, -an & lanndaicbean*, s.f. Enclosure. 2 House. 3 Church. 4 Repository. 5 Stud, or boss, as on a shield. 6 Gridiron. 7 Scale (balance.) 8 *rarely* Land. 9 *rarely* Veil. 10 Corn-yard. *The Place Names of Upper Deeside* has, among a number of entries relating to *loinn*, '**An Loinn** ---- the enclosure. The Loim of Abergairn (Pr.)' and '**An Loinn Mhór** (3,320032) big enclosure. Lynemore (Io 32), the Lynemore (G 17), Lenmore (Crg 1), Lynemore (D). A former farm in Glen Fenzie' (A Watson & E Allan (1984), 105-6).

If the *lyne* element in Auchlyne simply denotes an enclosure or field then we have repetition or tautology. Although not impossible, it seems likely that a distinction might exist between these two elements.

In 1921 Professor William Watson visited Auchlyne at that time farmed by ninety-five year old Duncan Christie. Christie told Watson that the old chapel at Auchlyne was known in Gaelic as *Caibeal na Fairg(e)*. While discussing the term *dewar* or keeper, Watson in his chapter on Early Church Terms in *The History of Celtic Place-names of Scotland* suggests that the *fairg* element is probably from *arc*, or *arg* - a shrine or coffer. (W J Watson (1926), 265) The Christie family still farm Auchlyne and Watson's visit is remembered in the farmhouse with a signed copy of his book.

The RCAHMS Canmore database has:

At Auchlyne, Glen Dochart, is a roofless chapel, 25 ft by 15ft, with walls about 9ft high. It used to be named ‘Caibul-na-Fairge’. From the 17th-18th century it was used as a Campbell burial place but is associated with a relic of St Fillan or Fergy in the pre-Reformation period. W A Gillies 1938.’ (NMRS Number: NN52NW 1). Gillies claims that ‘It was here that the “Fergy”, one of the relics of St. Fillan, was preserved in Pre-Reformation times’ (www.rcahms.gov.uk).

Simon Taylor in *The Cult of St. Fillan in Scotland* points out that Glen Dochart was the focus of the cult associated with St. Fillan, possibly inspired by Robert the Bruce’s devotion to the Saint. Also that in the 17th century there is a record at Auchlyne of the Dewarnefargs Croft - ‘croft of the dewar of the shrine’ (S Taylor (2001), 175-210).

A short distance across the river from Auchlyne, beside the modern A85 trunk road, is the small farm/croft of Liangarston. Unfortunately there is little in the way of early forms for this name apart from maps. Stobie’s map of 1783 shows Liengartan . Again we are faced here with the possible tautology of both elements in Gaelic, *lian* and *garsten* or *gartan*. Dwelly has ‘*Goirtean*, -*ein*, -*ean*, s. m. – Little corn-field. 2 Small patch of arable land. 3 Little field enclosure, “park.” 4 Little farm. 5 (MS) Croft’ (Dwelly (1994), 516).

In Argyll there is a Laglingarten (NN 1440 0800) near St. Catherines on Loch Fyne and Lingerton (NR 8736 8506) with possible association with Kilmichaelbeg and a cross marked stone and long cist burials (information thanks to Rachel Butter).



A closer look at the mound at Liangarston

It is not uncommon to find early Christian sites in proximity to prehistoric sites. Little more than the width of the A85 from Liangarston is a conical flat topped mound about 9m high with a

circle of stones on the top, a cupped mark stone on its east side and an earth and vegetation covered stone wall around the base. The mound is on ground being developed as a woodland conservation project by the Fife Air Cadets Conservation Group. The existence of the mound as a possible pre-historic site was drawn to the attention of local historian, Dr. Willie Angus. As a result the Air Cadets have become actively involved in an archaeological survey of the site as part of a Scotland’s Rural Past and RCAHMS project, a rewarding result in itself for the research.

The lack of early forms of the place-names Auchlyne and Liangarston make it difficult to determine their origins. Context, however, can provide important clues. Perhaps the proximity of a significant religious site indicates that the use of the *lann* element here was inspired by the chapel.

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Frank Harkness (including photos)

BOOK REVIEW

The Place-Names of Falkirk and East Stirlingshire, by John Reid.

Published by Falkirk Local History Society.

(ISBN 9780956048011 Price £11.99)

This book is the product of a labour of love by SPNS member John Reid, on his home area. It is a *magnum opus* in more than one sense, with over 400 pages, a full index and comprehensive list of sources, a preface by Professor Donald Meek, and many illustrations. It covers nine civil parishes, mostly in the modern Falkirk Council area.

The first thing to say about it is that you will enjoy and profit from it even if you live elsewhere, for – as so often with Scottish place-names – you will find resonance with your local names. John has chosen to lay it out with the

first chapters moving from British (Cumbric) names, through Gaelic names, to early Scottish names. Then he explores themes, drawing examples from all nine parishes, themes such as landscape, hydronymy, land use, and others. For each name he discusses, John has it printed in bold to stand out from the flow of the text, gives its parish and grid reference, and the oldest form of the name, before proceeding to a discussion of the meaning – sometimes with reference to examples of identical or similar names elsewhere in Scotland.

He is not afraid to tackle established interpretations. In particular he disagrees with Nicolaisen's famous analysis – which opens his *Scottish Place-Names* - of the name Falkirk, and which he analyses as 'speckled church' from an early Gaelic name (the adjective referring to the building stone): but which John argues is more likely from a Cumbric name in which the second element refers to a saint, now unknown.

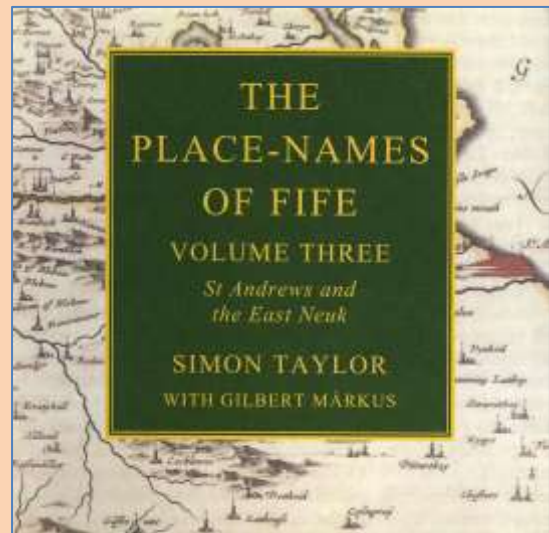
He also deals with some cherished folk etymologies, such as the local belief that Skinflats derived from the Dutch reclaimers calling it *schone*, hence bright or shining flats. John points out that there are no records of any Dutchmen digging here (on Crown land, indeed), and that in any event the first records, c.1714, are of Skamflat, Skimflat and Skameflat, with Skinflat (a version of these) first appearing in church records shortly after. He suggests a possible derivation from Old Norse *skammr*, short, as in Scammadale, ARG. I might have gone for Scots *scam*, burnt – but I don't know the area, and the explanation of possibilities is part of the fascination of onomastics.

All in all, the book is a fascinating insight into the place-names of what is a little-studied part of the country. And there is a further bonus in the offering for us, in that John – a long-standing SPNS member – has agreed to put his databases, gathering together all the old forms of names and their contexts, on the SPNS website in the Spring.

The book will be on sale at the bookstalls of our conferences, and can also be obtained from Ian Scott, Falkirk Local History Society, 11 Neilson Street, Falkirk FK1 5AQ; price for SPNS members £15 inclusive of packing and postage.

Pete Drummond

(See also John Reid's article on Skinflats in *Scottish Place-Name News* No. 26, Spring 2009. Ed.)



The Place-Names of Fife Volume 3

Simon Taylor with Gilbert Markus

Volume three of this series (ISBN 978-1-900289-97-9) is now available. It is even bigger than the previous volumes, at xii + 644 pages, and it covers the thirteen parishes in the East Neuk of Fife. As a bonus the book also includes two major appendices containing an edition, translation and discussion of the texts of the St Andrews Foundation Legends. And there's a full index, as before.

The research that enabled the series to be written was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The book has been generously subsidised by the Scottish Place-Name Society and the publisher is pleased to offer members a special discount. The normal retail price is £24, but members can buy at **£22 post-free** (or **£25** if buying from **overseas**). To obtain a copy, send a cheque to '**Shaun Tyas**', at **1 High Street, Donington, Lincolnshire, PE11 4TA**, or telephone him on **01775 821542** to use a visa or mastercard credit card. You can also email him on pwatkins@pwatkinspublishing.fsnet.co.uk

The publisher is already proof-reading volume four, which will cover North Fife. A final fifth volume will be a dictionary of elements and a series of studies, with an index for the full series.

EMPLOYMENT IN PLACE-NAME STUDIES IN SCOTLAND

SPNS would like to congratulate Carole Hough, SPNS Vice-Convener, on becoming Scotland's first Professor of Onomastics, at the University of Glasgow. Besides Prof. Hough there are currently three toponymists in paid full-time work: Dr Simon Taylor on the AHRC-supported research project, based at the same university, on the Expansion and Contraction of Gaelic in Medieval Scotland: the Evidence of Names, which is now well into its four-year span; Eileen Brooke-Freeman on the Shetland Place-Names Project; and Dr Jake King as researcher for Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba. Gilbert Márkus is employed part-time by the Bute Project to research place-names (see next item).

THE BUTE PROJECT: 'THE PLACE-NAMES OF BUTE'

Sunday 7th September 2008 saw the launch of a project called Discover Bute, supported by a £3 million funding package from various partners, including £1.78 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project involves a four-year programme of landscape improvements to Bute's rural landscape, and numerous cultural events and celebrations.

An important part of the project involves a detailed archaeological assessment of the island, which has already brought about the discovery of many hitherto unknown sites, and an accompanying study of the place-names of Bute. Gilbert Márkus is now being employed to research the place-names of Bute and their history, with a view to publishing a single volume study, *The Place-Names of Bute*, applying the same methodology and presentation protocols as were adopted for the five volumes of *The Place-Names of Fife*. The work will continue till the end of October 2010, by which time a manuscript should be ready to be sent for publication. There is an informative website at <http://www.discoverbute.com/>.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The **SPNS Spring conference** takes place on Saturday 8 May at the Birnam Arts and Conference Centre, across the Tay from Dunkeld and close to the A9 and Birnam & Dunkeld railway station. *Details on flier with this Newsletter.* The **Autumn conference** will be on 13 November, probably at Stirling.

The Scottish Society for Northern Studies (SSNS) (<http://www.northernstudies.org.uk/>) has arranged a conference, '**Sagas, Saints and Stewarts**' at Rothesay on 8-11 April. Bute's rich legacy of place-names will be among the topics covered.

The **Wigtown Spring Book Weekend** will return this year on Saturday 1st May with events and talks themed around 'A Sense of Place'. Place-names will be featured as part of this event. SPNS's Michael Ansell will be giving a talk entitled 'The Gaelic Speakers of Galloway and Carrick'. More details on the website Wigtownbookfestival.com soon or contact mail@wigtownbookfestival.com or 01988 403 222.

Scotland's Cluniac Heritage, a conference to mark the 1,100th anniversary of the founding of the monastic Order of Cluny in Burgundy whose abbeys included Paisley and Crossraguel, is programmed for 9.15 till 16:45 on Saturday 16 May, at Paisley Town Hall.

This is not specifically about place-names but is likely to be of interest to many who wish to know about the ecclesiastical context in which many medieval place-names were formed. Dr Barbara Crawford will be in the chair and speakers will include Dr Matthew Hammond (involved in the POMS project – see pages 7-8), Prof Stephen Driscoll and Peter Yeoman. Further details of the conference and other Cluny events via www.cluny2010scotland.info.

An international conference on **Perceptions of Place: English place-name study and regional variety** is to be held in association with the English Place-Name Society at the Institute for Name-Studies, University of Nottingham on Wednesday 23rd to Sunday 27th June 2010. Speakers include:

- Professor Thomas Clancy (Glasgow) on English place-names in the Scottish border region
- Professor Richard Coates (UWE) on place-names and linguistics
- Professor Klaus Dietz (Freie Universität Berlin) on place-names and English historical dialectology
- Professor Gillian Fellows-Jensen (Copenhagen) on the Scandinavian background to English place-names
- Professor Carole Hough (Glasgow) on women in English place-names

- Professor John Insley (Heidelberg) on personal names in place-names
- Dr Kay Muir (Northern Ireland Place-Name Project) on English place-names in Ireland
- Dr Oliver Padel (EPNS president) on the Celtic element in English place-names
- Dr Matthew Townend (York) on the Scandinavian element in English place-names

Further details on arrangements and costs will be available at www.nottingham.ac.uk/english/ins/.

The international **Trends in Toponymy Conference** at The University of Edinburgh is to take place on 28th June to 1st July 2010. This is the fourth in a series, the previous events having been at Kárásjohka-Karasjok (in the far north of Norway), Ballarat (Australia) and Durban (South Africa). Keynote presentations include Dr Simon Taylor on ‘Scottish Place-Names: The Cultural and Linguistic Challenge’. Contact details and website:

E-mail: g.puzey@ed.ac.uk;

<http://www.delc.ed.ac.uk/conferences/>

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<http://pi.library.yorku.ca/dspace/handle/10315/2901>

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JOURNAL OF SCOTTISH NAME STUDIES, VOLUME 3

The third volume, of what we may now regard as our 'sister' publication, begins with an article by Robin Campbell, drawing attention to a hitherto obscure late 16th century source for place-names and local history, held as two bound volumes in the National Archives of Scotland. This is the 'Charge of the Temporalitie of Church Lands', 'temporality' here being the income that the new reformed Kirk gained from tenants of church lands. The article prints the whole section for the parish of Lesmahagow near Lanark, after an account of the difficulties and delays overcome in preparing the documents and a brief explanation of the importance of the pre-Reformation church in the history of this parish. The extract for the parish will be of exceptional value to anyone specially interested in Lesmahagow, and for others an encouragement to seek similar records for other places likely to have had tenanted church lands shortly after the Reformation.

As is suggested by its title 'Towards a Taxonomy of Contact Onomastics: Norse Place-Names in Scottish Gaelic', the second article, by Richard Cox, is concerned with how names and other words of Norse origin were adopted and adapted into Gaelic. In dealing with place-names it goes beyond the traditional concentration on the meaning of original formations to consider processes by which they could be used in the creation of new place-names in Gaelic. Words other than place-names are also used to illustrate the linguistic processes at work. There are many technical terms, such as 'velarised dental lateral', and International Phonetic Alphabet symbols to represent sounds, so the article will certainly be easier reading for those familiar with such matters; but its conclusions will be of wider interest than only to specialists.

In 'The Role of Onomastics in Historical Linguistics' Carole Hough addresses the value, and pitfalls, in using place-name records to cast light on the history of the vocabulary and dialects of languages. Thus knowledge of specialised Old English vocabulary for things of relevance to those who formed place-names, such as animals or features of the landscape, has recently been enhanced by such studies, having been largely neglected in earlier work that concentrated on texts. The article notes that difficulties arise partly from the realisation that usages of elements in place-names may be

different from ordinary usage of the same words, and there is no way of knowing to what extent this could have been true for elements that are attested in place-names from a distant past. After sections dealing with matters such as folk etymology as a topic worth studying, the article concludes that despite the problems place-names can make a useful contribution to historical linguistics.

The next main article, 'Balinclog: a Lost Parish in Ayrshire' by Gilbert Márkus, is a piece of historical and geographical detective work; linguistic too, since place-names could describe either natural features or man-made ones such as boundaries. Two charters of Melrose Abbey, dated 1226, in which the resolution of a dispute about teinds from a property called *Barmor* is set out, contain the last mentions of the parish. Fortunately another charter sets out the bounds of what is now Barmuir in Tarbolton parish, and gives other place-names which are still recognisable, or are so on early maps. The author has, though, to negotiate complexities of parish boundary changes and scant medieval documentation, before having to conclude that Balinclog is not exactly identifiable but may have been the same as the medieval parish of Tarbolton. Later parts of the article discuss the significance of the name Balinclog ('settlement of the bell') as a possible indicator of some unidentified saint's cult with a bell safeguarded by a 'dewar'; other – not many – occurrences of Gaelic *baile* as parish names; the intriguing possibility that the name survives in half-translated form as Clockston, close to the identified estate of Barmuir and within Tarbolton parish; and the even more enticing but remoter possibility that the name was first coined in early Scots (**clokistūn?*) and later translated into Gaelic, in a parallel phenomenon to the prefixing of Gaelic *tòrr* to a settlement name from Old English **bopel-tūn*, resulting in the present name Tarbolton.

The next piece, by Simon Taylor on 'The Place-Names of Lesmahagow' was originally intended as an appendix to Robin Campbell's but ended up as a substantial article. Thanks to charters of Kelso Abbey and its ownership of the lands, Lesmahagow is an exceptionally well documented medieval parish. The article sets out the linguistic background to the names; explains how an earlier dedication to St Féchín, in the name of the parish, was misunderstood by the Tironensian monks of Kelso as being to the

British saint Machutus (or Maclovius) commemorated at St Malô; and addresses in turn names in the parish, from Achochan to Woodhead, in the format familiar to users of *The Place-Names of Fife*.

The last of the main articles is by Doreen Waugh and looks north, to 'Neglected Topographic Names: *Ness*-Names in Orkney and Shetland'. The picture is complicated by the multitude of promontories in the islands and the period of over a thousand years in which names now including *ness* could have been formed in Old Norse, Norn or Scots. Shape, character of ground, land use, landmarks for fishermen and seafarers, and other motivations for the specifics in *ness* names are discussed, with numerous examples and where possible comparisons in Norway or the Faeroes. A surprise to those not very familiar with the islands is the frequent significance of *ness* places in Shetland as valuable agricultural land.

In the *Varia* section Alan G James shows that despite its apparently Brittonic appearance, in a locality with undoubted Brittonic place-names, Dreva in Tweeddale is more likely to be from an Old English warning to wagoners to expect a **drag-weg*, a 'draw-way', a steep slope where much effort would be needed to draw a wagon to the top – and perhaps to stop it careering down the other side. Cyclists who have used the signposted Tweed Cycleway over Dreva Hill will readily empathise. Jacob (aka Jake) King considers whether the form *Haberberui* (1290) for Inverbervie (all other 13th century forms having *Inuer-*, *Inver-* or *Inir-*) is genuine evidence of an earlier Pictish form on the point of extinction. He notes that *Haberberui* is contained in a transcript of 1870 of a manuscript that has since been lost and of which no other copy or transcript remains; that the transcriber, Joseph Stevenson, commented that the manuscript was partly illegible but did not reflect such difficulties in his transcript; and that his reading *Montrose*, anomalously much earlier than other instances of the intrusive <t> in *Munros*, suggests creative interpolation into gaps in the manuscript. He notes too that the semantic equivalence of *aber* and *inver* in names was well known by Stevenson's time and unsurprisingly he concludes that the form *Haberberui* is not reliable.

In the Reviews section Alan G James reports in generally complimentary terms on *Language Contact in the Place-Names of Britain and Ireland*, edited by Paul Cavill and George Broderick: an

important set of nine conference papers of which four are directly concerned with Scotland and its islands, two with Man and one with Ireland. He also provides an appendix on some Brittonic elements that appear in place-names in Scotland and northern England. Doreen Waugh assesses Kristján Ahronson's *Viking-Age Communities: Pap Names and Papar in the Hebridean Islands*. Robert McColl Millar whets the appetite for the many articles in *A Commodity of Good Names: Essays in Honour of Margaret Gelling*. One of these, by Ann Cole on the Old English term 'Weg, a waggoner's warning' comments that in place-names it practically always refers to a particularly steep place, and thus ties in neatly with Alan James's *Varia* piece. Finally in the *Reviews*, Carole Hough welcomes *The Place-Names of County Durham Part I*, begun under the late Victor Watts and completed under the editorship of Paul Cavill. (WP)

SPNS'S FIRST E-BOOK PUBLICATION



View from Rousay, Orkney, towards Evie. Photo P. Gammeltoft

SPNS's first e-book publication with its own ISBN reference (978-0-9565172-0-3) is due to go live by the time this issue of Scottish Place-Name News reaches letterboxes. It is Berit Sandnes's own English translation of her 2003 thesis and book, which appeared in Norwegian under the title *Fra Starafjall til Starling Hill: Dannelse og utvikling av norrøne stednavn på Orknøyene*, published Ph.D., NTNU Trondheim.

With the English title *From Starafjall to Starling Hill: An investigation of the formation and development of Old Norse place-names in Orkney*, it constitutes an in-depth study of the Old Norse place-names of the parishes of Evie, Rendall and Firth on the west mainland of Orkney. As the author notes in her foreword:-

"The present work is a somewhat revised version of my doctoral thesis from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, published in Norwegian in 2003.

The Norwegian version is clearly not very easily accessible for potential British readers, whether scholars or people with a local interest in Orkney names, and I am very pleased to be able to present an English translation."

FROM THE TREASURER

April is the start of the new financial year, and our May AGM will have the accounts presented for the year just finished. Suffice it to say we are still solvent, even though we spent a lot of money this past year on important items such as digitising two place-names theses (now on our website), supporting the Fife volumes, and the BLITON project.

If your newsletter came without a subscription reminder slip, it means you are already paid up for this year. Those now due will have received a reminder tucked into the Newsletter. If you want to check your membership status, email me at peter.drummond@btinternet.com. By the way, if you move house, please let me know - we have lost members unnecessarily this way! Finally, we will soon be able to offer Newsletter delivery electronically, if you have broadband: our overseas members are being offered this now, and we hope to roll this out to UK members too, as an option.

Pete Drummond (Treasurer)

CULTURAL CONTACTS FUND

All applications welcome!

We wish to remind you that following successful fundraising for the Shetland conference volume *Cultural Contacts in the North Atlantic Region: The Evidence of Names* (P. Gammeltoft, C. Hough and D. Waugh eds.) we have surplus funds which we are using for the benefit of name research in the following ways:

- ▶ Grants to enable students of onomastics to attend conferences
- ▶ Travel grants to enable students of onomastics to pursue their research in the field
- ▶ Grants towards publication of onomastic material relating to the North Atlantic region, defined broadly as in the publication

A small steering committee, representing the three societies, has been appointed to make decisions on the fair allocation of funds.

Further information is available from the current coordinator of the steering committee, Professor Carole Hough: c.hough@englang.arts.gla.ac.uk Application forms can be downloaded from the Scottish Place-Name Society website: <http://www.spns.org.uk>



... though we should perhaps just mention, for completeness, an alternative more prosaic theory that this was the aftermath of a Rangers-Aberdeen match at Ibrox. (The May 2007 conference at Fort William famously took place next to the bar at a 'Strongest Man' competition that attracted a large boisterous crowd.)



At the Glasgow conference to celebrate online publications: Sheena Conroy, Margaret Shearer, Margaret Wilkinson and David Dixon, between Henry Gough-Cooper (left), and Simon Taylor and Doreen Waugh (right). David Dixon is the son of the late Norman Dixon whose 1947 University of Edinburgh Ph.D. thesis, *The Placenames of Midlothian*, has recently been added to the SPNS website <http://www.spns.org.uk/>. David Dixon was an active participant in making the work ready for publication. Sheena Conroy and Margaret Shearer transcribed the typescript to electronic format. Margaret Wilkinson carried out similar work in preparing for online publication May G. Williamson's 1942 University of Edinburgh Ph.D. thesis, *The Non-Celtic Place-Names of the Scottish Border Counties*.

Further additions have been made to the BLITON (Brittonic Language in the Old North) resource, also available through the website, as among other things are K J Matthews' list of Roman Place-Names of Britain, an Index of Celtic and Other Elements in W. J. Watson's 'The History of the Celtic Place-names of Scotland', regional surveys from W J Watson's work, a Lexicon of Proto-Celtic and Records of the Parliaments of Scotland till 1707, which contain much useful place-name material. The latest addition is Berit Sandnes's *From Starafjall to Starling Hill: an Investigation of the Formation and Development of Old Norse Place-Names in Orkney*. (See page 15.)

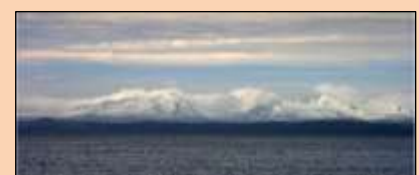


This tree house near Tarbolton in Ayrshire is possibly the smallest and most precarious structure in Scotland to have its own unique place-name, though whether it will ever make its way onto a map is debatable. High Skeoch is a splendidly literal use of a common prefix to an existing name: it is in the garden of the farmhouse of Skeoch.



The late Margaret Stewart Evans, of North House, The Causeway, Kennoway, Fife, was well known for her delightful ink drawings, especially of Fife scenes like this of Crail harbour and houses. In her will she very generously left £500 to the Scottish Place-Name Society.

Members who knew Mary Kidd Findlay, a keen supporter also of Forfar Drama Club, will have been sorry to learn of the recent death of this keen attendee at SPNS conferences.



View in early March past Bute (the dark stripe) to Arran, from the Ayrshire coast.