

SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME NEWS

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The Newsletter of the
SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME SOCIETY
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A south-eastward view, beyond the buildings of the now deserted Tarfessock Farm, to part of the 'Range of the Anful Hand'. The view straddles the boundary between Galloway and the Carrick division of Ayrshire, historically and topographically closely connected with Galloway. (Photo by Michael Ansell.) There is more about the place-names in and around this scene, on page 11.

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

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G12 8QQ

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

Scottish Place-Name Society web site:
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COMMENT

It was gratifying to learn that our Honorary Preses, Professor Bill Nicolaisen, has been awarded a prize from the Jöran Sahlgren Fund of the Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy for Swedish Folk Culture. This serves to remind us, too, of the remarkable range of Bill Nicolaisen's academic interests and achievements, also evident in the book of essays published by this society and advertised in this newsletter. There cannot have been many scholars who have made such distinguished contributions not only to place-name studies of broad scope in more than one continent, but also in other, albeit not entirely unrelated, fields such as folklore studies and literature. Members of SPNS are sure to join in congratulations and good wishes to Bill Nicolaisen on the occasion of this award.

For several years Leslie and Elizabeth Fraser have been familiar figures at the spring and autumn conferences, with the society's bookstall. This has not only provided a very useful opportunity to expand the contents of members' bookshelves with interesting and relevant publications, often hot off the press, but with the margin between wholesale and resale prices has made a welcome and useful contribution to society funds, helping to keep down subscription and conference fees. Leslie has now decided to take well-earned retirement from this task. Thus the committee is hoping that a suitable person will come forward to take it over. It involves, besides setting up and looking after the book stall at conference venues twice a year, ordering and storing a sufficient stock of books for this purpose. Anyone interested is invited to contact a committee member.

PLACE-NAMES AROUND COATBRIG

For this talk, I interpreted 'around Coatbrig' quite generously, in order to discuss patterns of names across the area of my recent PhD, covering from the Campsie Fells down to the Monklands area. Although we have many Brittonic names locally (e.g. Drumpellier, Dundyvan, Luggie), and even more Gaelic ones (e.g. Airdrie to the east, Bargeddie to the west, Gartsherrie immediately north) I chose to focus on Scots names, which are I feel often neglected beside the more 'exotic' toponyms from older languages: and I began with Coatbridge itself.

Coatbridge is a late name: it does not feature on Pont (1590s) or Blaeu (1654), although names from the Coats estate do feature, thus *Cootdykes* (Coatdyke), *N. Cotts* (Nether Coats), and *O. Cotts* (Over Coats, *sic*!).



Blaeu map 1654

The first records of the bridge name that I can find are listed below:

Cottbrig 1755 Roy

Cotes Bridge 1771 [From James Watt's diaries re Monkland Canal.]

Coat Bridge 1816 Forrest

Coat Bridge 1829 NLC Archives U3/2/01

Coatbridge 1864 OS 1st edn.

The name means 'bridge on the Coats estate', or conceivably 'bridge over the Coats Burn'. Other nearby points on the Coats estate include Coatdyke, Coathill, Coatbank and *Coatmuir* #. The bridge was built in the 18th century to carry the road from Glasgow to Edinburgh over the burn. But the forms of the name before the mid-19th century, composed of two separate words, indicate that it was a lexical item (i.e. a bridge) being described, not a settlement bearing the name.



Forrest's 1816 map of Lanarkshire

A detailed local estate map of 1801 by William Forrest showing many individual farms and areas did not even record the name, although his 1816 map did pick it up. What changed in the 19th-century's second quarter was the huge growth of industry and hence population in the town, as iron manufacture boomed. When Coatbridge finally became a burgh in 1885, it was known as the Iron Burgh, and by then it had swallowed up what had previously been the only settlement of size locally, Langloan (i.e. 'long lane'). The estate name Coats, which is recorded as early as 1545, may come from the same root as the several places in Scotland bearing the name Coates (one in Edinburgh, two in the Lothians, one in Fife), ostensibly from Scots *cot[t]*, meaning 'cottage' or 'enclosure for sheep'. But this simplex form (as indeed are many examples from DSL's entry) is used in the east of Scotland, not here in the west. There was a local landed family Colt, recorded from the 16th century, and it has been claimed that the estate carries their name – the letter *l* in Colt is easily lost, as Edinburgh's Coltbridge (beside the Coates estate) indicates, having been recorded in the past as *Cot Bridge* and *Cow Bridge*.



Sunnyside station sign

The conference took place in the Summerlee Heritage Museum in Coatbridge, the nearest station being Sunnyside, two names which might lead visitors to expect delightful climes.

Summerlee however was first recorded in 1797 as *Sommerslee*, almost certainly being the *lea* ('pasture for beasts') land of a Mr Sommers. Sunnyside is a very common name in Scotland with over 55 extant instances, and study of the topography that they, and the local instance, shows they invariably lie on steepish south-facing slopes, catching the sun. I had explored the possibility that Blacklands farm, less than 1km north, was a contrastive pair with Sunnyside, but there are only 3 extant Blacklands compared to 55 Sunnysides. And in fact now just 2: Blacklands farm, recorded since 1554, has in the last few years become a gated house called *Oaklands*, while the housing estate being erected on its fields is *Parklands*; clearly, *black* is not an onomastically sexy colour any more.



Easterhouse station sign

A few minutes on the train from Sunnyside, heading west, stands Easterhouse station, bearing a place-name known widely for sociological reasons. One of the earliest records (1765) speaks of "The old land of *Camflet* commonly called the *Eastern Houses*": this appears to be an instance of a name with the Scots generic *flat*, or *flet*, meaning 'piece of level ground'. Whilst the specific in *Camflet* (earlier *Conflattis* 1513, *Conniflattis* 1587) is problematic (is it *coney* 'rabbit', or *conze* 'corner of ground?'), the other local examples are fairly transparent in Scots meaning – e.g. *Cronflat* #, *Heyflat* #, *Medoflat* #, *Dryflat* and *Whifflet* in south Coatbridge. This last-named, which Pont recorded in the 1590s as *Wheeflet*, is still locally called 'The Wheeflet', and probably derives its name from the crops grown here: in the Old Statistical Account, the minister wrote that here, in the south of [Old Monkland] parish "are produced luxuriant crops of every grain, especially of wheat."

The definite article *The*, preceding *Wheeflet*, is interesting, as it seems to occur in Scots usually

before names that appear to be simplex forms: locally, there is The Plains and The Cruix (two villages of over 2,000 souls east of Airdrie, the latter fully Caldercruix), and The Slaggies (referring to the old iron slag waste tips north of the town); further away, there are instances like The Gyle and The Meadows (both Edinburgh), and The Inches (Perth). Simon Taylor (in PNF 5) wrote that “a name preceded by *The* may have lain on the boundary between word and name”; but while this is true of lexical items moving towards becoming place-names (e.g. ‘the black hill’ > Black Hill), it seems to be true here even of places that are well-established place-names. Another aspect of Scots place-names, occurring above in Plains (indeed an area of flat ground) is the plural form adopted by simplex forms – why isn’t it Plain without the -s? (Or should I say, plain Plain?) Locally there are many further instances such as Stepps and Shotts (Scots *shott* is a piece of ground), and farms containing the Scots elements *shiel*, *green* and *hagg* (respectively ‘shelter for beasts’, ‘grass strip’ and ‘marshy ground’) invariably occur on maps as Shiels (or Shields), Greens and Haggs, in this plural form – as do the many farms called Mains.

There was a Haggs locally, first recorded in 1543 as *Hagges*, but the big hoose and its policies changed from this in the early 18th century:

“The most considerable of which [gentlemen’s houses] are; the HAGGS, lately pertaining to Sir Alexander Hamilton baronet . . . a pleasant seat . . . the house became lately ruinous and heth been acquired by Archbald Hamilton . . . who heth changed its name to Rosehall.”

The social pressures that led to Blacklands changing its name in 2014 clearly applied three centuries ago too!

When the letter *s* appears in the genitival position in a Scots toponym, it appears invariably to indicate a personal or family name, as in *Sommerslee*, mentioned earlier, and in names like Davidston, Merryston and Bogleshole (Scots *hole*, ‘hollow’): regarding the last-named, Scots *bogle* is a ghost or similar, but an early record of this name in 1569 as *Bogillisboill* refers to “Wylzem Bogylle” as its renter. In contrast, where the first element refers to an occupation, there is no genitival *s*, as in Fullarton, Cuparhead, Souterhouse and Carlingcroft # (referring respectively to a fullar of cloth, a coupár or cooper, a souter or cobbler, and a carling, ‘old woman’): of course these occupation names are also surnames (Fullar, Cooper, etc),

but the absence of the medial *s* suggests occupation. Smithstone, now a Cumbernauld estate, looks therefore like a surname, but the earliest form *Smithitona* indicates the tradesman instead. Baillieston on the edge of Glasgow could refer to an officer of local authority, but the *s* indicates a family name (derived of course from the office), and indeed there was a family of that name in nearby Provan. Not far away, Clydesmill, standing on the major river, might appear to derive its name from its position, but again the *s* suggest it was in the possession of a family bearing that surname.

One aspect of Scots names I considered in depth in my PhD were instances of what I call ‘proximity names’, which contain the elements *end*, *head*, *foot* or *side*, all indicating proximity to a feature, as in Greenend, Sikeside, Shawhead and Burnfoot. Bill Nicolaisen wrote a 1985 essay “Burnside of Duntrune: in praise of ordinariness”, in which he argues that such names are often ignored as pedestrian and indeed obvious in meaning (“They wear their lexical meaning on their sleeves, so to speak”), whilst they actually contain a lot of information. He points out that compared to deciphering an ancient river name, or etymologising a Gaelic name, these Scots names do not make us feel like ‘onomastic Sherlock Holmes’, and so lack excitement. My detailed study of the location of over 220 of such names in my study area suggests a number of observations on them. They tend to be relatively late names, very few appearing before the 17th century. The element *head* appears to be the commonest, with over half the sample, while *foot* was the rarest with barely 5% of the total. Unsurprisingly, *head* usually means ‘above’, whilst *foot* and *end* usually indicate ‘below’ – all the several Craighends, for example, lay below the craig they referred to. The element *side* usually means ‘beside’, as in Muirside or Burnside, though sometimes can signify ‘slope’ as in Sunnyside or Espieside (Scots *esp*, ‘aspen’). Pairs of proximity names (e.g. Muirhead with Muirend, or Hillhead with Hillfoot or Hillend) are unusual, with barely 5% of the sample having such links, either extant or in lost names.

Affixes are a common feature of Scots farm names, in which a term is affixed to an earlier name to indicate a division of the land. These affixes are often directional (Easter or Wester), or relate to height (Upper or Lower), among other aspects: thus the names of Easter Gartmillan, Wester Coathill, Little Garturk, or

Upper Coats (the successor to *Over Coats*). Although the directional affixes North and South do exist, they are found far less often than Easter or Wester. An earlier study by Dodgshon suggested this followed the Scandinavian *Solskifte* or sun-division system of land division: but my conclusion is that it has much more to do with topography. The general grain of the land and hillocks in central Scotland is east-west, and dividing a piece of land into Easter and Wester ensures both segments have a 'share' of the sunnier south-facing slopes and shadier north-facing slopes, which a north-south division would not. One of the few north-south pairs in the local area, North and South Medrox, lie on a plateau of igneous rock which bucks the grain of the land, thus affording both farms an equal share of sunny aspect. My study also found that the few north-south affixes were late-recorded names, and that South often lacked a North partner, suggesting that North - like Black discussed earlier - was an unattractive element. Affixes, as settlement names, are a dying breed, and of my sample of over 200 affixes recorded at various times, barely 35% remain in that form, many having reverted to the 'core' form (e.g. simple Gartmillan), partly as farms have amalgamated. The affix coinage seemed to reach its apogee in the 17th and 18th centuries, perhaps when improved farming technology and drainage allowed the fission of farms.



North and South Medrox farms, on their plateau

More detail on the Scots forms I have been discussing (as well as Gaelic and Brittonic forms) can be found in my PhD online (<http://theses.gla.ac.uk/5270>), together with my data on the eight parishes studied. What I also hope is that members might consider how the

aspects of Scots place-names discussed above might apply to their own home area.

Pete Drummond (from his talk at the Coatbridge conference)

PLACE-NAME COMMISSIONS - ARE THEY OF ANY USE?

One of the big differences in onomastic governance between Scandinavia and the British Isles is seen in the attitude towards place-name authorisation. All the Nordic countries have central bodies appointed by the state to take care of or aid in establishing the correct spelling of place-names. In the British Isles, only a few of the national governments have set up place-name commissions. This difference ought to show up in how fixed place-name forms are in the British Isles as compared with Scandinavia - but do we see any difference? This article investigates the nature of place-name commissions and looks at the different functions and roles they play in different circumstances.

What is a place-name commission?

At first we have to establish what a place-name commission is. According to UNGEGN - United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names - a place-name commission (or geographical names commission in their terminology) is: "an independent body established or endorsed by a state in charge of establishing the correct spelling of geographical names nationally or internationally". By far the majority of place-name commissions deal with establishing correct place-name spellings at a national level. A notable exception is the only place-name commission in England, the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, whose area of responsibility concerns solely the correct English spelling of place-names outside of the UK.

Some place-name commissions act according to established law, such as is the case in Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Wales and Eire - whereas other work under departmental orders, like in Denmark (including the Regional language areas of Denmark, Faroe Islands and Greenland) Finland and the UK. In addition, many of the commissions have to deal with multiple languages, such as Norwegian, South Sami, North Sami and Kven (a Finnish dialect found only in Norway) in case of the place-name commission set up under the Norwegian Mapping Agency. Often the place-name commissions are associated an onomastic

research institution as is the case with the Danish Place-Name Commission (Stednavneudvalget), whose secretariat is permanently situated at the Name Research Section at Department of Nordic Research at University of Copenhagen. The commission is also obliged to have three members of staff from the Name Research Section present - of which one must be the commission's chairperson.

What are they used for, place-name commissions?

There are, broadly speaking, two uses of place-name commissions. On the one side they have the standardisation of place-names as their formal objective. However, there is no way around it that place-name commissions also function as political instruments of the state in some instances.

If we start with the formal objectives of place-name commissions (and although they differ between countries), then they generally work with standardising place-names - either according to established, national spelling conventions or to customary practice (or a combination of the two). Standardisation efforts usually result in a set of recommendations by the commissions which are then passed as standardised at government level. In some countries, the place-name commissions can even enforce standards on their own and decide what the correct spelling is without additional state approval.

Although this is normally one of the unspoken uses of place-name commissions, they are also very much tools of the state and occasionally used as political instruments. One of the most obvious ways in which place-name commissions can find usage is as a tool in the 'creation of a nation', i.e. nation building. Here a place-name commission can secure national consistency in a country's place-name material, either by means of enforcing a national standard - or, more problematically - 'dress up' place-names of other linguistic origins in one's own language and spelling conventions. In addition, a place-name commission can also facilitate the differentiation of place-name spellings from those of neighbouring countries of similar or close linguistic origins.

Fortunately, however, the main work of place-name commissions consists in securing consistency in spelling, thus creating a sense of uniformity - and making sure that unwanted forms do not creep into the national place-name

material. Occasionally, the place-name commissions are also supplied with the right to 'police' the place-name material - thus liberating the state from this (by the public often disliked) task.

What is the value of place-name commissions?

Place-name commissions mainly work to secure consistency. This can, however, also be ensured without a formal institution. The task then usually rests with the national mapping agencies who will have to carry out the standardisation work from established conventions and spelling regulations, etc. This has worked relatively successfully in e.g. England and Scotland. It is thus a valid question to pose if place-name commissions are worth the effort?

One major advantage a formally established place-name commission holds over, say a national mapping agency's standardisation unit, is the possibility to involve more relevant institutions and experts in the standardisation work - thus enabling a higher quality of output. At the same time a nationally endorsed standard is also easier to enforce at an international level also. So all in all, place-name commissions must be considered to be worth their value - after all.

Peder Gammeltoft (from his talk at Coatbridge)

An upgraded version of the online Scots Language Dictionary / *Dictionar o the Scots Leid* was launched on 12 September 2014. It has a clearer layout than before, besides fuller search facilities, and is an indispensable aid to anyone working with Scots place-names.

www.dsl.ac.uk

PLACE-NAMES IN GLENSHEE

The Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust under the leadership of David Strachan recently undertook an archaeological dig near the settlement of Lair in Glenshee PER. As part of an evaluation of the surrounding landscape I executed a preliminary place-name survey to complement the archaeological project. The survey area incorporated the watershed of the Shee Water from roughly Spittal of Glenshee to Persie, about 2 km north of Bridge of Cally, and was laid out on approximately the same lines as the *Place-names of Fife* series. It was hoped that the survey might show up Pictish place-names since

the archaeological focus was on a Pitcarmick-type dwelling. However, what was discovered instead was a very Gaelic landscape intermixed with some Scots place-names. Pictish was conspicuous by its absence. Indeed, only Persie, according to W.J. Watson, seems to contain Pictish influence (although in *PNF* 1 it is argued even this is possibly a Gaelic name). Nevertheless, many of the place-names show how the land had been used probably for many centuries prior to the area being mapped by Timothy Pont in the 1590s.



Part of Timothy Pont's manuscript map of Strathardle, Glenshee and Glenelicht, c. 1590 (thanks to NLS online maps)

I found the classifications used in John Stuart Murray's recent book *Reading the Gaelic Landscape* very useful when writing the brief analysis to the survey. The place-names show that Glenshee was very much a landscape that was worked and lived in by the Gaels – a part of their very character, in other words. There are many place-names that show how the land was used for agriculture, both pastoral and arable. A cluster of six *dail*-names, including Dalmunzie, demonstrates the importance of water-meadows as a source of food for both humans and animals, since the annual flooding would have made the land fertile for both crops and hay. Other names indicate shieling grounds, such as Rugh Dubh, and even areas presumably

dedicated to milking at Cnoc na Cuinneige and cheese-making at Creag a' Chaise.



Google Earth view of upper Glenshee, snowless in September 2008; north is towards the top. Spittal of Glenshee is just left of centre. Ben Gulabin is to its north-west. The 'Glenshee' ski area flanking the main road just below the top of the picture has Glen Clunie to the north of the watershed and Gleann Beag to the south; its familiar name probably goes back to the early years of the ski industry when coachloads from the Central Belt habitually stayed overnight or had après-ski ceilidhs in Glenshee proper.

Other categories of names found in Glenshee include flora and fauna with names containing Gaelic words for deer, such as Ben Earb and Allt an Daimh. More unusual is Meall Easganan 'lumpy hill of eels' showing it was not only Highland humans who emigrated over the Sargasso Sea to the Americas. The glen contains names as metaphors in Gaelic for the human body, such as Sròn na Fionnach. Colour in names is frequent, mostly *dubh* 'black' or *dearg* 'red'. Habitation names with Gaelic *baile* as the generic occurs quite frequently, the most notable perhaps being Blacklunans (*Bawclownan* in 1460; *Balclunas* in 1506), a clearly defined area towards the southern edge of the glen complete with its own distinct territorial unit (originally a detached part of Alyth parish not, as the rest of Alyth, in Perthshire, but actually in Angus) including specialist *touns* such as Borland and Drumfork, the latter probably containing Gaelic *coirve* 'oats'. Connected with habitation is justice and organisation, the former represented by *Cuthell* (from *còmhdbail* 'court hill') and Clach a' Mhoid 'stone of the court-hill', organisation by Kerrow, Gaelic *Ceathreamb* 'quarter', a division of land.

The most notable aspect of the place-name study, however, was the cultural dimension of

Glenshee. The name of the glen itself, of course, is in Gaelic *Gleann Sìthe*, 'fairy glen' or 'glen of peace', but there are also a number of names indicating that the Gaels imagined that the exploits of Finn mac Cumhail, the legendary Gaelic warrior, were relocated to Glenshee in at least two ballads. The most famous of these places is Ben Gulabin, where Finn's friend Diarmaid met his death after treading on the spine of a boar.



Looking south-west from the slopes of Glas Maol on the east side of the ski area. Ben Gulabin (Beann Gulbainn c1500, 'snout mountain'), where in legend Diarmaid was slain by a boar and buried in a mound (apparently a natural glacial deposit) below the hill, touches the horizon in the left of the picture. Glas Maol (1068m) in the upper right of the Google Earth view is 'green-grey round lumpy hill'; the conspicuously grey patch to its south is Creag Leacach (987m), 'slabby crag'.

Lamh Dearg 'red hand', a hill in the centre of the study area, takes its name after the name of one of the banners of the Fian. Finegand, in Gaelic *Feith nan Ceann* 'bog of the heads' is where Finn's enemies met their end. I presented some of these findings on the Fian in Glenshee at the 2nd international *Fíanaigeacht* conference at the University of Glasgow in July 2014 and hope to publish a paper on this fascinating topic in the near future. The full report can be found at: http://www.glenshee-archaeology.co.uk/uploads/4/5/4/6/45467547/p-mcniven_the_place-names_of_glenshee_pkht.pdf.

Peter McNiven

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

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

BOOKS FROM SPNS

In the Beginning was the Name
Selected Essays by Professor W.F.H. Nicolaisen
393 pages; price £12.00 plus P&P.

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

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

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

edited by Peder Gammeltoft, Carole Hough and Doreen Waugh

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

The Place-Names of Midlothian

Dr Norman Dixon's previously inaccessible and still important PhD study of 1947, with Introduction by Simon Taylor outlining more recent approaches to some of the names. (Midlothian here is the pre-1975 geographical county including Edinburgh and Musselburgh.)

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

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The **SPNS Spring 2015 conference and AGM** will take place in central Inverness on Saturday 2nd May: details and application form on flier with this newsletter. The **autumn conference** will be in West Lothian – details tbc.

The **SNSBI** (Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland) holds its 2015 spring conference at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, from 27-30 March; the day conference on 10 October will be within easy reach of many SPNS members, in Newcastle.

The **Scottish Society for Northern Studies** (SSNS) has a spring residential conference on Coll, 7-11 April; The annual day conference and AGM will be in Edinburgh on 21 November.

ATTENTION ALL STUDENTS!

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

CULTURAL CONTACTS FUND –

information from

<http://www.spns.org.uk/News09.html#CulturalContactsFund> or the current coordinator of the steering committee, Professor Carole Hough: carole.hough@glasgow.ac.uk.

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

NICOLAISEN ESSAY PRIZE

of £75 in honour of our Honorary Praeses, Professor Bill Nicolaisen. Students are invited to submit original work of around 5,000 words on any onomastic topic by the deadline of 31 December. Submissions should be sent electronically to the Society's Convener, Alison Grant, at alison@barnhillweb.co.uk. The winner will also be invited to give a paper at an SPNS conference.

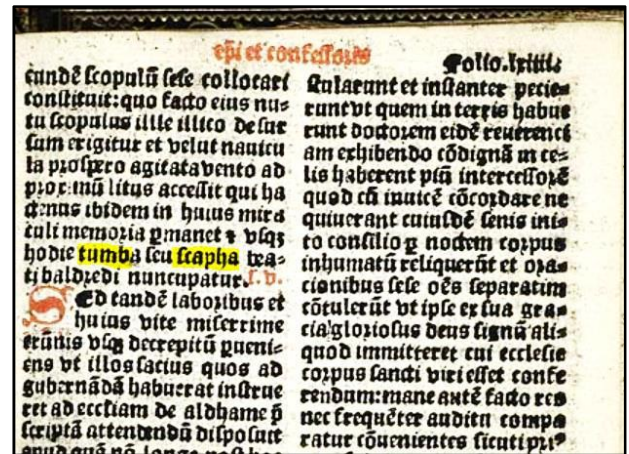
EXPLAINED: A 500 YEAR OLD GHOST PLACE-NAME

Users of printed books or the internet may occasionally come upon the expression 'St Baldred's tomb, or St. Baldred's boat', for a well known feature just off the East Lothian coast, where the saint was said to have removed a dangerous rock from the shipping channel between the Bass Rock and the mainland, directing it to a berth just off a reef that shelters the east side of Auldham Bay. It is now locally familiar and marked on OS maps simply as 'St Baldred's Boat', though for James Miller writing his verse epic 'St Baldred of the Bass: A Pictish Legend' in the early 1820s it was 'St Baldred's Coble or Cock-boat'; the latter being a light, frail boat.

Since the other best-known miracle of St Baldred, or Balthere, is the triplication of his dead body to satisfy the demands of three parishes for the privilege of burying their beloved spiritual shepherd – a story also told of St Teilo in south Wales – there is something wildly anomalous about 'St Baldred's Tomb' as an offshore rock.

The explanation for the spurious name lies in the Aberdeen Breviary of 1507, Scotland's first

printed book. The printed text for St Baldred's day of 6 March, describing his life and miracles, does indeed appear to have '*tumba seu scapha beati baldredi*' (Latin *tumba* 'tomb'; *seu* 'or'; and *scapha* 'light boat, skiff'; Miller's 'cock-boat').



Thanks to NLS online resources

A plausible sequence of events is that the manuscript original had *cumba*, a Latin word for 'boat', from Greek *κῠμβή* (*kymbē*), 'bowl or vessel', related to ancient Celtic *comba*, whence Welsh *cwm*, dialect French *combe* and southern English *coombe*; the printer, faced with late medieval script in which *c* and *t* were notoriously liable to confusion, and although working not far away in Edinburgh presumably not familiar with the location of the miracle, made the all-too-easy transcription error; and no-one with local knowledge checked a proof. A less likely scenario, which would spare the printer from any blame, is that the mistake happened earlier, in a transcription of the text from one manuscript to another. (W Patterson)

'FROM HELL TO HIGHWATER: APPROACHES TO COASTAL AND INLAND NAMING'

My talk of that title at the May 2014 conference in Dunbar looked at a number of aspects of coastal and inland naming in Berwickshire. One example discussed was White Heugh, a striking feature to the north of St Abbs harbour.

The etymology of the name is recorded in the Ordnance Survey Name Books (National Records of Scotland, OS1/5/9 page 74, Ordnance Survey Name Book, Berwickshire, White Heugh, 1856):

'A high precipitous cliff overhanging the sea. It is frequented during the summer by numerous birds which hatch their young among the crevices and the face of the rock is very much

marked by their dung which gives it a white appearance, hence the name.'



Looking northward to White Heugh from the clifftop Berwickshire Coastal Path, between St Abbs village to the south and St Abb's Head to the north

Roy's Military Map (1752-55) records the feature as *Shittenbeugh*. An early farm plan of Northfield by St Abbs, *A Plan of Northfield* (1782), surveyed and drawn by J. Ainslie (National Records of Scotland: RHP43284) gives the description *Shitten Heugh*. This offers a rather clear indication as to the origin of the name used in the 18th century!



Bell Hill, inland neighbour of White Heugh; the tree on the right hides the edge of the land at White Heugh (photo Leonie Dunlop)



Southward view of St Abb's Head lighthouse, from offshore. This part of the Berwickshire coast has spectacular cliffs of Devonian volcanic rocks, besides some puzzling coastal place-names such as Pettico Wick.



On the Berwickshire Coastal Path, looking south-east toward St Abb's Head. Bell Hill is the most distant land feature, on the right hand edge of the headland.

However, the earliest recording of the name is found in three charters, dating to the thirteenth century, in Durham Cathedral Muniments: *Schitenhogesbelle* (Misc. Ch. 853), *Schytenhowebelle* (Misc. Ch. 880), *Schytenhoubelle* (Misc. Ch. 996). 'Bell', the third element, refers to Bell Hill, the hill feature next to White Heugh. It is also recorded in the early farm plan of Northfield and the six-inch first edition Ordnance Survey map.

This is one example of the interaction of coastal and inland features in Berwickshire.

Leonie Dunlop

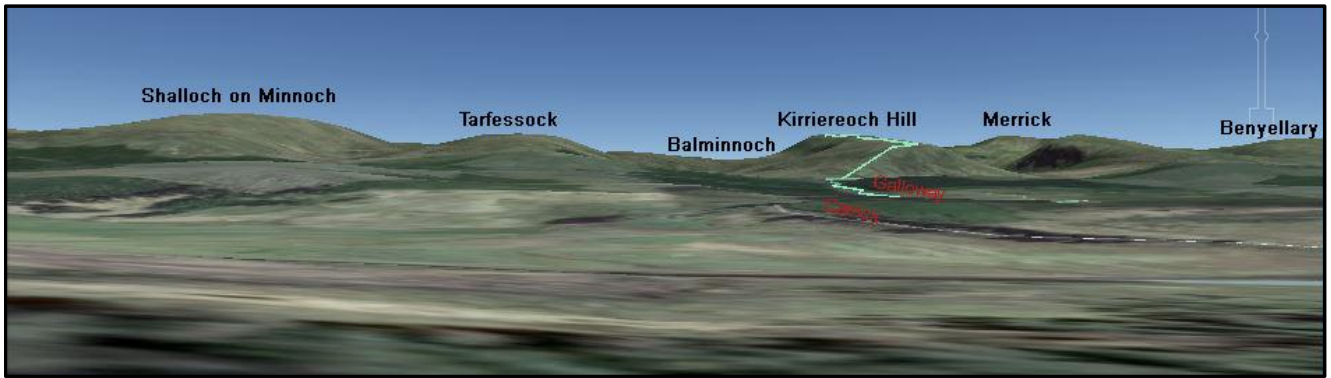
Life Membership of SPNS

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

peter.drummond@btinternet.com;

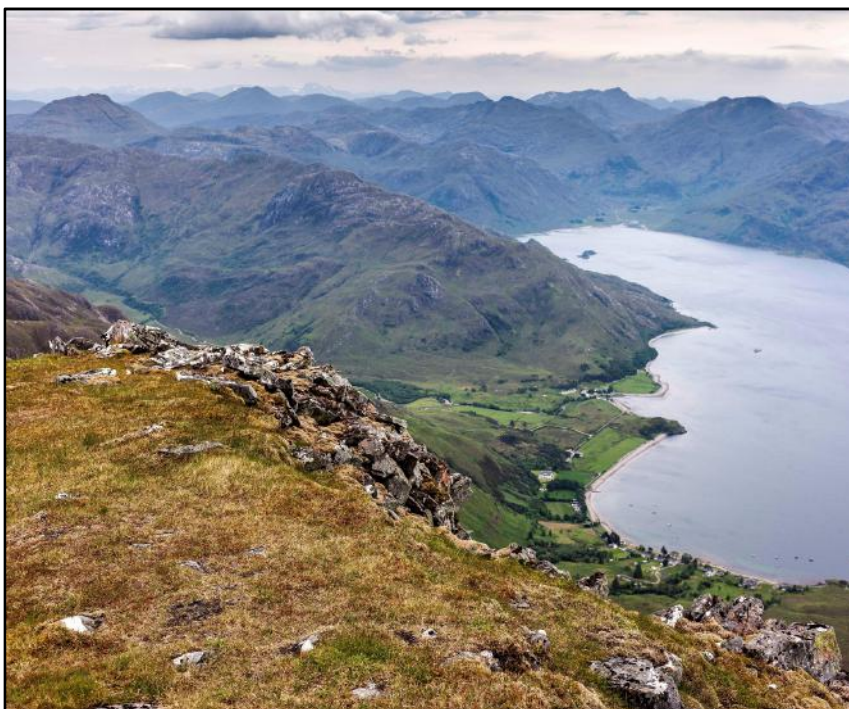
8 Academy Place, Coatbridge ML5 3AX

‘The Range of the Awful Hand’



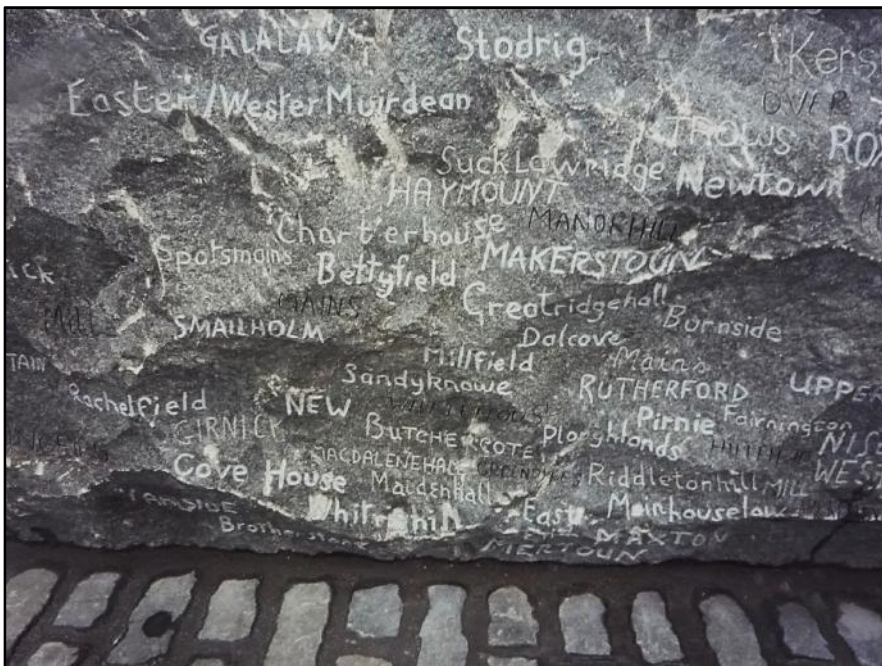
This low angle Google Earth image, from the same direction as the photo on the front cover, includes all the five main summits of the range, besides Balminnoch which marks the lowest point near the middle of the ridge. The ‘eye height’ is 229 metres; the co-ordinates 55°09'42.37" N and 4°34'26.46" W.

The popular name for the range of hills suggests Victorian romanticism, but the imagery is borne out by a view of the outstretched digits from overflying aircraft. That it is not entirely recent is suggested by the name of the highest point in these views and in mainland southern Scotland, the Merrick (843m): probably Gaelic *meurach*, ‘fingered, knuckled’. The rocky, very steep face of its western ridge is the Black Gairy – *gairy* being a Galloway Scots word for a cliff or crag on a hillside, with ultimate origin probably in Gaelic *garbh*, ‘rough’, according to DSL. Most of the local toponymy is of Gaelic origin, though after centuries of Scots speech not always as transparent as Ben Yellary (at the extreme right of the Google Earth view), plainly *Beinn [na h-]Iolair*, ‘eagle peak’. Kirriereoch Hill on the left of the cover photo (*ceathramh riabhach*, ‘brindled quarter’) is one of a series of surviving Kirrie- names recording old land divisions between the River Cree and the mountain ridge (Blaeu’s map of 1654 includes, from north to south, *Kereryoch*, *Kerrymoir*, *Kerykenan*, *Keruchastels*, *Kernaichory* and *Koul kery*); an older name for the hill was ‘Meal (*meall*, ‘lumpy round hill’) Tuaichtan’; a lochan on its far side is still called Loch Twachtan – obscure but possibly involving Gaelic *uchd*, ‘breast, or side, of hill’. To its left or north Kirriereoch Hill (786m) drops to a col and a hollow containing Balminnoch Loch, not a *baile* ‘settlement’ name but *bealach meadhanach*, a ‘middle gap or pass’ (cf. *Balmaha* by Loch Lomond). Blaeu’s map has *Bin Meanach Hil* in this part of the ridge as well. To the left or north of the col the tops are Tarfessock, *tòrr fàsach*, ‘wilderness mound’, with a ridge stretching down to Tarfessock farm; and then Shalloch on Minnoch, where Shalloch may relate to *sealg*, ‘hunting’. North again, Big Meowl fossilises the Galloway/Carrick pronunciation of *meall*. (Thanks to Michael Ansell for the front cover photo and discussion of these names.)



A view from the upper slopes of Beinn Sgritheall to the scattered settlement of Arnisdale (Gaelic Arnasdal) on the northern side of Loch Hourne in Inverness-shire. It is now a very remote place, on the edge of viability. But things were different a millennium or so ago. With a good landing place for boats, fish in the sea loch and in the river, some fertile low ground along the shore and along the dale, summer grazing in the high hills where not too rocky, oak woodland along the steep, rocky, lower slopes of Beinn Sgritheall, and even something rather familiar about the scenery, it must have had nearly all that an eponymous Arnar might have wished for, if he came from the western fjords of Norway.

THE 'KELSAE STANE', KELSO, ROXBURGHSHIRE



Chris Cameron writes (photos by Simon Taylor):-

On Monday, 17th December 2014 a huge lorry, loaded with a 33 tonne block of worked Indian basalt crept into Kelso Square on the last leg of its mammoth journey from the South-Eastern Indian port of Chennai, 60 miles south of the famous old now non-functional port of Mammalapurna - famous for its stone carvings. After many adventures Kelsae Stane (the block's name from beginning to end) had been cleared for customs before setting sail for Felixstowe, whence transhipment to Grangemouth; then whence forklift on to a Hislop lorry (all twenty-eight tonnes of her) for the final leg of her journey to Kelso, where a crane unloaded her onto the pre-prepared concrete pad waiting for her within the town Square, watched, and welcomed by many a bemused Kelsonian, who had seen a lot over the years – but nothing quite like this! Kelsae is the work of a local sculptor, Mike Harvey, Emeritus Professor of Sculpture at Edinburgh College of Art, who had been chosen by the

Stakeholders' Group to Chair the Public Art sub-group in its selection of the Artwork for Kelso group; titles of entries to represent the town, with its prime situation within its historic square. Entrants were allowed to envisage what the word 'Kelso' epitomised for Kelso folk, and to interpret this in any way they wanted. In all there was an entry of nigh on thirty in a complex field with Kelsae Stane the winner. I imagine that it is the rich place-name component (nigh on 200) that will particularly attract you. The sculptor's proposal was to select a large block of quarried stone, roughly proportionate to the individual cobblestones by which Kelso Square is covered. On the naturally riven side of the block the sculptor proposed to create a map of local place-names – with handwritten monikers of all the villages and farms incised into the stone. Every writer wrote the name of his/her place name (over 200) which was then sculpted into the stone. I have to leave it at that, other than make mention of two local names which have fascinated me for years, but which I've never got anywhere with. Perhaps you may have some ideas: - Venchen (near Town Yetholm) and Hatchednize (near Coldstream).



(Contrast in photos enhanced to make names more legible.)