SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME NEWS

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The Newsletter of the

***SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME SOCIETY***
***COMANN AINMEAN-ÀITE NA H-ALBA***

Eag Dhubh na h-Èigheachd – *Black Cleft of the Shouting. The site of a spectacular rock avalanche on Beinn Alligin, Torridon, estimated to have occurred four thousand years ago. It was believed by some to be haunted, probably due to the magnificent echo. The massive rock scatter has been studied because it extends much further than would be expected from the angle of the lower slope. It is theorised that this may be because the huge boulders were carried on a cushion of air. (Photo and text by Mary MacDonald.). A mass of information about Loch Torridon place-names is available online at http://torridonplacenames.org.uk/index.html.*

**The current postal address of the Scottish Place-Name Society (registered charity SC033810) is:**

**c/o 12 University Gardens, Glasgow G12 8QQ**

**Membership Details: Annual membership £6 (or £15 for three years), to be sent to Peter Drummond, Apt 8 Gartsherrie Academy, Academy Place, Coatbridge ML5 3AX. (See page 9 for information on Life Membership.)**

**Scottish Place-Name Society web site: http://www.spns.org.uk/**

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## *COMMENT*

The internet and social media are wonderful resources for those seeking information and useful discussion about place-names. As with any other discipline, however, they are also wonderful resources for those promoting theories and explanations that have no rational basis. Sometimes the writing is fluent, reasoning is astonishingly elaborate, abundant sources are cited, presentation is impressive and there is an illusion of intellectual rigour; yet the actual content would put members of SPNS in danger of a jaw dislocation. Typically familiarity with the languages involved, their sounds and their grammar is regarded as unnecessary baggage hindering true enlightenment.

It is easy to be exasperated, for instance, on reading that the conventional (and secure) derivation of Dumbarton from a 'fort of Britons' as named by Gaelic-speakers is fake news, since it is really the modern form of a late Roman (and probably irretrievably corrupt) SUBDOBIADON; equally easy when opportunity arises to respond in social media with more vigour than diplomacy. In matters that have a strong bearing on place-names, such as the history of the Early Middle Ages, reasonable insistence on due rigour can too readily spill over into intolerance of the more mildly off-message, or of the unorthodox but potentially valuable insight. Better when confronted with evident error to take a deep breath, try sweet reason, and be glad at least that junk etymologies don't kill people.

## *FROM THRAPPLE HOLE TO DUDGEON TREE – THE HYDRONYMS AND SHORELINE TOPONYMS OF LOCH LEVEN, KINROSS-SHIRE*

The recent publication of *The Place-Names of Kinross-shire* (Shaun Tyas 2017) has served to highlight the fascinating macrotoponomy of the former county of Kinross, an area of Central Scotland surrounded by hills with Loch Leven as its chief water feature. An additional set of names derived from maps and documents held in Kinross (Marshall) Museum, as well as the knowledge of local fishermen, reveal a unique microtoponomy that comprises nearly 100 names relating to areas of the loch and its surrounding shoreline. These names form the subject of this paper.

Extending over 13 km$^2$, Loch Leven is the largest lowland freshwater lake of its kind in Britain. With an average depth of only four metres, it is a nutrient rich loch that for centuries has been noted for its plentiful supplies of fish, most notably its famous Loch Leven brown trout.

In the early 1830s the loch was reduced to three-quarters of its original size when the water level was lowered by 4½ feet as part of a major land reclamation scheme promoted by the Kinross Estate. This scheme resulted in the disappearance of one island – Paddock Bower – which now forms part of the peninsula on the west shoreline known today as the Kirkgate Point. The name Paddock Bower is captured on the 1808 pre-drainage *Plan of Loch Leven* by the Edinburgh land surveyor John Bell.

For many years Loch Leven was leased to fishermen who set large nets in the loch and pulled in their catch towards the shoreline. This practice is noted as early as 1319 in a document relating to the perambulation of the marches of the lands of Lethangie and a first hand account of the setting of these nets is to be found in Robert S Young's *About Kinross-shire and its Folk* (Milne, Tannahill & Methven, Ltd. 1948).

Robert Burns Begg, a grand-nephew of the poet Burns, mentions in his book *The Loch Leven Angler* (George Barnet 1874) a *Sketch of Loch Leven Fishings* produced in evidence during a legal case held in Kinross Sheriff Court in which the tacksman of the fishings on Loch Leven made a claim for damage to his fishing as

a result of the lowering of the loch. Drawn in 1840 from an earlier, now lost, original survey by Ebenezer Birrell, this plan, for the first time, delineates and names 22 fishing 'sets' which include Clay Hill Sett, Powmouth Sett, North and South Weavers Nook Setts, Inch Long Sett, Powmouth Sett, Green Myre Sett, Gairny Mouth Sett and Queichie Mouth Sett. Other names include Vain Fishing (off Vain/Vane Farm), Frazer (off the Kirkgate Park) and Hole (also known as Hole o' Inch), a deep area of the loch between St Serf's island, or Inch, and the south-eastern shoreline.

*Detail from Ebenezer Birrell's* Sketch of Loch Leven Fishings*, showing (L-R), Front of Castle, Back of Castle and East Point Setts.*

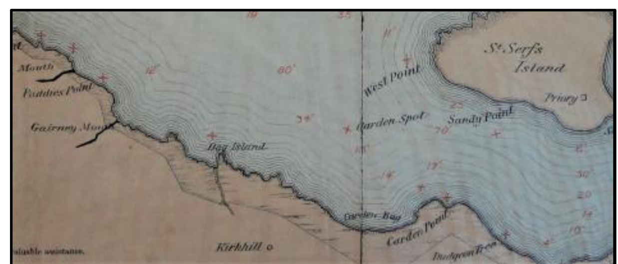
*Painting of Castle Island by an unknown artist c.1820, showing nets hanging out to dry and a net being set by fishermen.*

Invaluable sources for additional names are the diaries kept by David Marshall (1831-1902), the last tacksman of the Loch Leven net fishings. Compiled between 1847 and 1862, there are many references in these diaries to fishing sets not recorded on Birrell's sketch plan. Additional names mentioned include Little Kittle, Old Portmoak, Johnstone, White stane on the Vain, Inch Black and Brown, Gingle Dike (Jingle Dyke) and Jamecky (also Jummocks Deep).

Net fishing on Loch Leven came to an end in 1873 when David Marshall retired and the lease was passed to the Loch Leven Angling Association. Anglers, more interested in drifting across the best fishing sites, rely on both shoreline reference points as a means of navigation and hydronyms that reflect the sub-surface topography.

Reference points range from distinct boundary walls such as the Jingle Dyke and Vain Dyke to individual trees such as the Dudgeon Tree, an alder tree shaped like a dagger that was eventually felled in the 1970s. Although Burns Begg retained most of the 'set' names on his anglers map of the loch, the majority of these names disappeared from maps like the popular *Angling Map of Loch Leven,* produced for many years by William Robertson and James Harris. In their place, amongst 62 names, there appear topographical hydronyms such as The Shallows (on the east side of the loch), The Hems (loch side boundary of The Shallows marked by buoys) North, Mid and South Deeps (glacial kettle holes), Horn Bank (shallow area NW of St Serf's Island), Horse Shoe (cut into The Shallows between East Buoy and east shoreline) and Black and Brown (water colour change indicating transition to exceedingly shallow fringe adjacent to peaty east shore).

While some names such as Carden Point, a promontory on the south shore, are to be found on almost all maps dating back to Blaeu (1654), new names frequently appear. For example, the name Johnstone mentioned in Marshall's diary refers to a fishing area off the south-east shore of the loch where the farm of Johnstown, later renamed Levenmouth, was created in the 1830s following the lowering of Loch Leven. Harry's Pier on the edge of the Kirkgate Park, one of 60 names to be found on a 2013 on-line anglers map dates from 1965 when the pier was built to transport summer tourists to Castle Island. The first ferryman was Harry Hoy.




*Detail from* The Angling Map of Loch Leven *by William Robertson and James Harris, showing shoreline names (W-E) from Paddies Point to the Dudgeon Tree.*

The hydronyms and shoreline toponyms of Loch Leven, most of which are sourced from 19th and 20th century maps and documents, have been created and kept very much alive by the fishing community right up to the present day. Willie Wilson, who has managed the Loch Leven Fisheries since 1962, is an invaluable source on the origins of names which are still used daily during the summer fishing season both as an aid to navigating the loch and to recording the locations where fish are caught. A favourite drift, when the wind is from the west, takes fishermen across the Thrapple Hole, a bay just south of the mouth of the South Queich. This name, according to Willie Wilson, is derived from various bits of anatomy that were said to have floated into the loch from an abbatoir at the foot of Kinross.

*View of the Vane Dyke over the shallow Vane Bank from South East Point on St Serf's Island.*

While some names, like the Dudgeon Tree, no longer survive, both old names and names coined more recently are in common usage. The end result is a unique and very dynamic corpus of names kept alive by those who fish the waters of this lowland Scottish loch today.

**David Munro**

## *PLACES AND LANDSCAPES OF POWER: 'COMPARATIVE KINGSHIP: THE EARLY MEDIEVAL KINGDOMS OF NORTHERN BRITAIN AND IRELAND'*

This paper at the Perth conference was an introduction to the five-year Leverhulme Trust funded 'Comparative Kingship: the early medieval Kingdoms of Northern Britain and Ireland' project led by Dr Gordon Noble in the Archaeology department of the University of Aberdeen, focussing on the place-name element of the project, which I will be undertaking with Dr Simon Taylor as my mentor.

The project aims to further our understanding of kingship in Scotland and Ireland in the first millennium A.D. By comparing these countries with the international experience, the intention is to see whether these regions, which did not experience long-term Roman occupation, followed the same paths in their development of kingdoms and states as elsewhere.

The project will take an interdisciplinary approach, using archaeological, historical, landscape, environmental, and place-name studies to bring out different aspects relevant to these debates, and will use Bayesian statistical analysis to refine our pre-existing and project radiocarbon dating evidence.

The research includes studying kingship in general in Scotland and Ireland, but will primarily focus on three territories: Munster in Ireland, Dál Riata in both County Antrim in Ireland and the western seaboard of Scotland, and Pictland. In these areas four particular sites and their hinterlands will receive concentrated attention: the Rock of Cashel (County Tipperary), the primary royal site of Munster; the promontory site of Dunseverick on the north Antrim coast; and for Pictland the two northern sites of Burghead in Moray and Rhynie in Aberdeenshire. Not only these sites, but also the surrounding areas, will be investigated archaeologically, while through the taking of core samples from wetland areas we hope to build up a picture of the environment, and how this changed over time. Place-name research is a key part of the project, as it is an important way to understand people and their landscape.

*Dunseverick*

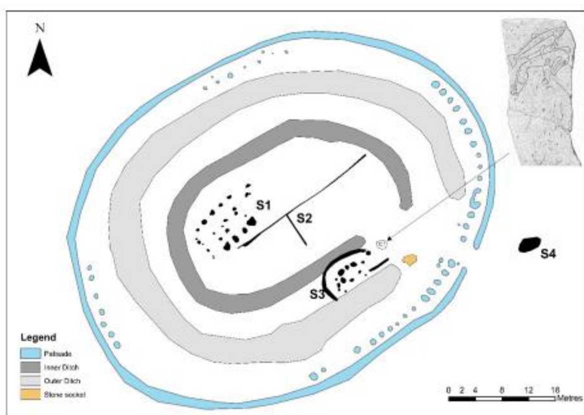
The project is still in its first year, so is still in its early stages. So far, the sites of Rhynie, Burghead, and Kinneddar near to Lossiemouth have been investigated, producing significant results, and it is intended that archaeological field research on the Irish sites will begin in summer 2018.

The main place-names work, consisting of full surveys and selective studies of wider areas, will begin in the summer of 2019. However, more

ad-hoc analysis, such as locating places which appear in written sources like the Irish chronicles and names of sites investigated by the archaeologists, will be undertaken throughout the project. The intention is that all work will be used to produce GIS maps which allow us to study the names of places alongside the environmental, archaeological and other written evidence.

*3D model of Burghead*
*©University of Aberdeen, www.sketchfab.com, University of Aberdeen, Archaeology*

Due to constrained resources and the need not to duplicate work being undertaken by those better qualified, full surveys will be published for a few Scottish parishes. Two modern parishes on the Moray coast will be surveyed: Duffus parish containing Burghead, and Drainie (formerly the medieval parishes of Ogston and Kinneddar), thus encompassing land from Burghead to Kinneddar and Lossiemouth. This area would have been functionally nearly an island in medieval times. Rhynie parish in Strathbogie, also including the medieval parish of Essie, will similarly receive a full survey employing the methodology of the Survey of Scottish Place-Names.




*Plan of the Craw Stane Complex, Rhynie*
*©University of Aberdeen*

However, in addition to this a third strand to the place-name analysis, selective studies of parishes around the central places, will be undertaken for all case study areas in both Ireland and Scotland. This will involve studying 1:50,000 scale maps and nineteenth-century 6-inch first edition OS maps, as well as places which other evidence indicates are of interest, and further work on early sources. The project will then investigate further: pre-Gaelic (including Pictish) names; place-names potentially linked to pre-1100 kingship and governance, such as *dún*, *caisel*, and *ráith* names; topographical names with potential social implications in some cases, for instance names including *tulach* and *inis*; land unit and settlement names indicating the division of the land and particular land organisations, such as those including *ceathramh*, *dabhach*, *pett*, and *baile*; the main church sites, and their lands, for example the interesting *annat* place-names in Duffus parish identified by Alasdair Ross; and names with 'king' and other leader terms as elements, like Ballinree names near Cashel.

Such comparative studies contain a number of challenges. One is the much larger number of early medieval sources for Ireland, particularly Munster. We could have focussed the Irish place-name studies on reconstructed early medieval polities, but that is not possible in Scotland, so to ensure comparability the case study areas all cover roughly equivalent geographical areas and are based on parishes not kingdoms.

There are other differences, such as the variable survival of records, and the greater continuity in Ireland of sites and territorial units – most notably the townland – but there are also commonalities, such as the first edition Ordnance Survey, and the predominance of Gaelic and later Scots and English dialects. In fact, the project offers an important opportunity to consider whether varying patterns of survival and different scholarly traditions mask essential similarities in our evidence and to identify divergences which show how kingship impacted upon the landscape in different ways with long-term political implications.

The detailed work on place-names will start from the summer of 2019. We will be publishing the full surveys, and using the research undertaken for these and the Selective Studies for analysis. We will be mapping different types of names, considering their relationships with each other, with central places, with archaeological finds and sites, and with the landscape, its resources and utilisation. Another avenue of investigation will be whether or not there are correspondences with the boundaries of territorial units: medieval

parishes, lordships and kingdoms, and sub-parish units like the davoch in Scotland, and the townland in Ireland. In doing all this, the intention is to show how place-names, and interdisciplinary studies in general, can be used to produce a richer picture of Ireland and Scotland, and their place in the wider historical context.

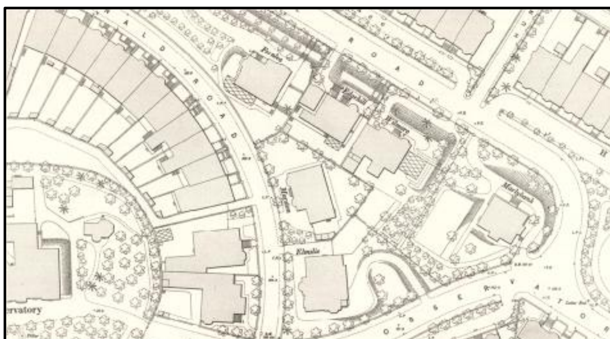
**Nicholas Evans**

*John G Wilkinson envisages how etymological heretics might have been dealt with 400-odd years ago. (Third on left looks suspiciously like James VI and I – ed.)*

**AWARDS FOR STUDENTS!**

Details of grants available to students from the Thomas Marcus Huser Fieldwork Fund and the Cultural Contacts Fund, as well as of the Nicolaisen Essay Prize, are available on the SPNS website, <http://spns.org.uk/>.

## ELMSLIE



*From NLS Map Images: OS 25 inch, 1894*

We are used to seeing orthographical uncertainty – variations in spellings of a place-name – in older documents and maps. It is perhaps less common to see that uncertainty on public view. On Dowanhill in Glasgow, the oldest and biggest houses are possessed of what seem to be aspirationally English names such as Elstow, Marston, Thorncliffe, or Northcote, most of these seemingly transferred place-names, and many still bearing their names carved on pillarposts at their entries. Prominent among these is Marlybank, originally *Marleybank*, built in 1840, the oldest remaining building on the hill. Just next to it, built later between it and the Glasgow Observatory, was *Elmslie*, now (along with Marlybank itself) part of the University of Glasgow's General Practice and Primary Care unit. It is spelled 'Elmslie' in the earliest maps that I have found which record it, from the 1890s (though it was there by at least 1882), and on legal records.

However, on the pillars leading up to the house, there is less confidence. On the left-hand pillar, ELMSLIE is clearly rendered.

The right-hand pillar, however, is a palimpsest of uncertainty, with the alternative spellings ELMSLIE and ELMSLEA shimmering in between each other, the latter dominating.

Glasgow University has noted this already in its *Estates Conservation Strategy* (2012) p. 242 (https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_222887_en.pdf), stating, only half accurately as can be

seen, that Elmslie is a 'spelling contradicted on the gate piers as Elmslea'.

It is worth noting that Elmslie is an uncommon spelling for place-names of this type in Britain, whether houses or larger settlement, with *Elsmlea*, *Elmsley* and especially *Elmsleigh* predominating at the time of the Ordnance Survey 6 inch 2nd edition, to judge by a search on the new, marvellous tool, GB1900, accessible through the NLS Map website: https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore. Elmslie seems, however, to be the dominant spelling for the surname (itself originally taken from a place-name, of course), with the earliest Scottish Elmslie being recorded in 1296: Robert of Elmslie, in Aberdeen; (see PoMS: http://db.poms.ac.uk/record/person/17122/#. The recently published *Oxford Dictionary of Family Names in Britain and Ireland* (2016, s.nn.) takes *Elmslie* as a Scottish surname and *Elmsley* as an English one, and the census data presented there from 1881 (around the time the house was built and, presumably, named), certainly bears this out, with a heavy concentration of Elmslie in north-east Scotland, especially Aberdeenshire, where it was first attested. *Elmslea* is not noted as a variant spelling for either surname. At a guess, then (and perhaps archival research would further clarify), the house was named from a family name related to one of its first residents, but the more usual place-name spelling seems to have caused some second thoughts for later residents, or their sign-painters.

**Thomas Owen Clancy, University of Glasgow**

## *WRANGHAM: A PLACE-NAME IN THE WRANG PLACE* [1]

At the Society's autumn 2017 conference in Glasgow, Sue Laflin spoke on 'Laflin: a surname in the wrong place'. Place-names too can appear in unexpected places, none more so than Wrangham in the parish of Culsalmond, Aberdeenshire. Macdonald (1899: 346) recorded the early forms *Warngham* (1366) and *Wranghame* 1644, 1696), but did not attempt an explanation of the name. Alexander (1952: 411) added information on pronunciation, but nothing further. Work by my colleague Simon Taylor has now uncovered three 13th-century forms, *de warngham* (1250 x 1299), *Wrangham* (1261), and *apud Wrangham* (1273 x 1289), all pointing towards a compound of Old English (OE) *wrang* 'crooked' and OE *hām* 'settlement'. However, there are difficulties with such an etymology, both geographical and semantic. Pre-eminent among them is the location of Wrangham outside the Border counties and East Lothian where all other *hām* names have been identified (Nicolaisen 2001: 26). This limited geographical spread is of course because *hām* is one of the earliest Old English place-name elements in Scotland, generally taken to have become obsolete as a habitative term during the eighth century. James (2010) has shown that it continued in use longer with reference to a *mynster*, but even in that usage probably not beyond about 800. My talk at Perth made a case for Wrangham as a genuine *hām* name, and explored possible interpretations.

A crucial point is that the Aberdeenshire Wrangham does not appear in complete isolation from other early types of Old English names. Nicolaisen's (2001: 97) map of early Anglian place-name generics includes *wīc* 'specialised farm' and *worth* 'enclosure' alongside *hām*, with occurrences of the former in both Aberdeenshire and Angus. More recent research, including for the REELS project, has uncovered further examples of all three, suggesting a potential progression up the east coast.

Moreover, Wrangham has doublets both in the Borders and elsewhere. Historical spellings of St Antony's Well in Eccles, one of the six Berwickshire parishes for which the REELS project is undertaking full place-name survey, include *Wrangham Well* (1862, 1909). In the same parish is the lost place-name *Wrangholmhill* (1633), later recorded as *Wranghimhill* (1648) and *Wrangham hill* (1752–5). Williamson (1942: 15-16) also drew attention to a lost *Wranghame* (1505) in the parish of Smailholm in neighbouring Roxburghshire. Peter Drummond kindly informs me of a further occurrence, Wrangholm in the Lanarkshire parish of Bothwell, first recorded as *Wra[n]gham* in the 1590s. Finally, over the border with England is another Wrangham in Northumberland, recorded in that spelling from 1820 onwards. It therefore seems likely that Wrangham represents a name-type rather than an *ad hoc* combination of elements.

[1] This research was carried out as part of the Leverhulme-funded REELS project, *Recovering the Earliest English Language in Scotland: evidence from place-names*. I am grateful to my colleagues Simon Taylor and Eila Williamson for their help. (https://berwickshire-placenames.glasgow.ac.uk/).

The first element also appears to support an early formation, in contrast to names like the ubiquitous Cauldhame, from the Scots reflex of *hām* and Scots *cauld* 'cold'. The only known term with which it can plausibly be associated is OE *wrang* 'crooked or twisted in shape', an element found in English place-names, as set out by Smith (1956: ii, 278):

**wrang** OE adj., **(v)rangr** ON adj., 'crooked or twisted in shape'. The OE word is thought to be a loan from ON *vrangr* (cf. NED s.v. *wrong*), but it may be native as it is found in OE *on wrangan hylle* 944 BCS 801 Brk, which is rather early for a loan of this kind in Brk. It is used once as a noun in Wulfstan's *Homilies* xlii, 203 in late OE, and a WGerm cognate exists in MLG *wrangh* 'sour, bitter'; in p.ns. it is usually combined with OE els. It is not common, as the idea could be expressed by other els. such as OE **wōh**. (*a*) Wrampool La (**pōl**), Wrangbrook YW (**brōc**), Wrangling C (**land**), perhaps also Wrangaton, Wrangworthy D (**tūn**, **worðig**). [~ **wringe**, by ablaut.]

The term is the ancestor of Modern English *wrong*, Scots *wrang* 'morally crooked', and is part of a large group of words that develop a metaphorical meaning relating to morals from an original meaning relating to shape (e.g. *crooked*, *twisted*, *warped*). As with most such words, the literal meaning predates the metaphorical one. Indeed, *wrang* is only attested in Scots in the metaphorical sense 'not right', suggesting that the literal use had already become obsolete by the time by the time speakers of Old English arrived in Scotland. The place-name Wrangham challenges that assumption, by appearing to provide unique evidence that the literal meaning was current in Scotland.

However, there are two problems; one morphological, the other semantic. Old English adjectives took inflectional endings, as in the charter form *on wrangan hylle* cited by Smith. The <an> inflection would typically be weakened to medial <e>, and then disappear completely from the modern form of the place-name, as in all the examples from England. The modern form Wrangham is therefore unexceptional. However, the various Wrangham names cited above include several early spellings, of which none shows any residual trace of an adjectival inflection. That is far from conclusive, but it does give us pause. The real problem, though, is what the name means. 'Crooked or twisting' makes good sense in connection with a stream, as in Wrangbrook in the West Riding of Yorkshire. It may also be plausible in connection with a building of an odd shape, and perhaps even with reference to an enclosure or land-holding, as in Wrangworthy in Devon. In connection with OE *hām*, however, which as James (2010) has argued often referred to a substantial area, it is more difficult to visualise, and certainly difficult to see why such a formation would have been coined repeatedly – even if one or more may have been influenced by others.

Smith concludes with a cross-reference to the entry for the etymologically related element *wringe*, which reads as follows (1956: ii, 279):

**wringe** OE, 'a press', 'a cheese- or a cider-press'. (*a*) Ring-, Wringford Co, Wringworthy D (**worðig**). [~ OE *wringan* 'to twist, to wring, to press out', **wrang**.]

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v. *wring*, n.[1]) also records the sense 'a cider-press or wine-press' from Old English, and 'a cheese-press' from the 17th century. It is striking that all three occurrences noted by Smith are in combination with OE *worðig* 'enclosure, farm, estate', another early Old English term. Indeed, the entry for Wringworthy in the Devon volume of the English Place-Name Survey refers to "four Wringworthys in Cornwall" (Gover *et al.* 1931: 201), making a total of at least five,[2] with no other generic element on record in combination with OE *wringe* 'a press'.

As with the Wranghams, that suggests a compound rather than an *ad hoc* combination of elements, possibly denoting a place or building with a particular function to do with wine-making or the like. All the toponymic occurrences of OE *wringe* are from the far south of England – Devon and Cornwall – and the only pre-Conquest quotation in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is also from a southern text. The term has no entry in the Dictionary of the Scots Language, so perhaps *wrang* was the northern equivalent. The suggestion may be supported by the geographical proximity of the Eccles *Wrangham* to a lost *Brewlands* (1674) in the same parish. It is also close to Leitholm, an early place-name from OE *hām*. So too, the Roxburghshire *Wranghame* is close to Smailholm, another place-name from OE *hām*.

[2] I suspect that two of Gover's "Wringworthys" may be the Ring-, Wringfords cited by Smith. If not, there would be a total of six in Cornwall.

In conclusion, I suggest that the Aberdeenshire Wrangham should be understood geographically in the context of the north-eastern Anglian names, and semantically in the context of the south-eastern Wranghams. By comparison with names from the etymologically related OE *wringe* 'press' in southern England, and bearing in mind that at least two occurrences are in close proximity to names from OE *hām*, it seems possible that the name-type Wrangham designated a place with a specialised function in connection with wine-making for a nearby *hām*.

**Carole Hough**

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**Life Membership of SPNS**

SPNS now has a membership category, 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 2018, you have £10 credit which means you'd only pay £70 for Life membership). peter.drummond@btinternet.com; 8 Academy Place, Coatbridge ML5 3AX

'**Names and Naming: People, Places, Perceptions and Power**' (edited by Guy Puzey and Laura Kostanski) is available, through www.multilingual-matters.com.

## DR BOB HENERY'S MAP RESEARCH - AN APPRECIATION

Bob Henery made a lasting contribution to our understanding of the Pont manuscript maps of Scotland, and he has also left us with comprehensive gazetteers of all the names on the Pont and Blaeu maps, that will be of enduring value.

In the last decade, Bob applied his diligent, mathematical and logical mind to several Pont map subjects that had not been tackled before. For example, in 2011, he applied cartometric techniques, based on the pixel location of all the names from the images of the maps, to refine our understanding of which Blaeu maps were directly based on Pont originals, rather than on maps by Robert Gordon, as had hitherto been assumed. Bob also usefully brought to attention the value of Pont's written texts to help understand the maps and various anomalies in them, including *Pont's Evil Map of the River Nairn* (Pont 8). Bob also spent some time working through the three numbering sequences on the Pont maps, by Gough, Cash, and in another hand. Amongst other things, this sadly confirmed that four Pont maps went missing from the Advocates Library sometime between 1723 and 1780.

Then in 2015, Bob presented us with a comprehensive gazetteer of all 11,358 place names on the Pont manuscript maps, ca. 1583-1614. Not only did this categorise the name by feature type and with modern equivalents (where possible), but also precisely gave the pixel reference of each name, allowing the web user to be taken directly from the listed name in the gazetteer to the name on the Pont map. Bob went on in 2017 to send through a further gazetteer of all the names on the Blaeu maps of Scotland, printed in 1654 – some 28,394 names! The two gazetteers combined therefore provide a comprehensive set of place names, based on the earliest detailed maps of Scotland, of immense value to posterity.

- Pont gazetteer: http://maps.nls.uk/pont/placenames/a-d.html
- Blaeu gazetteer: https://maps.nls.uk/atlas/blaeu/gazetteer/browse/a-d.html
- How many maps were lost by the Advocates Library?: https://maps.nls.uk/pont/history/lost-maps.html
- Mysterious Numerals on Pont, Gordon, and Adair maps:

https://maps.nls.uk/pont/history/mysterious-numerals.html

- Bob's articles for *Cairt* can be found in *Cairt* 19 and 20 at https://www.nls.uk/collections/maps/subject-info/cairt

**Chris Fleet, National Libraries of Scotland**

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The **SPNS autumn conference** is on Saturday 17th November 2018 at the Scottish Storytelling Centre, Netherbow, Edinburgh. It will be a joint conference with the Scottish Records Association, on the theme of 'Sources'. Details on separate flier. Next spring's conference will be at the V&A Museum, Dundee, on 11 May (not the 4th).

The Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland (**SNSBI**) and **Cymdeithas Enwau Lleoedd Cymru /Welsh Place-Name Society** hold a joint day conference at Bangor on 6th October.

The **Scottish Society for Northern Studies** meets at 50 George Square, Edinburgh, for its autumn day conference on 24 November. www.ssns.org.uk

***The Place-Names of Fife,***
*by Simon Taylor with Gilbert Márkus*
Vols II-V still available; normally £24 each, but £22 incl. UK p&p* to SPNS members.

***Kinross-shire*** volume recently out – special offer to SPNS members £28 incl. UK p&p*.

*E-mail Shaun Tyas at Paul Watkins Publishing, shaun@shauntyas.myzen.co.uk, to arrange overseas postage or Paypal payments; or telephone 01775 821542 for credit card payments; or send cheques to 1 High Street, Donington, Lincs., PE11 4TA.

## *THE CATERAN TRAIL: A WALK AMONG THE PLACE-NAMES AND FIANNSCAPE OF EASTERN PERTHSHIRE AND STRATHARDLE*

The Cateran Trail is a long-distance foot-path which begins in Blairgowrie and then takes in Strathardle before heading over the hills to Spittal of Glenshee and then on to Alyth via Kirkton of Glenisla. I was asked by Cateran Commonwealth, an organisation looking in to the heritage of the area along with Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust, to research the place-names with one kilometre of the path and publish a series of booklets that could be downloaded on to portable media devices which people could access while they walk. This is not the only project I have been doing in Perthshire recently: I had been researching place-names for Glasgow University's SERF project and Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust's Dunkeld project; Northlight Heritage asked me to research an ecclesiastical route through Glenlyon; and I also looked at the area between Perth and Abernethy and the Carse of Gowrie for the Tay Landscape Partnership. A large part of the groundwork for a survey of eastern Perthshire is therefore in place.

The booklets for the Cateran Trail can be found online[3]. There are six booklets which detail the 5 stages of the trail, as well as a circular Mini-Trail. The booklets are designed for use while walking in that they are not arranged alphabetically, but as one encounters the place-name on the ground. as it were. Otherwise the entries are laid out in the standard style of the recent Scottish Place-Name Society volumes of Fife, Bute, and Kinross-shire, namely a head-name followed by early forms and discussion. The booklets also have little essays built into them showing how the place-names fit into the three main themes of the Cateran Trail project – People, Places, Landscape.

Why call it the Cateran Trail? There are quite a few records over the course of the Middle Ages of Caterans using the Perthshire and Angus glens to raid the Lowlands. Cateran probably derives from a Gaelic word *ceatharn* meaning 'warrior', but usually one that is lightly armed. In the Lowlands *cateran* came to epitomise Highland violence but it is indicative of a Lowland perception of a particularly Gaelic Highland problem. Celebrated locally today is a raid into Angus in 1392, which caused, according to one medieval chronicler, 'grete discorde', and which led to a pitched battle between the caterans and forces headed by Sir David Lindsay of Glenesk. The battle is variously said to have been at Glasclune near Blairgowrie or at Dalnagairn in Strathardle, leaving the caterans fleeing the field of battle.

[3] At https://commonculture.org.uk/events-2 (scroll down the page for the links to the pdf files)

At Perth I presented a number of results into my studies, including:

**CALLY HOUSE** KRK S NO117522

*Kalathyn* 1214 × 1238 *Coupar Angus Chrs* no. 25

*Calady* 1326 *Coupar Angus Chrs* no. 108

*Calady* 1443 C.A. *Rental* i, 121

*Cally* 1463 C.A. *Rental i,* 131 [Marches between *Ester Cally* or *Monkis*

*Cally,* and *Parsy* (Persie) and *Myddil Cally* or *Buttiris Cally*]

OG *calath* + OG *-in*

'Hard place' or 'at a hard place'. While on the face of it, the current spelling and the early forms for nearby Rochallie, might suggest a meaning of ScG *coille* 'wood, woodland' – early forms for Faskally near Pitlochry PER include *Foscailye* 1505, *Fascalzie* 1615. However, the earliest forms for Cally – *Kalathyn* in 1214 × 1238 and *Calady* in 1326 – suggest a name based on Pictish *caled, from a Proto-Celtic **kaleto-*, 'hard'. The Old Irish form of this was *calath*, developing into *calad* and *caladh* (Watson 1926, 456). The earliest form seems to contain the OG *–in* ending 'place of; place at', so common in pre-1300 documents and later reducing to an *–ie*, or *-y* ending. Quite what was 'hard' about Cally is not clear; the word is found in places all over Scotland containing names like Calder, Cawdor, Keltie.

**FORTER** GLI S NO182646

*ffortouth* 1233 *Coupar Angus Chrs* no. 41

*Fortour* 1455 × 1465 *C.A. Rental* i, 131

half part of *Fortar* 1470 *C.A. Rental* i, 157

an eighth part of *Fortur in Glenyleff* 1478 *C.A. Rental* i, 226

OG *fortír* 'overland', or 'upper' or 'higher' land. Barrow states that this name means 'terrain which was either never or at least not regularly under the plough', to distinguish it from the lower-lying parts of estates which were arable land (2003, 242).

*DIL* (Dictionary of the Irish Language) has no entry with anything like this meaning for **fortír*, and it seems to be absent in Ireland but it occurs largely in areas of Scotland that were once Pictish speaking; so it may actually represent a loan-word from the Pictish equivalent of Welsh *gorthir* 'uplands, highlands, hill country', **uorthir* or similar, which has then undergone Gaelicisation. The name is also found in Fife in Forthar and Kirkforthar.

One of the great pleasures of doing an area in place-name studies is the chance to take oneself away from the very necessary and often heavy medieval material that we usually work with and look into more modern history. Here we have:

**WATERLOO** KRK S NO109558

*Waterloo* 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn PER & CLA XLI

This place was named to commemorate the British victory at the Battle of Waterloo, which occurred on 18th June 1815. This tradition of naming places after famous battles has continued into the modern period; there is an Alamein about 7 km north of Aboyne in Aberdeenshire.

**SALAMANCA** KRK S NO109559

*Salamanca* 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn PER & CLA XLI

The juxtaposition with Waterloo above indicates that these two settlements were named to commemorate the battles against France under the regime of Napoleon Bonaparte between 1803 and 1815. The battle of Salamanca in western Spain, was part of the Peninsular War, and occurred on 22nd July 1812. The belligerents were France against a British-Portuguese coalition under the command of Arthur Wellesley, later Duke of Wellington; the French were heavily defeated.

After presenting a few other examples, I finished off my talk by looking at what Alec Finlay calls the *Fiannscape* of Glenshee, something I had first looked into when I was researching Glenshee as part of the Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust archaeological excavation at Lair. It is well known, particularly from the work of modern scholars such as Donald Meek, that Finn mac Cumhail and his band of Fians were celebrated in Glenshee; the poem Laoidh Dhiarmuid was set on Ben Gulabin, a prominent mountain at the head of the glen. What is not so well known is that there are also a number of names indicating that the Gaels imagined that the exploits of Finn mac Cumhail within the glen. 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 Finn's enemies met their end. I mentioned that perhaps the McComies seem to have been significant in the dissemination of the myths and legends of Finn mac Cumhail. It is known that the author of a short poem alluding to several individuals famous in Gaelic mythology, in the Book of the Dean of Lismore, was one Baron Ewan McComie. The McComies (deriving from the name MacThomas or MacThomaidh) had lands

in both Glenshee and Glenisla and a rock in Glen Beanie is called *McComie's Chair and Well.*

**Peter McNiven**

## BOOKS FROM SPNS

Please see website for details of:

*In the Beginning was the Name*, selected essays by Professor W.F.H. Nicolaisen;

*Cultural Contacts in the North Atlantic Region: The Evidence of Names*, edited by Peder Gammeltoft, Carole Hough and Doreen Waugh; and

*The Place-Names of Midlothian*, Dr Norman Dixon's previously inaccessible and still important PhD study of 1947, with Introduction by Simon Taylor.

## A name in the news

A certain royal wedding in May caused, for relatively indifferent Scotland, great excitement at the tiny settlement of Markle in East Lothian, with a rough count of one large house, a cottage restored from former ruin and 24 dwellings formed by conversion and extension of an old farm steading. For the website report by BBC Scotland this little community was variably a hamlet or a village, complete with description of a piece of grass as the bunting-decorated 'village green' where a barbecue and strawberries and cream were to be enjoyed. The 'Markle' name sign on the adjacent highway was decorated with streamers and pink hearts, and had become a popular attraction to photograph.

Photo by Liz Curtis

Fragments of a late medieval or early modern laird's house ('Markle Castle') were described as standing on the site of an ancient battle, "where the army of Angus, King of the Picts, defeated the forces of King Athel – a victory which they hailed as a miracle. Markle got its name from Merkill – the Scots word for miracle."

Obvious toponymic tosh, but tosh with a surprisingly long pedigree, though with an added layer of muddle in this case. Plainly the reference is to the 'Battle of Athelstaneford' in the longer version of the St Andrews foundation legend, in which the Picts and Scots under King Hungus, having camped near the mouth of an unspecified River Tyne, defeated an army of the Saxon king Athelstan and slew him, after Hungus had been granted a night-time vision of the apostle Andrew promising victory on the morrow. The presence of a River Tyne in the vicinity, together with conveniently named neighbouring places *Merkhille* (*Ovir-* and *Ne[t]hir-, RMS* i no 159, dated 1363) and *Alstaneford* (1213) / *Helstanford* (1245) / *Elstanford* (1250x59) allowed patriotic later medieval writers to make the latter name more explicitly refer to the slain Saxon king, as in Walter Bower's *Athelstanford* (c 1440) with the 'lost' syllable restored; and the probable 'mark' or 'march' hill to be recast to refer to the visitation by the apostle.

The website has relocated the legendary battle from Athelstaneford (still pronounced locally much as in the earliest spellings) to the supposed place of the miraculous vision; the minister reporting on Athelstaneford for the Old Statistical Account (1790s) described *Martle* (*sic* as printed) as a contraction of 'miracle', acknowledging also the Renaissance scholar George Buchanan's detail that the St Andrew's Cross appeared in the sky as the battle began – the focus of the legend as widely known today but not in its oldest written form.

It seems very unlikely that Meghan Markle's surname, despite the identity of spelling, originated in this tiny place in Edinburgh's commuter belt. There is a larger (Much) Marcle in Herefordshire, best known for its cider, which has a different etymology: *Merchelai* 1086 (Domesday Book), from OE *mearc* + *lēah*, 'wood or clearing on boundary'. However, the German surname Markel (a minority variant of the somewhat better known Merkel) seems a more plausible origin. Curiously, given the 'miracle' of Markle and its occasional variant spelling of *Martle*, other variants of the German name include *Merickel / Merikel* and *Moertel / Moerthel.*[4]

*Bill Patterson (with thanks to Liz Curtis and to Thomas Owen Clancy for alerting to the BBC website report)*

[4] https://de.geneanet.org/genealogie/markel/MARKEL, accessed 21/9/2018