# SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME NEWS

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

*In Glen Doll, Angus, beside the White Water, a tributary of the South Esk. In his book on the names of* The Glens of Angus, *the late David Dorward noted that the name Glen Doll did not seem ancient. Although the name was on General Roy's military survey of the mid 18th century, it was absent from Ainslie's map in the 1790s. However, Ainslie showed a croft called Dole at the foot of the glen where it joins Glen Clova; Bartholomew maps of the 1960s still marked 'Glen of the Doll'; and Dorward comments that the glen's name was earlier pronounced 'Dole'. Unsurprisingly he concluded that the origin was Pictish **dol *('haugh, meadow', adopted into Gaelic as* dail *and cognate with Welsh* dôl; *also* dol *in Cornish and Breton).*

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## *COMMENT*

The new V&A (or officially Victoria and Albert) Museum on Dundee's waterfront has been a source of much public interest even before its opening last year. No doubt many SPNS members who live some distance from it will have made a mental note to visit it when the opportunity arises. That occasion will arise in the form of our spring conference in a structure, designed by architect Kengo Kuma, for which the word 'distinctive' is an understatement. Those who have some spare time for sightseeing before or after will have the chance to note some of the other changes being wrought along the riverside and around the city centre. Some, with long memories of how unkind the mid 20th century was to the historic port city, will appreciate the efforts to connect, forming once again a riverside city centre, handsome old streets and new human-scale places reclaimed from dereliction and traffic engineers' concrete spaghetti.

## *THE* LLYFR ANEIRIN *AND THE PLACE-NAMES OF* Y GODODDIN

The *Llyfr Aneirin* (henceforth *LA*), now housed in the National Library of Wales (Cardiff MS 2.81), is one of the most celebrated but controversial collections of early Welsh poetry. *LA* contains the famous elegies collectively referred to as *Y Gododdin*, four interpolations and four *gorchanau*. *Y Gododdin* is the standard modern title derived from a rubric preceding the text that translates: 'This is *The Gododdin*. Aneirin sang it'. These poems are attributed to the sixth-century poet Aneirin, and according to conventional understanding, they are laments commemorating the warriors of the Guotodin people and their allies who fell in the battle of Catraeth in the late sixth or early seventh century. The manuscript dates to *c.* 1250-1265. It was compiled in North Wales, and though the foundation that produced the work is unknown, it might have been the Cistercian house of Aberconwy. The manuscript Peniarth 17 has recently been attributed to one of *LA*'s scribes, and because of the Gwynedd interest in Peniarth 17, it has been suggested that this scribe belonged to Aberconwy (Mittendorf, 129; Huws, 75).

*LA* was written in two hands now known as A and B. The hands are contemporary with one another, and exhibit thirteenth-century orthography. Scribe A wrote the majority of the manuscript. Scribe A's orthography is Middle Welsh. Scribe B's text, however, preserves elements of archaic orthography and language. Based on linguistic analysis of the B text, two distinct sources can be traced in B (Isaac 1993: 83-9; Isaac 1999), and this has led some editors (e.g. Koch 1997) to categorize the B text as $B^1$ and $B^2$, $B^2$ being earlier. There is little doubt that Scribe B was copying from an earlier source (or possibly two), but the dating of B's lost exemplar(s) is problematic. Many of the poems in the A text are also repeated, with variations, in the B text, which implies that these poems were derived from different exemplars with a common archetype. To summarise the arguments for the dating of the texts, careful analysis of the language and corresponding stanzas between A and B indicates that the exemplar behind B's text cannot be dated any earlier than the ninth or tenth century, the latter being most likely (Charles-Edwards 1978: 50-1; Simon Evans, 81-7; Padel, 132).

The *LA*, particularly *Y Gododdin*, is controversial because most of the elegies appear to be set in the sixth- to seventh-century Old North. However, the *LA* — the only manuscript to preserve the corpus — dates to the thirteenth century. This is a large chronological gap, and opinions on the antiquity of *Y Gododdin* are divided.

For decades the assumed date of composition was *c.* AD 600 (Williams 1938: xl-xlii; Jackson 1978: 56-67). Some have recently argued that

the majority of the poems were composed in the Brittonic North from *c.*540-*c.*570, and only later transferred to Wales (Dumville, 3-4; Koch 1997: III, IX and xxx, lxxx). Others have argued that the entire corpus is a later Welsh literary creation, reflecting on events of the Brittonic Old North (Padel, 117, 132).

Most of the place-names in *LA* have been subject to orthographic modernisation, and few are identifiable. Regardless of the difficulty in interpreting the onomastic material, even a cursory reading of *Y Gododdin* demonstrates that place-names were an important, even integral feature of this style of poetry. Of the 134 stanzas in *LA* (including the *gorchanau* and *englynion*) there are only 29 which do not record place-names or folk-names. This is less than a fourth of the entire corpus. The place-names associated with the individual(s) commemorated were, therefore, an important feature of this poetic tradition.

The following section will consider the majority of the place-names and folk-names that occur in both the A and B texts in *Y Gododdin*, then those that occur only in B because it is earlier, followed by those in A. This article will conclude with a brief discussion of the place-names and the text itself.

**The Guotodin**

The Guotodin people are recorded 20 times in the A text and 11 times in the B text. The Guotodin are identified with the *Votadini*, an Iron Age tribe first recorded by Ptolemy, who locates them in Northumberland, Berwickshire, and Lothian to the Firth of Forth. The linguistic transition from Iron Age *Votadini* > ninth century *Guotodin* > MidW *Gododin* > ModW *Gododdin* is unobjectionable (Jackson 1953: 653; Jackson 1978: 69).

**The English**

The English are the main antagonists, and the Guotodin are never *specifically* depicted in conflict with other Britons (contra Koch 1997: xxxii-xxxiv). A variety of terms are used for the English, including *Lloegr, Lloegrwys*, *Saesson* and *Eingyl.* A distinction is made between the Bernicians (*Brennych*) and the Deirans (*Deivyr*), which may be significant as the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira did not amalgamate to form Northumbria until AD 654.

**Catraeth**

The most frequently mentioned place-name is Catraeth. It is recorded 23 times in the A text and five in B. It is the name of a battle and also a place-name. The name occurs in the formulaic first line *gwyr a aeth gatraeth* 'warriors went to Catraeth' nine times in the A text; in all other instances it is also associated with a battle. The identification of Catraeth has been problematic, but is now accepted to be Catterick on the River Swale in North Yorkshire (Dunshea, 84). Jackson (1978: 83) notes: the 'identification of Catraeth with Catterick is unobjectionable philologically'. Catterick was strategically important as it guarded the major routes to the North: it was the location of a Roman fort, and is a military base even today.

**Eidyn**

Eidyn, recorded five times in B and seven in A, is identified with Castle Rock in Edinburgh (Alcock, 165-6). The stanzas recording Eidyn are independent of one another, namely, there is not an equivalent stanza in A or B recording Eidyn. In *Y Gododdin*, Eidyn is depicted as a political centre in Guotodin territory and under Guotodin control. Some stanzas refer to a battle around Eidyn itself. *LA* 36 (B) records 'at the resounding of his shield there was flight, | innumerable men fleeing before the hill (*vre*) of Eidyn'. This implies a conflict at Eidyn, and the context implies that the Guotodin were the victors.

**Nouant and Aeron**

Koch (1997: xxx) suggests that *Nouant* is to be identified with the *Novantae*, an Iron Age tribe located in south-western Scotland. The name Aeron, which also occurs in each stanza recording *Nouant* (with the exception of *Gorchan Kynfelin*), has been used to support this theory. Aeron has traditionally been equated with the River Ayr or Earn Water. However, these are not philological matches for Aeron, though either identification is possible if the Welsh scribe confused this name with the River Aeron in Ceredigion (James, s.v. *ajr*).

**Gwanannon**

Gwanannon is unidentified. It has an *-on* suffix, which suggests it was possibly a river-name, and in *LA* 19 (A) it is described as 'the borderland of the Guotodin'. Gwanannon is not identified with any known river, nor do we know the extent of Guotodin territory. This name also occurs in *LA* 17.11 (A), but this particular

stanza is unusual in structure compared to the other *Gododdin* poems, and is likely a later interpolation (Koch 1997: 224).

**Gwynedd and Place-Names in Northern Wales**

The early medieval kingdom of Gwynedd is recorded on five occasions in the A text and once in B. Two almost identical passages in A and B also record the cantref name Rhufoniog (*Rywynyauc*) and the River Aled (*Alet*), which flows through Rhufoniog; the person commemorated is known for his participation 'in the second battle seen around the Alet'. This is a specific reference to a battle that is not associated with Catraeth. These stanzas do not record any place-names outside of North Wales, and they might be interpolations.

**Lleuvre, Lleu-tut and Din Dywyt**

These names occur in three stanzas (one in A and two in B), and are derived from a single original that has diverged during transmission (Isaac 1993: 83-9). Lleu-tut is from **Lugu-totā* 'Lleu's tribe'. The second element, *–tut*, has the same meaning and interpretation as the Irish cognate *túath* 'people, country, territory'. Lleuvre is from **Lugu-*briga* meaning the 'hill of *Lleu*', and from context was in the *ystre* 'frontier' of Guotodin. The first element of these names occurs in Lleudonia and Lleudinyawn, the name applied to the region of Lothian in Welsh sources. Lleu-tut and Lleuvre are likely located in Lothian.

Din Dywyt is unidentified. Grugyn, the commemoratee, is said to have come from Din Dywyt over the *merin* 'firth', perhaps the Firth of Forth. The geographical focus of this poem is unquestionably Northern (Lothian and perhaps Pictland), and from the context it appears to have nothing to do with Catraeth (Isaac 1993: 83).

**<u>Place-Names in the B Text</u>**

**Bannauc**

Bannauc ('the peaked hill, or range of summits') are the Touch and Gargunnock Hills near Stirling. The name is still preserved in modern Bannockburn (Watson, 195-6).

**Merin Iodeo**

Merin Iodeo is the Firth of Forth. This form also appears in *urbs Iudeu* 'city of *Iudeu*' in the *Historia Britonum*, and as *Giudi urbs* in Bede, which is now generally agreed to be Stirling (Fraser 2008). The spelling *Iodeo* is also Pritenic, or Pictish, in form (Koch 1997: 136; James s.v. *jüd*). Note also that the metre of this stanza is unusual for the *LA* corpus, and Koch (1997: 135-6) suggests it might be an interpolation.

**<u>Place-Names in the A Text</u>**

**Maen Gwynngwn**

Koch (1980) has convincingly identified Gwynngwn as a later, significantly altered form of *Uenicones*, a tribe first attested by Ptolemy, located between the Forth and the Dee and particularly around Tayside. Maen Gwynngwn means 'stone of the *Uenicones*'. Llif ap Cian, the individual praised in the poem, was from Maen Gwynngwn and probably a Pict. He is perhaps the same 'son of Cian' from 'beyond Bannauc' (see above).

**Gweiryd**

Gweiryd is the River Forth. Guerit is also the spelling of the River Forth in the thirteenth-century *Black Book of Chirk*. This identification is further supported by the appearance of Eidyn *gaer* 'the fort of Eidyn' in the preceding line.

**Banncarw**

The first element, *bann-*, is 'horn, peak, summit', and the second element *carw* means 'deer, stag'. Banncarw was likely in Wales. A place called *Bancarw* is recorded in an early thirteenth-century charter of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth confirming the lands of Aberconwy Abbey; it is associated with the area of Nantgwynant (Gresham 1939 and 1983). The Bancarw of this charter is likely identified with the ridge now called Cerrig Cochion near Snowdon (Gresham 1939: 156). Is it possible that the Banncarw of *LA* and the Bancarw of the *Aberconwy Charter* are one and the same place? This is perhaps a poem recording a place in Aberconwy's holdings that was added to the corpus; as noted above, *LA* was possibly compiled at Aberconwy Abbey. Koch (1997: 216-17) notes that the dating of this piece is complicated, and that Scribe A does not follow his 'normal practice' in this stanza. There is no association with Catraeth, and this poem is perhaps an interpolation.

**Ryt Benclwyt**

This unidentified name means 'ford at the head of the *Clwyd*'. Clwyt in Penclwyt cannot be identified with the River Clyde philologically. *Clwyd* is a common Welsh river-name, the most notable of which is the Clwyd in Denbighshire. There are no other place-names in this stanza

that associate Ryt Benclwyt with the events around Eidyn or Catraeth, and it may refer to a ford on the River Clwyd in North Wales.

**Breithel Vanawyt**

Though Manawyt is also a personal name, the preceding term *breithel* 'land, region', indicates that it was a geographic area. Manawyt may be a mistake for Manau, the region around the head of the Firth of Forth, which was possibly a sub-division of Guotodin territory (Watson, 103; Charles-Edwards 1974: 41). This name is still preserved in Slamannan and Clackmannan. Jarman (1988: 80, n.45) observed that the battle alluded to in this stanza has nothing to do with Catraeth, and the line in which this name is found suggests that the enemy, who is not named, fled before the Guotodin army.

**Discussion**

Despite the complicated nature of this material, examining the contents of *Y Gododdin* alongside its place-names can shed new light on the history of the poetry and *LA*. Conventionally, *Y Gododdin* has been viewed as a coherent poem commemorating warriors who fell in the battle of Catraeth. Many of these poems focus on Catraeth, and it was probably a significant battle, but some place-names and their contexts indicate that it is not the only conflict recorded.

A few stanzas refer to a battle around Eidyn. The stanzas that record Lleuvre, Lleu-tut and Din Dywyt are not associated with Catraeth. Likewise, the stanzas recording place-names in Wales are not associated with Catraeth, and one refers to a battle around the River Aled. The conclusion we should draw is that at least three conflicts are recorded in the *Gododdin* poems: Catraeth, one around Eidyn, and at least one in North Wales. These conflicts were probably independent, and this implies that the poems in *Y Gododdin* likely reflect more than one time period.

Conventionally, *Y Gododdin* is attributed to a single poet, Aneirin. But this is questionable, given that so many interpolations have made their way into the text. The *Reciter's Prologue*, *Pais Dinogad*, *Gorchanau* and *Strathcarron Stanza* are known interpolations, but it has also been suggested that stanzas recording the names Rywynyauc and Alet, Merin Iodeo, Banncarw, and one recording Gwanannon are also interpolations. The place-names suggest that we have a body of poems concerned with three areas: Catterick, the region around Edinburgh, and a third group focusing on Gwynedd in North Wales. This is a very broad geography.

What are the consequences of this analysis? Conventionally, *Y Gododdin* is viewed as early or late, but this all-or-nothing viewpoint prompts the question: why does the entire collection *have to be* either early or late? Why does it *have to be* the work of a single poet? The place-name evidence suggests that what we have in *LA* is an anthology, made of stanzas that probably derive from quite early Northern material, and stanzas that are later compositions which have become attached to '*Y Gododdin*' because of the shared theme of lament. Lewis (1986: 7-8) was the first to suggest that *Y Gododdin* as we have it today is a cumulative work based around a common theme, and this theory deserves more attention than it has generally received. The stanzas focusing on the region around Edinburgh and Lothian are probably derived from early written, Northern, material.

It is especially difficult, however, to decide which poems are early and which are late (though much effort has been expended over the past few decades to organise these based on language and orthography). The orthography of many place-names (especially those in the A text) was updated, but the names themselves often preserve elements of their earlier forms, e.g. Maen Gwynngwn.

**Conclusion**

If we abandon the assumption that the elegies of *LA* are either all early or all late, then we are freed from many interpretative constraints, but this also has significant consequences for our understanding of early Scottish history, *Y Gododdin* and *LA*. Whether or not we view the contents of *LA* as early, late, or a combination of both, the place-names themselves will likely form a key part of this ongoing debate.

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**NOTE**: This article is a brief summary of a work-in-progress, as outlined at the May 2018 conference. To cite this article, or to discuss the fuller work, please contact the author at: Kelly.Kilpatrick@nottingham.ac.uk or Ceallaigh685@gmail.com.

## *AN ONLINE RESOURCE FOR BERWICKSHIRE PLACE-NAMES*

An article in the Autumn 2017 issue of this Newsletter outlined the Leverhulme-funded REELS project ('Recovering the Earliest English Language in Scotland: evidence from place-names'), and explained that one of the main outputs would be an online resource covering all Berwickshire place-names on the Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 Landranger map (Hough 2017: 3). Designed by Brian Aitken, and populated by the other members of the project team at the University of Glasgow, the resource was launched on 17 November 2018, at a joint conference of the Scottish Place-Name Society and the Scottish Records Association held at the Scottish Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh. It is now freely accessible at www.gla.ac.uk/reels. (Unfortunately space limitations make it impracticable to include illustrations in the printed version of the article. References to Figures comprise screenshots, which can be found in the full version of the article available on the SPNS website. Some of the shorter urls are also noted here. Ed.)

Figure 1 shows the home page www.gla.ac.uk/reels with the four main types of search options: Quick Search, Browse Place-Names, Element Glossary and Advanced Search. The most commonly used (according to Google Analytics) is Quick Search, which retrieves place-names containing any string of letters in the modern spelling of the name or in any element(s) from which it may derive. Special characters, such as Old English *æ*, *ð* and *þ*, can be pasted into the search box.

A Quick Search for **hall** retrieves 30 place-names, of which 28 contain the letter string in the modern form of the name. They include Crosshall (ECC), Hall Burn (LMS) and Hutton Hall Barns (HUT). The other two are Herriotshiels (CHK), where the earliest spelling *Herriotshall* (1854 x 1862) indicates a derivation from Scottish Standard English *hall*, and Howlet's Ha' (WRR), recorded from 1771 and

containing the corresponding Scots element. An asterisk wildcard can be used to narrow the search to place-names beginning with the string (**hall***), ending with the string **(*hall**) or with the string in the middle (***hall***). Thus a Quick Search for ***hall*** retrieves just three of the 30: Charterhall Wood (FOG), Chirnside Hall Hotel (CHS) and Hutton Hall Barns (HUT).

Search results can be presented either as text or in map format, with a range of display options. Figure 2 shows the results of the Quick Search for **hall** as text, providing information on location and type of feature (settlement, vegetation, etc.). The 'View record' option on the right links directly to the full record for each place-name, including historical forms and interpretation. https://berwickshire-placenames.glasgow.ac.uk/place-names/?p=results&source=qs&qsearch=hall#10/55.7650/-2.4094

Figure 3 shows the same search results in the default map format, with icons representing the different types of feature. Any of these can be deselected by unchecking the box in the key towards the top right, so as to focus on particular types, such as coastal or water features. The menu icon towards the top left offers alternative ways to view the map. https://berwickshire-placenames.glasgow.ac.uk/place-names/?p=results&source=qs&qsearch=hall#11/55.8239/-2.4063/resultsTabs-0/code/tileDefault//

Figure 4 shows the same search results against a satellite background, with icons representing the century in which each place-name was first recorded. Again these can be deselected in order to focus on place-names first recorded within a particular date range. In Figure 5, the background has been changed to the 19th-century OS map, parish boundaries have been added, and the icons represent languages. Various additional options are available, including further OS maps and icons representing altitude, while place-name labels can either be turned on or – to avoid crowding the map – revealed by hovering over the icon with the cursor. The data can also be freely downloaded by clicking on the tab at the top of the screen.

The second search option, Browse Place-Names, offers a route into the data through the current place-name, historical forms, start date, source, parish, or feature type. This allows the user to focus, for instance, on place-names recorded in a selected source or group of sources, or on the names of a selected type or types of feature, or on those situated in a selected parish or group of parishes. Similarly, the third search option, Element Glossary, lists all place-name elements within the resource, but also makes it possible to select only those from a particular language, such as Brittonic, Gaelic, Scots, Old English or Scottish Standard English. Also included here are personal names and others used as place-name qualifiers. In order to undertake more complex investigations, however, we need to turn to the fourth search option, Advanced Search, which allows the various parameters to be combined flexibly.

Figure 6 shows the Advanced Search page. The criteria selected for Advanced Search in the online version are Scots names excepting those of parishes, settlements and water features, recorded before 1800 in the six parishes of Abbey St Bathans, Ayton, Bunkle and Preston, Cockburnspath, Coldingham and Cranshaws, and at an altitude of up to 200m. Figure 7 shows the results of the same search. The 15 place-names returned include the names of antiquities, vegetation, coastal and relief features, and – despite the exclusion of water features – the distribution is closely concentrated along the coastline. Again the map display could be modified to show dates, altitude or other types of information, while the results could alternatively be presented as text. As with all types of search, the full place-name records are easily accessible, and can be displayed or downloaded.

Many place-name derivations, and some locations, are open to doubt, and this is indicated throughout the resource by certainty levels based on a three-part system whereby 1 = (reasonably) certain, 2 = likely, and 3 = doubtful. Figure 8 shows the results of an Advanced Search for obsolete names only, from the six north-eastern parishes of Abbey St Bathans, Ayton, Bunkle and Preston, Cockburnspath, Coldingham and Eyemouth. Of the four place-names returned, Rough Side (ASB) and Warlaw (CHM) have "Certainty:1", indicating that the National Grid Reference (NGR) is accurate. Millerton (AYT), however, has "Certainty:2", indicating that the NGR is close to the site, but not precise. Even less reliable is the NGR for Shoneshiel (BUP), where "Certainty:3" indicates only a general location. By following the link to the place-name record, we would discover that it has a

single historical form, from Roy's *Military Survey of Scotland* (1752 x 1755). This not only accounts for the vagueness of the location but explains why the name has no feature classification. Whereas Millerton is identified in Figure 8 as a settlement, and Rough Side and Warlaw as relief features, the sole attestation of Stoneshiel leaves it unclear what type of feature the name refers to.

The place-name record for Millerton also reveals that the derivation is uncertain. The second element is the common Scots generic *toun* 'farm', but the first, qualifying element may be either the occupational term *millar* or the corresponding surname. As in all such instances of ambiguity, the place-name is linked to both elements in the resource, ensuring that it would be returned by a search for either. Both possibilities are also discussed in the main place-name entry, which reads as follows:

> 'A farm associated with a miller or (less likely) a person or family called Miller'. Given that it appears relatively early, and may have been located by a mill (see below), it probably contains Scots *millar* 'a miller' (also *milner* etc.) (*DOST*).
>
> It is the name of a now lost settlement, which does not appear on any map later than Gordon (c.1636 x 1652). It may have been located around NT921598, the site of *Prenderguest Mill*, to the south of Peelwalls, on the Sharp, Greenwood and Fowler map (1826), later a Saw Mill on the OS 6 inch 1st edn map. The settlement name survives only in the name of Millerton Hill (at NT910591).

The last sentence of the entry serves to explain why the resource includes a small number of obsolete names, despite being based on the OS 1:50,000 Landranger map. They are the exceptions, but are required in order to account for derived names that appear on the map, such as Millerton Hill.

The REELS project includes doctoral research being undertaken by Dàibhidh Grannd, whose PhD thesis focuses on the names of relief features in Berwickshire. Whereas the "Code" tab in the Browse Place-Names facility mentioned above allows all 190 relief features in the resource to be identified, much more nuanced searches are supported by the Advanced Search. For instance, by combining search parameters, we can establish that three of the 190 are now obsolete, seven are recorded before 1400, 21 have an altitude of below 100 metres, 74 derive from Scots, and so on. Useful statistics can also be generated for the names of other types of features. Of the 111 water names, ten are recorded before 1200, in contrast to just two of the 118 vegetation names, and only one of the 41 coastal names: St Abb's Head (CHM). Although there is no direct correlation between the date of creation and date of earliest record, these figures are suggestive, and give some insight into the chronology of feature naming.

In conclusion, the Berwickshire Place-Name Resource has many exciting features, only a small selection of which could be covered either during the launch in Edinburgh or in this summary. Do please try it out for yourselves!

**Carole Hough** (summarising her paper in Edinburgh)

Reference

Hough, Carole. 2017. 'Recovering the Earliest English Language in Scotland (REELS)'. *Scottish Place-Name News* 43:2–3.

## *POLDRATE – NEW EVIDENCE*

Since publication of my online article *The Poldrate Puzzle – Gaelic or Scots?* new evidence has come to light on the place-name Poldrate, strengthening the thesis that the name stems from Scots *pol* + *draucht*, meaning 'stream channel' or 'channelled burn'.[1]

David Simpson of the *Scotland's Oldest Bridges* website recently discovered an article about excavations in Glasgow in 1980-81, which revealed that the Poldrait burn was modified - literally streamlined for a medieval watermill.[2] The burn ran roughly parallel with Gallowgate down to the Molendinar burn,[3] and disappeared in about the 16th century. The article describes how it was modified:

> 'The improved channel was defined by parallel timber sides; pointed oak posts c. 1 m long were driven into the wet silt in two parallel rows, with wattles of hazel and cherry linking each into a revetment. Mud and sand,

[1] Liz Curtis, 2018, 'The Poldrate Puzzle: Gaelic or Scots?', *The Journal of Scottish Name Studies*, vol. 12, 57-76. http://www.clanntuirc.co.uk/JSNS/V12/JSNS%2012%20Curtis%20Poldrate.pdf

[2] David Pollock, 1991-92, The Saracen Head excavation 1980-1981, *Glasgow Archaeological Journal*, vol. 17, issue 17, pp. 77-90, https://www.euppublishing.com/doi/pdfplus/10.3366/gas.1991.17.17.77.

[3] Ibid.

dredged from the channel, was dumped, together with discarded twigs, behind the woven walls.'

There is clearly a similarity to the mill-lade at Haddington, East Lothian, which may be the inspiration for the road-name Poldrate in that town. While all or most of the Poldrate names may have originally been stream-names, Glasgow's Poldrait is the only one actually recorded as a stream-name.[4] The fact that it was also laboriously strengthened to form a channel suggests that the name does indeed mean channelled burn.

**Liz Curtis**

***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.
Most recent volume on
***Kinross-shire*** – 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.

## *CARTULARIES AS A SOURCE FOR PLACE AND PERSONAL NAMES*

My paper at the *Hence the Name* conference (Edinburgh, November 2018) introduced medieval cartularies, which are a rich source for place and personal names in medieval Scotland. It then highlighted a few notable issues for using cartularies in research, and ended by offering a new methodology for dealing with one of the major issues for names studies: dating the forms of names in cartularies.

Cartularies are manuscript books that were produced across western Europe throughout the middle ages, mainly by ecclesiastical institutions (major monasteries and cathedrals in particular). The earliest in Scotland were produced in the thirteenth century. Cartularies predominantly contain copies of single-sheet documents from a single archive (often broadly referred to as 'charters'). Charters began to be produced in Scotland from the early twelfth century, and their texts provide a rich source for local place and personal names. Unfortunately, the majority of original charters are now lost, and so cartularies often preserve the only copy of a charter's text.

A range of significant challenges faces any researcher wishing to use cartularies as a source. One particular issue is the extent of textual variation between the original document's text and the later cartulary copy, especially given that such copies were usually made a number of years, decades or even a century or so after the document was initially created. We looked at two examples of surviving original charters from Lindores Abbey's archive and their respective copies in the abbey's medieval cartulary. Both reveal a similar pattern: in the process of copying a text; it is the names where most of the variation was happening (such as *Londors / Lundors, Normanno / Normano, Lundores / Lundors, Cunigton' / Cunington'*). This pattern of name variation in cartulary copies is attested in a number of studies of cartularies across western Europe. What this means is that we must think carefully when dealing with names in cartularies, particularly when establishing whom the forms are a source for and how we date them.

My own work on medieval cartularies has developed a new methodology for analysing them through their manuscripts, with particular attention to the palaeography (scribes' handwriting) and codicology (the book's physical structure). This is significant because many cartulary manuscripts are very complex, often containing the work of dozens of different scribes working across a number of decades or centuries. Of particular significance for place and personal name research is dating these various contributions. One way of doing this is by looking at how the individual additions relate to each other in a sequence on the page, and then using these sequences to build a chain of earliest possible dates of working for each scribe. For example, if Scribe A added a text dated 1285 and then Scribe B added a text in the following space dated 1190, then we can say that Scribe B was certainly working after 1285, and so on. This can be called 'relative dating'. The basic method can be applied across the manuscript, giving each scribe's work a 'relative date'. It is 'relative' because it relates to the date of the texts that come before it in a defined sequence. These relative dates can then be honed to an extent by

[4] Liz Curtis 2018, op. cit., 66.

analysing the scribe's handwriting (which can generally narrow the date to a half century).

The key point from this talk was that the name forms that we see in cartulary manuscripts are not datable to the time of the document itself but to the date of the cartulary scribe's work – their 'relative date'. The fact that cartulary scribes are known to have adapted name forms when copying texts means that this precision is important when identifying whom that form is a source for. It would be exciting to see further work done on names in cartularies from the perspective of individual cartulary scribes, incorporating their individual habits as well as their 'relative dates' of working. This would offer a unique insight into how cartulary scribes themselves actually responded to the documents they copied.

**Joanna Tucker**, University of Glasgow

**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/>.

## *HOW TO AVOID 'HEATHERY BUTTOCKS' - NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN ONLINE MAPS, GAZETTEERS AND APPLICATIONS*

This is a summary of a talk given at the SRA-SPNS conference on 17 November 2018, which aimed to provide a brief update on new online maps, gazetteers and related applications of interest to place-name researchers.

**1. New online maps**. In the last three years, over 100,000 maps have been made available online at https://maps.nls.uk, taking the total now to over 210,000 maps. The main recent additions of primary interest to Scottish place-names researchers have been:

- Estate plans, ca. 1750s-1840s - https://maps.nls.uk/estates/ These have been scanned through the good work of the Dumfries Archival Mapping Project, who have supplied over 300 maps of south-west Scotland.
- Post Office Directory maps, 1794-1944 - https://maps.nls.uk/towns/ These detailed street maps of Scottish towns held within Post Office Directories were added online in 2016. From the later 19th century, the Post Office Directories were issued every year for several larger towns, and so the Post Office maps can provide a far more regular chronology of urban change compared to Ordnance Survey maps.
- Ordnance Survey Books of Reference (or Area Books), 1855-1882 - https://maps.nls.uk/os/25inch/books-of-reference/ These record acreages of each land parcel on the OS 25 inch to the mile 1st edition maps, and often its land use, along with a list of place names within each parish.
- Ordnance Survey National Grid 1:10,560 maps for Scotland, 1950s-1960s - https://maps.nls.uk/os/national-grid/index.html This series is the post-War continuation of the OS six-inch to the mile County Series, with excellent detail of the urban and rural landscape.

**2. Gazetteer Projects**

We have been lucky to benefit from the good work of the late Dr Bob Henery, who has compiled comprehensive and detailed gazetteers of all names on the Pont and Blaeu maps of Scotland:

- *Pont manuscript maps gazetteer, ca. 1583-1614* (11,358 names) - https://maps.nls.uk/pont/placenames/a-d.html
- *Blaeu printed maps gazetteer, 1654* (28,394 names) - https://maps.nls.uk/atlas/blaeu/gazetteer/browse/a-d.html

These two gazetteers combined therefore provide a comprehensive set of place names from the earliest detailed maps of Scotland four hundred years ago.

Another recent website addition for anyone interested in Lesmahagow names has been the *Lesmahagow Place Names Database* - https://maps.nls.uk/projects/lesmahagow/. Around 4,000 names relating to the old parish of Lesmahagow were gathered by Dennis White, who linked them together into around 600 unique place names.

By far the largest recent gazetteer project we have been involved with has been the **GB1900 Project** This ran from September 2016 to June 2018, and through crowdsourcing, gathered all 2.52 million names from the Ordnance Survey six-inch to the mile maps of England, Scotland and Wales, ca. 1888-1914. These maps are the most detailed scale of mapping covering the three countries, and an excellent record of practically all man-made and natural features. This means that abbreviations, boundaries, and other descriptive terms have been recorded too, in addition to place names. The GB1900 names complement those recorded in the OS Name Books (which record the rationale for the initial choice of name, and are available online at https://scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ordnance-survey-name-books). However, the OS Name Books are not geocoded, so they cannot be viewed on a map.

- The GB1900 dot distribution map is at https://geo.nls.uk/maps/gb1900/. This site also lets you query place name elements - effectively strings of characters - and see distributions of these elements (with a little patience!).
- The GB1900 names have also been incorporated into our *Explore Georeferenced Maps* viewer at https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/ - see the 'Search OS six-inch 1888-1913 names:' search box to the upper left, which will take you to the name on the map.
- The GB1900 names are also freely downloadable from http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/data/

There is ongoing work to clean, feature-code and build on the GB1900 Gazetteer, hopefully extending this to other map series. 'Heathery Buttocks' in Bellingham parish, Northumberland, is one of the newly "discovered" names, that can be located (or avoided) at the touch of a button!

### 3. Web services and re-usable open-source map viewers

There are also a growing number of ways of using these new online maps and gazetteers, through web-services and open-source applications, which have a great potential for collaborative projects. The Historic Maps API at https://maps.nls.uk/projects/api/, launched in 2011, illustrates how background historic map layers can be brought into other websites, and these have expanded from 2016, with the Historic Maps Subscription API layers https://maps.nls.uk/projects/subscription-api/index.html.

From 2011 too we have gradually replaced all our interface viewers with **open-source technology**. The code behind all the NLS map website applications is freely re-usable on Github: https://github.com/NationalLibraryOfScotland The blog at: https://blog.nls.uk/using-the-librarys-open-source-map-viewers/ explains this further.

**Chris Fleet** (National Libraries of Scotland; slides from the talk can be viewed at https://www.google.com/url?q=http://tiny.cc/07u00y&sa=D&ust=1550570217075000&usg=AFQjCNHWktHpIjkR3obC9_IYdIGs8gn_lQ)

## 'BLITON' UPDATED

A newly updated version of **Alan James**'s **'The Brittonic Language in the Old North'** (a Guide to P-Celtic place-name elements to be found in northern England and southern Scotland) has been uploaded, in downloadable pdf form, at https://spns.org.uk/resources/bliton. This revision adds to the Bibliography and references in the Guide publications that have appeared, or come to the author's notice, over the past three years. In a few cases, these, along with helpful feedback from several users, have prompted small amendments to, or modifications to the discussion of, various elements or individual place-names within the Guide. A number of, mostly minor, errors and inconsistencies within the Index, and between the Index and the Guide, have been corrected. In particular, the location of places within the complicated and often-changed county boundaries in central Scotland should now be more reliable. The help of all who have contributed suggestions for amendment or improvement is greatly appreciated.

## 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. 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.

## *WHERE THE HECK IS HECK?*

Archivists often deal with enquiries about place-names in early-modern documents such as legal registers, court act books or Old Parish Registers. These can be answered quickly, using a few online sources.

My first recourse is usually to my printed second edition of Francis H Groome (ed.), *Ordnance Gazetteer for Scotland*. The first edition of Groome is available widely and Edinburgh University used it as the basis for its Gazetteer of Scotland, but the second edition is much better and there is a facsimile edition at the Internet Archive plus searchable editions on the Gazetteer of Scotland (http://gazetteerofscotland.org.uk) and Electric Scotland (https://www.electricscotland.com/history/gazetteer/index.htm) sites.

### Wills and testaments

On the ScotlandsPeople site (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/guides/wills-and-testaments) the search device for testaments (1513-1925) at least partially distinguishes between place-names and personal names (what I call 'the Hamilton Test'). It is a freetext search of a description field, wherein testators are usually described in terms of where they lived. The search allows the use of wildcards to deal with uncertain spelling.

### Valuation rolls

Valuation rolls were annual property tax rolls drawn up by county and burgh assessors from 1855 until 1987. There are indexes for the rolls for 1855, 1865, 1875 (and so on) on ScotlandsPeople (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/guides/valuation-rolls). These pass the Hamilton test; the personal name and place searches are distinct, and flexible searching using wildcards is possible.

### Maps and plans

For early-modern place names the digital facsimiles of William Roy's military survey and the county maps of the early 1800s and supporting gazetteers on the National Library of Scotland's website (https://maps.nls.uk/) are excellent sources. In theory, these gazetteers should pass the Hamilton Test, since they only concern place names. They might support flexible searching, but I don't tend to use the NLS online maps in this way; I use them to conduct a visual search.

### Ordnance Survey Name Books

The ScotlandsPlaces site (https://scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/records) allows you to search for names in the first edition Ordnance Survey Name Books (OSNBs) either by using the search box or by choosing the parish concerned and browsing the index. The general search on the site does not entirely pass the Hamilton Test, since it searches freetext transcriptions of various records, some of which have personal names. Not does it allow flexible searching with wildcards.

### A Heck of an Example

To illustrate, an enquirer had come across 'John Richardson in Heck' in an 18$^{th}$-century document and wanted to know where this was. Groome lists one Heck, near Lochmaben in Dumfriesshire, and stated that the name comes from the word 'heck' meaning a rack for feeding livestock, in this case on high ground where cattle were herded during times of flood. There is another meaning of 'heck': a bend in a river, but when you look at maps of the area on the NLS website it is obvious that Heck Hill is a high point above flood plain on the River Annan and there isn't an obvious bend in the river at that point or in the burn that runs through Heck village. Topographically, Groome looks spot on.

OSNBs in ScotlandsPlaces revealed at least two other Hecks in (in Shetland and Ayrshire), so could either of these be the Heck I was after? Testaments and valuation rolls did not help much but the National Records of Scotland (NRS) catalogue (http://catalogue.nrscotland.gov.uk/nrsonlinecatalogue/welcome.aspx) found a High Court case for serious assault in the Lochmaben Heck, a Court of Session case relating to the division of commonty of Heck Bog, and even a case that reached the House of Lords called 'the Heck Case'. However, the Heck Case concerned, not the place-name Heck, but another meaning for 'heck': a kind of fish trap. Alas, the NRS catalogue, therefore, not only fails the Hamilton test but also fails the 'Heck Test', in failing to differentiate between people,

places and things! But it did come up trumps with my enquiry, since the High Court case featured a John Richardson in Heck, the very man my enquirer was after. He was the victim of the assault.

**Robert H J Urquhart** (from his talk at the November 2018 conference)

## Journal of Scottish Name Studies

The latest issue of this peer-reviewed online journal, *JSNS* 12, is now available free at http://www.clanntuirc.co.uk/JSNS/JSNS12.html. Previous issues are also accessible through the clanntuirc website.

## *'INTER LIMITES SPECIFICATOS': PLACE-NAME RESEARCH IN SCOTTISH RECORDS*

Anyone working in any kind of research since the late 20th century has witnessed a revolution. When I first started my research in 1990, the distinction between published and unpublished records was clear-cut, with archival material of all kinds hugely time-consuming to work with, and often very expensive, not necessarily in terms of direct access, but in travel and accommodation, if the archive you happened to want to work with was not on your door-step, which it rarely was.

Now, of course, archives have been thrown wide open and can be accessed from almost anywhere with computer and access to the internet. Nevertheless, until every single relevant document has been put online, anyone working on historical toponymics will at one point or another have to undertake archival work to look at originals. By 'historical toponymics' I mean anyone who is concerned with pursuing a place-name back to its original language, and the meaning and referents of its original elements.

Often such an analysis, which has to start with language, can be very challenging, especially in Scotland, where we have such a complex linguistic history, and without early forms, analysis can be impossible. Theoretically, and usually in practice, the older a place-name form that we can identify, the closer we are to the language and motivations of the original name-coiners, and so the greater chance we have of analysing it correctly. This means that early forms have to bear a great weight – intricate edifices of analysis and speculation are built on top of them. So, like any foundation, they have to be firm and secure, otherwise the whole edifice can come crashing down. A secure foundation can be provided by a suite of early forms from different sources, which means that despite scribal and editorial idiosyncrasies and errors, a reliable Ur-form can be recognised and then analysed.

By far our most prolific source of place-names recorded before about 1300 are monastic cartularies. Most historians working with these rely on the 19th-century editions produced by learned societies such as the Bannatyne Club or the Maitland Club. These are generally remarkably accurate in their transcriptions, but if mistakes are going to be made, then they will be made in the names.

An especially important source both for place-names and local and environmental history is the boundary description, often included as part of a perambulation, the legal settlement of a disputed march or boundary. However, these are especially prone to errors of transcription by later editors since so many of the names are for minor features (microtoponyms) which often are never heard of again.

I came across an example of this recently while working on a medieval boundary charter in Berwickshire.[5] Around 1200 William de Vipont, lord of Langton, a parish and lands west of Duns, gave a piece of land to Kelso Abbey. The boundaries are given in great detail, shining a remarkable beam of light on the medieval landscape – and namescape – of the southern part of the parish. One of the boundaries, as printed in *Kelso Liber*, the 1846 Bannatyne edition of the cartulary of Kelso Abbey, contains the following:

> usque in *stocfocclich* 1198 x 1214 *Kelso Lib.* no. 140 ['as far as into S.']
>
> usque in *Stocfocclouh* 1198 x 1214 *Kelso Lib.* no. 140.

Initially I could make nothing of it. Knowing that the letters c and t are often either indistinguishable in certain hands, or only distinguishable with difficulty, the various possibilities of reading a name with a total of five *c/t* letter forms was daunting, to say the least. There was nothing for it but to go to the original manuscript. Fortunately the Kelso

[5] Arising partly from work on the Leverhulme REELS project; partly from work on a chapter for the Alasdair Ross tribute volume (Brepols, forthcoming).

cartulary is kept in the NLS. When I say 'original manuscript', I mean the one which supplied the text for *Kelso Liber*. This cartulary itself is a copy which is thought to be from the early 1320s. On examining the original I could see that the scribe did distinguish clearly between *c* and *t*. And so the name in fact reads: *stocfotcluh*, not as printed (*stocfocclich*); and *stocfotclouh*, not as printed (*Stocfocclouh*). So two types of error were made in the editorial transcription of this one name: *c*/*t* confusion in both occurrences, and the miscopying of *u* as *i* in the first occurrence.  So now the name started to make more sense, and could be reconstructed in modern Scottish Standard English as: *Stockfootcleugh. Some of you might be thinking 'Aha, but the so-called original is itself a copy. Could the scribe of that copy not have made an error in such a minor name? It could be argued that, in terms of Kelso's rights to this land, no name on its boundary was 'minor' in the sense of unimportant. But in fact, whatever the motivation, we have absolute proof that the scribe got it right, because there is to this day a field-name on the farm of Ladyflat, within the former lands of Langton owned by Kelso, called Stockfoot.

Another major source for building a profile of a place-name is the Register of the Great Seal (*Registrum Magni Sigilli*, usually abbreviated as *RMS*). While some of its contents are copies of charters issued directly by the monarch to a subject, most are royal charters confirming, and therefore validating and securing, grants made between subjects. These were of course always done after the original charter had been issued, and the time-lag ranges from a few days to several decades later.

It is to the credit of the editor of *RMS* ii, James Balfour Paul, that he was fully aware of the problems I have already mentioned of transcribing place and personal names (see his Preface *RMS* ii, p. vii). However, for all this laudable concern about getting names right, there is one serious omission in the printed editions of *RMS* which anyone interested in local names, landscapes and landholdings must greatly regret. These are the omissions of sometimes very lengthy and detailed boundary descriptions of pieces of land being conveyed or confirmed. Fortunately they are not passed over in complete silence, since the editors signal their omission with words in brackets such as: (inter limites specificatos) or (intra bondas specificatas) 'between or within specified boundaries'; sometimes even (intra bondas in vulgari specificatas), i.e. written in Scots. Not only do these provide a wealth of minor features in the same way as do the earlier perambulations and boundary descriptions from the monastic cartularies, they also help to locate otherwise lost place-names. It would be an extremely worthwhile project for an individual or group to publish an Appendix to the 11 volumes of *RMS* with the full texts of all this omitted boundary material. I have no idea how much it constitutes, but I do know it will be of immense value and interest not only to toponymists but also to local historians.

Four years ago, under the auspices of the Scottish Place-Name Society, a Survey of Scottish Place-Names was established, whose stated aim is to carry out and to facilitate place-name surveys of the whole of Scotland on a pre-1975 county basis, following the template and protocols set by the existing volumes on Fife (2006-12), Buteshire (vol.1 covering the Isle of Bute) (2012) and Kinross-shire (2017), with Clackmannanshire, Perthshire vol. 1 (Menteith) and Berwickshire vol. 1 (The Tweedside parishes) all in the pipeline. Since the Survey is in effect a continuation of the initiative which produced all of these, it has, as it were, retroactively claimed them as part of the Survey, although so far only the Kinross-shire volume carries the logo.

Work is also proceeding on several other fronts, including Lanarkshire, East Dunbartonshire, and parts of Argyll, Ayrshire and Inverness-shire, while John Reid's comprehensive and meticulous work on east Stirlingshire has laid a firm foundation for the first volumes of that county. And most recently I can add to this list Kirkcudbrightshire volume 1, building on the place-name component of the Heritage Lottery-funded Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership being carried out by Gilbert Márkus, my co-author on the Fife volumes as well as the sole author of the Bute volume.

As I hope I have already made clear, one of the first stages in any place-name survey is to assemble for each name a representative suite of early forms from as wide a range of sources as possible. Simply harvesting them from the readily available major sources such as monastic cartularies, *RMS*, Exchequer Rolls and Retours is a huge labour in itself. Then there are the old maps and the OS Name Books to be added to this list, both these resources now available online thanks to the good offices of NLS and

NRS. But what this means is that there is a vast array of later medieval and early modern sources which we can hardly touch upon.

In working on Fife, Kinross-shire and Clackmannanshire, myself and my fellow authors received invaluable help from various researchers whose primary interest did not lie in toponymics. One who springs to mind is Colin Forsyth, who is working on late medieval and early modern Tulliallan and Culross. Although a member of SPNS, his chief research questions are to do not with place-names but with land-ownership, the early coal and salt industries, and their impact both on the built and the natural environment.

In the course of his research he uses, in his own words 'a wide range of sources - principally from the explosive growth of paper records in the archives from late 16th century'. These include Sasines, held in Edinburgh and Perth, Books of Council and Session, Presbytery Records, Teind Court material and family and estate papers. The list goes on. There is no way that those compiling a county place-name survey can cover all these. Both Colin and I have separately come to the same conclusion: we need to set up some kind of online 'place-name reporting' system, whereby researchers using such sources can flag up an early or unusual occurrence of a name, an unrecognised name, or an otherwise unrecorded definition or alias. At the same time, toponymists can advise on the interpretation of such names, as well as posting their 'most wanted' place-names for researchers to keep an eye open for. The details of how this is achieved are still to be worked out. But I hope you all agree that it is an idea worth pursuing.

One final point, which in some ways relates to this last. In the main archives where non-toponymic research is carried out, it is important for researchers to have access to the best available place-name surveys. This will help them in identifying and contextualising place-names they come across in the course of their research. But it will also be a way of checking to see if a name they do come across has been properly handled in the existing literature, answering such questions as: 'Has this strange name already been identified?' or 'Have I found the earliest form of this name, and if so, have I found the key to unlock its meaning?'

So my final plea to archives such as the NRS and NLS is to have on their open shelves the most reliable and scholarly place-name literature available, which of course includes the above-mentioned volumes. And so, with that shameless plug for our Survey volumes, I think I've said enough.

**Simon Taylor** (from November 2018 conference talk)

Please see website for details of **BOOKS FROM SPNS**:

*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.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The **SPNS spring conference and AGM** will be on Saturday 11th May 2019 at the V&A Museum in Dundee. Details at SPNS website and on flier with paper copies of this Newsletter. The autumn conference has been booked for the Three Villages Hall at Arrochar, on Saturday 2nd November 2019.

**SNSBI** (Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland) holds its spring conference at Nottingham University, on 26-29 April.

## *'ROUGH BURN' OR 'ROUGH BANK'?*

The name Garvald occurs at several places in southern Scotland, apparently always in connection with a burn and usually readily explained as Gaelic 'rough burn', *garbh allt*. However this is not so clear-cut for East Lothian's Garvald. This is in a locality short on Gaelic place-names but with a notable cluster of Brittonic names including Dumpelder, Traprain, Cairndinnis and, just across the valley of the Donolly Burn, Carfrae, where there were formerly remains of a substantial 'hill fort'.

The 19th century village of Garvald is beside the kirk [NT 591 719], whereas early maps showed the main settlement beside the present Garvald Mains farm [NT 583 699]. A notable feature

beside the farm is clearly defined earthworks. Historic Environment Scotland classes these as a prehistoric fort: 'Steep slopes to the south and west make this a good defensive site'. In the circumstances we may allow the possibility of a name coined in the language of the Old North and corresponding to Welsh *garw allt* 'rough bank', conceivably even a description by which the earthwork feature itself was known.

W. Patterson (with thanks to Alan James and Liz Curtis)

*On the brink of the 'rough bank': photo by Liz Curtis*

*A slightly surreal window display of the front of a vintage tram in inner city Stockholm. It is presumably not an allusion to Edinburgh's continuing wrangles over whether its tram line should be extended down Leith Walk and along to Granton. Could there be an arcane connection to the underworld 'river of forgetfulness' of Greek mythology?*

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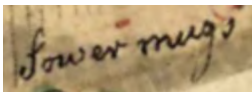
## *SOWEN IS FOR MUGS*



Roy's Military Survey map of the 1750s shows *Sower Mugs*, an apparent dwelling in West Calder parish [NT0161], but probably a slip for *Sowen Mugs*. *Sowens* was a dish made from oat husks and siftings steeped to ferment, then boiled: a *sowen-mug*[6] was the dish used to serve it. Does this imply soggy gruel-like land, or was the dwelling a haunt of weavers, *sowens* being also 'weavers' paste' used to size warp threads? The term also appears in *Sowen* Airth STL (*sic* 1794), which John Reid derives from ME *sogh* 'swampy land', thinking any link with the 'old dish' 'most unlikely' (*PNFES*[7], 153). Last back-end I was inspecting a plan of *The Lands of Crosswoodhill* (West Calder), commissioned of James Knox by its early 19th century proprietor, the great improver Andrew Steele, with his modern-day descendant.[8] The farmland is of some importance, lying as it does at the very edge of Lothian by its rigorously enforced ancient march with Lanarkshire: a raindrop falling on Craigengar at its limit has agenda options of the *Forth* via the *Water of Leith*, the *Clyde* via the *Medwyn* or the *Tweed* via *Lyne Water*, depending on the wind.

While discussing a section of ridge straddling the A70 *Lang Whang*, likely once a Roman road, the farmer said 'I've always known that as *The Sooen* (/ðə 'suən/): I don't know what it means or how it's spelt'. It doesn't feature on the plan, though it is roughly where the five highlighted hillocks are shown on the image below [NT0457]. To its north-west but physically below it, Steele's drainage channels slice through *Cobbinshaw Moss* and *North Moss*, and this is the clue: *sowen(s)* is in fact the dregs or lees, what's left of the drink after the liquor (the *swats*) is drained off, giving us perhaps an insight into the allusive 18th and 19th century mindset.

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[6] Thomas Clancy notes the usage of *mug* for baked clay field drains of a period later than Roy's map.

[7] The Place-Names of Falkirk and East Stirlingshire, 2009

[8] Thanks to Hew Hamilton for access to this plan, for the enlightening discussion and the name.