



Placenames, Gazetteers and Describing Scotland

Bruce M. Gittings

Senior Lecturer in Geographical Information
University of Edinburgh

bruce@ed.ac.uk

Engendering a Sense of Place



*Placenames are the cradle of culture
and at the centre of community*

What is a Place?



place

/pleɪs/

noun

1. a particular position, point, or area in space; a location.
 2. a portion of space designated or available for or being used by someone.
- **Place can be applied to any scale:** from a room in a building, to a monument, a country or larger region which rouses shared feelings in people. Local prominence becomes an issue
 - **Places are dynamic in their material structure and meaning.** Places are modified as people, ideas and objects pass in and out, in space and time
 - **Place does not necessarily have to be a fixed location spatially or temporally** (eg. a cruise ship)

The Gazetteer for Scotland



- Aims to be a definitive and detailed resource
- Began work in 1995; at least another 30 years to go !
- Contents divided into:
 - Settlements
 - Council Areas
 - People
 - Events
 - Geofeatures / Attractions
 - Families / Clans
 - Associated bibliographical references
 - Media (photographs, sounds, video)
 - Parishes
 - Old Counties
- Originally envisaged as a book, but is a **database**
- Some statistics:
 - Around 26,900 full descriptive entries (+75,700 others)
 - 2.6 million words of contemporary text (30 novels !)
 - 2.37 million words of historical text
 - c.10,000 photographs
 - Maps with every entry
 - Approaching 1 million hits per week
- There are places in the GfS which are not on OS maps



Gazetteer
for
Scotland

Help
Glossary

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Search



Welcome to the Gazetteer for Scotland

The *Gazetteer for Scotland* is a vast geographical encyclopaedia, featuring details of towns, villages, bens and glens from the Scottish Borders to the Northern Isles. The first comprehensive gazetteer produced for Scotland since 1885, it includes tourist attractions, industries and historical sites, together with histories of family names and clans, biographies of famous Scots and descriptions of historical events associated with Scotland. The network of connections between all of these entries make this gazetteer unique. We have included the text of Groome's 19th Century *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland* to provide a historical perspective on many of the places we describe.

With at least **26876** detailed entries, the Gazetteer is the largest dedicated Scottish resource created for the web, yet it is growing constantly, with some **56** entries added or updated in the last week alone. Please look at 'Gaz Stats' for more information.

Browse the *Gazetteer for Scotland* using either:

**Maps
and Places**

OR

**History
Time-Line**

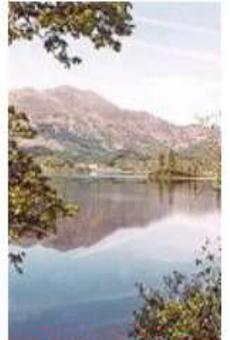
OR

**Search
Pages**

Alternatively, look at our:

Featured Town: Arrochar

In our **Fun Features** you will find a Scottish Quiz and can make interactive maps.



Historical and Contemporary Description

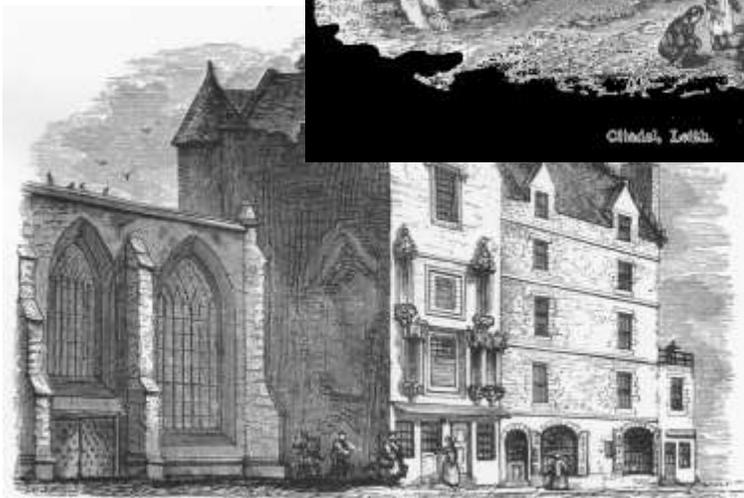


Muirhouse, a mansion in Cramond parish, Edinburghshire, on the shore of the Firth of Forth, $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile NNE of Davidson's Mains and $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles WNW of Edinburgh. Only two round towers remain of a previous mansion (*circa* 1670); and the present house is a picturesque Tudor edifice of about 1830, with a square battlemented tower and beautiful well-wooded grounds. Its drawing-room is adorned with several frescoes by Zephaniah Bell. Purchased by his ancestor in 1776, the estate belongs now to Thomas F.G.S. (b. 1817; suc. Edinburghshire, valued at £121,000 in 1857. See John Smith's *Lothians* (Edinb. 1883).

Muirhouse

City of Edinburgh

Lying to the north of Ferry Road in Edinburgh and to the west of Pilton, Muirhouse is a public housing estate begun in 1953. It takes its name from the Tudor-Gothic mansion built on Marine Drive in 1832 for the Davidson family, who were wealthy merchants trading in Rotterdam. The estate was built in mixed housing styles, include regular white boxes, with low-pitched roofs, and large tower blocks, mostly constructed in the 1960s. The area has suffered from significant social problems. From the mid-1980s Muirhouse, together with the neighbouring West Pilton has been undergoing significant renewal, with many of the tired and dilapidated council-owned blocks being replaced by private housing. The area suffers unemployment rates of more than three times the average for Edinburgh, with a lower proportion of long-term employment.



The Old Tolbooth, Edinburgh—"The Heart of Midlothian"—Demolished in 1817.



Much more than a Web Site



Aberdeen Aberdeen City



Attractions and Features Search

The third largest city in Scotland, Aberdeen lies 150 miles north of Edinburgh, for the most part occupying the mouths of the River Dee and the River Don which flow into the North Sea from the Grampian Highlands. Founded in 1793, it is a city of 220,000 people.

- The **Attractions and Features Search** allows you to retrieve entries from the Gazetteer based on their classification, for example, to list all of the castles.

Map of Aberdeen



How to use the map

the lists below.

types are available.

as all attractions and features from that type.

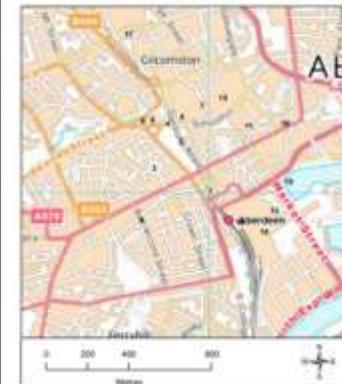
The Gazetteer for Scotland Guidebook Series:



Aberdeen (Aberdeen City)

Produced from information drawn from
The Gazetteer for Scotland
Editor: Bruce M. Gittings
www.gazetteer-scotland.org
Version: 3.17.02

Map of Central Aberdeen (E)



Features of Interest

1. Trinity Centre
2. Dean Burn Valley
3. Gullane Square
4. Rosemount Viaduct
5. Country Hall
6. St Mark's Church
7. Robert Gordon University
8. Aberdeen Central Library
9. Jackson's Garage
10. Aberdeen Railway Station
11. St Nicholas Shopping Centre
12. New Jordan Shopping Centre
13. Aberdeen Bus Station
14. Union Square
15. Dean Burn
16. Crown House
17. The Bastle

The Gazetteer for Scotland is a...



- **Short-form gazetteer:**
 - often used in conjunction with GIS, crucial for geoparsing and linking. Often a list of place-names together with their locations in latitude and longitude or other spatial referencing systems (eg. British National Grid Reference).
- **Long-form (or Descriptive) gazetteer:**
 - may include lengthy textual descriptions of the places they contain, with explanation of industries, government, geography, together with historical perspectives, maps and / or photographs.
- **Thematic gazetteer:**
 - list places or geographical features by theme; for example fishing ports, nuclear power stations or historic buildings. Their common element is that the geographical location is an important attribute of the features listed.

Why not just use the OS 1:50K Gazetteer



- Freely available since 2010
- But fundamentally it is a **map index**, not a **gazetteer**
- Poor spatial referencing: names (not necessarily features) only located to a 1km grid-square
- A lack of alternative names, including Gaelic names. There are only 25 alternative names within the 86,095 names recorded in Scotland
- Poor feature-typing
- Notable errors and inconsistencies with other sources
- Un-named features included eg. "mon"
- Uneven coverage; few names are recorded within towns and cities, due to lack of space on the map
- Repeated names eg. river names which appear more than once on the map

Scottish Government Interest



- Create a contemporary Gazetteer for Scotland that is as complete as we can make it
- Meet obligations under INfrastructure for SPatial InfoRmation in Europe (INSPIRE) regulations
- Debated the meaning of 'place'
- Merge the OS 1:50K gazetteer with another gazetteer which makes up for its shortcomings
- Gazetteer for Scotland:
 - consistent coverage
 - avoids many of the issues of the OS gazetteer
 - BUT not nearly as many entries as OS gazetteer
- One makes up for inadequacies of the other
- Cross checking improves the quality of both
- Sizeable manual editing operation (c. 140 person days)

Improving Gazetteers with GIS



Bruce's Well | Dumfries and Galloway

Satellite | Historical | Gmaps Satellite

Mode: 0.0000 0.0000 0.0000 0.0000 0.0000 0.0000

Problems	Categories	Do it fast	Help
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Couldn't find itAmbiguous positionCouldn't categorise itDuplicate (ASK FIRST!!!)MispellingNew Alternative <input type="button" value="Clear"/>	<p>Water or Coastal Features</p> <p>Well, Spa or Spring</p> <p>no values</p>	<p>Settlement</p> <p>Locality</p> <p>Other Domestic</p> <p>Point</p> <p>Moor</p> <p>Farm</p> <p>House</p> <p>Rock or Reef</p> <p>Valley</p> <p>Loch</p> <p>Sea Loch</p> <p>River</p> <p>Hill</p>	<p>google.it</p> <p>google map.it</p> <p>streetview.it</p> <p><input type="button" value="Photo"/></p>

Resulting Short-Form Gazetteer



- Placename list with around 97,000 entries and links

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"602 Squadron Museum","602 Squadron Museum","",2011585,258110,666010,NS581660,55.86632,-4.26896,"building","", "",2011-06-03,"Glasgow City"  
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"A' Bhuidheanach Mhor","A' Bhuidheanach Mhor","A' Bhuidheanach Mhòr",2074625,266434,778172,NN664781,56.87565,-4.19316,"landform","", "",2013  
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```

- But more can come from names crowd-sourced from OS Second Edition (1888-1913) Six-Inch-to-the-mile maps
- With Chris Fleet (NLS) and Humphrey Southall (Ports)
- Historical dimension
- ~92,000 further names can be added subject to editing

Using Gazetteers: Enriching Resources



Islay Life Explorer Ceud mìle fàilte!
6/11/2020

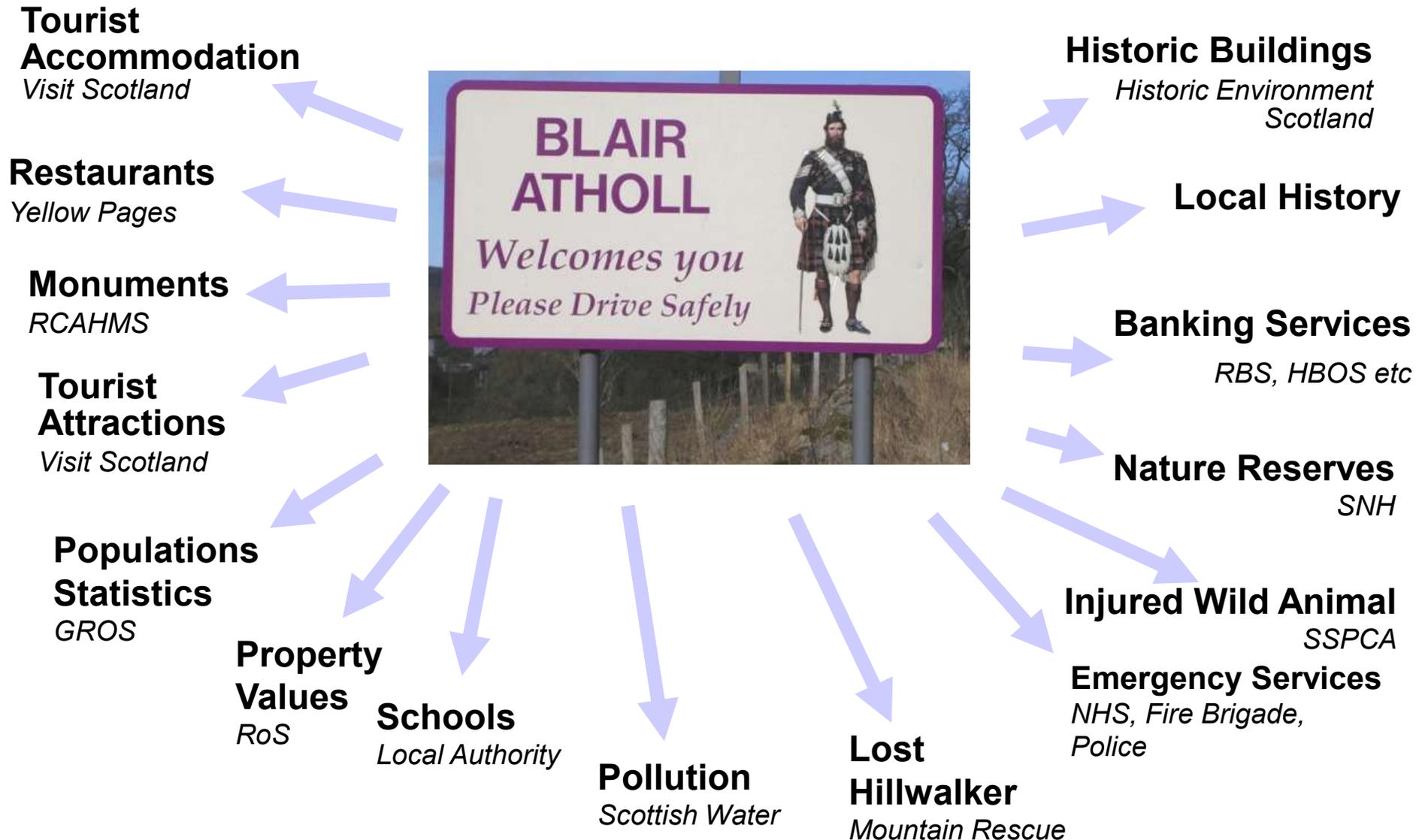
Overlays

Find useful maps that can be used as overlays (To display 'Civil Parish Boundaries' layer on the map, base maps have to be added.)

- ESRI World Topo
- ESRI World Imagery
- Modern Ordnance Survey
- Ordnance Survey 1920s
- Civil Parish Boundaries
- Farm Districts 1749-51
- Gazetteer for Scotland

Feedback?

Using Gazetteers: Linking Resources



GIS and Gazetteers in Toponymy



- Database Management and Data Mining Technologies
 - Searching
 - Textual Analysis
 - Names extracted from / matched in gazetteers
 - Geoparse digitised literary and historical corpora using gazetteers
 - Connect to bibliographic tools
 - Linkage to maps, using spatial references from gazetteers
- GIS tools can assess spatial relationships
 - e.g. proximity, connectivity, clustering
- GIS gives access to considerable volumes of varied data
- Analyse topography, geology, ecology for meaning
- Analysis in space and time
- Use image processing techniques on aerial and satellite imagery to search for lost settlement / archaeology



Conclusions



- Considered the meaning of place
- And therefore what places should be included in a gazetteer
- The value of descriptive gazetteers
- The Gazetteer for Scotland
- Creating a *definitive* gazetteer
- Gazetteers are more than a placename layer
- Value in terms of
 - enriching resources
 - But crucially linking resources of the basis of name and location
- The interplay of GIS, toponymy and gazetteers

