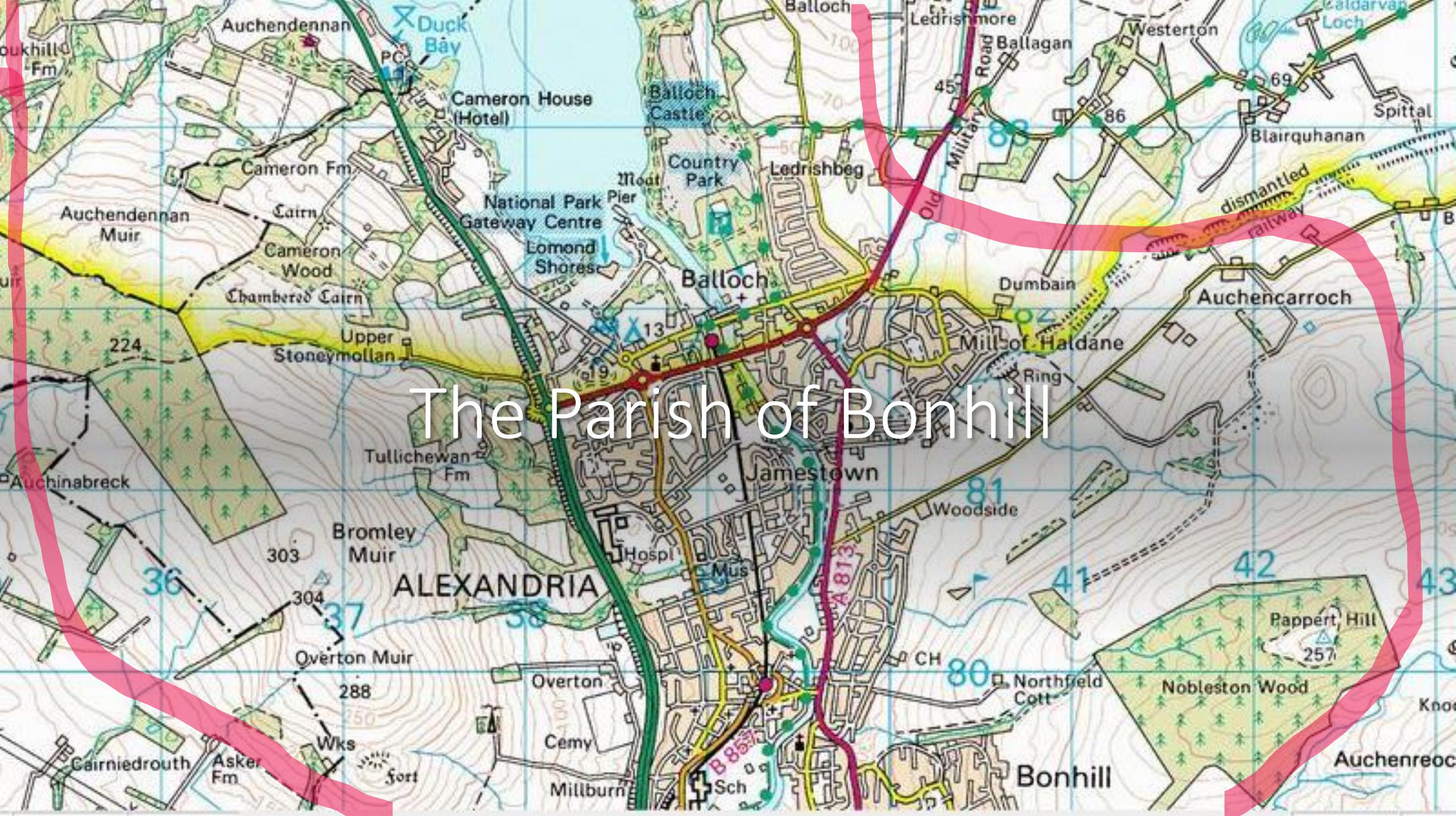


Gwen Jones-Edwards
Scottish Place-Name Society
7th November 2020

The Parish of Bonhill at the
Northern Edge of
Strathclyde: the place-
Name Evidence.

What I am
going to talk
about.

- Where the Parish of Bonhill is situated.
- Does the place-name evidence tell us...
- 1) What its medieval languages were, and when they were?
- 2) Whether they reflect how people lived when those languages were flourishing?



The Parish of Bonhill

Kingdom of Strathclyde

- Established c 500
- Language: Cumbric (Brythonic)
- Capital: Dumbarton (then Govan)
- Last certain monarch: Owain Foel, may have died at the Battle of Carham 1018



Bonhill - meaning

- *Buthlull*; prior to 1249; Registrum Episcopatus Glasguensis
- Generic: *Both* (Gaelic), or *Bod* (Brythonic) = 'dwelling, or church'
- Specific: ?*Lolanus* = a saint-name. 5th century.
- Lolanus' Church
- Not known when the church was founded, and whether this is Brythonic or Gaelic

Brythonic Names

A landscape photograph featuring a large mountain range with snow-capped peaks. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds. In the foreground, there is a body of water, likely a lake or a wide river, with some small buildings and trees visible on the shoreline. The overall scene is serene and scenic.

Lomond

- Nennius, 9th century British monk refers to the loch as '*stagnum Lumonoy*'.
- Generics are Gaelic '*beinn*' and '*loch*'. (borrowed from Welsh '*ban*' and '*llwch*'?).
- Specific is Welsh '*llumon*' = 'beacon'
- Hill, and loch, of the beacon.



River Leven

- Gaelic – *Màgh Leamhna* – the plain of elms – NOT SO!!!
- *limo = 'flood' (Welsh *llif*)
- *sli-m-no = 'slippery, smooth' (Welsh *llyfn*)

- Meaning: either fast, or smooth water.





Carman

- Generic is **cair* (Welsh *caer*) = fort
- Specific is **main* (Welsh *maen*) = stone
- The stone fort

Pappert Hill

- Found also in hills in Brythonic Lanarkshire and Selkirkshire
- *Pant (valley)* or *Paith (uninhabited land)*?
- *Pert* (Brythonic) = hedge or thicket.
- *Paithperth* regularly > Pappert
- A thicketed wilderness?



Gouk Hill

- Sleu nagowack 1538
- Slewna gowack 1654
- Gouckhill 1747

- Generic (*sliabh*) = sedge-covered hill
- Specific *Cwcu* (Welsh), *Cuthag* (Gaelic), *Gouk* (Scots)

- *Hill of Cuckoos*



Linbrain Hole

- Ancient Fishery
- Generic is **lin* (Welsh *llyn*) = 'pool'
- Specific is **pren* (Welsh *pren*) or **bren* (Welsh *bryn*) = 'tree' or 'hill'.
- Not Gaelic **breun* = 'rancid, putrid'

- Pool of the trees, or Pool of the hill.

- This old name suggests that it will have been a known fishery, even in the time of the fort of Carman.





Who was
Alwyn?

THE LENNOX



Earldom of Lennox



Earldom of Lennox

- Kingdom of Strathclyde ended somewhere between 1018 and 1054
- Seems to have been in possession of David, Prince of Cumbria in 1174
- Ailín, or Alwyn, is Mormaer of Lennox, and possibly named Earl in 1178
- What had happened during the hiatus?
- Was Alwyn a Brython? Was he a Gael? Muireadhach Albanach Ó Dálaigh describes him as Irish
- Was he simply called Alwyn by his subjects, who were still Brythons?
- When did the Lennox become properly gaelicised?

Gaelic Names

A scenic landscape featuring a large, snow-capped mountain range in the background, a smaller snow-capped peak in the middle ground, and a body of water in the foreground with a small settlement on the shore.



Balloch

- *Am Beallach* – ‘The Pass’
1340
- Or was it *Bwlch* (Welsh)?
- Guarding the entry to the loch, and to the Highlands was the Lennox castle.
- Maol Domhnach, 2nd Earl of Lennox ejected from Dumbarton Castle in 1238 by Alexander II



Generic (achadh) = Field; Specific (dùnan) = Small Fort

Achadh an Dùnan = Field of the Small Fort

The Round Hill? The Chambered Cairn?

- Auchendennan 1383

Auchincarroch

- *Hauchenkerauch 1217-1249* (Registrum Episcopatus Glasguensis)
- *Twa Auchinkerachis 1490-1493* (Lennox Cartulary)
- Generic (*achadh*) = field
- Specific is probably (*caorach*) = sheep
- *Achadh nan Caoraich* = Field of Sheep



Dalmonach 1250

- Generic (*Dail*) (Brythonic) = meadow/haugh
- Specific (*Manaich*) (Gaelic) = monk
- Haugh of the Monks
- Lucrative yare granted to the monks of Paisley Abbey (at Linbrain).





Woodbank

- *Stukeroger*; 1333-1365
 - *Stochrothart*; 1654
 - *Stockiroger*; 1777
 - *Stuckroger*; 1821
-
- Generic (*Stùc*) = peak
 - Roger's Hill
 - Who was Roger? Rogerius filius Glaii
ia a witness to Walter of Faslane about
1375. Is it him?



Tulichewen 1303

- Generic (*tulach*) = hillock
- Specific (*Eòghainn*)
- Who was Eòghann?
- Was he Owain?





Auchenheglish 1645

- Generic is (*achadh*) = 'field'
- Specific is (*eaglais*) (*Gaelic*) = 'church'

- Achadh na h-eaglais = field of the Church

- Old Statistical Account 1791-1799 – burial ground
- New Statistical Account 1845 – water had risen

Blairvault (Farm and Burn) 1777



- Generic (*Blàr*) = Clearing
- Specific (*Mult*) = Wether
- *Blàr a' Mhuilt* = Clearing of the Wethers

- 6 other *Blàr* place-names adjacent to Blairvault



Stonemollan

- *Stroinmuillin*; 1777
- Generic (*sruth*) = stream
- Specific (*muillin*) = mill
- Sruth na muillin
- Mill stream



What do the Celtic Place-names of Bonhill tell us?

- Early forts
- Fishing
- Saints' cults
- Change of kingship/over-lordship
- Religious and monastic rights
- Lennox houses and possessions
- Arrival of the Norman French
- Farming of sheep (and wethers)

Language
change at the
Northern Edge
of Strathclyde
could be
placed at any
time between
1018 and 1200

Brythonic place-names tend to
reflect natural features – hills,
rivers and wildlife

Gaelic Place-names tend to
reflect human activity -
farms, religious rights and
personal names.