

SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME NEWS

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The Newsletter of the

SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME SOCIETY

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An August evening view over the Loch of Stenness from the Ring of Brodgar, one of Orkney's most famous Neolithic monuments. As Professor Barbara Crawford explains in an article in this issue, place-names research and modern science have combined to make a striking discovery about this landscape in the era of Norse ascendancy: the almost landlocked stretch of salt water seen here was the most southerly part of a system of waterways, open waters and portages, connecting the south of Orkney Mainland with important settlements towards the north-west, including the power centre at Birsay.

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

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:
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COMMENT

Fieldwork is an essential component of place-name studies, as are trips to archives and libraries, and meetings with fellow toponymists to pore over maps and plans, mulling over etymologies and stories linked to landscapes. Just as the weather was becoming more hospitable for getting out and about, we found ourselves unable to make these journeys due to COVID-19. We had been looking forward to hosting our spring conference at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Skye which tied in with Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters. This event will now hopefully take place in 2021. While conferences and symposia planned to take place in person have mostly been cancelled, shorter online events have provided an outlet for new work. On 12 May, the online seminar *Place-Names of the Galloway Glens: The Language of the Landscape* launched the place-names database for this region, with more than 80 people attending the evening. The advantages of online events were quickly seen as people from further afield were able to pop in to online talks and workshops. As well as a good turnout, the Galloway Glens event was attended by people from a range of landscape professions, who bring different perspectives to our lived-in environments. As the committee is busy preparing for our online autumn conference, we look forward to welcoming new faces as well as greeting old friends. The committee held its first online meeting in June which was relatively straightforward to organize and went without technical glitches. This format made it easier for some committee members to attend and gave food for thought as to how to utilize online platforms in the future of SPNS, in order to encourage new members and continue to engage

with our current membership. Scottish place-names have come to the fore this summer as the street names in Glasgow's city centre were renamed temporarily by Black Lives Matter protestors, highlighting the city's links to the slave trade and the current necessity to engage in open dialogue in regard to racism which permeates our present day society. As the title of the Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership seminar recognizes, place-names are the language of our landscape and how we choose to use these languages and who we choose to commemorate in our streets has an impact on the citizens of that society. Audience questions at this seminar centred on biodiversity and land use, as landscape researchers and practitioners focus on the ever more pressing issues of climate change. Projects such as the Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership bring together place-name research with local knowledge and practical skills, with the futurity of the landscape at the core of the project. A sub-committee for community engagement within the SPNS committee has been formed to look at new ways the society can bring together more diverse communities and appeal to a wider audience. We welcome comments or ideas from members.

This year also would have marked the 100th birthday of Edwin Morgan, Scotland's first makar and a great innovator of place-names in poetry, especially in *Canedolia*. This summer has been a time for innovation in place-name research and in the Scottish Place-Name Society and we look forward to seeing you from 'from largo to lunga from joppa to skibo from ratho to shona from / ulva to minto from tinto to tolsta' at our online autumn conference. (Leonie Mhari)

THE NORSE WATERWAYS OF WEST MAINLAND ORKNEY

This study, recently published in the *Journal of Wetland Archaeology* is the result of interdisciplinary research carried out by geomorphologists (M. Bates and R. Bates) and historians and archaeologists (B. Crawford and A. Sanmark). It was initiated by an assessment of the Old Norse place-names in the locality which were interpreted to indicate that the low-lying landscape had been criss-crossed by waterways which it was suggested might have been navigable in the Iron Age and Viking period. The purpose of the study was therefore to test the hypothesis using palaeo-geographic reconstructions and geophysical analysis of abandoned river channels and core sampling of silted-up lochans and pools.

Initial interest in the area was inspired by the existence of a farm named Houseby, for farms with this name have been the subject of much interest in Scandinavia, and in Orkney. They are thought to have been royal farms which were established with the growth of kingship in the 11th century, and which were the basis for an administrative structure, particularly associated with the collection of dues and taxes. The Old Norse name Houseby or Huseby (*husebyer* = ‘farm with many houses’) indicates a farm with a cluster of buildings which had specific functions, some as storehouses for royal food renders. The geographical location of such farms has been one of the underlying interests of research into farms with this name, as they are usually situated by major waterways, and frequently at the convergence of different communication routes thus providing good transport routes for rents and food produce in shallow-keeled Viking ships and boats. There are six identified Houseby farms in Orkney and five are situated on the coast, by important sea routes. But Houseby in Birsay (West Mainland) is some 3 km from the loch of Harray and appears to be isolated from any major waterway. However it is situated by the small loch of Sabiston (formerly Loch of Houseby), and that very name also provides a possible toponymic indicator of its maritime significance. Sabiston is recorded in the early Orkney rental (1492) as Sebustar, from Old Norse *saevor-bolstaðir*, (‘sea farm’) apparently deriving from its location by the loch. It is difficult to know exactly what sort of ‘sea’ is indicated by this name, for the meaning in Scandinavia varies from ‘sea/arm of the sea’, to ‘inland lake’. However it does suggest that the loch of Sabiston was a prominent stretch of inland water when it was named, and probably much larger than it is today.

Further names in this locality can be interpreted as indicators of water features, although not previously recognized as such. Strange as it may seem the very name Greenay possibly also refers to a shallow stretch of water. Greenay is a township with its settlements clustered at the western side of Loch of Sabiston/Huseby and appears in the 1492 rental as *Grenying* /*Grenyng*/ *Grynning*.¹ The name was interpreted by Marwick as ON *græningr* (a green place), but I have suggested that it could be the same as some inland lakes in Norway named Grønningen/Grynningen, from ON

Grynningr (ON *grunn* = ‘shallow’).² If so, then Greenay may have been the name of the area of shallow pools known now as Loch of Banks. These two names, Sabiston and Greenay, appear to be giving toponymic clues to the former existence of much larger stretches of inland water in this particular location.

A very different place-name, but nonetheless possibly rather significant for our theory is the name Knarston. It is located near to Houseby and lies between the loch of Sabiston/Houseby and the north-east extremity of Harray Loch. It is not obviously associated with a waterway, and has been interpreted as deriving from the ON personal name Knarfi, or Knörr.³ But this misses a very important, and much more likely identification of the first element as deriving from ‘knarr’ (ON *knörr* = Viking trading ship). There are two other Knarstons in Orkney, one of which was an important earldom estate near Scapa, where Earl Rognvald held a Yule feast in 1138. The name Knarston is assumed by Guðmundsson in his edition of *Orkneyinga Saga* to indicate the place where ships called knarrrs laid up. Place-names with this same first element in Norway are interpreted as places where there was a good harbour for knarrrs or where there may have been a portage (as indeed at Scapa). There are also a few Knarestad names, where the second element was originally *sto* (ON *stöð*) which indicates a landing-place for boats, but which changes to *stad* and can be confused with *staðir* names. Following the Norwegian evidence it would appear a clear possibility that the Orkney Knarstons could be derived from the ON word for the Viking trading ship, the knarr, and not from a personal name. But to prove this would require some certain evidence that in the past significant waterways crossed the wetlands extending north from the loch of Harray towards Houseby which could have allowed access for sailing/rowing ships to be moored at the location called Knarston.

The fieldwork strategy of the geomorphologists was to identify palaeo-channels in the marshy locality as they had done in other landscapes. Two transects were drawn across the area, the main stream channel from the loch of Harray through

¹ H. Marwick, *Orkney Farm Names*, (1952), p.134, and *Grenie* in 1500. It is highly valued at thirteen pennylands (and along with Sabiston composed a whole ounce-land).

² B. Crawford, ‘Houseby, Harray and Knarston in the West Mainland of Orkney. Toponymic indicators of administrative authority?’ in P. Gammeltoft and B. Jørgensen, edd. *Names Through the Looking Glass*. Festschrift in Honour of Gillian Fellows-Jensen (Copenhagen, 2006), 30; J. Sandnes and O. Stemshaug, (*Norsk Stadnamleksikon*, 1997), 185.

³ H. Marwick, (1952), 64,99,142

the Loch of Banks over to the Loch of Boardhouse, and across the lowest part of the landscape near to the Loch of Harray. Coring was conducted in chosen locations over the area with a hand auger to sample the soft sediments down to over 2m in depth. Samples from key areas in the sections were subjected to laboratory analysis, recording microfossils in the material. It was concluded that prior to improvements in drainage in the 19th century a network of channels ‘interlinked a series of shallow lochs’ which silted up over time, leaving only the Loch of Sabiston/Houseby and the Loch of Banks as open water. The ‘stream channel gradients’ throughout this locality do not exceed 1 degree, which is ‘well within the haulage possibilities for shallow draft vessels’. The use of portages is also likely, as is well recorded for other locations in the Norse world. The extent of drainage improvement in the low-lying landscape is very evident from the drainage channels shown on the map of the locality, marked as ‘liable to floods’ on the 1882 OS map. As was said in the 1st Statistical Account ‘In general Harray is flat and rather swampy’ (as it still is). Climate change and natural processes of siltation have inevitably changed the landscape of this part of the Orkney Mainland since the Norse period (Viking Age and Late Norse Period, c.790-1350 AD). Place-names have been the clue to this reconstruction, and there are other names of significance in the locality, such as Warth, which lies right in the middle of the streams, where the narrowing of the channel is crossed by a track. It is recognized as derived from ON *varða* (‘a beacon’) and has the same origin as the Ward Hills in Orkney, where the beacon meaning is well understood.⁴ The name is much used in the low-lying parts of Denmark where it signifies a watchtower on routes through waterways such as Roskilde fjord, and where Warth names are understood to be part of a wide-ranging signal system established in the 11th century.⁵

All these Old Norse names have provided us with the toponymic evidence for a waterscape in the west Mainland of Orkney which was very different from what we see today. Comparison of the palaeo-reconstructions with place-names of significance allowed interpretation of possible routeways along navigable waters by shallow draught Viking-age vessels from Loch of Harray to Houseby, an important estate probably

originally belonging to the earls. It provided the potential for re-drawing the map of Norse Orkney and postulating transfer of produce from estates in the parishes of Harray and Sandwick westwards through the waterways via Twatt to the earldom power centre at Birsay. It resonates with research on other water routes in Viking/Norse landscapes which have been studied in the Western Isles, such as the loch network of S. Uist and Benbecula where local tradition tells of boats sailing along these lochs which were linked with the sea⁶ and Rubh an Dùnain in Skye where a stone-lined canal has been recorded linking Loch an Airde with the sea.⁷ Whether our water routes in the West Mainland were sailed, or rowed or whether boats were hauled along them is unknown. But it is very likely that the Norse settlers in the locality made use of the waterways for the transport of grain and other rental dues in a landscape which was not well supplied with roads. The functioning of the economy was dominated and organized by the earls who would have ensured that their produce requirements were satisfactorily supplied by the tenants of the fertile grain-growing *staðir* estates in Sandwick and Harray.

Barbara Crawford

(See also location map on back page.)

ANGUS MACDONALD AND HIS WEST LOTHIAN NAMES

ANGUS MACDONALD, M.A., PH.D had his book *The Place-Names of West Lothian* published in 1941, when he was Lecturer in English at King’s College, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. ‘The work... formed the subject of a thesis for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of Edinburgh’ (*PNWL*, v) and was the first to deal with a Scottish county using the methodology adopted by the *English Place-Name Society*. However, the choice of an upper case byline has resulted in his name being misrepresented as Angus MacDonald, more particularly in the last few decades. The first clue that this spelling might be incorrect is his self-designation ‘A.M.’ (*PNWL*, vi), which makes us consider the byline again: it is not MACDONALD. But can we be sure?

He used the same format in his *Linlithgow in*

⁶ S. Angus, ‘The coastal lochs of South Uist’s south end, and their possible role in navigation’ (forthcoming)

⁷ C and P. Martin, ‘Rubh’ an Dùnain: a multi-period maritime landscape on the Isle of Skye, Inner Hebrides, Scotland’, *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* (2017), 1-19

⁴ J. S. Clouston, *A History of Orkney* (1932), 276

⁵ O. Crumlin-Pedersen, *Archaeology and the Sea*, (2010), 129-31

Pictures (1932), when he was a mere M.A., but a year later is acknowledged by H. Harvey Wood (in his edition of *The Poems and Fables of Robert Henryson, Schoolmaster of Dunfermline*) as ‘Mr Angus Macdonald, Lecturer in English Language in this [Edinburgh] University’ for his assistance in preparing an introductory list of the poet’s linguistic characteristics. The matter is clinched by the title page of his actual typewritten thesis of 1937, where he styles himself Angus Macdonald, M.A., giving the lie to the metadata of the online document, which labels him MacDonald, Angus. This may seem a trifling superficial matter, yet its importance is magnified in a discipline where accurate transcription is a self-evident necessity and respect for an author’s self-identity essential.⁸

When I began studying Macdonald’s work several decades ago, I naively assumed that the published book *was* his thesis, much as Norman Dixon’s typewritten thesis (*PNML: The Place-Names of Midlothian*) was later published by the *SPNS* word for word, and character for character. It was only in July 2020, when I first gained access to this thesis (*PNCWL: The Place-Names of the County of West Lothian*⁹), that I found a quite different beast; since when I have been herding the discrepancies into a *Gazetteer* I thought almost complete, in an attempt to maintain the aim of a comprehensive roundup of West Lothian’s place-names.¹⁰

Overall, this newly available thesis is a refreshing prequel to the later book, often less formal, with more of the author’s personality allowed to shine through: Macdonald at times uses the first person singular and is not averse to using an exclamation mark to make a point! There are some useful historical Appendices, including an enlightening one on ‘[Local] Children’s Rhymes Involving Place-Names’. While in the main the entries in the book follow the thesis, it is evident that between thesis and book he has sought or been given (and has obviously taken) additional toponymic advice, as the divergence between the latter (180pp) and the former (807pp), though in differing formats, cannot entirely be explained by wartime paper rationing.

His survey of West Lothian was carried out

⁸ I have to plead guilty to the same error in 1992 (*WLPN, Bibliography*): Wilkinson, John Garth, *West Lothian Place-names* (Torphin), albeit after *SPN, Bibliography*.

⁹ Online at <https://era.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/28470>. Thanks to Guy Puzey for finding this thesis and to Liz Curtis for alerting me to it.

¹⁰ Wilkinson, John Garth (forthcoming), *Bare Brecks, Gutterslap, Fitimhame & Garbles: A Review of West Lothian’s Place-names*.

between 1932 and 1936, within a decade of William J. Watson’s epochal *The (History of the) Celtic Place-names of Scotland* (*CPNS*: 1926), which he used fully whenever necessary, occasionally disagreeing with or daring to correct the master. If this book served as a beacon guiding him away from the perils of the Celtic skerries, then James B. Johnston’s *Place Names of Scotland* (*PNS*: 3rd and final edition 1934) was a lurking will o’ the wisp leading him into unmarked bog. He appears to defer to it, but to have neglected to refer to it would have been the equivalent of, say, a similar researcher of the late 1970s omitting Bill Nicolaisen’s *Scottish Place-Names* (*SPN*: 1976) from his Bibliography, such was Johnston’s perceived dominance of the toponymic scene at the time.

Yet appearances are deceptive, as every toponymist knows, and Macdonald’s thesis reveals a few editorial oddities in the book. To use *Torphichen* as a case study: in the book (*PNWL*, 89) he provides 16 forms of the name and, while calling the second element ‘obscure’, seems to opt for Johnston’s ScG *tòrr* ‘hill’ + *p(h)igheann* ‘magpie’ (*PNS*, 313) with reservations, as MacBain’s *Etymological Dictionary* gives *pigheann* as a borrowing from the late ME *pie*. Yet in his thesis (*PNCWL*, 590-4) he offered around 150 forms from *T(h)orpechin* 1165-78 onwards, calling Johnston’s opinion ‘preposterous’ in that it derived a 12th century form from a word that did not yet exist; nor did the pronunciation suit. He also dismissed any link to the popular etymology’s ‘raven’ (ScG *tòrr fùtheachan* ‘hill of the ravens’) as phonologically impossible: ‘no derivative of *fùtheach*, a raven, may be fitted into the mediaeval spellings of our place-name, as far as pronunciation goes’ (*PNCWL*, 595). He proposed in its stead the genitive singular of the noun-infinitive ScG *feuchainn* from the verb *feuch* ‘to see’, ‘pronounced like /fei'χin/’, meaning ‘sight-hill’ (apparently based on *OSA*, I, 228), from ‘the magnificent view to the north and north-west’ across the Forth, thereby managing to find his own way onto the mudflats, Watson’s beam never having fallen on *Torphichen* in *CPNS*.

The consensus nowadays favours a ‘raven’ in some form: (1) ScG *tòrr fùtheachan* ‘hill of the ravens’; (2) an earlier ScG **tòrr Féichín* ‘hill of St Féichín’, a 7th century Irish saint (whose name means ‘little raven’) much given to founding sanctuaries such as may have existed at *Torphichen*, later medieval sanctuary and Scottish headquarters of the Knights of St John, the Hospitallers. Yet such a Gaelic derivation would make *Torphichen* unique among West Lothian’s parishes, which are uniformly of Brythonic or

later Scots origin, with the exception of the former parish of *Kinneil*, gaelicised from earlier *Penguanl* (sic 8th c [12th c]) or the like. This leaves an option on something like W *tref-fechan* ‘small farm’ (*WLPN*, 32; see *BLITON*, *bīch*, *torr*, *treß*, svv.): cf. *Tranent* ELO, locally **Tornent*, and indeed there are a couple of spellings of *Torphichen* in *Tre-* (*Trefichin* 1461, *Trefy(t)chen* 1538), though the vast majority are in *Tor-*, with the odd *Tur-* or *Ter-* representing the pretonic syllable. Dixon, though, preferred W *tor* + *bychan* ‘little’ for *Torfichen Hill* MLO, ‘transferred’ as he thought from West Lothian (*PNML*, 104–5), yet there remains a problem regarding the identity of the eponymous *tor*. Other permutations are possible, investigated elsewhere.

There were two early reviews of *PNWL*, the first a fairly sympathetic one by the Welsh academic B. G. Charles, who refers to the author as Dr. Macdonald,¹¹ the second, rather more censorious, by no less an authority than Kenneth H. Jackson, who styles him Mr. Macdonald.¹² As one example Jackson takes him to task with his entry for *Uphall* (*PNWL*, 70) where he had cited the Rev. Primrose’s suggestion of ScG *abbhall* ‘an apple-tree’ as a derivation, comparing [lost] *Orchard*. To Jackson this ‘seems to imply that he thinks it worth while mentioning; and if so, it shows a complete lack of understanding of historical Gaelic phonetics.’ This snippiness (and there is more) may be justified, yet Macdonald’s thesis continues: ‘but I hardly think this is correct’. In the same entry he goes on directly to affirm that ‘Johnston’s confused note (*PNS*, 319) in which he identifies Broxburn with Uphall is quite useless’ (*PNCWL*, 625–6), casting more illuminating light on that apparent deference, but a puzzled query on his editorial policy.

Whereas the book defines *Uphall* as ‘upper house, manor house’ (*ball*), the thesis, in a longer discussion, also offers the (less likely) option of Sc *hauch* (OE *healh* and *heall* in Macdonald’s terms), actually a possibility as most West Lothian *ba(ll)*-names are in fact potential *hauch*-names, and the centre of the barony of Strathbrock (which became Uphall) was at the now vanished castle beside the Brox Burn.

Angus Macdonald also benefited from Ekwall’s

work and enjoyed a correspondence with Sir Allen Mawer, founder of the *English Place-Name Society* (who read his proofs), while another authority on Old Norse, Dr O. K. Schram (apparently his supervisor), was among a few others thanked. It was Professor Bruce Dickins¹³ of Leeds University who impelled the project, but it is impossible to say whose post-thesis advice or input swayed him. In any case, he was happy to initial the preface, so the final enterprise is his alone.

Torphichen and *Uphall* may be exceptional, yet on many an occasion I have been obliged to patch the thesis into the *Gazetteer* to amplify what I saw as his ‘silences’, in most cases where his newfound options tally with my existing ones. As one example:

†**WALLHEADS, Whitburn** (sic 1693, *Walheads* 1697, *Wellheads* 1753, sic 1773) Not discussed by Macdonald (*PNWL*, 112), it is apparently Sc *wa* ‘wall’, though more likely Sc *wall*, *woll* ‘spring, well’ + Sc *heid* ‘head, top’: ‘spring-head(s)’, an equivalent of **Wellheads**, by the roadside at the eastern edge of **Stoneyburn**. In his thesis Macdonald admits (without Roy’s form) it could be either *wall* or *well* (OE *weall* or OE *nielle*: *PNCWL*, 662–3) [cNS984629].

In such a way I am attempting to cobble the three works into one. Many lesser dwelling-names in the thesis (such as the intriguing †*Cockmahorn Cottages* at Threemiletown) are unfortunately edited out of the book, but what I saw as his neglect of pre-OS maps is countered by the lists of forms in the thesis: only where there are no other forms are (say) Adair’s (1684, 1737), Roy’s (here 1753) and Forrest’s (1818) map forms included in the book, though generally listed in the very comprehensive thesis, which comes across as a remarkable and eye-opening undertaking.

Post-script: his important *Field-Names and Other Minor Names* section (*PNWL*, 141–65) is again diminished from the thesis (*PNCWL*, 669–761) where he lists scores of names snedded from the book, often with explanations, though admittedly the ‘more striking’ ones (*PNWL*, xxvi) feature in the book. Almost all though will need to be included in that part of my *Gazetteer*. Generally, he noted a disappointing lack of information and

¹¹ Charles, B. G., 1941, Review of ‘*The Place-names of West Lothian* by Angus Macdonald’ in *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Oct. 1941), pp. 515–17.

¹² Jackson, K. H., 1942, Review of ‘*The Place-names of West Lothian* by Angus Macdonald’, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Oct. 1942), 537–9.

¹³ In these times apparently remembered more for his opposition to women having full membership of the university: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce_Dickins, accessed 14 August 2020.

a falling into disuse which has accelerated in the 80-odd years since. Nearly a half of the farms (46%) had no field names, while just over a third (37%) had complete lists.¹⁴ Nevertheless, a surprising amount of noteworthy items still exist even today, and among them are a few gems. For instance, in 2013 I was given some field-names from Milrig Farm, Kirkliston, which (as *Millrig: PNWL*, 46) does not appear to have contributed to Macdonald's field-name survey. One of these names is *Mill Haugh*, self-explanatory and common, but in this case otherwise unrecorded. Yet *Milnehaugh* is listed c.1540 as one of the properties of the Knights Hospitaller in the parish (*KSJJ*, 229¹⁵), indicating a potential oral survival of half a millennium.

John Garth Wilkinson

A NEWLY-DISCOVERED THWAITE?



The area of Culter parish LAN as mapped in Blaeu's *Atlas* 1654, from Pont 1590s. (Thanks to NLS maps.)

The place-name generic *-thwaite* (from ON *þveit*, 'clearing, meadow, paddock') is especially common in north-west England, and in west Yorkshire. There are a couple of simplex forms in the northern isles of Scotland, in the farms named *Twatt*, while *Moorfoot* MLO (*Morthwait* 1142) is an isolated instance. As Nicolaisen (2001, 136) points

¹⁴I am still attempting to decode and sort Macdonald's OS map usage. A retired employee of the *Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food* (now DEFRA) claims that exhaustive field-name records were kept in the Chesser House archives when that was their Scottish HQ. The attempt to chase these up would be an interesting project for a young toponymist.

¹⁵Cowan, Ian B., P. R. H. Mackay & Alan MacQuarrie, 1983, *The Knights of St John of Jerusalem in Scotland* (Edinburgh). Many thanks to James Wood of Milrig farm, Kirkliston, for this apparent relic.

out, the centre of *thwaite*-names in southern Scotland is in eastern Dumfriesshire (DMF) the most northerly being near Moffat: these are listed by Nicolaisen (*op. cit.* 133-135), and he notes many are spelled with *-that* or *-what*, as in *Butterwhat*. He goes on to point out examples of many of these Scottish instances have identical equivalents south of the border, such as Thorniethwaite DMF with namesakes in both Cumberland and West Yorkshire. Other landscape generics of ON origin common in DMF are *beck*, 'stream', *býr*, 'farmstead' and *fell*, 'hill'. The northern limit of these terms lies along the watershed between the Annan on the south and the Clyde and Tweed basins to the north.

I have been working on parishes in south Lanarkshire (LAN) and was intrigued by names in Culter parish (CUL) near Biggar. One of the most curious is *Birthwood* on the Culter Water; there is no other place-name in Scotland beginning with 'birth'. It might be thought, given the confusion between the letters *c* and *t* in medieval script, that it may have been 'birchwood', but it seems unlikely that scribal error could impact on the spoken and understood name thereafter. And in Scotland, *birk* was the more usual word for a birch, attested from the 15th century.



Birthwood farm from Fell Shin. Picture by James Towill.

Looking at the historic forms, the earliest alerted me to the fact that there is no *wood* (*wod*, *wude*, *wid* in older Scots) in it, thus:

- Birthwate* 1466 RMS ii no. 906
- Birthwod* 1511 RMS ii no. 3603
- Birthwood* 1590s Pont 34
- Birthwood* 1755 Roy
- Birthwood* 1864 OS 1st edn.

Rather than the two modern words *birth* and *wood* it is surely composed of *bir* and *thwaite*.

There is a comparable *Burthwaite* in Cumbria: *EPNS* suggests that this latter name has ON *búð* (a word for a building) as the first element, while Whaley (2006, 60) suggests either ON *búr*, 'storehouse' or OE *búr*, 'cottage', or indeed ON *birk*, 'birch'. She further makes the point (420)

that *thwaite* appeared to be productive of place-names well into the 13th century, and certainly long after Scandinavian speech had died out (e.g. Bassenthwaite, containing a post-Conquest personal name). There is of course the possibility that our name here is a transferred name from Cumbria, a reason for which is suggested in the next paragraph. The absence of other *thwaite* names in this part of the Borders meant that that element was re-interpreted as *wod*, later *wood*.

But why would a *thwaite*-name lie here so far north of the other occurrences? CUL parish has several place-names with elements that are commoner in Cumbria, including Culter **Fell**, which stands above Birthwood. This hill lies some 15km north of any other *fell*, and was originally known as *Fiends Fell*, which Pont and Blaeu mapped as *Filfell*. (I discussed it in Newsletter no. 21, and in my *Scottish Hill Names* p. 177). There was another *Fiends Fell* in Cumbria, now Cross Fell. In addition to Culter **Fell**, Scawdman Hill, Kings **Beck** stream and the many streams named **Gill** in the parish (my emphases); conceivably a landowner from Cumbria settled here, perhaps one associated with the eponym of the lost name *Bagbie* (*Bagbie* 1574), from the personal name *Baggi* + *byr*, only 6km west across the Clyde in nearby Wiston parish.

Peter Drummond

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/>>.

A 'ROYAL' POLDRAIT?

The likelihood that the place-name Poldrate or Poldrait comes from Scots *pol* + *draucht*, meaning 'stream channel' or 'channelled burn', was explored in my article in *JSNS* vol. 12 and revisited in the Spring 2019 issue of this Newsletter.

Now a possible 'royal' Poldrait has come to light. Chris Long of Linlithgow Civic Trust has uncovered evidence that a pipe led from a well near an area called Poldrait to the King's Fountain at Linlithgow Palace. It seems likely that the area took its name from this 'stream channel'.

Long has discovered a plan of 1820 which shows four fields called Poldrait south of the burgh of

Linlithgow off Preston Road.¹⁶ In 1889 a villa called Poldrait, which still stands, was built on one of these fields. Nearby to the southwest, the 1897 OS 6 inch map shows 'Fountainhead of Palace Well', with a reservoir south of that.¹⁷

The piped water supply from Poldrait to the palace has been mentioned in written accounts from the 19th century onwards and sections of the 'massive pipes' have occasionally surfaced.¹⁸ Long aims to publish his findings in due course.

To complicate matters, there were evidently two areas called Poldrait in Linlithgow. The second was recorded in 1527 as being lands 'at the east end of the burgh of Linlithgow' (*ad finem orientalem burgi de Linlithgow*, RMS iii, no. 449). In my *JSNS* article, I suggested that the eponymous 'stream channel' in that case could have been the heavily engineered Bell's Burn.

Liz Curtis

Journal of Scottish Name Studies

The latest issue of this peer-reviewed online journal, *JSNS* 13, is available free at <http://www.clanntuirc.co.uk/JSNS/JSNS13.html>. Previous issues are also accessible through the clanntuirc website.

PLACE-NAME ENTHUSIASM IN A GALLOWAY PARISH

The land along the Solway coast between the estuaries of the Fleet and the Dee is happy hunting ground for place-name enthusiasts, containing as it does a fascinating range of linguistic origins – from Brittonic (e.g. Rattrra), via Northumbrian Old English (e.g. Twynholm) and Old Norse (e.g. Borgue) through to Scandinavian-influenced late Northumbrian (e.g. Carleton) morphing into widespread examples from Older Scots among the settlement names (e.g. Boreland), alongside the predominantly Gaelic names of, or derived from, the rugged topography (e.g. Knockbren).

Most of this coastal stretch is occupied by the parish of Borgue (in medieval times, Senwick, Borgue and Kirkandrews) plus portions of Twynholm and Girthon, and the parish

¹⁶ Plan of the Estate of West Port, 1820.

¹⁷ OS 6 inch Linlithgowshire, Sheet V.NE, revised 1895, published 1897.

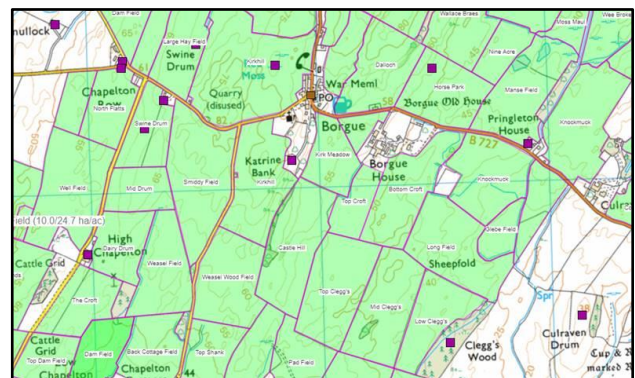
¹⁸ John Ferguson, *Linlithgow Palace: Its history and traditions* (Edinburgh 1910), 245.

community has seen a surge of interest in local place-names following a pair of talks given in the village by Professor Ted Cowan and SPNS stalwart Michael Ansell. These talks launched a pilot project for the National Lottery Heritage Fund ‘Great Place’ Scheme, supported by the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere, titled ‘PLACE (People Land Art Culture Environment) in the Biosphere’, and overseen by Nic Coombey.

This talk inspired local resident Rachel Lucas to set out collecting field-names in most of the parish and some immediately adjacent farms; the total area covered being about 100km². Rachel writes, ‘As a geographer and someone who always likes to know where I live, and the stories behind the landscape, this was a project which struck a chord. Armed only with a 1:25,000 OS map, I started to contact the farms on my list. The area identified has 24 active farms, down from a former total of 48. I contacted them first by phone and then went to see them. On each farm visit I explained the nature of the project and how we imagined that the information would be used and stored. The fields were all given a number on a base map (so that land-ownership details remained private) and the names recorded.

Luckily in many cases the farms had been in the family for several generations or families had only moved from one farm to another within the area. This resulted in a wealth of other background information and hints on who to go and see next. In a few cases, the farms were being run by ‘offcomers’ and without the benefit of knowing the older names they had given the fields new names. I then tried to track down former farm-hands still living locally (often in their 80s). They could remember the field names as though it was yesterday, but had trouble in placing the names to a field marked on a modern map. Only three farmers refused to share their field names with the project (‘what I call my fields is my business’, ‘data is the new oil, how much will you pay me?’), in all other cases the farmers were really keen to find out more about their field names, they were all very supportive, and the help of all the respondents is gratefully acknowledged. The project is nearly complete and we now have the names to approximately 1,000 fields.’ Ann Butler has produced a beautifully hand-painted base-map on which the names will be plotted, for display at local events and exhibitions. Alan James is currently studying and writing notes on these names, many of which are of linguistic, ethnographic and topographic interest, precious relics of linguistic archaeology that could all too easily have been lost without trace.

A second outcome of the project has been a series of strikingly scenic short videos of the parish viewed from the air, made by Calum Ansell using a drone, which have been combined to form a single film with a commentary on the names of places seen on the flights. This can be found on the Biosphere website at: <http://www.gsabiosphere.org.uk/living-in-the-biosphere/biosphere-in-action/place/>. Bringing these and other community initiatives together, a website has been set up by John Shields to provide a common access point for several applications and data types. The website is accessible at: www.borgue.org. It contains some general information about the Borgue area in an application called Borgueopedia¹⁹ and an archive of old photographs of the area. The website also stores data for place-name mapping and analysis applications. Secondly, a Galloway Place-names web application has been created at: www.borgue.org/placenames. This displays a map of place-names across Galloway, including South Ayrshire.



The place-names are derived from the Blaeu/Pont Gazetteer and the Ordnance Survey Open Data set. Place-names can be classified according to their language of origin and there are data fields that can be used for additional description and analysis of the names. Field names and boundaries are also stored in the database and may be plotted on maps as shown in this example (with field names in very small print):

A separate web application has also been created to analyse the geographical distribution of place-names with Gaelic and other origins: www.borgue.org/gaelicdb. Around 450 place-names have so far been entered across the Galloway region. As part of this project, parish boundaries and water features (rivers, burns and lochs) have also been digitised and stored in the database. These mapping sites and associated

¹⁹ www.borgue.org/borgueopedia/

applications are still under development and will continue to evolve as additional data become available and new applications are identified. It is hoped that a feedback facility might be added in order that the sites can be improved by visitors to them.

Alan James

Life Membership of SPNS

SPNS 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

ORDNANCE SURVEY NAME BOOKS OF SCOTLAND AND THE STUDY OF PLACE-NAMES

This article has been written to help inform readers of how to access the Name Books, what they can reveal, and cautions about the information contained in them.

A great interest of mine is the Gaelic place-names of Gairloch parish in Wester Ross, my home area. This area was the home of Roy Wentworth who, until his death in 2003, collected place-names from those who had lived on, and were intimately familiar with, the land. I, in a small way, have contributed to this work researching names in a wide area around my home in the crofting township of Aultgrishan (Gaelic: *Allt Grisean*), a district commonly known by the name of its neighbouring township, Melvaig (Gaelic: *Mealabhaig*). Roy taught me much of what I know about place-names, benefitting from his knowledge of Gairloch Gaelic, phonetics and the pitfalls that could easily mislead. Roy's death and work commitments led me to abandon work on place-names until my retirement nearly two years ago. My earlier work had been hindered by the limited computing power available then. Now, not only is there a vast array of on-line materials, including the National Library of Scotland's amazing website and the ability to interrogate it in so many ways, but there is also the possibility of using powerful applications to produce detailed maps that had previously, of necessity, been largely hand-drawn.

We are also fortunate that, in Scotland,²⁰ the work of those who collected place-names in the 19th Century to be added to O.S. maps is available for research on-line. The Name Books can be found by entering 'scotlandsplaces name book' in a search engine and going to the county of interest, listed alphabetically. The website shows an image of the page from the Name Book with, where it has been completed, a transcription below of the page's contents.

I have known about the Name Books since the 1980s when I was able to refer to them on microfiche in our local Museum.²¹ The ability now to search a website for particular terms, whether it be a place-name, the name of one of the sappers (Royal Engineer) who collected the names or their informants, makes research so much easier.

Collection of place-names in the Name Books

There is no doubt that the job done by these sappers was an incredible task. Many names were recorded that would otherwise have been lost forever. I have still to pin down how exactly the process was carried out, and maybe someone else in the Society could help, but it would seem that, firstly, 'authorities' in each district, who were thought to have the requisite knowledge, would be identified. The sappers then visited these people, maybe together in some cases, with, I would suggest, a draft of a map²² of that district. At these meetings, names of features of interest were noted. As many, if not all, of the sappers did not speak Gaelic, the native language of most of the population at the time, translators would have been required to make sense of what was being said and to offer translations of the names given in Gaelic.

If you have been told of a place-name and then sought it out, for example on an area of moorland, using the, often, vague description given, you will know how difficult it can be to plot the name accurately without the help of a map and modern technology. Despite their difficulties in this respect, most places were correctly plotted by the sappers, as recent informants have independently confirmed. How exactly they achieved that I have still to determine.

²⁰ Name Books for England and Wales are held by the National Archive and do not appear to be available on-line.

²¹ Gairloch Museum has a valuable resource of materials related to place-names including those collected by Roy Wentworth and those contained in censuses, rental records and other estate papers.

²² Names were collected in the Melvaig district from 1848-1852 but the first survey was only completed in 1875.

The O.S. had a hierarchy of informants regarded as reliable. Top of the list, unfortunately, were those least likely to be familiar with the place-names, namely the landowners, doctors, teachers and suchlike who probably had not lived all their lives in the area and would, in many cases, not have been so knowledgeable in Gaelic, the local dialect in particular. Bottom of the list were the tenants of the land, those who worked the land daily, spoke the local dialect and would have learned place-names from their parents and neighbours through the need to identify, for example, the location of cattle grazing over a large area of moorland.

The informants in Gairloch extended across this range. Many of the names in the Melvaig area were given by one informant. Exception to this were more general names such as those for settlements. It is seen from the rental records of Gairloch estate and the censuses that the principal informants were long-lived residents of the district. 'M. Mckenzie²³ of Peterburn', for example, is recorded as living in Melvaig in 1841, at which time he was 35. He was in Peterburn in 1851, aged 42, and in 1861, aged 50. His wife, Annabel(la), aged more usually from 29 to 49 in that time! Murdo, or Murchadh as he would have been called, was well-placed to speak of the place-names of the area.

Searching the Name Books

Finding the place-names from the O.S. maps in the Name Books can be difficult even with the search facility on 'Scotland's Places' website. The names need to input with any accents used but, as far as I can work out, this can only be done by importing the term or accented letter from, e.g. Word. So, if looking for *Cùil-chreag*, you will need to input the 'ù' with its grave. The search will give you occurrences of the name without the accent, which is fortunate, because this name appears on another page without the grave. Not taking anything from the work of the transcribers who have given us searchable data, there are a few errors in the transcriptions that can cause further confusion or frustration.

As already stated, name books are catalogued by county. Each county has a number following 'OS1/'; Ross and Cromarty (Mainland)²⁴ is 'OS1/28/' followed by a volume number, in this case, from 1 to 51. The precise page number for a

²³ Spelling varies: Mackenzie and MacKenzie being two variants.

²⁴ As opposed to 'insular' covering Lewis which was part of Ross and Cromarty until 1975.

particular area can be more problematic. For the relatively small area of around three square kilometres, the place-names of the townships of Aultgrishan and Melvaig extend over two Name Books and not necessarily on consecutive pages. The names are found in volume 12 on pages 66 and 77-79 and in volume 36 on pages 87, 93, 95, 99 and 103. The last page is OS1/28/36/103 though this cannot be searched this way.

The value of Name Books for local history research

There is a great deal of variety in the contents of the Name Books depending on the sapper noting the information. There may be details of the construction and use of a building or the vegetation cover of a small island, for example. In some volumes, whole pages are devoted to the description of a feature.

The extent of the townships of Aultgrishan and Melvaig has varied over the years. When researching this, a good deal of information was gleaned from Gairloch Estate rental records.²⁵ The O.S. Name Books cast some interesting light on this too. These books have a column, *Descriptive Remarks, or other General Observations which may be considered of Interest*, in which can be found some useful information, as mentioned above. An example from the Name Book, with changes not shown in the Scotland's Places transcription, is for the Allt Grisionn (additions underlined):-

A large stream rising in the hill s east of Melvaig and E. of Altgreshan and formed by the junction of several smaller streams: ~~It formed the boundary between Melvaig and Altgreshan~~ and falls into the Minch ~~west of the latter place~~_____

The informant made out that the river formed the southern boundary of Melvaig, something that does not appear to have been the case for between 19 and 23 years. The entry has been changed to reflect the situation as from around 1846. What the informant said, though, reflected what had been the case previously and has been further evidence for these changes.

A name in Melvaig, *Allt Gat Mbiaig*, has not been recorded before or since. Furthermore, its meaning is unknown. This burn has a number of names noted from residents recently but this name is a curiosity that appears to this day on O.S. maps. It raises many questions, not least whether it was recorded correctly or had the informant misunderstood the name? We shall probably never know. Although in this case the

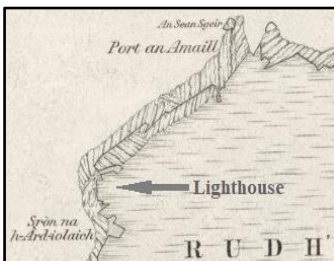
²⁵ Thanks again to Gairloch Museum.

outcome is inconclusive, sometimes the *Various modes of Spelling the same Names*, as occurred with *Allt Gat Mbiaig*, can be useful.

The need for caution with names printed on maps

There are a number of reasons to be cautious when using Name Books.

An example of a name that was most probably recorded incorrectly was given by a Mr Mackenzie, as *Sitbean Bard na Beinne*. In the last column, under ‘Sig.’²⁶, the meaning is given as ‘Hill of the Poet of the Mountain’. For this to be correct, *Bard* should be *Bàrd*. Later maps show it as *Sitbean Bàn* (pale-coloured) *na Beinne* (1905) and *Sidbean Ban na Beinne* (2020, online map). A form recorded in the 1980s is a little different: *Sitbean Bhad na Beinne* means ‘hill of the patch²⁷ of the mountain’.



Sometimes names are added to maps in the wrong place or they shift over time. *Port an Amail* (this spelling is a better reflection of how the name was given in the 1980s) is north of Melvaig at *A' Rubha Rèidh*. It is not known why it was placed where it is shown in the map of 1881 but locally it has been recorded as being to the south of the lighthouse built in 1912 where *Sròn na h-Àrd-iolaich*, itself an ‘interesting’ name, is located. It could be said that the more recent informants are wrong but the argument in their favour is that *amail* means ‘swingle-tree’ and, at half-tide, the rock layers on the shore give the impression of this system for bridling horses.

From Melvaig, there is a view over The Minch to the Isle of Skye and the Outer Hebrides. Off the north end of Skye are a number of small islands. The Name Books for Inverness-shire (OS1/16/5/5) include some of these, among which are *The Cleats*. The reference states, ‘This name is given to four or five small rocks on which there is a speck of pasture on each. they [sic] are situated a short distance to the east of Gailavor Island...’. Having initially been plotted correctly, over time ambiguity has led to misinterpretation so that, by the Seventh Series of the One Inch map, *The Cleats* have been relocated.

²⁶ This was used to indicate the significance of the place-name. Some sappers just wrote ‘Meaning’.

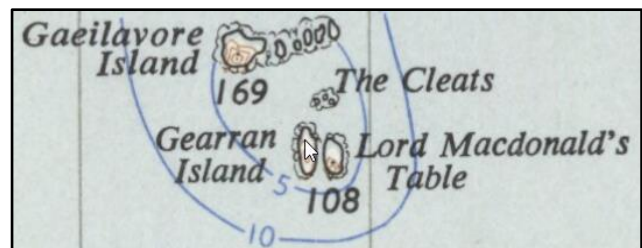
²⁷ The translation of this is open to a good deal of variety but will not be discussed here.



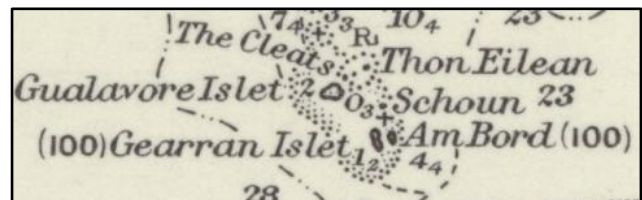
On the O.S. One-inch First Edition 1884 *The Cleats* clearly refers to the islets between Gailavore Island and Thon Eilean.



The O.S. One-inch ‘Popular’ edition 1931 is ambiguous, as *The Cleats* can be read as referring to the islets to the south of the name.

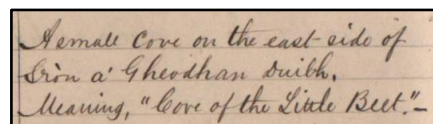


On the O.S. One-inch Seventh Series 1957 there is no doubt as to what *The Cleats* now labels.



The nautical chart of 1957 shows what has become *The Cleats* to the O.S. as being called *Schoun* though it was not until that year, coincidentally, as far as I can find, that the name *The Cleats* appeared on such a chart.

One further error is the incorrect translation, or recording of a translation, of a place-name in the



Name Books. The Name Book entry for *Geodh' a' Chriosain*, on the coast about three kilometres east of the lighthouse mentioned above, translates it as ‘Cove of the Little Beet’. (*An*) *criosan*, the nominative form of *a' chriosain*, can be found in a Gaelic dictionary to mean ‘belt, slender waist, apron’ revealing the obvious mistake that has been made here. Whether the true meaning is ‘belt’ would require further examination of the

inlet as it may possibly take its name from being narrow at its seaward end.

Name Books are not the final word in place-names

As stated at the start of this article, there are many names that were not recorded by the Ordnance Survey. This is because, it would seem, there was not interest or need to collect more. The number within settlements appear to be minimal, limited largely to the settlement names and water-courses. In contrast, other areas, such as stretches of coastline or moorland, are often graced with a higher density.

Whether other unmapped place-names are still available will depend on historical records or the local population knowing them. In Wester Ross, few of the informants who gave Roy Wentworth and me place-names are now alive. Without having done this work, many of these names would have been lost forever. The richness of what must have been lost in many places is suggested by a comparison between names recorded by the O.S. and more recent work. For an area round Melvaig and Altgrishan the O.S. recorded twenty names as against some 100 collected in 1986-2004.

Conclusion

The Ordnance Survey Name Books are a tribute to the work of that organisation and the sappers who collected the names. While there are shortcomings in the information, they are a treasure trove, to borrow Eila Williamson's description (Newsletter no. 47), of information and offer many opportunities for research in a variety of fields. It is hoped that this article will go some way to encouraging this.

Acknowledgements

All maps are reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland. National Records of Scotland gave permission to reproduce material from O.S. Name Books.

Nevis Hulme (This is a reduced version of a talk that would have been given at the conference in Skye that could not take place in May 2020.)

Scottish place-names on the Red Planet

Thanks to Liz Curtis for information that Aberlady (East Lothian) and Kilmarie (Skye) were names of sample drilling sites for NASA's Curiosity Mars rover on 12th May 2019. We don't know why!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Because of COVID-19 **SPNS's autumn conference** on Saturday 7th November will be an online event: details on enclosed flier and on website. Depending on the situation at the time it is hoped to have 2021's spring conference in Skye on 21st May, with substantially the programme that had been intended for the same venue in May 2020.

The **Scottish Society for Northern Studies** has arranged an online conference and AGM for 21st November:

<https://www.ssns.org.uk/news/ssns-day-conference-2020-news/>.

SNBSI (Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland) intends to hold its 2021 **Spring Conference** on 9-11 April at Bridgend, South Wales, postponed from April 2020.

THE THREE KINGS CULT IN SCOTLAND

In the Comment section of the previous issue of *Scottish Place-Name News*, attention was drawn to the cult of the Three Kings of Cologne, or biblical Magi, whose shrine at Cologne was a major pilgrimage centre during the Middle Ages. In Scotland, there is pre-Reformation evidence of the cult scattered around the country from the western islands of the Gàidhealtachd to eastern coastal burghs, and which is to be found in a range of sources including literature, altar dedications (e.g. at Aberdeen, Dundee and Haddington), the *Treasurer's Accounts* (in which royal offerings to the Three Kings of *Culane* are recorded at Epiphany), records of early drama, and wood carvings.

The individual names of the Kings were used as charms to protect against such afflictions as epilepsy, headache, fevers, and the dangers of travel, and can be found inscribed on jewellery. For example, on the thirteenth-century Islay and Kames gold ring-brooches, two of the King's names – Jasper and Melchior – are found in combination with Atropa, the eldest of the Three Fates of Greek mythology and the one who cut the thread of life. The name Atropa may be more familiar today in the form *Atropa belladonna*, or Deadly Nightshade, the poisonous plant from which atropine is produced.

Eila Williamson

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 – normally £35 but 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.

News of publication of the **Clackmannanshire** volume is expected very soon.

Long distance runner **Ian Campbell** would like to share his interest in **runs with place-name interest**. Sample sections of his blogs can be seen at:

<https://ianrunningdifferent.blogspot.com/2017/05/a-to-z-gwr-to-innerleithen.html?view=flipcard>
(A to Z of Scotland);

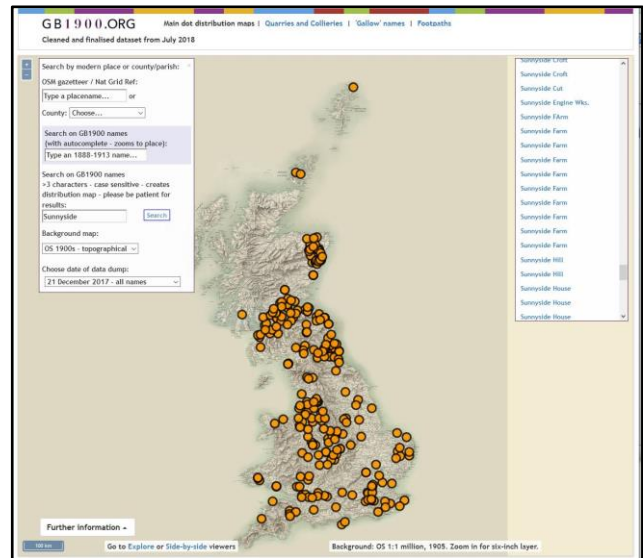
<https://ianrunningdifferent.blogspot.com/2020/01/a-to-z-of-perthshire-shape-of-water.html?view=sidebar> (A to Z of Perthshire).

There are also alphabet runs for Edinburgh, Dundee, Dunbar and Glasgow. Links to the whole set of blogs are provided in a left hand column of each section. The blogs are amply and attractively illustrated with photographs.

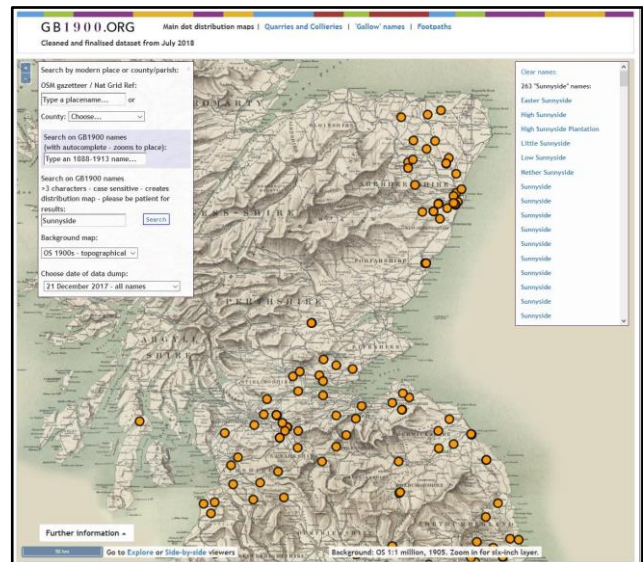
THE GB1900.ORG DATASET AS A RESEARCH TOOL

Chris Fleet, Curator at the NLS Map Library, has drawn attention to a searchable gazetteer for England, Scotland and Wales, based on Ordnance Survey large-scale maps of around 1900. A public search portal can be entered at <http://geo.nls.uk/maps/gb1900/#zoom=6&lat=55.0000&lon=-2.5000&layer=0>.

For names that occur far and wide, or may be common in a more restricted area, the ability to create a distribution map will be very useful. An example shows 263 names that are either plain Sunnyside or are part of a name such as Wester Sunnyside or Sunnyside Plantation. Given the large scale of the base maps it is not surprising that there are six instances of Sunnyside House and ten of Sunnyside Farm.



The distribution map for Sunnyside shows a spread from north Cornwall to an outlier near the north end of the most northerly Shetland isle, Unst. There are also notable gaps.



At a larger scale, and on the assumption that map-makers' practices were uniform, the map shows Forfarshire (Angus), Perthshire and north Fife to have shunned the appeal of 'Sunnyside' compared to Aberdeenshire and the Central Belt.

As an example of how such a facility in GB1900 can contribute to research, Dr Laura Wright at Cambridge University recently published a monograph 'Sunnyside – A Sociolinguistic History of British House Names'. For those in Scotland accustomed to expect a typical Sunnyside to be literally on the sunnier side of a hill, it may come as a surprise that in England the name was favoured for its vaguely religious connotations by Quakers and Nonconformists, a habit replicated in America for the naming of churches of evangelical denominations.

Bill Patterson

SCOTLAND'S SLAVERY LINKS – THE EVIDENCE OF NAMES

During the Black Lives Matter protests in the summer not only statues of men who benefited from slavery came under scrutiny. Street names that once proudly celebrated colonisation and eminent merchant citizens now remind how it was the slave trade and slave-powered plantations that provided the wealth for new industries and grand buildings, public as well as private, in new city districts as well as in country estates; besides enabling even the least affluent to develop a taste for sweet cakes and smoking, not to mention cotton clothing at a later period. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Glasgow's 18th century expansion, with its names such as Jamaica Street and Virginia Street, or Ingram Street, Cochrane Street and Glassford Street, named for 'Tobacco Lords'; some may feel it is now time for Ingram Street to revert to Back Cow Lone as it was till 1761. Any Edinburgher feeling holier-than-thou towards the Atlantic-facing rival city might reflect on how Antigua Street got its name, or on the monumented Lord Dundas's rear-guard efforts to postpone the abolition of British slave-trading.

Even so, many of us may have supposed that Scotland was relatively untainted by association with slavery in the New World, until the Union with England in 1707 enabled those with enough financial clout to join in England's established triangular trading (Africa – America – Europe) and colonial exploitation. However, Scots' involvement in the slave-driven economy began before the Union, or even the failed attempt in the Darien Scheme at the end of the 1690s to set up 'New Caledonia' in Central America.

It may largely have escaped public knowledge that the founding of Port Glasgow and Glasgow's first sugar houses in the 1660s was related to a surge in movement of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic. Any concern about an ancestral crime against humanity was not at the forefront of a very traditional History of Glasgow of a century ago, which preferred the euphemistic 'new avenues of trade' (chapter V of volume III at <https://electricscotland.com/history/glasgow/historynydx.htm>). Recently Stuart M Nisbet has researched direct involvement of Glasgow merchants and colonists by the 1660s in highly profitable sugar plantations in the Leeward Isles in the Caribbean, especially St Kitts and Nevis²⁸ (<https://www.scottishrecordsassociation.org/Scot>

²⁸ From Spanish *Nuestra Señora de las Nieves* (Snows) – not the Scottish Ben, Glen or Loch.

[tish%20Archives%2019.8%20Nisbet.web.2015-02-17.pdf](https://www.scottishrecordsassociation.org/Scot/tish%20Archives%2019.8%20Nisbet.web.2015-02-17.pdf); thanks to Scottish Records Association).

Perhaps more surprising than the involvement of merchants from the Clyde or a dominant East Coast port like Leith is the participation of venturers from the north of Scotland. Reflecting the belated growth of public interest in an aspect of history that has lain largely out of sight and out of mind, in mid August there was much attention in the media to recently published research at the University of the Highlands and Islands. An article by Professor David Worthington²⁹ shows that in the later 17th century sugar reached the Moray Firth region largely through Dutch ports, especially Rotterdam, not from the Clyde or from England. This trade was already active years before William of Orange became King of Great Britain, and depended on the Dutch imperial venture in Suriname, on the north-east coast of South America.

Northern Scots were directly involved in sugar plantations in this colony, using indigenous as well as African forced labour. One Henry MacKintosh, from the family of that name with a seat at Borlum near Inverness, is well attested from 1674. MacKintosh is on record as a substantial landowner and slave-owner, at Fairfield on the Commewijn river. He is also mentioned in Dr David Alston's 'Slaves & Highlanders' website.³⁰ But he was not the first. A map of which an extract is shown in Worthington's article (but in copyright so not reproducible here) is titled *A Description of the Colony of Surranam in Guinea Drawne in the Year 1667*. It shows 'Scotsmen' beside a creek-side building. An apparently Dutch version of the map records the surnames *Magalfin* and *Macfarson* where the other shows *Scotsmen*. Surviving records of the Dutch administration show the presence of other men of apparently Scottish origin.

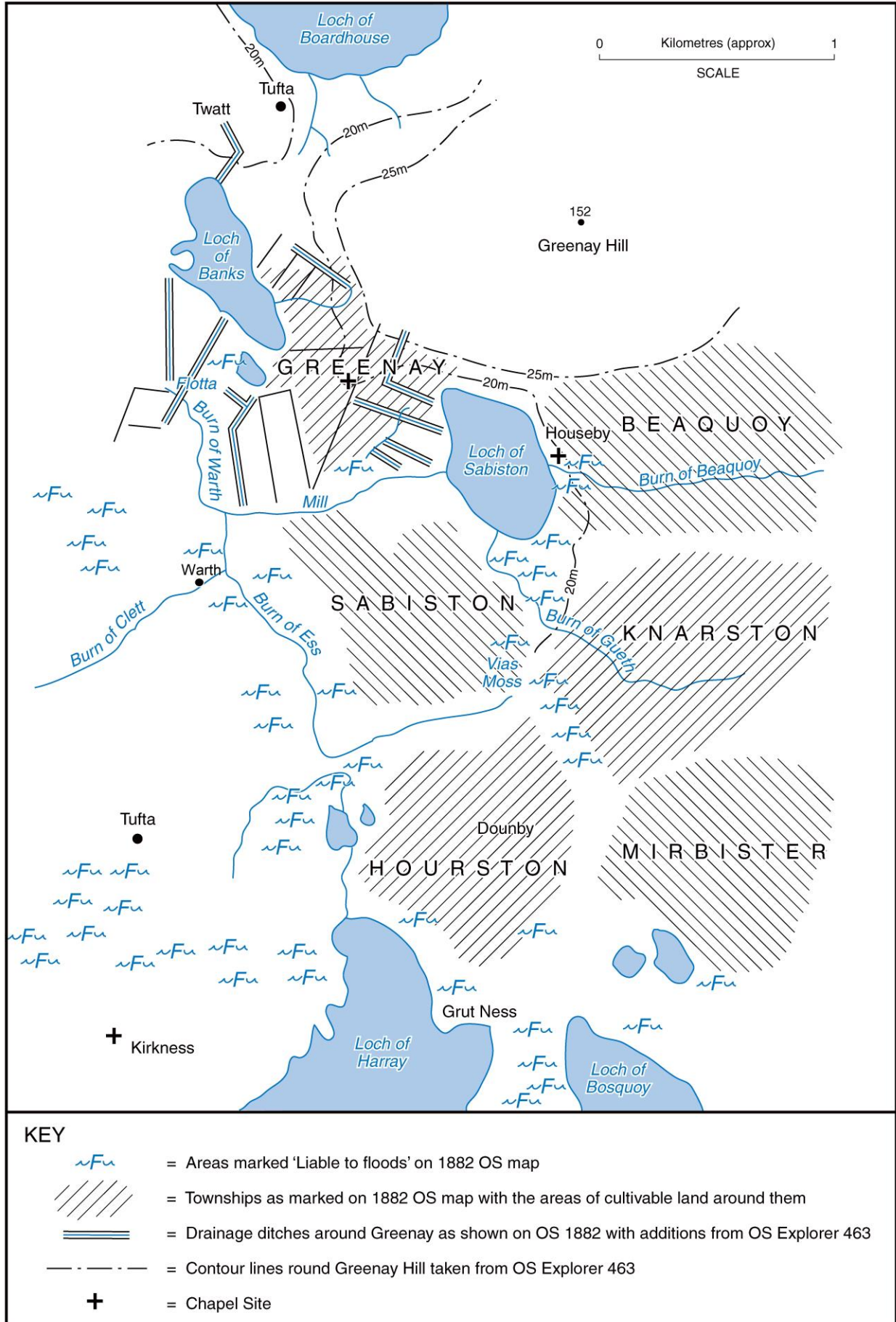
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If any SPNS member who receives printed Newsletters would also like an electronic copy, please e-mail pn.patterson3dr@btinternet.com to arrange this.

²⁹ Accessed 9/9/2020 at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03096564.2019.1616141>

³⁰ Most of the material on the website is from later periods: <https://www.spanglefish.com/slavesandhighlanders/index.asp?pageid=606986> for the relevant page.

Map relating to Orkney waterways article on pages 2 to 4



Sketch Map of area round Houseby, West Mainland of Orkney based on OS 1st ed. (1882)