review of John Murray (2017) Literature of the Gaelic Landscape: Song Poem and Tale/Litreachas na Tìre: Òran Bàrdachd is Sgeulachd, Dunbeath: Whittles Publishing Ltd

Bateman, Meg

SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME NEWS

No. 44
Spring 2018

The Newsletter of the
SCOTTISH PLACE-NAME SOCIETY
COMANN AINMEAN-ÀITE NA H-ALBA
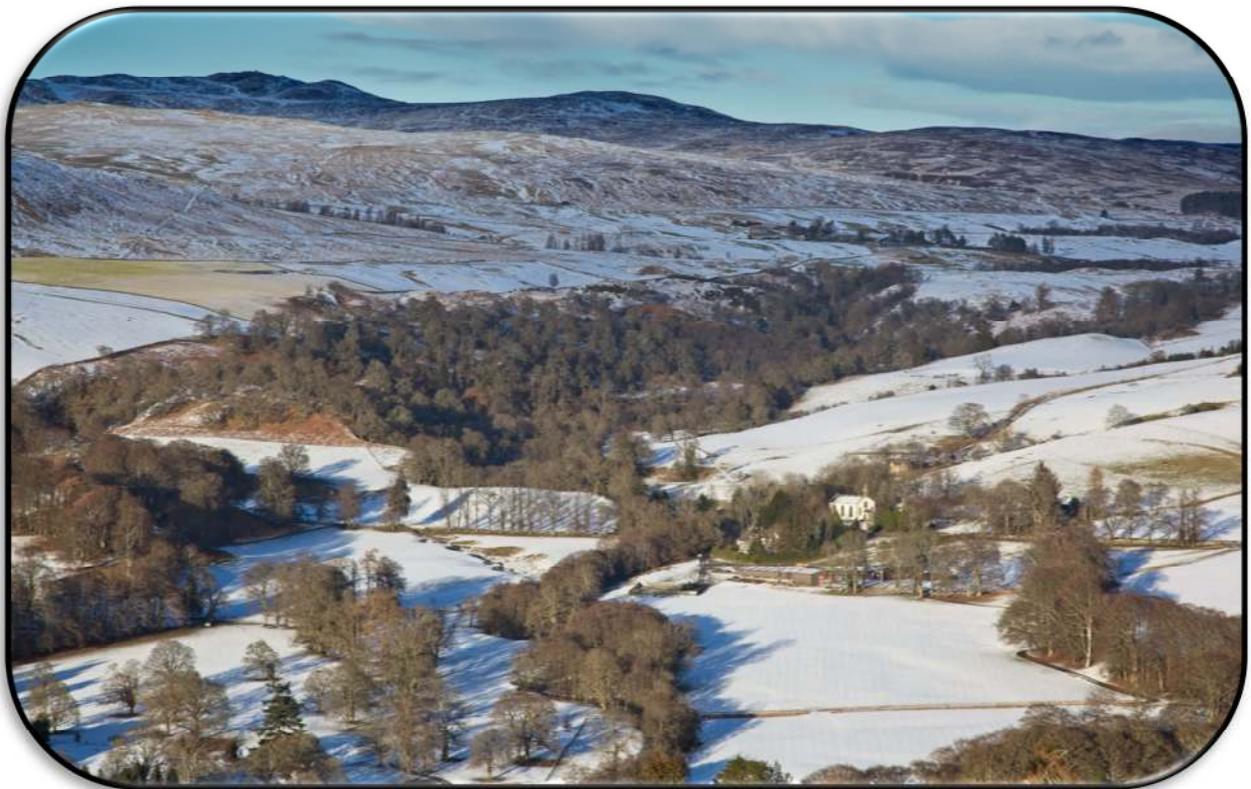
As the spring conference is to be in Perth, a scene from the edge of Highland Perthshire. It includes Monzie Kirk, some 4 km north of Crieff, as seen from near the northern end of the ridge known as Knock of Crieff. Monzie's six letters, of which the zed (or rather yogh) is now silent and the last two bear the stress, retain a Scots spelling convention of the 16th and 17th centuries; a modern anglicised spelling would be Monee. The late Angus Watson in his PhD thesis on place-names in the earldom of Strathearn (https://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/handle/10023/11331) gave earlier spellings including *Mugheda* 1226x1234, *Monyhge* 1268?, *Mothieth* and *Muyhe* 1283, *Monyeth* 1329x1334, *Moyhe* 1442, *Munze* and *Monze* 1553, *Monze* and *Monzie* 1576, *Moinye* and *Moiny K[irk]* on Pont's late 16th century manuscript map. He accepted earlier proposals that the name represented Gaelic *magh-eadh* 'plain of corn', and Prof W J Watson's (1926) explanation of the at first occasional and later regular appearance of the nasal [n] as deriving from the early Gaelic *mag n-etho*, where *mag* 'plain' was neuter and thus required the nasal insertion before the genitive of *ith* 'corn'. Good arable land is evident in the foreground of the photo.

COMMENT

Those with an interest in place-names may have noted with wry amusement the kinds of marketing names that volume house-builders tend to give to their new developments. (Not to mention the names given to house types: that customers in Scotland are offered houses in Scotland, named for towns in the Cotswolds or Somerset, says something about how much regard is given to local character or building tradition.)

The formula *X* Fields or *Y* Meadows is still going strong; streets of suburban semis are marketed as a rural idyll. 'Lea' and 'Paddock' are newer variations on this bucolic theme. Using just one such word was not enough for 'Meadow Lea' in Nairn, but for sheer irony 'Greenfields' in Inverness would be hard to beat. Marketing agents assume that buyers have social climbing pretensions: there are still a few 'Manors' around, but the clear leader for spurious reference to high-status buildings is now 'Grange'. A bizarre instance of such naming is 'Haddington Manse' for a new housing estate. Presumably in such cases the actual meaning of a word is neither known nor cared about; it is enough that genuine old manors or granges or manses tended to be desirable properties. Sometimes it looks as if the marketing men are based 'down south'. Would Haddington, Lincs., have got a 'Haddington Vicarage'? Was 'Brook Fields', East Kilbride, named through ignorance of Scottish usage, or because 'Brooks' are posher than 'Burns'?

SOME SCOTS PLACE-NAMES IN LANARKSHIRE: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JOHN PRINGLE MILLER

J P Miller left a typescript collection of Lanarkshire place-names in the School of Scottish Studies, but little trace of who he was. He had published much of his work in the Hamilton Advertiser in the early 1930s, and appears to have lived in Bothwell until his death in 1966. The present writer has been working on Lanarkshire (LAN) place-names for much of the last decade, and acknowledges his debt to Miller's work, especially for old forms of names in the Commissariat records of the 17th century.

In my November talk I focussed on the earliest Scots place-names in the county, and on *hall*-names. I began with the four oldest Scots names in Glasgow parish (GLW), as distinct from the many Brittonic or Gaelic names which are recorded from the 12th century on. The earliest Scots name is a 'new town', as *Neutun* 1186 (*Glas. Reg.* 62): this lay about 2km north-west of the old town centre of Glasgow, across what was then open countryside. In the 13th century Ramshorn is recorded as *Ramnishoren* (*Glas. Reg.* 180), then in the 14th century the first record of the famous Broomielaw on the Clyde waterfront, as *Bromilaw* 1325 (*Lib. Coll. ND Glasgow* 186). Ostensibly this is Sc *law*, 'hill', preceded by Sc *brume* later *broom*, the plant. However, it has to be said that a 'hill' is not really in evidence, just a gentle slope north from the river: and there is another definition of *law* in *DOST*, based on a 1674 extract from the burgh records of Glasgow, as: 'An (underwater) mound, a sand-bank or [perhaps] a place where the water is low, a shallow.' Now, where the Broomielaw stands, on Roy's 1755 map (extract below) there was a sandbank or small island in the Clyde: later that century the dredging of the Clyde began, a process which included the building of hundreds of small piers all the way up to the Broomielaw which had the effect of narrowing the channel, creating scour to deepen the channel for ships. Such work either washed

away the sandbank (or shallow island), or built over it. This riverine feature is the most likely meaning of the name.


Roy's 1755 map, showing Glasgow and the Broomielaw area

In the early 15th century comes a record of a stream-name *Gyrthburne*, a small tributary of the Molendinar Burn, lying close to Glasgow Cathedral. This name commemorates a long tradition, by then following into disuse, of granting sanctuary or 'girth' within the bounds of a church.

Moving beyond GLW, looking at LAN as a whole, my database contains c.30 Scots names in the 12th and 13th centuries, and half of these appear to be named from their Anglo-Norman owners, many give their lands by David I and his successors. The detailed history of these names has been covered by Geoffrey Barrow's work, and a forthcoming article by Simon Taylor; it suffices to point out here that southern Lanarkshire has an important collection of these eponymous names, many of which became parish names, such as Covington, Crawfordjohn, Dolphinton, Lamington, Roberton, Symington, Thankerton, Walston and Wiston, most combining their owner's name with Sc *toun*, 'farm, settlement, land-holding', a word cognate with OE *tūn*. One unusual one amongst them is Annieston, unusual in that it is named after a woman, probably Aneis de Brus, from Agnes, one of two wives (of the same name) of Robert the Bruce.

Much of modern western and southern Glasgow lies in Govan parish (GOV); and one of its oldest Sc names is Titwood (*Tytwod* 1513). A cricket club plays there, and their shield seems to suggest a simple explanation, that of trees frequented by the small birds. However, although place-names combining birds and trees are quite common

(e.g. Crowwood), most of the birds thus named are large or noisy – raven, cuckoo (Sc gowk), magpie (Sc pyat), curlew (Sc whaup), hawk, etc, which cannot be said of tits. The OED first recorded the form *tit* (a contraction of *titmouse*) in 1706, two centuries after the first record here, and long after the first record of

another *Titwood* (1638) in Ayrshire. So possibly it may derive from what the OED for *tit* n[3] gives as 'small animal, object' and the name could represent a 'small wood'.
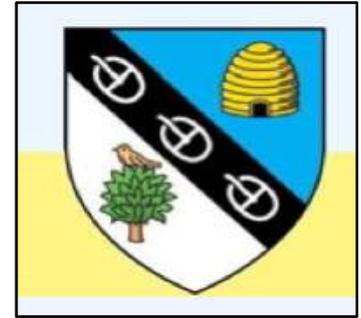
One Sc place-name that occurs mainly in Lanarkshire is Shuttlefield, of which I have found five instances in the county (the OSNB records two more, one each in Kirkcudbright and Dumfriesshire). Only one (in LAX, above image) is still extant, and all were in remote rural locations, mainly in the upper wards of the county. The term may apply to some kind of agricultural practice, perhaps involving the temporary movement (i.e. shuttling) of beasts, or the rotation of crops. If a crop was to be sown before the high ground or shiels were clear of snow for the beasts who had wintered on low ground, then the beasts could be 'shuttled' into a field temporarily. The existence of Shuttlehill SHO, and perhaps Shuttlefauld in Orwell parish Kinross (which Taylor however suggests may be due to the field's pointed shape), might also confirm the suggestion. I would be interested to hear from any member if they know of this term used by farmers.

In my talk, I examined some of the many *toun* names in and around the city: including Hutchesontown, from the brothers who left money to found a school that is now Hutchesons' Grammar: Anderston, a

planned village by Anderson of Stobcross that should by logic have been *Andersonton* but - like its Belfast equivalent which is often shortened to Andytown or similar – it has come down as Anderston; similarly, Alexander Dennistoun's 19th century planned eastern suburb became Dennistoun rather than *Dennistounton*; and the well-known area of the city Maryhill, which is actually named after a woman called Mary Hill, wife of a local landowner, and briefly recorded as Mary's Town before settling down in the well-known form.

Forrest's map 1816, showing Maryhill as Mary's Town

Sc *hall*, as in English, means a mansion, or a large and spacious building. However, as Taylor (*PNF* 5) has observed, it is often used ironically in the Scottish lowlands to describe a fairly mean, if not humble, abode. Sometimes, this is apparent from the specific used, such as *Brankumhall* and *Startuphall* EKB (Sc *brankum*, 'ground elder weed', *startup* 'upstart'), or the use of a bird name (e.g. Gowkhall BTW from Sc *gowk*, 'cuckoo'), but sometimes the truth is revealed by the 1860s Ordnance Survey Name Books (OSNB), information now freely available on the Scotland's Places website.

My Lanarkshire database has c. 60 hall-names. Of these c. 20% appear to be 'genuine' halls, which the OSNB often describes by the words 'superior' or 'mansion', such as Greenhall HAM or Woodhall BTW: and it is perhaps noteworthy that quite a number of the them *changed* their name to X-hall as part of their social ascent, such as *Newhall* > Woodhall, *Haggs* > Rosehall, both BTW, or *Wellshaw* > Wellhall HAM. About 15% of the hall-names are bird-names, such as Laverockhall CAD, Corbiehall CST, Fiddlershall OMO, and Pyethall DGL, respectively from Sc *laverock*, 'lark', *corbie*, 'raven', fiddler *sandpiper* and *pyet*, 'magpie': with the exception of Glaudhall CAD (from Sc *gled*, 'kite') which was a 'superior house', many of the others have the word 'small' or 'poor' appearing in their OSNB entry. Whilst c. 35% of the other halls are apparently reasonable housing ('farmstead, farmhouse, good repair, slated', etc), a similar percentage are poor habitations ('poor, ruinous, thatched, small cots' etc). Quite often the specific gives the game away, being less than positive about the environment: thus, Benthall (Sc *bent*, 'coarse moorland grass') Birniehall (Sc *birn*, 'burnt heather'), Boghall, Heathryhall, Kilnpothall, Thorniehall, Tuphall (Sc *tup*, 'ram') and Windyhall; the OSNB entries on those names confirm their low status ('indifferent repair', 'row of outhouses', 'occupied by cottars'). So not all halls were desirable residences!

Rosehall House, formerly Haggs estate, c. 1900

Of course, the use of irony was not confined to hall-names. The latter 18th and early 19th centuries saw the use of humorous or ironic names, often hinting at the poverty of the farm or dwelling: thus *Bad Weather* SHO, *Wakenwae* HAM, *Coldwakening* AVO and *Hungryside* HAM, as well as names in the same spirit as some hall-names, such as *Cathedral* BTW and *Palace* NMO in remote rural spots; *Clartyholes* (below) translates as 'filthy hollow'. Unsurprisingly, very little trace of these names remains, although there is a Mountainblaw Street in east Glasgow, from an old and recurring name (there were three in the county) perhaps indicating the micro-climate.
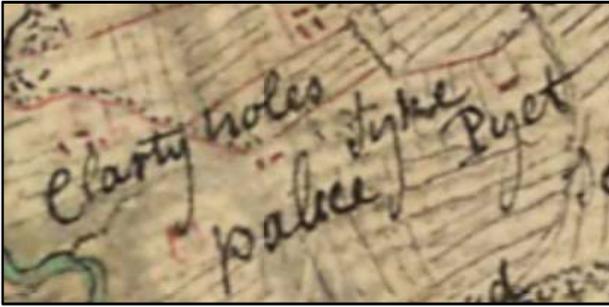
Roy's 1755 map, near Airdrie –
Clartyholes & Palice

Parish abbreviations: AVO – Avondale, BTW – Bothwell, CAD – Cadder, CST – Carstairs, DGL – Douglas, EKB – East Kilbride, HAM – Hamilton, LAX – Lamington, NMO / OMO – New / Old Monkland, SHO - Shotts

Peter Drummond

GAELIC PLACE-NAMES IN GLASGOW

GLASCHU is an ongoing project on Gaelic place-names within the modern city of Glasgow. The project-name is the standard Gaelic form of Glasgow. I am currently employed by the School of Humanities (Celtic & Gaelic) at the University of Glasgow to carry out the place-name research, with the support of Drs Katherine Forsyth and Simon Taylor. This place-name research is a feature of the first phase of a wider project which includes a number of external partners. This group of partners is co-ordinated by the Glasgow-based design practice Dress for the Weather and includes Glaschu Beò/Glasgow Life, Northlight Heritage, Hugh Dan MacLennan and Mary Ann Kennedy. Dress for the Weather worked with Glaschu Beò and Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba in producing 'Glaschu Gàidhlig: a map of Gaels and Glasgow' as part of Festival 2014, a map which many of you will have seen. The aim of the current project is to build on the research carried out in producing that map and on local toponymic research carried out to date, particularly that of Drs Simon Taylor and Peter Drummond. The overarching aim of GLASCHU is to bring to a wide audience a better understanding of the role played by Gaelic-speakers in the history and heritage of Glasgow. A key output is a bilingual, online, interactive resource, supported by a range of engagement activities and an arts programme. The online resource will be launched at Aye Write! on 15 March 2018.

Gaelic-speakers have played a role in Glasgow's history from at least as early as the 10th century. Gaelic was the language of the expanding kingdom of Alba whose heartlands were the eastern lowlands north of the Forth but which, since the 10th century, had been moving its frontier southwards into Lothian and westwards into Strathclyde. Local Gaelic-speakers played an important role in perpetuating earlier place-names of Brittonic origin but local toponymy also indicates that Gaelic was the predominant local language for a significant period from the 10th century.

Clincart
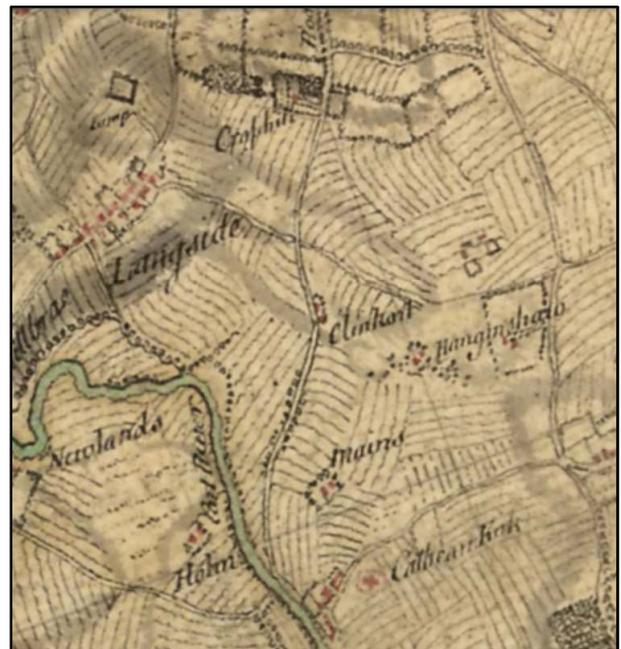
General Roy's Military Survey: NLS Map Images https://maps.nls.uk/roy/index.html

Among the Gaelic place-names on Glasgow's south side is Clincart (NS587614), recorded as *Clinkart* on William Roy's military map of the 1750s. Locals may be familiar with Clincart Farm, some of which still stands at the end of Hampden Drive overlooking Lesser Hampden Park and beyond to Hampden Park, the national football stadium. Clincart's earliest forms and local topography suggest that the name's generic is the Gaelic noun *claon* 'a slope, a brae (often

indicating an incline on a road)'. Clincart is the existing name which forms the specific of nearby Clincart Hill, whose summit is depicted around 300m west of the farm of Clincart on historical OS maps, and the slope of this hill is probably the feature to which *claon* refers. Clincart is one of several names in the area whose specific is the local hydronym Cart. The bend on the White Cart Water around which Cartside Quadrant and Spean Street curve lies just over 500m west-south-west of the farmhouse of Clincart.

Clincart Farm: 'schiehallion'
https://urbanglasgow.co.uk/glasgow-farms-t1334.html

Gairbraid

General Roy's map: NLS Map Images
https://maps.nls.uk/roy/index.html

Around 5 miles north-north-west of Clincart lies another place-name of Gaelic origin, Gairbraid (NS562694), which survives in a number of modern street-names: Gairbraid

Avenue; Gairbraid Place; Gairbraid Court. The grid reference refers to the "extensive farm steading on the northern skirts of Maryhill" recorded in the OS Name Books and on the 6 inch 1st edition OS map. Gairbraid's earliest known forms are as follows:

Garbred 1515 *Glas. Rent.* i, 72
Garbreyd 1546 *Glas. Rent.* i, 132 (1)
Garbreid 1546 *Glas. Rent.* i, 132 (2)
Gwarbraid 1553 *Glas. Rent.* i, 144
Garbraid 1587 *Glas. Chrs* ii no. 78

Richardson map (1795): NLS Map Images
https://maps.nls.uk/counties/rec/645

Gairbraid's etymology is perhaps less straightforward than that of Clincart. Nearby Garrioch is thought to derive from Gaelic *garbhach* 'rough, rugged place' and Gaelic *garbh*, the adjective from which *garbhach* derives, is certainly a possibility in Gairbraid. *Garbh* is typically defined as 'rough, rugged, coarse' in place-names and, in Gairbraid, the application could be to infertile, unproductive land. The element adequately describes uneven, rough land, especially that which is stony and rocky. Ruchill, a local Scots name meaning 'rough hill', provides supporting evidence for a rugged local landscape.

Garbh, however, has other possible applications: in the sense 'broad, thick, large' (see Whyte 2017, 126, 233) and to the sound of rivers, probably by way of analogy with its use in describing the landscape (see Ó Maolalaigh 2003, 211; also Whyte 2017, 126). Gairbraid's situation on the River Kelvin means that the latter is plausible.

There are alternatives for the name-initial element in Gairbraid, however. Old Gaelic *ga(i)rb* 'torrent' may be productive in river-

names in Ireland (Ó Maolalaigh 2003, 238, n. 68). Gaelic *geàrr* 'short' is frequently found as the specific in adjective-noun close compounds. Later historical forms even provide evidence for the popular local Gaelic element *gart*, probably best defined locally as 'enclosure; (secondary) farm':

Gairdbraid 1641 *CPM*, 151;
Gardbrade 1795 Richardson.

These forms are relatively late and medial *d* is not known in other historical forms but elision of *-t* in *gart* is a feature of local toponymy; e.g. Garscube (*Gartscub* 1493; *Garthsquyb* 1498; *Garscube* 1538); Garscadden (*Garscadden* 1369; *Gartscadane* 1374). A pertinent example considering the linguistic environment is Carbrain in Cumbernauld parish (*Garbrany* 1553; *Gartbraine* 1673; *Carbran* 1755) for which Drummond (2014, 226) has proposed elision of *-t* in *gart* before *b*.

As regards Gairbraid's final element, two candidates stand out:

Gaelic *bràghad*, genitive *b(h)ràghaid* 'neck, throat, gullet; gorge'; Gaelic *bràigh*, genitive *b(h)ràghad* 'upper part, upland country'.

The former is not typically translated as 'gorge' in Scottish toponymy but its Irish cognate *bráid*, also *brághaid*, is and this adequately describes the section of the Kelvin in the Gairbraid area.

To summarise: Gairbraid's etymology is tricky but the following etymologies should be considered:

*Garbh Bhràghad 'rough/broad neck/gorge';

*Ga(i)rbh Bhràghad 'torrent-neck/-gorge';

*Gart Bràghaid 'enclosure/farm of the neck/gorge';

*Gart Bràghad 'upland enclosure/farm';

*Geàrr Bhràghad 'short neck/gorge'.

Dr. Alasdair C. Whyte (Celtic and Gaelic, University of Glasgow)

Bibliography and sources

CPM The Cartulary of Pollok-Maxwell, ed. William Fraser (Edinburgh, 1875).

Drummond, Peter, 2014, 'An analysis of toponyms and toponymic patterns in eight parishes of the Upper Kelvin basin' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow); online at http://theses.gla.ac.uk/5270/

Glas. Chrs Charters and Other Documents Relating to the City of Glasgow. A.D. 1175–1649, ed. Sir James D. Marwick, 2 vols (Glasgow, 1894).

Glas. Rent. Rental Book of Diocese of Glasgow A.D. 1509–1570, ed. Joseph Bain and Rev. Charles Rogers, 2 vols (London: Grampian Club, 1875).

Ó Maolalaigh, Roibeard, 2003, 'Tírdhreach na nGael: Logainmneacha agus an tSamhlaíocht', in *Cruth na Tíre*, ed. Wilson McLeod and Máire Ní Annracháin (Coiscéim: Baile Átha Cliath), 195–243.

Richardson, Thomas, 1795, 'Map of the town of Glasgow & country seven miles around' (Glasgow: J. Gillies); NLS Shelfmark EMS.s.337; online at https://maps.nls.uk/counties/rec/645

Taylor, Simon, 2015, 'Ainmean-Àite Ceilteach ann an Glaschu | Celtic Place-Names of Glasgow', in the programme of the 15th International Congress of Celtic Studies, 13–17 July, University of Glasgow; online at http://www.celticstudiescongress.org/files/5714/3712/4776/ICCS_programme_final.pdf

Whyte, Alasdair C., 2017, 'Settlement-names and society: analysis of the medieval districts of Forsa and Moloros in the parish of Torosay, Mull' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow); online at http://theses.gla.ac.uk/8224/

DENOTATIVE NAMING IN SCOTLAND: 1264-1600

This paper came out of my PhD thesis examining how onomastic evidence may be implemented in Scots lexicography. A key issue in this research is establishing when bynames in Scotland ceased to be denotative, becoming limited as lexicographical evidence as they no longer indicate contemporary language use.

To investigate this, names were collected from the *Exchequer Rolls of Scotland* (ER), (1265-1600) and the first thirteen volumes of the *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer* (ALHT), (1473-1566). In total around 18,000 occurrences (or tokens) were counted but

these were spread between 5,841 different names (or types). Indicators of whether a name was denotative were: a syndetic form, that is a name containing a morpheme as in *Alexanderson* and *the Grant*; a name being translated into Latin such as *eruginator* 'furbisher'; and the recording of individuals with multiple bynames. Names were categorised according to whether they were locative (e.g. *Abergaldy*), occupational (e.g. *Milner*), relationship (e.g *Wilson*) or nicknames (e.g. *Fleming*).

Beginning with locative names, syndetic forms were the only indicators of denotative naming. In this case, the morphemes used were *de* (e.g. *de Krkyntullach*) and *of* (e.g. *of Callindar*). These forms were in gradual decline from the outset in both the ER and ALHT, becoming essentially obsolete by the late fifteenth century. This can be exemplified through the name *Crawford,* which is recorded in the ER exclusively as *de Crawford* until the mid-fifteenth century when it begins to appear in its asyndetic form. Locative names therefore seem to show a clear shift towards non-denotative meaning in the late 1400s.

Moving onto occupational names, asyndetic forms were always predominant in this category. However, syndetic forms do occasionally appear, even into the sixteenth century. For instance, *Pieris the Payntour* is recorded in 1505 and 1508 (ALHT v.3: 173; ALHT v.4: 138) whilst *Laurence the brusar* ('embroiderer') is recorded in 1506 (ALHT v.3: 325). These names would indicate that some level of denotative naming continued into the 1500s.

Aside from grammar, in the case of occupational names, Latin forms such as *aurifaber* 'goldsmith' (ER v.1, 2) could also signal that names were still denotative. Latinised occupational names were recorded until around the early fifteenth century, although they had been in decline from around the mid-fourteenth century. The disappearance of Latin forms likely corresponds to names becoming hereditary and thus non-denotative as they are no longer being translated. A clear instance of this is provided by *Ade Clerici* who is recorded in 1420 alongside his son, *David Clerk* (ER v.4: 311). Thus, although there are signs that denotative occupational names were in use as late at the sixteenth century, it would appear that they were largely hereditary by this point.

Turning to relationship names, although syndetic forms were fairly common, morphemes were overwhelmingly those which are retained when a name becomes hereditary such as *son* (e.g. *Jackson*) and *mac* (e.g. *Mackenzie*). However, like occupational names, Latin forms provided guidance as to whether a name was denotative, more specifically names with Latin *filii* (e.g. *William filii Matilda* (ER v.1:304, 351)). Names with the element *filii* are in decline from the outset and the loss of such forms is complete by around the mid-fifteenth century.

Another feature of denotative naming particular to this category was the use of an individual's full name in a patronymic. For example, *Alexandro Jhoncannochsone* is recorded in 1533 and 1534, with information in the records showing that he was indeed the son of a man named *Johannis Cannoch* (ER v.16: 105, 291, 344). As highlighted by *Jhoncannochsone*, this type of naming persisted into the sixteenth century. That denotative relationship naming continued into the 1500s is supported by a small group of names which appear with the definite article (e.g. *the Vedouissoun,* 1512 (ER v.13: 598)).

Finally, with regards to nicknames, asyndetic forms were dominant from the outset; in both the ER and ALHT, such forms consistently accounted for at least ninety percent of all nicknames. Moreover, as in relationship names, those syndetic forms which did appear were often those which are not dropped as denotative meaning is lost such as *–man* (e.g. *Duchman*). Language was also not an indicator of denotative naming.

However, the presence of nicknames in aliases such as *Thomas Drummond alias Thom Unsanit* (1513, ALHT v.4: 417) may provide some guidance as to the denotative value of this category of name. Aliases and doublets

highlight that the naming system may not be fixed (McClure, 2010: 173). In the current data, as seen with *Thomas Drummond alias Thom Unsanit*, aliases and doublets continue into the sixteenth century. Generally, the names involved belong to different categories of names as above. In some instances, though, two patronymics are used such as aliases *Johanni Tallochsoun alias Robertsoun* (1564, ALHT v.11: 324) or in a doublet such as *Duncan Donaldson McKinze* (1533, ALHT v.6:70). A possible explanation for this set of names may be that two male ancestors are being referenced.

To conclude briefly, locative names were earliest and most consistent in their loss of denotative meaning. Although relationship and occupational names also seem to become non-denotative during this period, there are a number of examples which show that some degree of denotative bynaming continued into the sixteenth century. Likewise, there are indications that at least some instances of nickname-type names were denotative even in the sixteenth century.

Katie Cuthbertson

References

Dickson, T. and Paul, J.B. (eds.) (1877-1978) *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House

McClure, P. (2010b) "Middle English occupational bynames as lexical evidence: a study of names in the Nottingham borough court rolls 1303-1455 part 1: methodology" in *Transactions of the Philological Society* 108:2 (164-177)

Stuart, J. and Burnett, G. (eds.) (1878-1908) *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House

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/.

Life Membership of SPNS
SPNS now has a membership category, Life Membership of the Society, for £80. If you would like to become a Life Member, please contact the Treasurer Peter Drummond, addresses below. If you have already paid for a 3-year membership, any outstanding credit balance can count against the £80 fee (e.g. if you paid £15 in Spring 2016, you have £10 credit which means you'd only pay £70 for Life Membership).

peter.drummond@btinternet.com;
8 Academy Place, Coatbridge ML5 3AX

LAFLIN: A SURNAME IN THE WRONG PLACE

This paper, given at the meeting in Glasgow on 4 November 2017, was both a plea for help and an account of progress so far.

When I came to consider my surname, many years ago, I was immediately faced with a contradiction. On the one hand my father's family insisted it was an old Suffolk surname because the family had always lived there. On the other hand, all the onomastic authorities said it had nothing to do with Suffolk but was a Scots or Irish surname, possibly denoting an immigrant from Scandinavia. This intrigued me and I decided to investigate further.

I started with my father's family. My aunts told me of the two small villages some ten miles northwest of Ipswich, Ringshall where the Laflins lived and Battisford where Granny's family the Welhams lived. Although adjacent, they had little to do with each other and when my grandparents married in 1893 they were defying the local convention. After their marriage they moved around in search of work, mostly in north Essex, and finally settled in Bentley, southeast of Ipswich. Many of my cousins still live in the area.

Parish registers for the area are to be found in the Ipswich Record Office. These confirmed that the registers for Ringshall are full of Laflins and there are very few in the

surrounding parishes. This continued to October 1712 when Jonathan Laflin married Mary Bennet in Ringshall and settled there. There are no earlier records and no indication of where either of them came from.

The parish of Boxford lies in the extreme south of the county, hard against the border with Essex. The surviving records start in 1560 and show the presence of a Simon Laflin (Lafflynd, Laughlin, Laughlinge) who was twice married and had a large family. The family were found in Boxford until about 1630 and some moved into the next parish of Edwardstone, whose registers only survive from 1645 onwards. After this the trail becomes faint, but I eventually managed to trace a line from Simon's son Jasper Laflin to a Jonathan baptised in Hitcham in 1688 who was probably the Jonathan who appeared in Ringshall in 1712. For those interested, full details may be found in the book[1] I have written.

The earliest record I have found is dated 1524 when the Lay Subsidy Return for Suffolk shows a Thomas Laughlyn among the farmers in Boxford required to pay this tax. So by 1524, Thomas Laflin was living in Boxford and was sufficiently well established to be liable to pay this tax. So I have traced my family in Suffolk for nearly 500 years now. I think that entitles us to call it a "Suffolk surname" even though "always lived there" is an exaggeration.

Then I came to the onomastic evidence. I cannot check this because it is outside my areas of expertise, so I merely accept it. The only way in which I could reconcile it with the family history is to assume that Thomas Laflin or one of his ancestors had arrived in Suffolk some time before 1524 and brought the surname with him. This means he has to have arrived in Suffolk at a time when surnames were in common use. A study[2] of the tenants of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk showed that by 1100

"nearly half" had a second name, by 1200 this had risen to 69% and by 1300 it was 99%. The use of a second name to identify an individual does not prove it was a surname. It may be either a "byname" held by that individual or a "surname" passed on from father to son and it is hard to identify when the presence of a second name has become a surname.

However allowing for time for bynames to develop into surnames and allowing time for Thomas Laflin to build up his farming business. I think it is fairly safe to suggest that the first LAFLIN arrived in Suffolk between 1300 and 1500. Since there are no earlier records, he is more likely to have arrived towards the end of that period.

My final question is where did he come from? It is always possible that he travelled overland from either Scotland or Ireland and either generated no records during his travels or gave a false name to avoid trouble. This cannot be checked. However I think it more likely that he came by sea. There was an active trade up and down the east coast of Britain from Aberdeen to London and Ipswich was an important port in this trade. It is only my opinion and at present I have no evidence to support it, but I think it likely that Thomas Laflin or one of his ancestors came to Ipswich by sea and then moved inland to Boxford.

Finally my plea for help. Does anyone have information about this trade and in particular the names of those involved in it? Were the Lachlan family involved in this trade with the English ports further south? Such evidence would be gratefully received and would help me to work out just how my Laflin ancestors came to live in Suffolk.

Susan Laflin

SCOTS SOLAN AND GAELIC SÙLAIRE: TWO NAMES FOR THE ISLAND-DWELLING GANNET LOANED FROM LATIN?

I have a special relationship with the gannet. Like many a voracious child, I was called a "gannet" more than once in my youth, but I

[1] *History of the LAFLIN Family from Suffolk* by Susan Laflin. available from Amazon.
[2] *The Means of Naming* by Stephen Wilson 1998 ISBN 1-85728-245-0 p116.

didn't see a real live gannet until I visited the Skelligs off the coast of Co. Kerry in 1989, and then I saw forty thousand or so, all at once, nesting on Small Skellig and wheeling in the air around this solitary rock. Thus began my fascination with this remarkable bird. I now look out for gannets whenever I am at the coast, and sometimes spot them wheeling and diving up to a kilometre offshore, sometimes up to 100km from any known gannet colony. If you see a bird diving vertically from a great height (up to 30m) this can only be a gannet. This long-term observation steered me towards the etymologies proposed here.

The northern gannet is the largest sea-bird native to Britain and Ireland. In Gaelic it is known as *sùlaire* and in Scots as *solan* or *solan goose*. It is usually assumed that *sùlaire* and *solan* are related, though the exact relationship between the two words is rarely explained beyond the obvious similarity and the suggestion of a common root. For example, MacBain (1911) derives ScG *sùlair* from Old Norse *sùla / sùlan*, which was also the name of the bird in that language. MacLennan (1925) spells the word *sùlaire* but follows MacBain regarding the origin. As regards the Old Norse word, Cleasby, Vigfusson and Craigie (1957) give two meanings for *súla*: 1) a pillar; 2) a bird (haf-súla), the gannet, solan goose. There is, however, no indication in this source of the origin of the word.[3] *The Scottish National Dictionary* (*SND*) also derives *solan* from O.N. *súla*, gannet, suggesting that the last syllable may represent O.N. *önd, and-*, a duck. The Irish term *gainnéad* is of no help with our enquiries, as it is simply loaned from English *gannet*, meaning 'little goose'.

ON *súla* appears in the name of the remote Hebridean island *Sula Sgeir*, situated about 65km N of Lewis, and also in *Sule Skerry* and

Sule Stack, two islands located about 60 km west of Orkney. All three of these islands have gannet colonies (Wanless, Murray and Harris, 2005). The Old Norse word also seems to account for one of the Latin scientific names for the northern gannet, *sula bassana*.[4] The adjective *bassana* refers to the Bass Rock in the Firth of Forth, the world's largest northern gannet colony with over 150,000 birds (Murray, Wanless and Harris, 2014). The gannet's other scientific name is *morus bassanus*. *Morus* means 'fool', apparently due to their lack of fear when approached by humans intent on hunting them.[5]

Never completely convinced by the Old Norse derivation, which seems to rest on a poorly attested element and vague phonology, I kept an eye open for a more satisfying alternative. Another characteristic of the gannet is the fact that it almost never flies over land, except at its nesting site. The obvious reason for this habit is the need for deep water to dive into, as diving is its principal means of fishing for herring and mackerel. This means that eager would-be gannet-spotters can confidently eliminate anything large and white flying close to the shore as probably some kind of gull. Almost all of the 24 British and Irish gannet colony sites are islands. Troup Head in Aberdeenshire and Bempton in East Yorkshire are exceptional mainland sites. The bird can therefore be regarded as an island-dweller in essence (Wanless, Murray and Harris, 2005).

The Latin for 'island' is, of course, *insula*. One Latin term for an island-dweller is *insulanus*. 'of or belonging to an island', hence also a noun meaning 'an islander' (Lewis and Short). Another word is *insularis*, usually an adjective, which yields English *insular* and French *insulaire*, which can be both an adjective and a noun meaning 'islander'. I would argue that these two words are the origin of Scots *solan* and Gaelic

---

[3] The word is treated by Jóhannesson in his *Isländisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, assigning it to an Indo-European root *sel- along with ON *súla* "pillar, post" and German *Säule*, also meaning "pillar", on the basis that they ultimately denote split timber and that the gannet has a split tail. There is a fundamental flaw with this: the gannet simply does not have a split tail, a fact which renders the proposed etymology of little value.

[4] It also appears to account for *Sulidae*, the scientific name of the wider family of gannets and boobies.

[5] This characteristic of apparent foolishness is also alluded to in the French name of the bird, *fou de bassan*, the German *Basstölpel* and the Polish *głuptak*.

sùlaire respectively. Unfortunately, I cannot support this with examples of either word being used in Latin in relation to the gannet. However, insulanus and insularis are semantically apt and the sound changes are regular for the most part. The loss of the final syllable in each case is to be expected, but the initial *in-* has also been lost. This could be due to an unaccented pronunciation of this first syllable. Alternatively, it may be because, at some time after the initial borrowing from Latin, *in-* came to be confused with a definite article and consequently dropped. This may either have occurred in Old Norse, where the masc. nom. form of the article is *inn* when not suffixed to the noun (the suffixed position is admittedly more usual), or in Gaelic with the definite article *an*. I am not in a position to fully resolve this, as it depends whether Gaelic *sùlaire* and Scots *solan* were borrowed directly from Latin, or whether one or both were indeed borrowed first into Old Norse, and thence into Gaelic and Scots as the dictionaries suggest (MacBain and *SND*). However, I am more inclined to think that these words did not pass through Old Norse, since there is no evidence in Old Norse for a form with a suffix containing /r/ that would account for *sùlaire* and the /u/ in *sùla / sùlan* is consistently long, in contrast to the short vowel of Scots *solan*. It seems more likely that Old Norse *súla / súlan* is an independent but parallel borrowing from Lat. *insulanus*. However, this proposed derivation does at least have the advantage that these two synonyms, both derivatives of Latin *insula*, could account for the different endings of Gaelic *sùlaire* and Scots *solan*. I would be grateful for any input from experts of Old Norse, Gaelic and Scots on this matter.

Paul Tempan

<u>References and abbreviations</u>

Cleasby, Richard and Vigfusson, Gudbrand. 1957. *An Icelandic-English Dictionary* (2nd edn. with a supplement by Sir William Craigie). Oxford.

Lewis, Charlton T. and Charles Short. 1879. *A Latin Dictionary*. New York, Oxford.

Jóhannesson, Alexander. 1951. *Isländisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*. Bern.

MacBain, Alexander. 1911. *An Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language* (2nd edn.). Stirling.

MacLennan, Malcolm. 1925. *A Pronouncing and Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language*. Edinburgh.

Murray, Stuart, Sarah Wanless, and Mike Harris. 2014. "The Bass Rock - now the world's largest northern gannet colony" in *British Birds* 107. 769-770.

SND. Scottish National Dictionary. 1976. *Dictionary of the Scots Language*. Available from: <http://www.dsl.ac.uk/>. Accessed 21/11/2017.

Wanless, Sarah, Stuart Murray and Michael P. Harris. 2005. "The status of the northern gannet in Britain & Ireland in 2003/04" in *British Birds* 98, 280-294.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The **SPNS spring conference and AGM** will take place on Saturday 5th May 2018 at Perth Museum and Art Gallery. Details on separate flier with this newsletter. The **autumn conference** is provisionally to be on Saturday 17 November in Edinburgh: note the <u>later date than usual</u>.

The Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland (**SNSBI**) returns to Scotland for its spring 2018 residential conference on 6-9 April at Blackwaterfoot, Arran.

On 6 October SNSBI holds a day conference jointly with the Welsh Place-Name Society / Cymdeithas Enwau Lleoedd Cymru at Bangor in North Wales.

http://www.snsbi.org.uk/index.html

The Scottish Society for Northern Studies (**SSNS**) is holding a residential conference in Thurso, Caithness, on 11-14 April. www.ssns.org.uk

A day conference on **Galloway, Gaelic's Lost Province**, is to take place in the auditorium of the Catstrand at New Galloway on Saturday 8th September: https://catstrand.cloudvenue.co.uk/galloway gaelicconference

PLACE-NAMES OF THE CATERAN TRAIL

The Cateran Trail is a circular 103 km walking route that uses old drove roads and other tracks in eastern Perthshire and the Angus glens. Among other items available online at http://commonculture.org.uk/events-2/ a series of five detailed and informative booklets, prepared by Dr Peter McNiven, explores the history and meanings of place-names in sequence along stretches of the route. A further booklet addresses a 'Mini Trail' based at Kirkmichael and explains how several names around Glenshee record the localisation of Gaelic heroic legends in this area.

The website also offers a remarkable 17 minute video showing aerial views of 50 places along the Cateran Trail, including archaeological sites, together with a separate catalogue of the views as numbered in the video.

Wee Coonty Ferms[6]

Kelliebank, Keilarsbrae,
Hazleyshaw, Gartmorn.
Cornhill, Lambhill,
Balhearty
Balquharn
Thorn

Shirra-yairds, Devonknowes,
King o Muirs, Blackfaulds.
Greenkerse, Langriggs,
Pitgober
Rodders
Fearns

Shannockhill, Tulligarth,
Harviestoun, Naemuir.
Muircot, Myretoun,
Grassmainston
Jellum
Ditch

Gordon Donaldson

(Shirra-yairds is screivit Sheriffyards; Jellum is screivit Jellyholm)

[6] The 'Wee Coonty' is Clackmannanshire. The work is reprinted here by kind permission of the author and of the Scots Leid Associe/ Scots Language Society: http://www.lallans.co.uk/ for information about the society's activities and publications.

Journal of Scottish Name Studies

JSNS 11 is now available free online through http://www.clanntuirc.co.uk/JSNS/contents.html, as are volumes 6 to 10. The earlier printed volumes 1 to 5 are now offered at the discounted price of £2 per volume (£10 for all five); for purchase arrangements please see http://www.clanntuirc.co.uk/JSNS/purchase.html.

BOOK REVIEW

John Murray (2017) *Literature of the Gaelic Landscape: Song Poem and Tale/ Litreachas na Tìre: Òran Bàrdachd is Sgeulachd.*
Dunbeath: Whittles Publishing Ltd

Probably most onomasticians look on their subject as something approaching a science in which rules can be predicted to some extent, perhaps as the phonemes of one language become systematically altered by the speakers of another, and folk etymologies can be identified as such. But this book takes a different tack: it makes startling use of place-names to illuminate some of the profoundest questions of literature. It might have borne the sub-title: the poetic relevance of place-names. It has the explosiveness that comes of inter-disciplinarity, its author bringing scientific and geographical expertise to bear on the subject. Murray is qualified in biology and landscape architecture and has learned Gaelic, and in walking, identifying, tracing and photographing the places connected with some twenty works, he discovers various salient patterns – a clockwise circuit, a spiral, an aerial view of dream-like leaps – whose significance hitherto has been largely overlooked.

In a series of short and focused chapters, he shows how place-names can relate to memory, community, culture and the self. He examines the topo-mnemonics of folklore and the sites identified with the exploits of Fionn mac Cumhail and the Fenians. The citation of place-names lends verisimilitude to a tale while the tale lends cultural depth to the landscape. In tracing the 'songlines' of the 'songlands' of two works by the 18th

century poet Donnchadh Bàn, Murray reveals in one instance the path and elevation of a herd of deer, and, in the other, the poet's own circuit while thigging for wool among his neighbours, which, taken with the detail of the poem, sheds new light on the social obligations of this custom. Murray sees Sorley MacLean's envisaging of the peaks of the Cuillin sometimes as a leaping stallion, sometimes as various villains and heroes in history, as an extension of a biomorphic tendency in Gaelic topography.

Following Kurt Wittig, he convincingly argues that Neil Gunn is a Gaelic writer in English, his works sharing with the Gaelic poets a trajectory overcoming the tragedy of the Clearances. Old Hector wants Young Art to inherit his place-name lore for, as Murray states, 'Individual and place are transcended by the continuance of a shared memory'. His analysis of the place-names of *Highland River* map a journey towards self-knowledge for the young Kenn, his life starting amorphously at the coast and becoming increasingly defined as he goes inland and upstream until he reaches the boggy, still source of the Water of Dunbeath.

Such plotting of place inevitably draws comparisons with the songlines of the Aborigines who, in retracing the paths of their ancestors, narrate the relationship of people and landscape common to hunter-gatherer societies. Murray reflects on ideas long-associated with a Gaelic aesthetic, such as the circularity of time, the non-hierarchical attitude to life forms, a blending of the physical and the spiritual on earth and with animism. I felt his interpretation of animism as little more than the personification of discrete aspects of nature could have been pushed further to include the sense of the whole of nature as a living entity. In this context, the moaning in 'Tha Sìor Chaoineadh am Beinn Dòbhrain/ There is a Constant Keening on Ben Dorain' is not that of the wind alone but of nature lamenting the death of the singer's lover (p.101). Likewise, the curlews whose calling remind Kenn of the spirits of people cleared from the land could be compared to the trees in Sorley MacLean's 'Hallaig', as

manifestations of a continuous life force.

If this masterly book is to be reprinted, I suggest that the Gaelic quotations, rather than being centred, would be better inset to show their metrical structure, and that a fair sprinkling of inverted commas should be converted into apostrophes. These are small details which shouldn't detract from the book's greatest satisfaction in giving concrete evidence for much that we have hitherto only inferred. I might suspect myself of communing in a thought-bubble of Gaelic revisionism if it wasn't for Murray 'showing his working' in detailed charts of the place-names of each text. It is significant that Donnchadh Bàn's poem, 'Cead Deireannach nam Beann/ Final Farewell to the Bens' to which he returned after they were cleared includes only one place-name, for what relevance has place in the absence of the people?

Dr Meg Bateman (Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, UHI)

SCOTTISH NAMING IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD: THE OLD PARISH REGISTERS AS AN ONOMASTIC SOURCE

My paper at the Glasgow conference offered an introduction to the Scottish Old Parish Registers, the primary source for my MPhil and PhD research into the personal naming practices of early modern Scotland. In particular, the paper sought to reveal the richness and value of these records for

research into first names, but also highlighted how they might be used for research into both surnames and place-names.

The Old Parish Registers (OPRs) were kept by the representatives of the Church of Scotland throughout the early modern period, with the earliest record dating from 1553, and contain details of the baptisms, marriages, and burials conducted in over 900 parishes. My research primarily focused on the baptismal records, which generally contained not only the child's first name but also their surname, parents' names, date of baptism, and other identifying information. Throughout my postgraduate studies, I collected the details of 75,386 baptisms. 63,460 of these were used in my PhD project, where I looked at the baptisms in eleven parishes for the period 1680-1839.

I used these records in two ways. First, I analysed the dataset of first names given to children, looking at size of the name-stock, frequency of name use, and regional variation. During this analysis, I was also able to examine the use of diminutives and of English equivalents to Gaelic names. Second, I used the additional information found in the records to group children together with their siblings and analyse them as a single familial unit. By doing so, I could investigate naming patterns and practices, including naming after parents, the potential adherence to a traditional naming pattern, the rate of substitution (where children are given the same name as a deceased elder sibling), and so on.

Through this second type of analysis, I was able to gain interesting insights into different naming practices in different areas of Scotland. For example, I showed that there were potential regional divides for the practice of naming children after their parents: in Kilrenny (Fife), 37.99% of families eligible for analysis contained both a son and a daughter who shared a name with a parent; similar figures were found in other parishes in central Scotland (e.g., Govan (Lanark): 31.33%; Dundonald (Ayrshire): 25.12%). The figures were lower for parishes near the English border (e.g., Tongland

(Kirkcudbrightshire): 11.11%), and significantly lower for Highland parishes (e.g. Durness (Sutherland): 3.51%, Kilmallie (Argyll): 5.58%). I suggested that the lower figures in the Scottish Borders were possibly indicative of similar figures in the nearby English parishes (though further research is needed to confirm this), or that the parishes may simply be outliers. I argued that the stark difference between figures in the Highlands and Lowlands was potentially due to the Highland usage of patronymics, which may have meant there was less perceived need to name a child after a parent.

Although surnames and place-names were not a focus of my postgraduate studies, the potential value of the OPRs for these areas of onomastic research was apparent throughout my projects. I chose to work with the OPRs because they were a rich source of first names, but of course they do also provide valuable surname data. In addition, since records often contain a reference to the location of a family's residence within the parish, they are a good source of minor names. The records are particularly useful for studies of surnames and place-names as they often provide multiple references and we can consequently see both variation in spelling and frequency of each spelling. I mentioned, for example, the variation in the spelling of modern-day Shutterflat (an area within the parish of Beith, Ayrshire): *Shutterflat* appears in the OPRs in 1769, but had previously been recorded as *Shitterflat* and other variants with medial *-i-*.

My paper concluded that the Scottish OPRs are an invaluable source for onomastic research. They are not wholly reliable due to inconsistent record-keeping, the non-survival of some documents, and inevitable human error. However, they are one of the largest sources of early modern Scottish names, and the wide range of additional information (e.g., father's occupation, mother's maiden name) means it is possible to draw more conclusions than if a simple list of names were analysed. In addition, given the records are available for over 900 parishes and for, in some cases, over 200 years, the OPRs are useful for both synchronic and diachronic

analysis of many types of name in early modern Scotland.

Alice Crook

DIABOLICAL PLACE-NAMES IN ANGUS AND PERTHSHIRE

Clootie is among many old Scottish names for the Devil. The name comes from *cloot*, meaning one division of a cleft hoof. A common variant of the epithet is *Old Cloots*. There is a piece of land, called Clootie's Croft, that is left untilled as a gift to the Devil. Another Scottish euphemism for the Devil is 'Horny' or 'Old Horny' and 'Deuse' is yet another old name for the Devil, or any evil spirit.

The Devil appears in many Tayside place-names, and indeed he seems to be common along the Angus coast especially. The Devil's Head is an isolated stack of red sandstone on the coast and nearby are his 'anvil,' his 'armchair', his 'letterbox' and his 'grindstone.' The Devil's Anvil is a rock in the gloomy portals of the Dark Cave, at Arbroath Cliffs, and the De'il's Armchair is also in the murky portals of the Dark Cave. As for the De'il's Een – beware, they watch you from the Smugglers' Cave, at the Arbroath Cliffs; while the Devil's Letterbox is a chink in the rocks through which turmoil of waters can be seen below. The Devil's Grindstone can be heard, (but not seen) — it is a whirring noise that occurs near Auchmithie at certain states of wind and tide. In olden days no Auchmithie fisherman dared go to sea when that dreaded sound was heard. There is a Devil's Knapp at Gightyburn as well as the Devil's Knapp at Lunan and the De'il's Den at Farnell.

The famous De'il's Stane is in the River Esk at Cortachy Kirk, and another De'il's Stane at Letham. This 3-ton stone is locally known as the Girdle Stane.

There are the Devil's Knowe at Brunton; the De'il's Hows at Marcus; and another De'il's How at the Vayne. The Devil's Wind is referred to in the book the Land of Lindsays. The De'il's Lappie lies between Balgavies and Milldens. (Beware as this is near to the Carnal Hole).

Then there are Horniecross near Kirriemuir and Horniehaugh at Glenquiech, an old farmhouse that lies on the western side of Glen Quiech. There was a well next to the house. Allegedly the devil (Auld Hornie) appeared from the well, and since then it has been called Horniehaugh. Doolie Den is a small river-cut valley that used to allow easy access between the east and west sides of the glen. The minister was cycling along the path when the Devil (Doolie) appeared to him. The Devil obviously liked this part of the glen, as Doolie Den is not that far from Horniehaugh.

There is Bodenjon in Glenisla, which comes from the Gaelic – *Bod an Deamhain*, which translates as 'penis of the demon'. There was also the same Gaelic name in the Lairig Ghru, before the euphemistic anglicisation to 'Devil's Point', which was the subject of the name change to avoid embarrassing Queen Victoria and the ladies who passed it.

Finally, there is the famous Devil's Elbow on the Cairnwell Road to Braemar, but how many have heard of the 'Devil's Teeth' (WW2 anti-tank blocks) alongside them?

Dave Orr