

# Place-Names of Inverness and Surrounding Area

Ainmean-àite ann an sgìre prìomh bhaile na Gàidhealtachd

Roddy Maclean



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**Author:** Roddy Maclean

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## Gu Aonghas Seumas Moireasdan, le gràdh is gean

The place-names highlighted in this book can be viewed on an interactive online map - <https://tinyurl.com/ybp6fjco> Many thanks to Audrey and Tom Daines for creating it.

This book is free but we encourage you to give a donation to the conservation charity Trees for Life towards the development of Gaelic interpretation at their new Dundreggan Rewilding Centre. Please visit the JustGiving page: [www.justgiving.com/trees-for-life](http://www.justgiving.com/trees-for-life)

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**Cover photograph:** The mouth of the River Ness – which gives the city its name – as seen from the air. Beyond are Muirtown Basin, Craig Phadrig and the lands of the Aird.

Central Inverness from the air,  
looking towards the Beauty Firth.



Above the Ness Islands, looking  
south down the Great Glen.



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Fhuair mi deagh bheachdan bho gu leòr de dhaoine air an leabhran a dh'fhoillsich mi ann an 2004 - *The Gaelic Place Names and Heritage of Inverness* - le cuid ag innse dhomh gun do dh'fhosgail e an sùilean don dualchas Ghàidhealach aig Inbhir Nis, a bha car dìomhair dhaibh roimhe sin. Tha mi air cluinntinn bho dhòrlach dhaoine gun do dh'ionnsaich iad a' Ghàidhlig a dh'aona-ghnothach, às dèidh dhaibh an leabhar a leughadh, agus 's e glè bheag de naidheachdan riamh a rinn mi cho moiteil is toilichte!

Ge-tà, bha beachd eile a' tighinn am bàrr gu tric - gun robh an leabhar ro chuingealaichte. Dè mu na h-àiteachan taobh a-muigh a' bhaile mhòir, bhiodh daoine ag ràdh rium - mar na bailtean beaga dùthchail, far am biodh iad a' dol a chèilidh air an caraidean. Dè mu dheidhinn nan dlùth-choilltean crannach, na h-àrd-mhonaidhean fraochach, na beag-rathaidean lùbach is na ceumannan tarraingeach, far am biodh iad a' falbh air chuairt baidhsagail, a' coiseachd leis a' chù, a' snàmh, a' cruinneachadh dhearcán, a' togail dhealbhan is a' gabhail tlachd bho bhòidhchead na dùthcha agus àilleachd nàdair? Bha iarrtas aig gu leòr barrachd tuigse a bhith aca air na h-ainmean-àite taobh a-muigh a' bhaile - agus bha sin a' gabhail a-steach dhaoine a bha a' fuireach anns na sgìrean mun cuairt air Inbhir Nis, a bharrachd air sluagh na cathrach fhèin.

Mar sin, dh'fhaodainn a ràdh gur e iarrtas poblach a phiobraich mi gus an leabhar ùr seo a sgrìobhadh, ged nach robh e na uallach mì-thlachdmhor dhomh idir! Tha an t-iarrtas sin - miann a tha aig daoine barrachd tuigse a bhith aca air an dùthaich sa bheil iad gan àrach no sa bheil iad a' fuireach - gam

thoilteachadh gu mòr, oir tha e a' riochdachadh doras mòr brèagha le sanas sgrìobhte air: 'A' Ghàidhlig - gheibhear i tron doras seo'!

Bidh ùghdar an dòchas gum bi dileab a mhaireas an cois gach leabhair aige. A thaobh an leabhair seo fhèin, bhithinn an dòchas gum brosnach e barrachd dhaoine gus ùidh a ghabhail nar dualchas, agus moit a bhith aca gum buin iad do sgìre le beartas cànan, àrainneachd, cultair is eachdraidh a tha air leth, agus airidh air dìon.

Tha baile Inbhir Nis air a bhith na thèarmann dhomh on a thàinig mi a dh'fhuireach ann, le mo theaghlach, ann an 1992. Thogadh mo chuid chloinne an seo, fhuair iad am foghlam sgoile an seo, agus tha iad moiteil a bhith nan Gàidheil. Tha Inbhir Nis tarraingeach is tlachdmhor mar bhaile (cò chì Abhainn Nis ri taobh Pàirc a' Bhucht air feasgar brèagha samhraidh nach canadh sin?!), ach barrachd na sin, tha e air a chuirteachadh air gach taobh le àiteachan a tha àlainn, agus aig a bheil dualchas air leth, gu leòr dhiubh a nochdas air duilleagan an leabhair seo. Dhòmhsa, tha e mar gun do rinn sàr-dhealbhadair dealbh a bha cuimseach brèagha ach neo-chrìochnaichte. Dh'fhàg e air a' bhòrd e agus, thairis air an oidhche, chuir na deagh shithichean frèam maiseach mu a thimcheall. Bha an obair-ealain aige a-nise na neamhnaid lurach a sheasadh leatha fhèin anns an Louvre! 'S e sin a th' ann an Inbhir Nis dhòmhsa - dealbh rìomhach air canabhas luachmhor, air a chuirteachadh le àilleachd. Guma fada a mhaireas e mar 'phrìomh bhaile na Gàidhealtachd'.

**Ruairidh MacIlleathain**  
Inbhir Nis Am Faoilleach 2021





High tide on the shore at The Carse (South Kessock) which is washed by the waters of the Beaully Firth. In the distance is the old village of Clachnaharry at the mouth of the Caledonian Canal, with Scorguie and Craig Phadrig behind.



## The Area Covered by the Book

The area under consideration in this publication is roughly a rectangle, centred on Inverness, with all of the place-names on land S of the Beaully and Moray Firths. In the NW, it starts at NH550473 near the mouth of the River Beaully, and follows the 550 Easting line S, past the W end of Kirkhill, including most of Abriachan, to NH550300, just off Urquhart Bay in the middle of Loch Ness. It then turns due E on the 300 Northing grid line, passes over the S end of Loch Duntelchaig, crossing Strathnairn and reaching the SE corner of the rectangle at Tomatin NH790300. It turns N here on the 790 Easting, to the E of Loch Moy, passing to the W of Croy, and reaching the shore of the Moray Firth at NH790575, between Fort George and Whiteness Head.

In addition to Inverness and its extensive suburbs, the area contains the city's rural hinterland, but does not extend as far as Beaully/Kiltarlity/Strathglass in the W or Nairn in the E, and might be considered to be broadly a zone within which relatively easy and regular intercourse would have made between the population in the rural hinterland and traders in the town of Inverness, in the days before motorised transport. It does not follow local government or parish boundaries – which, anyway, have changed over the years – but the parishes which are wholly or partly within the area concerned are Inverness and Bona, Petty, Ardersier, Croy and Dalcross, Moy and Dalarossie,

Daviot and Dunlichity, Kirkhill, and a sliver of Kiltarlity (which is now linked to Kirkhill). The area is contained within the old Inverness District of Highland (Regional) Council, and mostly within the historic county of Inverness-shire, with a small portion in the east once belonging to Nairnshire.

The place-names reflect the landscape, which varies from gentle shorelines and productive agricultural land to expanses of peat- and heather-clad hills in the south, rising to an elevation of 616m on *Càrn na h-Easgainn*. It includes beautiful lochs, rivers and streams, patches of native woodland (with now extensive plantation forest being much to the fore), and battlefields, straths, villages, farms and other features which have a rich archaeology, history and cultural heritage. It is a glorious hinterland to an attractive city, and at the centre is the River Ness and its source – Loch Ness – which lie at the northern end of the Great Glen that runs across Highland Scotland.

This book is in two halves, divided geographically by the River Ness and Loch Ness, and further subdivided into categories of landform. The author hopes that many people who are new to the field of toponymy will see patterns of elements and structures emerging within these categories, so that they can start to work out place-names for themselves.

## Introduction

### Languages

Many commentators have made, or repeated without due scrutiny, the observation that Inverness, throughout its history, stood out from its hinterland as being the abode of an English-speaking people who were entirely ignorant of, and even dismissive of, the Gaelic language and culture. I hope that I laid that myth to rest in my 2004 publication 'The Gaelic Place Names and Heritage of Inverness'. Since the formation of the Royal Burgh in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, it is certainly true to say that there was, for centuries, an English-speaking (or, in earlier days, Scots-speaking) ruling class – unfailingly loyal to the monarch – in what was a very small urban area, consisting of just a handful of streets, but it is erroneous to consider Inverness to be an island of non-Gaelic heritage within a Gaelic sea of villages, hamlets, farms and crofts. For a long period of time, Gaelic was the numerically dominant language within the town (particularly among its poor), and indisputably the vernacular of the country folk who engaged with the townspeople on a daily basis. It should therefore come as no surprise to the reader that the place-names of the entire area of this book, including Inverness (much of which now covers areas that were once rural), are dominated by the Gaelic language.

While the author has made an effort, in the pages that follow, to foster an appreciation of relevant linguistic issues for those who have little or no knowledge of Gaelic, he might gently make the point here that, to comprehensively understand a land, you have to understand the language of that land. This principle is central to the world-view and



Moy, viewed from the north-west. The place-name, meaning 'the plain', is derived from Gaelic, by far the dominant landscape language in Inverness and its environs.



sense-of-being of native peoples who have named their landscapes in their own languages across the globe, but it seems to have been poorly appreciated in Scotland, where our children still, in general, graduate from an education system that largely ignores the toponymic riches that surround them.

The dominance of Gaelic in the landscape of Inverness and its surrounding area is based on a toponymy created largely between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, with the place-names still very much on people's lips when the Ordnance Survey collected them from local informants in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The 'Gaelic question' first appears on the national census in 1881, but we can learn much from the Statistical Accounts of Scotland about the state of the language in the century before that.

The Old Statistical Account (OSA), a collation of narratives by parish ministers on each parish in the country, was published by Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster between 1791 and 1799. In Petty, east of Inverness, in 1792, the Rev. William Smith tells us, despite the local people's frequent intercourse with English-speakers, that 'Gaelic continues in general use among them. Most of them can speak nothing else, and the few that can speak the English do it but very imperfectly.' In neighbouring Ardersier, The Rev. Mr Pryse Campbell reported that 'the Gaelic and English languages are spoken equally well'.

In the same year, the Rev. Alexander Fraser wrote of the parish of Kirkhill, west of Inverness, that the 'language chiefly spoken by the common people is Gaelic; although a great many of them, from their being taught to read English at school, can transact ordinary business in that tongue.' In Moy and Dalarossie, which covers the south-eastern

portion of the area in this book, we are told by the Rev. William MacBean that 'Gaelic is almost the only language used in these parishes, and has been so, as far back as tradition goes.' While not mentioned in the OSA, similar pictures of linguistic strength could no doubt be drawn of other communities in this book – Dores and Loch Ness-side, Abriachan and Strathnairn.

The New Statistical Account (NSA) was similarly compiled in 1834-45, and shows how linguistic change was underway in Petty, where the Rev. John Grant makes this observation: 'English is the sole language of some of the families, but chiefly on the Earl of Moray's estate. The greater proportion of the farm-servants, and all the old aboriginal tenantry, prefer to speak Gaelic. A man now living recollects the time when there was not on all the Culloden estate one who could tell a traveller the road to Inverness in English. Forty years hence, we apprehend it will be nearly as difficult to find many in the parish who, if questioned in Gaelic, will be able to answer in that language.'

A similar picture was given for Ardersier by the Rev. John Matheson: 'The language generally spoken in the village, which contains three-fourths of the population of the parish, is English. In the interior, Gaelic prevails. But, from recent changes in the lessees of farms, and from the new occupants possessing little of the Celtic character, it may be fairly stated that the Gaelic has lost and is losing ground.' Even in Moy and Dalarossie, by 1845, the Rev. James MacLauchlan tells us that 'the language spoken is the Gaelic, which is generally spoken very correctly, but, from the increasing admixture of English, we doubt not that, in a few years, it will be lost altogether.'

The weakening of Gaelic was accelerated by the 1872 Education Act, as is described in the following account of Strathnairn: 'Prior to 1872 there had been at least two Presbyterian church-run schools in Strathnairn. In common with other similar schools throughout the Highlands, the main language of education would have been Gaelic. However, following handover of these schools to the Government authorities, English now became established as the only language of education. The suppression of Gaelic that followed (even where spoken in the playground) was widespread throughout the Highlands and has been renowned for its harshness and brutality. Many are the reports of children suffering severe physical punishment for daring to speak their native language while at school. Gaelic now became stigmatised as an inferior language and was

persecuted with such success that the language has been in massive decline in our Strath, and beyond, since the Act of 1872 was implemented' ([strathnairnheritage.org.uk](http://strathnairnheritage.org.uk)). In 1881, 79% of the population of Strathnairn still spoke Gaelic – 991 individuals within a total population of 1,252 (Cumming 1980 p.529). The Strath's last speaker of the local dialect died in 1984, although there are families and individuals living there today who still use Gaelic as their daily vernacular.

The 1891 national census gives us reliable figures about the strength of the language across the area in this book, at a time when it had been in decline in all communities for some time. East of the River Ness and Loch Ness, we have the following figures for percentages of Gaelic speakers: Newton of Petty and Balmachree 46%; Dalziel and Fisherton



Lochan an Eòin Ruadha



Weather-stained and largely ignored today, *Clach na Cùdainn* 'the stone of the tub', which sits under the Mercat Cross outside the Town House, was once considered the primary icon of the town of Inverness. That it carries a Gaelic name is further evidence for the historical place of the language within the lives and affections of ordinary Invernessians. Anglicised 'Clachnacuddin', it has given the name to a local football team.

51%; Ardersier 22%; Cantray 42%; Moy 62%, Daviot 75%, Duntelchaig 73%; Dores 75%. West of the river and loch are: Bunchrew 63%; Kirkhill & Lovat 47%; Moniack & Relugas 78%; Dochgarroch 68%; Abriachan 94% (<http://www.linguae-celticae.org>).

In the 1845 NSA account of the Inverness parish, we are told that in 'the remoter parts of the parish, and by some of the poorer classes in town, the Gaelic language is exclusively spoken, but it is fast wearing out, and by the rising generation English is almost universally preferred, especially in the town of Inverness, where many of them are wholly ignorant of Gaelic' (Vol XIV p.18). Despite that, immigration into Inverness from the rural hinterland and the wider Highlands boosted the language in the town and, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, 30% of its population still spoke Gaelic.

Gaelic might be dominant in the landscape, but it is not the only language on the map of the area. Pictish was a Brythonic Celtic tongue, with affinities to Welsh, and the language of the dominant people in eastern Scotland north of the Forth until around the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD, when it was increasingly displaced by Gaelic, although Gaelic had been in the area before that, as *cill* 'church, cell' names like Kilvean and Killianan represent Gaelic ecclesiastical influences that are almost certainly pre-800 AD. There is a handful of Pictish 'survivors' among the place-names of the area, including Abriachan, Petty, Daviot and Cantray, and possibly Drakies, Farr, Erchite, Groam and a few others. Elements that originated in Pictish – such as *davoch* and *carden* – are sometimes combined in a toponym with a Gaelic element, blurring the boundary between the languages, and it is worth remembering that Gaelic is also a Celtic language (of the Goidelic branch, shared with Irish and Manx Gaelic). It is possible some

Pictish toponyms were readily adapted as Gaelic cognates, creating what appears to be a place-name of pure Gaelic origin.

Any possible pre-Pictish survivors, representing a language of which we have no knowledge, are most likely to be found in river names, which tend to form the most conservative strand in the place-name landscape. The only obvious candidate here is Farar in *Abhainn Farair* (River Beaully), the earliest form being Ptolemy's Varar in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, with the Rivers Ness and Nairn likely being named by the Picts.

The Scots language, a descendant of the Old English spoken in Northumbria and Lothian, was by the 12<sup>th</sup> century being increasingly spoken in southern Scotland, and was adopted as a *lingua franca* by immigrants from northern Europe, notably Normandy, other parts of France and the Low Countries. Between the years 1153 and 1165, King David I made Inverness a Royal Burgh and installed as burgesses people who were Scots speakers and loyal to the monarchy, which by that stage had turned its back on Scotland's Gaelic origins (Meldrum 1982 p.6). The Scots language (referred to as Inglis in those early days) thus gained a position of status in the medieval town.

Place-names like (The) Bught, (The) Carse and Holm appeared in the wake of the immigration of Scots-speakers, and the streets of the town are commonly quoted as Scots forms, with the word *gate* 'street, way' to the fore, but notably with some Gaelic landmarks included. The main streets were Kirkgate (Church Street), Bridgegate (Bridge Street) and Eastgate, a name still in currency, the last leading east from the Mercat Cross and Clachnacuddin in the town's centre (now outside the Town House) to the Fosse or Ditch at its eastern boundary, which itself followed

the line of what is now Academy Street to meet the Moray Firth at an inlet called the Loch Gorm. Castle Street was then called Overgate 'Upper Way' or Dymingsdale, the latter name appearing in five different spellings in 15<sup>th</sup> century records, and probably meaning 'judgement field', as it was the road to the town's gibbet at Muirfield (also called Gallows Muir), in the proximity of today's Muirfield Road (Meldrum 1981 p.24-9; Pollit 1981 p.70). Prior to that, the same road led to *Tom nan Ceann* 'the knoll of the heads' NH667448, where an earlier form of capital punishment - beheadings - took place (Maclean 1886 p.28).

In the Aird, west of Inverness, Scots place-names appear as early as ca.1221, when Wardlaue (Wardlaw) - what is now Kirkhill - is mentioned in a legal charter. Wardlaw means 'watch hill' in Scots (Taylor, S. 2019 p.5). Kirkhill is also Scots - *kirk* being Scots for 'church' - as is Kirkton, of which there are two examples in the environs of Inverness. Scots names occur through most of the area but at a very low density outside Inverness, and mostly as settlement names terminating in *toun* 'farm' - such as Englishton, Ladystone, Morayston, Treeton and Newton.

The other great toponymic language of northern Scotland - Norse - is absent from the area covered in this book. The Norse had a major influence on the map of the north and west of the country, but their impact on the place-names of the wider hinterland of Inverness is minimal - Dingwall and Eskadale (Strathglass) being notable exceptions. Neither is English much in evidence as the language in which a toponym originated, except for the names of some properties bestowed by English-speaking landowners, or those chosen by planners or commercial interests within the modern urban landscape of Inverness.



## The Structure of Gaelic Place-Names

For those unfamiliar with the Gaelic language, place-names can be something of a conundrum, so here is a quick guide. Some of the simplest names comprise a noun and adjective, or descriptor, but usually in the reverse order to English i.e. with the noun first. An example is *Càrn Mòr* 'big hill'; *mòr* is the descriptor. In Gaelic we would generally include the (definite) article and say *An Càrn Mòr* 'the big hill', but the OS normally exclude the initial article from their toponyms. *Doire Mhòr* 'large copse' is a similar type of name, but you will notice the presence of the 'h', showing a change in pronunciation from 'MORE' to 'VORE'. This softening of the consonant is called *lenition* and is very common in Gaelic. In this example, it is because the noun *doire* is feminine, whereas *càrn* is masculine.



Lochan a' Chaorainn

*Allt a' Mhinisteir* 'the burn of the minister' is an example of a more complex toponym which there are two nouns, separated by an article. *Allt* is in its basic form, whereas *am ministear* 'the minister' has become *a' mhinisteir* 'of the minister' - what is termed the *genitive* form of the noun. This type of inflection of Gaelic nouns is very common, and you will note that it incurs a change in the word's pronunciation. *Cnoc na Mòine* 'the hill of the peat' is a similar type of toponym, but the reason for the genitive article being *na* rather than *a'*, is that *mòine* is a feminine noun, whereas *ministear* is masculine. *Beinn na h-Iolair* 'the mountain of the eagle' is another example, where *iolair* 'eagle' is feminine. The *h-* is here simply to make it easier to say, by separating the two vowels - at the end of *na* and the beginning of *Iolair*.

*Allt an Ruighe Bhuidhe* 'the burn of the yellow slope' shows how this type of toponym can carry a descriptor, usually (but not always) qualifying the second, rather than the first, noun. *Bhuidhe* is an inflected form of *buidhe* 'yellow', here lenited because of its position in the noun phrase. *Creag nan Gobhar* 'the crag of the goats', on the other hand, is an example of a fairly common type of place-name, where the second noun is in the genitive plural. We know this because the article *nan* (sometimes *nam*) precedes a plural noun.



## Gaelic Pronunciation

In the area covered by this book, many of the place-names, particularly of settlements, have anglicised forms which are generally transparent, in terms of pronunciation, to English speakers. Where there might be an issue or difficulty, a rough pronunciation guide is included. It is important to note that the emphasis within the anglicised form generally follows the Gaelic example. Thus, *Achadh Buidhe* ‘ach-ugh BOO-yuh’ (with the emphasis naturally on the first syllable of the final element) becomes Achbuie ‘ach BOO-ee’.

For pure Gaelic names, the matter is more complex, with Gaelic possessing a finely tuned and subtle orthography, and the reader is advised to learn the principles of Gaelic spelling and pronunciation through online or other learning opportunities.

The loss of the local dialect means that we cannot always be sure how local people would have pronounced some Gaelic place-names, although knowledge of this nature tends to be retained to some degree among those who preserve community traditions. But we do know, for example, that, in common with dialects of the Central Highlands, *Baile* (‘BAL-uh’) – a steading, farm, township – would sometimes become *Bail’* (‘BAL’) in Strathnairn (Cumming 1980 p.529). This loss of the schwa – an unstressed neutral vowel sound – might be expected in some other words that end in ‘e’, such as *coire* (‘corrie’) and the genitive forms of nouns like *eaglais* ‘church’ and *gaoth* ‘wind’. It is heard in a 1953 recording of Catherine Forbes (née Mackintosh) from Strathnairn who says *dà mhil’* for ‘two miles’ and

*cuir ort do chòt’* for ‘put on your coat’ (Willie Forbes pers. comm.).

The examples on p.19 are proffered as examples of toponyms in this book, with a phonetic guide based on Scottish Standard English. Note that ‘ch’ is always as in ‘loch’, never as in ‘church’ (the ‘ch’ in ‘church’ is represented by *tch* in the guide). Capitals indicate the emphasised syllable and note also that accented vowels are elongated in speech. Ø represents a sound not found in English, similar to the Germanic *ø* or *ö*, or the French *oeu* in *oeuf* ‘egg’; it is shown as the ‘ao’ vowel combination in Gaelic. The author has presumed that, in the Inverness area, the unstressed vowel (the schwa) in a terminal location is not sounded in speech; the schwa is represented inside { } brackets to demonstrate more general pronunciation. The guide is only approximate, and the help of a fluent Gaelic speaker is advised for anyone who wishes to master the pronunciation of Gaelic place-names.

## Gaelic Spelling Conventions

For modern representations of Gaelic place-names and other words, the author has followed ‘GOC’ – the Gaelic Orthographic Conventions 2009 (see Bibliography), although the headword is invariably the form shown on modern OS maps, even if it does not conform to GOC. However, in quoting older representations of Gaelic words, and earlier place-name forms, he has largely been faithful to the spelling employed by the authority at the time and/or which appear on contemporary maps.

Allt a' Chlachain	owlt uh CHLACH-un
Allt Eas a' Chait	owlt ess uh CHATCH
Allt Lochan an Fheòir	owlt loch-un un YÒR
Allt nan Clachan Breaca	owlt nun clach-un BREH-uchk{-uh}
Bealach a' Chadha	byal-uch uh CHA-uh
Beinn nan Cailleach	baynn nun KAL-yuch ('nn' is halfway between English 'nn' and 'ng').
Blàr nam Fèinne	blaar num FANE{-yuh}
Caochan na h-Eaglaise	kø-chun nuh HAKE-leesh{-uh}
Càrn an Achaidh	kaarn un ACH-ee
Càrn Dubh	kaarn DOO
Cathair Fhionn	ka-hur YOON ('fh' is silent)
Cnoc an t-Seòmair	krochk un TCHÒ-mur (t- silences a following 's')
Cnoc na Gaoithe	krochk nuh GØEE{-yuh}
Coire Shalachaidh	kor-uh HAL-uch-ee ('sh' is silent)
Creag an Fhithich	krake un YEE-eech ('th' is silent)
Creag Dhubh	krake GHOO
Druim a' Mhuilinn	droo-eem uh VOO-lin ('OO' is short)
Fraoch Choire	FRØCH chor{-uh}
Fuaran a' Mhinisteir	foo-uh-run uh VEEN-eesht-yur
Glaic na Ceàrdaich	gliechk nuh KYAARD-eech ('lie' as in English)
An Ceathramh Àrd	un ker-oo AARD
An Leacann	un LEH-uchk-un
Lochan a' Chaorainn	loch-un uh CHØR-un
Loch nan Geadas	loch nun GET-uss
Loch Nis	loch NEESH
Meall Mòr	myowl MORE
Meall na h-Earba	myowl nuh HER-ep-uh
Ruigh Samhraidh	roo-ee SOW-ree ('SOW' as in female pig)
Slochd an Fhamhair	slochk un AV-ur
Stac Dearg	stachk JER-ek
Stairsneach nan Gàidheal	stars-nyuch nun GAY-ul
Tom a' Mhòid	towm uh VÒJ
Uaigh an Duine Bheò	oo-eye un doon-yuh VYÒ

## Place-Name Subjects

The generic terms for elevated ground – hills, slopes, mountains – in this book serve as a good introduction to the upland toponymy of the wider Gàidhealtachd (Highlands), in which there are well over a hundred Gaelic words for such places. Elements like *Beinn*, *Càrn*, *Cnoc*, *Creag*, *Druim*, *Dùn*, *Leacann*, *Màm*, *Meall*, *Ruigh*, *Sgòr*, *Stac*, *Tom* and *Tòrr* represent, in their particularities, an opportunity to appreciate the subtleties of how our ancestors viewed their land, and how – and perhaps why – they distinguished between them by use of such a wide vocabulary. *Creag* ‘rocky hill, crag’, along with its diminutive *Creagan*, is the most common, with 31 examples, reflecting the craggy nature of the landscape, most notably around Strathnairn and Loch Ness-side. *Cnoc* and *Càrn* are the second most common ‘hill’ elements, with 14 apiece, and *Druim* ‘ridge’ appears 13 times. The classic mountain term *Beinn* comes next, with 10 examples, perhaps more than might be expected in a landscape so close to the Moray Firth; all are to the east of the River Ness and Loch Ness. None have been anglicised (to Ben) – all retain their pure Gaelic form. Most are substantial hills, the most diminutive being *Beinn nan Creagan* (267m), east of Clava.

Gaelic also has a rich vocabulary for ‘bog’, or ‘peatland’, with almost fifty generic terms, but these are less in evidence in the hinterland of Inverness than in many other parts of the Highlands, perhaps because the climate is drier, but particularly because large programmes of drainage converted many mosses into agriculturally productive fields and pastures, which

would have made older bog toponyms redundant. Seven generics exist here, the most notable being *bog* (pron. ‘BOKE’), found in Bogroy and Bogbain; this word was borrowed into English as ‘bog’. Other generics are *mòine* (Moniack, *Cnoc na Mòine*), *blàr* (*Blàr Buidhe*, *Blàr nam Fèinne*), *easg* (*Càrn na h-Easgainn*), *fèith* (Feabuie, Feyglass), *càrr* (*Càrr Bàn*) and *gròm* (Groam).

Hydrological generics are less diverse than those connected to hills or bogs. Most standing water is labelled as *loch* or its diminutive *lochan* (both of which also occur as loanwords in English), of which there are 18 examples in this book. At the level of the OS 1:25 000 maps, and particularly the 1:50 000 maps, burns and streams are overwhelmingly named with *allt*, and there are 58 such toponyms here. However, at a more detailed level, another generic is seen to also be important, particularly in upland areas – *caochan* (pron. ‘KØ-chun’), translated here as ‘streamlet’, which is discussed on p. 171. *Uisge* ‘water, stream, river’ occurs in *Uisge Narann* (River Nairn), *Uisge Dubh* and, perhaps tautologically, in *Allt Uisge Geamhraidh*. *Eas* ‘waterfall’ is found in Essich and *Allt Eas a’ Chait*. Two other hydrological elements that are worth noting are *fuaran* ‘spring’ and *tobar* ‘well’. Some of these springs and wells were, and are, of great cultural importance (see p. 42-3).

The Gaelic language has strong traditional links to nature, and trees form a culturally important strand of that ancient heritage. There are several tree species named in the landscape here – *beithe* ‘birch’ (Achnabechan, Beachan), *caorann* ‘rowan’



(*Lochan a' Chaorainn*), *cuileann* 'holly' (Achculin, Leiterchullin), *darach* 'oak' (Ballindarroch, Tordarroch), *iubhar* 'yew' (Tomnahurich) and *sgitheach* 'hawthorn' in Aultnaskiach and *Craobh Sgitheach*. The willow (*salach* in old Gaelic) is probably the element behind the specific in *Coire Shalachaidh*, but notably absent from the landscape is the *giuthas* 'Scots pine', perhaps reflecting an early loss of that species in this area. Most of the conifers now growing here have resulted from planting programmes in recent times which, in places like the hills surrounding Strathnairn, and a large part of the Aird, have resulted in a significant change in land use and appearance. Shrub species named in the landscape here are *bealaidh* 'broom' (*Creag an Tom Bhealaidh*), *conasg* 'whin, gorse' (*Allt a' Chnuic Chonaisg*), *fraoch* 'heather' (*Fraoch-choire*), and one of the edible berry-bearing plants in *Cnoc nan Croiseag* and *Glac Dhubh nan Dearcag*. Other vegetational names include *craobh* 'tree' in Bunchrew, *coille* 'wood, forest' in Achlaschoille and Balnakyle (*Baile na Coille*), *doire* 'copse' in *Doire Mhòr*, *preas* 'thicket' in *Preas Dubh*, and the archaic *ros* 'wood' in Dores.

Wild animals also find their way into the Gaelic landscape here, with examples such as *earba* 'roe deer' (*Meall na h-Earba* and *Caochan na h-Earbaige*), *cat* 'wildcat' (*Creag a' Chait*), *madadh-ruadh* 'fox' (*Creag a' Mhadaidh Ruaidh* and, indirectly, *Cnoc na Saobhaidh*). A rather unusual animal presence is *seangan* '(wood) ant' in *Cnoc nan Seangan*. Bird references are frequent e.g. *eun* 'bird' (*Creag an Eòin*), *iolair* '(golden) eagle' (*Beinn na h-Iolaire*) and *feadag* 'plover' (Balnafettack). The *fitheach* 'raven' appears in *Creag an Fhithich* and *Stac an Fhithich*, while its relative, the *cathag* 'jackdaw' is named in *Stac na Cathaig* and *Creag nan Cathag*. *Eilean nam Faoileag* is 'the island of the seagulls', while

*Loch na Curra* and *Lochan an Eòin Ruadha* refer respectively to the heron and red-throated diver. Two fish species are found in our little bit of landscape as well – the pike in *Loch nan Geadas* and the brown trout in *Caochan nam Breac*.

As would be expected, there are numerous references to domesticated animals. Folds connected mostly to cattle are named in Blackfold, Balnabual and *Buaile Chòmhnard*, while *Creag nam Bà* is named for cows, Resaurie probably refers to a place where cattle were grazed, and *Allt na Banaraich* 'the milkmaid's burn' makes an oblique reference to the species. Sheep also appear – in Achvaneran, *Beinn Uan*, *Beinn an Uain* and *Camas nam Mult*, while horses are named in *Creagan Bad Each*, *Creag Bad an Eich*, Dalneigh, Faschapple, Merkinch, Capel Inch and The Caiplich. Goat toponyms are *Creag nan Gobhar* and Balnabock, dogs receive a mention in Connage, *Creag a' Choin* and *Tomachoin*, and pigs are present in Muckovie and *Clach Cailleach nam Muc*, although *Bught* (a word of Scots origin) might represent a place where pigs were once kept.

The *àirigh* 'shieling', a place for summer grazing of livestock in the hills, was once central to the way of life of the Gaels, and there are three such toponyms in the book – *Allt na h-Àirigh Samhraich*, *Càrn Àirigh nam Mult* and *Càrn nam Bò Àirigh*. In addition, a number of names containing the element *ruigh* e.g. Remore, Rebeg might also reference shielings.

A knot of *davoch* names at the northern end of Loch Ness – Dochfour, Dochgarroch, Dochnalurig – recall a system of landholding, long gone, as do Kerrowaird and Kerrowgair in Petty. Many old farms carry names based on *baile*, sometimes in translated form with -to(w)n, such as Charleston, Muirtown, Hilton, Milton and Smithton, or often

anglicised, as in Balbeg, Ballifeary, Balnafettack, Balloan, Balmore, Balnagaig, Balloch, Balnakyle, Balachladaich etc. *Achadh* 'field', often shortened to *ach*, expanded its meaning to become a settlement name and is found, usually in an anglicised form on the maps, in places like Achbuie, Achculin and Achnabat. *Dail* 'field, meadow, dell' names operate in a similar way, and there is a considerable number of them in this area – e.g. Dalneigh, Dalreoch, Dalroy, Dalveallan and Dalziel.

The growth of grain crops, once exceedingly common, is recalled in Auchnahillin and *Allt an Lòin Eòrna*, and the use of natural burns or diverted watercourses for the running of a grain mill or sawmill is commemorated in *Allt a' Mhuilinn*, Drumvoulin, the various examples of Milton and *Allt Lòin an Daim*. Kilns were often used for drying grain (and other purposes), and *Allt na h-Àtha* recalls such a place. Other examples of people involved in small industry are the blacksmith – and we have a smiddy named in *Glaic na Ceàrdaich* and *Allt na Ceàrdaich* – and shoemakers, who appear in Balnagriasehin.

Movement of people across the country took many forms, and mention is made of it in place-names. *Slochd an Dròbh* recalls cattle-droving, and Bona was an old ford where cattle often made a crossing on a drove. Crask refers to cross-country movement, and *bealach*, as in *Bealach a' Chadha*, names a regular walking (or droving) route, as do places based on *làirig* 'pass' e.g. *Allt na Làirige*.

Churches and graveyards are named in *Caochan na h-Eaglaise*, Kilvean, Killianan and *Cladh Uradain*, the last three recalling beloved saints, as does Kessock. Scots forms like the Kirktons and Kirkhill (all of which have Gaelic equivalents) further remind us of the people's long-term commitment to the Christian religion. However, peace did not

always reign in the Highlands, and Ballifeary, *Càrn an Fhreiceadain* and *Clach na Faire* were all places where a lookout was kept for bands of men from outwith the area who were intent on plunder, in order to prevent conflict or, on occasion, to inflict revenge on retreating marauders. Actual conflict is remembered in the toponyms *Blàr na Cuinge Fliuch* and *Clach an Airm*, as well as *Blàr Chùil Lodair* (Culloden Battlefield), where the last pitched battle between two armies on British soil took place in April 1746. This seminal event in Scottish history still casts a shadow over the Highlands, most particularly in the area covered by this publication.

Finally, the strength of the Gaelic heritage of the area is demonstrated by landscape references to the legendary warriors known as the Fianna, whom oral tradition maintains are slumbering inside Tomnahurich in Inverness, awaiting three blasts on a magic whistle (or horn) to return them to their station as defenders of the Gaels. Their leader was Fionn mac Cumhail, of whom great tales were told at firesides wherever Gaelic was spoken. In the Aird, we have *Blàr nam Fèinne*, where the name suggests they fought a battle. Near Lochend there is Glac Ossian, named for Fionn's son, and at Loch Ashie (whose name reputedly recalls an enemy whom the Fianna defeated), there are *Cathair Fhionn* and *Clach na Brataich*, both of which commemorate that legendary conflict, now lost in the mists of distant time, or perhaps in the bold, but vaporous, recall of the Gaelic imagination.



## Up West, Down East

The demise of the local Gaelic dialect in Inverness and its surrounding area during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries leaves us uncertain as to what degree local linguistic particularities influenced place-names – and, of course, the Ordnance Survey has generally tended to standardise toponyms from a national perspective. We can be fairly certain, however, that the English forms Easter and Wester in place-names represent Gaelic *shios* and *shuas* respectively, as is the case throughout the Eastern Highlands (Grant 1999 p.96). *Shios* ('HEE-uss') in general parlance means 'low, situated on the lower side' and *shuas* ('HOO-uss') represents 'up, situated on the upper side'; the relation of these descriptors to compass direction is likely to be derived from the general flow of the area's rivers, from west to east. Even as far west as Glengarry, Dieckhoff recorded *Na h-Innseachan Shios* for The East Indies and *Na h-Innseachan Shuas* for The West Indies (1932 p.183). However, in Wester Ross and the Western Isles, the traditional Gaelic norm is 'up south' and 'down north'.

Charles Robertson confirmed that the Gaelic for E[ast] Moniak is *Mon Iòthaig Shios* (King 2019 p.226), which fits this model, and Andy Cumming (1982) wrote that West Town (Duntelchaig) is *Baile Shuas*. Strathnairn natives, Finlay and Jessie Smith, gave *Loirg Shuas* for Wester Lairgs. Just to the west of the area under consideration in this book is Strathglass, where the same model obtains, but the adjective for 'wester' in place-names there is *uachdarach*, which also means 'upper' (Taylor S.

2019 p.218-19). In determining Gaelic forms for names in the area covered by this book, which are only recorded in an anglicised form, it seems reasonable for us to apply *shios* and *shuas* to 'easter' and 'wester' respectively. For example, Easter Altourie and Wester Altourie would be *Allt Uairidh Shios* and *Allt Uairidh Shuas in Gaelic*.



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## Abbreviations

As this publication is designed for the general public, abbreviations, including acronyms, have been kept to a minimum. Languages are given their full names rather than a letter designation, as is often the case in place-name texts. The following, however, have been employed to avoid unnecessary repetition and to foster a degree of brevity in the text.



### Points of the compass:

**N** north; **S** south; **E** east(er); **W** west(er)  
**NE** north-east etc

### Authorities:

**ÀÀÀ** Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba  
**NSA** New Statistical Account  
**OS** Ordnance Survey  
**OSA** Old Statistical Account

### General:

**ca.** circa (around, in dates)

**ibid.** in the same source

**ISS** Inverness Scientific Society & Field Club

**MS** manuscript e.g. Wardlaw MS

**OS 6-inch map** Ordnance Survey map at a scale of 6 inches to the mile.

**pers. comm.** personal communication

**pron.** pronounced / pronunciation

**q.v.** *quod vide* Latin for 'which see' i.e. view a reference elsewhere in the book under the headword indicated in italics or bold (which can be located in the Index).

**TD** Tobar an Dualchais/Kist O Riches website.

**Tr.** Track (audio)

**Trans.** Transactions (of)

Loch Bunachton from Creag a' Chlachain.



## Place-Name Authorities

While the current author ventures some suggestions as to the derivation and meaning of local place-names, the majority of the scholarship in this publication belongs to others, most of whom, fortunately, lived at a time when fluent native speakers of Gaelic and tradition-bearers were still to be found in the majority of communities. The most significant of these authorities are as follows:

**William J. Watson** (*Uilleam MacBhàtair* 1865-1948) is probably the most important scholar in the history of Scottish Gaelic toponymic studies. A Gaelic speaking native of Easter Ross, and son of a blacksmith, he became a prominent student at Aberdeen and Oxford, and had a distinguished career as a teacher in Scotland, notably as Rector of Inverness Royal Academy from 1894 to 1909. After being Rector of Edinburgh Royal High School from 1909 until 1914, he was appointed to succeed the late Professor Donald Mackinnon as Professor of Celtic Languages, Literature and Antiquities in the University of Edinburgh. His 'Place Names of Ross and Cromarty' (1904) was a seminal work, and in 1926 he published his *magnum opus* 'The Celtic Place-Names of Scotland'. Many of his scholarly papers were gathered together in 'Scottish Place-Name Papers', published in 2002. Professor Watson was exceptionally fond of Inverness and is buried on the summit of Tomnahurich.

**Alexander Macbain** (*Alasdair MacBheathain* 1855-1907), a contemporary of Watson and also a native Gaelic speaker, was raised in poverty in Glenfeshie, Badenoch. He attended the Grammar School of Old Aberdeen, becoming dux, and entered Aberdeen University in 1876, from which he graduated with honours in Philosophy. In 1880, he was appointed rector of Raining's School [situated at the top of Raining's Stairs] in Inverness. He was a leading Gaelic philologist and intellectual and published 'An Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language' in 1896. Macbain died of a cerebral haemorrhage at the age of only 52 in 1907. His articles on place-names, which originally appeared in Highland newspapers and the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness, were collated and published posthumously in 1922, as 'Place-Names, Highlands and Islands of Scotland'.

**The Rev. Charles M. Robertson** (*An t-Urr. Teàrlach MacDhonnchaidh* 1864-1927), Gaelic speaking son of a garden labourer from Strathtay in Perthshire, was a student of Prof. Donald Mackinnon, first professor of Celtic at the University of Edinburgh. He was a folklorist, linguist and toponymist who made a rigorous collection of place-names and other linguistic material from local informants over thirty years as a minister in such places as Arran, Argyll, Inverness-shire, Nairnshire, Skye, Wester Ross and Sutherland, as well as his native county, at a time when Gaelic was still a dominant vernacular in those places. He was also a major contributor to W. J. Watson's 'Place Names of Ross and Cromarty'. Robertson had intended to compile

a comprehensive Scottish place-name dictionary, but was unable to achieve this before his death in 1927. His notes and papers were collated and edited by toponymist Dr. Jacob King, and published in 2019 as 'Scottish Gaelic Place-Names: The Collected Works of Charles M. Robertson', an important work that gives us local dialectal forms of toponyms that are unavailable elsewhere, and which, without Robertson's assiduous scholarship, would have been lost forever.

**Hugh Barron** (*Ùisdean Baran* 1925-2018) was a distinguished historian and long-time Secretary to the Gaelic Society of Inverness, being responsible for many years for the publication of the society's Transactions, to which he was himself a regular contributor. His roots were in Badenoch, but his childhood was spent in many different parts of Scotland and, after the War, he settled down to farming, first in Charleston, then at Ness-side, both on the outskirts of Inverness. During this period, he developed fluency in Gaelic and a deep and comprehensive knowledge of the history and heritage of the country around Loch Ness. His scholarly papers, which contain a treasure-trove of information on poetry, stories, place-names, dialect, cultural practices and historical events, were collated and published by the Gaelic Society of Inverness in 2011 under the title 'The Hugh Barron Papers'.

**Fr. Henry Cyril Dieckhoff** (1869-1950) was a Catholic priest at Fort Augustus Abbey for much of his life. Born in Russia, he learned the Glengarry dialect of Gaelic fluently, and wrote a *Pronouncing Dictionary of Scottish Gaelic* (1932), based on that dialect. His work contains information on place-names in Inverness-shire, and their pronunciation.

**Charles Fraser-Mackintosh** (*Teàrlach Friseal Mac an Tòisich* 1828-1901), while not a toponymist, was a significant public figure who did much for the Gaelic language and its scholarship. He was born at Dochnalurig on the estate of Dochgarroch. Trained as a lawyer, he became an Inverness town councillor and then a member of parliament for 18 years, championing the crofters' cause and the Gaelic language. His main contribution to place-name studies is through his publication of antiquarian materials which include early forms of local toponyms.

**Edward Meldrum** (1921-89), originally from Aberdeen, was a distinguished architect with an interest in local history and archaeology, who spent the last thirty years of his life living in and around Inverness. He was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, and President of the Inverness Field Club, and he wrote a number of publications about Inverness and its environs, which included well-researched information on places and place-names.

Other sources of useful local place-name information include several people who contributed papers to the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness. **Alexander Mackenzie** (*Alasdair 'Clach na Cùdainn' Mac Coinnich* 1838-98), a native of Gairloch, was a founding member of the Society, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, and editor and publisher of the Celtic Magazine and the Scottish Highlander. He also contributed to the Transactions of the Inverness Scientific Society and Field Club. Another founding member of the Gaelic Society was **William Mackay** (*Uilleam MacAoidh* 1848-1928) of Glenurqhart, an eminent Inverness lawyer and author of the book 'Urquhart and Glenmoriston', who contributed many papers on Highland history, and who edited antiquarian

works that provide early forms of Inverness place-names. The **Rev. Thomas Sinton** (*An t-Urr. Tòmas Sinton* 1856-1923), a native of Laggan (Inverness-shire) who was for many years Minister of Dores, was an accomplished Gaelic scholar and authority on Gaelic poetry, who authored the celebrated book 'The Poetry of Badenoch' (1906). He contributed two papers to the Gaelic Society on 'Places, People and Poetry of Dores', which include information on local place-names.

The toponymy of Strathnairn has been well-served by the **Rev. Dr. John MacPherson** (*An t-Oll. Urr. Iain Mac a' Phearsain* 1901-80), Minister of Daviot and Dunlichity from 1943 to 1970, who contributed two papers to the Society with significant information on place-names, and by Strathnairn native, **Andrew Cumming** (*Anndra Cuimeanach* 1930-2003), perhaps the last of the strath's great tradition-bearers. His paper on tales and legends of Strathnairn contains information on many place-names, which was augmented in 1982 when he compiled an (unpublished) paper on local places, under the instigation and guidance of Willie Forbes, a Strathnairn informant for the current book. An important source of information on Strathnairn and the Dores area is a 1962 audio recording by Ian MacKay and Prof. Wilhelm Nicolaisen, in which Finlay and Jessie Smith, Gaelic speaking natives of Strathnairn, give the pronunciation of local place-names. This recording is available on the *Tobar an Dualchais* website (Track 81647).

An audio recording made in 1962 of a group of Gaelic speaking informants from the Caiplich is also on the *Tobar an Dualchais* website (Tr. 81413), and this gives Gaelic forms for a number of names in the Aird, Abriachan and Dochfour areas. On the other side of Loch Ness, the country from Aldourie to Erchite (and beyond), reaching as far east as

Loch Duntelchaig, is explored in a paper written in the 1920s by the landlord Neil Fraser-Tytler, with corrections and additions by Iain Cameron in 2002. The author's chief source was James Gow of Erchite Wood, who died at the age of a hundred in 1903, and whose grandfather, when a teenager, had hidden in a cave for thirteen weeks in 1746, to avoid being murdered by Cumberland's soldiers in the aftermath of the Battle of Culloden. The paper is full of anecdotes and place-names, most of the latter not on published maps, and would benefit from detailed toponymic analysis. It is available on the internet at [southlochnessheritage.co.uk](http://southlochnessheritage.co.uk).

Mention also needs to be made of three further authorities who are still active in the field of toponymy. **Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba** (<https://www.ainmean-aite.scot>) is the national advisory partnership for Gaelic place-names in Scotland. **Jacob King** (the editor of Charles M Robertson's collected works, mentioned earlier) works for the organisation, which conducts research into toponyms that are then recommended as official Gaelic forms to local authorities and other public bodies. **Iain Taylor** (*Iain Mac an Tàilleir*) is a lecturer with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture, on Skye. In 2011, he published 'Place-Names of Scotland' (Birlinn), which contains many toponyms within the area covered by this book. **Simon Taylor** (*Sim Mac an Tàilleir*), Reader in Scottish Onomastics at the University of Glasgow, who has published extensively on toponymy, including a five-volume *magnum opus* on the place-names of Fife, worked with Jacob King and local informant Ronald Maclean to produce the authoritative 'Place-Names of the Aird and Strathglass, Inverness-shire' (published 2019). Part of the content of this book covers a small section of the area under consideration in the current publication and has been invaluable to the current author.

## Maps and Mapmakers

A list of maps consulted is available in the Bibliography. Some are held at the Highland Archive Centre in Inverness, and a number are available on the National Library of Scotland's website (<https://maps.nls.uk>). With respect to place-names, they all carry a health-warning in that they were completed by people with no intimate knowledge of Gaelic. The most significant pre-Ordnance Survey maps and mapmakers for the purposes of this volume are as follows:

**Timothy Pont** (ca.1564-1614), son of the influential Scottish clergyman, Robert Pont, probably learned his mapmaking skills at St Andrews University, and, with financial support from his father, seems to have spent much of the 1590s mapping various parts of Scotland, before becoming minister of the parish of Dunnet in Caithness in 1600 or 1601. His surviving maps include one of coastal Moray, showing detail of what are now the E suburbs of Inverness eastwards, and another of the Great Glen. His notes are also useful, although the spelling of toponyms there is sometimes different from that given on his maps.

Pont's maps never made it into print during his lifetime, but his scholarship, augmented by that of Robert Gordon of Straloch, helped to inform the ground-breaking and beautiful work of Dutch cartographer **Joan Blaeu** (ca. 1599-1673), whose Atlas of Scotland, published in 1654, is available on the internet and in book form. It has some place-names pertinent to the current volume.

Major-General **William Roy** (1726-90), a native of Lanarkshire, was a military engineer and surveyor who advocated the establishment of the Ordnance Survey (which occurred after his death). He and his team spent from 1747 to 1752 mapping the Highlands, as part of an initiative of King George II, following the Battle of Culloden, to permanently subjugate the Jacobite clans. His Military Map, at a scale of one inch to a thousand yards, shows the distribution of the population in the Highlands in the days before the Clearances, including settlements that no longer exist. It also indicates land-use, terrain, distribution of woodland and large areas of bog and morass. While it is detailed with respect to the area in this book to the E of the Great Glen, it shows settlement of the Aird to be sparse except in its northern coastal strip, and there are no dwellings at all in Abriachan (despite Pont's and Blaeu's earlier maps showing settlements there).

Other useful cartographic publications are *A General Map of Scotland and Islands*, produced in 1750 by Land Surveyor **James Dorret**, of whom little is known, except that he was an Englishman in the service of the Duke of Argyll, and **Aaron Arrowsmith's** attractive 1807 *Map of Scotland*. Arrowsmith, a native of County Durham, was a celebrated cartographer who produced a map of the world on the Mercator projection in 1790 and was to go on to become Hydrographer to the King. Mention should also be made of **John Home**, about whom information is scant, who produced the very useful 1774 map of 'Inverness and Neighbourhood', also called 'Plan of the River Ness'.



Detail from Jan Jansson's map 'Scotia Provinciae' (Amsterdam, 1659). Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.



Auld Castle Hill as seen from near Culcabock across the golf course.





## Presentation of Place-Names

The place-names presented as headwords in this publication are, generally speaking, those to be found on the modern, popular OS 1:25 000 Explorer series. Old and redundant names are generally avoided except where of particular significance or interest to a modern readership. Some archaic and redundant toponyms in Inverness are presented by Maclean (2004 p.45-54).

The toponyms in this publication are given in the following form:

**Carnarc Point** *Gob Chàrnairc*

---

NH 660 473

57°29.733'N 4°14.247'W

The first item in **bold** is the name on OS maps. If there is an attested, or commonly used and understood, separate Gaelic form of the name, it is given as the second item on the first line, in *italic* font. The second line is the grid reference for the feature, given in standard form. The third line is the latitude and longitude. For large or extended geographic features, such as streams, the co-ordinates are generally for where the name appears on the Explorer map, or for a point where an observer might conveniently view the feature at close range. For hills and knolls, the co-ordinates are for the summit. In the case of features which carry only a Gaelic name, this is given as the first item in **bold**, with an interpretation, where possible, in *italics* at the start of the fourth line.

## Buidheachas

Thanks are due to various informants and correspondents who have provided advice to me on place-name forms and local interpretations. Particular mention goes to Heather Clyne (Abriachan and surrounds), Willie Forbes, Raghnaid Sandilands, Alasdair Forbes, Heather Forbes and Iain MacQueen (Strathnairn), Ronald Maclean (The Aird), Eoghan Stewart and Donald Pollock (Clachnaharry and Dunain), and Jacob King and Ronald Black (general). James (Seumas) Grant proffered valuable advice, and I am grateful to him for sharing his expertise on Gaelic dialect and place-names around Strathdearn. Iain MacIlleChiar was a source of insight and wisdom on all aspects of the text and made many excellent suggestions with regard to historical context and interpretation of place-names. All mistakes or shortcomings in the book are, of course, mine.

Thanks go to the staff of The Highland Archive Centre and Inverness Library for their assistance in accessing archival materials. The National Library of Scotland (NLS) deserves commendation for its wonderful website ([https:// maps.nls.uk](https://maps.nls.uk)) which makes many old maps available for scrutiny. The NLS is also involved, with Historic Environment Scotland and the National Records of Scotland, in a partnership project – ScotlandsPlaces (<https://scotlandsplaces.gov.uk>) – which makes available the Ordnance Survey Name Books, another invaluable source of information. The University of Edinburgh’s website, which gives full access to the Old and New Statistical Accounts of Scotland (<https://stataccscot.edina.ac.uk>), is another fine resource.

Phil Baarda of NatureScot deserves a special mention; this book is very much a result of his ‘gentle persuasion’ and infectious enthusiasm for throwing new light on nature and environment by engaging with our heritage languages, particularly Gaelic. Thanks also go to NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage) for agreeing to publish the book, and to Bòrd na Gàidhlig for their financial and moral support.

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**Roddy Maclean**  
Inverness  
January 2021

# Section 1: West of the River & Loch Ness



The view NE from Dunain Hill across Inverness to the Moray Firth. The wooded hill at centre right is Tomhnahurich.

## City and Suburbs

### **Abban (The)** *An t-Àban*

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NH 660 457  
57°2.901'N 4°14.194'W

Àban is a Gaelic place-name element found only in the Inverness area. It means a *backwater or disused/silted-up channel*. The Abban was one of the features of the old River Ness delta, isolating Merkinch (q.v.) on its W side, and is remembered in Abban Street which runs along the line of the ancient watercourse. Home's map (1774) gives it as 'a saltwater lake called the NABON' (misunderstanding the Gaelic article), and a large field to its immediate south as DALNABON i.e. *Dail an Àbain*. See **Abban Water** and **Clach an Àbain**. The Abban was filled in during a street development programme in 1870, and then itself developed for housing (Ross 1916 p.284).

### **Ballifeary** *Baile na Faire*

---

NH 662 442  
57°28.071'N 4°13.952'W

*Township of the sentinel or watch*. A location where sentinels would be posted in order to warn the townsfolk of the approach of hostile forces from the west. This is one of the town's oldest attested names, recorded as Balnafare in 1244 (Watson 2002 p.156), and again as Balnafare in a bishop's charter in 1544 (Mackenzie 1884 p.12). It appears as Baliferie in Home's map of 1774, and as Ballefery in a parliamentary map of 1832. Now a suburb to the immediate N of Bught Park.

### **Balnacraig** *Baile na Creige*

---

NH 632 431  
57°27.455'N 4°16.967'W

*The farm of the rock or rocky hill*. E of Dunain Hill. There is another settlement of the same name near Bunachton at NH654342, given variously as Balnacraig, Balnacreag and Baile na Creige. For this second example, Robertson gives Baile na creig as the Gaelic form (King 2019 p.234).

### **Balnafettack** *Baile nam Feadag*

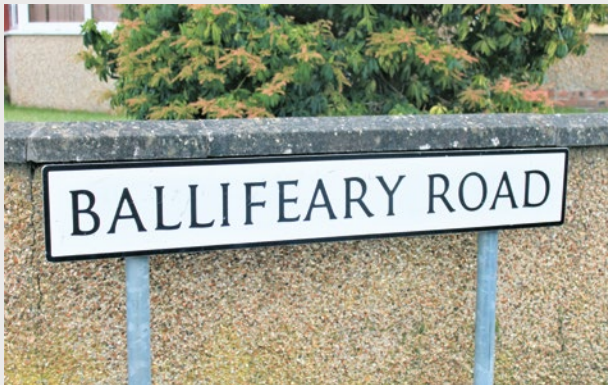
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NH 643 453  
57°28.638'N 4°15.682'W

*The farm of the plovers*. The interpretation is from Watson (2002 p.156). Recorded as Balnafetic on Home's map in 1774, the Gaelic form is confirmed by Barron (1961 p.16). An alternative interpretation of the second element would be 'of the whistle(s)' [the plover is the 'whistler' in Gaelic], or a variant of *feadan* 'drainage ditch, channel, runnel'. *Cnoc na Feadaige* in Caithness ND099294 is interpreted as 'hill of the whistle' (OS1/7/15/182) – likely being a place where the wind whistles – and it is notable that Balnafettack is adjacent to **Scorguie** 'windy point'. However, another *Cnoc na Feadaige* in E Sutherland NH700953 is 'knoll of the plover' (OS1/33/30/52), and *Bealach Lùib nam Feadag* NH036342 in Kintail is 'pass of the plover loop' (a bend on the river) [OS1/28/49/42]. Dieckhoff (1932 p.181) reports a deserted village near Fort Augustus called Balnafettack/*Baile nam Feadag*. The Inverness Balnafettack is now a suburb, E of Craig Phadrig.

## Baile – Farm, Steading, Township

The Gaelic word *Baile* (pron. 'BAL-uh', with slender 'l' as in English 'light') is the classic place-name element for a location where humans were, or are, permanently domiciled. It originally meant a place or piece of land belonging to one individual or family. Usually translated as 'farm, steading or township' (Scots 'fermtoun'), in modern parlance *baile* refers to a village, town or even city, but its old usage is still recognised in the common phrase *Tha mi aig baile* 'I'm at home'. In anglicised form, it usually occurs as Bal-, Balla-, Bally- or occasionally Bella-. Despite its old heritage, the word does not appear in Scottish place-names until the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and it seems to have been active in creating new toponyms up until the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in places like Bute and Arran



(Márkus 2012 p.524-5). *Baile an Òir* 'the town of the gold' (*Baile an Òr OS*) was the name given to the shanty town that grew up in the Strath of Kildonan in Sutherland, in response to a short-lived 'gold rush' in 1869. It is impossible to date most of the examples of *baile* names in this book, but from the example of Ballifeary, it was certainly active from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards, if not before. *Baile* toponyms occur in virtually every part of the country, the notable exceptions being Orkney and Shetland, demonstrating the historic spread of the Gaelic language across both Highland and Lowland Scotland.



### **Bught, The** *Cill Bheathain, Am Bucht*

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NH 660 439  
57°27.955'N 4°14.002'W

Historically, the Gaels knew this area as *Cill Bheathain* 'the church of St Bean' (see **Kilvean**) but, following the establishment of the Royal Burgh in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, speakers of Inglis (later to be recognised as Scots) settled in Inverness, and it has been generally thought that Bught is from their language (variously written as *boucht*, *bought*, *bucht* or *bught*), designating an enclosure for sheep or pigs (e.g. Macbain 1922 p.123, Watson 2002 p.157). Certainly, the modern pronunciation would support that. However, the earliest record of Buth in a legal deed in 1452 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.122) suggests an alternative – a possible origin in Gaelic *both* 'hut' or an earlier Pictish cognate. The use of *both* in a religious context in some other parts of the country (Taylor, S. 2012 p.303-5) might also be relevant here given the Bught's original equivalence to *Cill Bheathain*.

The article is included in the Burgh Court records e.g. 'in the Bucht' in 1579 (Mackay 1911 p.270) and it is still in use today in both languages. It appears as Town of Boch on a military map of ca. 1725 (A Generall Survey of Inverness), which interestingly shows an adjacent site being used as an 'army camp before marching to Glenshiel', referring to the deployment of British Hanoverian troops under General Wightman to meet a combined Spanish-Scottish Jacobite army in Glenshiel (Kintail) in 1719. The modern Bught Park, famous for the sport of shinty, is *Pàirc a' Bhucht* in Gaelic.

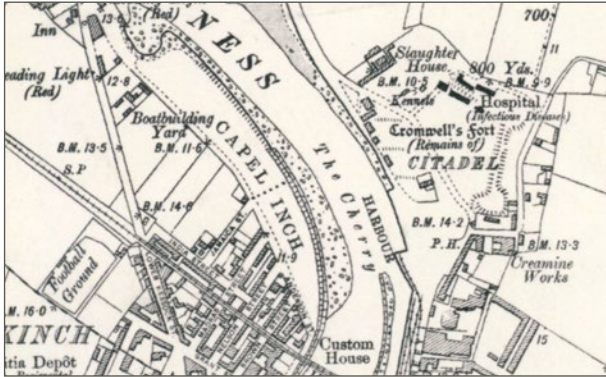
### **Capel Inch** *Capall Innis*

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NH 662 463  
57°29.243'N 4°14.007'W

*Mare or horse island or riverine meadow.* Originally a low-lying meadow, opposite the site of Cromwell's old fort and close to the mouth of the River Ness; it may have become an island at times of flood. The OS Name Book (1876-8 OS1/17/33/30) says the name applies to 'that portion of ground lying along the west bank of the river from the Railway Viaduct to the Thornbush. The Merkinch is its western limit.' They also add, by explanation, that 'here is the market stance for horses'. The 'Market Stance' is clearly marked as occupying the southern portion of Capel Inch in the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch OS map (pub. 1874) and, in reminiscing on events in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, John Fraser (1905 p.51) tells of a 'great temperance meeting on the Capel Inch'.

The use of *capall* varies according to dialect – in some places it means a mare, in others a horse broken to the bit, whereas in yet others it is entirely archaic (although still common in Irish Gaelic). The (Celtic) Gaulish equivalent was possibly borrowed by the Romans into Latin, hence French *cheval* and English *cavalry*, *chivalry* (Watson 1909 p.50). Now developed for housing and commercial purposes, and its original use largely forgotten, the name Capel Inch has gone from most modern maps and is in danger of being lost.



Capel Inch shown on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS 6-inch map pub. 1907. The section of the River Ness adjacent to it is The Cherry (see Ness, River). The Football Ground is the home of Clachnacuddin FC; the club takes its name from a famous local landmark (see Clachnacuddin).

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### Carnarc Point *Gob Chàrnairc*

NH 660 473

57°29.733'N 4°14.247'W

The OSA tells us that 'there is, at some distance from the mouth of the River Ness, a considerable way within flood mark, a large cairn of stones, the origin of which is of very remote antiquity. It is called Cairnairc, that is, the cairn of the sea. There is a beacon erected on Cairnairc, to apprise vessels coming into the river, of danger from it' (Vol IX 1793 p.631). The interpretation here is that the name is *Càrn Fhairg'*, with *fairg(e)* meaning 'of the sea'. In general, this has been rejected in favour of *Càrn Airc* 'cairn of danger or distress'. It is given as Cairn Ark on Home's map (1774), and is described, two centuries later, as being a 'rude cairn which is surmounted by a heavy wooden post' (Fraser 1905 p.54). It now bears a modern navigational beacon, at the end of a well-constructed breakwater-cum-peninsula on the W side of the river mouth, and is a favoured place for dog-walkers.

Another alternative explanation for the name is that Carnarc is simply a corruption of *crannag* 'crannog', a structure built on an artificial island, of which there were at least five in the Beaully Firth (Meldrum 1987 p.13). One of them – the *Càrn Dubh* 'black cairn' – is marked and named on the OS 6-inch maps at NH617472.

### Carse, The *An Cars*

NH 653 464

57°29.247'N 4°14.788'W

*The flat land adjacent to water.* The original Scots word passed into Gaelic as a loanword. Recorded as 'the Carse' in 1677 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.145). Dwelly's dictionary tells us the word is feminine i.e. *A' Chars*, but Robertson's record of the name in Perthshire and Argyll is *an Cars*, making it a masculine noun (King 2019 p.283, 340), and this is supported in the Inverness area by the place-name Teacharse (i.e. *Taigh a' Chars*) mentioned in the Wardlaw MS (p.235). See **Balcarse**. The Carse Industrial Estate lies to the immediate E of Muirtown Basin.

### Charleston *Baile Theàrlaich*

NH 640 434

57°27.683'N 4°16.105'W

*Charles's farm.* The original farm was some distance south of the modern Academy (in the suburb of Kinmylies) which now carries its name. The name dates back at least to 1781, replacing an earlier *Baile nam Bodach* (Barron 1961 p.12). The identity of the eponymous *Teàrlach* is unknown.



### Clachnahagaig (Stone) *Clach na h-Eagaig*

---

NH 645 428  
57°27.375'N 4°15.505'W

The original stone marked the south-western boundary of Inverness and the southern extent of the town's fishing rights on the Ness, according to the Golden Charter of 1591 (the rights extended *inter lapidem vocatum Clachnahaggag et mare* 'between the stone called Clachnahagaig and the sea'). Barron (1961 p.18) says the stone was on the E bank of the river, and 'had to be removed when the river channel was diverted' during the construction of the Caledonian Canal. The original, which was 'frequently in part submerged in flood time', was replaced, at the instigation of Charles Fraser-Mackintosh, by an inscribed marker stone (Fraser-Mackintosh 1883 p.573). In the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this was thrown into the canal by vandals, and finally restored to its correct position in 2015. The rights of Inverness anglers to the public fishings still run officially 'from Clachnahagaig Stone to the sea'.

Much debate over the original form and meaning of the name ran in Highland periodicals during the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the most likely is *Clach na h-Eagaig* 'the stone of the small cleft'. Another stone recorded in the vicinity was *Claycht-nye-helig* and it is unclear as to whether this was the same object. This name has been interpreted as *Clach na h-Eilig*, based on *eileag*, commonly 'a V-shaped arrangement ... into which deer or other wild animals were driven and shot with arrows'. The word also applied to a contrivance for catching fish and 'that is probably the origin of Clachnahelig' (Mackay 1911 p.lxii). Yet other forms are recorded – Clachnahulig and Clachnahalaig – the former of which was preferred by Barron, who identifies it as the same stone as Clachnahagaig, whereas Fraser-Mackintosh postulated an original of *Clach nam Faoleag* 'the stone of the gulls' (1883 p.574).

### Clachnaharry *Clach na h-Aithrigh*

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NH 646 465  
57°29.329'N 4°15.577'W

*The stone of repentance.* This toponym has been the subject of much debate. The OS considered it to be derived from 'Clach na h-Aire "Stone of the Watch", as in olden times it was customary to have a man stationed on it to watch the Ross-shire coast and sound an alarm on the approach of unfriendly clans from the north' (OS1/17/31/51), and there is such a stone above the village at its W end. This interpretation of the name is supported by Robertson (King 2019 p.226) and by Barron (1961 p.15), who gives the alternative Gaelic form *Clach na Faire*. However, considering the local example of **Ballifeary**, a 'watch stone' origin would have been likely to produce the anglicised form Clachnafarry or Clachnafairy.

The Rev. James Fraser, in the earlier (17<sup>th</sup> century) Wardlaw MS, tells us 'the battle of Clach-ni-Harry i.e. the Repentance or Pennance Stone happened June 27 1378' (p.87). The editor of the Wardlaw MS, William Mackay, claims the Rev. Fraser is incorrect, and that the Repentance Stone would be *Clach na h-Aithreachais*, but this would be presuming a feminine gender for the word *aithreachas*, which is unlikely – it would properly be *Clach an Aithreachais*. William Watson (e.g. 2002 p.220) supported the Rev. Fraser, pointing to the old word *aithrigh*, now obsolete in Scottish Gaelic, although not in Irish (the related word *aithreachas* 'repentance, regret' is still commonly used in Scotland). The usage of *aithrigh* dates back to the days when Catholicism was the major religion; the repentance would have consisted of the repetition of a given number of paternosters in the vicinity of the stone, perhaps following a reflective walk of around an hour from the centre of Inverness. A similar name is to be found on Colonsay at *Clach a' Pheanais* 'stone of penance' (Watson 2002 p.57).

Yet another model seems to be proposed by Arrrowsmith on his 1807 map, where the village is given as Clachnacarie i.e. *Clach na Cairidh* 'the stone of the fish trap', but this is not supported by other evidence. Clachnaharry was a fishing village in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and strongly Gaelic speaking, being the site of a Gaelic school before the 1872 Education (Scotland) Act made English the sole language of education.

### **Craig Phadrig** *Creag Phàdraig*

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NH 640 452  
57°28.636'N 4°16.189'W

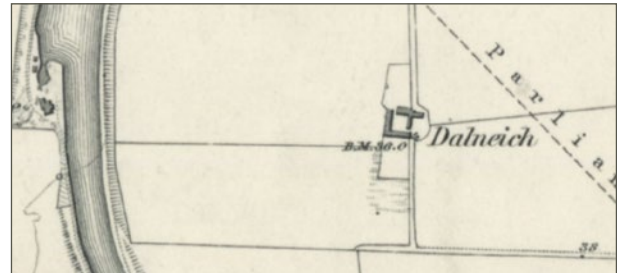
*Peter's (or Patrick's) rocky hill.* This rocky eminence (now forested), in a strategic position to the west of Inverness, is the site of an ancient hillfort which is associated in oral tradition with the Pictish king Brude and with St Columba's famous 6<sup>th</sup> century mission to convert him to Christianity. Fraser (1905 p.226) offers the translation 'Peter's Rock' but fails to identify the eponymous gentleman. Watson (2002 p.158) comments that 'the name is said not to be very old, and to have been given after a tenant who lived near it'. However, it was recorded as early as 1592 on the Register of the Great Seal, as Craigfadrick. The pronunciation of the Gaelic form is 'krake FAAT-rik' but local Gaelic speakers for long preferred to call the hill *Làrach an Taigh Mhòir* 'the site of the great house' in recognition of the site's historic significance. Craig Phadrig was among the places where rights of usage, for pasturing, pulling heather, cutting peats, obtaining lime, clay etc, were granted to the townsfolk of Inverness in the Golden Charter of 1591.

### **Dalneigh** *Dail an Eich*

---

NH 654 448  
57°28.470'N 4°14.796'W

*The meadow of the horse.* The earliest forms are Dellinaich (1668) and Dalnahich (1786) [Barron 1961 p.14]. Given on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch OS map (pub. 1874) as Dalneich, by the time of the second edition in 1906, the name had become Dalneigh. This presumably reflected some change in usage, but many Invernessians still pronounced it 'dal-NAYCH' during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, whereas it is now 'dal-NAY'. The flat fields of this farm were an ideal gathering ground, and tradition tells us that this is where a combined force of Frasers and Chisholms camped on their way to Culloden in April 1746 (Pollitt 1981 p.125). Now a suburb, N of Tomnahurich.



Dalneigh Farm as shown on the 1st edition OS 6-inch map pub. 1874. The water at left is the Caledonian Canal. This is now the suburb of Dalneigh.

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### **Fuaran a' Chlèirich**

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NH 733 472  
57°29.840'N 4°06.918'W

*The spring/well of the cleric (priest).* An ancient well in Balloch, now surrounded by houses, and by streets which bear the name 'Wellside'.

## *Fuarain agus Tobraichean* – Springs and Wells

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A full account of the wells and springs known, named and once used in the Inverness area would require a publication of its own – and would be a rewarding enterprise for a person with patience and an eye for detail. Many wells have suffered neglect since the creation of a piped water supply, and have dried up, become overgrown or been lost in urban development. As an example, the small village of Campbelltown (now part of modern Ardersier), as shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch OS map, had seven water-gathering points, three marked 'Well' and four marked 'Wells'. None are named. On the modern 1:25 000 map, only one of them is still shown, and it carries the name 'Posty Well' (being near the old Post Office). In Gaelic, a natural spring is generally a *fuaran* 'FOO-uh-run', the plural of which is *fuairain* 'FOO-uh-rin', and a man-made well is generally a *tobar* 'TOPE-ur' (as English 'HOPE'), with plural form *tobraichean* 'TOPE-rich-un', although there is some degree of interchangeability between the terms.

Some of the wells which are particularly worthy of note, because of their interesting names or traditions, and which are not mentioned in the general text of this book, are as follows. The commentaries are drawn from Fraser (1878).

### Sea-wells

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*Fuaran a' Chladaich* 'the spring of the shore' or Sea-well, near Englishton (Bunchrew), was inundated regularly by the sea. The water was celebrated, being reckoned curative to the whooping cough, and was resorted to during outbreaks of cholera. The well was once accessed

by a specially constructed causeway. Three other important sea-wells (those situated below high-tide mark) were to be found in the Inverness area – one near Stoneyfield at NH690458, *Fuaran a' Mhinisteir* (see **Petty**), and a third at Campbelltown (Ardersier), also reputedly good for whooping cough.

### Clachnaharry-Muirtown

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The *Priseag Well* (*Fuaran na Priseig* 'the spring of the small thicket') is at Clachnaharry NH643463, hidden in the woods and now protected by concrete surrounds. Reputed to have been blessed by St Kessock, its water was used for eye ailments, and, if a silver coin were immersed in it, and the water imbibed, it would act against the 'evil eye'. Along the road at Muirtown NH651461 is *Fuaran Allt an Ionnlaid* or Well of the Washing (or Anointing) Burn, once a place of religious import connected to both druidic and Christian traditions. Its water reputedly healed skin disorders, and its fame was enhanced when the Marquis of Montrose drank there in 1650. It is virtually dried up today.

### Inverness

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*Fuaran a' Chragain Bhric* 'the spring of the speckled rock or rocky hill', at the N base of Dunain Hill at NH628438, was a fairy well and 'clootie' (healing) well, the bushes around it being once festooned with rags or 'cloots' of those who sought its virtues. It has recently been cleaned up and is no longer in danger of being lost (and, in fact, appears to be regularly visited by fans of the

'Outlander' books and films). The Clachnacuddin Nonagenarian tells us that the rock (now hidden among trees) was 'spotted with various specimens of moss', hence its name (Maclean 1886 p.108), but the OS list the hill behind the well as *Creagan Breac* (and *creagan* is pronounced 'cragan' in the Loch Ness area). *Fuaran Lagain Dhonnchaidh* 'the well of Duncan's tomb' or King Duncan's Well is adjacent to the Culcabock Roundabout at NH682446. Despite evidence to the contrary, oral tradition has it that King Duncan died and was buried near here, but the name might simply refer to *Clann Donnchaidh*, the Gaelic appellation of the Robertson lairds of Culcabock.

## Culloden

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Well of the Dead (*Tobar nam Marbh*) is on Culloden Battlefield at NH743449. It is said that fatally wounded soldiers crawled here to quench their thirst. To the W of the battlefield is a knot of old wells whose names survive. St Mary's Well or *Tobar na Coille* 'the well of the wood', within a circular stone enclosure at NH723452, was considered a healing well and was heavily frequented, particularly on the first Sunday in May. The *Tobar Gorm* 'blue well' was at Blackpark Farm NH726449 and is on the OS 6-inch maps, but not marked today; and the location of *Tobar na h-Òige* 'the well of youth', so-called because drinking or washing in its waters restored the virtues of youth, is unclear today. There has possibly been some confusion of well nomenclature in this

area, with the name of St Mary's Well perhaps being translocated from an earlier site (<http://www.stmaryinthefields.co.uk/church-inverness-history>). Another Culloden well with a fascinating, but unexplained, name is Kenneth's Black Well at NH725460. Nearby, the Limepark Well ('a fine spring') at NH729461 was named for the field into which it issued, known locally as the Lime Park (OS/1/17/31/8).

## Nairnside

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*Fuaran na Dèide* at NH738426 is named on both OS 6-inch maps, but only marked as 'Spr.' on the modern 1:25 000 Explorer map. The name means 'the spring of the toothache', and the OS tell us that 'the waters of this well possess such qualities as have the power of mitigating the pain arising from toothache' (OS1/17/20/21). W of here at NH725432 is Farquhar's Well, which is also a spring well. The eponymous Farquhar is unidentified.

## Croy-Dalcross

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*Fuaran a' Mhadaidh*, Feabuie NH763476. The OS Name Book calls it 'A perennial spring ... the fox's well'.

### **Kessock, South** *Port Cheasaig, Ceasag a Deas*

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NH 657 467

57°29.484'N 4°14.504'W

*The port of Kessock.* Robertson gives *Port Cheasaig* (King 2019 p.226). The earliest record is of (Estir) Kessok for N Kessock in 1437 (Watson 1904 p.136). Named for a 6<sup>th</sup> century saint, who was connected to the Trossachs/Loch Lomond area, and whose name was also written Kessog or Cessog, and *Ceasag* in Gaelic. It is probable that there was a cell dedicated to him at Kessock, although there is a traditional story of him reviving a group of drowned travellers or pilgrims who were crossing the firth on the ferry (Newton 2010 p.37). A document from 1509 mentions 'the town of Kessock' in Ardmannach' i.e. *An Àird Mheadhanach* 'the middle promontory', an old term for the Black Isle.

A detailed map drawn up ca. 1726 and called 'Generall Survey of Inverness' shows no settlement at what is termed South Kessock (or colloquially 'The Ferry') today, but it does show a substantial number of dwellings at Kessack on the N side of the Firth, with the name Ferry of Kessack at the slipway there. This probably reflects the traditional Gaelic name for North Kessock, which is *Aiseag Cheasaig* 'Kessock ferry' (given as *Aiseig Cheiseig* by Watson [1904 p.136]), although most Gaels refer to it today as *Ceasag a Tuath*. Even in 1832, there were just a handful of houses at S Kessock (Parliamentary map), although the Pier is clearly marked. The Kessock Bridge is *Drochaid Cheasaig* in Gaelic.



Kessock Ferry shown in 'A Generall Survey of Inverness and the country adjacent to the foot of Loch-Ness' ca. 1725. Most of the settlement is on the Ross-shire side of the Beaulie Firth.

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### **Kilvean** *Cill Bheathain*

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NH 641 434

57°27.664'N 4°15.997'W

*The church/cell of St Bean (Naomh Beathan).* This place-name refers to a settlement west of Torvean (q.v.), but historically the Gaels of Inverness referred to the Bught as *Cill Bheathain*, and the Burgh Court Books of 1568 give Myln of Kilbean as an equivalent to the Mill of Bught. The

Wardlaw MS of mid-17<sup>th</sup> century (p.336) gives Kill Baine, referring to the current area of Bught Park. Bean's name is traditionally pronounced with two syllables i.e. as Gaelic *Beathan* (Watson 2002 p.160). He is reputed to have been a relative of St Columba who came east from Iona, and who had a cell in the vicinity of Torvean.

### **Kinmylies** *Ceann a' Mhìlidh*

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NH 644 446  
57°28.308'N 4°15.715'W

*The headland of the warrior/soldier.* Now a suburb, but formerly a farm. The name is very old, appearing in a royal charter of 1232 as Kinmyly (Watson 2002 p.160). It is Kinmyleis in 1571 (Mackay 1911 p.211). Blaeu's map (1654) has Kinmylie, and Home gives Kinmellie (1774). Fraser-Mackintosh (1875 p.25) gives an alternative opinion, writing that it 'is known that there was a church and burying ground at Kinmylies, formerly Kilmylies, and it may have been dedicated to the Virgin Mary, or a female saint, Maillie or Marion'. Yet another alternative interpretation has been proposed - that the name represents the original form of 'Mile-end', an old farm at NH643439 (now remembered in Mile End Place). Carmyllie in Angus is explained as *Càrn (a') Mhìlidh* 'warrior's cairn'.

### **Leachkin, The** *An Leacainn*

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NH 636 444  
57°28.172'N 4°16.476'W

*The broad slope/hillside.* Pron. 'LEH-uch-kin' in Gaelic. The word means 'side of the face' and, like many body features, has also become a landscape term. This toponym appears as 'The Leaking' on Home's map of 1774 (the 'ng' representing the Gaelic 'nn'), but the Gaelic form is clear and

confirmed by Barron (1961 p.16), who tells us that until around 1820 the area was rough waste land which was then given out in small lots for tenants. Commonly pronounced 'LARK-in' in Inverness English, the official spelling was an attempt to represent the Gaelic pronunciation in written form. The name refers to the broad slope broadly opposite New Craigs Hospital. This was still a strongly Gaelic speaking area in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. See **Leacainn [Aird]**.

Above the Leachkin, on the ridge-top at NH629441, is the ruin of a Neolithic chambered cairn, of which only a few constituent stones remain - one of a series of ancient sites regularly visited by fans of the television drama series 'Outlander'. One of the stones, now no longer identifiable, was flat and hooded like a child's cradle, and known as the 'Cradle Stone' or *Clach na Sìthe* 'the fairy stone'.

### **Merkinch** *Marc Innis*

---

NH 657 460  
57°29.070'N 4°14.420'W

*Horse island/meadow.* A flat riverine meadow which became an occasional island in the old Ness delta, this area was a common-grazing for horses, and was granted to the burgh in a charter signed by Alexander II in 1236, the rent of one pound of pepper to be paid annually at Michaelmas (Pollitt 1981 p.209). The area 'comprised the lands then enclosed between the two branches of the river, separating at Friar's Place, and the Moray Firth' (OS1/17/33/9). Given as Markhynch in 1365 and both Merkinsh and Markinsh in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Wardlaw MS, it is clear that the modern pronunciation 'merk-INSH' (as in 'jerk') is not ancient; even today, some local people still

pronounce it 'mark INSH'. A Pictish origin for the name (represented by modern Welsh *march-ynys* 'horse island/meadow') has been suggested, but it is impossible to tease that apart from the cognate and very similar Gaelic form. *Marc* is largely obsolete in modern Gaelic but is preserved in *marcachd* 'riding' and *marc-shluagh* 'cavalry'.



Inverness shown in 'A Generall Survey of Inverness and the country adjacent to the foot of Loch-Ness' ca. 1725. Merkinch is the large broad peninsula in the upper centre, almost made into an island by the long inlet on its W side called the Abban. The legend is as follows - A: Town of Inverness; B: The Castle; C: The Old Fort built by Cromwell; D: The Pier; F: Mure Town (Muirtown). The E side of the town's agricultural lands are protected by a dyke from the rough coastal strip of the Longman which would be inundated by high spring tides.

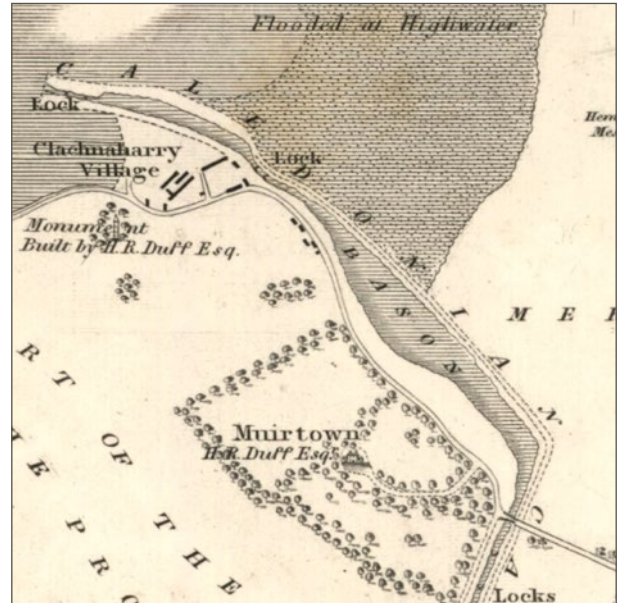
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### Muirtown *Baile an Fhraoich*

NH 650 459

57°29.027'N 4°15.193'W

*Heather i.e. moor town*. Given as Moortoun in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Wardlaw MS, Muirton on Blaeu's map of 1654, and as Muirtown on Roy's map (1747-52), it was originally part of the Kinmylies estate, and was sometimes known as Easter Kinmylies. The Gaelic form, of which the English is a translation, is confirmed by Barron (1961 p.12). This area, now a suburb, gave its name to the Muirtown Basin on the Caledonian Canal at NH651461. In Gaelic, Muirtown Basin is *Acarsaid Bhaile an Fhraoich* (AÅA).



A detail from John Wood's 'Plan of the Town of Inverness from actual survey' published in 1821. At this stage the Caledonian Canal was not yet complete (it was finished in 1822), and the newly developed Muirtown Basin is given only as 'Bason'. Muirtown, now a part of suburban Inverness, was then a grand estate owned by the Duff family.

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## Ruighard *An Ruigh Àrd*

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NH 634 436  
57°27.713'N 4°16.586'W

*The high slope.* *Ruigh* or *ruighe* can be tricky to translate, as it can mean a slope, the elongated base of a hill or the flat ground at the bottom of a hill – also a shieling or, on the human body, an extended arm. But, in the case of this location on the NE side of Dunain Hill, it is actually a comparatively modern name created for a house – suggested by William Mackay for the residence of Dr Aitken, the first superintendent of what was then the Inverness District Asylum (Barron 2002 p.387).



Ruighard is one of the youngest place-names in the Inverness area, dating from the 1860s.

## Scorguie *Sgòr Gaoithe*

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NH 644 460  
57°29.055'N 4°15.724'W

*Windy point.* Given as Scorgui by Roy (1747-52) and Scorguy on Home's map of 1774. There are at least five other hills, mountains or points called *Sgòr(r) Gaoith(e)* across the Highlands – perhaps not surprising in a windy country! Scorguie House once stood on its own, but the whole area is now a suburb of Inverness, NE of Craig Phadrig. See **Sgòr Gaoithe**.



Scorguie on the OS 6-inch map published in 1907. It is now a suburb. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

## Thornbush *Am Preas Droighinn*

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Approx. NH 659 466  
57°29.395'N 4°14.266'W

The Gaelic form, from Robertson (King 2019 p.226), means 'the blackthorn bush' and presumably originally referred to a tree of the species. Robertson gave *Am Preas draighean* as the equivalent to Thornbush Brewery, but the name Thornbush came to apply to an area north of Capel Inch (q.v.) and conjoined to Merkinch (q.v.). Early records include Thorne Bus and Thorne Buss in the Burgh Court Records of 1580 (Mackay 1911 p.278), and Thornbush Pier and Thornbush Brewery appear on the E. side of Merkinch on a parliamentary map of 1832. By the time of the first OS survey in 1870, there was a Thornbush Inn on the S. side of the brewery, with an annotation just north of the brewery (at NH659467) viz. 'Stone marking the site of Thorn Bush'. The stone was gone by the 1980s (Meldrum 1982 No.4 p48). Thornbush Quay was built in 1817. The name is perpetuated today in Thornbush Road.

## Tomnahurich *Tom na h-lùbhraich*

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NH 655 441  
57°28.057'N 4°14.564'W

*The hill of the yew wood.* This place-name has been the subject of much debate (a great deal of it 'fanciful', according to Macbain [1922 p.124], who favoured the 'yew wood' interpretation). It appears as Tomni Firach, Tomnifirich and Tomnihurich in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Wardlaw MS and, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as Tomahury (Roy, 1747-52) and Tomnahurach (Home 1774). Mackay's estate map (1866) gives Toumnahurich, which is closer to the Gaelic pronunciation.



The occasional presence of an 'f' in the second element, and in the version of the name used by local Gaelic speakers up until around 1850, led some to speculate that it was actually 'the hill of the wood gathering', presumably *Tom na Fiodhraich*, but this has little support today. The hill's resemblance to an upturned boat, and the fact that *iùbhrach* can also mean a sailing vessel, have further muddied the toponymic waters, but Watson (who is buried on Tomnahurich) agreed with Macbain's assessment (2002 p.162). It is not clear, however, at which historical period a yew wood would have grown there. According to the OSA (Vol IX 1793 p.610), it was planted with Scots pine in 1753; prior to that it 'yielded only a short thin heath'.

Celebrated locally as a 'fairy hill', this striking landmark, now a cemetery, was once nationally famous for the stories of its *sithichean* ('fairies'), including *Na Fidhlearan agus Sithichean Thom na h-Iùbhraich* 'The Fiddlers and the Fairies of Tomnahurich', a legend that is still told today. The NSA opines that 'being the great gathering hill of the fairies in the north, its broad and level summit and smooth green sides waving with harebell, broom and braken [sic], afforded them ample space and seclusion for their elvish orgies' (Vol XIV 1845 p.8-9). According to Hugh Barron (1961 p.12), 'as far back as 1514 there is [a] record of Lord Lovat having at various times resided at Kinmylies and that he held courts and dispensed justice on the summit of Tomnahurich.'



Tomnahurich (E) is an isolated hill well outside the town boundary in 'A General Survey of Inverness and the country adjacent to the foot of Loch-Ness' ca. 1725. H marks the site of a 1719 British army camp before the soldiers marched to Glenshiel to engage a Jacobite force, and I represents the 'Town of Boch' i.e. Bught.

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### Torvean *Tòrr Bheathain*

NH 648 433

57°27.634'N 4°15.257'W

*The hill of St. Bean.* Torvean is pronounced in English as in the surname Maclean (and the related Kilvean q.v.), although the Gaelic original *Beathan* has two syllables (and derives from *beatha* 'life', as does the surname MacBeth which is still often spelt MacBeath in the Highlands). The place-name appears as Torevain Hill (Home 1774), Tor a' Bhean (New Statistical Account 1845) and Torvaine (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century OS maps). The identity of Beathan is a matter of dispute. Macbain considered him to be the 11<sup>th</sup> century bishop of Mortlach in Moray, but others have placed him earlier than that, claiming him to be a cousin of St Columba who came from Iona to spread the gospel, and who successfully proselytized in Strathglass.

Torvean (*Tòrr Bheathain*)  
and the Caledonian Canal.

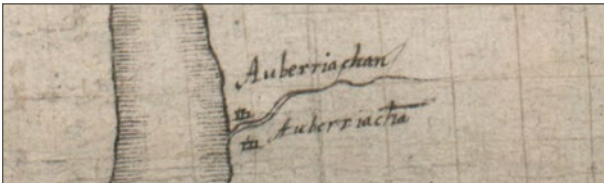


## Farms and Small Settlements

### **Abriachan** *Obar Itheachan*

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This place-name appears in 1239 as Abirhacyn and in 1334 as Aberbreachy (Macbain 1922 p.125); later it is given as Auberrriachan (Pont's map of the Great Glen ca. 1583-1614), and as Aberiachan in 1677 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.145). It now applies to a collection of villages between Loch Ness NH571346 and Loch Laide NH546353, but it must have originally referred to the mouth of the burn, now called Allt Killianan (q.v.) at NH572345. The first element is Pictish *Aber* 'river mouth', as in Abernethy, Aberfeldy and Aberdeen, for which the Gaelic derivative is *Obar*. The name has been naturally contracted, in the same way that Aberbrothock (Gaelic *Obar Bhrothaig*) has given us modern Arbroath.



A detail from Timothy Pont's map of the Great Glen and Glen Garry (ca. 1583-1614). It clearly shows the settlement at Abriachan at the mouth of the stream on either side. South is at the top of this map.

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Watson (1926 p. 466) gave the Gaelic pronunciation as *Obr-itheachan*, and it is an anglicised form of this form that is often shown on old maps e.g. Obriachan (Blaeu 1654), Obriachen (Moll 1745), and which (as Obriachan) is preferred

by Fraser-Mackintosh (1875 p.25). Dieckhoff gave the Gaelic form as *Obair Itheachan* in his dictionary but referred to *Bodaich Obair Iachain* 'the old men of Abriachan' in his notebook (Heather Clyne pers.comm.), whereas Barron (1961 p.3) quotes verse in which the elderly gentleman of the village are described, in less than flattering terms (for being too verbose after a drink), as *Bodaich bheag Obriathaichean*. Despite these representations of the first vowel being an 'o', local informants in 1962 gave the Gaelic pronunciation as 'ab REE-uch-un' (TD Tr.81413), although it is possible that they had been influenced by the anglicised form.

Watson (1926 p.466) considered it likely that the place-name was developed from *Obar Bhritheachan* 'the mouth of the hill river', and Macbain agreed that the original form of the burn's name was Briachan (1922 p.125). The old pier at NH573348 was once serviced by the paddle steamers that plied the Caledonian Canal (Meldrum 1987 p.16).

### **Achbuie** *Achadh Buidhe*

---

NH 566 357

57°23.354'N 4°23.215'W

*Yellow field*. The colour descriptor *buidhe* usually refers to vegetation, particularly grasses that become straw-coloured in the winter. In the case of Achbuie, the visual contrast of the grassy fields to the darker heather-clad and forested hills that surround them serves to validate the toponym.

### **Achculin** *Achadh a' Chuilinn*

---

NH 568 351

57°23.060'N 4°22.990'W

*The field of the holly.* An old farm at Abriachan. Given as Auch Culin in an 1808 estate map. The Gaelic form is from Mackenzie (1884 p.16). Holly trees still grow in the area.

### **Achnagairn** *Ach nan Càrn*

---

NH 553 449

57°28.440'N 4°24.824'W

*The field of the cairns.* Robertson gives *ach na carn* (King 2019 p.225). Watson (1926 p.241) interpreted the 'g' in the anglicised form as being an example of eclipsis in older Gaelic, where the 'c' becomes a 'g' in speech, and he wrote the name as *achadh na gcarn* 'field of the cairns'. Local informants in 1962 gave it as 'ach nuh GAARN' (TD Tr.81413). Simon Taylor (2019 p.221-2) gives early forms as Achnagarne, Achnagairne and Achnigarn, Roy's map (1747-52) shows Achnagairn, and Thomson's 1832 Atlas has Auchnigairn. The OSA (1792) tells us that the cairns in question were 'small tumuli of earth mixed with stones' and were to be found 'in the moor between Achnagairn and the ferry of Beuly [sic]' (Vol IV p.120-1). They were connected with an incident in which the local people, while ploughing their land in spring, were set upon by neighbouring clans. The locals unhitched the oxen from their ploughs and laid into their enemies with the yokes with such fury that 'numbers were killed upon both sides. The slain were buried in the field, and the tumuli mentioned were raised over their graves.' The battle was referred to as Blar-na-cui-flich i.e. *Blàr na Cuinge Fliuch* 'the battle of the wet yoke.' *Blàr* can also mean a battlefield, and the same name appears in the Wardlaw MS (p.290) in an account of an apparition of an 'army of marshalled horse and foot in Blarenicuilich'.

The OSA (Vol IV p.113) further tells us that there was once a 'chalybeate spring' at Achnagairn which was 'thought to be very salutary for complaints of the stomach'; it was 'once much frequented', according to the NSA (Vol. XIV 1845 p.459). This feature is listed as Shell Well on the OS 6-inch maps at NH555446; modern OS maps do not name it but give 'Spr(ing)' at NH558448.

### **Altourie** *Allt Uairidh*

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Easter Altourie NH 578 402

57°25.824'N 4°22.196'W

The twin settlements of Easter and Wester Altourie west of Blackfold (q.v.) gain their names from the burn to their immediate south, given on the OS maps as Allt Ourie. According to Hugh Barron (1961 p.7), the correct Gaelic is *Allt Uairidh*, which Professor Watson gave as 'the burn of screes or scaurs', such a landscape feature being plentiful in the stream's upper reaches. The pronunciation is confirmed by an audio recording of local informants (TD Tr.81413). Watson wrote that it was the only example, of which he was aware, of an *uairidh* toponym outside Sutherland, and that is probably a 'Pictish survival' (2002 p.65). However, Barron in a later paper gives the form *Allt Uaraidh* (2002 p.383). Near the source of *the burn* was the *Fuaran Dearg* 'red spring' NH568398 (marked on the OS 6-inch maps), named for its iron-stained water and famous for its medicinal properties. The Clachnacuddin Nonagenarian tells of how its water cured a 'dangerously violent case of dysentery' (Maclean 1886 p.107), and local informants said that, even in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the water was taken as a cure for anaemia (TD Tr.81413).

## Ardmachdonie

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NH 563 430  
57°27.300'N 4°23.781'W

Initially, the OS listed this farm name as Ardmachdunie (OS1/17/52/50), and this better represents the pronunciation which is 'ard mach DOON-ee' (Ronald Maclean pers. comm.) Bartholomew's Atlas of 1912 has Ardmachdanio. The first element is likely to be Gaelic *àird* 'height' or possibly the adjective *àrd* 'high'. However, the latter part of the name has proved impossible to decipher. E of Knockbain on the Aird.

## Aultfearn *Allt na Feàrna*

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Easter Aultfearn NH 559 404  
57°25.893'N 4°24.033'W

The old steadings of Easter and Wester Aultfearn are named for the burn that runs between them - *Allt na Feàrna* 'the burn of the alder'. This stream flows into the *Allt Mòr* (q.v.) at the point at which that watercourse's name changes to Moniack Burn.

## Balbeg *Am Baile Beag*

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NH 562 348  
57°22.928'N 4°23.460'W

*The small township.* Stands in direct comparison to the adjacent Balmore (q.v.). In Abriachan.



Balmore and Balbeg in Abriachan on the 1st edition 6-inch OS map. The names are comparative - *Baile Mòr* is 'big township', while *Baile Beag* is 'small township'. This type of binary comparison is common in the Gaelic landscape.

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## Balcarse *Baile a' Chars*

---

NH 566 457  
57°28.754'N 4°23.549'W

*Carse farm.* Carse is a Scots word meaning 'low-lying land, usually by the sea', and came into Gaelic as the loanword *cars*. The name fits the location of this farm, to the NE of Kirkhill (Simon Taylor 2019 p.224). For a note on the gender of the word, see **Carse, The**. An earlier form of the name is likely to have been *Taigh a' Chars* 'the house of the carse', as there is a Teacharse near Kingillie mentioned in the Wardlaw MS (p.235).

### **Balchranggan** *Baile a' Chragain*

---

NH 563 346  
57°22.756'N 4°23.468'W

*The farm or settlement of the small crag or rock.* Pron. 'bal CHRAG-un' in English but 'bal uh CHRAK-un' in Gaelic (TD Tr.81413). A township in Abriachan. There are four settlements in the Aird-Loch Ness area called Balchranggan, and at least three are *Baile a' Chragain* (see Barron 2002 p.405 and Robertson in King 2019 p.232). The more 'standard' form would be *Baile a' Chreagain*, but *cragan* seems to be the default form of *creagan* in the Inverness area, including Strathnairn.

### **Balliemore** *A' Bheallaidh Mhòr*

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NH 605 408  
57°26.217'N 4°19.753'W

The Gaelic form is from Barron (2002 p.385), a revision of an earlier paper in which he gave *Am Baile Mòr* (1961 p.9). It occurs as Beallymore in an 1829 rental entry. The meaning is not clear, although *bealaidh* is the Gaelic for broom (*Cytisus scoparius*). The OS Name Book (1876-8) tells us that, at that time, there were several thatched crofters' houses there (OS1/17/32/9). Above Dochnalurig.

### **Ballone** *Baile an Lòin*

---

NH 552 387  
57°24.950'N 4°24.697'W

*The farm of the wet meadow.* Three springs are shown nearby on the 1:25 000 OS map. NW of Ladycairn. See **Balloan**.

### **Balmore (Abriachan)** *Am Baile Mòr*

---

NH 564 352  
57°23.040'N 4°23.410'W

*The big township.* Stands in comparison to the adjacent Balbeg (q.v.). In Abriachan.

### **Balnagaig** *Baile na Gàig*

---

NH 635 428  
57°27.344'N 4°16.518'W

*The settlement of the cleft.* A thatched shepherd's dwelling house in the 1870s, but with as many as seven tenants in 1840. Named for a gap in the ridge behind the settlement which is 'striking when viewed from the road' (Barron 1961 p.10). Also Balnagaick on early OS maps. E of Dunain Hill. The hill to the immediate W of Balnagaig Farm is *An Torran Biorach* 'the sharp hillock'.

### **Balnagriasehin** *Baile nan Greusaichean*

---

NH 552 384  
57°24.785'N 4°24.734'W

*The settlement of the cobblers, shoemakers.* The Gaelic form of the name is clear from the name of the adjacent burn *Allt Baile nan Greusaichean* [*Allt Baile nan Griasaichean* OS] (q.v.) W of Ladycairn. Given as *Bail na griasaichean* by Robertson (King 2019 p.226). The pron. of the Gaelic form is 'bal-uh nun GREE-uss-ich-un'.

### **Benlie**

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NH 564 352  
57°22.609'N 4°23.539'W

Locally pronounced 'BEN-lee' or 'BYOWN-lee' (Heather Clyne pers. comm.), but traditionally 'BING-lee' in Gaelic (TD Tr.81413), the 'NG' probably representing a Gaelic double 'N'. Given as 'Beinilie [Inclosure]' in Seafield Estate papers of 1809 (Barron 1961 p.5), the settlement's name is likely to derive from *Beinnellidh*, found in the nearby *Cnoc Bheinnellidh* (q.v.). S of Abriachan.

### **Blackfold** *A' Bhuaille Dhubh*

---

NH 589 407

57°26.104'N 4°21.140'W

*The black (cattle)fold.* Given as *Buaile Dhubh* 'boo-uh-luh GHOO' by local Gaelic speaking informants in 1962 (TD Tr.81413), but the 'official' version (now on road signs) contains the article (AÀA). W of Dochgarroch.

### **Bogroy** *Am Bog Ruadh*

---

NH 567 449

57°28.312'N 4°23.419'W

*The red-brown bog.* Given as Bogroy in the Wardlaw MS. Robertson gives the Gaelic form *am Bog ruadh* (King 2019 p.226), which is also found in local Gaelic poetry (Barron 1966 p.23, 36). Local pronunciation of the Gaelic form is 'boke ROO-uh' (TD Tr.81413), while the anglicised form is 'bog ROY'. The name is preserved in the Bog Roy Inn (formerly Bogroy Inn and shown on the OS 6-inch map pub. 1876), which stands at the edge of the old bog, now drained, at the W end of the village of Inchmore (q.v.). The Inn was associated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with illicit whisky smuggling (Meldrum 1987 p.14).

### **Bona** *Am Bàn-àth*

---

Old Bona Ferry NH 603 376

57°24.446'N 4°19.642'W

*The fair ford.* Pron. 'BONE-ah' in English. This is an old ferry crossing at the extreme N end of Loch Ness (with a lighthouse on the W. side of the crossing, marking the entrance to Loch Dochfour on the Caledonian Canal). Numerous authorities tell us that there was a ford over white shingle on the river there, but that it ceased to exist when the river was deepened during the formation of the Caledonian Canal (e.g. Watson 2002 p.156). The earliest record is Baneth in 1233 (Fraser-

Mackintosh 1875 p.22), but 16<sup>th</sup> century forms such as Bannache and Bonnoch led to the suggestion that it meant 'white plain or field' i.e. *Ban Ach(adh)* [Barron 1961 p.1]. Other early forms are Bonnytht in 1583 and Bonah in 1675 (Barron 1961 p.1), and it appears on maps as Bonaness (Dorret 1750), and Bona Ferry (Arrowsmith 1807 and Thomson 1832). The Gaelic form in the modern era is confirmed by Robertson (King 2019 p.226), who says the pronunciation is 'Bàna' but that the article is used e.g. *aig a' Bhàna* 'at Bona'. Bona was on a droving route from the Aird for cattle which would be taken through Strathnairn and onto Strathdearn ([www.strathnairnheritage.org.uk](http://www.strathnairnheritage.org.uk)). Just S of the old ferry crossing at NH603374, the second edition 6-inch OS map gives *Slochd a' Mhadaidh* 'the gully of the fox or wolf'; this is given by Fraser-Tytler as *Slac-a-Mhadaich* which he translates as 'the Wolf Den'.



A 'wolf' place-name on Loch Ness-side? *Slochd a' Mhadaidh* near Bona. From the 2nd edition 6-inch OS map (pub. 1905).

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### **Brachla** *A' Bhraclaich*

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NH 561 329

57°21.828'N 4°23.626'W

The original settlement of Brachla was to the immediate S of where the Loch Ness Clansman Hotel sits, first appearing on the original OS 6-inch map. Iain Taylor (2011 p.32) equates it with Brackla (Nairn) and Brackloch (Sutherland), deriving it from *A' Bhraclaich* 'the badger's sett'. For Brackla (Nairn), Watson also gives *A' Bhraclaich* (Dwelly p.1008). In the case of Brachla (Loch Ness), local informants recorded in 1962 gave the Gaelic form as *Braclaich* ('BRACHK-lich' TD Tr.81413), although natives of Glenmoriston further south, recorded in 1963, called it Bracla (pron. 'BRACHK-la' TD Tr. 82770.3). However, the article does seem to have been present historically, as we have the recorded nickname of a famous smuggler from the area – *Ali Mòr na Braclaich* 'big Ali of Bracla' (Barron 2002 p. 382). If the name does refer to badgers, it is not entirely unique in the area; there is, for example, *Tòrr nam Broc* 'the knoll of the badgers', east of Battlefield near Dochfour (given by Barron 2002 p.385, although not on published maps). In Kilmallie, *Allt na Braclaich* is explained as the 'burn of the wild beast's den' (OS1/2/68/316), while the ruined settlement of Braclach near Loch Tulla NN338450 is just a few miles from *Tom nam Broc* NN392481. Brackla in Aberdeenshire NJ617225 is adjacent to Broclach Hill, and the two names appear to be connected (*broclach* 'badger's sett', being a variant of *braclach*).

However, there are similar toponyms which are based on the adjective *breac* 'dappled, speckled'. For example, Brecklach in W Ross is *A' Bhraclach* 'the dappled place' (Watson 1904 p.198), and Brecklach Hill in Galloway is *Breaclach* 'brindled, broken hill' (Maxwell 1930 p.47). There are sixteen townland names in Ulster and Connaught,

anglicised Bracklagh and Brackly, which are *Breaclaigh*, an oblique form of *Breaclach*, interpreted as 'speckled place', sometimes with a connotation of stoniness ([www.placenamesni.org](http://www.placenamesni.org)). Both pronunciations – 'BRACH-luh' and 'BRAK-luh' – are heard for the Loch Ness example in its anglicised form, with the latter achieving prominence, along with the spelling 'Brackla', in local tourism (Heather Clyne pers. comm.).

### **Bruichnain** *Bruach an Eidhinn*

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NH 631 456

57°28.805'N 4°17.049'W

*The bank of the ivy.* The pron. in English is 'brooch NANE' (Ronald Maclean pers. comm.), and the name also appears as Brochnain and Brouchnain. The settlement is on a N-facing slope to the S of the Beaully Firth, west of Clachnaharry. The interpretation is from both Macbain (1922 p.184) and Watson (2002 p.157). Robertson, on the other hand, gives *Bruch an fhàin* which probably stands for *Bruthach an Fhàin* 'the low [part of the] hillside' (King 2019 p.226), with the presumption that there is a comparative Bruthach na h-Àird (or similar) i.e. 'the high [part of the] hillside' nearby, perhaps above where Blackpark is today (cf. Forsinain and Forsinard in Sutherland). However, such a comparative toponym remains elusive.

### **Bunchrew** *Bun Chraobh*

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NH 619 456

57°28.789'N 4°18.281'W

This is a tricky name to interpret, although it appears to contain the Gaelic element *craobh* 'tree'. It is on maps as Binachrow (Blaeu 1654), Bonchrew (Roy 1747-52), Banchrew (Dorret 1750), Bunchroy (Thomson 1832) and Bunchrew (OS). If the first element represents Gaelic *bun* 'bottom part of, stream mouth', it might have stood for the mouth of the watercourse now



known as the Bunchrew Burn. If the name of the burn had been, say, *Allt Chraobh* ‘burn of trees’, we might expect *Bun Chraobh* (cf. *Bun an Lòin* in Morar, which is at the mouth of *Allt an Lòin*). Iain Taylor (2011 p.35) gives the Gaelic form *Bun Chraoibh* ‘the foot of the tree’ – which is close in ‘standard’ pronunciation to Bunchrive in the Wardlaw MS (e.g. p.3, 235). Robertson (King 2019 p.226) favoured *Bun Chrao(bh)*, with *craobh* in its modern genitive plural form i.e. ‘foot of (the) trees’, presumably referring to a settlement below a forested slope – which it appeared to be during the time of Roy (mid-18<sup>th</sup> century). This can be compared to Bunloit ‘foot of (the) slope’ on Loch Ness-side.

However, the earliest records give an initial ‘M’ rather than ‘B’ e.g. Moncref (1498) and Monchrowe (1542). This caused Watson (1926 p.241) to propose an eclipsis of the ‘b’, with (*i m*) *bun chraoibhe* representing ‘near (the) tree’ in old Gaelic. Simon Taylor (2019 p. 226), however, suggests that this might not be eclipsis, but an example of ‘generic element variation between *bun* and *mòine* “moss, peat bog”.’

Robertson’s placing of the terminal ‘bh’ within parentheses reflects the pronunciation. In Ross-shire Gaelic, *craobh* is commonly pronounced ‘*criù*’, similar to English ‘crew’, and it is possible that the dialectal form was similar along the southern shore of the Beaully Firth, giving us ‘boon CHREEOO’ [with ‘EE’ short and ‘OO’ long], although Gaelic speakers from the parish of Kiltarlity and Convinth, recorded in 1962 (TD Tr.81413), gave the pronunciation ‘boon CHROW’ [as English ‘NOW’]. However, as with Bunchrive (above), a Latinised form in a register of local events called *Scriptum Bunchriviae* (Wardlaw MS p.128) suggests an older pronunciation of the ‘v’ sound.

## Clunes *A’ Chluain*

Easter Clunes: NH 550 416  
57°26.588’N 4°25.133’W

*The meadow.* Recorded as Clunes East and West in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Wardlaw MS. The Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.225). The plural form of the anglicised name reflects the fact that there are Easter Clunes, Wester Clunes and South Clunes. Iain Taylor (2011 p.44) gives *Na Cluainean*, a plural Gaelic form, but this refers to the Clunes between Loch Arkaig and Loch Lochy. Simon Taylor (2019 p.157) raises the possibility that the attribution of the name to a Gaelic original of *cluain* ‘meadow’ might be a reanalysis of a toponym which originated as *claon* ‘brae, slope’, as all the Clunes are on a SE-facing slope, although in general usage, *claon* is more commonly found in adjectival form than as a noun. On old maps, there is another Clunes at NH552458.

## Cnoc nan Seangan

NH 627 455  
57°28.751’N 4°17.431’W

*The hill of the ants.* This name is recorded in the OS Name Book (OS1/17/52/40) as applying to a dwelling rather than a hill, although the adjacent stream is already in translated form as Anthill Burn. Cnoc nan Seangan Cottage is now simply Cnoc Cottage. Between Bunchrew and Bruichnain. See **Antfield**.



*Cnoc nan Seangan* between Bunchrew and Bruichnain, near the shoreline of the Beaully Firth.

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## Corryfoyness

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NH 551 331  
57°21.923'N 4°24.617'W

Pron. 'cor-ee FOY-nuss', this settlement name, above Brachla on Loch Ness-side, is an anglicised form of *Coire Foithaneas* to its west. The OS Name Book (OS1/17/32/67) characterises *foithaneas* as 'obscure' and does not attempt an interpretation. Recorded as Corrifoinnes in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Wardlaw MS, this location was a 'well-known grazing of the Abriachan people' (Barron 1961 p.3), and Heather Clyne terms it a 'well defined and very beautiful meadow' (pers. comm.), suggesting a possible origin in *fo-innis* 'little meadow'. An alternative would be *fo-an-eas* 'below the waterfall'. Neither of these explanations, however, sit comfortably with the early forms of the similar place-name Phoineas (near Kiltarlity) for which Simon Taylor suggests a possible meaning, from Old Gaelic, of 'place of shelter or thickets' (2019 p.208-11).

## Craggach

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NH 571 442  
57°27.956'N 4°22.958'W

Simon Taylor (2019 p.229-30) considers that the early forms Craggak (1568) and Craggag (1666) suggest an original Gaelic *Creagag* 'little crag or rock' rather than *Creagach* 'place of the crag'. The name occurs on modern OS maps as Easter Craggach, Mid Craggach, Wester Craggach and Craggach Wood (the last sometimes pluralised as Craggach Woods). S of Inchmore.

## Dallauruach

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NH 557 351  
57°23.007'N 4°24.080'W

This is the form of the name, for this tiny settlement in Abriachan, recommended by all three informants to the OS (OS/1/17/32/43), but local pronunciation is 'dal OO-uh-ruch' which would suggest that Dalluarach would be a more appropriate spelling. Local opinion is that the Gaelic original is *Dail Luarach*, a variant of *Dail Luachrach* 'field abounding in rushes' (Heather Clyne pers. comm.), and this interpretation is supported by an article by 'Sean Gallda' (a nom de plume) in the Northern Chronicle in 1908, in which the anglicised form is indeed given as Dalluarach. The double 'l', however, suggests that the first element might be the old Pictish *dol* 'meadow, dale, valley' (see Watson 1926 p. 414).

## Dalreoch *An Dail Riabhach*

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NH 630 416  
57°26.631'N 4°17.074'W

*The brindled field.* Another name for Lower Dunain, still on OS maps as such. The name (sometimes as Dalrioch) originally referred to a tiny settlement adjacent to Milton of Dunain, next to the Caledonian Canal. In a number of dialects, the 'bh' in *riabhach* was (and is) not pronounced.

## Dochfour *Doch a' Phùir*

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Dochfour House NH 604 391  
57°25.289'N 4°19.508'W

*Davoch of pasture.* The Gaelic form (pron. 'doch uh FOOR' with a long 'OO') follows Watson (1926 p.235) and the pronunciation given by Gaelic speaking natives of Glenmoriston in 1963 (TD Tr. 82770.3). Pont shows the name as Dochafour on his map of the Great Glen (ca. 1583-1614), but it appears as Davochfure in 1677 (Fraser-

Mackintosh 1875 p.145). The davoch was a Pictish land measure, based on productivity, and has been described as an area that four ploughs could till in a year (Fenton 1991 p.33). It survived in Gaelic as *dabhach*, but the internal 'bh' (sounded 'v') was lost locally in speech, and by 1509, we see the form *Dawchfoure* in the Register of the Great Seal of Scotland. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has become 'DOCH' in speech. Robertson gives *Doch phùr* (King 2019 p.226) as the Gaelic form, and Dieckhoff (1932 p.182) gives *Dobhach a Phur*, with the first element pronounced 'DOCH'. A similar evolution famously took place with the village of Avoch on the Black Isle, now pronounced 'OCH' in English. Dochfour is pronounced 'doch FOOR' in English.

Macbain (1922 p.263) was of the opinion that the name is entirely Pictish, with the second element being *pùr*, as in Welsh *pawr* 'pasture'. In contrast, the second element in both Dochgarroch (q.v.) and Dochnalurig (q.v.) is Gaelic.

### Dochgarroch *Doch Garrach*

Dochgarroch Lock NH 618 404  
57°25.987'N 4°18.120'W

*Davoch of rough land.* For davoch, see **Dochfour**. The Gaelic form (pron. 'doch GAR-uch') is from Charles Robertson (King 2019 p.226), the pronunciation recorded by researcher Francis Diack (AÀA), and an audio recording of Gaelic speaking informants in 1962 (TD Tr.81413). The interpretation is that given by Macbain (1922 p.174) and Watson (2002 p.226); this is shared by Iain Taylor who, however, gives a slight variant of the Gaelic form – *Dabhach Gairbheach* (2011 p.57). However, Barron (1961 p.8) gives *An Dabhach Carrach*, with a similar meaning (rough, uneven or stony ground), and claims that the 'c' sound was formerly heard, even in the anglicised form of the

name. This is supported by the form found in the Register of the Great Seal of Scotland in 1509 – *Dawchcarreache* – and much later by Dieckhoff (1932 p.182) who gave the Gaelic form as *Dobhach Carrach* (pron. 'doch KAR-uch'), and also by Gaelic speaking natives of Glenmoriston, recorded in 1963, who gave 'doch KAR-uch' (TD Tr. 82770.3). Other old records include *Davochgarioch* in 1677 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.145) and *Doch Gerach* in 1769 (Barron 1961 p.8). Situated between Dunain and Dochfour, Dochgarroch is traditionally associated with a northern branch of the Clan Maclean, known locally as *Clann Theàrlaich*.



Three *dabhach* names at the northern end of Loch Ness, as shown in Blaeu's Atlas of Scotland (1654), demonstrating that the internal 'bh' was no longer being pronounced. *Daach na lurg* is modern Dochnalurig, but *Daach-Charn* (Dabhach Chàrn) and *Daach na Crag* (Dabhach na Creige) are obsolete, the latter being an old name for Lochend.

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### Dochnalurig *Doch na Luirg*

NH 610 403  
57°25.924'N 4°19.015'W

*The davoch of the shank.* For davoch, see **Dochfour**. *Lurg* (or *Lurgann*) is a shank, but can refer in the landscape to a long, thin ridge (Watson 2002 p.159). This name is given as Dochnalurg on earlier OS maps, but Dochnalurig is closer to the Gaelic pronunciation ('doch nuh

LOOR-ik'). Given as Dawchlurgyn in 1509 on the Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, and as Davochnalurgin in 1677 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.145), it appears as *Daach na lurg* on Blaeu's map (1654) and is part of a cluster of 'davoch' names near Dochgarroch (q.v.). Between Dochnalurig and Lochend, old maps show another 'davoch' – Dochcairn – which appears to be *Dabhach Chàrn* 'davoch of cairns' (Daichcarne, Register of the Great Seal 1509 and Daach Charn, Blaeu 1654). Two further davoch names are recorded for what is now Lochend (q.v.).

Charles Fraser-Mackintosh, MP and champion of Gaelic, was born at Dochnalurig in 1828; he was the son of Alexander Fraser, *An t-Iasgair Bàn* 'the fair-haired fisherman' who wrote *The Natural History of the Salmon* [pub. 1833] (Barron 1961 p.8-9).

### Druim

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NH 553 355  
57°23.236'N 4°24.559'W

*Ridge.* The name does not appear on older maps. In Abriachan.

### Drumchardine *Druim a' Chàrdnaidh*

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NH 567 447  
57°28.216'N 4°23.488'W

*The ridge of the woodland or enclosure.* Sometimes given as Drumchardnie in anglicised form. AAA prefer *Druim a' Chàrdnaidh*, similar to Robertson's *Druim a chàrdanaidh* [King 2019 p.226], although other authorities suggest *Druim a' Chàrdain*. *Carden* was for long recognised as a Pictish element meaning 'wood, thicket', with a modern Welsh equivalent *cardden* 'thicket'. However, *cardden* also means 'fort' in a Welsh context, and reanalysis of the word in Scotland, where it was adopted into Gaelic as a loanword,

has suggested that it might stand for 'fort' or 'enclosure' here also. Older forms include Drumhardne (1552) and Drumcardnye (1568) [Taylor, S. 2019 p.235]. S of Inchmore.

### Drumreach *An Druim Riabhach*

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NH 562 443  
57°27.986'N 4°23.976'W

*The brindled ridge.* The Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.226). Roy (1747-52) gives Drumrioch. S of Inchmore.

### Dunaincroy *Dùnan Cruaidh*

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NH 640 419  
57°26.847'N 4°16.002'W

The Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.226), who does not suggest a connection with nearby **Dunain**, on which estate it stood, a case supported by 'Sean Gallda', a correspondent to the Northern Chronicle in 1908, who gave *Dunain Cruaidh* for Dunaincroy, but *Dùn Aighean* 'hill of hinds or heifers' for Dunain. Early forms are Dunnayncroy (Register of the Great Seal of Scotland 1509) and Dunenchroy (Pont ca. 1583-1614). Barron (1961 p.11) tells us that Dunaincroy [which gave its name to a steading] is 'the flat ground lying to the west of the canal and [which] was well known in the past as the place where horse racing was held.' This helps to substantiate the view that 'croy' here derives from the Gaelic *cruaidh* 'hard' (as it does with the village of Croy), ground of this nature being suitable for a racecourse. Racecourse Wood is adjacent to Dunaincroy at NH638417. Mackenzie (1884 p.16) translates Dunaincroy as 'hard (bottomed) hill'. A 'William Mor Duneancroy', i.e. Big William of Dunaincroy, appears in the records in 1576 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.129).

Another possibility is that *croy* has its origin in Scots, being a salmon weir on a river. Dunaincroy is close to the bank of the Ness which boasted many croys or cruives along the length of the public fishings. However, the word ‘cruive’ seems to have had more local currency than ‘croy’, and there is no record of such a structure at this location.

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### Englishton *Gallabhail*

NH 610 453  
57°28.622'N 4°19.165'W

*The settlement of the English or Inglis (Older Scots) speakers.* Old forms of the name of this small group of houses SW of Bunchrew include Ingilstoune, Inglistoun and Englishtoun (see Taylor S. 2019 p.237). The Gaelic name comes from Barron (1967 p.62), who says that it also applies to the burial ground at Kirkton (q.v.). It represents an unusual word order – one would expect *Baile nan Gall*. As Barron suggests, there seems to be some confusion between Kirkton and Englishton, and Gaelic speaking informants recorded in 1962 said that the Gaelic for Englishton (pron. ‘Ingilston’) was *Baile na h-Eaglais* ‘bal nuh HAKE-lish’ (TD Tr.81413). Meldrum (1987 p.14) claimed that the name originated with a 12<sup>th</sup> century knight of English origin who built a fortress on *Tom a’ Chaisteil* (see **Kirkton**).

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### Faschapple *Fas a’ Chapaille*

Easter Faschapple NH 562 416  
57°26.548'N 4°23.788'W

*The stance of the horse.* The Gaelic pron. is ‘fass uh CHAP-il’ with pre-aspirated ‘p’. The original Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.225) and confirmed by local informants in 1962 (TD Tr.81413). Watson (1926 p. 498) describes *fas* as a ‘stance, a nice level spot such as a drover would choose as a night’s quarters for his charge’. Faschapple, between Moniack Burn and *Màm a’*

*Chatha*, is close to *Slochd an Dròbh* (q.v.) and on a route used by drovers and other travellers which linked The Aird with Bona (q.v.). It is also on the fringe of the Caiplich (q.v.) which is likewise named for horses.

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### Fingask *Fionn Ghasg*

Mains of Fingask NH 553 459  
57°28.815'N 4°24.796'W

*Fair spur of land.* Pron. ‘fin GASK’ in English. Simon Taylor, who discusses this name in some detail (2019 p.240), is of the opinion that the piece of land called *Fionn Ghasg* was the eastern spur of the hill later called Kirkhill. 13<sup>th</sup> century forms include Fingasc and Fyngasc (Taylor S. p.240), but the pronunciation appears to have changed in Gaelic, as it was given in the Wardlaw MS as Fingasck, Finasck, Finask and Finisk, and as Finesk on maps by Arrowsmith (1807) and Thomson (1832). Macbain (1922 p. 271) wrote that the Gaelic (presumably reanalysed by Gaelic speakers) ‘is now *Fionn-uisg*’. Local Gaelic speaking informants recorded in 1962 gave the pronunciation ‘FYOON-ishk’ (TD Tr.81413). Gask literally ‘tail’ (Gaelic *gasg*) is a relatively common element in place-names in central and eastern Scotland. See **Gask**.

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### Groam *A’ Ghròm*

NH 560 463  
57°29.011'N 4°24.183'W

*The bog.* Watson (1926 p.379-80) discusses Groam, Groan and Gorn names in Scotland in some detail, and Simon Taylor (2019 p.90) examines another Groam S of Beaully at NH512439. The origin is a Pictish element *gronn* ‘marsh, bog’ which was adopted into Gaelic as a loanword. Thus, this place-name might be Gaelic or Pictish. The Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.225); local informants in 1962 gave the pron. ‘GRÒM’.

### **Holme** *An Talm*

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NH 576 446  
57°28.156'N 4°22.157'W

*The haugh, low land near water.* This is a Scots name. The Gaelic form, supplied by Robertson (King 2019 p.233) and confirmed by Barron (1967 p.61), demonstrates how the Gaels would insert an initial 't' into words starting with 'h', the latter being an unnatural occurrence in Gaelic. See **Haugh, The**. Although the current farm of Holme is slightly distant from water, the land of Holme at one time stretched to the coast and east to the Inchberry Burn (q.v.) [Taylor S. 2019 p.242-3]. See **Holm**.

### **Inchberry** *Innis a' Bhàiridh*

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NH 588 455  
57°28.697'N 4°21.328'W

*The meadow of the shinty.* Old records include Inchbary (1496) and Inchvarie (1672), the latter reflecting more closely the modern Gaelic pronunciation 'insh-uh VAAR-ee' (TD Tr.81413). For a discussion of this name, see Taylor S. (2019 p.243). Inchberry Burn, which enters the sea at Lentrán Point (NH584460), is only known as such in its lower reaches; above that it is *Allt na Ceàrdaich* 'the burn of the smiddy'. This in turn gives its name to the settlement of Altnacardich at NH585432. Inchberry Hill is at NH597446. A Captain Fraser of Inchberry was one of the first to fall in the Battle of Culloden, having had a presentiment of his death (Maclean, J. 1886 p.16).

### **Inchmore** *An Innis Mhòr*

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NH 570 450  
57°28.371'N 4°23.178'W

*The large meadow.* The Gaelic is here inferred but fits the anglicisation and topography. Between Kirkhill and Lentrán.

### **Killianan** *Cill Fhionain*

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NH 571 348  
57°22.890'N 4°22.713'W

*St Finan's church.* Pron. 'kil EE-un-un'. The Gaelic form is from Barron (2002 p.382) and Macbain (1922 p.178). Recorded as Cillinan in the Wardlaw MS (p.60), this settlement is adjacent to the old burial ground of Killianan (NH571346) on the shore of Loch Ness at Abriachan, at which 'there can be no doubt that formerly a church existed' (Canmore/site/12619). There is a local tradition of the site being connected to St Adamnan, the famous biographer of St Columba (Heather Clyne pers. comm.), and this is supported by William Mackay (1914 p.335). However, Adamnan's name is generally pronounced *Eònan* 'EH-Ö-nun' in Scotland, and in Kintyre *Cill Eònain* 'Adamnan's church' has produced the anglicised form Killeonan (NR690183). Nevertheless, the saint's name does appear in the form Eunan 'EE-un-un' in *Tom Eunan* 'Adamnan's Knoll', the site of the Insh Church in Badenoch (Macbain 1922 p.161), although Watson gives *Tom Eódhain* as the correct form of this toponym (1926 p.271).

Macbain connects Killianan (Abriachan), not to Adamnan, but to the 7<sup>th</sup> century St Finan (*Naomh Fionan*), sometimes written Finnan, who is commemorated in two other places called *Cill Fhionain* – one anglicised Kilfinnan near the head of Loch Lochy (NN277957) and the other anglicised Kilfinan in S Argyll (NR935788). There is also *Eilean Fhianain* NM752682, on which are the ruins of St Finan's Chapel, in Loch Shiel (Barron 1961 p.1). Within the area covered by this publication, Finan is also connected by tradition to the religious settlement at Dunlichity (q.v.) in Strathnairn.



Killianan as shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch OS map (pub. 1875), with Loch Ness at right. By this stage, Abriachan has lost its original meaning of 'stream mouth' and has become the collective name for settlements to the W of Killianan.

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### Kingillie *Cinn a' Ghaoilidh*

NH 559 452

57°28.470'N 4°24.239'W

Pron. 'kin GILL-ee' in English (Ronald Maclean pers. comm.). The Gaelic name comes from Barron (1967 p.60), who explained it as 'the head of the bay'; it was confirmed by local Gaelic speakers in 1962 who pronounced it 'king uh GHØ-lee' with slender 'l' (TD Tr.81413). The noun *gaoileadh*, however, is not in the dictionaries. Robertson gave *Cinn ghilidh* (King 2019 p.225). Older anglicised forms include Cingily, Kyngeil, Kingily and Kingile (Taylor S. 2019 p.244), and Thomson's 1832 map shows Kingelly. Barron tells us that this part of Kirkhill was formerly under the sea. There is a possibility that *gaoileadh* is a dialectal form of *goileadh* 'boiling' which was used of unheated but turbulent water (see **Tobar na Goil**), and that it referred to the waters at the headland where the River Beauly meets the Beauly Firth. This would be consistent with the early recorded forms.

### Kinlea (Wood)

NH 615 450

57°28.497'N 4°18.611'W

The first element is Gaelic *ceann* 'head, end', while the second element, because of the monosyllabic pronunciation, is unclear but unlikely to be *liath* 'grey' (Taylor S. 2019 p.244). Pron. 'kin LEE' (Ronald Maclean pers. comm.). Given as Canley in 1758, and as Keanlay on Brown's estate map of 1798-1800. Being surrounded on three sides by water (the Beauly Firth and the Bunchrew and Kinlea Burns), there is the possibility that the second element is *lighe* (pronounced 'lee' in Ross-shire Gaelic) - a flooded area where the water is still or stagnant.

### Kirkhill *Cnoc Mhoire*

NH 553 454

57°28.569'N 4°24.798'W

The Gaelic form means (*St*) *Mary's hill*, the name coming from the old church at NH549457, which was dedicated to the Virgin Mary. According to the Wardlaw MS, the monks in the priory at Beauly called it *Mons Mariae*, a Latinised form of *Cnoc Mhoire*. It belonged to the medieval parish of Wardlaw, whose name means 'watch-hill' in Scots, and which is recorded from as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Kirkhill is also Scots). In 1618, it became the parish kirk of the parish of Kirkhill, created from the medieval parishes of Wardlaw and Fernua or Farnway, the latter name being derived from the Gaelic for 'alder plain' (Taylor S. 2019 p.238). The Gaelic name for Kirkhill is confirmed in the Wardlaw MS (p.xv) and by Robertson (King 2019 p.225), and is still in use, unlike a local Gaelic oath *Air Moire sa Chnoc* 'by Mary in the hill' (Wardlaw MS p.xvi).

### **Kirkton** *Baile na h-Eaglaise*

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NH 604 452  
57°28.573'N 4°19.767'W

This settlement south of Phopachy (q.v.) has equivalent names in two languages – Scots and Gaelic, both meaning ‘settlement of the church’ (see Taylor, S. 2019 p.246 and Robertson in King 2019 p.226). The old church of Fernua, a parish that was combined with Kirkhill in 1618, was sited at Kirkton (Mackay 1905 p.xvi), or Kirktown of Farnuay (Kirkton in Farnway) as it was called in the Wardlaw MS. Kirkton Burn was once called Ault in Dour (*Allt an Dobhair*), a tautological name meaning ‘water burn’ (Lovat Estate maps, 1798-1800). The church was dedicated to St Curadan, an early Celtic saint also well remembered on Loch Ness-side (see **Ruigh Uradain**). There is another Kirkton on the shore of Loch Dochfour at NH601385, adjacent to *Cladh Uradain* (q.v.).

### **Knockbain** *An Cnoc Bàn*

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Knockbain Farm NH 553 432  
57°27.359'N 4°24.775'W

*The fair hill.* The Gaelic name is from Robertson (King 2019 p.225). However, it is not clear if the article was always employed, as Barron (1967 p.73) quotes *piatan Cnoc Bhàin* ‘magpies of Knockbain’ from local poetry – rather than *piatan a’ Chnuic Bhàin*. S of Moniack Castle.

### **Ladycairn** *Càrn na Baintighearna*

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NH 557 385  
57°24.819'N 4°24.210'W

The Gaelic form is pronounced locally ‘karn nuh BINE-tchee-urn’ (TD Tr.81413). This name is discussed in some detail by Simon Taylor (2019 p.227-8). The earliest forms clearly show that Ladycairn is a translation from the Gaelic *Càrn na*

*Baintighearna* ‘the cairn of the lady’ (*baintighearna* usually means the wife of the landlord or clan chief). The early 6-inch OS maps show two adjacent steadings, one called Ladyscairn, the other Cairnabaintearn (1875) or Cairnabaintearn (1905). Close to the latter is a cairn of stones marked as Lady’s Cairn NH557384, which is connected through oral tradition (recorded in the Wardlaw MS p.110) to Margaret, wife of the Lord Lovat who lived in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. She was a famous hunter who drove wolves out of the Caiplich (q.v.), and the Wardlaw MS records a ‘seat there called Ellig ni Baintearn’ (*Eileag na Baintighearna* ‘the lady’s hunting enclosure’, referring to a structure, sometimes called an *eilrig*, which was commonly used in the Highlands for confining and killing deer in large numbers).

However, the OS Name Book (OS1/17/32/11) says the cairn was raised to a Lady Grant (Margaret was a Fraser) who died in Glenurquhart, and whose body was conveyed this way en route to burial in Inverness. There was a tradition that whenever a coffin was put down to change the carriers or allow them refreshments, a rough cairn would be built, with all the carriers contributing a stone. Sometimes the same spot would be used many times, if it were on a regular ‘coffin road’, and the cairn would become significant in size. This practice is the origin of the Gaelic expression of solemn respect to the memory of a dead person – ‘*clach air a c(h)àrn*’ – a stone on his/her cairn. Ladycairn is on the road from Blackfold to Abriachan.



## Ladystone

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NH 619 438  
57°27.819'N 4°18.173'W

This name most likely originated in Scots as Lady's Toun 'Lady's farm', although it is possible that it is named for a stone that has not survived (Taylor S. 2019 p.246-7), in which case the original Gaelic would likely be *Clach na Baintighearna*. The lady in question remains elusive – it is not likely to be Margaret of Ladycairn (q.v.), as the Wardlaw MS tells us she lived in Phopachy, near the sea. Ladystone is S of Bunchrew, and well inland.

## Lagnalean *Lag an Lìn*

---

NH 621 413  
57°26.489'N 4°17.867'W

*The hollow of the flax.* Recorded as Lagnalien by Pont (ca. 1583-1614). The Gaelic form and meaning are from Barron (1961 p.11) who says it is a 'reminder of how general that crop was in the Highlands up to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.' The name was recorded as early as 1571. The 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch OS map shows a pool opposite the farm of Lagnalien which might have been a retting pond; by the time of the second edition map (pub. 1905), the pool has become a marshy area, and the farm's name has adopted the modern spelling. Between Dochgarroch and Dunain.

## Leault *An Leth-allt*

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NH 556 353  
57°23.111'N 4°24.196'W

A settlement at the W end of Abriachan. The name (pron. 'LEH-alt') means a stream with one high bank and comes from the name of the adjacent watercourse (see **Allt Raon Leth-allt**) which is higher on its E bank. *Allt* is the default word in Gaelic Scotland for a burn or stream, but it originally meant 'height, rock, cliff' (c.f. Latin *altus* 'high' whence English 'altitude'). Cognate forms in Irish and Welsh retain the old meaning which is also seen in some Scottish place-names e.g. *An t-Allt Mòr* at Inverfarigaig which Watson says refers to the great precipice by which the burn flows (1926 p.243). Thus *Leth-allt* originally described a pair of stream banks in which only one was high (and invariably rocky); in the same way, *leth-shùil* means 'one eye' and *leth-chas* means 'one leg'. There are many examples of *Leth-allt* place-names across the Highlands. Where they have become settlement names, they are generally anglicised as Leault or Lealt.



### **Lentran** *Leantran*

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Lentran House NH 577 451  
57°22.435'N 4°22.461'W

The name is pronounced the same in both languages i.e. 'LEN-trun' (TD Tr.81413), and does not appear to have a Gaelic origin. The written Gaelic form comes from Robertson (King 2019 p.226), although he had a question mark next to the entry. Given as Lentron on William Mackenzie's 1789 plan of the Estate of Reelick and the Lands of Knockbain. Barron (1967 p.59) suggests that the name was transferred from a property near Arcan in Easter Ross at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century; it originated in a family name Lentron into which a Mackenzie of the Arcan family married. However, there is a record in the Burgh Court Books in 1573 of Lentryne, where 'Saint Boniface day' i.e. St Curadan's feast-day was commemorated on 16 March (Mackay 1911 p.229), although it is not certain where this was. See also Taylor S. 2019 p.247-8. Lentran Point is on the shore of the Beaully Firth at NH584459.

### **Letter** *An Leitir*

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NH 560 407  
57°26.054'N 4°23.965'W

*The slope.* *Leitir* represents a broad slope, often above a loch or other watercourse. Robertson (King 2019 p.226) gives the Gaelic form as *an Litir*, which presumably reflects local pronunciation. This old steading lies above the Moniack Burn (known as the *Allt Mòr* in its higher reaches).

### **Lovat** *Lobhat, A' Mhormhaich*

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Easter Lovat Cottages are just within the area covered by this book at NH 551 464 / 57°29.078'N 4°25.112'W. The pron. in English is 'LUV-at' but in Gaelic 'LOVE-at' (as English 'COVE'). The name Lovat occurs in several locations nearby i.e. Easter Lovat, Wester Lovat and Lovat Bridge; there was a castle near Wester Lovat in medieval times, and the Frasers of Lovat were for long the dominant local clan. The name is also perpetuated in the Lovat Shinty Club, based in Kiltarlity. The shinty team is referred to as *Lobhat* in Gaelic, but the Lovat Frasers are *Clann 'ic Shimidh* and do not carry the Lobhat moniker in Gaelic. The place-name *A' Mhormhaich* (*A' Mhor'oich* according to Macbain, and *A' Mhorfhach* according to Dieckhoff) means 'the sea plain liable to flooding' and refers to the flat land adjacent to the extensive mudflats near the mouth of the Beaully River. The Fraser clan chief is referred to in poetry as *MacShimidh Mòr na Mormhaiche* (Barron 1966 p.44). Robertson gives *Droch'd na' manach* 'the bridge of the monks' for Lovat Bridge and *a' Mhorfhaich* for Wester Lovat (King 2019 p.225).

Macbain (1922 p.185) considered *Lobhat* to be Pictish, meaning 'mud', while Taylor (S. 2019 p.249) gives 'place of mud' based on the Gaelic *lobh*; however, *lobh* usually refers to rotting or putrefaction, so 'stinky, rotten place' (on the muddy seashore) might be a suitable interpretation. The earliest recorded form is Loveth in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century (Wardlaw MS).



Lochend, Loch Ness *Ceann Loch, Loch Nis*

### Lairgmore

NH 592 376  
57°24.452'N 4°20.636'W

While the anglicised element Lairg elsewhere in this book might stand for *làirig* 'pass' (see **Lairgs**), this is unlikely here, as the name was listed as Lurgmore by the OS until recently. The original Gaelic appears to be *An Lu(i)rg Mhòr* 'the big shank', referring to a ridge of land coming from the country above. This is the same meaning as in the village of Lairg *An Luirg* 'the shank' in Sutherland. SW of Lochend.

### Lochend *Ceann Loch*

NH 596 379  
57°24.584'N 4°20.235'W

The modern Gaelic is a translation of the English and was confirmed (as *An Ceann Loch*) to AAA by informant HB. A Gaelic speaking native of Glenmoriston, recorded in 1963, gave it as *Ceann an Loch* (TD Tr. 82770.3). One of the old Gaelic names for this settlement at the N end of Loch Ness, *Dabhach na Creige* 'the davoch of the rock', is shown on Blaeu's map of 1654 (as *Daach na craig*) and on Moll's map of 1732 (as *Daach na Crag*); it is recorded in the Moray Synod Records in 1671 as Davach-in-Craig (Mackay p.355).

Another old name, *An Dabhach Dearg* ‘the red davoch’, is also recorded (Taylor I. 2011 p. 111). Barron gives the anglicised forms as Dochnacraig and Dochdearg (1961 p.6); however, both names are now obsolete. Lochend first appears on maps in its current English form by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century e.g. Arrowsmith (1807).

### Lyne *An Loinn*

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NH 553 425  
57°27.030'N 4°24.709'W

*The enclosed field.* This is the usual translation of *loinn*, although Macbain (1922 p.319) gives ‘a land, a glade’. Pron. ‘LINE’ in English (Ronald Maclean pers. comm.). The Gaelic form (pron. ‘un LUH-eenn’) is from Robertson (King 2019 p.225). *Loinn* is the locative (dative) form of the feminine noun *lann*, which is cognate with Welsh *llan*. S of Moniack Castle.

### Moniack *Mon Iothaig*

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Moniack Castle NH 551 436  
57°27.577'N 4°24.940'W

Properly, the anglicised form of the name, as with the Gaelic, has the second syllable emphasised i.e. ‘mon-EE-uk’. The Gaelic form is from AÀA who follow Robertson (King 2019 p.225), although Iain Taylor (2011 p119) prefers *Mon Itheig*. The first element was for long considered to be *mon*, a reduced form of *monadh* ‘upland’, the shortening of the word being a feature of dialects in the Central and Eastern Highlands. However, Simon Taylor, who has traced the earliest forms as Monychet and Munythoc (1220), suggests that the first element is probably Gaelic *mòine* ‘peat-bog, moss’, with the second being Gaelic *ioth* ‘corn’ plus a diminutive suffix meaning ‘burn’ or ‘place of’. So Moniack could mean ‘burn of the corn(land) moss’ (referring to Moniack Burn) or ‘place of the cornland moss’. See Taylor S. 2019 p. 251.

Easter Moniack NH557438 is *Mon Iothaig Shios* (with Wester Moniack NH551438 presumably being *Mon Iothaig Shuas*), and Moniack Burn is *Allt Mhon Iothaig* (Robertson in King 2019 p.226). The Moniack Mhor Creative Writing Centre (*Mon Iothaig Mòr*) is some distance away at Teavarran, *Taigh a' Bharain* ‘the baron’s house’ at NH527378, and outside the scope of this book.

### Newton

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Newton House NH 561 456  
57°28.662'N 4°23.996'W

The earliest record of this ‘new farm’ E of Kirkhill is (as Newtown) on Roy’s military map (1747-52). The name originates in Scots. Newtonhill at NH577435 would originally have been the hill-ground for grazing the beasts of Newton House (Taylor, S. 2019 p.252 & 255). No Gaelic form has been ascertained for either toponym.

### Phopachy *Fopachdainn*

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NH 604 461  
57°29.018'N 4°19.760'W

Appears on maps as Foppachy (Blaeu, 1654), Fapachie (Dorret, 1750) and Fopachy (Thomson, 1832), and early forms include Fopoquhy and Fapochy (Taylor S. 2019 p.255). The initial ‘Ph’ appears in the Wardlaw MS, where the name is given as Phoppachy; however, the NSA (1845 p.461) prefers Fopachy. The OS elected to write it Phopachy but gave alternative spellings of Phobachy and Phobachie (Name Book OS1/17/52/38). Gaelic forms of *Fopachdainn* and *Fopachdidh* are supplied by Barron (1967 p.62), and Robertson gives *Fopachdainn* (King 2019 p.226). The name of this settlement on the shore of the Beaully Firth has so far resisted interpretation, although Taylor suggests that the first element may be the Gaelic *fo* ‘under, sub-’.

### Rebeg *An Ruigh Beag*

---

Rebeg Farm NH 562 422  
57°26.863'N 4°23.796'W

*The small slope or shieling.* This is named in comparison to Remore (q.v.) just above it. This contrast of adjacent toponyms with the descriptors *mòr* 'large' and *beag* 'small' is common in the Gaelic landscape. *Ruigh* often stands for an old shieling site in the central parts of the Highlands, although at certain historical stages, the pressure on land was such that they became permanently settled. Given as Ribbeg on Roy's military map (1747-52). On the Aird S of Reelig.

### Reelig *Rùilig*

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Reelig House NH 558 436  
57°27.558'N 4°24.260'W

Pron. 'REE-lig' in English. The Gaelic form is from AÀA, after Robertson, who gives *an Rùilig* for Reelickwood (King 2019 p.226), although Barron (1967 p.63) says that (latterly) 'the Reelig glen did not have any Gaelic name'. It appears as *Ruilig*, however, in the love song *Òran Nighean Fhir na Ruilig*, which was reputedly composed by a jilted daughter of the laird of Reelig (MacDonald 1914 p.267). *Rùilig* may be a dialectal form of *rèilig* 'graveyard, remains' (a word of Latin origin, from which English 'relic' also derives), but there is no record of a churchyard or graveyard at this location. There is the possibility that the word was applied colloquially to the ancient chambered cairn known as 'Giant's Grave' at NH559437. We can benefit from an analysis of the nearby place-name Ruilick, immediately west of Beauly at NH511468. Simon Taylor interprets this as being either *Rèilig* (although there is no tradition of a graveyard there) or *Ruigh Lice* which might mean 'flagstone slope or shieling' or simply 'place of the slope or shieling'. For a discussion of Reelig and Ruilick, see Taylor (S. 2019 p109-110 and 256).

### Reindoul

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NH 562 352  
57°23.096'N 4°23.563'W

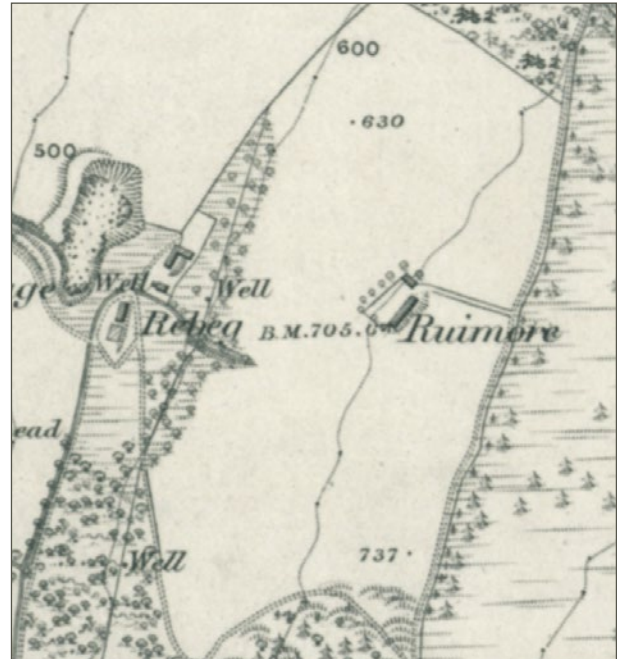
This appears to be *Ruigh an Duil* 'the slope or shieling of the meadow' (see Watson 1926 p.414). Given as Runan Doull in an 1808 estate map. In Abriachan.

### Remore *An Ruigh Mòr*

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NH 564 422  
57°26.844'N 4°23.615'W

*The large slope or shieling.* See Rebeg (q.v.). That this is originally a *ruigh* name is supported by the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch OS map which gives Ruimore (although Rebeg is in its current form).



Detail from the 1st edition 6-inch OS map.

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## Rhinduie

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NH 584 456  
57°28.788'N 4°21.689'W

The earliest records are Rhindowie (1616) and Rindowy (1666), and Taylor (S. 2019 p.256) proposes that the name is based on Gaelic *rinn* 'point, promontory' (referring to nearby Lentrán Point) and *dubh* 'dark, black', with a local suffix or extension. The Gaelic would therefore be *Rinn Dubhaidh* or something similar. An alternative is *Rinn Duibh*, based on the dative/locative inflection; a similar example is Culduie in Applecross which is *Cùil Duibh* 'black nook' (both *rinn* and *cùil* are feminine nouns and traditionally incur adjectival slenderisation in the dative singular). For information on Culduie see [www.applecrossplacenames.org.uk](http://www.applecrossplacenames.org.uk). There is yet another alternative for Rhinduíe - *Ruigh 'n duthaigh* - proposed by Robertson (King 2019 p.226), and based on *ruigh* 'slope', but the flat coastal topography casts doubt on this.

## Rinuden *Ruigh an Aodainn*

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NH 552 371  
57°24.104'N 4°24.616'W

*The slope or shieling of the face.* The Gaelic form for this settlement name (pron. 'roo-ee un ØT-in') is confirmed by Robertson (King 2019 p.226). Note also the name of the adjacent hill, *Meall Ruigh Aodainn* (q.v.). N of Abriachan.

## Tealaggan *Taigh an Lagain*

---

NH 567 446  
57°28.139'N 4°23.339'W

*The house of the small hollow.* Pron. 'tuh LAG-un' in English (Ronald Maclean pers. comm.). The Gaelic is here inferred, but there are several examples of place-names in neighbouring Kilmorack Parish where the Gaelic element *taigh* is anglicised 'tea' (Taylor S. 2019 p.119-122). The burn at Tealaggan is *Allt na Criche* 'the boundary burn'. S of Inchmore.



Tealaggan and surrounding settlements. Detail from 1<sup>st</sup> 6-inch OS map (pub. 1876).

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## Tomachoin *Tom a' Choin*

---

Tomachoin East NH 550 376  
57°24.328'N 4°24.892'W

*The hillock of the dog.* The Gaelic form is confirmed by Robertson (King 2019 p.226). N of Abriachan.

## Tyeantore

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NH 561 345  
57°22.700'N 4°23.722'W

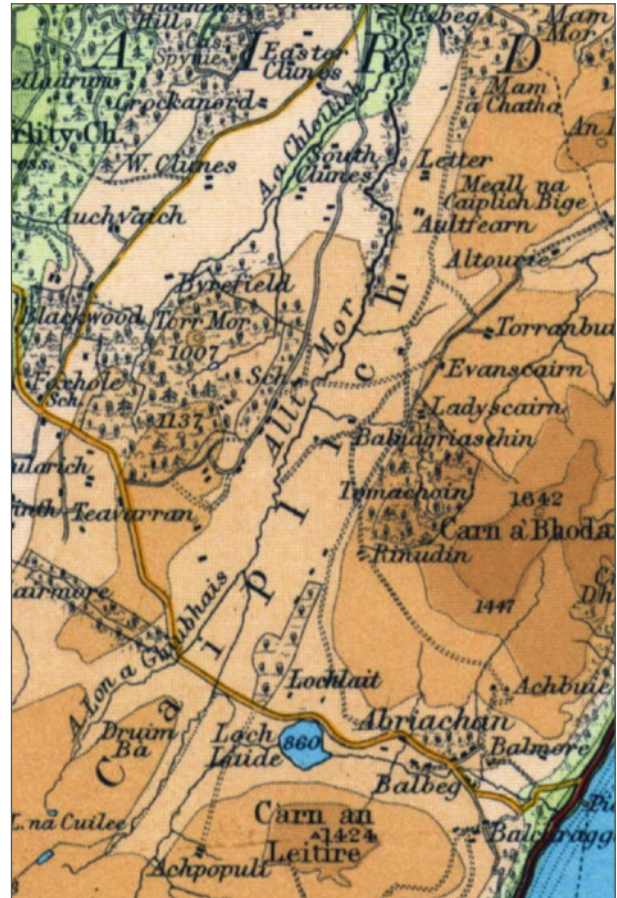
This appears to be *Taigh an Tòrra* 'the house of the mound or hill'. Above Balchraggan (q.v.) in Abriachan.

## Hills and Slopes

### Caiplich *A' Chaiplich*

*The horse place.* Pron. 'KEP-lich' or 'KIPE-lich' in its anglicised form, but 'uh CHIPE-lich' (as English 'TYPE') in Gaelic (TD Tr.81413). Places with such a name, derived from *capall* 'horse', are generally understood to be areas where horses were grazed or sheltered. The exact boundaries of this particular Caiplich, an extensive upland N and W of the Abriachan area are not clear and might have varied through the centuries. The 1896 OS one-inch map shows it running from *Loch na Cuilce* NH521347 in the S, to N of Ladyscairn at approx. NH557396, and the OS Name Book says it is 'a large district, commencing at the small farm of Torranbuie [now ruins at NH566392] and running westward on both sides of the parish boundary about seven or eight miles; it is interspersed with patches of cultivation and moss, but the greater part of it is covered with heath' (OS1/17/32/31).

Moll's map (pub. 1745) shows 'Mont Chaploch' further W and S, while a military map of the environs of Inverness (ca. 1725) gives 'Mount Caplach' much further N, directly W of Dunain Hill. The area was the source of a long-running dispute between the people of Dunain, who cut peats on the Caiplich, and the baillies of the Burgh of Inverness, to whom the rights to cut peat (and to pasture cattle, pull heather etc.) there were granted by King James VI in the 'Golden Charter' of 1591. The dispute led to clashes, 'sometimes resulting in death or severe injury' (Barron 1961 p.10). The Gaelic form, from Robertson (King 2019 p.226) and Watson (2002 p.157), is consistent with derived names like *Meall na Caiplich Bige* (q.v.).



Caiplich as shown on the Bartholomew Half-inch map (1926-35)  
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## The 'Golden' Charter of Inverness

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Being a Royal Burgh from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the burgesses and inhabitants of the town of Inverness were granted rights by a series of monarchs in a number of royal charters, summarised by Pollitt (1981 p.208-14). The most significant is the 'Golden' or 'Great' Charter of 1591, in which King James VI (later to become James I of England) confirmed the 'rights, liberties and privileges' granted by previous monarchs, including his grandfather, James V. There are many examples of local place-names in the document. Drakies, Merkinch, Culcabock, Leys and the (Burgh) Haugh all get a mention, as do 'the common lands called the Carse', the Ferry of Kessock, and 'all and every one of the mills of our said burgh, called the King's Mills' (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.256-7). Confirmation was given to the people that they had the right to 'pasture their goods, pull heather, to cast and turn feal [sods], fearn [bracken], divots, peats, turf, lime, clay, mortar, stones ... especially in and around ... Craig Phadrack, Caiplich Moor, Davimont [moor of Daviot] and Bogbain ... and of carrying and transporting them thence to our said burgh of Inverness ...' Also of interest are place-names which have limited currency today, such as the Carn-laws (see **Cairnlaw Burn**), the Barnhills and Claypots (both in the vicinity of The Crown) and Knockintinnel (see **Cameron Barracks**).

The charter not only granted fishing rights to the River Ness 'betwixt the stone called Clachnahagaig (q.v.) and the sea' but extended this to 'the fishing place called the Stell' and 'the Red Pool on the west side of the Ferry of Kessock'.

Stell is a Scots word meaning a place in a river or estuary where fish, particularly salmon, are caught in nets, and here refers to an area in the Beaully Firth, W of Clachnaharry.

The charter also defines the burgh as being bounded by a number of locations with Gaelic names. For example, on its NE corner was Auldinhemneris (*Allt na h-Imire*) NH708471 and Altnacreich (*Allt na Crich*) NH704461 – see **Cairnlaw Burn**. Then it went 'as wind and weather shears to a knowe called Knoknacreich' (*Cnoc na Crich* 'boundary hill'), 'now callit Carnemewarraane' (*Càrn an Fhuarain* 'the cairn of the spring'); these are both in the region of Westhill, and the spring named in the latter toponym might be that given on modern OS maps at NH715439. The line of the boundary then went SW a short distance to Glascarnacreich (*Glas Chàrn na Crich* 'the green hill of the boundary'), before turning NW to reach 'ane well or fontane callit Toberdonech' (*Tobar Dòmhnaich* 'Lord's Well'), possibly the well marked on the OS 6-inch maps at NH709441. Then the boundary went SW along a 'bra callit Brayrinchaltin' (*Bràigh Raon a' Chaltainn* 'the upper part of the field of the hazel trees') in the region of Lower Muckovie to reach Knoknagad (*Cnoc nan Gad* 'the hill of the withes') in the vicinity of Bogbain.



### Càrn a' Bhodaich

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NH 570 375  
57°24.317'N 4°22.932'W

*The hill of the ghost or spectre.* Pron. 'kaarn uh VOT-ich'. The interpretation is by Barron (1961 p.7), who tells us that the 'boulder-strewn slopes here were formerly referred to as *na sgradalan dearg.*' SE of Ladycairn. Elevation 501m, the highest summit between Blackfold and Abriachan.

### Cnoc a' Chinn

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NH 596 454  
57°28.624'N 4°20.536'W

*The hill of the head.* Pron. 'krochk uh CHEENN'. The site of an ancient fort between Lentrán and Bunchrew at NH597452 which, in oral tradition, was considered to be a place where justice was dispensed (Canmore/site/12649). Elevation 111m.

### Cnoc an Duine

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NH 570 361  
57°23.592'N 4°22.894'W

*The hill of the man.* Pron. 'krochk un DOON-yuh'. The meaning is confirmed by the OS Name Book (OS1/17/32/52). N of Abriachan. Elevation 441m.

### Cnoc an t-Sàraidh

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NH 554 333  
57°22.037'N 4°24.462'W

The OS offer '*the hill of the impediment*' as an interpretation (OS1/17/32/53). Pron. 'krochk un TAAR-ee'. It is not clear what aspect of the hill is regarded as an obstacle or impediment, although it is quite rocky. NW of Brachla. Elevation 337m.

### Cnoc Bheinnellidh

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NH 560 340  
57°22.450'N 4°23.669'W

SW of Abriachan. The OS Name Book (OS1/17/32/59) says that *b(h)einnellidh* is 'a Gaelic word, but corrupted, so that the meaning is obscure'. It is possible that an older name for the hill was based on the element *beinn* 'hill, mountain', and that *cnoc* was added later in a tautological fashion. *Beinnellidh* is similar to the paired hills of *Binnilidh Mhòr* (439m) and *Binnilidh Bheag* (375m) in Glen Moriston, both of which are likely to contain *beinn* (pronounced 'binn' dialectally). Another similar toponym is Carn Bingally in nearby Strathglass for which the OS says the meaning is 'obscure'; Robertson gives the Gaelic form as *Carn Bhinnealaidh*, referring to 'a rock on the Ben', with the mountain itself being originally *Binnealaidh*. Taylor (S. 2019 p.152-3) considers that Bingally/Binnealaidh might derive from *beinn* + *allaidh* i.e. 'wild mountain' and Watson introduces another possibility, interpreting Craigellie in Aberdeenshire as *Creag Eiligh* 'rock of the stony place' (1926 p.478). *Beinn Eiligh* 'stony mountain' would satisfy the topography of the Binnilidh, *Beinnellidh* and *Binnealaidh* examples above, but these incur initial stress whereas *Beinn Allaidh* and *Beinn Eiligh* would tend to carry the stress on the second element. This is a group of place-names which would benefit from further research. See **Benlie**.

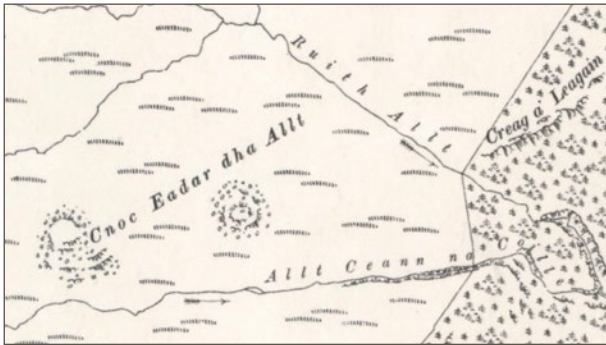
## Cnoc Eadar Dhà Allt

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NH 581 377

57°26.631'N 4°17.074'W

*Hill between two burns.* The burns are *Ruith Allt*, translated by the OS as 'running stream' (OS1/17/32/38) to the N, and *Allt Ceann na Coille* 'the burn at the end (head) of the wood' to the S. The use of *eadar* 'between' (pron. 'ATE-ur') in such toponyms is not unusual. W of Lochend. Elevation 400m.



*Cnoc Eadar Dhà Allt* 'hill between two burns' might seem a slightly pedestrian labelling, but it is accurate, as shown on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 6-inch OS map (pub. 1875). There is a hill with an identical name in Lewis at NBO85339 which is also positioned between two burns that join below it.

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## Cnoc na Gaoithe

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NH 589 395

57°25.471'N 4°21.067'W

*The hill of the wind.* NW of Dochfour. Elevation 384m.

## Cnoc na h-Eachdraidhe

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NH 551 362

57°23.570'N 4°24.639'W

*The hill of the story, legend.* The OS Name Book (OS1/17/32/48) gives 'hill of the history', but *eachdraidh* can also mean 'tale, narrative, legend'. There is certainly a long history of settlement here, with the location boasting a lot of ancient roundhouses (Heather Clyne pers. comm.). There is another possibility, however, given its proximity to the Caiplich 'horse place' (q.v.) - that it originated as *Cnoc na h-Eachraidh* 'the hill of the horses or horsemen'. NW of Abriachan.

## Cnoc na Mòine

---

NH 597 421

57°26.890'N 4°20.310'W

*The hill of the peat.* Given as Knock na Moan on George Brown's estate map (of Common Moor of Pharnaway, surveyed 1798-1800). Pron. 'krochkh nuh MÒN-yuh'. In the middle of the Aird, W of Craig Leach. Elevation 316m.



*Cnoc na Mòine*, probably named for being a source of peat for fuel. By the 1870s, as shown on the map above, the hill had become heavily afforested.

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## Pre-aspiration in Scottish Gaelic

Uniquely among the Celtic languages, Scottish Gaelic demonstrates a phenomenon called pre-aspiration, in which an 'h' or 'ch' is sounded immediately prior to certain consonants, making the consonant 'breathy'. As this is also a feature of Icelandic and Faroese, it is likely to be a legacy of the Norse influence on Gaelic, evident even in places where the direct influence of Norse-speaking people was minimal (as in Inverness and its surrounding area). It operates, for example, with the letter 'c', giving a 'chk' sound after a vowel, as can be seen from the pronunciation of the common toponymic element *cnoc* 'hill' – which is 'KROCHK' (with the KR nasalised), a development of the ancient pronunciation of the word – 'KNOK' (hence the anglicised form 'Knock'). Thus, *Cnoc na Mòine* is pronounced 'krochk nuh MÒN-yuh'. This is also the case with the slenderised form of the word; *Baile a' Chnuic* 'Hilton' is pronounced 'bal-uh CHROO-eechk'.

The evolution of the 'kn' sound (Gaelic '*cn*') in *cnoc* to a nasal 'kr', now standard throughout Gaelic Scotland, took place in the Aird sometime between the mid-17<sup>th</sup> and late 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, as shown by place-name evidence (Taylor S. 2019 p.17). Evidence elsewhere in the Inverness area is inconclusive. For example, although Timothy Pont (ca. 1583-1614) represented *cnoc* as 'knok' or 'knock', he might simply have been following an anglicising convention, rather than representing the Gaelic pronunciation of the word.

*Glac* 'hollow' ('GLACHK') also demonstrates pre-aspiration; thus, *Glac na Grèighe* 'the hollow of the herd' is pronounced 'glachk nuh GRAY-yuh'. A similar commentary can be made about the adjective *breac* 'speckled' as in *Tom Breac* 'speckled hillock' 'towm BREH-uchk'. *Creag Bhreac* 'speckled crag' is 'krape VREH-uchk'.



*Breac* – with its pre-aspirated 'c' – is a common descriptor in the Gaelic landscape, meaning 'speckled, dappled or variegated'. It can be applied to locations which are studded with primroses or daisies during the spring or summer.

## 'Extinct' Wildlife and Place-Names

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Locating Gaelic place-names which recall animal species that have become extinct in Scotland is not an easy task. As far as we can tell, there are no references to the beaver (recently reintroduced) or the lynx, and the reasons for several 'bear' place-names are unclear. The wolf, commonly considered to be extinct only since the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, is a particular challenge, as both it and the fox are known by the same generic – *madadh* 'wild dog' pron. 'MAT-ugh'. To distinguish between them, we use a specific: the fox is the *madadh-ruadh* 'russet wild dog' ('mat-ugh ROO-ugh'), while the wolf is the *madadh-allaidh* 'ferocious wild dog' ('mat-ugh AL-ee'). However, place-names usually just contain the generic – so *Slochd a' Mhadaidh* ('slochk uh VAT-ee') near **Bona** might refer to either species (although local opinion was that it referred to the wolf). The example on the next page of *Creag a' Mhadaidh Ruaidh* ('crake uh vat-ee ROO-eye') is very helpful, as it definitely refers to the fox. Two *madadh* names in Strathardle in Perthshire are known to refer to the wolf, as the species was documented in those localities, but in many cases around the Highlands, the matter remains unresolved. This issue is of interest to modern ecologists, because place-names can help us to build up a picture of past distributions of animal (and plant) species, and perhaps point us towards favourable habitats or localities for recolonisation or reintroduction.

**Beinn na h-Iolair** 'the mountain of the eagle' ('bane nuh HYOOL-ur-uh') near Loch Moy might in theory refer to either the *iolair-bhuidhe* 'Golden Eagle' or *iolair-mhara* 'Sea or White-tailed Eagle', the latter being extinct in Scotland for decades until it was reintroduced from the 1970s

onwards. In 2012, the late Richard J. Evans and his colleagues published a paper that examined the place-name evidence, in all languages, for the distribution of eagles in Britain and Ireland in the last 1500 years and used altitude and distance from open water to separate the two species. Under their criteria, our *Beinn na h-Iolair* is the haunt of the Golden Eagle. The researchers' conclusion was that around 500AD, there were 800-1400 pairs of White-tailed Eagles, and 1000-1500 pairs of Golden Eagles in the British Isles (Evans et al 2012).



Golden eagle *iolair-bhuidhe*

### **Craig Leach** *Creag Leac*

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NH 611 418  
57°26.716'N 4°18.934'W

'This name applies to a considerable eminence forming part of a long ridge', according to the OS Name Book (OS1/17/31/85). The first element is Gaelic *creag* 'crag, rocky hill', but the second element is erroneous. Barron (1961 p.10) gives it correctly as *Creag Leac* 'crag of flat rocks' (it is covered with forest and was so in 1876); *Leac* was often written *Leachd* in place-names, and the loss of a terminal 'd' might have been a simple technical mistake that has been perpetuated. N of Dochgarroch. Elevation 295m.

### **Creag a' Leagain**

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NH 588 378  
57°24.547'N 4°21.164'W

The OS give *Creag Ruigh Leagain* on their first 6-inch map but label its meaning 'obscure' in the Name Book (OS1/17/32/38), calling it simply a 'small but bold creag'. The modern form *Creag a' Leagain* (for *Creag an Leagain*) was established by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A translation is not straightforward, but the example of *Leagag*, a rocky hill in Rannoch (Perthshire), may be instructive, with *leag* perhaps representing a large rock (c.f. *leac*); *Creag a' Leagain* might therefore be tautological (Iain MacIllaChiar pers. comm.). This location was reputedly a refuge of the district's last smuggler (Barron 2002 p.382). W of Lochend.

### **Creag a' Mhadaidh Ruaidh**

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NH 575 413  
57°26.402'N 4°22.486'W

*The crag/rocky hill of the fox.* A rocky summit on *An Leacainn* [Aird] (q.v.). Elevation approx 389m.

### **Creag an Fhithich**

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NH 589 429  
57°27.270'N 4°21.227'W

*The crag of the raven.* In the middle of the Aird, SE of Inchmore.

### **Creagan Mòr**

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NH 585 398  
57°25.613'N 4°21.482'W

*Large crag.* *Creagan* is a diminutive of *creag*. The OS confirm it as a singular form (OS1/17/32/6). SW of Blackfold. Elevation 364 m.

### **Creag an Tom Bhealaidh**

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NH 561 333  
57°22.063'N 4°23.623'W

*The crag of the knoll of broom (plant).* On Loch Ness-side N. of Brachla (q.v.). One would expect *Creag an Tuim Bhealaidh*.

### **Creag Bhàn**

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NH 551 336  
57°22.319'N 4°24.585'W

*Fair crag.* Pron. 'krake VAAN'. NW of Brachla.

## Creag Bhuidhe

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NH 578 362  
57°23.664'N 4°22.048'W

*Yellow crag.* A crag on Loch Ness-side N of Abriachan. Pron. 'krake VOO-yuh or VOO-ee'. *Buidhe* in the landscape is usually a descriptor of vegetation, whose accuracy can be masked by later changes in land-use, particularly afforestation. The word, while representing the floral yellow of plants such as whin, broom or buttercups, commonly refers to the straw colour of native grasses during the winter months. There is another *Creag Bhuidhe* 'yellow rocky hill' in Strathnairn at NH663314. See photo below.

## Creag Dhearg

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NH 581 366  
57°23.854'N 4°21.766'W

*Red crag.* Historically known as Red Craig in English (Maclean 1886 p.30), and called 'Red Rock' today by Abriachan folk (Heather Clyne pers. comm.), it is listed by the OS as a 'very bold craig of red granite' (OS1/17/32/39). Situated between Lochend and Abriachan, above the A82 road. Barron (1961 p.6) says that the name applies to the entire length of steep hillside from the *Allt Dearg* NH579365 in the S to *Allt Iain Mhic Ailein* NH595387 (now Lochend Burn) in the N. He gives it as *Creag Dearg*



The Strathnairn *Creag Bhuidhe* (right, middle ground) seen from *Creag a' Chlachain*. The descriptor *buidhe* suggests the hill was grassy at the time naming took place, whereas it is now dominated by heather (unless the name was transferred from the *Coire Buidhe* 'yellow corrie' on the hill's northern flanks). A corner of *Loch a' Chlachain* is visible. It, like *Creag a' Chlachain*, is named for *Clachan Dhùn Fhlichididh* (hidden in the trees at left). See Dunlichity p.135.

and reports the presence of a cave near the top of the crag which was once the abode of a notorious cattle-lifter (Barron 2002 p.382). A full account of how this criminal, Samuel Cameron, escaped from the Inverness jail and forced the *Shirra Dhu* 'black sheriff' to annul his sentence, is given by the Clachnacuddin Nonagenarian (Maclean 1886 p.29-32). This location should not be confused with another Creag Dhearg on Loch Ness-side, N of Invermoriston at NH456203, which was the hiding-place of the freebooter *Dòmhnall Donn* of Bohuntin.

### Creag Dhomhainn

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NH 595 441  
57°26.631'N 4°17.074'W

The use of *domhainn*, usually 'deep', is rather puzzling, but the OS Name Book (OS1/17/52/53) says it means 'hollow' here, and this is recognised in the dictionaries as a subsidiary meaning of the word. Simon Taylor (2019 p.230) interprets it as possibly meaning 'low-lying', although it is some 30m higher than its neighbour, Inchberry Hill. There is a possibility that *domhainn* (pron. *domhann* in some dialects) is a misinterpretation of an earlier *donn* 'brown', as an estate map of 1798-1800 gives it as Craig Down (George Brown map of Fopachie and Kirktown, Lovat Estates). Thus, *Creag Dhonn* 'brown rocky hill' might be the original Gaelic form.

### Creag Mhic Dhòmhnail Òig

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NH 553 323  
57°21.606'N 4°24.407'W

*Young Donaldson's hill*. This is the translation given by the OS (OS1/17/32/68) who write it *Creag Mhic Dhomhnuill Oig*. It might alternatively be interpreted as 'the crag of the son of young Donald'. It is not clear who this refers to. SW of Brachla.

### Creag na h-Èigheachd

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NH 565 372  
57°26.631'N 4°17.074'W

*The rocky hill of the shouting*. Rocks of this name are usually places where a good echo can be generated. Between Ladycairn and Abriachan. Elevation 490m.

### Creag nan Cathag

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NH 556 325  
57°21.637'N 4°24.124'W

*The rocky hill of the jackdaws*. The interpretation is confirmed by the OS (OS1/17/32/68), who give the name as *Creag nan Cadhag*. SW of Brachla.

### Creag nan Sithean

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NH 592 390  
57°25.195'N 4°20.640'W

The OS interpret this place-name, W of Dochfour, as 'hill of the fairies' (OS1/17/32/18). Also on the maps as *Creag nan Sidhean*.

### Dunain Hill *Dùn Eun*

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NH 626 432  
57°27.521'N 4°17.539'W

*Hill of birds*. The anglicised form is a tautology, with the later addition of 'hill'. The Gaelic form is pronounced 'doon EE-un' (TD Tr.81413), but the pronunciation of the anglicised form preserves an earlier Gaelic sounding of the 'eu' diphthong as a monophthong i.e. 'dun ANE'. It was recorded as Dunnane in Burgh Court Books in 1568, but as Dunneene in 1654 (Barron 1961 p.9). Forms like Dunean in 1677 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.145) might represent 'dun-ANE' as in the surname Maclean. In later times (and to this day), the Gaels of Inverness pronounced the name as 'Dùn Ian', and the Gaelic poetess *Màiri Mhòr nan Òran* (who

lived in Inverness and is buried in the Chapel Yard) wrote it as *Dun-ian* in her poetry. It was recorded as *Dun-eun* in 1821, and originally collected by the OS (1876) as Dunean Hill (OS/1/17/31/26). Robertson gives *Dùn ian* as the Gaelic form (King 2019 p.226), but Barron prefers *Dun-fhiann* (seeming to connect the name with the Fianna,) although he says he 'heard it pronounced "Dunen" by the older generation of local people' (1961 p.9). Iain Taylor contends that the original might have been *Dùn Eathain* 'John's (hill)fort' (2011 p.60).

Dunain Hill (OS) is often referred to colloquially as Craig Dunain, which in Gaelic is *Creag Dhùn Eun*, translated by Fraser (1905 p.226), a little poetically, as 'hill of the singing birds'. This name also became associated with a psychiatric hospital at NH636437 which has now been redeveloped for housing. Dunain Mains is *Baile Mòr Dhùn Eun*, and three crags on Dunain Hill are known as *Stac an Fhithich* 'the rock of the raven' NH628433, *Stac Meadhanach* 'middle rock' NH626430 and *Stac Beag* 'small rock' NH626429.

### Leacainn, An [Aird]

NH 577 410  
57°26.244'N 4°22.350'W

*The broad hillside.* Dwelly's dictionary gives the following definition of Leaca(i)nn: *the broad side of a hill, broad slope, steep shelving ground.* The description fits this hill on its eastern and north-eastern side. The OS Name Book says the name signifies 'steep shelvey ground' (OS1/17/52/65). Elevation 414m. See **Leachkin, The**. In the middle of the Aird.

### Leacann, An

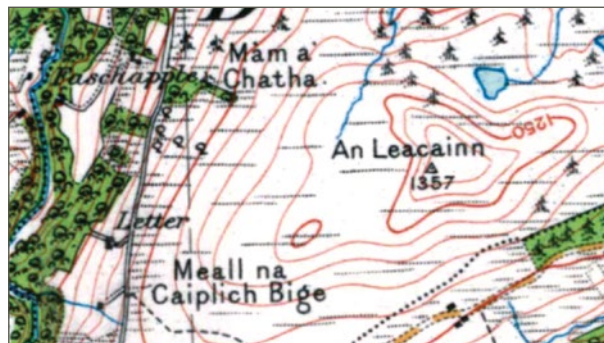
NH 565 367  
57°23.861'N 4°23.388'W

*The broad hillside.* *Leacann* is an unslenderised form of *Leacainn* (see **Leacainn, An**) and means the same. The slenderised form - originating in the dative/locative form of this feminine noun (for 'on the Leacann' we say '*air an Leacainn*' in Gaelic) - is common in the Inverness area. N of Abriachan.

### Màm a' Chatha

NH 570 415  
57°26.498'N 4°23.059'W

*The rounded hill of the battle.* This hill on the Caiplich is named for a battle between the Frasers of Lovat and the MacDonalds which put an end to the depredations by the MacDonald Lords of the Isles on the Frasers. It is dated by the Wardlaw MS (p.108) as 1464, but Maclean (1975 p.210) says it is more likely to have occurred in 1429. Elevation 363m. For the meaning of *màm*, see **Màm Mòr**.



*Màm a' Chatha* 'the hill of the battle' and *An Leacainn* 'the broad hillside' on the Caiplich 'horse place'. The map also shows *Meall na Caiplich Bige* 'the hill of little Caiplich' and the settlements of *Faschapple* 'stance of the horse' and *Letter* 'slope'.

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## Màm Mòr

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NH 575 429  
57°27.247'N 4°22.370'W

*Big rounded hill.* *Màm* is usually a large, rounded hill, which is its likely meaning in this case – the OS mark it as a fairly indistinct area on the northern slope of an upland that continues to the summit of *An Leacainn* [Aird] (q.v.); the word originally meant ‘breast’ and is related to Latin *mamma* (hence ‘mammal’) and English ‘mammary’. However, *màm* can also refer to a gap between two adjacent hills, as in *Màm Unndalain* in Knoydart (NG 886009). See **Màm a’ Chatha**.

## Meall a’ Bhàthaich

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NH 552 341  
57°22.625'N 4°24.553'W

*The rounded hill of the byre.* A rolling hill to the south of Abriachan. Elevation 382m. Its N slope is divided from that of *Càrn na Leitire* ‘the hill of the slope above water (*Loch Laide*)’ by **Allt nan Clachan Breaca**.

## Meall na Caiplich Bige

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NH 566 405  
57°25.980'N 4°23.379'W

*The rounded hill of little Caiplich.* This sits adjacent to *Meall na Caiplich Mòire* ‘the rounded hill of big Caiplich’ NH570407, which is also shown on the OS 1:25 000 map, so the two hills seem to be in a binary comparison. As they are both situated – presumably – on the same Caiplich ‘horse place,’ one would expect them to be called *Meall na Caiplich Mòr* ‘the big hill of the Caiplich’ and *Meall na Caiplich Beag* ‘the small hill of the Caiplich’, but the OS throws no light on this matter. See **Caiplich**. *Meall* is a common mountain generic and is sometimes translated as ‘lump’ or ‘lumpish hill’.



*Meall na h-Earba.* Roe deer still frequent this wooded hill.

## Meall na h-Earba

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NH 562 377  
57°24.430'N 4°23.687'W

*The rounded hill of the roe deer.* Pron. ‘myowl nuh HER-ep-uh’. SE of Ladycairn. Elevation 433m.

## Meall Ruigh Aodainn

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NH 556 374  
57°24.256'N 4°24.246'W

*Rounded hill of (the) slope or shieling of (the hill) face.* Pron. ‘myowl roo-ee ØT-in’. Given as *Meall Raon Aodainn* on the first OS 6-inch map; *raon* generally refers to flat ground and is less likely than *ruigh*. S of Ladycairn. Elevation 444m.

## Meall Ruigh Dhuibh

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NH 577 371  
57°24.131'N 4°22.226'W

*Rounded hill of (the) black slope or shieling.* Given as *Cnoc an Ruigh Dhuibh* on the first OS 6-inch map, with the meaning given as ‘hill of the black shieling’. Between Lochend and Abriachan. Elevation 477m.

## Ruigh Uradain

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NH 595 387  
57°24.996'N 4°20.477'W

This feature W of Loch Dochfour is *the slope of St Uradan*, although the first OS 6-inch map (pub. 1875) gives *Suidhe Uradain*. *Suidhe* is a 'seat, sitting place', and the word in place-names is sometimes connected with religious figures. Fraser-Mackintosh (1875 p.23) says it is 'a great stone - the seat of Uradain - on top of the ridge where the saint used to rest, when crossing to the Caiploch (Caiplich q.v.) to preach'. On the other hand, Watson (1926 p.315) and Barron (1961 p.2) call the feature *Suidhe Churadain* 'Curitan's seat', and connect it to the 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> Century St Curitan (*Naomh Curadan*) whose bishopric was based in Rosemarkie on the Black Isle. Curadan (sometimes also referred to as Boniface - see MacDonald 1994) was a significant cleric, and a guarantor at the Synod of Birr in 697AD of *Càin Adomnain* (the Law of Adomnan) which set out legal protections for non-combatants at time of conflict. Curadan and Uradan seem to be the same person. The Canmore website gives the following information about 'Killuradan or the graveyard of St. Uradan' at Corrimony in Glen Urquhart (with spelling regularised): 'The combination of Killuradan, Cladh Churadain and St Uradan's Well nearby, leaves little doubt that this was the site of one of the chapels of St. Curitan with its associated graveyard and well' (Canmore/event/660257).

The second edition 6-inch map (pub. 1905) gives *Suidhe Uradain* as *Ruigh Uradain* (some modern OS maps give *Ruighe* with an 'e'). Just below the saint's slope (or seat) is a graveyard connected to him called *Cladh Uradain* (q.v.).

## Sgòr Gaoithe

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NH 579 416  
57°26.550'N 4°22.086'W

*Windy point*. *Sgòr* can refer to a rocky point or a 'precipitous height on another hill or mountain' (Dwelly) - and this summit is subsidiary to the main summit of *An Leacainn* [Aird] (q.v.) which is just to its south. Elevation 378m. See **Scorguie**.

## Torran Binneach

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NH 558 329  
57°21.876'N 4°23.971'W

*Pinnacled knoll*. A high ledge of rock S. of Brachla, extending from *Allt Coire Foithaneas* (q.v.) to *Allt Coire Shalachaidh* (q.v.).

## Torran Buidhe

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NH 564 389  
57°25.084'N 4°23.520'W

*Yellow knoll*. Pron. 'tor-un BOO-ee' (TD Tr.81413). Adjacent to the old abandoned farm of Torranbuie, NE of Ladycairn. Elevation 351m. *Torran* is a diminutive of *tòrr* and a noun in its own right, but there is actually a double summit here which introduces the possibility that the original form was the plural *Torran Buidhe* 'yellow knolls', although the OS favoured the singular form (OS1/17/32/13).

## Corries, Passes and Hollows

### Bealach a' Chadha

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NH 572 351  
57°23.197'N 4°22.538'W

The meaning is given by the OS as 'pass of the narrow ravine' (OS1/17/32/50). However, *cadha* can also mean a narrow pass at the foot of a hill. Both *bealach* and *cadha* point to human usage, suggesting there was a walking route through here, probably linking Achbuie (q.v.) to Loch Ness.

### Coire Shalachaidh

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NH 556 335  
57°22.086'N 4°24.020'W

Although the OS advise us that the meaning of this place-name is 'obscure' (OS1/17/32/69), it is likely to represent '*corrie of (the) willow place*' cf. Sallachy (Watson 1904 p. 187). The modern Gaelic for willow is *seileach*, but an older form was *salach* (cf. *salix* in Latin). Given as Corry Hallachie on an 1808 estate map, which attempts to show the Gaelic pron. 'kor-uh HAL-uch-ee'.

### Cordachan *Na Cordachan*

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NH 555 323  
57°21.529'N 4°24.131'W

This is described in the OS Name Book (OS1/17/32/68) as 'a small space of rough pasture with two or three old ruins ... on the farm of Correyfoyness'. Barron (2002 p.381) gives the Gaelic form above and describes the feature as 'three small narrow fields strung out end to end beside the road and a little to the south of the Clansman Hotel.' He further adds that they

were cut into by the new road in the 1930s, that they were referred to in 1801 as the 'Cords of Abriachan', and that it was not known when they had last been under cultivation. The meaning is not clear. Dwelly's dictionary has the word *corda* for two genera of sedges which were 'formerly used in making ropes'.

### Feadan, Am

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NH 572 406  
57°26.043'N 4°22.687'W

This was explained by the OS Name Book (OS1/17/52/60) as 'a hollow through which the wind whistles ... situated between An Leacainn and Meall na Caiplich Moire'. *Feadan* also means a bagpipe chanter, and can be used for places that channel water, as well as wind. It is at an altitude of approximately 370m.

### Fraoch-choire

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NH 559 377  
57°24.451'N 4°24.074'W

*Heathery corrie*. A corrie between *Meall na h-Earba* (q.v.) and *Meall Ruigh Aodainn* (q.v.), with its upper reaches at around 390m altitude. *Allt Fraoch-choire* (q.v.) flows to the north from the corrie and turns west at Ladycairn (q.v.).

### Glac Dhubh nan Dearcag

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NH 573 372  
57°24.395'N 4°22.178'W

*The black hollow of the berries*. *Dearcag* can mean any (small) berry, but it often refers to the blaeberry. In the hills W of Lochend.

*Glac Dhubh nan Dearcag* seen from *Meall Ruighe Dhuibh*.  
The place-name suggests that this was a locality where  
local people would collect berries in the days before it  
became heavily grazed by sheep and deer.



## Glac na Grèighe

---

NH 579 383

57°25.263'N 4°21.208'W

*The hollow of the herd.* Grèigh can mean a herd of red deer or a troop of horses. In the hills W of Lochend.

## Glac Ossian *Glac Oisein*

---

NH 587 392

57°25.263'N 4°21.208'W

*Ossian's hollow.* In the hills W of Loch Dochfour. The name is properly written *Glac Oisein* (pron. 'glachk OSH-en'). Ossian is an anglicised form of Oisean, a famous member of the legendary Fianna and the son of Fionn mac Cumhail (Fingal). He is remembered in several place-names in Scotland. Allt Glac Ossian (q.v.) flows through the hollow to become Lochend Burn in its lower reaches. Fraser-Mackintosh (1875 p.23) tells us that the parish of Bona, in which this is situated, also contains 'the grave of Bran' (Fionn's dog) and 'the grave of Tuarie' ('supposed to be a Fingalian'), although he does not substantiate this information with the locations or original Gaelic forms. Barron (1961 p.2) says that *Uaigh Bhran* 'the grave of Bran' is near *Glaic Oisein*, which he describes as a 'considerable sized hollow' close to *Suidhe Churadain* (see **Ruigh Uradain**).

A note of caution about the Fianna connection is sounded by Fraser-Mackintosh, who tells us that 'a very aged man, named Ferguson, who lived in this hollow or glaick, and died in spring 1867, was all his days commonly called "Ossian"'. Was his nickname derived from the location of his dwelling, or is he the 'Ossian' named in the toponym? The old farm of Glackossian (NH597385) bears an anglicised form of the place-name. Glac Ossian was on an

old drove route from the Aird to Bona (see **Buaile Chòmhnard**) and was probably the route along which Montrose took his army after raising the siege of Inverness during the civil war in May 1646 (Meldrum 1987 p.20). The earliest record is on the 1<sup>st</sup> 6-inch OS map (pub. 1875).

## Slochd an Dròbh

---

NH 567 405

57°26.011'N 4°23.215'W

*The hollow of the (cattle) drove.* Pron. 'slochk un DROVE'. The name would be written today *Sloc an Dròbh*. Adjacent to *Meall na Caiplich Bige* (q.v.), and close to the old droving route from the Aird to Bona via Glac Ossian (q.v.).

## Slochd an Fhamhair

---

NH 572 356

57°23.307'N 4°22.582'W

*The hollow of the giant.* Pron. 'slochk un AV-ur'. The OS Name Book (OS1/17/32/51) gives 'the hollow of the giant or champion'. A rocky hollow north of Abriachan. Properly *Sloc an Fhamhair*.



*Slochd an Fhamhair* above Loch Ness, N of Abriachan. Places named for giants are not uncommon in the Gaelic landscape. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

## Lochs, Rivers and Burns

### Abban Water *An t-Àban*

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NH 600 380  
57°24.699'N 4°19.936'W

*The backwater.* An inlet on the W. side of Loch Dochfour (q.v.). The word *àban* 'backwater, disused or silted-up river channel' is only known from the Inverness area. See **Abban**. On the E extremity of Abban Water at NH602380 is the site of the ancient *Caisteal Spioradan* (Castle Spiritual OS, also known as Bona Castle), which was robbed of stone and partially submerged when the water level was raised during the building of the Caledonian Canal. The name, said to mean 'castle of ghosts', is supposed to have come from it being haunted, following a bloody encounter between Macleans (who held the castle) and Camerons, in around 1450 (Maclean L. 1988 p.104).

### Allt a' Ghleannain

---

NH 622 427  
57°27.254'N 4°17.795'W

*The burn of the small glen.* Given by Barron (1961 p.10) as *Allt a' Ghlinnein* with the same meaning. S of Dunain Hill.

### Allt Baile nan Greusaichean

---

NH 551 384  
57°24.818'N 4°24.742'W

*The burn of the village of the shoemakers.* *Allt Baile nan Griasaichean* OS. See **Balnagriasehin**. This burn flows into the *Allt Mòr* (q.v.) at NH548386. Above Ladycairn (q.v.) the burn is called *Allt Fraoch-choire*, as it flows from the Fraoch-choire (q.v.).

### Allt Bheinnellidh

---

NH 568 342  
57°22.584'N 4°22.940'W

*The burn of Beinnellidh.* See **Cnoc Bheinnellidh**.

### Allt Coire Foithaneas

---

NH 558 324  
57°21.611'N 4°23.873'W

This burn, which flows into Loch Ness S. of Brachla, originates in *Coire Foithaneas*. See **Corryfoyness**.

### Allt Coire Shalachaidh

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NH 549 334  
57°22.206'N 4°24.354'W

This burn flows S. of *Creag Bhàn* (q.v.) and meets *Caochan a' Challa* (q.v.) in *Coire Shalachaidh* (q.v.), before the combined stream reaches Loch Ness at *Brachla* (q.v.).

### Allt Cumhang

---

NH 587 369  
57°24.074'N 4°21.185'W

*Narrow burn.* Pron. 'owlt COO-ung' ('ng' as in English 'hunger'). Between Lochend and Abriachan on Loch Ness-side.

### Allt Dearg

---

NH 580 364  
57°23.768'N 4°21.847'W

*Red burn.* Pron. 'owlt JER-ek'. Adjacent to *Creag Dhearg* (q.v.), from which the colour descriptor likely derives.

## Allt Dionach

---

NH 586 416  
57°26.542'N 4°21.389'W

*Sheltered burn.* Pron. 'owlt JEE-un-uch. Given as *Dionach* (without accented 'i') by OS. Flows NE from Loch Dionach (q.v.) to join Bunchrew Burn.

## Allt Glac Ossian

---

NH 586 393  
57°25.296'N 4°21.252'W

*The burn of the hollow of Ossian.* Properly *Allt Glac Oisein*, pron. 'owlt glachk OSH-en'. See **Glac Ossian**. The burn flows SE south of *Cnoc na Gaoithe* (q.v.) until it reaches the site of the *Fuaran Dearg* 'the red spring' (now dried up) at NH591389, where its name changes to Lochend Burn (q.v.).

## Allt Killianan Allt Chill Fhionain

---

NH 586 347  
57°22.854'N 4°23.062'W

*The burn of Killianan.* Flows into Loch Ness at Killianan (q.v.). Also called Abriachan Burn. See **Allt Loch Laide**.



Allt Killianan at Abriachan on the 1st edition 6-inch OS map (pub. 1875). The adjacent stream, the *Caochan Dubh* 'dark streamlet' is not named on the modern 1:25 000 map.

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## Allt Liath

---

NH 576 353  
57°23.190'N 4°22.217'W

*Grey burn.* Pron. 'owlt LEE-uh'. Flows through *Slochd an Fhamhair* (q.v.) into Loch Ness N of Abriachan at NH576353.

## Allt Loch Laide

---

NH 550 352  
57°23.055'N 4°24.818'W

*The burn of Loch Laide.* Flows E. from *Loch Laide* (in Abriachan) and becomes Allt Killianan (q.v.), after its junction with Balmore Burn (q.v.). *Loch Laide* NH546353 should probably be written *Loch Laid*, given local pronunciation 'loch LATCH', although Robertson gave Loch Laité (King 2019 p. 226). It proved a puzzle to the OS who wrote that 'it is a corrupt Gaelic name, no meaning could be obtained' (OS/1/17/32/46). Watson (1926 p.138) considered *Laid(e)* to be derived from *lad* or *lod* 'puddle', the same element found in 'Culloden' in its diminutive form. This would be appropriate, as the loch is notably shallow (Heather Clyne pers. comm.).

## Allt Lòn an Daim

---

NH 570 389  
57°25.067'N 4°22.958'W

*The burn of the wet meadow of the dam.* The OS Name Book (OS1/17/32/16) gives 'Burn of the Mill Dam Marsh'. This stream joins Allt Ourie at NH575399. After the junction, the watercourse becomes the Dochfour Burn, and it is on this burn, at Dochnalurig (q.v.) that the only dam is apparent on early OS maps - built to divert water down a lade to a sawmill. A larger dam was constructed in the same vicinity in more recent times.

### Allt Mòr

---

NH 551 390  
57°25.089'N 4°24.789'W

*Big burn.* This is the name of the stream which becomes Moniack Burn at NH557404 where it is joined by *Allt na Feàrna*. See **Aultfearn**. It flows from the Caiplich (q.v.) and was called *Allt na Caiplich* by Robertson (King 2019 p.226). There is another *Allt Mòr* N of Loch Ashie at NH643366.

### Allt na h-Àtha

---

NH 621 455  
57°28.731'N 4°18.061'W

*The burn of the kiln.* This small burn disappears underground by the railway line close to Bunchrew.

### Allt nan Clachan Breaca

---

NH 554 350  
57°22.940'N 4°24.414'W

*The burn of the speckled stones.* Flows N. to reach **Allt Loch Laide** in Abriachan.

### Allt na Teanga

---

NH 554 392  
57°25.267'N 4°24.372'W

*The burn of the tongue.* Pron. 'owlt nuh TCHENG-uh'. The *teanga* in question would be a spur of land adjacent to the burn. This small stream on the Aird flows into the *Allt Mòr* (q.v.).

### Allt Raon Leth-allt

---

NH 554 392  
57°25.267'N 4°24.372'W

*The burn of the plain of Leault.* Pron. 'owlt røn LEH-owlt'. This appears to be a tautological development of an original *Leth-allt* 'burn with one high side' (see **Leault**). Flows into *Allt Loch Laide* (q.v.) at NH555352.

### Balmore Burn

---

NH 563 360  
57°23.502'N 4°23.453'W

This modern English name comes from the settlement of Balmore [Abriachan] (q.v.). The older Gaelic name for this stream, just to the N. of Abriachan, is *Allt na Caillich* 'the burn of the *cailleach*/old woman' (OS 6-inch map, 1<sup>st</sup> edition). For the meaning of *cailleach*, see p. 172.

### Beauly Firth *Linne Fharair*

---

NH 550 473  
57°29.599'N 4°25.258'W

Hugh Barron wrote in 1961 that 'until fairly recently the Beauly Firth was usually called Loch Beauly and quite a number of trading vessels sailed up to the old harbour in Beauly' (1961 p.15). This is not quite the full picture. While it appears as Loch Beaulie on Dorret's map (1750) and Loch Beauly on Arrowsmith (1807), it is given as Beuley Firth by Roy (1747-52) and as Firth of Beuly on a military map of ca. 1725 (A Generall Survey of Inverness).

However, there is another name that was in common use among people of the contiguous parishes - *Poll an Ròid* 'the inlet of the rood or



cross' (Barron 1961 p.15). In about 1240 King Alexander II, while on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St Duthac in Tain, granted land to the Friars in Inverness (which included Merkinch), but required them as part of the deal to erect a cross on an islet or gravel bank mid-firth to the W of the Ferry of Kessock, presumably to encourage ferry-users in their religious observance. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, this area was still called the Rood Pool or *Poll an Ròid* (Wardlaw MS p.54). Traditionally, the fair of the Holy Cross or Roodmass was held in Inverness on 3<sup>rd</sup> May; merchants from the north would bring their wares for sale via the Kessock Ferry (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.190).

The modern Gaelic for the Beaully Firth is *Linne Fharair* (AÀA) 'the firth of Farrar'. See **Beaully River**.



The Beaully Firth given as Loch Beaulie on James Dorret's map (1750). This name for the inlet persisted alongside Beaully Firth until modern times. The Gaelic form during this period is not recorded. It appears that *Poll an Ròid* (see above) applied, not to the whole waterbody, but rather just to the area around the cross that was erected 'mid firth' by order of the King.

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## Beaully River *Abhainn Farair*

NH 550 473

57°29.599'N 4°25.258'W

The Beaully River or River Beaully is the name given to the watercourse created by the junction of the River Glass and the River Farrar at NH407398, and which reaches the Beaully Firth (q.v.) at NH552476. It takes its English name from the village of Beaully through which it flows, and which was named as *Beau Lieu* 'beautiful place' in French by the monks in Beaully Priory (founded 13<sup>th</sup> century). Given as Watty of Bewling in 1565 (Mackay 1911 p.123) and Beuley River on Roy's map (1747-52). There is an older name for the river – Forn (1253) and Forne (1312), which is discussed by Simon Taylor (2019 p.29). However, the oldest name is Ptolemy's *Varar* from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, which is preserved in the River Farrar and in Glen Strathfarrar, and which gives us the ancient Latinised name for the Moray Firth viz *Varar Aestuarium* (e.g. Blaeu's map, 1654).

In Gaelic, the River Beaully itself is still *Farar*, and it flows through what was once called *Srath Farair* (Strathfarrar) – although that name is now only retained upstream of Struy (NH401403) in *Gleann Srath Farair* (Glen Strathfarrar i.e. the glen of Strathfarrar) [see Watson 1926 p.48]. However, it is notable that the (more logical) *Gleann Farair* is recorded in 19<sup>th</sup> century poetry, presumably meaning what is now 'Glen Strathfarrar', as it refers to *Gleann Farair nam beann mòra* 'Glen Farrar of the high mountains' (Barron 1966 p.25). The meaning of *farar*, and the language in which it was originally coined, is uncertain.

Robertson (King 2019 p.217) gives an additional Gaelic name for the river – *Abhainn nam Manach* 'the river of the monks', referring to the monastery at Beaully, a form that is confirmed by the Wardlaw MS ('Avin ni Mannach or the Monkwater' p.63).

The village of Beauly in Gaelic is *Manachainn 'ic Shimidh* 'Fraser of Lovat's monastery', usually shortened to *A' Mhanachainn* 'the monastery'.

### Caochan a' Challa

---

NH 555 337

57°22.206'N 4°24.112'W

The OS Name Book (OS1/17/32/55) tells that this name means 'stream of the loss or damage', based on the Gaelic word *call*, and it is close to *Cnoc an t-Sàraidh* (q.v.) which is interpreted as 'hill of the impediment'. No explanation is forthcoming for either name. However, it is perhaps as likely to be based on the archaic *call* or *coll* meaning 'hazel'; thus 'the streamlet of the hazel'. It runs into *Allt Coire Shalachaidh* (q.v.), and the combined watercourse (unnamed on the map) runs through *Coire Shalachaidh* (q.v.) to Loch Ness. For an explanation of *caochan*, see **Caochan Dubh**.



*An Dubh-allt Mòr* and *An Dubh-allt Beag* on Loch Ness side, showing the common pairing of adjacent features, with comparative adjectives, on the Gaelic landscape.

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### Dubh-allt Mòr, An

---

NH 578 361

57°23.574'N 4°21.977'W

*The big dark burn.* It is close and parallel to *An Dubh-allt Beag* 'the small dark burn' NH577359, with which it is compared. Both streams flow into Loch Ness N. of Abriachan.

### Loch Dionach

---

NH 590 418

57°26.702'N 4°21.064'W

*Sheltered loch.* N of Blackfold. Given as *Dionach* (without accented 'i') by OS. The name derives from *Allt Dionach* (q.v.) which flows from it. The loch is artificial and is not present on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch OS map. The same applies to an adjacent, and unnamed, loch at NH580414.

### Lochend Burn

---

NH 602 385

57°24.973'N 4°19.704'W

This burn flows into Loch Dochfour a short distance to the N of Lochend (q.v.). It starts in the hills as *Allt Glac Ossian* (q.v.) and undergoes a name-change adjacent to the site of the *Fuaran Dearg* 'red spring' NH591389 which is shown on old OS maps but is no longer in evidence, perhaps as a result of forestry activity. The burn's older name, given on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS 6-inch map, was *Allt Iain Mhic Ailein* 'the burn of John, son of Allan'.

## Loch na Sanais

---

NH 651 436

57°27.775'N 4°14.965'W

According to the OS Name Book (1876-8), 'the meaning is loch of the whisper and the word Sanais is used as a feminine noun' (OS1/17/31/98). While it is true that *sanas* 'whisper, signal, alarm' is usually masculine (in which case the name would be *Loch an t-Sanais*), it does appear in a feminine guise in the Inverness area in *Clach na Sanais* near Croy (NH794492). This is translated as 'listening stone' and is explained by a story in which the stone is 'told' by a member of the Cummings that there will be a treacherous attack on their guests, the Mackintoshes – while a Mackintosh is conveniently eavesdropping! A traditional tale also illuminates the meaning of *Loch na Sanais*: in the vicinity of the loch, a young woman hears a whispered plan being hatched by her father and a rich merchant to kill her young lover who, suitably warned, is then able to elope with his sweetheart. A version of the story is told by Maclean (2004 p.84).

However, this seems to be an example of folk etymology (not that it should stop us telling the story!). Three of the six place-name informants for the OS preferred the form Loch-na-Schannish, and the traditional pronunciation was 'SHAN-ish' rather than 'SAN-ish' (although native Gaelic speakers from Glen Moriston, recorded in 1963, pronounced in 'SAN-ish' [TD Tr.82770.3]). Watson (2002 p.233; 1926 p.522) stated that its anglicised form should be Loch na Shanish, and that it should be *Loch na Seanais* in Gaelic. He interpreted it as 'loch of the old haugh (or meadow)' derived from *Loch na Sean-innse* (meaning pasture that had fallen into relative disuse). *Loch na Sanais*, situated N of Torvean on a golf course, was at one

time beloved of Invernessians, being a favourite location for curling and skating during the winter. It was originally small but was enlarged when surrounding clay was removed for the building of the Caledonian Canal. During the winter of 1960-61, it was reduced in dimensions once more when part of it was filled with rubble from Inverness. Around the loch at one time was a wood called *Coille nam Bodach* (Barron 1961, p.12).

## MacGruer's Pond

---

NH 629 438

57°27.834'N 4°17.239'W

This small, attractive pond is one of a series of reservoirs built to supply the then Inverness and District Lunatic Asylum (known colloquially as 'Craig Dunain', and now redeveloped for housing). It was the final reservoir to be created, in around 1920, and, according to a carved stone erected at the pond's SE end, was subsequently named 'to perpetuate the memory and faithful service of John MacGruer, a member of the Asylum staff for 49 years from 1874 to 1923'. A Gaelic equivalent would be *Lòn Mhic Ghrùdhair*. The other adjacent reservoirs appear to be unnamed.



MacGruer's Pond

## Miscellaneous

### **Battlefield** *Innis a' Chatha*

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NH 608 405

57°26.001'N 4°2119.258'W

Close to a dam on the Dochfour Burn, this flat, green area has long been marked as Battlefield on OS maps. Barron (1961 p.8) tells us the original Gaelic name is *Innis a' Chatha* 'the meadow of the battle', and that it is said to refer to a conflict between 'Donald Lord of the Isles [who] was raiding Inverness and a force from Inverness Castle.' An alternative explanation is that John

Maclean, laird of Dochgarroch, was outlawed by the government on two occasions, the latter being the 1715 Jacobite rebellion, after which he built a house at Dochnalurig and led a quiet life. However, a party of four Hessian soldiers (German auxiliaries to the British Army) were pillaging in the local mill and John, along with a few followers, intervened, killing one of the Germans in a bloody fight, and thus bestowing the name Battlefield on the locality. John then took to hills and lived there for years before giving himself up and successfully defending himself in court (Trans. ISS Vol 1 1879 p.276).



Battlefield *Innis a' Chatha*

Yet another explanation of the name is that it dates to the Wars of Independence, and an occasion in May 1297, when the English Constable of Castle Urquhart (near Drumnadrochit), Sir William Fitzwarine, was attacked on his way home from Inverness by a Scottish patriot force under the command of Andrew de Moray and Alexander Pilche, a burgess of Inverness. A waterfall (marked but unnamed on OS maps) at Battlefield is called *Eas a' Chath* 'the waterfall of the battle' (Maclean 1975 p.200). Fitzwarine escaped, survived a subsequent siege of Castle Urquhart, and was to meet Moray again four months later at the Battle of Stirling Bridge.

### **Aird, The** *An Àird*

---

This name is applied to an extensive area covering the parishes of Kilmorack, Kiltarlity & Convinth, and Kirkhill, excepting Strathglass (Ronald Maclean pers. comm.). For the purposes of the present publication, it is considered to be bounded on the W by the Beaully River, on the N by the Beaully Firth, on the E by the northern end of Loch Ness and the hills to the immediate west of Inverness, and on the S by Glen Urquhart. The E boundary on the A862 is at Bruichnain, and both **Craig Phadrig** and **Dunain Hill** lie within Inverness Parish, and outwith the Aird.

The earliest record, as *le Ard*, is in 1258 (Taylor S. 2019 p.24). Gaelic *Àird* can mean 'high ground' and the name possibly referred originally to the higher land to the south of the Beaully Firth; now it is applied to the whole area, regardless of altitude. However, *àird* can also mean 'promontory', and Hugh Barron (1967 p.47) was of the opinion that the name originally referred to the low-lying land jutting into the Beaully Firth between the bay at Lentrán and the mouth of the Beaully River, a view

supported by William Mackay (1905 p.59). The higher part of the western sector of the area is known in Gaelic as *Bràigh na h-Àirde* 'the upland of the Aird', although Barron maintained that it refers to Kiltarlity, as distinct from Kirkhill or Kilmorack. For a full discussion of the name see Taylor (S. 2019 p24-7).

### **Blàr nam Fèinne**

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NH 595 432  
57°27.488'N 4°20.592'W

Alternatively, *Blàr na Fèinne* 'the battlefield of the *Fianna* or *Fingalians*'. This site in the centre of the Aird, heavily disrupted by dense afforestation, boasted a large number of stone cairns, now mostly destroyed. These might have been agricultural clearance heaps (Canmore/site/12728), but they are connected in oral tradition to a battle or battles and, indeed, at least in their name, to the famous legendary warriors of the *Fianna*. The OS Name Book says of the site that 'there are a great number of stone cairns scattered about the ridge which are supposed to mark the burying places of those who were slain in a battle which was fought on this spot'. It also quotes the following passage from Skene's *Highlanders of Scotland*: 'A battle took place between Malcolm King of Scotland and Thorfinn, a Norwegian Earl, on the Southern shore of the Beaully Firth; each party seeming resolved to peril their cause upon the result of this engagement; but the ferocity and determined valour of the Norwegians at length prevailed over the numbers and undisciplined daring of the Scots, and Malcolm was totally defeated, himself killed, and his army almost destroyed. Thorfinn followed up his success by conquering the whole of Scotland as far as the Firth of Tay. This was about the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.'

## Cladh Uradain

---

NH 602 385  
57°24.954'N 4°19.691'W

*The graveyard of St Uradan (otherwise known as Curadan).* On the shore of Loch Dochfour at Kirkton (q.v.). For information on Curadan, see **Ruigh Uradain**. *Cladh Uradain* is an ancient religious location, reputed to be the site of the Old Church of the parish of Bona, of which nothing remains. According to tradition, Curadan was buried in Rosemarkie, where he was bishop, and not on Loch Dochfour-side, and it is likely that the graveyard takes its name from the ancient church which was dedicated to the saint. A Free Church, which accommodated 600 persons sitting, was built beside *Cladh Uradain* in 1846, and the site attracted a sacramental occasion in 1856 when there were four thousand people outside the church in addition to those inside (Barron 2002 p.383). See **Kirkton**.

## Doire Mhòr

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Around NH 585 388  
Around 57°25.103'N 4°21.342'W

*Large copse.* The pockets of trees still to be found here today are presumed to be the origin of the name of this upland area NW of Lochend.

## Dùghall Mòr

---

NH 559 425  
57°27.008'N 4°24.152'W

This is an unusual toponym as it refers to a tree which is marked on the OS 1:25 000 map. In the year 2000, this forest giant in Reelig Glen was found to be over 64m high, making it the tallest tree in Britain. The name, chosen in a local competition and meaning 'Big Douglas', is appropriate as the tree is a Douglas Fir. However,

in 2014 it was announced that another tree of the same species, growing nearby, is slightly higher than *Dùghall Mòr*, and that the new king of the forest is actually the tallest conifer in Europe.

## General's Well, The

---

NH 660 436  
57°21.036'N 4°22.034'W

The Gaelic form *Fuaran* (or *Tobar*) *an t-Seanaileir* might be expected, but it is unrecorded (see **General Wade's Well**). On the W side of the River Ness, opposite the Ness Islands in Inverness, the General's Well is popularly associated with the road-building Wade, but Edward Meldrum (1982 p.43) connects it instead to a General Macintyre, a 19<sup>th</sup> century resident of Bught House (demolished in 1967 to make way for the Ice Rink), and this is the information provided on a plaque at the well. However, this claim is contradicted by the feature being recorded as 'Generals Well' on Home's 1774 map. The OS say simply that it is 'a spring of pure water ... covered over with mason work and a drinking cup attached by a General officer resident in Inverness about 100 years ago' [i.e. mid-18<sup>th</sup> century] (OS1/17/31/106). Even this detail is disputed, with a Robert K. Mackenzie of Cleveland, Ohio installing a plaque at the well in 1956, claiming his father Kenneth Mackenzie, a native of Inverness, provided the original ladle in 1872 before emigrating to America (**ambaile.org.uk**). However, the OS survey, which mentions the 'drinking cup', took place prior to that, in 1868-70. Alexander Fraser says of the well that 'children and young people affected with rickets were brought to it and manipulated upon its waters. To strengthen the virtue of the water, silver coins of all sizes, together with small pebbles, were immersed in the well, and various curious ceremonies were observed' (1878 p.130).



The General's Well, Bught, Inverness

### Lòn Cauntinn

NH 565 398  
57°25.384'N 4°23.743'W

This is described as a 'mossy flat' in the OS Name Book (OS1/17/52/66), which fits the meaning of *lòn*. The specific element bears similarity to the Ross-shire place-name Contin 'confluence', and aerial photographs show that *Lòn Cauntinn* boasts a number of confluences of bog-streams. If this interpretation is correct, the Gaelic form should be *Lòn Cunndainn*. Just to its N, at NH565401, is *Creagan Cauntinn*, probably 'the small rocky hill of Cauntinn'. NE of Ladycairn.

### Racecourse Wood

NH 638 416  
57°26.701'N 4°16.193'W

Adjacent to Dunaincroy (q.v.). The OS Name Book (OS1/17/31/88) tells us that the name derives from the fact that races (presumably horse races) were held here 'about thirty years ago'. Another 'Race Course' is marked on old OS maps at NH625419 above Mains of Dunain; this was created around 1823 and used until about 1915 (Barron 1961 p.11). No Gaelic form has been ascertained.

**Section 2:**  
East of the River & Loch Ness





## City and Suburbs

### Aultnaskiach *Allt nan Sgitheach*

NH 664 440  
57°28.023'N 4°13.657'W

*The burn of the hawthorns.* Recorded as Auldnskiahe in 1592 and Altnaskiach in 1595 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.251-3); also as Aldniskiach in the Wardlaw MS, and Aultnaskiah on old OS maps. It flows from near Leys Castle via Balloan Road, then behind Green Drive and Culduthel road, meeting its tributary, the Cauldeen Burn, behind Broom Drive. The combined watercourse, which retains the name *Allt nan Sgitheach*, continues under Burn Road and through woodland adjacent to Glenburn Drive, to reach the River Ness just N of the Ness Islands. An alternative name for the stream is Glen Burn, hence the name of the Drive. The Cauldeen Burn derives its name from the Gaelic for the hazel tree (i.e. *Allt a' Challtainn*). It originates near the Oldtown of Leys and flows under Balnakyle Road in Lochardil, before reaching Drummond Park and meeting *Allt nan Sgitheach* (Meldrum 1981 p.44). It gives its name to Cauldeen Primary School NH670430 and Cauldeen Road NH670435.

### Auld Castle Hill

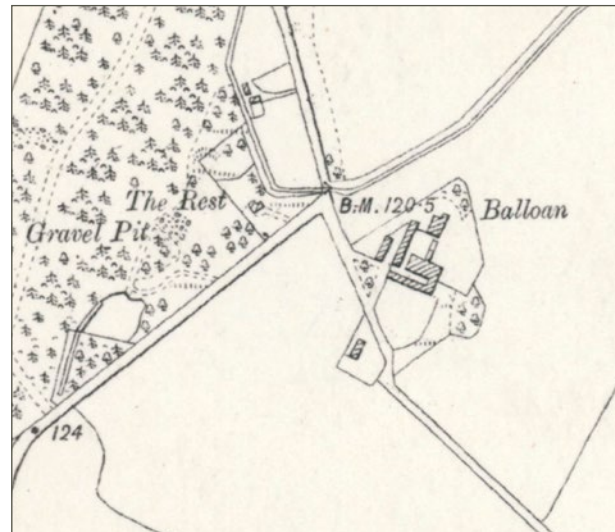
NH 674 455  
57°28.877'N 4°12.789'W

Now remembered in Auldcastle Road, this hill, directly to the S of Millburn Road is reputed to be the site of MacBeth's ancient stronghold. Given as ye Auld Castele in 1449 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.117) and Auld Castelhill in 1580 (Mackay 1911 p.279). See **Crown, The**.

### Balloan (Inverness) *Baile an Lòin*

NH 670 426  
57°27.3381'N 4°13.041'W

*The farm of the loch,* now developed for housing and parkland. *Lòin* here refers to a loch that was drained (OS1/17/31/24), sometime between the mid-18<sup>th</sup> and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, although the word can also stand for a meadow in an area of poor drainage. Even today, this locality remains prone to occasional flooding. See **Balloan (Strathnairn)**.



Balloan Farm before the area was developed for housing and parkland. The road to the steading's immediate north is now Balloan Road. Detail from the 2nd edition 6-inch OS map (pub. 1906).

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### **Balloch** *Baile an Loch*

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NH 735 471

57°29.764'N 4°06.639'W

*The settlement of the loch* (long since drained). Given as Bellinloch by Roy (1747-52). The emphasis in speech goes on the second syllable of the anglicised form of the name (i.e. 'ba-LOCH'), in contrast to Balloch ('BAL-och') on Loch Lomond where the name derives, not from *baile* but from the Gaelic word *bealach* 'pass'. A pass known as *Am Bealach*, anglicised 'The Balloch', existed in what is now central urban Inverness. The name, while no longer on the maps, still has some currency in the Gaelic community; it is the pass leading from the top end of Castle Street into View Place at NH666449.

### **Balnakyle** *Baile na Coille*

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NH 664 424

57°27.203'N 4°13.572'W

*The farm of the wood*. Early OS maps show the farm adjacent to an extensive woodland. The name is now preserved in Balnakyle Road in the suburb of Lochardil.

### **Broad Stone**

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NH 673 449

57°28.504'N 4°12.867'W

This is a historically significant horizontal slab, measuring some 3.6m x 2m, and bearing a rectangular sunken slot measuring 1.2m in length and 0.24m in width, which was thought to be designed to take the shaft of a cross that marked the medieval burgh boundary. It possibly dates back to as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Edward Meldrum (1982 p.35) tells us that it was on the march between the barony of Auldcastle and Church lands in the Middle Ages, and that the earliest record of the name is as 'le Braidstone' in

1455. The stone, now in a small enclosure on the N side of Kingsmills Road between Kingsmills Park and Broadstone Avenue in the Crown, was buried under the pavement for around a century, and was uncovered in around 1920 (Canmore/site/13523). 'Broadstone Park' is an adjacent suburban street but, at the time of the first OS survey in 1868-70, it was an actual 'park' (pasture land) that was in the process of being developed for housing (OS1/17/33/148). There is no recorded Gaelic form of the toponym.

### **Cameron Barracks**

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NH 679 455

57°28.879'N 4°12.224'W

This military establishment adjacent to Millburn Road is named for the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders who were based there for over eight decades. In Gaelic it is *Gearastan nan Camshronach*. The high ground on which it is located is Knockintinnel *Cnoc an Tionail* 'the gathering or rallying hill' – an old Gaelic name which is falling into disuse, and which likely derived from the hill's being employed as a rallying site for defenders of the town at time of threat. Early forms include Knokyntynol in a royal charter of 1359 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.65) and Knokintynnal in 1581 (Mackay 1911 p.289).

### **Castle Heather** *Caisteal an Leathair*

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NH 680 427

57°29.360'N 4°12.117'W

*The castle of the slope*. The name of this suburb is a corruption of an earlier Gaelic name for a settlement variously called Castle Leather, Castle Lethers or Castleleathers. The Lordship of Leffare (1456) applied to the district along the slope there (Macbain 1922 p.184), and old records include Castletoun de Lafere 1508, Castletown of Lather 1537, Castle Lathir 1537 and Castle Leathers 1677

(Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.145). The OSA of 1793 claims the original name was for a 'castle' (existing today only as 'earthworks') called *Caistal nan Leoireach* 'the castle of the recluse or retired'. But this seems unlikely, and 'the castle of the slope' fits the location. The name was still Castleleathers on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS 6-inch map (1874), with 'Supposed Site of Castle' marked a short distance away to the SW, but by the time of the second edition in 1906, Castle Heather had become the established (OS) form in English. Robertson gives the Gaelic form as *Caisteal an Leathair* (King 2019 p.233), the second element being a derivative of *leth-oir* 'slope, edge', and his interpretation is supported by Macbain.



Castle Heather in its earlier guise as Castleleathers (1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch OS map pub.1874). By the time of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (pub. 1906), it had become Castle Heather.

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### Castlehill (of Inshes) *Caisteal Still*

NH 696 442  
57°28.199'N 4°10.495'W

*Castle of (the) strip (of land)*. Castlehill 1677 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.146). Roy's map (1747-52) gives Castle hill. According to the OS Name Book (OS1/17/31/49), 'the property connected with it is a small estate, formed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century by a subdivision of the estate of Inshes. The house is said to have been fortified in ancient times,

by a keep or tower, but no trace remains ...' The English form is thought to be a corruption of the original, which was collected by W.J. Watson when Gaelic would still have been widely spoken on the outskirts of Inverness (see Watson 2002 p.157).

### Castle Hill (Inverness) *Tom a' Chaisteil*

NH 666 450  
57°28.576'N 4°13.526'W

This is the site of Inverness Castle (*Caisteal Inbhir Nis*) in the centre of the city, on a steep hill which overlooks a strategic crossing point of the River Ness (and therefore of the Great Glen). A fortification has existed on this site, on and off, since the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and it is referred to as 'Castle-hill' in translation from Latin in a royal charter of 1379 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.79). In 1718, it was named Fort George after King George I (MacIntosh 1939 p.153), and is so marked on maps (e.g. Dorret 1750), although military maps predating this change have an unnamed structure on Castle Hill (e.g. Petit ca.1716).

Having been destroyed by the Jacobites in February 1746, the victor at the Battle of Culloden, the Duke of Cumberland, sought to replace it on the same site. John Maclean (1886 p.25) says that Cumberland was dissuaded from this by his officers, on account of the site 'being commanded by heights in the immediate vicinity' (the high ground of The Crown and Barnhill). However, there is another tradition - that the ex-Provost, John Hossack, led a successful opposition to the proposal because of the potential effect on the young ladies of Inverness of the 'wild and licentious soldiery', he being the father of 'pretty daughters' (Pollitt 1981 p.55). Whatever the reason, the military reconstruction did not take place, and the name was transferred to a major fortification built on a new site near Ardersier (see **Fort George**). Before the construction of the current

'Inverness Castle' in 1836-7, the maps show no building, but give the site as Castle Hill e.g. Wood (1821). The Gaelic form is based on general usage in Inverness. Another hillock called *Tom a' Chaisteil* (*Tom a' Caisteal* OS) is to be found S of Kirkton (q.v.) in the Aird at NH604448. It is the site of a ruined medieval fortress (Canmore/site/13556) built by a knight of English origin (Meldrum 1987 p.14) and sometimes referred to as 'Fernua Castle' (Meldrum 1975 p.152). There is yet another *Tom a' Chaisteil* in Petty (See Dalziel).

### **Chapel Yard (Cemetery)** *Cladh a' Chaibeil*

NH 664 456  
57°28.909'N 4°13.372'W

Also known in Gaelic as *Cladh an t-Seipeil*, this cemetery, sandwiched between Chapel Street and Longman Road, has ancient links to the church, and hosts the grave of the famous Gaelic poet, *Màiri Mhòr nan Òran* (Mary MacPherson). The OS Name Book (OS1/17/33/36) has an interesting entry, saying that it was the 'yard of the chapel which belonged to a Franciscan, or, as the Old Statistical Account maintains, Dominican Monastery, established here in the reign of

Alexander II. At present there is not the slightest vestige remaining of either of these two objects - Cromwell having removed every stone of these for the building of a citadel near the mouth of the river ...' The yard was at one time a site for outdoor church services and was used by the Duke of Cumberland to corral Lord Lovat's confiscated cattle which were driven off his estates in the Aird (Maclean 1886 p.53).

### **Clachnacuddin** *Clach na Cùdainn*

NH 667 452  
57°28.638'N 4°13.520'W

*The stone of the tub.* The OS Name Book (OS1/17/33/42), which gives the name as Clachnacudin, has the following entry: 'three Gaelic words in a corrupted state (Gaelic - *Clach na Cudainn*) meaning "Stone of the Tub", applied to a stone standing at the Exchange front of the Town Hall, at the base of the Market Cross, "on which the predecessors of the present ... maid-servants were wont in ancient days to rest their water pails in passing to & from the river." The Gaelic name was submitted to the authorities, but they would not adopt it. It is generally written



A view of Inverness from the W bank of the river on a military map ca. 1725 (A General Survey of Inverness and the country adjacent to the foot of Loch-Ness). Castle Hill, with the original Fort George, is at right beyond the old seven-arched bridge. At the left-hand end is the Old High Church. The spire left of the castle is the Town Steeple.

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in the anglicised form.' The smooth, flat stone, which stands to this day outside the Town House, was for long viewed as a powerful symbol of the Highland capital, being the location where people gathered to meet and exchange news (it was at one time closer to the river than its current location). According to tradition, it originated in Lochalsh, where it was employed in the installation of the Lords of the Isles as Lords of Lochalsh, and it was described by the NSA (Vol XIV 1845 p.16) as 'Clach-na-cudden ... the palladium of the burgh'. It was so beloved of Invernessians that many citizens who left for far-flung parts would chip off a small piece as a talisman, leading to the stone being set in its protective covering in 1900, lest it disappear altogether (Pollitt 1981 p.80).

The Mercat (Market) Cross, to which it is affixed, once stood in the middle of the area of Bridge Street known as The Exchange, and important proclamations were made from its steps. Once Clachnacuddin was set into the steps, the person making the proclamation could stand on the stone, presumably affording them more symbolic power and significance. The last time the Riot Act was read in Inverness, during the First World War, the sheriff delivered it while standing on Clachnacuddin (Maclean, L. 1988 p.20). Sadly, the historical and cultural significance of this iconic stone to Inverness is barely recognised by the inhabitants today.

### **Cradlehall** *Am Baile Dearg*

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NH 703 448  
57°28.485'N 4°09.904'W

The Gaelic form of the name, which means 'the red steading' is from Robertson (King 2019 p.233). Cradlehall was for some time the home of William 'Toby' Caulfeild (d. 1767), a British army officer

and successor to General Wade, who constructed over nine hundred miles of roads in the Highlands, and whose name, with a spelling change, is remembered in Caulfield Road in today's suburb of Cradlehall. Apparently generous in his hospitality, he is reputed to have 'entertained his friends and provided a hoist to carry them to an attic, where they could sleep off their potatoes; hence the name Cradlehall' (Trans. ISS Vol 7 1910 p.186).

### **Cromwell's Fort**

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NH 665 463  
57°29.264'N 4°13.707'W

Also known as the Citadel. Located on the Longman Industrial Estate, next to the estuary of the River Ness. Virtually nothing remains today of what was a remarkable military structure. The OS Name Book (OS1/17/33/23) tells us that it 'was built by Oliver Cromwell in 1653-8 from material obtained from the Greyfriars Church and St Mary's Chapel Inverness and from the monasteries of Beauly and Kinloss, as well as the episcopal castle of Chanonry all of which he demolished for that purpose. The timber used was partly obtained from the fir woods of Strathglass and the remaining part, the oak, was brought from England. In form it was pentagonal with ramparts and bastions, having a wet ditch on four sides and the river washing it on the fifth, the western. A large, square, three-storied building which served as a magazine, stores and church occupied the centre, while two large four-storied buildings on opposite sides within the ramparts furnished accommodation.' The structure was short-lived; after five years it was demolished, and the stone used in the new bridge across the Ness, among other structures (Glashan 1975 p.181). Today only the clock tower and remains of earthworks can be seen.

Roy's map (1747-52) shows a remarkable pentagonal structure and calls it 'Old Fort'. In 1832 it is given as Cromwell's Fort and shows some buildings and the moat, but the walls forming the pentagon have gone. By 1870 the OS survey shows that little remained of the fortress. A Gaelic form has not been ascertained; however, Cromwell Street in Stornoway is *Sràid Chrombail*, so *Dùn Chrombail* might be expected.

### **Crown (The)** *An Crùn*

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NH 672 454  
57°28.675'N 4°12.846'W

The Crown (the article is not always present on maps) is explained in the OS Name Book (OS1/17/33/137) thus: 'an eminence 640 yards in length by 330 in breadth, situated a little eastward of the town. We are told by tradition that in the sixth century Inverness was the Capital of the Pictish Kingdom and that the Royal Palace stood on the rising ground now called the Crown, for what reason unless from this circumstance or some fancied resemblance to that insign of Royalty, is now uncertain.' John Noble (1902 p.6) claims that the hill 'has from time out of mind' been known as The Crown, but the earliest record appears to be 1505, where the register of Sasines has an account of 'the lands and barony of Auld Castlehill [q.v.], commonly called the Crown, and long rig immediately around the Crown, called the Auld, or MacBeth's Castlehill' (Noble *ibid.*) It appears likely that the name was coined in English, and that the modern Gaelic form is a derivative.

### **Culcabock** *Cùil Chàbaig*

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NH 680 444  
57°28.251'N 4°12.162'W

The Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.233), but the name's origins are a mystery. Watson gave *Cùil na Càbaig* 'nook of the cheese' (2002 p.231); *càbag* is the Gaelic equivalent of

the Scots *kebbock* 'a whole cheese'. Recorded as Culkabok and Culcabok in the Burgh records of 1556-61, Culcabock in 1677 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.145) and as Coulchabarck on Pont's map (ca. 1583-1614). The village of Culcabock was situated at the NE corner of the current Culcabock Golf Course (Inverness Golf Club), just behind Fluke Street (see **Fluke Inn**) and the ford over the *Allt Muineach*, where the Culcabock Roundabout is today. *Cùl Chadha Bog* 'behind (the) wet pass' has been postulated as an alternative explanation for the origin of the name. However, the 'cheese' interpretation is given credibility by an account in the OSA of a stone, marking the boundary of Ardersier and Nairn parishes, called 'claoch na cabbag' [i.e. *clach na càbaig*] or 'cabbac stone', *cabbac* signifying 'a cheese' [meaning a large round wheel or truckle], and marking the death of a 'chieftain who fell in a scuffle which originated in a cheese, in the town of Inverness' (Vol IV 1792 p.91).

### **Culduthel** *Cùil Daothail*

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NH 663 419  
57°26.823'N 4°13.716'W

The first element was confirmed by Professor Watson as *cùil* 'nook', rather than *cùl* 'back' (Watson 2002 p.232) but, beyond that, this toponym resists interpretation. The slenderisation of the second element is a subject of disagreement, Robertson giving *Cul-daothal* (King 2009 p.233), but Sinton (1923 p.117) preferring *Cul-daothail*. The genitive form is given as *Chuldaothal* in a Gaelic poem in 1806.

Iain Taylor has suggested the second element might be based on a personal name Tuathal. A Pictish origin has also been suggested, with the second syllable representing an open space cf. modern Welsh *iâl* 'hill country' (Watson 2002

p.82). Duthil (G. *Daothal*) in Strathspey (Dothol ca. 1230) has been explained as being to the north (*tuathal*) of Creag an Fhithich, with Deishar to its south (*deiseil*) [Macbain 1922 p.157 & 320].

The name is recorded in 1642 on the Register of the Great Seal of Scotland as Culdutheld and (Over et Nether) Culduthellis (Vol IX p.399 & 426).

### Culloden *Cùil Lodair*

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NH 717 463

57°29.329'N 4°08.440'W

*The nook of the small pool or marsh.* Recorded as Cullodyn and Cullodyne in the Burgh Records (1556-61), and as Coulloddinn on Pont's map (ca. 1583-1614), it occurs in its modern spelling by 1677 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.146). The anglicised form preserves the terminal 'n' of the original Gaelic, whereas the modern Gaelic form has it transformed to an 'r', a change that had already taken place by the time of the famous battle on Culloden Moor in April 1746; we know this from the work of contemporary Gaelic poets who wrote the name *Cuilodair*. Milton of Culloden *Baile Mhuilinn Chùil Lodair* is at NH707468. *Lodan* is an uncommon toponymic element in the northern Highlands, but it is not so infrequent in Argyll and Galloway. The latter boasts several examples, including Cumloden 'bent marsh or pool', and Loddanmore, Loddanree and The Lodans, all of which refer to pools (Maxwell 1930). *Lodan* is originally a diminutive of *lod* but stands as a word in its own right; it was adopted into Scots from Gaelic as the loanword *loddan* 'pool' (<https://dsl.ac.uk>). The battlefield of Culloden is *Blàr Chùil Lodair* in Gaelic. The word *blàr* 'field, plain' also came to mean 'battle' (a *blàr* was a good place for two armies to meet) so that *Blàr Chùil Lodair* also means 'The Battle of Culloden'; context will differentiate between the two.



The memorial cairn, Culloden Battlefield. The battle on 16 April 1746 was a seminal event in Scottish and British history.

### Diriebucht *Tir nam Bochd*

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NH 677 453

57°28.756'N 4°12.411'W

*The land of the poor.* The Gaelic form is from Iain Taylor (2011 p.56), although he suggests it might originally have been *Doire nam Bochd* 'the grove of the poor' (cf. Dirnanean *Doire nan Eun* 'the copse of the birds' in Strathardle, Perthshire). Another striking possibility is *Dithreabh nam Bochd* 'the uncultivated land of the poor' (Ronald Black pers. comm.). A 1795 account by Provost Inglis says that this area close to Millburn Academy was 'Dire na Pouchk or the Land of the Poor' (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.20). It was reported to have been granted in 1362 by Sir Robert Chisholm of Chisholm to the Church as a means of raising revenue for poor people, and it was still the property of the Inverness Kirk Session in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Recorded as Deyrbowchte in 1376 (Watson 2002 p.158), and Dayrbocht in 1562 (Mackay 1911 p.78). Watson commented as follows: 'commonly said to mean "The poor's Land"; but it may rather mean "The poor or barren Land"', although he did not offer a Gaelic form. The name is today perpetuated in Diriebucht Road.

### **Drakies** *Dreigidh*

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NH 682 442  
57°28.065'N 4°11.849'W

The meaning of this place-name, which might be of Pictish origin, is unknown. Recorded as Drekeis in a royal charter of 1369 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.69). The reason for the pluralisation in English is that there were two settlements of the same name adjacent to each other, known in Gaelic as *Dreigidh Mòr* and *Dreigidh Beag*. They are recorded as Mekil Draky and Lytill Draky in 1557 (Mackay 1911 p.9), but Pont a few decades later gives them as Draky-moir and Draky-beg, demonstrating the currency of the names in both languages. Drakies is now an extensive suburb. An interesting comparison can be made with two small settlements outside Grantown-on-Spey called Easter Dreggie and Wester Dreggie. These are shown on Roy's military map (1747-52), respectively, as *Dregie mor* and *Dregie beg*. Unfortunately, as with the Inverness example, the name has so far resisted interpretation.

### **Drumbuie** *An Druim Buidhe*

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NH 716 439  
57°28.037'N 4°08.577'W

*Yellow ridge*. The name does not appear on OS maps until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. S of Westhill.

### **Drummond (Inverness)** *An Druimein*

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NH 665 434  
57°27.685'N 4°13.603'W

*The small ridge*. This interpretation of the name, which applies to a low ridge that runs parallel to the Ness through the suburbs of Drummond and Lochardil, is from Iain Taylor (2011 p.59), but Watson preferred *Druiminn* 'at or on the ridge' (2002 p.159). The recorded forms Drumdevan

(1592) and Drumdivan (1595) – both in Fraser-Mackintosh (1875 p.251-3) – appear to be derived from the Gaelic *Druim Diomhain* 'idle ridge'. If the name had survived in anglicised form as Drumdevan, it could have been confused with the small settlement of Drumdevan (q.v.) south of the city.

Accounts by Lorraine Maclean of Dochgarroch and Charles Fraser-Mackintosh fill in the picture. Maclean tells of twin Mackintosh brothers from Strathspey who set up as ironmongers in Inverness and became rich when a barrel of nails they had ordered turned out to be full of gold! (1988 p.43). Whatever the origin of his wealth, the younger of the twins, Angus, the great-great-grandfather of Charles Fraser-Mackintosh, bought **Drummond (Ashie Moor)** near Erchite from the Macbeans prior to 1751. His only son, Phineas Mackintosh, whose portrait hangs in Inverness Town House, and who was Provost of Inverness four times between 1770 and 1791, fell heir to the lands of Drummond (Ashie Moor), but was tempted by a high price to sell the estate to William Fraser of Balnain, a decision he came to regret. Phineas then bought Drumdevan from the Town of Inverness and called his new purchase Drummond in remembrance of his own and his father's country property (Fraser-Mackintosh 1898 p.38-9). In 1833, a Royal Commission on Municipal Corporations in Scotland reported that in 1783, the land of Drummond (Inverness) was owned by the Burgh, which sold it below its market value to Provost Mackintosh, who appears to have been less than scrupulous in his financial dealings ([ambaile.org.uk](http://ambaile.org.uk)). Phineas, who styled himself 'of Drummond', probably built Old Drummond House in Inverness at NH666434 (Meldrum 1982 p.41).



### Fluke Inn

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NH 681 446  
57°28.385'N 4°12.020'W

There is some contention about the origin of the name of this old inn on Culcabock Road. The thoroughfare on which it is situated was colloquially called Fluke Street, the name originating, according to some folk, from the fact that a fish market was once held there, 'fluke' being a Scots term for a flounder. This is supported by the Gaelic form given by Robertson – *Straid an Leòbag* (properly *Sràid na Leòbaig*) 'flounder street' (King 2019 p.233) – although this might have been influenced by the supposed etymology of the Scots/English name. There is an old tradition that 'fluke' here actually originated in the Gaelic *fliuch* 'wet', as the road led to a ford at NH682446 across a burn called the Aultmurnoche or Altmuniack (possibly *Allt Muineach* 'thorny burn') which now flows underground below the Old Perth Road.

### Haugh, The *An Talchan*

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NH 665 446  
57°28.370'N 4°13.611'W

*The flat land by the river.* Haugh is a Scots word, derived from the old Scots *halche* 'flat land by water, and The Haugh in Inverness is first recorded in a royal charter of 1180 (Watson 2002 p.159). It was again recorded as Haugh in 1677 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.145). The word, as borrowed into Gaelic (*talchan*), has retained the original 'l' which has been lost in modern Scots. For a note on the intrusive 't' in the Gaelic form, see **Holm**.

### Hilton *Baile a' Chnuic*

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NH 674 436  
57°27.800'N 4°12.727'W

*The settlement of [on] the hill.* Mèkle Hiltoun and Lìtil Hiltoun are recorded in 1509 in the Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, perhaps corresponding to what appears in the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch map (OS) as a collection of houses, including a Poorhouse, called Hilton (NH673440) and a separate steading several hundred metres distant (NH678433). Hilton, now unified, is a modern suburb. The original Gaelic name is not recorded and is here inferred. The area is referred to as *Baile a' Chnuic* by Gaelic speakers in Inverness, although the form on the Hilton Community Centre carries the diminutive adjective i.e. *Baile Beag a' Chnuic*. All of the Hiltons in Easter Ross, close to Inverness, originated as *Baile a' Chnuic*. One of Professor Watson's place-name informants was a Hugh MacIennan of Hilton.

### Holm *An Tuilm*

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NH 651 421  
57°26.967'N 4°14.949'W

*The riverine meadow.* The Gaelic form is from Watson (2002 p.160), although Robertson gives the unslenderised *an Talm* (King 2019 p.233). Records include Holme 1677 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.145), Holm (Roy 1747-52), and Home on a 1725 military map (showing the loss of pronunciation of the 'l' by this stage). The name is of Scots or English origin, although the word *holm*, with an additional meaning of 'island', also occurred in Old Norse. The intrusive 't' in the Gaelic form is a common response by the Gaels of old to loans of words starting with 'h', an unnatural occurrence in Gaelic. The Laird of Holm was known as *Fear an Tuilm* in Gaelic. Holm (pron. 'HOME') is now a suburb. See **Holme**.

### Inshes (The) *Na h-Innseagan*

NH 695 443

57°28.251'N 4°10.675'W

*The small meadows.* Recorded as Inchis in 1557 (see Mackay 1911 p.lxxxvi) and as Inches by Roy (1747-52), the name (pron. 'nuh HEEN-shak-un') is based on *innseag*, a diminutive of *innis* - a Gaelic word with an old Celtic heritage, meaning 'island' or 'meadow' (Watson 2002 p.160). Mackay (1911 p. lvii) eschews the diminutive, giving *Na h-Innseachan* 'the meadows'. This form might, however, be confused with the (identical) Gaelic for India! Jessie Smith, one of the last speakers of Strathnairn Gaelic, gave it in the singular form i.e. *An Innis* 'the meadow' (TD Tr.81647.2).

Inverness boasts several examples of place-names with the element *innis*, including Merkinch (q.v.) and Capel Inch (q.v.). In English, the suburb and

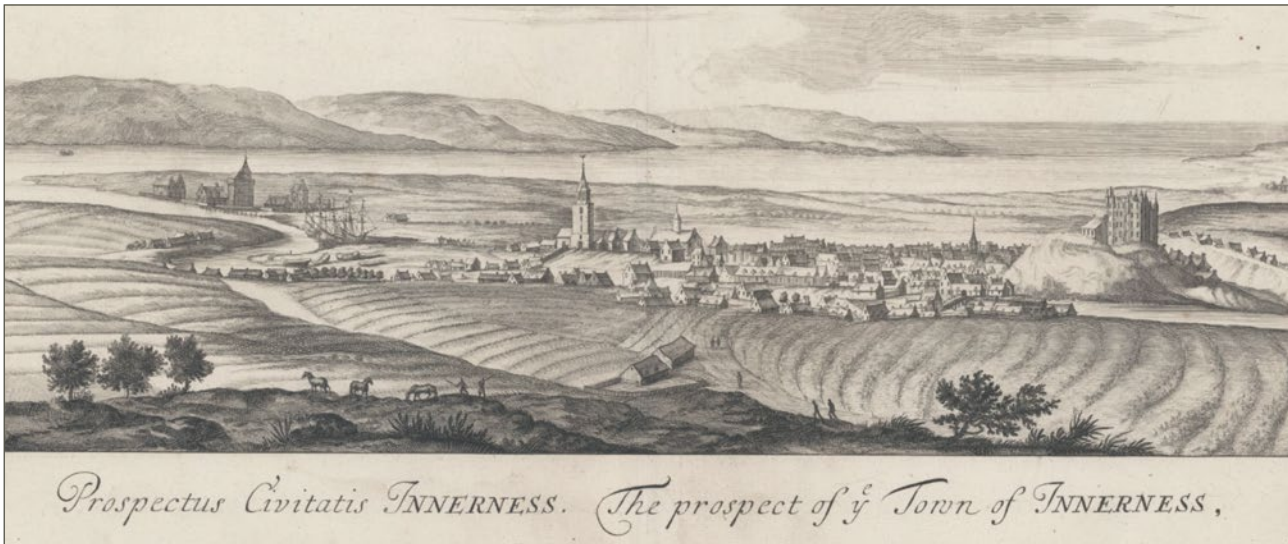
retail park are commonly referred to today as 'Inshes' rather than 'The Inshes' although the article is universally employed in Gaelic. William Mackay commented that the loss of the article in English had already taken place by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (see Mackay 1911 p.lvii).

### Inverness *Inbhir Nis*

NH 665 451

57°28.626'N 4°13.610'W

*The mouth of the River Ness.* The 'bh' in *inbhir* 'river mouth' is not universally pronounced as a 'v', so we see records such as Invirnyss in 1369 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.79), but Innernis in 1561 and Innernes in 1563 (Mackay 1911 p.70 & 106). On his beautiful engraving of the town in *Theatrum Scotiae*, John Slezer (1693) labels it Innerness, and the OSA (1793 p.603) tells us the name was 'anciently written' in the same way. See **Ness, River**.



John Slezer's view of 'Innerness' 1693.

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### **Kingsmills** *Muileann an Rìgh*

---

NH 677 445

57°28.333'N 4°12.404'W

*The mill of the king.* The earliest record is in English, as 'our mill at Inverness', in a royal charter of Alexander II in 1232 (Watson 1909 p.54). Use of the Mill Burn (q.v.), and associated water storages, was later granted by royal charter to the townsfolk for powering a series of water mills, given as Moulyn na Ry (*Muileann an Rìgh*) by Pont (ca. 1583-1614). Recorded in the singular (as with the Gaelic) as Kingis Myll in 1559 (Mackay 1911 p.35) and as King's Mill in 1774 (Home's map), but a plural form is listed on the Golden Charter of 1591. Both plural and singular forms are found on various historical maps, and the plural form *Muilnean an Rìgh* is sometimes heard in modern Gaelic. After seven centuries, milling at Kingsmills came to an end in 1954, and the waterwheel was removed in the 1960s (*Am Baile* website). There was also a mill on the lower part of the Mill Burn at Diriebught (q.v.). Yet others between Kingsmills and Diriebught, which are shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch OS map, were known as Mid Mills, a name which is perpetuated in Midmills Road.

### **Leys (The)** *An Leigheas*

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NH 680 409

57°26.393'N 4°12.046'W

The Gaelic form is from Watson (2002 p.160), but it has resisted interpretation, although 'bright (i.e. sunny) spot' has been suggested (from *leus, lèas*). Given as Leyes in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century Wardlaw MS (p.147). Based on his research on 16<sup>th</sup> century Burgh Court Records, Mackay (1911 p. lvii) gives *An Léas* 'the sunny spot', and he makes clear use of the article in the anglicised form i.e. The Leys. A 19<sup>th</sup> century Gaelic poem to the Leys Bard, William Mackenzie, referred to the longevity of his teaching career there as *iomadh bliadhna san Leidheas* 'many years in The Leys', confirming the

presence of the article and the pronunciation. Robertson gives the Gaelic form *an Léus*, with *Caisteal an Léis* for Leys Castle (King 2019 p.233). Oldtown of Leys is *An Seana Bhail'* ('SHEN uh-val') [Robertson and Jessie Smith TD Tr.81647.3]. Jessie and Finlay Smith gave *An Coille Dubh* for the Black Wood of Leys, *coille* unusually being a masculine noun locally. Much of this wood, centred around NH668384 and shown on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 6-inch OS map (pub. 1905), no longer exists.

### **Lochardil** *Loch Àrdail*

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NH 663 426

57°27.278'N 4°13.750'W

*The loch at the high place* (Taylor, I. 2011 p110). Lochardil is now a suburb but, according to the 19<sup>th</sup> century OS Name Book (OS1/17/31/91), it was a 'field on the Drummond estate which gets this name from the circumstances of a loch having once been here. The proprietor is particularly anxious that the name should appear on our plans as he intends to build a house here'. The said owner, Charles Fraser-Mackintosh, built his mansion there in 1876; it is now the Lochardil House Hotel. The name Lochardil, which also appears as Lochardill, Loch Ardle and Lochardell, is thought to be originally the name of an old barony near Inverness.

### **Lochgorm** *An Loch Gorm*

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Approx. NH 671 455

*Green loch.* The name is preserved today in a furniture store on Millburn Road, but this part of the old town of Inverness was once known as *Loch Gorm* and is shown as such in a parliamentary boundary map in 1832. The OS Name Book (OS1/17/33/85) registers it only in the form of the Lochgorm Inn which was on the N side of Petty Street at its eastern end. Petty Street was the route leading E out of Inverness towards Petty, but

this name had lost currency by 1905, becoming Eastgate, originally the name for the High Street (Meldrum 1982 p.25). Lochgorm appears on the 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. OS 6-inch map connected to railway sheds around NH669456 known as the Lochgorm Works. Writing of the mouth of the Mill Burn, Edward Meldrum (1981 p.46) says that ‘until the Longman Embankment was completed in 1813, an inlet of the sea, known as Loch Gorm, made the area a saltwater marsh at low tide’. The enclosed waterbody then became ‘an unsightly loch of stagnant water’ (Fraser 1905 p.10) and was filled in to become the site of a sale yard.



Detail from a Parliamentary map of 1832, showing Petty St and Loch Gorm's evolution into an area name, now remote from its origins as an inlet of the Moray Firth.

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### Longman, The *An Longman*

NH 669 473

57°29.770'N 4°13.374'W

An enigmatic place-name which continues to challenge definitive interpretation. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century ‘The Longman’ was applied to a ‘level piece of water grassland along the shore of the

Moray Firth’ (OS1/17/31/45). Today, it refers to the area east of Inverness Harbour, which includes an extensive industrial estate and Inverness Caledonian Thistle FC’s stadium. The Longman included a seashore bank at NH667471, bearing the name Longman’s Grave on Home’s 1774 map and on early OS maps (although in Home’s case ‘Long’ and ‘man’ are separated by another annotation, and it is not entirely clear if the cartographer considered it to be a single word). The OS Name Book tells us that it is ‘derived from the circumstance of a very long man having been cast on the shore and buried here. No person can, however, tell when this occurred nor where he was interred. Evidently the name has originated the tale.’

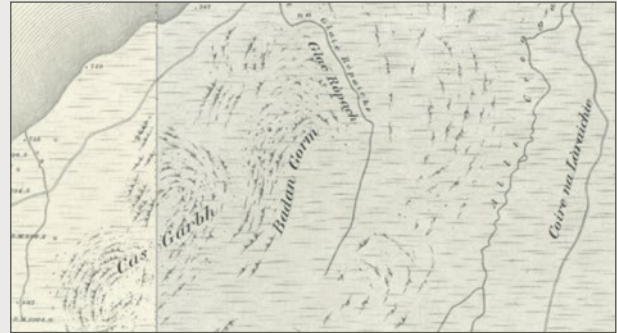
There are other sites in Scotland with similar names. The Long Man’s Grave is on the roadside W of Abernyte in Perthshire at NO221315, described by the OS as a ‘stone about eight feet long, lying in a horizontal position ... placed there to mark the spot where a traveller was buried, who either committed suicide or was murdered’ (OS1/25/4/6). Long Man’s Grave is at Fife Ness NO635094, in a maritime situation, and still marked on OS maps. The Name Book says that it is ‘a spot on the seashore but there [is] no vestige of a grave visible here nor are there any persons in the locality that remember any resemblance [sic] of a grave being here’ (OS1/13/84/94). Longman’s Grave, on the Croft of Logie Newton, Aberdeenshire at NJ652391, is in an area rich in archaeological heritage. We are told it had been a ‘small knowe of earth and stones’ which was levelled without discovering any remains (OS1/1/7/36). Unfortunately, none of these names further illuminates our Inverness example.

A slightly bizarre explanation of the name, unlikely to be correct, is given by John Fraser (1905 p.18): ‘It has ... been suggested that the reason for it being so called was that at one time it was

## 'Green' in Gaelic

There are three toponymic elements which can mean 'green'. In modern parlance, *uaine* ('OO-un-yuh') is the most common. While it appears in the landscape, usually associated with water bodies (there are four lochans in the Cairngorms called *An Lochan Uaine*), there are no examples in the area covered by this book. *Glas* ('GLASS') is an old pan-Celtic descriptor, sometimes found in initial position e.g. *Glas-choire* 'green corrie', generally meaning 'green' in old place-names, although standing for 'grey' or 'grey-green' in modern usage. Examples here are *Creagan Glas* and *Càrn Glas*. The archaic noun *glas* can also mean 'stream', and was likely found in Pictish as well as Gaelic. It is the root of the River Glass, and thus Strathglass, just to the W of the Aird. *Gorm* ('GOR-om') translates as 'blue' in common parlance (e.g. of the sky), but can also mean green when applied to vegetation. An example in the book is *Badan Gorm* 'green tuft'. In Inverness, an old inlet of the

Moray Firth, which lost its outlet and became stagnant (and reportedly green) was called *An Loch Gorm* ('un loch GOR-om').



A 'gorm' place-name in Strathnairn – *Badan Gorm* – a vegetational toponym. Earlier (pre-OS) maps of this area show woods in this area close to Loch Duntelchaig (the water visible at top, left).

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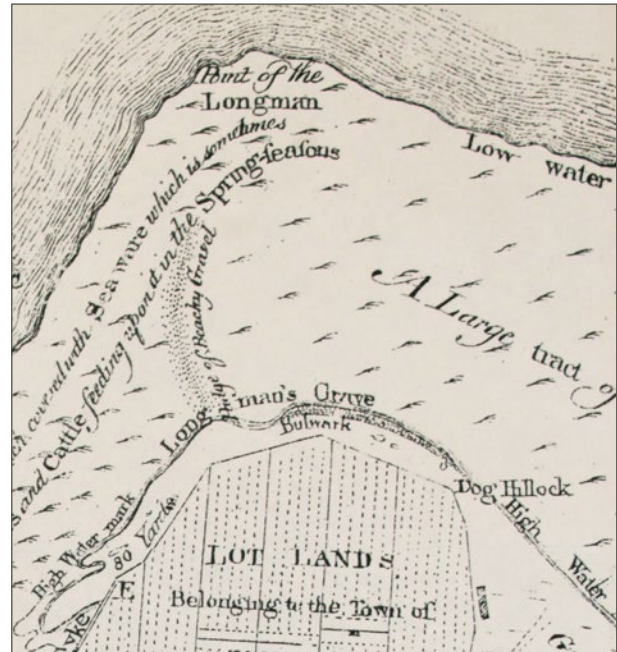
A furniture store on Millburn Road is all that preserves the ancient toponym Loch Gorm 'green loch' – once an inlet of the Moray Firth and later a name for this part of the town.

a favourite place for the landing of contraband goods, and that as a signal for the coast being clear for that purpose, the receivers on shore were wont to elevate a figure on a pole as a sign to the smuggling crews that the coast was clear, and that operations might begin.'

The OS continues its Name Book account of 'The Longman' (OS1/17/31/45) thus: 'Those who ought to know best say that the name comes from the Gaelic *Long* = Ship and *min* = flat which seems very reasonable when the flat character of the ground is considered, and the fact that in former times, vessels used to lie here'. The 'ship-flat' explanation is supported by records in 1449 of 'Ship Flat' (*ye schep flat* in Scots) as being the name for the coastal plain which boasted 'arable land' on the E side of the river mouth (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.117).

If we accept that, rather than being an English descriptor, *long* here refers to 'ships', as in Loch Long 'loch of ships' in Argyll and Kintail, we are left with the puzzle of the second element. *Min* 'plain field' is a possibility, although it is not common in place-names, but there might be other candidates. *Monadh*, often shortened to *mon*, generally means 'hill, elevated country', although, north of Inverness, the meaning is 'moor' (Watson 1926 p.406); in old place-names, it sometimes occurs as *man* in terminal position e.g. Langman, probably 'long hill', (now Longmanhill) near MacDuff (Alexander 1952 p.xlvii). Interestingly, nearby at NJ738620 is Longman Cairn, 'a large mound of earth and stones situate[d] on the highest part of the Longman hill (an artificial mound supposed to be sepulchral)' (OS1/4/14/194). However, the lack of elevation at the Inverness Longman casts doubt on this being the second element here.

*Mòine* 'peatland, moss' is another possibility, and it is notable that the low-lying coastal plain around Petty and Ardersier was once described as a 'moss'; however, it is not clear if the Longman was ever as poorly drained (and therefore peaty) as the ground around Petty. Coastal Hopeman in Moray (*Hudaman* in Gaelic) also fails to throw any further light on our puzzle, as it is likewise an enigmatic name (<http://www.ainmean-aite.scot/placename/hopeman>).



Longman's Grave and Point of the Longman on Home's map of 1774. Reproduced with the permission of the Highland Archive Centre HCA/D38/1b

Yet another possibility is that the first element is a corruption of the Gaelic *lòn* 'tidal pool', as the Longman was a mass of rough tidal flats in medieval times.

The OS also have an entry under Longman's Point (Longman Point on modern maps NH670476) which they describe as a 'shingly bank extending out into the Moray Firth and terminating in a point at the Longman Beacon. It appears only at ebb tides, used as a mussel scalp [place for collecting mussels]' (OS1/17/31/126). It is given as Point of the Longman by Home.

*An Raon Rèidh* 'the level plain' is a Gaelic name for the Longman which had some currency in the 20<sup>th</sup> century among Gaelic students at the old Inverness College campus in that area. It was coined by the late Duncan MacQuarrie, then inspector of schools. The Longman was once a site for public executions, reached from the town by a road called the Scatgate, the remains of which is today's Rose Street (named after the Rev. Robert Rose, minister of the Old High Church from 1744 to 1799).

#### **Mill Burn** *Allt a' Mhuilinn*

---

NH 683 436  
57°27.846'N 4°11.766'W

The earliest record is on Pont's map (ca. 1583-1614) as *Allt Moulyn nen-Ry* i.e. *Allt Muileann an Rìgh* 'the burn of the mill of the king'. James VI's 'Golden Charter' of 1591 confirmed the rights of the burgh to 'all and every one of the mills of our said burgh, called the King's mills ...' Water from the burn eventually drove mills at Milton of Leys, Culcabock, Kingsmills, Mid Mills and Diriebught, and to facilitate this, there were several dams and ponds along its length. Fraser's 1911 map shows two tributary streams, augmenting the flow of the Mill Burn, which bear Gaelic names. The larger, *Allt na Banaraich* 'the milkmaid's burn', joins it near Milton of Culcabock at NH679437, and *Allt Shiamaidh* 'Jimmy's Burn' used to join it at NH686434, but

now goes underground for the latter part of its route, thanks to widespread housing development. A Mill Dam at NH675444, and associated Mill Lade, helped to regulate water flow for milling purposes (see OS 6-inch maps), and gave the name to modern Damfield Road. The ultimate sources of water for the Mill Burn are twelve springs in the vicinity of Bogbain (Alexr. Fraser 1878 p.131).

#### **Milton (of Culcabock)**

*Baile a' Mhuilinn (Chùil Chàbaig)*

---

NH 676 439  
57°28.016'N 4°12.473'W

*Mill town.* Adjacent and conjoined to the modern suburb of Hilton, Milton was a settlement close to the Culcabock Woollen Mill, which used the power of the Mill Burn (q.v.); the name is perpetuated in local usage and in Milton Crescent. The reference to Culcabock in the name is rarely heard today.

#### **Milton of Leys** *Baile Mhuilinn an Leigheis*

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NH 695 426  
57°27.292'N 4°10.584'W

*Mill town.* Now the name of a suburb. See **Leys**.

#### **Muckovie** *Mucamhaigh*

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NH 705 434  
57°27.756'N 4°09.615'W

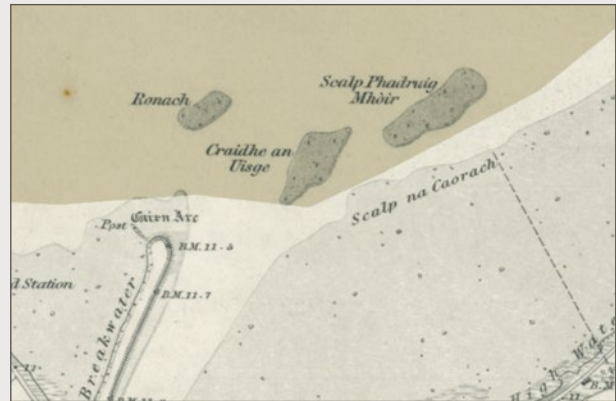
*Pig field or plain.* An ancient name, according to Watson, who gives the Gaelic form as *Mucomhaigh* (2002 p.161). Iain Taylor prefers *Mucamhaigh* (2011 p.121). Recorded as Mukwye in 1568 (Mackay 1911 p.163). The second element is presumed to be *magh* 'plain'.

## Foraging in Old Inverness – the Mussel Scalps

At the delta-mouth of the River Ness, and accessible from the Longman, were the old mussel scalps of Inverness, banks of sand and gravel which could be reached at low spring tides and where people would gather shellfish. The most common Gaelic word for the Scots *scalp* or *scaup* is *oitir*, but this is not recorded in Inverness, and it appears that Gaelic borrowed the Scots word in this part of the country, forming Gaelic toponyms with *Scalp*. Two maps show them in detail and demonstrate how place-names can change over time. Home's 1774 map gives Green Scalp and Muscle Scalp at the Longman, with the Black Scalp beyond the East Channel of the river. Beyond the Mid Channel is Middle Scalp or *Crea-in-Uith*, and further W is West Scalp.

In the OS 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch map (pub. 1880), Green Scalp remains, and Muscle Scalp has become *Scalp na Caorach* 'the scalp of the sheep'; the OS tell us that it was a 'shingly bank which was at no very distant period overgrown with moss [and] frequented by sheep' (OS/1/1733/141). Black Scalp has become *Scalp Phadruig Mhòir* 'Big Peter's scalp'. Middle Scalp/Crea-in-Uith is now *Cridhe an Uisge* 'heart or middle of the water' (given correctly in the Name Book, but erroneously on the map as *Craidhe an Uisge*); it is a commentary on its location in the river mouth, where it was revealed on ordinary ebb tides (OS/1/1733/142), although there is a suspicion that the name might derive from an older *Crèadh-Innis* 'clay island'. West Scalp, only appearing at extremely

low Spring Tides, has become *Ronach* (properly *Rònach*) 'place of seals'. By the time of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 6-inch map (1907), *Ronach* has disappeared, presumably destroyed by dredging in order to clear a good channel into the river for shipping, but the other scalps remain as they were thirty years before.



The mussel scalps at the mouth of the River Ness, as shown on the 1st ed. 6-inch OS map.

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Inverness is not the only location where foraging on scalps was recorded in this area. The NSA (1845) tells us that seaweeds were gathered on the (unmapped) 'black scalp' at Ardersier. The main species were dulse, carrageen, laver (sloke) and sea lettuce, the last two of which were considered to be delicacies (Vol XIV p.467).



## Raigmore *An Ràthaig Mhòr*

---

NH 684 451

57°28.640'N 4°11.746'W

*The large rathlet. Ràthaig is a diminutive form of ràth 'circular fortification with earthen walls or ramparts', although the word can be applied to hut-circles, circular graveyards and also to burial mounds or plots. The place-name is Gaelic but not native to Inverness, originating in Strathdearn. A keeper of Strathdearn tradition gave the following: 'The place name Raigmore was taken to Inverness by the Mackintosh family of the small Raigmore estate in Strathdearn. Today we still have a hamlet and school called Raigbeg, but no place known as Raigmore ...' (MacAskill 1972). However, old OS 6-inch maps show a circular 'Grave Yard (Disused)' labelled 'Raigmore' at NH808271, and Watson gives details of its size, appearance and history (2002 p.148-9). The Gaelic form of the Strathdearn Raigmore is *Reathaig Mhòr*, according to Robertson (King 2019 p.236), although Grant (1980 p.20) preferred *Relig Mor* (i.e. *Rèilig Mhòr*) 'big burial place'.*

The first OS 6-inch map (pub. 1874) names the Inverness Raigmore as Broomtown; prior to that it was The Machrie 'the plain', based on the Gaelic word *machair*. Machreis is recorded in 1575 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.236). An ancient stone circle in this area, originally at NH687454, was



moved for the building of the A9 road; because of it, this vicinity was referred to in Scots in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as the Standan Stanis (i.e. standing stones) – see Mackay 1911 p. 71 and endpiece map. Raigmore Hospital is (slightly ungrammatically) *Ospadal an Ràthaig Mhòir* 'osp-uh-tul un ra-eek VORE' in Gaelic.

## Resaurie *An Ruigh Shamhraidh*

---

NH 706 451

57°28.653'N 4°09.558'W

*The summer pasture land i.e. a place where cattle grazed in summer. Also given in English as Risaurie and Resourie. The Gaelic form is from Watson (2002 p.162); Robertson gives *an Ruigh Shamhraidh* (King 2019 p.233). 'A scattered agricultural village' in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, according to the OS Name Book (OS1/17/31/17), but now increasingly a part of suburban Inverness. Pron. 'ruh SOW-ree' in English and 'roo-ee SOW-ree' in Gaelic [OW as in English 'town'].*

## Slackbuie *(An) Slag Buidhe*

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NH 674 420

57°26.966'N 4°12.596'W

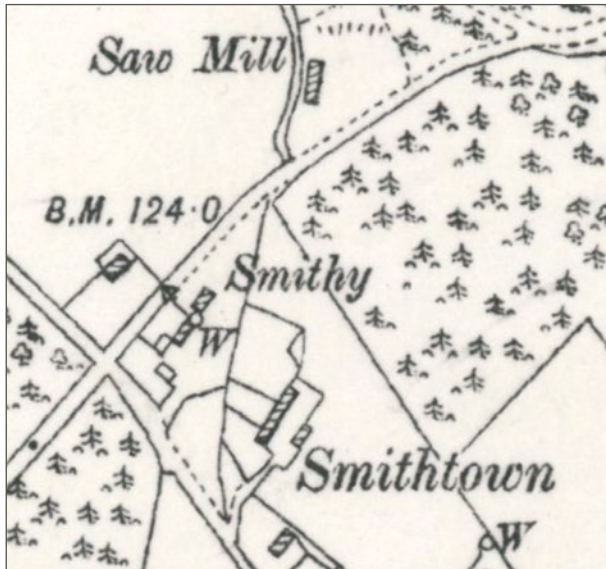
*The yellow hollow. Possibly named for the buttercups that grow there (although the area is rapidly becoming covered with houses). Slag is a dialectal form of lag 'hollow', common around Inverness. The Gaelic form for this toponym was confirmed by Gaelic speaking native of Strathnairn, Finlay Smith, with the loss of the terminal schwa in the Gaelic form, and the pronunciation the same in both languages i.e. *Slag Buidh'* pron. 'slak BOO-ee' (TD Tr.81647.2). Upper Slackbuie was formerly Knocknakirk (*Cnoc na Circe*, 'the hill of the hen').*

### Smithton *Baile a' Ghobhainn*

NH 712 454

57°28.863'N 4°08.979'W

*The blacksmith's settlement.* A small village ('Smithtown'), according to the OS Name Book (OS1/17/31/47), which at the time possessed 'one shop and a smithy from which last circumstance the name of the village is derived'.



Smithton on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 6-inch OSF map (pub. 1907), showing the location of the smithy which gave the settlement its name.

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### Stoneyfield

NH 691 457

57°28.934'N 4°11.032'W

The OS Name Book (OS1/17/31/50) explains Stoneyfield as being 'derived from the existence of a Druidical Temple, or Stone Circle, in the adjoining field.' Given as Stoneyfeild on Roy's military

map (1747-52). An old Gaelic form of the name, *Scriodan-sgràd*, was proffered by John Noble (1891 p.7); the first element is *Sgriodan* from the nearby watercourse (see **Secretan Burn**) but the second part is cryptic. A modern Gaelic form *Fèith nan Clach* has been in use, but this appears to have been imported from Stoneyfield in Easter Ross.

### Torbreck *An Tòrr Breac*

NH 648 409

57°26.300'N 4°15.167'W

*The speckled hill.* Appears as Torbrek on the Register of the Great Seal of Scotland (1509), and on Blaeu's map (1654), and as Torrybrake on a military map of ca. 1725. Robertson gives an *Torra breac* (King 2019 p.233). SW of Drumdevan, just beyond the city boundary.



Torbreck appears as Torbrick in Dorret's 1750 map. Note Cromwell's Fort, 'Isle' referring to the island(s) on the River Ness and Fort George, then the name for Inverness Castle.

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## Farms and Small Settlements

### **Achlaschoille** *Achlais Choille*

---

NH 691 372  
57°24.378'N 4°10.740'W

Literally *armpit of (the) wood*. *Achla(i)s* 'armpit' refers to the contours of the land. A steading near Mains of Faillie. The Gaelic form is from MacPherson (1955) and Cumming (1982), but local pron. is *Achlais Choill* 'ach-lish CHUH-eel'. Strathnairn native Finlay Smith made no distinction in pron. between the Gaelic and English forms (TD Tr.81647.1).

### **Achnabat** *Ach nam Bat*

---

NH 598 301  
57°20.438'N 4°19.814'W

*The field of the sticks*. A settlement overlooking the SW shore of Loch Duntelchaig. Cumming (1982) tells us that the name arose from a fight 'with cudgels ... that occasioned great slaughter', and Sinton (1906 p.323) says that the old inn there was 'a famous rendezvous for drovers, reivers, smugglers and other travellers. As free fights frequently broke out among the guests, the green close by was known as "the field of sticks".' Cumming, however, also points out that the second element might be *bad* 'clump of trees', rather than *bat(a)* 'stick'. The Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.234), although Sinton gives *Acha' nam Bat*. It is marked on Dorret's map of 1750 in its modern form. There is another Achnabat near Skerry in N Sutherland which in Gaelic is *Ach nam Bat* (e.g. *Creag Ach nam Bat* OS) or *Achadh nam Bata* (Robertson in King 2019 p.96).

### **Achnabechan** *Ach nam Beitheachan*

---

NH 677 314  
57°21.276'N 4°11.942'W

*The field of the small birch woods or places abounding in birches*. A steading in Strathnairn W of Farr House. The meaning is suggested by Cumming (1982) in his comments on *Beachan* (q.v.). Finlay Smith gives the pronunciation 'ach nuh BECH-in' (TD Tr.81647.3). There are at least two other places in the Highlands with a name like this; one is near Ferness (Ardclach) and another is Achnabeachin in Badenoch, the Gaelic for which is *Ach nam Beathaichean* 'the field of the beasts', referring to cattle (Macbain 1922 p.265).

### **Achvaneran** *Ach' a' Mhainnirein*

---

NH 678 342  
57°22.749'N 4°11.996'W

*The field of the small sheep-milking fold*. A tiny settlement in Strathnairn, pron. 'ach VAN-uh-run' in English. The interpretation is from MacPherson (1955), and from Cumming (1982) who gives 'field of the little sheep fold or pen' with the added note 'once on a day, ewes were milked for domestic use'. Robertson gives *Ach a' bhanarain* as the Gaelic form (King 2019 p.234). *Mainnir* is an animal fold, often on the hillside. Macbain (1911 p.239) says it can apply to a goat pen, and Armstrong (1825 p.373) gives it as a 'fold for cattle'. Dwelly tells us *banair* is an enclosure where sheep are milked (Appendix ed. Clyne 1991). The two words, because of their similar function and pronunciation in lenited form, can

be easily confused. *Mainnirean* is a diminutive form of *mainnir*. Although Strathnairn's economy was, like most of the Highlands, based on cattle for centuries, the OSA in 1795 tells us that black-faced sheep had by then been introduced into 'the upper part of Dunlichity' and numbered some two thousand, with other breeds comprising 'more than double that number' (Vol XIV, p.74).



Achvaneran lies in Strathnairn between Blarbuie and the River Nairn.

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### **Achvraid** *Ach' a' Bhràghaid*

NH 644 388  
57°25.206'N 4°15.500'W

*The field of the upland, brae.* SW of Essich. The name sometimes appears on maps as Auchvraid. The Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.233). It corresponds to Achvraid in Flichity NH662267 (in Strathnairn, just S of the area covered by this book), which he gives as *Achadh a' bhràghaid*. For the Strathnairn example, MacPherson (1955 p.3) prefers the non-singular genitive of *bràigh* i.e. *Ach' a' Bhràghad*, and this is confirmed in a recording by Duncan MacBean, a Gaelic speaking native of Strathnairn (TD Tr.11736). See **Balvraid**.

### **Aldourie** *Allt Dobharaidh*

Aldourie Castle NH 601 372  
57°24.217'N 4°019.777'W

*Small stream.* The anglicised form is pronounced 'al DOWR-ee', but in local Gaelic it is 'alt DOE-ur-ee', as confirmed by Jessie Smith, who knew the area well (TD Tr.81647.2). This is in agreement with Robertson's form *Allt Dobharaidh* (King 2019 p.232). Given as Altourie on Blaeu's map (1654). The settlement name is derived from the stream which runs through it and into Loch Ness at NH600373. This is the Dobhrag Burn, also given locally as Dourack Burn or, on the 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 6-inch map as Dourag Burn, a tautological place-name based on a diminutive form of the obsolete Gaelic word *dobhar* 'water, stream' which has cognates in other Celtic languages e.g. Welsh *dŵr*. The oldest part of the castle dates from 1626 (Fraser-Tyler ca.1920).

### **Allanfearn** *An t-Àilean Feàrna*

NH 717 474  
57°29.925'N 4°08.539'W

*Alder meadow.* A farm north of Culloden. Given as *Allanfern* on Roy's military map (1747-52).

### **Alturlie** *Allt Rolaidh*

NH 715 495  
57°31.001'N 4°08.761'W

This has the appearance of a burn name, but AÀA (who supply the Gaelic form) conclude that 'the generic element seems to have changed from *àird* 'height' to *allt* 'burn' or even *alt* 'cliff'. The original Gaelic form may have been *Àird Rolaidh* (or similar), meaning 'promontory of Rolaidh', with *Rolaidh* being obscure, and Watson gives the anglicised form Ardturlie (2002 p.156), in contradistinction to the OS forms Alterlie and Alturlie. Early recorded forms include Artrelly (1351) and Artirlie (1565) - see AÀA for a full list.

The farm at nearby Bothyhill NH717491, which is on elevated ground, was given on Roy's map (1747-52) as Ardturlies, and by Arrowsmith (1807) as Ardturies, although Dorret (1750) has Alterly, the last being similar to Alterlie, recorded in the Burgh Court Books in 1580 (Mackay 1911 p.286), and Altirly in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Wardlaw MS (p.494). Pont (ca. 1583-1614) gives it as Alt-Terly.

In the early mapped examples, the farms are slightly inland and south-east of the current settlement of Alturlie. The adjacent headland, given as Arturlies Head by Roy, is known today as Alturlie Point; the Gaelic form is *Gob Allt Rollaidh* (Taylor, l. 2011 p.7). Behind the cottages at NH715494 is the site of an ancient chapel which was dedicated to St Columba, and behind that, the marine terrace escarpment is known as *Cnoc an t-Sagairt* 'priest's hill' (Meldrum 1983 p.23). On Roy's map, the hill above the farm (now much reduced after gravel extraction) is Crochaboid, which might represent *Cnoc a' Bhaid* 'the hill of the thicket'. The buildings on the shore to the east of Alturlie Point at NH722492 are given as Clattach on old maps; clearly, this is from the Gaelic *cladach* 'shore'.



Alturlie as shown on the 2nd edition 6-inch OS map (pub. 1907). Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

### Antfield *An t-Achadh Seanganach*

NH 614 372

57°24.270'N 4°18.476'W

The Gaelic form for this settlement N of Darris in Strath Dores, comes from Robertson (King 2019 p.233). It appears to mean 'the field abounding in ants', but it is not clear if it represents the original or a translated form, as the earliest map records only have Antfield. Meldrum (1983 p.35) proposes an alternative origin for the name - that it is 'corrupted from "Annat" - *Annaid* meaning mother-church, referring to a St Ninian dedication.' The church in question is in the field to the S of Antfield at NH614368 but is referred to as a 'chapel' in English ('Site of Chapel' being marked on the OS 6-inch maps), and as *A' Chill* in Gaelic (Sinton 1906 p.319). One other possible interpretation comes from Cameron (1883 p.15) who tells us that an alternative meaning of *seangan* is a type of clover known as the lesser trefoil (*Trifolium dubium*); the adjectival form (i.e. 'abounding in lesser trefoil') would be *seanganach*. As *seangan* (derived from *seang* 'slender or slender-waisted') is better known as the word for 'ant', a semantic change might have taken place in Gaelic, leading to an anglicised form that is, in fact, erroneous.

### Ardersier *Aird nan Saor*

NH 615 371

57°34.009'N 4°02.162'W

*The headland of the joiners/carpenters.* The NSA (1845 Vol XIV p.462) gives a fascinating account of this place-name: '... in a map of Moray, from drawings by Sir Robert Gordon of Straloch, taken in 1640, it is spelt Ardyrsyir. It is pronounced in Gaelic "Ardnasaor" which may signify "the height of the carpenter", tradition having preserved a vague story, that several carpenters were drowned

in the ferry during the period that the cathedral of Chanonry [on the Black Isle] was being built. Although this derivation is plausible, it may reasonably be supposed that the parish had a name before this accident befell the craftsmen. So far back as the year 1226, in a deed of agreement between the Bishops of Moray and Ross, affecting this parish, and transcribed in the *Registrum Moraviense*, it is written “Ardrosser”. This is probably derived from the Gaelic *ard* “high”, *ross* “a promontory or peninsula”, and *iar* west; or the adjunct may be an arbitrary termination. This interpretation is in consonance with the features of the parish, which towards its western and northern limits exhibits a front of verdant hill, at some points 200 feet above the level of the sea. This hill does not extend to the point of land which juts into the sea, and which is occupied by Fort George, but terminates by a gradual slope within a mile of it, and suggests the idea that the cape had been washed away by some early inundation.’

Regardless of the reference to the carpenters (Watson preferred the translation ‘wrights’), there is a possibility that the name actually represents *Àird nan Saothair* ‘the headland of the tidal causeways or promontories which are covered at high-water’. Given as [Kirk of] Aldizer by Avery (1725) and as Arderseer by Roy (1747-52), the village of Ardersier consists of what was two separate fishing communities – Campbelltown (sometimes Campbellton) in the north, named for the Campbell Earls of Cawdor, and Stuarton to its south, founded by the Stuart Earls of Moray. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the name Ardersier was sometimes applied to the area to the north of the village, near what is now the Carse of Ardersier. See **Fort George**.

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### **Auchbain** (*An t-)Achadh Bàn*)

NH 717 368  
57°24.248'N 4°08.171'W

*The fair field.* Locally pron. Achbain ‘ach-BANE’ in English. Adjacent to the A9 S of Scatraig (q.v.). Cumming (1982) suggests that the colour descriptor is possibly related to the abundance of bog cotton. The Gaelic original is confirmed by Finlay and Jessie Smith (TD Tr.81647.2), although their form *Achadh Bàn* ‘ach-ugh BAAN’ eschewed the article.

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### **Auchnahillin** *Ach na h-Iodhlainn*

NH 741 385  
57°25.242'N 4°05.887'W

*The field of the cornyard.* Sometimes given as Achnahillin, and appears as Auchnahullan on Arrowsmith’s map (1807). An old farm above Craggie (q.v) that is now a holiday park. The Gaelic form and translation are from MacPherson (1955) and Cumming (1982).

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### **Baile na Creige**

NH 655 346  
57°22.947'N 4°14.244'W

*The farm of the rock.* SW of Loch Bunachton. Cumming (1982) gives its anglicised form as Balnacreag.

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### **Balachladaich** *Baile a' Chladaich*

NH 585 329  
57°21.900'N 4°21.208'W

*Settlement of the shore.* Pron. ‘bal uh CHLAD-ich’ in English. On the shore of Loch Ness, S of Dores. Given as Balachladach (Thomson, 1832) and as both Balchladaich and Baile-a-cladaich by the OS. The Gaelic form was confirmed by Finlay and Jessie Smith (TD Tr.81647.2).

**Ballaggan** *Baile an Lagain*

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NH 755 437

57°27.999'N 4°04.618'W

*The farm of the small hollow.* S of Milton of Clava.

**Ballindarroch** *Baile an Daraich*

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NH 614 392

57°25.348'N 4°018.565'W

*The farm of the oak.* Robertson gives *Bail an darach* as the Gaelic form (King 2019 p.233). The first 6-inch OS map gives Ballindarroch. Roy's map of the mid-18th century shows woods in this area, but it does not indicate the dominant species of tree. The forest to the S of the settlement is called Darroch Wood, which in Gaelic would likely be *Coille an Daraich* (or *Coille nan Darach*), and which gives its name to the Darroch Islands at NH604382 (see Admiralty charts of the Caledonian Canal). A ferry service, which came to an end in the 1930s, once plied a route directly across Loch Dochfour to and from the Ballindarroch pier at NH611394.

**Balloan (Strathnairn)** *Baile an Lòin*

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NH 671 327

57°21.954'N 4°12.623'W

*The farm of the damp meadow.* Appears on earlier OS maps as Ballone. Cumming (1982) gives 'stead of the marsh'. In Strathnairn, between Farr and Milton of Tordarroch. See **Balloan (Inverness)** and **Ballone**.

**Balmachree** *Baile MoChridhe*

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NH 737 476

57°30.038'N 4°06.434'W

The Gaelic form is from AÀA. Sometimes interpreted as 'town of my heart' (i.e. 'beloved farm'), an alternative explanation is that it is *Baile*

*Mo Chridhe*, carrying the appellative name of an ancient saint, perhaps from Aberdeen, but whose identity is unknown (Watson 1926 p.331). However, it is notable that the earliest forms are Balnacry and Bale-crey (Pont's map and notes ca. 1583-1614), and Ballnachree (Roy, 1747-52), with the 'm', rather than 'n', only appearing first on 19<sup>th</sup> century maps. In this area, there are pockets of clay which were good enough in quality and extent to encourage the development of the Culloden Brick and Tile Works in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, just a short distance from Balmachree (at NH726479). Thus, *Baile na Crèadh(a)* 'the steading of the clay' is an attractive and likely alternative. There is an old farm of this name (anglicised Balnacrae) in E Ross at NH535647 (Watson 1904 p.92). Other possible Gaelic forms which are worthy of further consideration are *Baile na Craoibhe* 'the settlement of the tree' and *Baile na Criche* 'the settlement of the boundary', as Balmachree stands close to the historic boundary between the parishes of Petty (to the east) and Inverness & Bona (to the west).

**Balmore (Scaniport)**

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NH 626 395

57°325.509'N 4°17.336'W

Hugh Barron tells us that this name is a corruption of an older Bualmore (Barron 2002 p.385). This is likely to be derived from *A' Bhuaile Mhòr* 'the big fold'. However, Robertson gives *am Baile mòr* (King 2019 p.233). SW of Scaniport.

**Balnabual** *Baile na Buaile*

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NH 775 490

57°30.884'N 4°02.706'W

*The settlement of the (cattle)fold.* N of Dalcross.

**Balnabock** *Baile nam Boc*

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NH 665 303

57°20.628'N 4°13.195'W

*The farm of the bucks.* MacPherson (1955 p.3) and Cumming (1982) agree on the Gaelic form, but disagree on the translation. Cumming says that the name refers to male roe deer, but MacPherson's interpretation of 'stead of the [buck] goats' is more likely. Cumming also writes that 'some of the old folk [gave it as] stead of the poor [i.e. *Baile nam Bochd*], meaning either it was a poor place or poor people lived there' (the latter would be more likely). A farm SW of Brin Mains in Strathnairn. The hill behind the farm is *Creag nam Bà* 'the rocky hill of the cows' (this is a non-standard genitive plural form, but it is sometimes heard, for example, in Ross-shire).

**Balnafoich** *Baile na Faiche*

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NH 684 354

57°23.404'N 4°11.366'W

*The farm of the green meadow (or green, lawn in front of a building).* There are at least three settlements in the Highlands called Balnafoich, and two of them are in the area covered in this book. The first is in Strathnairn (see map), where the Gaelic form is confirmed as *Baile na Faiche* 'stead of the green field' by MacPherson (1955) and Cumming (1982). Cumming notes that *faiche* also denotes a gathering place, and that Balnafoich is indeed a traditional gathering spot, being at a crossroads and adjacent to a bridge across the River Nairn. The other Balnafoich is a farm between Loch Ness and *Loch na Curra* at NH591328; it means the same as the Strathnairn example (Fraser-Tytler ca.1920).



Balnafoich in Strathnairn is near the junction of the River Farnack and the River Nairn.

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**Balnafroig** *Baile na Fròige*

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NH 736 388

57°25.318'N 4°06.334'W

There are two farms in the area of this book called Balnafroig. The first, south of Mid Craggie in Strathnairn, is interpreted by MacPherson (1955) and Cumming (1982) as '*stead of the crevice or den*'. *Fròg* generally means 'crevice, nick, chink, cranny', but Dwelly gives an additional meaning of 'marsh, fen'. The second example is at NH627389, S of Scaniport. The Gaelic form for this toponym is given by Robertson as *Bail na Fròig* (King 2019 p.233).

**Balnaglack** *Baile na Glaiç*

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NH 743 507

57°31.758'N 4°05.964'W

*The farm of the hollow.* Adjacent to Castle Stuart Golf Links. Given as Balnaclac on the first 6-inch OS map but corrected on the second edition. There is a Balnaglack in Stratherrick which Robertson gives as *Baile na Glaiç* (King 2019 p.231).



**Balnuarin** *Baile an Fhuarain*

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NH 755 443  
57°28.339'N 4°04.535'W

*The farm of the well.* Adjacent to the Clava Cairns and sometimes given as Balnuarin of Clava. The well is at NH755444. See **Clava**.

**Balrobert** *Baile Raibeirt*

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NH 653 397  
57°25.687'N 4°14.721'W

*Robert's farm.* Balrobert is mentioned (as Ballerobert) on the Register of the Great Seal of Scotland in 1509 and appears as *Bala Robert* on Blaeu's map (1654). Robertson gives the Gaelic form as *Baile Reabairt* (King 2019 p.233), which gives us an indication of its local pronunciation.

**Balvonie (of Daviot)**

*Baile a' Mhonaidh (Deimhidh)*

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NH 721 399  
57°25.915'N 4°07.886'W

*The township of the hill, moor-steading.* Dundavie or Daviot Forest (around NH712398) was once known as Balvonie of Daviot Wood.

**Balvonie (of Inshes)**

*Baile a' Mhonaidh (nan Innseagan)*

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NH 698 431  
57°27.560'N 4°10.280'W

*The township of the hill, moor-steading.*

**Balvonie (of Leys)** *Baile a' Mhonaidh (an Leigheis)*

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NH 664 394  
57°25.569'N 4°13.553'W

*The township of the hill, moor-steading.*

**Balvraid** *Baile a' Bhràghaid*

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NH 729 436  
57°27.941'N 4°07.145'W

*The farm of the upland, brae.* The meaning, which is topographically accurate, is confirmed by Cumming (1982), although he gives the Gaelic form *Baile na Bràighe*, which is unlikely to be correct. The masculine noun *bràigh* 'brae, upland' (also 'chest or upper part of the body') is normally *bràghad* in its genitive or possessive form. However, *bràghaid* has become a nominative form in its own right, referring to the neck, breast or upper part of the body (and, as with *bràigh*, by extension to the landscape, a brae or upland); its genitive form is *bràghaid*. AÀA give *Baile a' Bhràghaid* for Balvraid near Glenelg, and this is the form proffered for Balvraid near Muir of Ord (Watson 1904 p.110) and yet another place of the same name near Dornoch (Robertson in King 2019 p.107). See **Achvraid**. An ash at the west end of the old steading here was long pointed out as the tree to which Prince Charles Edward Stuart tied his horse on the day of the Battle of Culloden. Many Jacobite soldiers passed through Balvraid when fleeing from the battlefield.

**Beachan** *Am Beitheachan*

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NH 681 347  
57°23.040'N 4°11.728'W

*The small birch wood.* This is the name of a farm S of Balnafoich in Strathnairn. Cumming (1982) interprets the name as 'little nook of the birches or abounding in birches', and this is supported by Finlay Smith, who gives the pronunciation 'BEH-uch-un' (TD Tr. 81647.1). The same interpretation is given for other locations called (The) Beachan or Beachans in Moray, Aberdeenshire (Taylor I. 2002 p.26) and Argyll (OS1/2/26/34). Even today, the rocky knolls to the immediate W and SW of Beachan are still impressively clad in native birch forest. See **Achnabechan**.

## The Three Balvonies

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There are three townships on the outskirts of Inverness called Balvonie 'bal-VON-ee' (see p.120), and what they share in common is a location on the hill above the main settlements of Daviot, Inshes and Leys. *Baile a' Mhonaidh* 'bal uh VON-ee' means the steading or settlement of the *monadh* 'upland, hill range, high moorland', the word suggesting that the location was fairly undeveloped when it was named, even if, in the Inverness cases, the altitude is not great. *Monadh* probably came into Gaelic from a P-Celtic language, either Brythonic or Pictish, or both. The modern Welsh cognate term is *mynydd*, which likely indicates the early pronunciation

of the Gaelic loan i.e. 'MUN-ith', with 'th' as in English 'the'. Scots 'mounth' (pron. 'MUNTH') – the watershed of the 'Grampians' – may have been borrowed from Gaelic at that early time. Modern Gaelic pronunciation of *monadh* is 'MON-ugh', reduced to 'MONA' or even 'MON' in the Central and Eastern Highlands. The Gaelic for the Cairngorms is *Am Monadh Ruadh* 'the russet upland' (pron. 'um mon-ugh ROO-ugh'); the range is named for the colour of its dominant rock (pink granite). The love of the Gaels for their hills is summed up in the traditional recommendation – *Rachainn gu mullach monaidh leis latha sam bith* 'I'd go to the top of a hill with him any day'.



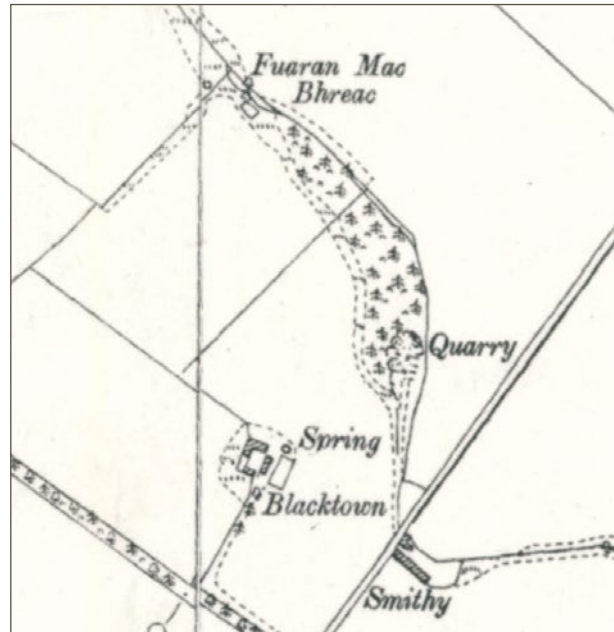
### Blacktown *Am Baile Dubh*

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NH 739 436

57°27.916'N 4°06.143'W

*Black steading.* The Gaelic form (pron. 'um bal-uh DOO') for this settlement near Mains of Nairnside is from a correspondent who signed himself 'Mac Iain' in *The Celtic Magazine* (Vol IV 1876 p.475-6). The writer explained that the name arose from an incident when a man called Mac Bhriachd (Mac Bhreac, according to the OS) was banished from his home in Barevan near Cawdor - where he lived near a lovely well that was protected by a huge flagstone - to a then-uninhabited moor, with no water supply, to the N of the River Nairn. He had to go the river for water and carry it up the hill. One day, when the river was in flood and the water foul, Mac Bhreac exclaimed, *O! 'S e baile dubh dhòmhsa am baile seo!* 'Oh, this is a black town to me!' The monologue continues ... 'I would, however, be quite happy in it if I had the well that's under the flagstone of Barevan.' As Mac Bhreac made the homeward ascent, he met with a clear stream of water that was flowing from a new source near his house. It tasted just like the water at his old home and, indeed, when he later returned to Barevan, his old well had dried up. The new water source was known as *Fuaran Mac Bhreac* 'Mac Bhreac's spring', and it is marked at NH740439 on both editions of the old 6-inch OS map. In the absence of other information, we may be forced to accept the account!



Blacktown, showing the position of *Fuaran Mac Bhreac*. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 6-inch OS map (pub. 1906).

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### Blàr-Buidhe *Am Blàr Buidhe*

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NH 674 343

57°22.837'N 4°12.387'W

*The yellow field or bog.* Anglicised Blarbuie 'blar BOO-EE' or Blairbuie, this is the location of a steading between the River Nairn and Loch Bunachton. In place-names, *buidhe* is usually a descriptor of vegetation, and there are flat grassy fields in front of the farmhouse, although there is also a wetter area below and to the N of these, and *blàr* in the northern Highlands can refer to a flat bogland. Local farmer Alasdair Forbes (pers. comm.) notes that the colour adjective might refer to the prevalence of whin (gorse). Cumming (1980 p.526) also makes the comment that 'the peats here have a yellow tinge'. There is another

*Blàr Buidhe* (without erroneous hyphen), probably 'yellow bog' (at 300m altitude and lacking any settlement) S of *Meall Mòr* at NH695331.

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**Bogbain** *Am Bog Bàn*

NH 708 418  
57°26.883'N 4°09.209'W

*The fair bog.* Probably named for the bog cotton which grows there (Watson 2002 p.156). Bogbain was among the places where rights of usage, for pasturing, pulling heather, cutting peats, obtaining lime, clay etc, were granted to the townsfolk of Inverness in the 'Golden Charter' of 1591. Adjacent to the A9 road, SE of Inverness.

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**Borlum** *Bòrlum*

NH 622 400  
57°25.754'N 4°17.766'W

*Strip of arable land worked by tenants to provide food for the landlord's table.* The word originated in Middle English and survived in Scots as *bordland* 'land providing supplies for the landlord's table'; there is a large number of places in southern Scotland called Borland or Boreland. The word was reworked into Borlum in Gaelic, and there are three places with such a name around Loch Ness, all likely connected to a nearby castle or estate house - Borlum at Drumnadrochit NH518291 for Castle Urquhart, Borlum at Fort Augustus NH384082 for the fort/abbey and the current example, just W of Scaniport, which probably serviced the laird's house (now castle) at Aldourie. The name was recorded as Broadland in 1592 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.262), as Borland by Pont (1583-1614), and as Borlum in 1654 (Blaeu's map) and 1747-52 (Roy's map). The accented 'o' in the Gaelic form is from Iain Taylor (2011 p.31), although Charles Robertson gives *Am Borlum*, unaccented and with the article, for the Fort Augustus example.

There is some confusion about the connection between Borlum and Ness Castle (q.v.), near Culduthel, Inverness, at NH651415. Borlum is given the name Nesspark on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch OS map ('corrected' to Borlum on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition), and we are told that it is 'the property of Lord Saltoun of Ness Castle by Inverness' (OS/1/17/22/5) - meaning Ness Castle near Culduthel. Alexander Macbain, however, tells us that Borlum is 'the old name for Ness Castle, whence the famous and notorious Borlum family got its name'. He is referring to the Mackintoshes of Borlum, of whom John Maclean 'The Clachnacuddin Nonagenarian' wrote that 'with few exceptions, the Lairds had acquired a fearful notoriety in the Highlands for the perpetration of every species of crime' (Maclean 1848 p.11). The reason for the confusion is that Simon Fraser, son of an Inverness merchant, who was based in Gibraltar, bought the Borlum estate from the Mackintoshes in the 1760s and renamed it Ness Castle. This is the 'Ness Cas.' just N of Bona shown on Arrowsmith's 1807 map, and to which Macbain was referring. Simon's daughter Marjory or Margery (1754-1851), known to her servants as 'Ness Madgie', later married Alexander Fraser, 16<sup>th</sup> Lord Saltoun (1758-93), creating the Saltoun connection (see [spanglefish.com/slavesandhighlanders](http://spanglefish.com/slavesandhighlanders)).

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**Brecknish** *Breac Innis*

NH 714 486  
57°30.578'N 4°08.860'W

*Speckled meadow.* The Gaelic form is from Watson (2002 p.77). A farm and settlement south of Arturlie Point. Given as *Bracknies* on Roy's military map (1747-52).

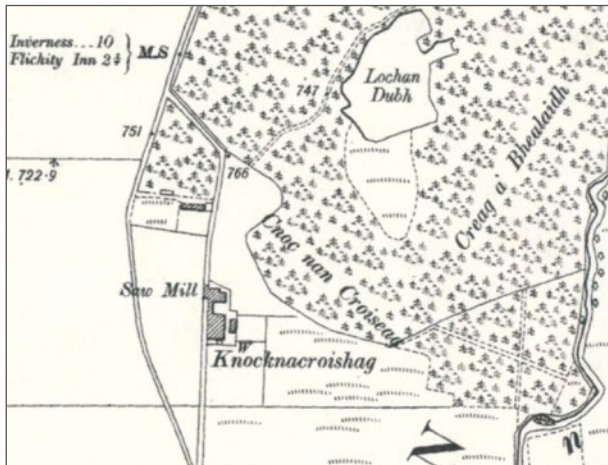
### Brin (Mains) *Braoin*

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NH 669 305

57°20.782'N 4°12.794'W

*Damp place.* A steading W of Loch Farr in Strathnairn. The Gaelic form is from Iain Taylor (2011 p.34). Cumming (1982) and Robertson (King 2019 p.235) give the non-slenderised *Braon*. It appears as Brun on Blaeu's map (1654). On old OS maps it is called Knocknacroishag, an anglicised form of the name of the hill immediately behind the steading - *Cnoc nan Croiseag* (q.v.).



Brin Mains under its old name of Knocknacroishag which comes from the hill behind, *Cnoc nan Croiseag* 'the hill of the berries'. *Lochan Dubh* is 'black loch' and *Creag a' Bhealaidh* is 'the rocky hill of the broom'. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 6-inch OS map (pub. 1905). Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

### Bunachton *Both Neachdain*

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Mains of Bunachton NH 656 348

57°23.071'N 4°14.149'W

*Nechtan's hut or steading.* The Gaelic form is from Watson (2002 p.157), who is supported by Iain Taylor (2011 p.35), but Robertson preferred *Bun*

*Neachdainn* (King 2019 p.234). Strathnairn native Jessie Smith pronounced it 'boh NEACH-kin' (TD Tr. 81647.1). Nechdan/Nec(h)tan was a name carried by several Pictish kings and also a famous religious figure, St Nechtan or Nathanalus, who probably lived in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD (Macquarrie 2012 p.401-2). It also gives us the clan name MacNeachdain (MacNaughton). The similarly named *Dùn Neachdain* (Dunachton) in Badenoch is considered to be 'the hill-fort of Nechtan' (Macbain 1922 p.264), although in neither case is the Nechtan in question identifiable. As with the Badenoch place-name, the first element in *Both Neachdain* is likely to be Gaelic, but Macbain (p.141) entertains the possibility of it being Pictish, in which case it would be the equivalent of the Gaelic *baile*. The use of *both* in a religious context has also been proposed for some other parts of the country (Taylor, S. 2012 p.303-5), so that there is the possibility that Bunachton was a religious site, perhaps connected with the spread of Christianity into Pictland.

### Cantray *Cantra*

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NH 786 475

57°30.107'N 4°01.607'W

The Gaelic form (pron. 'KOWN-tra' as in English 'cow') is from Robertson (King 2019 p.233), although Watson gave *Cantra* or *Canutra* (2002 p.214), saying it represented an ancient 'British' name, meaning 'white or bright stead (settlement)'. The pronunciation and geographical position would appear to rule out Alexander Mackenzie's suggestion of Gaelic *Ceann an t-Srath* 'the head of the strath' (1884 p.17). Recorded as Cantray in 1508 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.184), it appears on Arrowsmith's map (1807) as Cantra.

### **Cantraybruich** *Cantra a' Bhruthaich*

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NH 777 462  
57°29.376'N 4°02.481'W

*Cantray (q.v.) of the slope.* The Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.234). Although the first element is 'British' (Watson 2002 p.214), likely meaning Pictish, the second is Gaelic; a combination of two languages in one place-name is common enough in northern Scotland. It appears on Roy's map (1747-52) as Cantry Prioch.

### **Cantraydoune** *Cantra an Dùin*

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NH 789 461  
57°29.344'N 4°01.229'W

*Cantray (q.v.) of the fort.* The Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.233). The farm of this name is next to an earthwork thought to be a 12<sup>th</sup> century motte. Recorded as Cantradoun in 1468 (Watson 1926 p.365), it is shown on Roy's map (1747-52) as Cantrydown, and on Dorret's map (1750) as Kentradown.

### **Castletown** *Baile a' Chaisteil*

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NH 748 428  
57°27.493'N 4°05.224'W

The Gaelic form is confirmed by AÀA. A small settlement S of Clava, which is named for an adjacent ruin, described thus in the OS Name Book: 'It is believed from the tradition of the country that an ancient castle once stood here; but when, or by whom built is not known in the locality. The site of it is still visible on the top of a small nameless knoll and the farm adjacent takes its name from it' (OS/1/17/18/31). Given as Castletown on Arrowsmith's map (1807).

### **Caulan (Wester)**

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NH 683 366  
57°24.061'N 4°11.533'W

MacPherson (1955) suggests that the name of this old steading, N of Mains of Gask in Strathnairn, originates as *Cùilean* 'little nook'. However, the pronunciation of the anglicised form is approx. 'COW-lun' (Willie Forbes pers. comm.) which suggests a possible origin in *coll*, an archaic word for modern *calltainn* 'hazel' which is attested in place-names. Loch Caulan is adjacent to the steading.

### **Clachan** *An Clachan, Clachan Dhùn Fhlichididh*

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NH 659 329  
57°22.050'N 4°13.867'W

*The hamlet by the church.* The settlement next to the old church at Dunlichity (q.v.). There are many clachans across the Highlands. The word can also be translated 'kirktoun' or 'churchyard'. Cumming (1982) gives 'rocky place' as the meaning, and this is not without merit, as the meaning of *clachan* as a religious site is thought to derive from the monastic stone cells built in the early days of the church (*clach* means 'stone'). In addition, close by at NH661325, is the abandoned settlement of Balnaclach (no longer on the maps), which is *Baile nan Clach* 'the farm of the stones'. Adjacent to Clachan at NH660328 is *Clachan Beag* 'little clachan' which is erroneously given on the OS 1:25 000 map as *Clachain Beag*.

### Clachandruim

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NH 651 343

57°22.758'N 4°14.662'W

S of Mains of Bunachton. Cumming (1982) gives 'the hamlet on the ridge' i.e. *Clachan [an] Druim*, although he earlier gave *Clach an Druim* 'the stone of the ridge' (1980 p.526). Local Gaelic speakers, Finlay and Jessie Smith, gave 'klach-un DROME' i.e. Clach an Drom', 'the stone of the ridge', with *druim* 'ridge' in its standard genitive form (TD Tr.81647.1). The anglicised form is alternatively given as Clachindruim, which suggests the first element is *clach* not *clachan*. The stream flowing through Clachandruim is called *Caochan nam Pòran*, which the OS tells us means 'burn of the small seeds' (OS1/17/22/44), although Cumming (1980 p.526) prefers 'oozing streamlet'. It might also mean 'the streamlet of the croplands'.

### Clava Clabhalag

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NH 789 461

57°28.551'N 4°04.091'W

Given as Clava by Roy (1747-52). The site is famous for its prehistoric cairns, which are properly at Balnuarin (q.v.). While many Gaelic speakers refer to it today as *Clàbha*, following the English form, Iain Taylor (2011 p.44) gives *Clabhalag*. The NSA (1845) similarly says the Gaelic form is 'Clavalag' (Vol XIV p.450). The meaning is unclear.

### Cloughmor

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NH 676 361

57°23.765'N 4°12.271'W

Given as 'place of renown (possibly)' by Cumming (1982), but this would appear to be based on the Gaelic *cliùmhòr*, and is unlikely as a toponym. The first element, if Gaelic, is a puzzle. Local pronunciation is 'cluh MORE' (Willie Forbes pers. comm.) or 'clow MORE' (as 'cow' - Finlay and

Jessie Smith, TD Tr.81647.1), which is suggestive of *clobha* 'tongs' - found in *Leac a' Chlobha* 'flat of the tongs (OS)' on Skye. But examples of *clobha* as a generic landscape element (perhaps referring to a topographical bifurcation?) are elusive. Another possibility is Scots *cleugh*, English *clough* 'ravine, valley with steep sides', followed by Gaelic *mòr* 'big', but the topography does not support that. Cloughmor is W of Mains of Gask (see **Gask**) in Strathnairn. Just to the SW at NH671356 is the ruined settlement of *Cnoc na Seanais*, given as Knocknashenish by the OS on their early maps, and described as a (thatched) 'small farm steading, dwelling house and outoffices' in the Name Book of 1876-8. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the settlement appears to have become derelict, and the name has disappeared from the maps - but is remembered by local tradition-bearers (Alasdair Forbes pers. comm.). The name probably derives from *Cnoc na Sean-innse* 'the hill of the old meadow' (see **Loch na Sanais**) although all of the hills in the vicinity are fairly diminutive.

### Clune Cluain

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NH 604 353

57°23.236'N 4°19.404'W

*Meadow, pasture*. Just N of Dores. Fraser-Tytler (ca. 1920) tells a tale of Clune that gives us its Gaelic name: 'late in the evening after the Battle of Culloden, a company of dragoons pulled up at the old house of Clune. What was the lady's horror when she recognised her husband's plaid on the shoulders of the officer in command. The plaid was said to have been of beautiful texture, and to have had not only the Fraser crest on it, but also the words "Fear Chluain" (the tacksman or goodman of Clune). She learned from him that her husband had put up a desperate fight before he was cut down. It is said that the lady conducted herself with great calmness and presence of

mind. The troop then left, clearing the place of all livestock.' Just across the road from Clunes is the Deer Pond which, according to the same author, owes its name to a herd of fallow deer kept by a landlord. See also **Clunes**.

### **Connage** *Con Innis*

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NH 777 531  
57°33.119'N 4°02.672'W

*Dog meadow*. Pron. 'KON-idge' in English. Between Inverness Airport and Ardersier. Watson tells us that *innis* can become a terminal *-age*, rather than *-inch* in some anglicised forms, and that the 1532 record of Conysche for this place-name demonstrates a transition stage. Pont's map (ca. 1583-1614) gives Connitch, whereas his notes give Koninch, the latter demonstrating a closer relationship to the Gaelic form. The Inverness Presbytery records of 4 April 1683 give Conadge and Roy's map (1747-52) gives Connedge. Iain Taylor (2011 p.46), on the other hand, prefers *A' Choinnis*, perhaps 'the joint meadow'. There is also a Connage in Moray, and another in Strathspey. Coninish near Crianlarich is also thought to be 'hound meadow', as is Coninnis near Dalmally (Watson 2002 p.175 & 131). The Ardersier Connage was the home of the Mackintosh chiefs from 1163 to 1502 (Maclean L. 1988 p.32).

### **Cottartown**

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NH 745 422  
57°27.191'N 4°05.575'W

This is likely to be the same as Cottartown near Grantown-on-Spey, and to be either a translation of the Gaelic *Baile nan Coitearan* or to have been generated in Scots (the Gaelic word *coitear* is a loan from Scots or English). Cottars were agricultural labourers who had no legal rights to the use of land, unlike crofters. In Strathnairn SW of Castletown (q.v.).

### **Craggie** *Cragaidh*

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NH 728 391  
57°25.508'N 4°07.170'W

*Rocky, craggy place*. The Gaelic form (pron. 'KRAK-ee'), which is derived from *creag* 'rock, crag', comes from Robertson (King 2019 p.235) and corresponds to the Sutherland Craggie (Taylor I. 2011 p.48). It was confirmed by Jessie Smith, a Gaelic speaking native of Strathnairn, in 1962 (TD Tr.81647.2). It corresponds to Kragy, recorded by Pont (ca. 1583-1614), although Cumming (1982) gives us *Creagaidh*. The latter form is supported by map entries like Craigie (Roy 1747-52 and Arrowsmith 1807) and Craigy (Dorret 1750). There are several places in Strathnairn with names based on Craggie in addition to Craggie itself - Craggie House, Craggiemore, Mid Craggie, Craggie Cottage and Easter Craggie. The last is reputed to be haunted by the ghost of an English soldier who was killed by the woman of the house after the Battle of Culloden, upon him relating to her how he had vanquished a Jacobite soldier, whose plaid he had over his arm, which the woman recognised as belonging to her son.

### **Cranmore**

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NH 732 434  
57°27.777'N 4°06.891'W

The name of this old farm S of Balvraid is somewhat of a puzzle. It is possibly *Na Cràthan Mòr(a)* 'the large enclosures, pens'. However, Cranmore is adjacent to what was once a marsh - shown on the OS 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 6-inch map with Easter Bogbain at its far end - creating the suspicion that it might have originally been a Gaelic bog name based on *crath* 'shaking', as in the place-names Crathes, Crathie and Cray (Taylor I. p.49).



### Crask *Crasg Sheumais*

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NH 669 333

57°22.251'N 4°12.833'W

*James' crossing place.* Drumossie (*Druim Athaisidh*) can be crossed here via a pass between *Creag a' Chlachain* (q.v.) and *Creag Shuilleir* (q.v.) through which a road now runs. This is reputedly a route regularly used by a particular Seumas who was a freebooter from Dores (Cumming 1982, MacPherson 1955). It is possible that Seumas's route descended to Crask to the E of *Creagan a' Bhealaich* (q.v.) rather than to Clachan, thus avoiding a perfect ambush site in *Glac Ratch* (q.v.) at NH659333. A party of government soldiers was delayed in its pursuit of Prince Charles Edward Stuart after the Battle of Culloden when supplied refreshments by a MacKintosh family in Crask (Barron 1980 p.286). Both parties were unaware that the Prince was at that stage only a short distance ahead, and it is possible that the delay at Crask saved his life. This story was also handed down as oral tradition within the family of Alasdair Forbes (pers. comm.).



Crask in Strathnairn, showing the pass between *Creag a' Chlachain* and *Creag Shuilleir* (where a road now runs) that gives it its name. *Creagan a' Bhealaich*, mentioned in the text, but not shown on this scale of map, is to the immediate NE of the lowest bend in the road.

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### Croft Croy *Croit Cruaidh*

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NH 683 332

57°22.221'N 4°11.411'W

*The hard [land] croft.* The soil here (in Strathnairn, S of Farr Primary School) is shallow, and the ground hard. The Gaelic form is from Cumming (1980 p.526; 1982) who lived here; the standard form would be *A' Chroit Chruaidh*. Given as Croftcroy on the OS 6-inch maps. Cumming gives some fascinating information about this locality. It was 'supposed to have been given as a reward by the Clan Chattan to *An Gobha Crom* for his help to the Clan Chattan at the Battle of the North Inch, Perth 1390. Croft Croy hosted an inn and cattle mart stance at one time and was also a place where people gathered for expeditions or meetings. Here on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1746 the Strath men gathered to go to Culloden. They then went to Gask and met at **Clach an Airm.** Cumming translates *Gobha Crom* as 'crooked or bow-legged blacksmith', but *crom* can also mean 'hunchbacked' or 'stooped'.

### Croygorston

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NH 770 451

57°28.774'N 4°03.123'W

This farm name most likely originated as Gaelic *Cruaidh Ghoirtean* 'hard enclosed field', although *Goirtean Cruaidh* would be a more common (modern) word order. NE of Clava.

### Cullaird *A' Chùil Àrd*

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NH 781 500

57°31.434'N 4°02.152'W

*The high (upper) nook.* An old steadying W of Croy, given as Upper Coul by Roy (1747-52). Compare Cullblair (q.v.). See **Cullaird**.

### **Culblair** *Cùil a' Bhlàir*

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NH 778 515  
57°32.218'N 4°02.585'W

*The nook of the moss/bog.* This settlement, given as Coulblair by Roy (1747-52), lies adjacent to the extensive flat ground now partly occupied by Inverness Airport which, in Roy's day, was a massive peatland, stretching from W of Dalziel to a long way E of Treeton. It could also be *Cùil a' Bhlair* 'the back of the moss', and this is suggested by Mackenzie (1884 p.17), but the comparative names Mid Coul (q.v.) and Culaird (q.v.) suggest *cùil* 'nook', a common place-name element in the Inverness area.

### **Culchunaig** *Cùil Chuinneag*

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NH 739 443  
57°28.321'N 4°06.189'W

*Nook of milking pails.* Given as Coulwhinnag by Pont (ca. 1583-1614), Culchunnick 1677 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.145), Culhunnack by Roy (1747-52), Culwhinnack by Thomson (1832), Culchinnock in 1845 (NSA Vol XIV p.518) and Culchuinach in 1876 (1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch OS map). The interpretation here is from Cumming (1982), although he gives *Cùil Chuinneig*. Cuinneag is found elsewhere in the Gaelic landscape but usually for hills that are reminiscent of a milking pail – although *Càrn Chuinneag* in E Ross might be named for wind-scoured potholes (Watson 1904 p.74). It is not clear, however, why the Inverness example should be so named. Prince Charles Edward Stuart took up position at the farm of Culchunaig at the start of the Battle of Culloden in April 1746.

### **Culdoich**

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NH 754 434  
57°27.847'N 4°04.696'W

Given as Couldoich by Roy (1747-52). This might be based on *Cùl* 'behind' or *Cùil* 'nook' and *Dabhach* 'davoch' (a measure of land). S of Clava, adjacent to the railway line.

### **Cullaird** *A' Chùil Àrd*

---

NH 637 401  
57°25.859'N 4°16.231'W

*The high nook.* A steading NE of Scaniport (q.v.). The Gaelic form is modified from that given by Robertson (King 2019 p.233), although there is a possibility that it originates as *Cùl Àirde* 'behind the height'. See **Culaird**.

### **Cullernie**

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Upper Cullernie Farm NH 734 475  
57°29.996'N 4°06.886'W

This is likely to be *Cùl Fheàrnaich* 'behind the alder wood' or *Cùil Fheàrnaich* 'nook of the alder wood' ('*fh*' is silent in Gaelic). It is close to Allanfearn (q.v.) which is named for alder trees. AÀA give *Cùl Fheàrna*. Another possibility is *Cùil Àirne* 'the nook of the sloe/blackthorn'. Given as Cullernye in 1564 (Mackay 1911 p.115), and as Coulerny and Cowlerny by Pont (ca. 1583-1614). Cullerne in Moray is not the same; it is *Cùl Èireann* 'behind the Findhorn', being on the eastern side of the Findhorn River.

### Dalcross *Dealgan Ros*

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NH 774 486  
57°30.663'N 4°02.793'W

*Prickly wood.* This interpretation is based on the work of Watson (1926 p.496, 2002 p.158), although he admits that the second element might be 'point' or 'promontory' (which can be inland). He says that the plants in question are 'whins or thorns'. Iain Taylor (2011 p.53) gives 'thorn point' and the Gaelic form *Dealgros*. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, maps were carrying the modern anglicised form of the name (it appears as such in the Wardlaw MS p.424), but anciently it was Delginross or Dalginross (there is also a Dalginross in Perthshire), and it appears as *Dealgan Ros* in old Gaelic poetry. The Rev Alexander Campbell, writing in the NSA, gives the origin of the name as *Dal aig ceann Rois* 'the dale at the end of the ravine', which he says is 'accurately descriptive of the locality' (Vol XIV 1845 p.444), but the Gaelic form *Dealgan Ros* is confirmed by Robertson (King 2019 p.233). In modern times, under the influence of the English form of the name, a new Gaelic form *Dail Chrois* 'i.e. field of [the] cross' has arisen. Dalcross and Croy formed an old parish. Dalcross Castle, now restored, was built in 1621 by Simon Fraser, 8<sup>th</sup> Lord Lovat, and later owned by Mackintosh of Mackintosh.

### Dalgrambich

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NH 787 470  
57°29.869'N 4°01.479'W

This has all the appearance of a Gaelic field name based on *Dail*, but the second element is rather cryptic. It might be based on *crom* 'bent, crooked', with a developed 'b', as in Dalcrombie which is on a bend of Loch Ruthven. Certainly, it appears that Dalgrambich was originally situated at a sharp bend in a small stream. Given by Pont (ca. 1583-1614) as Dalegramich. A steading N of the River Nairn, SE of Dalcross.

### Dalmagarry *Dul mac Gearraidh*

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NH 787 323  
57°21.919'N 4°01.041'W

*Gearraidh's son's haugh.* The Gaelic form is from Watson (2002 p.145), and confirmed by Finlay Smith, one of the last native speakers of Strathnairn Gaelic, in 1962 (TD Tr.81647.2). The name is given as Dalmigary on Roy's military map (1747-52) and Dalmagarrie in Thomson's atlas of 1832, which might represent a reinterpretation into Gaelic *dail* of the old Pictish *dol* or *dul* which, according to Watson, is a 'level haugh by the burnside, rather elevated above it, forming a plateau'. However, the oldest forms, such as Tulloch-Mackgerry (Pont ca. 1583-1614), Tullowch Makcarre (1634) and Tullochmakerrie (1661), suggest the first element was originally *tulach* 'hill', referring to a nearby feature. The old representations of the second element led to Watson's interpretation that it is the genitive form of a personal name *Cearrach*.

### Dalriach *An Dail Riabhach*

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NH 766 375  
57°24.703'N 4°03.362'W

*The brindled field.* An old steading N of Moy that appears as Dalreach in Thomson's Atlas (1832). Clearly, the 'bh' in *riabhach* was not pronounced, at least latterly, in the local Gaelic dialect. Dalriach Burn, which flows into *Lochan a' Chaorainn* (q.v.), takes its name from the location. There are several settlements called Dalriach across the Highlands.

### Dalroy *An Dail Ruadh*

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NH 767 447  
57°29.583'N 4°03.393'W

*The red-brown field.* The name is likely related to the adjacent burn, the *Allt Ruadh* (q.v.). Listed as Dalroy on Roy's military map (1747-52). E of Clava, adjacent to the railway viaduct.

### **Daltullich** *Dail an Tulaich*

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Easter Daltullich NH 750 431  
57°27.669'N 4°05.087'W

*The field of the hill.* Daltullich on Roy's military map (1747-52). Mains of Daltullich (NH737418) has just one 'l' in the second element in its anglicised form (OS). SW of Clava on E side of River Nairn.

### **Dalveallan** *Dail Mheallan*

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NH 691 363  
57°23.905'N 4°10.726'W

*Meadow of mounds.* Pron. 'dal VYAL-un'. In Strathnairn between Balnafoich and Faillie. Cumming (1982) gives *Dail mheallan* 'meadow of the little mound' but this Gaelic form, which is backed up by local pronunciation (TD Tr.81647.3), suggests 'meadow of mounds'. Roy (1747-52) has Dalveanan, which might represent *Dail Mheannan* 'field of kid goats', but other cartographers have Dalveallan. Some folk in the strath have identified the second element with Gaelic *bealaidh* 'broom' (plant).

### **Dalvourn** *Dail a' Bhùirn*

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NH 688 344  
57°22.871'N 4°11.035'W

*The dell of the water; watery dell.* Cumming (1982) has supplied us with the interpretation and the original Gaelic name (confirmed by Robertson in King 2019 p.235, and by Jessie Smith TD Tr.81647.3). The word *bùrn* 'water' is only found in certain Gaelic dialects, those of the Central Highlands among them. The place-name is confirmed by the semi-translated form Dallwater on maps by Arrowsmith (1807) and Thomson (1832). MacPherson (1955) says he was informed that there were three wells there, which might account for the name. On B851 road in Strathnairn, S of Tombreck.

### **Dalziel** *Dail Ghil*

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Easter Dalziel NH 755 509  
57°31.901'N 4°04.812'W

*White meadow.* Pron. 'dal YILL'. Professor Watson, who provides the interpretation here, considered *Dail Ghil* (with the specific pronounced 'YEEL') to be the dative (locative) form of (*An*) *Dail Gheal* (1926 p.440). Given as Daligill by Pont (ca. 1583-1614) and as Dallyeild in the Records of the Presbytery of Inverness (4 April 1683). It is Dalyell on Roy's (1747-52) and Arrowsmith's (1807) maps, and is given as (Wester) Dalyiel by the NSA (Vol XIV 1845 p.410). The 'z' in the anglicised form is a representation of the obsolete letter yogh, pronounced like a 'y' (as is Gaelic 'gh' when followed by an 'i'). There is another Dalziel, with the same derivation, at Novar in E Ross. Opposite Wester Dalziel at NH753502 is a mound (once an island surrounded by marshland), thought to be the site of a medieval castle, and known as *Tom a' Chaisteil* 'the knoll of the castle' (Trans. ISS Vol 1 p.255).

### **Darris** *Daras*

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NH 611 367  
57°23.961'N 4°18.753'W

*Door (i.e. narrow pass).* The Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.233) and the interpretation from Watson (2002 p.158). *Daras* is a variant form of the standard *doras* 'door' (historically *dorus*); indeed, the word is pronounced 'daras' in some dialects. Given as both Dares and Darris by the OS. Darris is a tiny settlement a mile N of Dores - indeed, *Mile o Dhuras gu Daras* 'a mile from Dores to Darris' is a traditional saying from the area.

## When a Z is Really a Yogh

The Gaelic alphabet has only eighteen letters, and 'z' is not one of them. The appearance of 'z' in place-names derived from Gaelic is due to it representing a *yogh* (pron. 'YOG'), a letter written '3', which occurred in Middle English and Scots, and which eventually became almost indistinguishable from a tailed 'z'. As printing developed, the yogh became unavailable and was generally replaced by a 'z', sometimes causing a pronunciation change in place-names and personal names, as the written form came to influence the spoken form. Lenzie (outside Glasgow) was originally pronounced 'LEN-ye'e', and Mackenzie, derived from *MacCoinnich* ('machk KUN-yich'), should properly be Mackenyie. Some bearers of the name Menzies pronounce it according to its old form 'MING-iss', while others say 'MENZ-ees'. However, some place-names retained the original yogh sound, or an approximation of it. Thus, Finzean (Aberdeenshire) is 'FING-un', Culzean (Ayrshire) is 'kul-ANE' and Dalziel (several) is 'dal-YILL' or 'duh-YELL'.



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## Daviot *Deimhidh*

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Daviot Church NH 725 394  
57°25.637'N 4°07.650'W

The Gaelic pronunciation is 'JEV-ee' (TD Tr. 81647.1). In English it is pronounced 'DAY-vee-ot' cf. the Aberdeenshire Daviot which is 'DAV-ee-ot'. Macbain's interpretation of this name – whose earliest record is Deveth (1206-33) – as representing an old Pictish root *dem* 'sure, strong' remains the accepted view today (see Macbain 1922 p.127,156). A related Gaelic word, still in common usage, is *deimhinn* 'sure, definite'. Macbain connected the name to that of a Cumbric tribe, the Demetae, in modern Wales, and to the area name Dyfed. Given as Divie (representing the Gaelic pronunciation) by Blaeu in 1654, and as Divy More (i.e. Deimhidh Mòr) on Dorret's 1750 map. The Gaelic form above concurs with Macbain, AÅA and Iain Taylor (2011 p.55), although Robertson gave Deamhaidh (King 2019 p.234). See **Dundavie**. The hill behind Daviot Church, now altered by the A9 road, is given by Cumming (1982) as *Tom a' Mhòid* 'moot (i.e. gathering) hillock' but early OS maps label it *Cnoc an t-Sagairt* 'the hill of the priest'.

## Dores *Duras*

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NH 598 347  
57°22.889'N 4°19.976'W

*Black (dark) wood*. The Gaelic form is from AÅA, and after Robertson (King 2019 p.232). It is thought to have arisen from *Dubh-ros*, and is alternatively written *Dubhras* (pron. 'DOO-russ') in its Gaelic form. *Ros* can also mean a cape or promontory (Watson 2002 p.232), and it might have referred to Tor Point at the W end of Dores Beach, but this is not substantiated in the cartographic record, and the Rev. Thomas

Sinton, who was minister at Dores and a noted Gaelic scholar, favoured the 'wood' interpretation, particularly given that the 'nook' by the church was 'sometimes called *Slac Dhubhrais*' (Sinton 1906 p.318). Set against the interpretation above is the pronunciation of the Gaelic form – *Doras* ('DOR-uss') – given by Strathnairn natives Finlay and Jessie Smith in 1962 (TD Tr.81647.2). However, the pronunciation given by Gaelic speaking natives of Glenmoriston, recorded in 1963, was 'DOOR-uss' (as English 'POOR'). They supplied a traditional play on words: *shìos air Duras, dùin an doras* 'east of Dores, close the door', a supposed observation on the lack of hospitality among the people eastward of the village (on the road to Inverness) [TD Tr. 82770.3].



**Duras**  
**Dores** ( B 862 )

The name appears as Durrys in 1530 (Watson 2002 p.159), Durris in 1561 (Mackay 1911 p.71), Dorris in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Wardlaw MS (p.424), Dorres and Doores in the Records of the Presbytery of Inverness (1670/1671), as Dores on Roy's map (1747-52) and Doors on Dorret's map (1750), but universally as Dores by the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Macbain entertained the possibility of a Pictish origin for the name, with *dur* representing 'strong' i.e. a stronghold. The name *Duras* inflects in a standard manner, so that Strath Dores is *Srath Dhurais*. There is a Durris, possibly of the same origin, in Aberdeenshire.

### **Drumashie** *Druim Athaisidh*

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Drumashie Steading NH 633 374  
57°24.416'N 4°16.597'W

*The ridge of Ashie.* Anglicised Drumashie in the vicinity of Loch Ashie, *Druim Athaisidh* takes on the anglicised form **Drumossie** close to Inverness. The NSA (1845) mentions 'an inclined sandstone ridge commonly called Drimmashie or Drumossie moor (or the moor of Leys), at the east end of which the battle of Culloden was fought' (Vol XIV p.514). The Gaelic form is from AAA; Robertson gives *Druim àisidh* (King 2019 p.233). Wester Drumashie (*Druim Athaisidh Shuas*) is at NH608327. For the meaning of *Athaisidh*, see **Loch Ashie**.

### **Drumdevan** (*An*) *Druim Diomhain*

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NH 655 412  
57°26.512'N 4°14.529'W

*The idle ridge.* A ridge which is uncultivated, or on which little will grow. This was the original name of Drummond (q.v.) in Inverness. The same Gaelic name has been anglicised as Drumdivan (near Dornoch and W of Nairn) and Drumdewan (Dull, Perthshire). See Watson 2002 p.159. The Gaelic form (without the article) was confirmed by Jessie Smith, a native of Strathnairn (TD Tr.81647.2).

### **Drumlea** *An Druim Liath*

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NH 675 300  
57°20.515'N 4°12.113'W

*The light-grey ridge.* Cumming (1982) gives the anglicised form as Drumliia, demonstrating the pronunciation 'drum LEE-uh' (confirmed by Willie Forbes pers. comm.). The Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.235). Drumlea is an old steading SW of Loch Farr, which is probably named in contrast to the adjacent *Druim Dubh* 'black ridge' (q.v.).

### **Drummond (Ashie Moor)** *Drumainn*

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NH 590 319  
57°21.376'N 4°20.669'W

The Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.232). Given as Drumond by Thomson (1832). The name is based on Gaelic *druim* 'ridge', and one would expect *Druimean* or similar, but Robertson's form takes account of local pronunciation. There are several Drummonds in Scotland, with the meaning being either 'ridge place' or 'small ridge'. Fraser-Tytler (ca.1920) says the toponym means 'white ridge', presumably deriving it from *druim* + *fionn*, but this is less likely. See **Kindrummond** and **Drummond (Inverness)**.

### **Drummore of Clava**

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NH 765 436  
57°27.977'N 4°03.616'W

This almost certainly originated as *An Druim Mòr* 'the large ridge'. SE of Clava.

### **Drumnacreich**

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NH 748 510  
57°31.942'N 4°05.477'W

Modern maps concur with the spelling and position of this house (just N of Castle Stuart Golf Links) as shown on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 6-inch OS map (pub. 1906). However, the 1<sup>st</sup> edition map (pub. 1876) gives twin settlements called Drumnacreech a short distance away at NH751518 and NH746514 where Easterton and Wester Fisherton, respectively, are found today (see **Fisherton**). According to the OS Name Book, Drumnacreech consisted of several single-storey thatched houses which were occupied by fishermen and had 'a few acres of land attached to each'. The south-westernmost of the two settlements boasted a

school at NH746513 which was 'chiefly got up for the teaching of Gaelic' and which was supported by school fees and an 'allowance from the Edinburgh Highland Society' (OS1/17/55/43).

The name may be from *Druim na Criche* 'the ridge of the boundary', a toponym to be found in central Skye, where it marks a historic border between lands controlled by the MacLeods and MacDonalds (Forbes 1923 p.157). Drumnacreech does not appear to have been on the border of either parish or estate but, if the name is very old, it might refer to the limit of an ancient sanctuary around a religious settlement situated where the Old Petty Church now stands, an area also delimited by the historic settlement of Termit (see **Morayston**). An alternative would be *Druim Crèadhach* 'clay ridge' with a developed vowel between the two elements, as occurs in the Gaelic of W Ross (Robertson in King 2019 p.137), and a later realisation of that into the genitive article '*na*'. *Druim na Creiche* 'the ridge of the plunder, pillage' is another possibility that cannot be discounted, although there is no obvious event, or series of events, that such a name would commemorate.

#### **Drumvoulin** *Druim a' Mhuilinn*

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NH 769 496  
57°31.191'N 4°03.405'W.

*The ridge of the mill.* Adjacent to a small burn, S of Tornagrain.

#### **Dunlichity** *Dùn Fhlichididh*

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Dunlichity Burial Ground NH 659 329  
57°22.042'N 4°13.804'W

*Hill or fort of Flichity.* The name might represent an ancient fort, which was presumably on strategically higher ground than the current

church (see Watson 2002 p.159; Taylor I. 2011 p.62). A possible candidate is the 'unmarked fort' on *Creag Bhuidhe* at NH665314 (Maclean L. 1988 p.46); this hill is halfway between Dunlichity and Flichity (Flichity House is at NH675285). There is a local tradition that the parish church was moved to its current location, having been previously at Brinmore in Flichity (Fraser 1883 p.260). Flichity, recorded as Flechate in 1560 and Flichety by Roy (1747-52) is derived from *flichead* 'moisture' i.e. 'place of wetness', which fits the character of the ground.

In English, Dunlichity is pron. 'dun LICH-it-ee'. Finlay and Jessie Smith, natives of Strathnairn recorded in 1962, gave two Gaelic pronunciations. Jessie gave 'doon LICH-itch-ee' which corresponds to Charles Robertson's written form *Dun Fhlichididh* (King 2019 p.234). Finlay gave 'doon LEH-chut-ee', a form that might have been affected by the story of 'The Grave of the Fifty', of which he was an adherent (see next page).

The church at Dunlichity is connected to the 7<sup>th</sup> century St. Finan, who is reputed to have preached on the site (see **Killianan**). An image of the saint was hidden in Strathnairn following the Reformation, but it was found and burned publicly in Inverness in 1643 (Pollitt 1981 p.78). The current church building, which dates from 1759 (with major repairs done in 1826), is reputed to be the third church on the site (NSA Vol XIV p.522). The parish is still known as the Parish of Daviot and Dunlichity. The old name for Dunlichity Farm was Ballintuim *Bail' an Tuim* 'the farm of the knoll'. See **Clachan**.



## The Grave of the Fifty

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Local tradition-bearer, Willie MacQueen, had a different story about the origin of the name Dunlichity. He maintained that it means 'the grave of the fifty' from the Gaelic *dùn* 'mound' and *leth-cheud* 'fifty' (pron. 'LEH-chyut'). In his version, 'lowland' cattle thieves some centuries ago were returning from the flatlands of Nairnshire with their booty, when they stopped at Dunlichity to

rest for the night. They were surrounded by the Nairnshire men, who were in pursuit, and fifty men were killed and buried there. Only two men escaped – the pair that were supposed to be the sentries. Or so the story goes ... (Latimer 2001 p.45-6).



Above: '*Dùn an Leth-cheud*' – The Grave of the Fifty – at NH662328 is reputedly a mass burial site marked by a pile of stones. For many locals, this feature and its associated story explain the place-name Dunlichity.

### Erchite *Eircheid*

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Easter Erchite NH 584 311  
57°20.930'N 4°21.291'W

According to Finlay and Jessie Smith, the Gaelic form is pronounced 'ER-ee-chitch' (TD Tr.81647.2), which corresponds to Robertson's *Eir(i)cheid* (King 2019 p.232). The pronunciation in English is 'ER-chit'. Given as Erchet by Thomson (1832) and consistently as Erchite by the OS. This place-name is thought to be Pictish, but its interpretation is challenging. A possible explanation is that it means 'wood-side', based on Pictish forms equivalent to modern Welsh *ar* 'on' and *coed* 'wood'. Wester Erchite is at NH577307 and Erchite Wood is at NH581318. The old name for Easter Erchite was *Bail' an t-Sithein* 'the steading of the fairy hillock' (Sinton 1906 p.334). Erchite Castle, a possession of the Frasers, stood near Wester Erchite but was dismantled by the government after 1746 (Meldrum 1975 p.151).

### Essich *Esaich*

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NH 648 394  
57°25.531'N 4°15.149'W

*Place of waterfalls or streams*, based on Gaelic *eas* 'waterfall, rapidly falling stream'. Recorded as Esse in 1509 on the Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, as Essie in 1576 (Mackay 1911 p.248) and Essich in 1599 (Fraser-Mackintosh 1875 p.269), it appears on maps as Eissick (Roy, 1747-52) and Essich (Thomson, 1832 and OS). The Gaelic form is confirmed by Robertson (King 2019 p.233), although a recording of its pronunciation by Jessie Smith of Strathnairn suggests the presence of an article i.e. *An Esaich* (TD Tr.81647.2). The same name, in its Gaelic form, occurs in other parts of the Highlands.

### Faillie *Fàillidh*

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NH 712 380  
57°24.881'N 4°08.716'W

The Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.234), and the pronunciation 'FAAL-yee' is confirmed by Finlay Smith (TD Tr.81647.2). Pont (ca. 1583-1614) and Dorret (1750) give Faaly, demonstrating the Gaelic pronunciation, whereas Blaeu (1654) and Arrowsmith (1807) give Faillie, representing the modern English pronunciation ('FAY-lee'). The Wardlaw MS gives Phaly. The name might be based on the Gaelic *fàl* 'enclosure, hedge' or *fail* 'sty', as in the modern *fail-mhuc* 'pigsty'. An alternative is that *fàillidh* is the genitive of *fàlach* (based on *fàl* 'sod, divot'), and that, as in Artafallie on the Black Isle (NH628490), it means 'place of sods' (Watson 1904 p.146).

Cumming (1982) tells of the local tradition that the name comes from *fa-àilleadh* 'beautiful place'. It was referred to as *Fa-àilleadh grianach Srath Narann* 'sunny Faillie of Strathnairn', the fact being long noted 'that if there is sun at all, it shines on Faillie'. The old military bridge, not yet present on Roy's map (1747-52) - the River Nairn at that time being traversed at a ford - is called *Drochaid Fàillidh* or Bridge of Faillie. Prince Charles Edward Stuart crossed the Nairn at the ford of Faillie on his escape south from the disaster at Culloden (MacPherson 1976 p.233).

### Farr *Fàrr*

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Milton of Farr NH 683 326  
57°21.902'N 4°11.437'W

The Gaelic form is from Taylor (l. 2011 p.67) and reflects its pronunciation which is much the same in Gaelic and English (e.g. TD Tr. 81647.1), although the meaning is given as 'unclear'. Appearing as Farr on maps by Blaeu (1654) and Dorret (1750), and as Far by Pont (ca. 1583-1614) and in the

Burgh Court Books in 1574 (Mackay 1911 p.238), the name is applied collectively to settlements some distance apart, from around the road junction at NH683331 to Farr House at NH684313, and also to the Farr Estate. Robertson offers the Gaelic form *Fair* (King 2019 p.235). It has been explained as deriving from Gaelic, meaning ‘over, above’, but it might well be Pictish in origin. There is a Farr in N. Sutherland and another by Loch Insh in Badenoch. Some local people prefer the Gaelic spelling *Fàr*, and the word does not lenite or slenderise in the genitive. Milton of Farr is *Baile Mhuilinn Fàr* (Willie Forbes pers. comm.).

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### Feabuie *An Fhèith Bhuidhe*

NH 756 468

57°29.688'N 4°04.522'W

*The yellow bog.* An area east of Balloch on which no habitation is marked on 18<sup>th</sup> century maps, although Pont (ca. 1583-1614) identified a Febuy and wrote ‘Moss’ (i.e. bog) immediately below it. *Fèith* (originally a ‘sinew’) can also mean a bog channel or moss-stream, but it seems likely that it was here referring to an extensive area that was wet and boggy before being drained for farming.

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### Fisherton *Baile an Iasgair*

Wester Fisherton NH 747 514

57°32.135'N 4°05.657'W

An original Gaelic form of *Baile an Iasgair* is suggested by Baliniskar on Blaeu’s map (1654) and Moll’s map (1745); Pont ca. 1583-1614 gives Balinescarr. There is some confusion between three nearby settlements with similar names: Fisherton at NH738503, now hidden within the Castle Stuart Golf Links, is given on Roy’s map as Wester Fishertown. Roy has Easter Fishertown roughly where modern maps show Wester Fisherton. The second edition 6-inch OS maps give Easter Fisherton at NH751518; modern maps call it Easterton. See **Drumnacreich**.



Baliniskar i.e. *Baile an Iasgair* is the original form of which Fisherton is a translation, as shown by Moll’s map (1745). Lhony (Lonnie) appears to be in the wrong place, and Ardersier is given as Ardyrsyir.

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### Gaich *A’ Ghàig*

NH 689 312

57°21.158'N 4°10.795'W

*(The) cleft.* The name given by the OS appears to be erroneous, and should be Gaik or Gaick to reflect local pronunciation (Willie Forbes pers. comm.). The 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch OS map gives Gaeck, which is updated to Gaich in the second edition. However, many 20<sup>th</sup> century OS maps correctly give Gaick, and it is not clear why the modern 1:25 000 maps reverted to an incorrect form. Robertson gives *A’ Ghàig* and *T(a)igh na Gàig* (King 2019 p.235). The name of this tiny settlement close to Loch Farr in Strathnairn has the same origin as the better-known Gaick in Badenoch. *Gàg* means ‘cleft, fissure, opening’; it is a feminine noun, so it often appears in the slenderised (dative/locative) form *a’ Ghàig*. Iain Taylor (2011 p.72) prefers Gaick to be written *A’ Ghàdhaig* in Gaelic, which better represents the pronunciation ‘uh GHAA-ik’.

## Slender Feminines

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Feminine nouns in Gaelic traditionally slenderise in the dative case, also called the locative or prepositional case (the case used when expressing 'in' or 'on', for example). This means that, for a word like *glac* ('GLACHK') 'hollow', we say *anns a' ghlaic* ('owns uh GHLIE-chk') for 'in the hollow'. Because of this, *glaic* can become the basic (nominative) form of the noun, giving us place-names like *Glaic na Ceàrdaich* rather than *Glac na Ceàrdaich*. Similarly, *gàg* 'cleft' can become *gàig*

('GAA-eek'), and *leacann* (LEH-uchk-un) 'slope' can become *leacainn* ('LEH-uchk-in'). The classic mountain generic *beinn* 'BAYNN', anglicised 'ben', started life as *beann* 'BYOWNN', with the meaning of 'animal's horn'. But it is a feminine noun, and our ancestors would slenderise it in expressions like *air a' bheinn* 'on the mountain'. Eventually the slenderised *beinn* became the basic form of the word.



The Leachkin, Inverness (top of photograph), with a dusting of winter snow. The anglicised form of the name is an attempt to represent the Gaelic *Leacainn*, a slenderised form of *Leacann*, which means a broad slope and, in the human context, the side of the face.

## Gask *Gaisg*

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Mains of Gask NH 680 360  
57°23.747'N 4°11.835'W

*Tapering piece of land.* In Strathnairn, between Loch Bunachton and Loch Caulan. Robertson gave *Gaisg* as the Gaelic form for Mains of Gask (King 2019 p.234), and this pronunciation ('GASHK') is confirmed by Strathnairn native Finlay Smith (TD Tr. 81647.1). The meaning is from Cumming (1982). Given around the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century as Gask (Pont's map & Mackay 1911 p.238), this is also the spelling in later centuries e.g. Dorret (1750) and OS maps. According to Watson, a *gasg* is a 'tail-like point of land running out from a plateau', although Macbain (1922 p.272) thought that it might signify a 'nook, gusset or hollow'. Simon Taylor (2019 p.240) agrees with Watson's assessment of the element *gasg*, translating it as 'tail-like spur'. See **Fingask**. Gask Burn is a short distance to the S of Mains of Gask, and runs from Loch Bunachton to the River Nairn N of Beachan. No Gaelic name was ascertained for the burn, although *Allt a' Ghaisg* might be expected.

## Gollanfield (Milton of)

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NH 789 512  
57°32.587'N 4°01.430'W

This was named for the owner, John Gollan, who bought part of the Flemington lands, once owned by the Earl of Moray, after the estate had been subdivided in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (OSA Vol XIV 1845 p.388). An older name for this settlement was Milton of Breachlich or Braicklaich, an ancient parish name, perhaps based on the Gaelic *breac* 'speckled'.

## Hillton

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NH 679 355  
57°23.474'N 4°11.964'W

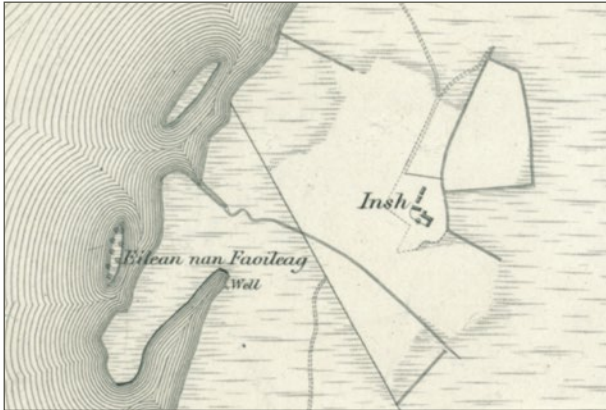
No Gaelic form of this place-name has been found, and Finlay and Jessie Smith, who knew this part of Strathnairn (S of Mains of Gask) intimately, claimed not to know of one (TD Tr.81647.1).

## Insh *An Innis*

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NH 637 351  
57°23.163'N 4°16.137'W

The Gaelic name of this ruined and lonely settlement on the eastern side of Loch Ashie, the site of a small one-storey farmhouse in the 1870s, and whose people left when the loch was adopted as a municipal water supply for Inverness (TD Tr. 81647.1), is confirmed by Robertson (King 2019 p.233). The initial inclination of a toponymist might be to translate it as 'the meadow'. However, the Gaelic word *innis*, often anglicised Insh or Inch in place-names, can also mean a sheltered forest clearing, a resting place for cattle or, if the name is old enough, an island (as in Loch Insh 'loch of [the] island' in Badenoch). Cumming (1982), who gives the anglicised form as Innish (which accurately represents the pronunciation in both languages i.e. 'IN-eesh'), tells us it means 'place of islands, but "islands" of cultivation in a "sea" of moor'. This may well be correct, but it is notable that, adjacent to Insh, there are two small islands in Loch Ashie, the only islands in that waterbody. Jessie Smith, who grew up at Insh, claimed to have often seen the 'mirage' of the ghostly battle at the loch (TD Tr.81647.3). See **Clach na Brataich**.



Insh on the E shore of Loch Ashie, as shown on the 1st ed. 6-inch OS map, when it was still occupied by a family. *Eilean nam Faoileag* [the article 'nan' on the map is erroneous] means 'the island of the gulls'.

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### **Inverarnie** *Inbhir Fheàrnaidh*

NH 689 349

57°23.152'N 4°10.887'W

*The mouth of the Farnack (alder burn).* This old settlement is shown as Innerairny by Pont (ca. 1583-1614), as Innerarnie by Roy (1747-52), as Invernainie by Dorret (1750), and as Inverarnie by both Arrowsmith (1807) and the OS. However, on the Bartholomew maps it is Inverernie, and that is the form supplied by MacPherson (1955) and Cumming (1982). What appears to have happened is that two separate place-names (in anglicised form) arose from the same root (*Inbhir Fheàrnaidh*) – the settlement of Inverarnie at NH689336 (whose name is not in dispute) and the estate of Inverernie further north (which appears to have become a victim of official disapproval). The shop at NH689348 for long went under the name Inverernie Stores and the wood at NH693349 was known locally as Inverernie Woods.

The estate on which both were situated was sold by auction in 1968 and the official sale particulars list it as 'Inverernie Estate'. The use of 'Inverernie' for this area had been current for generations (Alasdair Forbes pers. comm.).

This was to change in the 1970s, however, as is highlighted in a paper ('InverArnie? InverErnie? Or Both?') produced by the Strathnairn Heritage Association in 2017. Highland Regional Council erected road signs at Inverernie which read 'Inverarnie'; locals considered this to be a 'silly mistake' and ignored the change. However, by the 1990s, the character of the strath's population had changed significantly, and newer residents were unaware of the subtle difference between the two names, resulting in confusion within the community about the place-name change. The result is that the shop is today officially called Inverarnie Stores and the patch of forest is on maps as Inverarnie Wood.

Those who favour the exclusive use of Inverarnie might point to the fact that Inverarnie Wood was labelled as such on the OS 2<sup>nd</sup> edition map, published in 1905, and that Inverernie Lodge NH690344, erroneously given as Inverurie Lodge on the first 6-inch OS map, had become Inverarnie Lodge on OS maps by the 1920s. But an estate plan of 1866, held in the Scottish Records Office in Edinburgh and predating the first OS survey, was confirmed by the Inverness Field Club – who had taken a particular interest in the matter – as giving the name as Inverernie. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the argument, the debate amply demonstrates the importance of place-names – and their integrity – to the heritage and identity of people and communities and the need for local authorities and developers to consult widely on such matters with community interest groups and particularly with keepers of local tradition.

The Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.235) and is supported by Finlay Smith who pronounced it 'in-yer AARN-ee' (TD Tr. 81647.1); however, Cumming (1982) gives *Inbhir Feàrnach*.

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**Kerrowaird** *An Ceathramh Àrd*

NH 762 495  
57°31.145'N 4°04.036'W

*The high quarter land.* The *ceathramh* was an old measure of land, probably the quarter part of a davoch (for an explanation of davoch, see **Dochfour**). On higher ground than Kerrowgair (q.v.). SW of Tornagrain.

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**Kerrowgair** *An Ceathramh Geàrr*

NH 757 520  
57°32.473'N 4°04.690'W

*The short quarter land* (see **Kerrowaird**). Given as Carrugair by Roy (1747-52) and Currugair by Arrowsmith (1807). W of Inverness Airport.

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**Kinchyle** *Cinn Choille*

NH 621 379  
57°24.760'N 4°17.783'W

*Woodend.* The Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.233). Jessie Smith gave *Cinn a' Choill* (TD Tr.81647.2), *coille* 'wood, forest' being locally (Strathnairn) a masculine noun. *Cinn* is a developed form of *ceann* 'head, end', and old OS maps reveal that this farm has for long been at the edge of a wood running up the W slope of Drumashie. Kinchyle was the 18<sup>th</sup> century home of the chiefs of Clan MacBean (or Macbain), and the clan has a memorial park nearby at NH612358. A Clava-type passage grave with stone circle, known as Kinchyle of Dores Cairn, is at NH621389.

This appears to be the 'Druid's temple' viewed by Boswell and Johnson in 1773, and which left Dr Johnson unimpressed. No Gaelic name for the structure has been recorded.

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**Kindrummond** *Ceann Drumainn*

NH 594 324  
57°21.620'N 4°20.326'W

*Ridge end.* The Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.232). Jessie Smith gave *Cinn (an) Dromain* (TD Tr.81647.2). A steading on the B862 between Dores and Achnabat. See **Drummond (Ashie Moor)**.

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**Kinrea**

Kinrea Farm NH 783 465  
57°29.574'N 4°01.864'W

*Kin-* is likely to be from Gaelic *ceann* 'head, end', but no definitive Gaelic form of the name has been ascertained. It is given as Kinres by Roy (1747-52) and Kinries by Arrowsmith (1807), and the first 6-inch OS map shows 'Kinrea Mill (Corn and Barley)' at NH786466, a short distance from the steading. The Name Book's entry of *Kinray*, which demonstrates the pronunciation, was altered to *Kinrea* by Charles Fraser-Mackintosh MP, factor for the owner, The Mackintosh (OS1/17/18/23). The most likely explanation for the toponym is that the second element is *rèidh* 'level', giving us *Ceann Rèidh* 'level headland' or 'level end (of something)' and that the forms on Roy's and Arrowsmith's maps are anglicised plurals corresponding to the farm and nearby mill, both called Kinrea. Between Cantraybruich and Cantraywood adjacent to the River Nairn.

### Knockchurralt *Cnoc a' Chaorailt*

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NH 612 355  
57°23.351'N 4°18.637'W

The Gaelic form for this abandoned steading NE of Dores comes from Robertson (King 2019 p.232). The name may derive from the small burn flowing at the S end of the old farmed area (not named on the maps). A possibility is *caoir-allt* 'sparkling stream' i.e. *Cnoc a' Chaoir-uillt* 'the hill of the sparkling stream'. Fraser-Tytler (ca. 1920) gave *Cnoc-Charailt* 'the hillock of the quarry' but made no mention of a quarry there.

### Knocknagael *Cnoc nan Giall*

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NH 659 408  
57°26.235'N 4°14.076'W

*The hill of the hostages.* The name might be based on a historical event which involved the giving of hostages as surety (Watson 2002 p.160). Robertson gave the Gaelic form as *Cnoc nan ciall* (King 2019 p.233), but Mackay (1911 p.lviii) preferred Cnocnangial, and Jessie Smith, a native of Strathnairn, knew it as Cnoc nan Giall 'krochk nun GEE-ull' (TD Tr.81647.2). The name appears in the The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland as Knokingeill in 1509 and Knoknagell in 1610, and further old recorded forms are Knocknagail in 1532 and Knocknagael in 1677 (Fraser-Mackintosh p.10 & 145). The famous Boar Stone, now residing in Highland Council Headquarters in Inverness, which boasts a fine carved image of a boar, was originally on the lands of Knocknagael at NH656413.

### Laggan *An Lagan*

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NH 631 402  
57°25.913'N 4°16.913'W

*The small hollow.* Immediately N of Scaniport (q.v.). The Gaelic form is from Robertson (King 2019 p.233).

### Lairgandour

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NH 720 376  
57°24.665'N 4°07.918'W

Pron. 'lairg un DOW-ur'. Given as Larigouer by Pont (ca. 1583-1614) and Lairgindour on early OS maps. Cumming (1982) considered it to be *Làirig an Tùir* 'the pass of the fort', adding that 'there was one [a fort] there at one time' (although this does not appear to be documented). However, pronunciation of the toponym by local native Gaelic speakers, Finlay and Jessie Smith, suggests either *Loirg an Tùir* or *Leirg an Tùir*, with the 't' being mutated to a 'd' (pron. 'an Dùir') [TD Tr.81647.2]. *Loirg an Tùir* was given by Robertson (King 2019 p.235), *loirg* being a variant of *luirg* 'shank, slope', which gives Lairg in E Sutherland.

A local informant, with long personal and family connections to Strathnairn, heard members of older generations speaking about the place in Gaelic as *Leirg an Dobhair* (Willie Forbes pers. comm.). This suggests 'the slope of the stream', with *leirg* being a slenderised form of *learg* 'slope' and *dobhar* an old Celtic word for water or stream. *Leirg nan Dobhar* 'the slope of the streams' would be an apt description of the locality, as the farm was originally situated on a slope between two streams which joined at NH719377. See **Lairgs**. In Strathnairn on the E side of the A9 road, opposite Scaraig.

### Lairgs

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Mid Lairgs NH 713 364  
57°24.010'N 4°08.519'W

Given as (Mid) Larig by Roy (1747-52), the three Lairgs (Lairgindour q.v., Mid Lairgs and Wester Lairgs NH704348) are considered locally to derive from Gaelic *làirig* 'pass', which fits the topography, with all three providing routes to the ancient pass known as *Stairsneach nan Gàidheal* (q.v.) at



NH736343, through which General Wade built his military road in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. For Mid Lairgs, MacPherson gives *An Làirig Mheadhanach* ‘the middle pass’. However, Robertson’s form for *Allt na Làirige* (q.v.) is *Allt na Luirg* (King 2019 p.235), which suggests the possibility of the element being *luirg* ‘shank, slope’, rather than *làirig*, and he gives *Loirg mheadhonach* for Mid Lairgs. Local pronunciation of ‘Lairgs’ is ‘LURGS’, and the Gaelic form was given by Strathnairn natives, Finlay and Jessie Smith, as *Loirg – Loirg Shuas* for Wester Lairgs and *Loirg Mheadhanach* for Mid Lairgs (TD Tr.81647.2). See **Lairgandour**.

### **Leanach** *Lèanach*

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NH 753 449

57°28.647'N 4°04.812'W

*Marshy place, place of water-meadows.* Given as *Lionacch* [sic] by Pont (ca. 1583-1614), and *Lionach* by Roy (1747-52) and Thomson (1832) – demonstrating the pronunciation of the name (‘LEE-uh-nuch’). The first 6-inch OS map gave the name as *Urchal* (following *Uruchill* on John Thomson’s *Atlas of Scotland*, 1832), but it was admitted by the OS that this was at the ‘proprietor’s request’, and that the site was ‘better known in the neighbourhood as *Leanach*’. *Urchal* is likely to be the same as *Orchil* in Perthshire, which might be Gaelic or Pictish, and means ‘by the wood’ (Watson 2002 p.97). The place-name *Lèanach* had bad connotations for a long time, as it housed a barn into which wounded Jacobite soldiers were carried from the Culloden battlefield and ‘over whom it was burned by order of the Duke of Cumberland’ (OS1/17/18/26).



Leanach Cottage on Culloden Battlefield was a witness to the terrible events of 16 April 1746. This building may have been used as a field hospital for government soldiers.

### **Leiterchullin** *Leitir a' Chuilinn*

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NH 631 310

57°20.968'N 4°16.598'W

*The slope of the holly.* The name and interpretation are supported by Cumming (1982); Robertson gives *Leitir chuilinn* (King 2019 p.234), which is supported by Jessie Smith (TD Tr.81647.2). *Leitir* usually refers to a slope above water, particularly a loch. This example is on the south side of Loch Duntelchaig (q.v.), and holly trees still grow there.

### **Lochandinty**

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NH 785 500

57°31.467'N 4°01.742'W

This tiny settlement W of Croy derives its name from the adjacent lochan – *Lochan Dinty* (q.v.).

## Lonnie

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NH 737 491  
57°30.873'N 4°06.561'W

The name of this farm near Old Petty Church is likely to be based on the Gaelic *lòn* 'damp meadow', as we are told by the Rev John Grant in the NSA (1845 Vol XIV p.376) that 'until Lord Moray, about sixty years ago, opened the main drain, the whole vale was a morass'. He goes on to add that until this moss was 'reduced to cultivation' that it supplied the town of Inverness with rushes. In the 1228 Chartulary of Moray, there is a mention of Petyn and Lunyn, which were considered by Rev. Grant to represent Petty (q.v.) and Lonnie respectively. The account tells us that there was a delta of land to the E of Lonnie 'from time immemorial called the Island, or Island Macmartin'. Given as Lhony by Blaeu (1654) and Moll (1745), although in a slightly different location.

## Lynemore *An Lainn Mhòr*

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NH 762 339  
57°22.743'N 4°03.554'W

*The big enclosed field.* W of Loch Moy. *Lainn* is an inflected (dative/locative) form of the feminine noun *lann* 'enclosure, enclosed field', generally anglicised Lyne or Lyn. Generally given as *Loinn* on older maps. This interpretation is confirmed by the adjacent *Allt na Loinne Mòire* (q.v.). The adjacent Lynebeg NH765339 is *An Lainn Bheag* 'the small enclosed field'.

## Meallmore (Lodge)

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NH 748 379  
57°24.889'N 4°05.117'W

Meallmore Lodge Care Home replaced a hotel, which itself replaced a hunting lodge of the same name, all on the same site. The name presumably comes from a hill to the SW of the site – *Meall*

*Mòr* (q.v.) 'big lump, mound' – which is visible from Meallmore Lodge. The presumed Gaelic form is *Loids a' Mhill Mhòir*. On the old road (B9154) between Craggie and Moy. The pronunciation is properly 'myowl MORE' but 'mee-ul MORE' is often heard.

## Mid Coul *A' Chùil Mheadhanach*

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NH 777 506  
57°31.781'N 4°02.650'W

*The middle nook.* The Gaelic is here inferred. Mid Coul lies between Culblair (q.v) and Culaird (q.v.), hence the name. Given as Midd Coull by Roy (1747-52).

## Morayston

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NH 751 489  
57°30.832'N 4°05.136'W

A farm belonging to the Earl of Moray. Near Morayston in olden times was Termit, which is marked on Roy's and Arrowsmith's maps (with Little Termit near where Newton of Petty now stands). This derives from Gaelic *tearmaid*, a local variation of *tèarmainn*, an outer limit of an ancient sanctuary, which would have been in place around a religious site located where the Old Petty Church was later built (see Watson 1926 p.259). An important meeting to ensure the unity of the Clan Chattan federation took place at Termit on 4 April 1609 (Munro 1975 p.187).

As with Morayston, so we get the name of Morayhill, the settlement on the other side of the A96 adjacent to the particle board factory. Next to Morayhill at NH754494 is *Tom na Croiche* 'the hillock of the gibbet' which is marked on the OS 6-inch maps. According to the OS Name Book (OS1/17/55/52) this natural mound was 'said to have been at some remote period a place of execution; human remains were found here A.D. 1860.'

### Moy *A' Mhuigh*

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Moy Hall NH 768 350  
57°23.352'N 4°03.028'W

*The plain.* The Gaelic form here is from the last native Gaelic speakers in the area, Angus and Marjorie Dunbar of Invereen (Dr. James Grant, pers. comm.), although AÀA give *A' Mhoigh*, while Iain Taylor prefers the accented *A' Mhòigh* (2011 p.120). The name appears in the Wardlaw MS as *Muy* (p.61) and *Moy* (p.85 etc.). William Mackay, who hailed from Glenurquhart and lived in Inverness, gives the Gaelic form *A' Mhaigh*, 'the plain' (1911 p. lvii). Moy Hall, Moymore and Moybeg are in close proximity to each other, and the name would have originally applied to the flat land north of the loch. It appears as Loch Moie and Moyhall on Roy's military map (1747-52), and as Loch *Muy* on Blaeu's map (1654). The Dunbars of Invereen referred to Loch Moy as *Loch na Maighe* and to Moy Hall as *Taigh na Maighe* in Gaelic, and this is how it appears in local poetry (Sinton 1923 p.77 & 256). See **Stairsneach nan Gàidheal**.

### Nairnside

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Mains of Nairnside NH 737 431  
57°27.678'N 4°06.345'W

The name clearly arises from the settlement's position just to the N of the River Nairn, nearly opposite Easter Daltulich. Lorraine Maclean of Dochgarroch tells us that Nairnside House 'was once called Culclachy' (1988 p.43), which is shown on Roy's map (1747-52) as *Coulclachy*. However, the OS 6-inch maps show *Culclachy* to the S of Mains of Nairnside at NH731425. The name possibly originated as *Cùil Clachaidh* 'nook of [the] stony place'.

### Ness Castle *Caisteal Nis*

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NH 651 415  
57°26.637'N 4°14.925'W

The Gaelic form is from AÀA. The 'Ness Cas.' on Arrowsmith's 1807 map does not refer to this toponym. It is a renaming of *Borlum* (q.v.) by Simon Fraser (1727-1810), following his purchase of the estate in the 1760s. Edward Meldrum tells us that Ness Castle (Inverness) is 'an Italianate classical mansion with columned portico, dating from about 1840' (1983 p.35).

### Ness-side

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NH 645 425  
57°27.150'N 4°15.580'W

An old farming settlement, on the E bank of the River Ness, now being encroached upon by the city's expansion adjacent to the southern distributor road. Appears as *Ness-side* in Mackay's 1866 estate map. There is no attested Gaelic form.

### Petty *Peitidh*

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Old Petty Church NH 738 498  
57°31.296'N 4°06.453'W

Petty is a name of Pictish origin, based on *pet* or *peit* 'piece of land, homestead'. The earliest record is *Petyn* in the 1228 Chartulary of Moray, and *Pont* (ca. 1583-1614) gives *Petty*. The Old Petty Parish Church, dedicated to St Columba, has fallen into disuse, but it, and its predecessor buildings, were at one time well-known across the Highlands, particularly from 1759 to 1774, when the minister was the redoubtable Rev. John Morrison, a Gaelic speaking son of the manse (with connections to Bragar in Lewis), who was reputed to have an *dà-shealladh* 'the second-sight'. See **Clach an Àbain**.

Famously, the body of Alexander MacGillivray (*Alasdair Ruadh na Fèile*), chief of his clan, was reinterred here after being initially thrown into a mass grave by government troops at the end of the Battle of Culloden.

The church stands on high ground, once called 'The Island' or 'Island Macmartin', at one time backed by the Moray Firth to the north, and the Moss of Petty to the south (Wallace 1914 p.155). See **Lonnie**. To the south of the graveyard at NH738497 was *Fuaran a' Mhinisteir* 'the minister's spring', a well washed daily by the tide, whose water was regarded as efficacious against whooping cough and other conditions. The OS Name Book (OS1/17/55/31) says that the water was 'of the most uniform cold temperature in the neighbourhood of Inverness, and ... very much resorted to on that account.' By 1962, the well had dried up (Canmore/site/14193), and there is no sign of it today.

### **Scaniport** *Sgàine Phort*

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NH 630 398  
57°25.714'N 4°16.986'W

This is generally interpreted as 'ferry by the cleft', literally 'cleft-ferry', based on the Gaelic elements *sgàin* and *port*. Given as Scannieport on Mackay's 1866 estate map and as *Sgàine port* by Robertson (King 2019 p.233). The ferry would have been across the Ness, and it has been suggested that the cleft refers to the Great Glen. Iain Taylor gives *Sganaphort* as a modern Gaelic form, with the expected lenition of the second element because of the 'reversed' word order (2011 p.139). Strathnairn native Jessie Smith also lenited the second element, pronouncing it '*Sgànaphort*' (SKAANA-forst) with an accented (elongated) 'a' (TD Tr.81647.2).

### **Scatraig** *Sgàtraig*

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NH 714 375  
57°24.614'N 4°08.480'W

The Gaelic form is from Jessie Smith, a native of Strathnairn (TD Tr.81647.2), although Robertson gave slenderised *Sgàtraig* (King 2019 p.235). Both agree, however, on the accented 'a', and this is supported by an MS of Francis Diack's, which also shows pre-aspiration before the 't' (Jake King pers. comm.). The earliest records are those of the OS (as Scatraig), and they attempt no interpretation. MacPherson (1955 p.8) suggests that the name derives from the Gaelic elements *sgàth* and *raig* (i.e. *ràthaig*), meaning 'outer [small] fort', but this is unlikely. A Scots origin might be considered, deriving from *scat* 'tax' (a loan from Norse) and *rig* 'ridge, ploughed strip' although the vast majority of names in the area originate in Gaelic, and the terminal 'ag' in the Gaelic form places a question mark over this. It has something of the feel of a Norse toponym, but there are no others in that language in the area covered by this book. A possibility is that it originated as Gaelic *Sgartag* and underwent metathesis, or consonant transposition, a not uncommon linguistic phenomenon. *Sgartag* would be a diminutive of *sgarta*, referring to something divided or broken as in *sgarta-falaich* 'rift, rent, cleft, cave, recess in a rock in which to hide or shelter' (Dwelly) - and the original settlement at Scatraig was immediately adjacent to a small rocky mound at NH713375. Scatraig lies a short distance from the old ford across the River Nairn at Faillie, and some of the Jacobite clans are reputed to have met here, and dispersed, following the Battle of Culloden.

### **Tombreck** *An Tom Breac*

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NH 690 347

57°23.070'N 4°10.834'W

*The speckled hillock.* Cumming (1982) says this small settlement in Strathnairn is 'now called Invernie'. See **Inverarnie**.

### **Tordarroch** *Tòrr Dharach*

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NH 677 334

57°22.342'N 4°12.040'W

*Hill of oaks.* South of Achvaneran in Strathnairn. The Gaelic form is from an audio recording of Strathnairn native Catherine Forbes (née Mackintosh) in 1953 (Willie Forbes pers. comm.). She refers to Milton of Tordarroch as *Baile Mhuilinn Tòrr Dharach*. Cumming (1982), however, gives *Torr an Daraich*. The name appears as Tordarache on the Register of the Great Seal of Scotland in 1509, and as Tordarracch [sic] by Pont (ca. 1583-1614). It is also on maps as Tordarach (Blauw 1654), and Tordarroch (Roy 1747-52, Arrowsmith 1807, Thomson 1832 and the OS). Cumming tells us that 'very near [the] present house is *Làrach an t-Sabhail*, the site of the barn where the Earl of Moray 14<sup>th</sup> Cent. hanged several ... Mackintosh people which gave rise to the saying *Chan ann a h-uile latha a bhios mòd aig Mac an Tòisich* "it's not every day Mackintosh has a gathering".' Willie MacQueen relates that Moray was attempting to discredit Mary Queen of Scots by sending out a false command to the Mackintoshes to gather at Tordarroch (Latimer 2001 p.48).

The settlement name presumably comes from one of the adjacent hills which is not named on the maps. Across the river is Polchor NH675336 and the crag above it Craig Polchor NH673336, which are both marked on old OS maps, and which

derive their names, according to Cumming (1980; 1982 p.525), from a feature in the river, *Poll a' Chorr*, which translates as either 'the crane's pool' or, more likely, 'the heron's pool'. An alternative interpretation is given by Finlay Smith, who says it is *Poll a' Choir* 'the kettle bog', referring to a flat bit of boggy ground where, according to tradition, a 'kettle of gold' was once buried (TD Tr.81647.1). The house today called Craig Polchor is close to where the old maps have Lagmore (*Lag Mòr* 'big hollow'), the latter settlement described as 'derelict' by Andy Cumming (1982) – although a new house is being constructed which will revitalise this place-name. Just to the N of here at NH675340 is Balnabodach, *Baile nam Bodach*, which Cumming interprets as the 'stead of the old men or spectres'.

### **Tornagrain** *Tòrr na Grèin*

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NH 766 499

57°31.348'N 4°03.651'W

*Sunny hillock.* Pron. 'tor nuh GRAIN'. Given as Tornagrain by Roy (1747-52). Slightly confusingly, a new and much larger village, also bearing the name Tornagrain, has been developed around NH781502 near Culaird.



The original, and attractively named, Tornagrain lies almost opposite the (New) Petty Church adjacent to Tornagrain Wood. The new planned village of Tornagrain has been developed around Culaird off the road connecting Mid Coul and Croy.

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## Treeton

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NH 784 537

57°33.452'N 4°01.990'W

A settlement near Connage which was a 'large farm house and outoffices' at the time of the first OS survey in 1876-8 (OS1/17/55/6), having been extended as a residence for the factor of the nearby Castle Stuart estate. Given as Treetown on Roy's military map (1747-52) and on Arrowsmith's 1807 map, and as both Treeton and Treetown on OS maps. A Gaelic form has not been ascertained.



Treeton (Treetown) as it appears on the OS one-inch map (pub. 1896). Much of the flat land that once belonged to a series of farms W of Treeton is now occupied by Inverness Airport and Dalcross Industrial Estate. The only toponym to disappear is Mid Kerrowgair, although Easter Kerrowgair farmhouse has been lost and the name transferred to cottages on the roadside.

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## Tullochclury

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NH 787 334

57°22.519'N 4°01.110'W

Given as Tulloch cloury by Blaeu (1654) and Tulochclury by Thomson (1832), this name has been resistant to interpretation. The first element is clearly Gaelic *tulach* 'hill'. Dwelly's dictionary gives *cluara* 'steep inaccessible', but it is not clear which of the adjacent hills might fit that description. *Cluaran* is a common Gaelic term for a thistle. There is a Clury in Strathspey (NH969237) which also defies interpretation. S of Loch Moy.

## West Town (Duntelchaig) *Baile Shuas*

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NH 623 327

57°21.865'N 4°17.434'W

The Gaelic form is from Cumming (1980 p.529), who gives *Baile Shios* for nearby Midtown NH627332. However, Finlay and Jessie Smith gave 'bal-uh HOO-uss' i.e. *Baile Shuas* for West Town and 'bal-uh MEE-un-uch' *Baile Meadhanach* for Mid Town - and they called West Town 'Westerton' in English. Cumming gave no Gaelic form for East Town (now Easterton NH636329), the easternmost of these three townships at the N end of Loch Duntelchaig, but Finlay Smith gave 'SHEN-uh val' i.e. *Seana Bhail* 'old township' TD Tr.81647.2).

## Hills and Slopes

### Badan Gorm

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NH 641 310  
57°20.998'N 4°15.565'W

The OS Name Book says 'this name signifies "Green Tuft" and is applied to a rocky eminence situated between Glac Ròpach and Cas Garbh' (OS1/17/23/30). On the E side of Loch Duntelchaig. Cumming (1982) translates the name as 'the little grey green clump of trees'.

### Beinn a' Bheurlaich

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NH 733 361  
57°23.855'N 4°06.599'W

This is a substantial hill of elevation 482m between Strathnairn and Moy whose name the OS admit to being unable to translate. Ostensibly, *Beinn a' Bheurlaich* means 'the mountain of the person who speaks English fluently', but it seems likely to be a misinterpretation of *Beinn a' Mhèirlich* 'the mountain of the robber'. It is adjacent to an old route connecting Inverness to the south, which was partially adopted by the A9 road, and travellers here would likely have been subject to the depredations of highwaymen. The high country in this vicinity was earlier referred to on maps as Mammsalie (Arrowsmith 1807 and Thomson 1832) which may derive from the Gaelic *Màm Salach* 'willow hill'.

### Beinn a' Bhuchanaich

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NH 760 401  
57°26.113'N 4°04.017'W

The OS Name Book (OS1/17/5/4) interprets this as *Buchan's hill*, although they corrected their early form *Beinn na Buchanich* to *Beinn a' Bhuchanaich* in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 6-inch map. *Na Buchanaich* produced some significant historical figures, including the Earl of Buchan, son of King Robert II, who is remembered as The Wolf of Badenoch (or *Alasdair Mòr mac an Rìgh* in Gaelic). He controlled a considerable amount of territory in the vicinity of Inverness. An alternative explanation would be based on the word *buchainn* 'swelling' (as in the prodigious growth of plants in early summer) or 'warbling of birds'. MacPherson (1955) and Cumming (1982) give *Beinn na Buchanaich* 'hill of the melodious birds'. Between Daviot and *Beinn Bhuidhe Mhòr*. Elevation 400m.

### Beinn an Uain

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NH 778 359  
57°23.838'N 4°02.054'W

*The mountain of the lamb*. N of Moy. Elevation 415m.

### Beinn Bhreac

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NH 784 378  
57°24.885'N 4°01.507'W

*Speckled mountain*. N of Moy. Elevation 511m.

### Beinn Bhuidhe Mhòr

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NH 786 406  
57°26.394'N 4°01.366'W

*Big yellow mountain.* Elevation 548m. Contrasted with *Beinn Bhuidhe Bheag* 'small yellow mountain' (NH790423), which is around 100m lower. *Buidhe* as a mountain descriptor often refers to the straw colour of grasses during the winter months. NE of Daviot.

### Beinn Dubh

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NH 709 326  
57°21.970'N 4°08.892'W

*Black mountain.* NE of Loch Farr. Elevation 514m.

### Beinn na h-Iolaire

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NH 789 346  
57°23.156'N 4°00.934'W

*The mountain of the eagle.* Elevation 466m. Contrasted with nearby *Beinn na h-Iolaire Bheag* 'small mountain of the eagle' at NH783352, which is around 50m lower. E of Loch Moy.

### Beinn nan Cailleach

---

NH 724 325  
57°21.908'N 4°07.296'W

*The mountain of the old women.* The OS Name Book (OS1/17/5/147) says the name derives from 'several large stones which lie on the top, which the country people say, resemble old women convening'. Between Loch Farr and Loch Moy. Elevation 562m.



*Beinn a' Bheurlaich* from Strathnairn. The vehicle is on the A9 road.



### Beinn nan Creagan

---

NH 784 444

57°28.452'N 4°01.742'W

*The hill of the rocks.* E of Clava. Elevation 267m.

### Beinn Uan

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NH 780 433

57°27.834'N 4°02.022'W

*Mountain of lambs.* SE of Clava. Elevation 350m.

### Bruaich na Fuaran *Bruthaich nam Fuaran*

---

NH 779 509

57°31.917'N 4°02.337'W

*The brae of the wells.* *Bruthaich nam Fuaran* appears to be the correct form. The OS Name Book (OS1/17/55/47) has the following entry: 'This name is given to the side [or] face of a slight elevation near the road from Inverness to Nairn, about the 8<sup>th</sup> milestone from Inverness; there were formerly a number of spring wells along this face from which it took its name of "The Brae of the Wells", the ground is now however all cultivated and the wells have been covered & their waters conveyed by drains to a little marshy spot by the road side where they may be seen to issue.' Although the OS accepted that the wells were supplied by springs, the NSA (1845 Vol XIV p.380), some decades before, reported that the 'old inhabitants' claimed the water came from Lochandunty (Lochan Dinty q.v.) - presumably by some underground channel.

### Cairn Gollan

---

NH 646 332

57°27.100'N 4°01.703'W

A hill to the W of *Creag a' Chlachain* near Dunlichity. The OS give it simply as an 'anglicised Gaelic name' (OS1/17/20/48). Cumming (1982)

writes that it might be from the (Inverness) surname Gollan (see **Gollanfield**) 'or more possibly Cairn Goilean = boiling. There is a tradition of illicit distilling here.' An alternative is that *gollan* is a local form of *gallan* 'stalk, young tree', which also refers to youths or young men.

### Càrn a' Ghrandaich

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NH 784 420

57°27.100'N 4°01.703'W

*Grant's hill.* An outlier of *Beinn Bhuidhe Bheag* (q.v.).

### Càrn Àirigh nam Mult

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NH 779 304

57°20.875'N 4°01.804'W

*The hill of the shieling of the wedders (castrated rams).* Given as *Càrn Airidh nam Mult* by the OS. Elevation 404m. NW of Tomatin.

### Càrn an Achaidh

---

NH 654 303

57°20.602'N 4°14.253'W

*The hill of the field.* W of Balnabock (q.v.) in Strathnairn. Elevation 421m.

### Càrn an Fhreicheadain

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NH 657 311

57°21.148'N 4°14.033'W

*The hill of the watch or sentinel.* Pron. 'kaarn un RAYCHK-ut-in'. S of *Loch a' Chlachain*. Given as *Càrn an Fhreachadain* by the OS. Hills with this type of name provide a good view of the country around; sentinels posted there would be able to warn of an enemy's approach. Cumming (1982) gives the name as *Càrn na Freiceadan* 'the hill of the watchmen' (properly *Càrn nam*

*Freiceadan*), and says it allowed a lookout to be made for enemies (of the people of Strathnairn) from Stratherrick and the West. However, Fraser (1883 p.261) adds another dimension – that this lookout and the nearby *Clach na Faire* on *Creag a' Chlachain* (q.v.) were used to spy on cattle thieves as they left the strath with their booty, allowing them to be intercepted. In a traditional Strathnairn tale – *An Cath gun Chrich* ('The Never Ending Battle') – *Càrn an Fhreicheadain* is the home of *An Rìgh Dubh* 'the black king', who had a great dispute with his brother *An Rìgh Bàn* 'the fair king', who was domiciled on *Creag nan Gobhar* (Cumming 1980 p.500-3).

### Càrn Dar-riach

---

NH 716 314  
57°21.308'N 4°08.107'W

This partially anglicised name, applied to a hill SW of *Beinn nan Cailleach* (q.v.), appears on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 6-inch OS map, replacing *Càrn Ruithe Rèidhe* on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition. It is difficult to interpret, although the element *riach* appears to be *riabhach* 'brindled'. There is a possibility that *Dar* represents *doire* 'copse'. Elevation 503m.

### Càrn Dearg

---

NH 712 302  
57°20.655'N 4°08.498'W  
*Red hill*. E of Loch Farr (Strathnairn). Elevation 516m.

### Càrn Mòr

---

NH 625 301  
57°20.473'N 4°17.091'W  
*Big hill*. S of Loch Duntelchaig. Elevation 389m.

### Càrn Mòraig

---

NH 763 303  
57°20.832'N 4°03.478'W

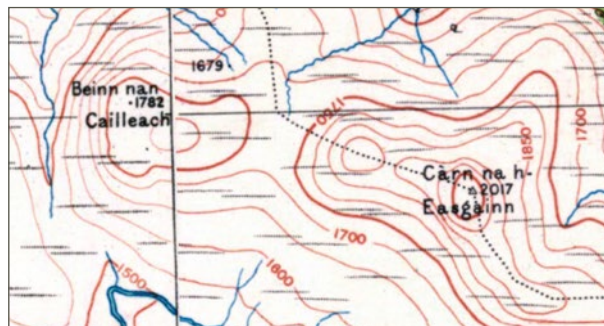
*Morag's hill*. The OS Name Book gives 'the hill of Sarah'. *Mòr* (diminutive *Mòrag*) is sometimes considered a Gaelic equivalent to Sarah. The woman in question is not identified. NW of Tomatin. Elevation 558m. The wild, elevated country between *Càrn Mòraig* and Loch Farr is known as *An Sealbhanaich*, a name which is not on any OS map, but which is recognised locally, and has been translated as 'the place of the herding' (Sandilands 2019).

### Càrn na h-Easgainn

---

NH 743 321  
57°21.729'N 4°05.402'W

While this has been interpreted as 'the hill of the eel', it is more likely to be 'the hill of the morass, bog', based on *easg* 'bog, ditch formed by nature'. Indeed, it is covered with peat hags. The first OS entry was *Càrn nan Uisgean* 'the hill of the waters' which, while erroneous, reflects the wet nature of the landscape there. In a remote location between Loch Farr and Loch Moy. Elevation 616m.



*Càrn na h-Easgainn* and its neighbour *Beinn nan Cailleach* between Farr and Loch Moy. Detail from OS 1-inch map 1921-30. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

### Càrn na Loinne

---

NH 762 325  
57°21.993'N 4°03.550'W

*The hill of the enclosure.* The name of this hill SW of Loch Moy, elevation 545m, refers to *An Lainn Mhòr* (Lynemore q.v.) to the hill's immediate north. The OS originally collected the name as *Càrn an Lòin* 'the hill of the meadow' but corrected this in later map editions. The correct form was given by local Strathdearn bard, Donald MacAskill (d.1947), in a poem called *Ceann na Coille*:

Ged a gheibhinn-sa mo thagha,  
B' e mo rogha dhen Roinn Eòrp'  
A bhith 'n tàmh an Ceann na Coille  
Far an deach mo thogail òg;  
Far am faicinn Càrn na Loinne  
Is Càrn Dubh Mhic an Deòir,  
Far an cluinninn fuaim na h-abhann  
Sa bheil bradain 's bric gu leòr ...

'If I were to get my choice, in all of Europe I would choose to live at Woodend where I was raised in my childhood; where I would see *Càrn na Loinne* and *Càrn Dubh Mhic an Deòir*, where I'd hear the sound of the river in which salmon and trout abound ...' (Barron 1977 p.147).

### Càrn nam Bò Àirigh

---

NH 756 305  
57°20.930'N 4°04.074'W

*The hill of the shieling cattle.* This appears as *Càrn nam Bò-airidh* on early OS maps. It is the hill to the immediate west of Càrn Mòraig (q.v.). Elevation 563m.

### Cas Garbh

---

NH 638 309  
57°20.911'N 4°15.806'W

The OS Name Book gives 'the rough steep', presumably meaning the rough steep hillside (OS1/17/23/30). Cumming (1982) gives 'rough step or way'. S of Loch Duntelchaig. See **Cas Liath**. Elevation 377m.

### Cas Liath

---

NH 635 305  
57°20.911'N 4°15.806'W

The OS Name Book gives 'the grey steep' (OS1/17/23/9) - see **Cas Garbh**. S of Loch Duntelchaig. Elevation 405m.

### Cnoc an t-Seòmair

---

NH 632 395  
57°24.455'N 4°16.728'W

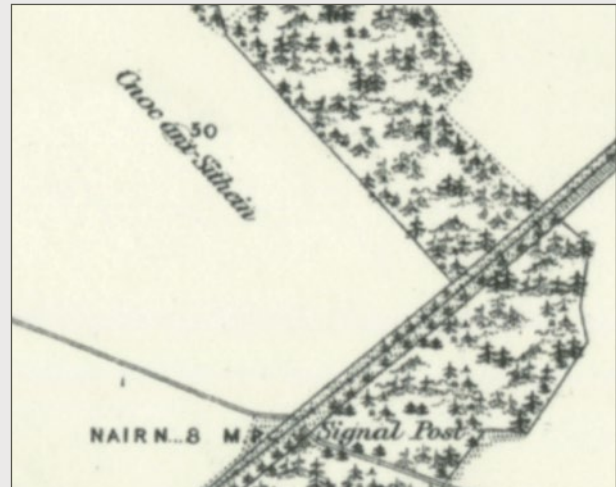
*The hill of the chamber.* Pron. 'krochk un TCHÒM-ir'. A low knoll S of Scaniport, given as *Tom an t-Seòmair* 'the chamber knoll' by Thomas Sinton, then the Minister at Dores (1906 p.320). Presumably, the hill was considered by locals to be a chambered cairn, although it is not listed as such. We might compare it with *Cnoc an t-Seòmair* 'the knoll of the chamber' in Glenamachrie in Argyll, which is considered by the archaeological authorities to be a natural knoll.

## The *Sithichean* of the Gaels

The *sithichean* 'SHEE-ee-chun' are an ever-present component of the cultural landscape of Gaelic Scotland, even if some sceptics deny their continued existence in today's world! An individual is a *sithiche* - the root of the word is *sith* 'peace, quietness' - and, indeed, they are the quiet beings who live underground in green knolls and hills called *sitheanan* (sing. *sithean*). The inaccuracy of the translation to English 'fairy', which represents an entirely different type of supernatural being, should be obvious, but we seem to be stuck with the term. The folklorist and Presbyterian minister, the Rev. John Gregorson Campbell, wrote that '[the fairies] are addicted to visiting the haunts of men, sometimes to give assistance, but more frequently to take away the benefits of their goods and labours, and sometimes even their persons. They may be present in any company, though mortals do not see them. Their interference is never productive of good in the end, and may prove destructive ...' (Black 2005 p.2).

The story told of **Cnoc an t-Sithein** (next page), where the good wife disappeared for a year (as the fairies live on a different timescale to humans), is a common motif in traditional legends, and a variant is told of the dwellers of the Otherworld in Tomnahurich in Inverness, a hot-spot for interference by the *sithichean* in the affairs of humans. The 'fairies' once caused a milk famine in the town by putting a spell on the milking cows, because of their annoyance at humans planting too many rowan trees - the great protector species against negative supernatural forces. In this book, another toponym named for fairies is **Creag nan Sithean** near Lochend.

The Petty-Ardersier area seems to have been another place for fairy legends, particularly of *tàcharain* 'changelings', infants who were stolen shortly after birth and replaced by an unholy, rude child whose hunger was never satisfied. Two accounts are given in the NSA (1845), one of an attempt to steal a new-born infant at 'Lag-chree' near Castle Stuart, and another of a fairy hillock called *Tom Eanruig* 'Henry's knoll' E of Ardersier at NH813557, where the fairies would reputedly gather under the moonlight. A father believed that, if he left his 'sickly atrophied' infant overnight on the hillock, the real child would be found in its stead in the morning. The man left his child there, and 'in the morning found it a corpse'.



*Cnoc an Sithein* - then a knoll in the middle of a field - as shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch OS map (pub. 1976). The straight line crossing the map is the railway. Today, *Cnoc an t-Sithein* is also very close to Inverness Airport.

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### Cnoc an t-Sithein

---

NH 766 510  
57°31.936'N 4°03.723'W

*The fairy hillock.* Given as *Cnoc an t-Sidhean* by the OS, this is a forested hillock E of Castle Stuart. A common place-name across the Highlands. A short distance away at NH753499 is *Tom a' Mhòid* 'court hill', which was reckoned to be a favourite abode of the fairies (NSA Vol XIV 1845 p.391). The NSA account tells us of 'a farmer's wife having been detained amongst [the fairies] for a whole year, without being sensible of the lapse of time, and afterwards returning home, to the surprise and delight of her friends.' *Tom a' Mhòid*, no longer marked on the maps, was locally pronounced *Tom Mhòit* i.e. 'towm VÖTCH' (Trans. ISS Vol 1 1879 p.255). It was cut through by the railway line and is now directly behind a particle board factory.

### Cnoc Dubh Mòr

---

NH 672 323  
57°21.710'N 4°12.530'W

*Big black hill.* East of Dunlichity in Strathnairn. Elevation 222m.



*Cnoc Dubh Mòr* in Strathnairn. Detail from 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 6-inch OS map (pub. 1905). At bottom right is the River Nairn.

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### Cnoc na Saobhaidh

---

NH 722 307  
57°20.962'N 4°07.451'W

*The hill of the fox den.* Pron. 'krochk nuh SØ-vee'. E of Loch Farr.

### Cnoc nan Croiseag

---

NH 670 306  
57°20.814'N 4°12.667'W

*The hill of the cranberries.* The hill behind Brin Mains in Strathnairn. The OS were of the opinion that *croiseag* represents the cranberry (OS1/17/20/78), but MacPherson (1955) gives the translation 'knoll of the bearberries', an interpretation supported by Cumming (1982) who says that *croiseag* represents standard *cnàimhseag*. While *cnàimhseag* commonly refers to the cranberry or bearberry, it can also be used as a generic term for fruit of plants in the family Ericaceae, including blaeberrries and cowberrries. The farm under the hill, known today as Brin Mains, was for a period called Knocknacroishag, an anglicised form of the hill name, but this has gone from the modern OS maps. An alternative interpretation of the name has been proposed – that *croiseag* is a (diminutive) form of *crois* 'a cross', and that the location was so named for an Episcopalian church that was burned down before 1858 (Meldrum 1983 p.38). However, the pronunciation given by Finlay and Jessie Smith ('krochk nun CROY-shak') suggests that the second element is indeed a berry-bearing plant, and not based on *crois* (TD Tr.81647.2). The low rocky hill to the NE of *Cnoc nan Croiseag* is given on old maps as *Creag a' Bhealaidh* 'the hill of the broom (plant)'.

### Craobh Sgitheach

---

NH 670 336  
57°22.440'N 4°12.789'W

This name, which applies to a rounded hill N of Crask (q.v.) in Strathnairn, means literally 'hawthorn tree' (properly *A' Chraobh Sgithich*). Cumming (1982) explains it as 'place of thorn trees' (*sgitheach* can sometimes apply to the blackthorn) and says there is another of the same name at Duntelchaig. Finlay Smith gives the alternative form *Creag Sgitheach* 'hawthorn crag' (TD Tr.81647.2), although he says it is not rocky. Elevation 288m.

### Creag a' Chait

---

NH 661 317  
57°21.374'N 4°13.562'W

*The rocky hill of the (wild)cat.* Pron. 'krake uh CHATCH'. SE of Loch a' Chlachain (q.v.). On 6-inch OS maps and listed by Cumming (1982). There is another *Creag a' Chait* (on the OS 1:25 000 map) W of Loch Dochfour at NH594389.

### Creag a' Chlachain

---

NH 652 333  
57°22.232'N 4°14.501'W

*The rocky hill of the clachan.* See **Clachan**. This was an important lookout hill above Dunlichity, as recounted by MacPherson (1955) and Fraser (1883 p.262). See **Càrn an Fhreiceadain**. MacPherson tells us that on 'the summit of the hill at Dunlichity is a large upright stone, called the "watching stone". No doubt it served in olden times as a signalling station, its signals being noted and passed on by other stations on neighbouring hills.' The Gaelic name for the stone is *Clach na Faire* (Cumming 1982); it is named on early OS maps at NH654334 but appears on later maps simply as 'Cairn'. Elevation 365m.

### Creag a' Choin

---

NH 644 300  
57°20.466'N 4°15.218'W

*The crag of the dog.* S of Loch Duntelchaig.

### Creagan a' Bhealaich

---

NH 659 333  
57°22.254'N 4°13.803'W

*Small rocky hill of the pass.* Lies to the E of the pass (in which the road runs) leading from Dunlichity to Bunachton.

### Creagan Bad Each

---

NH 720 352  
57°23.361'N 4°07.859'W

*Small rocky hill of the place of horses.* *Bad* can mean a thicket but has also become a general word for a place or spot. This hill, elevation 338m, is close to the A9 road, E of Inverarnie. Horses were an important part of life in these parts at one time. The OSA (1795) tells us that the 'whole parish of Daviot, and some parts of Dunlichity, lie within the distance of between 4 and 6 miles to ... Inverness ... to which all the tenants ... send their horses with peats or turf regularly twice a week, the spring and harvest not excepted' (Vol XIV p.76).

### Creagan Breac

---

NH 777 439  
57°28.172'N 4°02.425'W

*Little speckled rocky hill.* SE of Clava.

### Creag an Eòin

---

NH 732 338  
57°22.657'N 4°06.607'W

*The rocky hill of the bird.* The connection to a bird (such toponyms often refer to the golden eagle) is confirmed by the OS Name Book (OS1/17/5/144), and the form of the name is supported by the account of *Ciste Creag an Eòin* (q.v.) in the NSA (1845, Vol XIV p.98). However, Cumming (1982) gives it alternatively as *Creag Eòin* 'Eoin's (John's) rock', presumably connecting it to Eòin MacGillivray who, according to tradition, was buried alive in *Uaigh an Duine Bhèo* (q.v.), following a boundary dispute between his clan and the Mackintoshes. Cumming, however, is the only source to identify this individual's name as Eòin.

### Creagan Glas

---

NH 766 426  
57°27.451'N 4°03.493'W

*Little grey or grey-green rocky hill.* SE of Clava.

### Creag an Reithe

---

NH 663 336  
57°22.435'N 4°13.409'W

This crag, on the ridge that divides Strathnairn from Bunachton, has long been interpreted by the OS as *Creag an Reithe* 'the crag of the ram'. Finlay and Jessie Smith give it as *Creagan an Reith* (pron. 'krak-un un REH') 'the small crag of the ram', with a short 'ei' (TD Tr.81647.2). However, an alternative, with long 'èi', has been suggested – *Creagan Rèidh*, pron. *Cragan Rèidh* 'flat topped little crag' (Willie Forbes pers. comm.).

### Creag Bad an Eich

---

NH 593 302  
57°20.456'N 4°20.361'W

*The crag of the thicket of the horse.* The name applies to a 'conspicuous rock' (not the hill behind), according to the OS Name Book (OS1/17/23/10). SW of Loch Duntelchaig.

### Creag Bheithin

---

NH 736 348  
57°23.182'N 4°06.224'W

*Benjamin's crag.* The OS Name Book (OS1/17/5/143) is the source of this interpretation – supplied by Mackintosh of Mackintosh at Moy Hall. Benjamin is a given name sometimes favoured by the Mackintoshes. *Allt Creag Bheithin* flows in an easterly direction to the S of the crag, which rears above the A9 road, before joining *Allt na Slànaich* (q.v.) at NH750348.



*Creag Bheithin* is to the immediate north of *Stairsneach nan Gàidheal* which was on the route of Wade's old military road. Detail from OS 6-inch 1st edition map (published 1871-5).

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### Creag Bhreac

---

NH 593 306  
57°20.668'N 4°20.323'W

*Speckled rocky hill.* SW of Loch Duntelchaig.  
Elevation 357m.

### Creag Chrò

---

NH 701 317  
57°21.407'N 4°09.592'W

*Narrow rocky hill.* This is the meaning, according to the OS Name Book (OS1/17/23/36). *Crò* is here an adjective, meaning 'narrow', which roughly fits the topography. An alternative would be *Creag a' Chrò* 'the rocky hill of the animal enclosure'. NE of Loch Farr. Elevation 463m.

### Creag Dhubh

---

NH 659 301  
57°20.524'N 4°13.753'W

*Black rocky hill.* Pron. 'krake GHOO'. Behind Balnabock (q.v.) in Strathnairn. There is another *Creag Dhubh* S of Loch Duntelchaig at NH630307.

### Creag Liath

---

NH 742 403  
57°26.141'N 4°05.754'W

*Grey rocky hill.* Pron. 'krake LEE-uh'. Given as Craig-Lioch by Roy (1747-52). NE of Daviot. Elevation 355m. There is another Creag Liath between Loch Duntelchaig and Loch a' Chlachain at NH651323.

### Creag nan Gobhar

---

NH 695 324  
57°21.834'N 4°10.821'W

*The rocky hill of the goats.* Also given as *Creag nan Gabhar* (same meaning). A rugged hill to

the immediate west of *Meall na Fuar-ghlaic* (q.v.). According to Cumming (1982), goats became extinct here in the late 1940s. In a traditional tale of Strathnairn, *An Cath gun Chrich* ('The Never Ending Battle'), this hill is the home of *An Rìgh Bàn* 'the fair king' who is involved in a conflict with his brother *An Rìgh Dubh* 'the black king', who lives on *Càrn an Fhreicheadain* (Cumming 1980 p.500-503). There is also a crag called *Creag nan Gobhar* at NH575358 N of Abriachan, overlooking Loch Ness.

### Creag Shuilleir

---

NH 666 336  
57°22.430'N 4°13.163'W

*Bright crag.* The rock shines after rainfall, according to Cumming (1982), who gives it as *Creagan Soilleir*. Willie Forbes says the correct form, reflecting the pronunciation 'krak-un SIL-yur', is *Cragan Soilleir*, and that the name perhaps derives from the rising sun shining onto the crag (although the area is now cloaked in dense forest). His pronunciation is supported by Finlay Smith, recorded in 1962 (TD Tr.81647.2). *Creagan* is generally pronounced as *Cragan* in the Loch Ness area. W of Tordarroch in Strathnairn. See **Creag an Reithe**.

### Druim Dubh

---

NH 678 305  
57°20.788'N 4°11.830'W

*Black ridge.* Directly W of Loch Farr. In the mid-19th century, there was a farmhouse just to its east called Drumdhu (the anglicised form of *Druim Dubh*). There is a *Druim Dhubh* N of Dores at NH614381; the OS appear to have mistakenly ascribed the feminine gender to *druim* in this case - it should properly be *Druim Dubh*.



## Drumossie (Muir/Moor) *Druim Athaisidh*

NH 707 404

57°26.140'N 4°09.248'W

*The ridge of Ashie.* Elevated country running for some 8 miles from S of Loch Ashie (q.v.) in the south to Cantray in the north. It lies N of the River Nairn, and borders Inverness on its SE. The whole ridge is *Druim Athaisidh* in Gaelic. However, in English, it is called Drumashie (q.v.) in its southern part, and Drumossie in the vicinity of Inverness. The NSA (1845) mentions 'an inclined sandstone ridge commonly called Drimmashie or Drumossie moor (or the moor of Leys), at the east end of which the battle of Culloden was fought' (Vol XIV p.514). Roy's map (1747-52) has only 'Culloden Moor' for the 'Drumossie' part of the moor, as does Arrowsmith (1807). Given as Drumossie Muir by the OS who say it 'consists of arable, wood, and moorland, chiefly of the latter, and consequently presents a very bleak and monotonous aspect. "Culloden Muir" forms part of this waste' (OS/1/17/18/25). For the meaning of *Athaisidh*, see **Loch Ashie**.

## Meall Mòr

NH 744 408

57°26.459'N 4°05.617'W

*Big rounded hill.* Pron. 'myowl MORE'. NE of Daviot. Elevation 369m. This is a common name in the Gaelic landscape. There is another *Meall Mòr* NW of Moy at NH737355 (elevation 492m), and yet another E of Strathnairn at NH697340 (elevation 379m).



Drumossie Muir, as shown on Bartholomew's Survey Atlas of Scotland, 1912. Culloden Moor (and Battlefield) forms a section of it, close to its NE extremity.

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## Meall na Fuar-ghlaic

NH 699 324

57°21.817'N 4°09.775'W

*The rounded hill of the cold hollow.* Pron. 'myowl nuh FOO-ur ghliechk'. The hollow is a place of long snow lie (Cumming, 1982). NE of Loch Farr (Strathnairn). Elevation 473m.

### Saddle Hill

---

NH 788 434  
57°27.926'N 4°01.235'W

This is likely to be a translation of an earlier Gaelic name with the element *diollaid* 'saddle' (e.g. *Meall na Diollaid*), of which there are many examples across the Highlands. However, no Gaelic form has so far been found in the records – the earliest is the first 6-inch OS map which shows the current form. There is a saddle between the hill's twin summits. SE of Clava.

### Stac an Fhithich

---

NH 643 317  
57°21.356'N 4°15.192'W

*The rock of the raven.* Pron. 'stachk un YEE-eech'. Overlooks NE corner of Loch Duntelchaig.

### Stac Dearg

---

NH 647 322  
57°21.658'N 4°14.982'W

*Red rock.* Overlooks NE corner of Loch Duntelchaig.

### Stac na Cathaig

---

NH 640 301  
57°20.489'N 4°15.680'W

*The rock of the jackdaw.* Pron. 'stachk nuh KA-hik'. S of Loch Duntelchaig. Elevation 446m.



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### Tom na h-Ulaidh

---

NH 788 313  
57°21.372'N 4°00.904'W

*The hill of the treasure.* The OS say that the name arose from the concealment there of valuables by soldiers who were on their way to participate in the Battle of Culloden in 1746 (OS1/17/5/50). Adjacent to A9 road, S of Dalmagarry. Elevation 380m. A short piece of verse by the late Murdo MacAskill of Tomatin gives an anglicised form of the hill's name and tells us a little more of the treasure buried there and how to find it! (Grant 1980 p.31):

On Tomnahully, old folks say,  
That the New Year's earliest ray  
Of sunlight strikes a certain stone,  
Which has since olden times laid on  
A golden treasure wrapped within  
The cover of a young foal's skin.

### Tòrr, An

---

NH 592 354  
57°23.247'N 4°20.548'W

*The hill.* The wooded eminence at the W. end of Dores Beach on Loch Ness. The trees of 'Torr Wood' were mostly planted by William Fraser of Balnain in 1760, after he bought Aldourie in about 1752 (Fraser-Tytler ca. 1920). The adjacent promontory has the English name Tor Point. Elevation 62m.

### Tòrr an Daimh

---

NH 603 314  
57°21.140'N 4°19.301'W

*The hillock of the stag.* Pron. 'tòr un DIEF' (as English 'die'). Translated by the OS as 'ox knowe', *damh* here is more likely to refer to a red deer stag than an ox. A knoll W of Loch Duntelchaig. Elevation 273m.

## Corries, Passes and Hollows

### Cadha, An

---

NH 592 304

57°20.561'N 4°20.429'W

*The pass.* A route N of *Creag Bad an Eich*, linking Erchite to General Wade's Military Road and Loch Duntelchaig. Given as *Cadha Acha' nam Bat* (named for the steading at **Achnabat**) by Sinton (1906 p.323).

### Ciste Creag an Eòin

---

NH 731 340

57°22.773'N 4°06.747'W

*The deep hollow of Creag an Eòin* (q.v.). Given by the NSA (1845) as 'Ciste Chraig an Eoin (the chest of Craig an Eoin) which is a circular hollow surrounded with high rocks, and accessible only through one narrow entrance ... from being quite close to the pass called *Starsach na Gael* [*Stairsneach nan Gàidheal* q.v.] 'the gate of the Highlands', it was used as a place of concealment for their wives and children by the Highlanders during their predatory excursions into the low country' (Vol XIV p.98). It was undoubtedly a good hiding place, for whatever purpose it might have been used. Ragnaid Sandilands of Strathnairn gives a fascinating account of this feature and other surrounding places in her blog (Sandilands 2018).



*Ciste Creag an Eòin* with *Creag an Eòin* behind. A concealed hollow which made a perfect hiding place at times of conflict.

### Coire Buidhe

---

NH 664 320  
57°21.560'N 4°13.314'W

*Yellow corrie.* E of Loch a' Chlachain on the N slopes of *Creag Bhuidhe* (q.v.).

### Coire na Leirg

---

NH 649 310  
57°20.999'N 4°14.822'W

*The corrie of the hill slope.* E of Loch Duntelchaig. *Allt Càrn na Leirig* (OS) flows through the corrie but *Càrn na Leirig* is not shown on the maps. It might be the unnamed hill of elevation 417m at NH644295.

### Covenanter Hollow

---

NH 665 326  
57°21.839'N 4°13.233'W

This is a deep, grassy hollow in a field in Strathnairn, close to *Allt a' Chlachain* (q.v.), which was reputedly used by the Covenanters, a 17<sup>th</sup> century Presbyterian movement which opposed the Episcopalian establishment at a time of religious and civil strife. It is invisible from the outside and therefore could host clandestine meetings of large numbers of people. Local tradition bearer, Willie MacQueen, reported that the acoustics are excellent: 'it ... could keep at least a couple of thousand people with great comfort and they could hear without any hearing aids or any of the present-day appliances ...' (Larimer 2001 p.51). The name is not recorded by Cumming or MacPherson, and neither is it marked on OS maps; the 'Gravel Pit' marked on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 6-inch map (published 1905) is a separate feature at NH664325. Immediately adjacent to Covenanter

Hollow on its NW side is a broad dip in the land called '*Lach na Bà*' locally; this appears to be for *Lag na Bà* 'the hollow of the cow', although the pronunciation suggests there might be confusion with an earlier *Glac na Bà* (same meaning). There is a *Glac na Bà* (not marked on the maps) near Balnabock (Cumming 1982). No Gaelic form has been ascertained for Covenanter Hollow, although *Glac nan Cùmhnantach* might be expected.

### Finglack

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NH 772 440  
57°28.211'N 4°02.953'W

This looks almost certain to be *An Fhionn Ghlac* 'the fair hollow', a conclusion supported by the contours which show a slight hollow with an opening to the S. A steading E of Clava.

### Glack, The A' Ghlac

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NH 789 562  
57°34.780'N 4°01.525'W

*The hollow.* There is a hollow here at the T-junction of the roads. NE of Ardersier.

### Glac Ratch

---

NH 658 332  
57°22.208'N 4°13.940'W

This semi-anglicised name, according to Cumming (1982) is *Glac Roid* 'pass of (the) bog myrtle', referring to the route from Dunlichity to Bunachton, where the road now runs. We might compare it to Loanroidge *An Lòn Roid* 'wet meadow of bog myrtle' in E Ross NH591741 (Watson 1904 p.81). Although modern maps show the name above the road on the E side of *Creag a' Chlachain*, the old OS 6-inch maps

make it clear that it refers to the base of the gully where the burn flows, which must have been later called a *bealach* 'pass', as it is framed on the E by *Creagan a' Bhealaich* (q.v.). Other interesting place-names in this vicinity, given by Cumming, include *Croit Annag* 'Annag's Croft' at the road junction (NH661330) and Annag's Dyke at the same location (*Annag* is a diminutive and familiar form of *Anna* 'Ann'). Willie Forbes' father knew the road from Dunlichity to Bunachton as the *Bioraid*, pronounced approx. 'BEER-utch', the meaning of which is unclear, but might be 'point' or 'corner'. The name was confirmed by Jessie and Finlay Smith (TD Tr.8167.1).

### Glac Ròpach

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NH 643 314  
57°21.178'N 4°15.359'W

The OS say that the name signifies 'the entangled hollow' (OS1/17/23/29). Properly *A' Ghlac Ròpach*. A rocky hollow between *Badan Gorm* (q.v.) and *Stac an Fhithich* (q.v.). The descriptor probably refers to vegetation.

### Glaic na Ceàrdaich

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NH 613 346  
57°22.875'N 4°18.461'W

*The hollow of the smiddy*. Between Dores and Loch Ashie.

### Stairsneach nan Gàidheal

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NH 736 345  
57°23.027'N 4°06.165'W

*The threshold of the Gaels*. Given by the NSA as 'the pass called *Starsach na Gael*...' through which, according to the author, the Rev James M'Lauchlan, Highlanders would travel on their 'predatory excursions into the low country' (Vol

XIV 1845 p.98). The OSA also tells of its strategic significance, as 'a few men could defend it against numbers' (Vol III 1793 p.499). See **Ciste Creag an Eòin**. The name applies to a pass that connects Strathnairn to Strathdearn, through which General Wade built his 18<sup>th</sup> century military road, but which was a thoroughfare long before that (Grant 1980 p.9). Tradition in Strathnairn puts an entirely different slant on the origins of the name. Strathdearn in Gaelic is *Srath Èireann*, the strath of the Findhorn (*Uisge Èireann*), but also meaning 'Strath of Ireland'. It is said that it was inhabited by Gaelic speaking people when Strathnairn was still Pictish-speaking, hence the name (e.g. Cumming, 1982).

Old OS maps show a location just W of *Stairsneach nan Gàidheal* (at NH729346, now marked with an impressive cairn and plaque) as the site of *Ruaig na Maighe* 'The Rout of Moy' in February 1746, where a handful of local Jacobites turned away a government force of around 1,500 men from Inverness who had intended to capture Charles Edward Stuart as he rested at Moy. However, the Prince received a warning, given - according to the Clachnacuddin Nonagenarian - by a lass working in the town's principal Inn 'The Horns', who, having overheard the officers discuss their plan, ran to Moy, some twelve or thirteen miles, 'with the speed of the wild deer of her native mountains' (Maclean 1886 p.37-9). In the darkness, the local men made a lot of noise and successfully pretended to be part of an army, whereas in reality they numbered only five! Their leader, the blacksmith Donald Fraser, became famous as *Caiphtean nan Còig* 'Captain of the Five'; his grave in the Moy Churchyard NH771342 is marked by an impressive marble gravestone which was sent from Rome by Jacobite admirers (Grant 1980 p.161).

## Lochs, Rivers and Burns

### Allt a' Chasain

---

NH 630 381  
57°24.763'N 4°16.926'W

*The burn of the path* (Name Book OS1/17/22/9). S of Balnafroig (Scaniport). The 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch OS map shows a path crossing the burn at NH630380, and another following its S bank for a distance further downstream.

### Allt a' Chlachain

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NH 663 329  
57°22.025'N 4°13.422'W

*The burn of the churchyard*. This stream runs from Clachan (q.v.) and enters the River Nairn at NH671330.

### Allt a' Chnuic Chonaisg

---

NH 594 340  
57°22.518'N 4°20.379'W

*The burn of the hill of whin (gorse)*. Pron. 'owl't uh CHROO-eechk CHON-ishk'. South of Dores, this small burn flows today through woodland into Loch Ness. It presumably arises on a hill once covered with whin, and known as *Cnoc (a') Chonaisg*, although this toponym is not recorded. The OS give 'stream of the whinny hillock' (OS1/17/22/34).

### Allt a' Chruineachd

---

NH 588 333  
57°22.088'N 4°20.895'W

The name of this small burn that reaches Loch Ness just N of Balachladaich is a bit of a puzzle. It

is not on the first 6-inch OS map or in the Name Book, first appearing on the second edition map in 1905 in its current form. Fraser-Tytler (ca.1920) gave it as *Allt-a-Chreanachd* and explained it as 'the wheat burn' i.e. *Allt na Cruithneachd*. This seems unlikely, as wheat was a little grown crop in these parts, and there is a possibility that it refers to the Cruithne or Picts, as in *Càrnán Cruithneachd* in W Ross (Watson 1904 p.182). There is also a distinct chance that it is a corrupted form of *Allt a' Chruinneachaidh* 'the gathering burn', of which there is an example further down the Great Glen at Laggan NN283983. The reduction of *cruinneachadh* to *cruinneach* is a common feature of East Perthshire Gaelic (Ó Murchú 1989 p.320) and is seen in other East Highland dialects (Iain MacIlleChiar pers. comm.).

### Allt a' Chùil

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NH 766 313  
57°21.319'N 4°03.140'W

According to the OS Name Book (OS1/17/5/49), this means *the burn of the back* (i.e. *the place behind*), although it is not clear what topographical feature it is supposed to lie behind. However, *Am Faclair Beag* (<https://faclair.com>) gives a third meaning for the masculine noun *cùl* (in addition to 'back' or 'hind part'), which is 'shadow (position: when used adjectivally in the genitive)' and, certainly, the burn, which descends from a range of N-facing hills would spend much of its time in shadow, as viewed from Dalmagarry, which it reaches shortly after its junction with *Allt na h-Àirigh Samhraich* (q.v.).

### Allt a' Mhinisteir

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NH 608 335  
57°22.280'N 4°18.990'W

*The burn of the minister.* The name of this stream no doubt derives from the fact that it flows from Ashie Moor to Dores, where it performs a dogleg at the church and continues past the manse to enter Loch Ness next to the Dores Inn at NH598348.

### Allt an Lòin Eòrna

---

NH 696 315  
57°21.319'N 4°10.123'W

*The burn of the damp meadow of barley.* The 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch OS map gives *Allt an Lòin Uaigneich* 'the burn of the lonely damp meadow'. However, Cumming (1982) gives it as *Allt an Lion Eòrna* 'the burn of the oat sheaf', although this seems unlikely. There is a possibility that *Eòrna* is a misinterpretation of *Fheàrna*, referring to the alder tree. The burn flows into the Farnack River (itself named for the alder) in Strathnairn at NH693313.

### Allt an Ruighe Bhuidhe

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NH 575 305  
57°20.562'N 4°22.125'W

*The burn of the yellow slope.* Pron. 'owlt un roo-ee VOO-ee'. Flows into Loch Ness in Erchite Wood at NH571308.

### Allt an Tighe Dhuibh

---

NH 630 377  
57°24.574'N 4°16.904'W

*The burn of the black house.* A modern standard form would be *Allt an Taigh Dhuibh*. The OS say it means 'burn of the black bothy' (OS1/17/22/22). Flows from Drumashie Farm and meets *Allt Lochan an Fheòir* at NH628378.

### Allt Càrn a' Ghranndaich

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NH 772 428  
57°27.558'N 4°02.894'W

*The burn of Grant's hill.* Pron. 'owlt kaarn uh GHROWN-tich' (as in 'now'). Named for *Càrn a' Ghranndaich* (q.v.), from which the burn flows.

### Allt Càrn na Leirg

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NH 647 308  
57°20.892'N 4°14.983'W

*The burn of the hill of the slope.* Flows from *Coire na Leirg* into the *Allt Eadar Dhà Loch* (q.v.), which connects Loch Duntelchaig with *Loch a' Chlachain*.

### Allt Cromachan

---

NH 769 416  
57°26.885'N 4°03.126'W

*Burn of bends.* The OS interpret the name as 'stream of the crook' (OS1/22/1/31), but it is more likely to be a description of the tight bends that characterise the watercourse. It joins the Hollow Burn at **Drummore of Clava**.

### Allt Cromagach

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NH 757 302  
57°20.727'N 4°03.985'W

*Crooked burn.* Pron. 'owlt KROME-uk-uch'. S of *Càrn Mòraig*.

### Allt Dailinn

---

NH 584 321  
57°21.473'N 4°21.285'W

There are two schools of thought on this place-name. Fraser-Tytler (ca.1920), obtaining his information from James Gow, who belonged to this area and knew it intimately, wrote that it is *Allt Dail Linn* 'the burn of the lint dell', and that

it flows under the B852 road at 'Witches Bridge'. He explained both toponyms, with a distinct lack of charity, as follows: 'Lint or flax in olden times was grown on every holding and was here put out to bleach. An old woman from Culloden called Bean-a-Charier (the Carrier's wife), a reputed witch with an evil eye, lived here 1820-1885. On the marriage of Lieutenant-Colonel E.G. Fraser-Tytler in 1881, she went to Aldourie with wedding presents consisting of a goose, an old spoon, and some magic concoction like gruel in a pot. A most troublesome person, whose death was a relief to the Parish.'

An entirely different school of thought is that the stream's name is *Allt Dà Linne* 'burn of two pools'. This is how it is shown on the first OS 6-inch map, pub. 1875, and it was presumably pronounced *Allt Dà Linn* in the local fashion (the pronunciation of the two models is very similar). But the debate went even further than that. The name was a matter of such dispute following the first OS survey, that Mr Mackenzie of Drummond (q.v.), through whose property the burn ran, called at the Ordnance Survey office in Inverness to 'condemn' two other suggested names - *Allt na h-Ailme* 'the burn of the elm' and *Allt Ailein* 'Allan's Burn' - and to point out that, as a 'native', he could confirm that it should be *Allt Dà Linne*, named 'for the two pools at the bottom of [the] cascade' (OS1/17/22/30).

### Allt Eadar Dhà Loch

---

NH 649 319  
57°21.477'N 4°14.737'W

*Burn between two lochs.* This form of the name of the short burn that carries water from Loch Duntelchaig into *Loch a' Chlachain* is from Cumming (1982), although the OS in their old 6-inch maps give (somewhat ungrammatically)

*Allt Eadar Dhà Lochan* (the name is not on the modern maps). Cumming said that the old people of that location could judge the weather by the sound of the burn, which they termed *rànaich dhà loch*, literally 'the crying of [the] two lochs'.

### Allt Eas a' Chait

---

NH 581 304  
57°20.567'N 4°21.496'W

*The burn of the waterfall of the cat.* Pron. 'owlt ess uh CHATCH'. This is named for a waterfall in the burn. The cat referred to is almost certainly the native wildcat. Flows through Erchite Wood and enters Loch Ness at NH572309.



*Allt Eas a' Chait* derives its name from *Eas a' Chait*. Both names are shown on this detail from the OS 6-inch 2nd edition map (published 1905). The presence of the wildcat on the Gaelic landscape of the Highlands reminds us that it was once a much more common species than it is today.

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### Allt Garbh

---

NH 613 366  
57°23.935'N 4°18.525'W

*Rough burn.* Pron. 'owlt GAR-av'. Flows directly downhill S of Darris to enter the Dobhrag Burn at NH608365.



### Allt Gogach

---

NH 700 302  
57°20.632'N 4°09.599'W

*Stuttering burn.* This is the interpretation by Cumming (1982). *Gogach* can also mean 'fickle'. The burn reaches the *Allt Beag* at NH698304, E of Loch Farr.

### Allt Lochan an Fheòir

---

NH 626 380  
57°24.720'N 4°17.265'W

*The burn of the small loch of the grass.* Pron. 'owlt loch-un un YÖR'. The lochan, whose name indicates that it was nearly filled in with vegetation, has completely disappeared and is not shown on any OS map. Just to the E of **Kinchyle**.

### Allt Lugie

---

NH 725 411  
57°26.560'N 4°07.519'W

MacPherson (1955 p.3) and Cumming (1982) give the meaning as 'burn of the twisted channel', but neither supplies the Gaelic original. The OS only say that it 'is a corrupt Gaelic name, and has therefore been anglicised' (OS1/17/20/19). The specific is perhaps based on *liùg* 'twist, bend, creep' i.e. *Allt Liùgaidh*. The burn flows into the River Nairn opposite Mains of Daltulich at NH733419.

### Allt na Fuar-ghlaic

---

NH 714 351  
57°23.293'N 4°08.370'W

*The burn of the cold hollow.* W of **Creagan Bad Each**.

### Allt na Glaic Ròpaich

---

NH 642 315  
57°21.223'N 4°15.424'W

*The burn of the tangled hollow.* This is the interpretation given by Cumming (1982). Flows through the *Glac Ròpach* (q.v.) to enter Loch Duntelchaig at its NE end.

### Allt na h-Àirigh Samhraich

---

NH 777 308  
57°21.127'N 4°02.030'W

*The burn of the summer shieling.* This watercourse flows NE from the hills around **Càrn Mòraig**, through an extensive shieling site around NH773301, to reach the Dalmagarry Burn at NH783321. The standard form of the name would be *Allt na h-Àirigh(e) Samhraidh* but *Samhraich* appears to be a local form, also found in *Càrn na h-Àirigh Samhraich* (now *Càrn Ruighe Shamhraich* OS) a short distance to the south in Strathdearn (NH787223).

### Allt na Làirige

---

NH 705 342  
57°22.831'N 4°09.319'W

*The burn of the pass.* Flows through Wester Lairgs, Strathnairn. Pron. 'owlt nuh LAAR-ik-uh.' This, at least, is the form of the name given by the OS on old and modern maps. However, Robertson's form is *Allt na Luirg* (King 2019 p.235), which suggests that the element is *luirg* 'shank, slope', rather than *làirig*, and this fits better with the Gaelic forms and interpretation of nearby *Lairgs* (q.v.). The pronunciation of this form is 'owlt nuh LOO-rik' with a short 'OO'.

### Allt na Loinne Mòire

---

NH 757 332  
57°22.381'N 4°04.086'W

*The burn of the big enclosed field.* Pron. 'owlt nuh lun-yuh MORE-uh'. Some modern OS maps have the erroneous *Allt na Loinne Mòr*. Flows N off *Carn na h-Easgairn* and past Lynemore (q.v.), the latter giving the watercourse its name.

### Allt na Rànain

---

NH 723 334  
57°22.396'N 4°07.486'W

*The burn of the crying or stag's bellow.* A small stream that flows into *Allt na Fuar-ghlaic* (q.v.) SW of *Uaigh an Duine Bheò* (q.v.). Cumming (1982) gives the burn the name *Allt na Rànaich*, maintaining that it makes a sound like a man crying – said to be that of the ghost of the MacGillivray who was buried alive in *Uaigh an Duine Bheò*. The OS have *Allt na Rànain* on their first 6-inch map (it is still the form on their maps today) but say 'meaning unknown' in the Name Book (OS1/17/5/146) which is a little surprising, as *rànan* 'the roar of a stag' is included in the *Dictionarium Scoto-Celticum* of 1828. However, it is properly a masculine noun, and Raghnaid Sandilands offers the grammatically correct form *Allt an Rànain* 'burn of the stag's roar/cry/bellow' (Sandilands 2019).

### Allt na Slànaich

---

NH 748 343  
57°22.961'N 4°05.030'W

*The healing burn.* The Gaelic form of this stream – that flows from the N slopes of *Càrn na h-Easgairn* (q.v.) – is confirmed by Robertson (King 2019 p.236). Waters of certain burns, springs and wells were – and sometimes still are – considered to have healing or health-giving properties. Cumming (1982) thinks that this property in *Allt na Slànaich*

derives from 'the mineral wells that are numerous in these hag lands'. Nearby was the old (now ruined) settlement of Aultnaslanach, given by Pont ca. 1583-1614 as Ardnaslanach. This name was pronounced 'alt nuh SLAAN-uch' i.e. Altnaslanach by Strathnairn native Finlay Smith (TD Tr.81647.2), although his knowledge of the toponym might have been influenced by the anglicised form.

### Allt Ruadh

---

NH 766 448  
57°28.608'N 4°03.550'W

*Red-brown burn.* Flows through *An Dail Ruadh* (Dalroy q.v.). Formed by the confluence of the Cassie Burn and *Allt Càrn a' Ghranndaich* (q.v.).

### Allt Ruidhe Mòire

---

NH 754 415  
57°26.809'N 4°04.641'W

This appears to be the 'burn of (the) big slope', with *ruidhe* for *ruighe*, but the OS Name Book give it as *Allt Ruithe Mòire* 'big running burn' (OS1/17/5/3). This stream forms part of the boundary between Nairn and Inverness.

### Allt Saidh

---

NH 580 308  
57°20.756'N 4°21.765'W

Fraser-Tytler (ca.1920) gives this as *Allt Saighe* 'burn of the rocky ridge' (pron. 'owlt SIGH' as in English 'sigh'), and there is no particular reason to doubt the interpretation [Dwelly's dictionary, following Armstrong (1825), gives 'sharp edge, sharp point' for *saigh*]. Another possibility is *Allt Saidhe* 'burn of [the] bitch', and it should be noted that there is a tradition on the other side of Loch Ness that *Allt Saigh* N of Invermoriston refers to a she-wolf. The 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch OS map calls it *Allt na Criche* 'boundary burn', but the second edition has it in its current form.

### Allt Tarsainn

---

NH 776 428

57°27.554'N 4°02.455'W

*Crosswise burn.* Pron. 'owlt TAR-sinn'. It flows at right angles into *Allt Càrn a' Ghranndaich* (q.v.) and lies somewhat parallel to the prevailing contours of the slope. The OS have *Allt Tarsuinn* (old spelling).

### Allt Uisge Geamhraidh

---

NH 703 317

57°21.539'N 4°09.297'W

*Burn of winter water.* The reason for the name is not known, although the burn is on a south-facing slope so might be the first in the area to run after snowmelt. The name might be tautological, reinterpreting an older burn name i.e. *Uisge Geamhraidh* 'winter burn'. Flows into the **Uisge Dubh** at NH703310.

### Caochan Dubh

---

NH 732 312

57°21.243'N 4°06.439'W

*The dark streamlet.* Pron. 'køch-un DOO'. There are many small streams in this area named *caochan*, literally 'blind stream' i.e. one that cannot be seen, usually because it is, or was historically, hidden by vegetation. Few of these *caochanan* make it onto the OS maps popular with walkers, but many can be seen on the old 6-inch to the mile maps which are available on the internet. Flows into the **Uisge Dubh** at NH728310.

### Caochan Fiadhaich Ruithe

---

NH 784 363

57°24.061'N 4°01.519'W

*Wild running streamlet.* This is the interpretation by the OS (OS1/17/5/10). An alternative would be *Caochan Fiadhaich Ruighe* 'wild streamlet of (the) slope or shieling'. Arises E of *Beinn an Uain* and flows into Moy Burn at NH781366.

### Caochan na Caillich

---

NH 743 306

57°20.923'N 4°05.362'W

*The streamlet of the cailleach/old woman.* Pron. 'køch-un nuh KAL-yich'. One of the tributaries of the **Uisge Dubh**, E of Loch Farr, it flows W off *Càrn nam Bò-àirigh*.

### Caochan na h-Eaglaise

---

NH 770 338

57°22.820'N 4°02.565'W

*The streamlet of the church.* Flows into Loch Moy close to the church. Marked on old 6-inch OS maps.

### Caochan na h-Earbaige

---

NH 741 342

57°22.881'N 4°05.689'W

*The streamlet of the small roe deer.* Pron. 'køch-un nuh HER-ep-ik-uh.' Joins with *Allt Creag Bheithin* at NH745346.

### Caochan nam Breac

---

NH 717 305

57°20.830'N 4°07.968'W

*The streamlet of the trout [plural].* Flows into the **Uisge Dubh** E of Loch Farr at NH716309.

## Are we Becoming Blind to our *Caochanan*?

---

Caochan '*streamlet, purling rill*' is a fascinating place-name element, as it is derived from *caoch* 'blind', a word that is rarely encountered in modern Scottish Gaelic, although it is still active as a verb and adjective in Irish Gaelic. It can be interpreted as both a stream so overgrown with vegetation that it cannot see out of its own bed, or that it is so hidden by undergrowth that walkers are 'blind' to it (see Murray 2014 p.86). But are we, thanks to cartographic restrictions, in danger of becoming 'blind' to the rich heritage of this toponymic element in our upland areas? On the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch OS map, Strathnairn resident Raghnaid Sandilands located 27 caochanan on one section of high moor between Strathnairn and Strathdearn, running from Farr to Dunmaglass and over to the Findhorn. The names are rich and meaningful, and include *Caochan Còsach* 'streamlet of crevices', *Caochan na Poite* 'the streamlet of the [illegal] whisky still' and *Caochan Dubh Ruighe na Sròine* 'the dark streamlet of the shieling of the hill promontory'. However, walkers relying on the 1:50 000 OS Landranger map while crossing these hills will find only 3 of the 27 caochanan named. Those with a strong interest in place-names, particularly burn names, would be advised to use the 1:25 000 Explorer map series which identifies many more of these 'blind streams'. See <https://www.raghnaidsandilands.scot/blog1/2018/5/22/blog-2>.

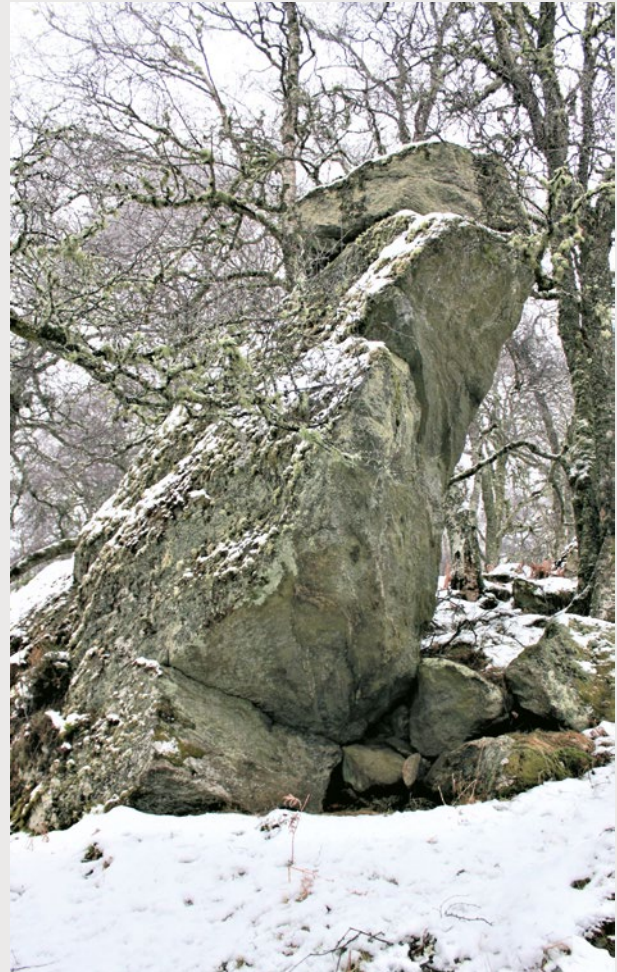


A typical *caochan* in upland country. The slow-flowing stream 'disappears' in places due to the growth of surrounding vegetation. Such watercourses can be ankle-breakers for unsuspecting hillwalkers!

## A' Chailleach – Old Woman, Hag, Goddess

---

The Gaelic word *cailleach* (pron. 'KAL-yuch') is used colloquially to mean 'old woman' and is employed in such a manner even in English in the Highlands. In *Beinn nan Cailleach*, the name is said to come from large stones on the summit, which resemble a gathering of old women, and *Clach Cailleach nam Muc* recalls a real person, 'the old woman of the pigs', who surrounded herself with her porcine companions. However, the word *cailleach* in its genitive singular form, as in *Caochan na Caillich* 'the streamlet of the Cailleach', sometimes references, not a contemporary old woman, but a timeless supernatural being, interpreted as both pagan goddess and spiritual matriarch, who probably belongs to the Great Mother tradition of Indo-European and early Celtic mythology (Newton 2009 p.227). She dominates her landscape, and has extraordinary links to wild nature, protecting her deer from hunters, and milking her hinds. She may be at once malevolent and benevolent towards those who 'encroach' upon her territory, sometimes targeting members of particular clans for maltreatment and even assassination. There are many places across the Highlands named for the Cailleach, including burns, lochs, promontories, harbours, skerries and, of course, hills and mountains. Five mountains between Islay and Skye carry the name *Beinn na Caillich*, and there are at least seven burns called *Allt na Caillich*.



Clach Cailleach nam Muc

### Cairnlaw Burn *Allt na h-Imire*

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NH 705 464  
57°29.363'N 4°09 672'W

The area adjacent to the burn (at NH703464) is given as Cairnlaw on early OS maps but, if the name is Scots (*law* meaning 'a roundish or conical hill'), it hardly fits the landscape. The OS explained it as a corruption of the Gaelic *Car an Latha* 'the turn of the day', arising from a change in fortune during an ancient conflict, but this seems unlikely. Rights were granted to the burgesses of Inverness over the 'Carn Laws' in the Golden Charter of 1591, and one of the old town boundary markers was in this vicinity. An older name for the burn was Auldinhemmerie or Althemrie, from the Gaelic *Allt na h-Imire* 'the burn of the field'. Fraser's map (1911) shows it as *Allt na h-lomaire*, with the tributary stream that joins it at Stratton NH704461 bearing the name *Allt na Crich* 'boundary burn'. The lands to the W of the Cairnlaw Burn and *Allt na Crich* were granted to the Royal Burgh in the Golden Charter, hence the latter's name.

### Cassie Burn

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NH 765 441  
57°28.228'N 4°03.660'W

*The OS Name Book gives the following:* 'This stream is formed by the confluence of the Hollow Burn and Allt Cromachan at the farm of Drummore of Clava whence it flows in a north easterly course to where Allt Càrn a' Ghrantaich [sic] falls into Allt Ruadh' (OS1/17/20/28). The name is probably Scots, meaning 'causeway burn'. No Gaelic form was ascertained.

### Dubh-lochan

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NH 636 304  
57°20.625'N 4°16.059'W

*Black lochan.* S of Loch Duntelchaig.

### Eitigheach, An

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NH 661 345  
57°22.848'N 4°13.708'W

*The gullet or windpipe.* This is the name of the burn which flows into the SW end of Loch Bunachton. The interpretation is from the OS Name Book (OS1/17/20/46). Dwelly's dictionary gives the word as *de-tigheach*.

### Farnack (River) *Allt Feàrnaig*

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NH 688 346  
57°22.977'N 4°11.031'W

*Alder burn.* Cumming (1982) gives *Fearnag* 'little alder burn', without *Allt*, but Pont (ca. 1583-1614) has Alt Fairnag. Local Gaelic speakers refer to the stream in English as the *Feàrnag* (i.e. 'FYAR-nak'), rather than *Farnack*. The name is based on *feàrna* 'alder'. The glen through which the upper part of the burn flows is Glen Arnie on old maps e.g. Roy (1747-52) and Thomson (1832). The stream meets the River Nairn at NH684350. See **Inverarnie**.

### Fiddler's Burn *Allt an Fhidhleir*

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NH 723 479  
57°30.195'N 4°07.938'W

The Gaelic form (pron. 'owl't un YEEL-ur', with a long 'EE') is based on Wallace (1914 p.155), although the reason for the appellation is unknown. This burn, near Lower Cullernie, marked the boundary of the Inverness and Petty parishes.

### Funtack Burn *Allt Fionntaig*

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NH 789 326  
57°22.075'N 4°00.840'W

*White burn.* The equivalent name is elsewhere anglicised Fintag or Fintaig and is based on the colour *fionn* 'white, bright'. Watson (1926 p.448) gives the name as *Fionntag* 'little white one', without *Allt*, and compares it to the common burn name *Dubhag* 'little black one'. He notes that the

mouth of the burn, where it meets the Findhorn River *Uisge Èireann*, is Invereen i.e. *Inbhir Fhinn*, based on the genitive form of *fionn*. This gives the name Invereen to a nearby settlement at NH798315. Watson also raises the possibility that *fionn* is here used in its secondary meaning of 'blessed, holy', as an older name for the burn was *Allt na Cille* 'church burn'. Robertson gives the Gaelic form as *Allt Fionntaig* (King 2019 p.236), but this does not alter the interpretation. The Funtack Burn drains Loch Moy to the S.

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### Hollow Burn

NH 761 432  
57°27.748'N 4°03.953'W

No Gaelic forms are recorded, but the English name is likely to be a translation of an earlier *Allt an Luig* 'the burn of the hollow', as the watercourse flows from an area called Lagmore (*An Lag Mòr* 'the big hollow') at NH756431. The Hollow Burn joins with *Allt Cromachan* at **Drummore of Clava** NH764436 to form the **Cassie Burn**.

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### Lochan a' Chaorainn

NH 755 374  
57°24.626'N 4°04.401'W

*The lochan of the rowan*. N of Moy. The earliest OS record is *Lochan a' Chaoruinn* (old spelling); Thomson (1832) gave Loch an Churin. Arrowsmith (1807), on the other hand, had a different name - L[och] Unagag. *Caorann* 'rowan (tree)' is a common element in Highland place-names, but it is no longer an accurate descriptor of the loch, which now has diverse woodland on its banks. To the loch's immediate west is *Lochan an Leanaibh* (*Lochan an Leinibh*, OS) 'the lochan of the child/baby'. The reason for the name is unrecorded, although a drowning tragedy long ago might be expected.

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### Loch a' Chlachain

NH 654 322  
57°21.628'N 4°14.272'W

*The loch of the churchyard or church settlement*. Pron. 'loch uh CHLACH-in'. Given as Loch Clachan by Roy (1747-52) and Thomson (1832). It takes its name from the nearby *Clachan* (q.v.).

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### Lochan an Eòin Ruadha

NH 611 321  
57°21.519'N 4°18.637'W

*The lochan of the red bird(s)*. This place-name, as written, is grammatically problematical. The OS at first gave it as *Lochan nan Eun Ruadha* 'the lochan of the red birds'. This is the form given by Cumming (1982), except that he (realistically) elevates the waterbody's status to 'loch' i.e. *Loch nan Eun Ruadha* 'loch of the red birds'. However, the OS changed the name to *Lochan an Eòin Ruadha* 'the lochan of the red bird' (singular) on the second edition 6-inch map (pub. 1905), and this is what remains on their maps today. The case inflection of the adjective *ruadh* 'red-brown' for the genitive singular in the updated version is incorrect, and, if the second noun is indeed singular, the name would be *Lochan an Eòin Ruaidh*; MacPherson (1955 p.3) was clearly of that opinion, giving his preferred form for the burn that drains the loch as *Allt an Eòin Ruaidhe*.

That said, *eun*, *eòin* 'bird, birds', does inflect irregularly in some dialects, with the genitive plural being *eòin* rather than *eun* - but, in that case, one would expect *Lochan nan Eòin Ruadh(a)* 'the lochan of the red birds', with the plural genitive article *nan*, rather than the singular genitive article *an*. Indeed, Cumming gives the burn name as *Allt nan Eòin Ruadha* 'burn of the red birds'. Local Gaelic speakers, Finlay and Jessie Smith, recorded in 1962, clearly consider it plural and give *Loch(an)*

*nan Eun Rua'* (TD Tr.81647.2). The OS would be well advised to revisit the name of this waterbody and make a correction. The *eun ruadh* 'red bird' is generally interpreted as the red-throated diver, which is still to be seen on the lochan (Raghnaid Sandilands pers. comm.), although Fraser-Tytler (ca.1920) thought it to be the (red) grouse. The former is far more likely.



*Lochan an Eòin Ruadha* and its neighbours *Loch(an) na Curra* and *Loch Dùn Seilcheig*, more commonly *Loch Duntelchaig* today. Detail from OS 1-inch map 1921-30.

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### **Loch Bunachton** *Loch Bhoth Neachdain*

NH 665 350  
57°23.148'N 4°13.346'W

*The loch of Bunachton* (q.v.).

### **Loch na Curra**

NH 605 323  
57°21.624'N 4°19.195'W

*The loch of the heron.* The standard form would be *Loch na Corra* (*curra* appears to be dialectal for *corra* but is actually more common in place-names). This toponym appears on OS maps by the 1930s, but initially as *Lochan na Curra*. Prior to that the feature was labelled *Lochan a' Choin* 'the

loch of the dog', although Sinton (1906 p.323) calls it *Lochan a' Churr*. It is situated on Drumashie Moor adjacent to the much bigger *Lochan an Eòin Ruadha* (q.v.); it is clear that *Loch na Curra* should properly be a 'lochán'. Given as *Lochan nan Curra* by local Jessie Smith (TD Tr.81647.2), who had inherited the name through oral tradition.

### **Lochan Dinty**

NH 788 502  
57°31.536'N 4°01.534'W

This tiny body of water W of Croy, which gives its name to the adjacent settlement of Lochandinty (q.v.) is a fragment of its original size, although even when it was surveyed by the OS in the 1870s, it was described as having 'no visible outlet, and very little water running into it' (OS1/17/55/50). The NSA (Vol XIV 1845 p.380) reports that the 'old inhabitants' of the area thought its water flowed underground and emerged in the wells at *Bruaich na Fuaran* (q.v.). It further ventures that the name originated as *Lochan-dun-duibh* 'the loch of the black hillock', which is consistent with the anglicised form it supplies - Lochandinty. However, 'the loch of the black hillock' is more likely to be *Loch an Dùin Duibh*.

### **Lochan Dubh**

NH 671 308  
57°20.937'N 4°12.567'W

*Black lochan.* Just N of Brin Mains in Strathnairn.

### **Loch Ashie** *Loch Athaisidh*

NH 629 349  
57°23.036'N 4°16.925'W

*Loch of the bare or poor meadow.* *Athaisidh* is derived from *Ath-innse*, the genitive form of *ath-innis* 'poor or disused meadow' (Watson 2002 p.100). The name Ashie is applied to a



loch, moor and ridge, with the last bearing the form Drumossie (q.v.) close to Inverness. See **Drumashie**. Tradition, however, maintains that Ashie was a Scandinavian prince (variously a Dane or Norwegian) who was defeated in battle by the Fianna, and who died in the vicinity of the loch. Robertson gives the Gaelic form as *Loch Àisidh* (King 2019 p.233), but the pronunciation given by local Gaelic speakers Finlay and Jessie Smith in 1962 sounds more like *Athaisidh* (TD Tr.81647.1); they give the meaning as 'loch of strife'. The name appears, apparently erroneously, as Loch Ashley on Roy's military map and on Arrowsmith (1807). The first Loch Ashie dam was built in 1875 (Canmore /site 214156) and the loch remains a water supply for Inverness. See **Clach na Brataich**.

#### **Loch Dochfour** *An Eadarloch*

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NH 605 388  
57°25.124'N 4°19.402'W

The anglicised form comes from the adjacent settlement of Dochfour (q.v.), but it was also called Little Loch Ness (Barron 1961 p.7). Barron confirms the Gaelic name, which means '*the between loch*' - referring to its position between Loch Ness and the River Ness. The name Loch Dochfour was already established by the time of the first OS survey (1876-8). The NW corner of the loch was excised from the main waterbody by the construction of a causeway to carry the road in about 1832 (Barron 1961 p.9).

#### **Loch Duntelchaig**

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NH 616 310  
57°20.914'N 4°18.101'W

The name of this loch (which also operates collectively for the settlements on its shores) is intriguing. It is given as Duntelchak in the Inverness Presbytery Records in 1671, the form

also given by the OSA (Vol XIV 1795 p.69). However, Roy (1747-52) records Duntaliack, while Arrowsmith's 1807 map has Duntelchak, and the OS varies from *Dùn na Seilcheig* through *Dun Seilcheig* to Duntelchaig, while Iain Taylor (2011 p.161) favours *Loch Dhùn Deilcheig*. *Dùn na Seilcheig* means 'the hill/fort of the snail' and this is the interpretation that Watson gives (2002 p.232); he also has an explanation for the intrusive 't' (which cancels the sound of the 's' in the 'ts' combination in Gaelic): 'Dun-telchaig is Duntseilcheig "fort of (the) snail". This prefixing of t before the genitive [singular] of nouns beginning with s is an old custom, seen for instance in *Ceann tSaille*, Kintail "head of salt-water". The hill above Loch Duntelchaig, as viewed from Abriachan, looks exactly like a huge snail.'

The pronunciation of the anglicised form is commonly 'dun-TEL-tchik' today. However, the traditional pronunciation follows the Gaelic more closely, and is approximately 'dun-TEL-chak', with the 'ch' as in 'loch' (Willie Forbes pers. comm.). The local Gaelic pronunciation is given by Finlay and Jessie Smith (1962) as 'doon TCHALE-ich-ak' (TD Tr. 81647.1), which might be arguably best represented as *Dùn Teilcheag*. The loch supplies water to Loch Ashie and thence to Inverness as part of the city's municipal supply.

#### **Loch Farr**

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NH 686 307  
57°20.875'N 4°11.072'W

This loch in Strathnairn, called 'Farr Loch' by locals, was created in 1877 by damming the *Allt Dubhach* and flooding a hollow known as the *Fèith Ghlas* (Feyglass) 'grey bog' (Barron 1980 p.288). It was presumably named for being on the Farr Estate. See **Feyglass Wood**.

## Loch nan Geadas

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NH 599 306

57°20.712'N 4°19.685'W

*The loch of the pike (fish, plural).* A small loch linked to Loch Duntelchaig at the latter's SW end. Given as Lochan an Geddesh on Mackay's 1866 estate map. There are at least two other water bodies in the Highlands named for pike – both *Lochan nan Geadas* – one in Glenmore, Cairngorms and the other in Perthshire. *Gead* and *geadasg* are other Gaelic words for this fish species. It is also worth noting that the Arctic charr in Loch Mealt in North Skye are locally referred to in Gaelic as *geadas*. Just to the N on the shore of Loch Duntelchaig at NH604309 is the old settlement of *Bealaidh* 'place of broom' (Fraser-Tytler ca.1920).



*Loch nan Geadas* is just to the N of Achnabat and closely connected to Loch Duntelchaig.

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## Loch Ness *Loch Nis*

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NH 576 334

57°22.141'N 4°22.153'W

See **Ness (River)**. Recorded as Loch Nes in 1575 (Mackay 1911 p.lxxv). There have been attempts to concoct an etymology for the loch's name separate from the river e.g. *Loch an Eas* 'the loch of the waterfall' for the impressive cataract at Foyers (OSA 1793 p.604), but this ignores the

Gaelic form *Nis* which could not be derived from such an origin. There is also a Gaelic legend which explains the name's origin, told by Maclean (2004 p.89), but this is a play on words and not to be taken too seriously. The name originates with the river that drains the loch to the N. The monster (which St Columba famously confronted in the river, not the loch) is known in Gaelic as *Uilebheist Loch Nis* (colloquially *Niseag*).

## Moray Firth *Linne Mhoireibh*

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NH 72 52

Blaeu's map (1654) gives the outer firth as 'Murray Fyrth, called of old Varar Aestuarium' (see **Beaully River**). The Gaelic *Moireibh* suggests an early Celtic *mori-treb* 'sea settlement' (Watson 2002 p.55), meaning the name is likely to be Pictish in origin. The province of Moray was at one time extensive, stretching from the mouth of the Spey to Lochaber. A native of Moray is a *Moireach* in Gaelic, hence the surname Murray. In some old maps, the toponym is written Murray Firth (e.g. Arrowsmith 1807). In Badenoch and Strathspey (and possibly elsewhere) the Moray Firth was called *An Geòb* (or *Geòp*), the meaning of which is given in Dwelly's dictionary as a wry or gaping mouth (Dr. James Grant, pers. comm.).

## Nairn, River *Uisge Narann*

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NH 772 455

57°28.966'N 4°02.914'W

The use of *uisge*, literally 'water', to name this river is no great surprise – this is sometimes the preferred generic for river names in the central and eastern parts of the Highlands. For example, the River Spey is in Gaelic *Uisge Spè*, not *Abhainn Spè* (Robertson in King 2019 p.79). Robertson confirms the River Nairn as '*Uisge Narrunn*, rarely *Abhainn N[arrunn]*', although Strathnairn native, Finlay Smith, gave the slenderised 'ooshk-uh

NAR-in' i.e. *Uisge Narainn* when recorded in 1962 (TD Tr.81647.2). The OSA (Vol XII 1793 p.381) gives *Uisge Nearne*, interpreting it as 'Water of Alders' (i.e. *Uisge an Fheàrna*) 'from the great quantity of trees ... of that species ... which grows upon its banks', but this unlikely to be correct. River names tend to be the oldest in our landscape and the Nairn is no exception. It is possibly Pictish and has been variously compared to the Latin *nare* 'swim' or to an old Celtic root from which we get the modern Gaelic *snàmh* 'swim'. The idea behind the name is of water flowing (Watson 1926 p.435).

Strathnairn, which continues to the S of the area covered in this publication, is generally *Strath Narann* ('stra NAR-un') in Gaelic (e.g. Taylor I 2011 p.146), the name meaning 'strath or wide valley of the Nairn'. However, Finlay Smith gave *Strath Narainn* ('stra NAR-in'), and Mary MacBean, another Gaelic speaking native of the upper part of the strath (Aberarder), recorded in 1970, gave 'stra NARN' (TD Tr.11729). The town of Nairn was once Invernairn or Invernarne, from *Inbhir Narann*, which remains its Gaelic name to this day.

### **Ness, River** *Abhainn Nis*

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NH 663 460  
57°29.070'N 4°13.890'W

Robertson (in King 2019 p.226) tells us this is *Abhainn Nis* although an ancient usage of *Uisge* as the generic (as in *Uisge Narann* for the River Nairn, see above) is suggested by old Scots forms e.g. *Wattyr of Ness* 1561 (Mackay 1911 p.71). Authorities vary in their view of the origin of this ancient river name, ascribing it to the Picts or even the pre-Pictish inhabitants of the area. Macbain (1902 p.62) considered it Pictish, and Ness or Nessa to be the 'Pictish cousin' of the Irish mother of the demi-god king Conchobar Mac Nessa, who was 'really a river goddess of pagan Ulster'; he includes

a quote from St Gildas, who refers to the Celts paying 'divine honour' to their rivers. Iain Taylor (2011 p.171), on the other hand, says that the name is simply based on an ancient Indo-European word meaning stream or river.

The earliest record is *Nesa* (genitive *Nisae*) in the Latin *Vita Columbae* by St Adamnan who died in 704 AD. The English form preserves an old Gaelic nominative *Nes*; in modern Gaelic we only have the genitive form *Nis* surviving, although an earlier form *Nise* is recorded (Watson 1926 p.77). See **Loch Ness**.

The modern OS 1:25 000 map carries no names for features of the river, such as fishing pools, weirs and cruives. For those interested in these toponyms, Home's 1774 map is a good historical resource, and there is modern information available through the Inverness Angling Club and from commercial cartographers. One feature that is still generally known to the populace of Inverness is Friars' Shot NH663454, just downstream of the Greig Street suspension bridge. Shot (or shott) is an old Scots word meaning a place where fishing nets are shot, particularly for catching salmon, and the name recalls the Dominican friars who were granted rights to set up a friary nearby (along with fishing rights) by King Alexander II in around 1233. They are also remembered in Friars' Street and Friars' Lane. According to the OS Name Book, Friars' Shot extends 'from the Roman Catholic Chapel in Huntly St. to the foot of Wells Street', but Home's map tells us that a century before that, it was much longer, ending at the ford across the river at the downstream end of what was then called the Maggat (or Maggot), an area on the E bank of the river, roughly bounded today by Glebe Street and the Waterloo Bridge. Maggot is a challenging place-name. It supposedly references a chapel

to St Margaret that once existed there (Watson 2002 p.161), but the initial element might actually originate in the Gaelic *magh* 'field, plain, flat area', which would also explain the riverside part of Nairn still known as The Maggot.

Downstream of Friars' Shot, adjacent to Capel Inch, is a part of the river known as The Cherry or Cherry Shot, although the name is unmarked on modern maps and is in danger of being forgotten.

It is another enigmatic name. A derivation from Gaelic *cairidh* 'weir, fishtrap' is possible, but the earliest forms Scurry (1240), Churry[flat] (1365), Churrie (1576), and the name's connection to an adjacent dyke that protected the townlands of the Longman from inundation by high spring tides, suggest a possible origin in Gaelic *tiùrr* pron, 'TCHOOR'. The word is today used for the line of seaweed cast up by the highest tide.



Friars' Shot, from the W bank of the river, looking upriver towards the castle.

### **Scretan Burn** *Allt an Sgriodain*

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NH 696 453

57°28.729'N 4°10.495'W

*The burn of the stony ravine.* This short watercourse runs behind the Inverness Retail and Business Park, and under the A96; before reaching the Moray Firth near Cairnlaw, it flows over a waterfall and through a short defile marked on early OS maps as Scretan NH700462, from the Gaelic *sgriodan* 'stony ravine'.

### **Spùtan Dubh**

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NH 664 308

57°20.925'N 4°13.220'W

Literally '*black spout*', interpreted by Cumming (1982) as 'black gushing water'. The name of a

stream that enters the River Nairn at NH671316. *Spùtan* is a diminutive of *spùt*, a loanword from Scots *spout* (English *spout*).

### **Uisge Dubh**

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NH 717 309

57°21.048'N 4°07.983'W

Literally '*black water*', but perhaps more accurately 'dark stream'. It joins the *Allt Beag* in Srathnairn at NH695310 to form the **River Farnack**. The descriptor probably describes the tannin-stained water which comes from the peat-clad hills E of Farr.



Buaille Chòmhnard

## Miscellaneous

### **Badachreamh** *Bad a' Chreamh*

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NH 729 349

57°23.230'N 4°06.948'W

*The clump of trees of the wild garlic.* This name is still on the maps, even if the feature is obscure following the building of the A9 road; it is such a nice name, it would be a shame to lose it! It refers to the ruin of a building at the edge of General Wade's Road, which was an inn during the days when the road was in regular use, but which was already ruined by the 1870s. *Creamh* is the wild garlic or ramsons, which is usually found as a woodland understorey plant, but it can refer to the gentian in some parts of the Highlands and appears in that guise in Duncan Bàn MacIntyre's poetry. To the S of **Beinn a' Bheurlaich**.

### **Buaile Chòmhnard**

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NH 621 332

57°22.140'N 4°17.633'W

*The level (cattle)fold.* This is an impressively large circular stone enclosure S of Loch Ashie, with a folkloric connection to the Fianna. It is now in a clearing, surrounded on all sides by forest, but at the time of the first OS survey in 1870-71, it was in open country, and probably had been for a long time (e.g. Roy's military map 1747-52). The OS Name Book says it had 'in all probability been a cattfold' (OSD1/17/22/38) but notes the local tradition that it had been a fort. The Canmore archaeological website says it was 'not a dun or a fort, but a stock enclosure, probably associated with a drove road which passes it nearby to the W.' (Canmore/site/13240). This droving route

went from Beaully, via Reelig and Blackfold, to the ford at Bona, and continued via Loch Ashie and Dunlichity to Glen Kyllachy and thence to Strathdearn and the South (Meldrum 1987 p.16 and [www.strathnairnheritage.org.uk](http://www.strathnairnheritage.org.uk)).

Canmore also supply alternative names recorded for the structure [modified to standard modern spelling] - *Buaile Aonarach* 'solitary fold', *Buail' a' Chorranaich* 'the fold of the coronach (funerary crying)' and *Buaile [a'] Chòmhraig* '[the] fold of [the] battle'. The last is favoured (over the OS name) by some within the local community (Raghnaid Sandilands pers. comm.). It associates the structure with the legend of an ancient battle between the Fianna and a Scandinavian force under their prince, Ashie, and helps to form a knot of features within a small area, all reputedly linked to that event - viz. **Clach na Brataich**, **Cathair Fhionn** and **Loch Ashie**. Barron (1980 p.288) favours the form *Buail' a' Chòmhrag* and relates accounts of ghostly battles being seen there, usually in frosty weather.

### **Caisteal an Dunriachaidh**

*Caisteal an Dùin Riachaidh*

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NH 600 316

57°21.217'N 4°19.665'W

This is an ancient fort on a rocky ridge W of Loch Duntelchaig, probably dating from the Iron Age, with easy access only on its SW side. The name appears to mean *the castle of the fort of scratching or scratched fort*. A similar name in Easter Ross is Rarichie (*Ràth Riachaidh* 'circular

fort at the scratching place' – Taylor, 2011 p.132). The name is probably a tautology, with *Caisteal* being added to an earlier *Dùn* 'fort' name. The OS first listed it as *Caisteal Dùin Riabhaich* 'castle on the speckled mount' (OS1/17/22/47), but it was given earlier (1792) by the OSA as Dunriachan, which is explained (unreliably) as follows: 'At the distance of 3 miles from the lake are to be seen the vestiges of a fort, called Castal Dunriachan, which some reckon a corruption of Castal Dun Ri-Chuan or the Castle of the King of the ocean, a name which it is supposed to have got at the period when the King of Norway and Denmark was master of the sea' (Vol III p.485). In oral tradition, the castle was a stronghold of Fionn mac Cumhail (Noble 1902 p.52), the adjacent cairns marking the graves of men slain in battle. The OS say it was 'a rallying place for the Highland Caterans when driving the stolen cattle south if pursued and overtaken by the original owners of the cattle; the moor on which it is situated was supposed to have been the place where the different droves met'. According to Historic Environment Scotland, this monument 'is of national importance because it represents good surviving evidence of a late prehistoric fortified settlement' (<http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/SM11817>). To the immediate SW of *Caisteal an Dunriachaidh*, at the road junction (NH596314) is *Ceann na Creige* 'the end of the crag', referring to the rocky hill which leads away to the SW.

### Caisteal Rollach

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NH 693 407  
57°26.307'N 4°10.720'W

This is the name of the remains of an ancient fort close to Wade's old military road on the SE outskirts of Inverness (**Canmore/site/13517**). It is shown on Fraser's map (1911), but not on the

early OS maps. It is possibly the 'ruins of a large structure' mentioned in the OSA (Vol IX 1793 p.635), which was robbed of 'hundreds of loads of the stones' for construction in Inverness [although the account might refer to the chambered cairn close by at Druid Temple (q.v.)]. The meaning of *rollach* is obscure. It might represent *roilleach* 'abounding in ryegrass' or be a dialectal form of *reannach* 'spotted, striped', but these are conjectural, and there is no recorded anglicised form of the name.

### Camas nam Mult

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NH 590 336  
57°22.277'N 4°20.693'W

*The bay of the wedders (wethers)*. A small bay on the NE shore of Loch Ness S of **Dores**. The name first appears in print (as *Camus nam Mult*) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 6-inch OS map (pub. 1905).

### Cambuslochy Bay *Camas Lòchaidh*

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NH 606 387  
57°25.038'N 4°19.264'W

*The bay of the dark water*. A small bay on the E side of Loch Dochfour. *Lòch* (with an elongated 'o') is an obsolete Gaelic word meaning 'dark' and is found in place-names such as Loch Lochy (*Loch Lòchaidh*) in the Great Glen and Loch Loch (*Loch Lòch*) in Perthshire – the latter, when not accented, appearing erroneously to be a strange tautology. Barron (1961 p.7) gives the pronunciation as *lòchaidh*. Cambuslochy shows an older form of the word *camas*; the addition of 'bay' to the overall name is, of course, unnecessary, as *camas* means 'bay', and Barron gives the anglicised form of the full name as Camus Lochy.



Cambuslochy Bay shown on the 2nd ed. 6-inch OS map (pub. 1905). It is a significant feature of Loch Dochfour, but not marked on the modern 1:25 000 map. Another feature not marked on modern maps is *Cladh Uradain* at Kirkton.

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### Càrn Glas

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NH 649 382

57°24.873'N 4°15.008'W

*Grey cairn.* A group of chambered cairns near Achvraid on Drumashie Moor (also called Essich Moor at this point). It is scheduled as '... a complex long cairn formed of three linked chambered cairns, visible as a series of stone structures set into a natural saddle-shaped ridge' (Canmore/site/13164). Lorraine Maclean of Dochgarroch called it 'the largest burial mound in the North of Scotland' (1988 p.47). In 2018, one of the chambered cairns was damaged by human action, an occurrence that was investigated by the police (*The Press and Journal* 19.06.18).

### Càrr Bàn

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NH 670 366

57°24.048'N 4°12.825'W

*Fair moss or bog.* The adjective may reflect the abundance of 'bog cotton', according to Cumming

(1982), who says the *Càrr Bàn* stretches from above Gask Wood to Leys. The peatlands in this area, dominated by the harestail cottongrass *Eriophorum vaginatum* (known in Gaelic as *sioda-monaidh* 'mountain silk') even today can become an impressive sea of white during the summer flowering season.

### Castle Stuart

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NH 741 498

57°31.248'N 4°06.183'W

This towerhouse was built in 1625, adjacent to the Old Petty Kirk, by James Stewart (Stuart), 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Moray. It appears as Castle Stuart in the Wardlaw MS (p.354), but as Castle Stewart on Roy's map (1747-52). Once in a ruinous state, it has been restored, but has the reputation of being haunted.

### Cathair Fhionn

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NH 615 336

57°22.344'N 4°18.182'W

*Fionn's armchair.* This is a culturally significant feature connected to the legendary *Fionn mac Cumhail* (Finn or Fingal in anglicised form), leader of the Gaelic warriors known as the Fianna. The genitive form of Fionn is usually Fhinn, but can also be Fhionn, and both forms occur in place-names across the Highlands. Interestingly, two Gaelic scholars gave the form *Cathair Fhinn* for this landmark (Thomas Sinton 1906 p.320 and Rory Mackay 1975 p.34). The OS Name Book (OS1/17/22/39) has the following entry: 'This name signifies "Fingal's Chair" and is applied to a portion of a rocky ridge consisting of flat slabs which was until recently in form of an armchair, and here it is supposed that Fingal sat to rest himself after his reputed engagement with Ashie the son of the Norwegian King; it is situated near the upper road from Inverness to Stratherrick



and about 100 yards south of the 8<sup>th</sup> mile stone from Inverness; in the immediate vicinity are to be seen several heaps of stone or cairns, which are supposed to mark the burying place of those slain in battle.' The OSA (1793 p.485) verifies that the structure was well-known in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, although it calls it *Sèithear Fhinn* (modern spelling), telling us that the 'inhabitants point out the chair where Fingal rested on the occasion, and which is still called *Sheir Fhinn*, or Fingal's Chair.' The feature is in a poor state of repair today, having probably been disrupted during the construction of the adjacent road. See **Loch Ashie** and **Clach na Brataich**.



*Cathair Fhionn* and *Buaille Chòmhnard*, known locally as '*Buaille Chòmhraig*', at the S end of Loch Ashie, as they appear on the OS 6-inch map (pub. 1875). Both features, along with the 'Cairns' and nearby *Clach na Brataich*, are connected to the legendary battle between the Fianna and the forces of Ashie.

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The word Fianna, usually 'FEE-un-uh', was locally pronounced 'FEE-un-oò' (probably representing the inflected form *Fiannaibh*), as evidenced by an audio recording made with Catherine Forbes (née Mackintosh) of Beachan in 1953 (Willie Forbes pers. comm.). The local tradition of *Cathair Fhionn* is further verified by Cumming (1980, 1982) who

also identifies another 'armchair' in the local landscape – *Cathair an t-Sagairt* 'the priest's chair' SW of Loch Bunachton. This is not given on the OS maps but is connected to *Tobar an t-Sagairt* 'the priest's well' at NH657343.

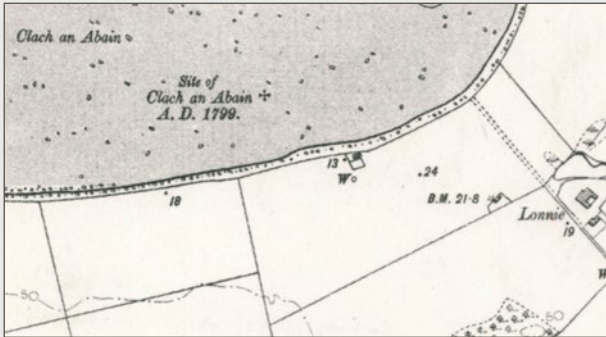
### Clach an Àbain

NH 730 494

57°31.027'N 4°07.310'W

*The stone of the backwater, silted up channel* (see **Abban**). The name of this large stone, which sits proudly on the mud in the middle of Petty Bay, refers to its original location, for it was the subject of a most mysterious translocation at the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Rev. John Morrison, a famous minister at Petty, who was reputed to have the second-sight, delivered a powerful sermon, berating his congregation for being perpetual sinners. 'As a mark that I am telling the truth,' he said (in Gaelic), '*Clach an Àbain* will be moved during the night without a person laying a hand on it.' This seemed preposterous, for it was reckoned that no natural agent would be powerful enough to shift the massive rock. Some twenty-six years later, however, the prophecy came true, for the stone shifted seawards 260 yards during the night! The only 'rational' explanation for the occurrence was that, during the extremely cold winter weather, the sea had frozen around the stone, and the filling tide had lifted it off the ground, stuck to a sheet of ice, leading it to be deposited further out. No doubt, the people marvelled at the occurrence! Sadly the Rev. Morrison, whose gravestone (with his name spelt 'Morison') can be seen in the graveyard at St Columba's (Old Petty) Church, died in 1774, and did not live to see his prophecy fulfilled. The OS 6-inch maps give the original and resultant positions of the stone.

## The Rock that Moved in the Night



The original and current sites of *Clach an Àbain*, as shown on the 2nd ed. 6-inch OS map (pub. 1907).

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The remarkable story of *Clach an Àbain* is described as follows by the Rev. John Grant in NSA (Vol XIV 1845 p.393): ‘On the south side of the bay, an immense stone, weighing at the least eight tons, which marked the boundaries between the estates of Lord Moray and Culloden, and called *clach-an-aban*, or beach-stone, was, on the night of Saturday, 20th February 1799, carried forward into the sea 260 yards. Some suppose that nothing short of an earthquake could have moved such a mass; but the more probable opinion is, that a large sheet of ice, which had collected to the thickness of 18 inches round the stone, had been raised by the tide lifting the stone with it, and that their motion forward was aided and increased by a tremendous hurricane, which blew from the land.’



*Clach an Àbain* with Arturlie Point and the Black Isle in the background.

## Clach an Airm

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NH 680 366  
57°24.050'N 4°11.795'W

The local interpretation of this name is *the stone of the arms or weapons*, for which the OS offers the alternative *Clach nan Arm* (and locals pronounce it 'Clach an Arm' i.e. '*klach un AR-am*'). It is a standing stone in Caulan Wood (Gask Plantation) in Strathnairn, upon which, according to oral tradition, members of the Jacobite army sharpened their weapons on their way to take part in the Battle of Culloden in April 1746 (OS Name Book OS1/17/20/42). Cumming (1982) identifies the weapon-sharpeners as men from Clan Chattan. A grooved stone in the church at Dunlichity (NH659329) is also identified as a place where Jacobite soldiers sharpened their swords on the way to Culloden (Larimer 2001 p.55).

## Clach Cailleach nam Muc

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NH 677 344  
57°22.885'N 4°12.075'W

*The stone of the old woman of the pigs.* This feature is not on OS maps but is highlighted by Cumming (1982) who says the cailleach was 'from Lewis and a witch [who] wandered the glens and straths on each side of Loch Ness with pigs. This stone was her shelter and where she died, said to have been eaten by her pigs.' MacPherson (1976 p.246-7) gives an account of the woman, repeating the tradition that she was from Lewis, and claiming that a man from Glenmoriston, who died in around 1916, could remember her. He says her main base was in Glenurquhart. Finlay Smith recalled her as *Cailleach na Muic* 'the old woman of the pig' and said that she would stay at the stone when her pig gave birth and would wait there until the piglets were old enough to walk (TD Tr.81647.3). On the same recording, Jessie

Smith recalls her grandmother at Clachandruim feeding the cailleach, and allowing her and the pigs to stay in their barn.

Strathnairn native Alasdair Forbes (see Forbes 2015) gleaned his knowledge of the story from tradition-bearers in the strath, and he took the author to see the stone at NH 6775 3448. It is an impressive upright rock (with another rock atop it), set at angle and bearing an overhang. It is near the summit of a wooded, rocky knoll, known as *Creag Cailleach nam Muc*, which is readily observed from the road between Beachan (q.v.) and Achvaneran (q.v.). In Forbes' account, the woman was a native of Dunmaglass in Stratherrick. She would sell her pigs annually at the market in Inverness, walking them there via Strathnairn, taking two days for the journey. She would spend a night, on both outward and return journeys, sheltering under the stone. His account concludes, as do the others, with her being devoured by her swine, although this might have occurred following her death by natural causes.

## Clach na Brataich

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NH 621 343  
57°22.696'N 4°17.685'W

*The stone of the flag or banner.* Also called the Banner Stone. Tradition tells us that the flagpole of the Fianna was inserted into the hole in this flat stone – reminiscent of an unfinished over-heavy millstone – which lies adjacent to the road at the SW end of Loch Ashie (q.v.), during the legendary (but historically unsubstantiated) battle against Ashie, the Scandinavian prince. In this vicinity there have been reports, even in recent times, of phantom armies being seen – one clad in red, the other in blue – with the sightings being most commonly made around dawn on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May (Willie Forbes pers. comm.). Jessie Smith, who grew up at Insh (q.v.) on the E side of the loch

in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, claimed to have often seen, from near her house during her childhood, 'banks of soldiers in the early morning and late afternoon' ascending to Bunachton Moor (further to the E) and out of sight. Her parents would call her to go out and see the soldiers. The ghostly figures were at a distance, and she could not discern the colours of their uniforms. Although she admits to considering it 'extraordinary', she gives a very matter-of-fact description of the phenomenon (TD Tr.81647.3, recorded 1962). See **Cathair Fhionn**.



Clach na Brataich

## Cromal Mount

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NH 782 555  
57°34.413'N 4°02.262'W

The meaning is not clear, although the NSA (Vol 1845 p.470) claims that the Gaelic name for this mound at the N end of Ardersier village is 'Cromal or Tom Mhoit' (*Tom a' Mhòid* 'meeting hill'). The Gaelic word *crom* can mean bent, crooked or concave, and Cromal could be for *Crom-dhail* 'bent field' referring to the flat ground next to the eminence. Watson (1926 p.419) tells us that Cromdale 'bent haugh' in Moray (next to a bend in the River Spey) can be pronounced *Crom'ail* in Gaelic.

There has been speculation that Cromal refers to Oliver Cromwell (whose forces built a fort in Inverness), but this appears to be fanciful. The mound is marked on Roy's map (1747-52) but is not named. It is scheduled as a 'mound and earthworks [comprising] the earthwork remains of a late medieval fortification. The remains comprise a re-shaped natural hillock ...' (Canmore/site/14316). Lorraine Maclean of Dochgarroch tells us that the fort had the purpose of protecting 'the *Via Regis*, the King's Road, from Aberdeen, which divided south of here, to go to Inverness or to cross from the point where Fort George stands today to Chanonry Point in Ross-shire' (1988 p.32).

## Cumberland Stone *Clach Chumberland*

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NH 749 452  
57°28.821'N 4°05.219'W

The Gaelic form is from the *Am Baile* website ([ambaile.org.uk](http://ambaile.org.uk)). The Cumberland Stone is a large glacial erratic boulder adjacent to Culloden Battlefield, and at the S side of the B9006 road. The Duke of Cumberland was reputed to have stood on it to direct the government army during the battle. Another account has him eating a meal at the stone, following the conflict.

### **Dirr Wood** *Coille na Doire*

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NH 605 335

57°22.270'N 4°19.254'W

The Gaelic form is confirmed by Robertson (King 2019 p.232), although it appears at first glance to be slightly contradictory, as it means 'the wood of the copse', based on *doire* 'copse', with the terminal 'e' being lost in speech (pron. 'DIR').

The explanation is that the name is likely to have originated from Dirr Cottage, known in Gaelic as *An Doire* (Robertson & Fraser-Tytler). Roy's map of the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century shows some woodland here, whereas the current Dirr Wood was not yet developed and the country there is without trees. The wood was present, and named Dirr Wood, by the time of the first OS 6-inch map (pub. 1875). Dirr Cottage was built around 1800 (Fraser-Tytler ca.1920).

### **Druidtemple Chambered Cairn**

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NH 685 420

57°26.957'N 4°11.574'W

This ancient monument on the slope above Castle Heather, and close to General Wade's military road, is a 'Clava-type passage grave of prehistoric date, visible as a denuded cairn and stone circle ...' (Canmore/site/13505). It gives its name to the adjacent Druid Temple Farm. The connection to druidical practice is not attested, and no Gaelic form of the name is recorded.

### **Dundavie** *Dùn Deimhidh*

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NH 718 392

57°25.510'N 4°08.145'W

*Fort of Daviot.* Also Dùn Davie on modern OS maps. A promontory fort which occupies a flat hilltop at Daviot, this site is recorded on Roy's map (1747-52) as Dune. The integrity of the site has been compromised on its southern side by

a large quarry. The first element in the name is Gaelic *dùn* 'fort' and the second is directly from the Gaelic for Daviot (q.v.). The NSA refers to it as Dun-Daviot, saying that it 'appears to have been a signal post in former times and ... formed a line of telegraphic communication between Dun-Evan near Calder [Cawdor] on the east and Dun-Dardil [Dùn Dearduil] on Loch Ness Side on the west and Craig Phadric near Inverness on the north' (Vol XIV 1845 p.519). The OS Name Book says that 'none at present know anything about it but that it is called Dun Davie' (OS1/17/20/7). The forested hill to the N of the fort is referred to today as Dundavie or Daviot Forest, but on earlier OS maps it was Balvonie of Daviot [q.v.] Wood. It is likely that this is the area named Davimont (probably from *Deimhidh* + *monadh* 'upland') in King James VI's Golden Charter of 1591, which granted rights to the townsfolk of Inverness to use the area for pulling heather, collecting fuel etc.

### **Eilean nam Faoileag**

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NH 632 350

57°23.122'N 4°16.559'W

*The island of the seagulls.* The southernmost of two small islands in Loch Ashie (q.v.). No name is recorded for the other island. See **Insh**.

### **Eilean nan Clach**

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NH 777 340

57°22.824'N 4°02.149'W

*The island of the stones.* The OS Name Book (OS1/17/5/25) elucidates the name thus: '...a small circular island, entirely composed of stones, in Loch Moy, and lying a short distance to the south of a larger island which bears the name of Isle of Moy. This island ... was used as a temporary prison. Persons were fastened by chains to it for a night or so before being brought to trial in the morning, and frequently were drowned either by

the loch rising or falling from exhaustion into the water which was generally up to the waist'. It was originally a crannog, constructed perhaps as far back as the Iron Age (**Canmore/site/14137**). See **Isle of Moy**.

**Feyglass Wood** *Coille na Fèithe Glaise*

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NH 683 307  
57°20.913'N 4°11.333'W

*The wood of the grey bog.* The old settlement of Feyglass *An Fhèith Ghlas* 'the grey bog', to the south of Loch Farr, is no longer inhabited. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, it consisted of a 'small cottar house, occupied by a shepherd' (OS Name Book OS1/17/20/79). See **Loch Farr**.

**Fort George** *Dùn Deòrsa, Gearastan Deòrsa*

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NH 762 567  
57°35.014'N 4°04.307'W

Fort George, named after King George I, was previously the name of the castle in Inverness (on the site of the current castle) which was destroyed by the Jacobites in February 1746. See **Castle Hill (Inverness)**. The 'modern' Fort George near Ardersier (q.v.) was built in 1748-69 to provide a local headquarters for the army, in order to forestall any further Jacobite rebellions, following the unsuccessful campaign to restore the Stuart monarchy in 1745-6. However, the Jacobites never rose again. A ferry at one time crossed the Moray Firth between Fort George and Chanonry Point, and Joseph Avery's 1725 map shows 'Ferry' with a building where Fort George now stands. The Gaelic forms are from general



*Eilean nan Clach*, Loch Moy. The trees behind are on the heavily wooded Isle of Moy.

modern usage, although another form *Gearasdan Àird nan Saor* 'the fort of Ardersier' appears in the song '*S Diumbach mi do Dhòmhnall MacNill*' sung by Ealasaid Sinclair of Vatersay (TD Tr.19777 rec. 1962). This usage is reflected in Dorret's map (1750), where the unfinished structure is marked as Ardersier Fort.

#### **General Wade's Well** *Fuaran an t-Seanaileir*

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NH 576 313  
57°21.036'N 4°22.034'W

On the upper side of the B852 Loch Ness-side road, this well in Erchite Wood commemorates Irish-born General George Wade (1673-1748), a military commander who was responsible for building the old road on this route, connecting the garrison in Inverness to that in Fort Augustus. The Gaelic form is from Thomas Sinton, who was minister at Dores (1906 p.334). See **General's Well, The**.

#### **Isle of Moy**

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NH 775 343  
57°22.963'N 4°02.266'W

This is the major island on Loch Moy. It is reported to be 'largely artificial' (see Canmore/site/14136), although the construction of such a large island - nearly 300m in length with a width of around 50-60m - would have entailed an almost unimaginable amount of work. Based on the form recorded for Loch Moy, the Gaelic is presumably *Eilean na Maighe* (see **Moy**). This is not contradicted by Pont's form (ca. 1583-1614) *llan na Muy moir* (he fails to inform us, but logic would lead us to presume that **Eilean nan Clach** was *llan na Muy beg*). The OS tell us that the Isle of Moy hosted 'the ancient residence of the head of the Mackintoshes' which was deserted by them around the year 1660 (OS1/17/5/20), but the

Canmore website claims that an inscription above the door of the ruined residence indicates that it was built in 1665 (Canmore/site/14136). According to the OSA, the Isle of Moy was a refuge to which the Lairds of Mackintosh would resort in times of trouble. Not only was there a substantial house, of which ruins remain, but there was also a street of smaller dwellings, and in 1422, 'it contained a garrison of 400 men' (Vol III 1793 p.504-5). Grant gives the year as 1424 (1980 p.131). This refers to an incident during a period of warfare between the Mackintoshes and Cummings, when the Mackintoshes repaired to the island for safety. The Cummings reputedly built a dam in order to flood the Mackintoshes out, but the plan was thwarted. Remains of the dam were found at the outlet of the Funtack Burn in 1884-5 (Canmore/site/14127).

#### **Merchants Stone** *Clach nan Ceannaichean*

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NH 611 332  
57°22.086'N 4°18.597'W

*The stone of the merchants*. Fraser-Tytler (ca.1920) gives only the Gaelic name for this boulder on the west side of the road between Essich and Stratherrick SW of Loch Ashie, and a short distance south of **Cathair Fhionn**. He translates it as 'the stone of the packmen'. It is likely that merchants or traders met clients at this location. The Gaelic for a packman, or pedlar, is *ceannaiche-siubhail*.

#### **Preas Dubh**

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NH 635 324  
57°21.718'N 4°16.181'W

*Dark thicket*. A forested headland at the N end of Loch Duntelchaig.

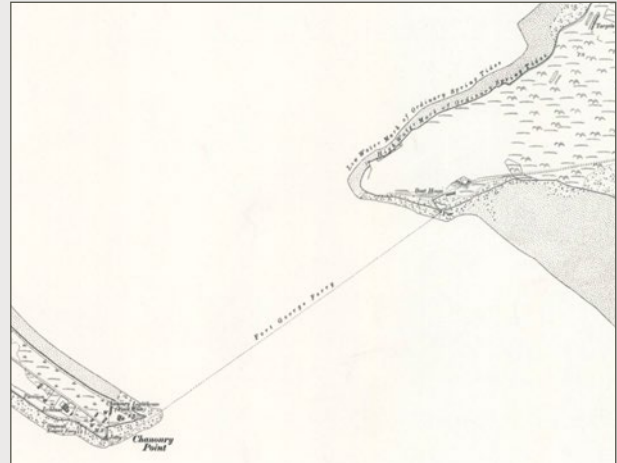
## Cartographers Drawing a Blank

Can we always believe what maps tell us? The example below answers that with an emphatic 'no'! Before military sensitivities apparently became too great, Fort George was marked on British maps. It is there, for example, on Roy's and Dorret's publications (ca. 1750), although its construction was not yet complete. It appears again on maps by Arrowsmith (1807) and Thomson (1832).



Fort George on Thomson's map (1832).

However, both editions of the OS 6-inch maps (1876 & 1906) show a blank peninsula where the fort stands to this day, and the same is true for the early one-inch OS maps (1885-1900). This was presumably for reasons of national security, so that hostile foreign powers would not be able to locate the facility using British maps. John Bartholomew and Sons were perhaps less constrained by such matters and their map of 1912 shows the fort clearly. By the 1920s, it was starting to appear on OS publications, but even later than that - for example, in the OS 1:25 000 series (1937-61) - Fort George's existence was still a subject of cartographic denial.



An 'empty' peninsula marks the site of Fort George on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS 6-inch map (pub. 1906) - although the route of the 'Fort George Ferry' might be a clue to foreign powers with hostile intent!

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### Tobar na Goil

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NH 767 501  
57°31.477'N 4°03.596'W

*The well of the boiling.* Pron. 'tope-ur nuh GUL' (slender 'l'). This well, in woodland just to the north of the original settlement of Tornagrain (q.v.) and across the A96 road from Petty Church, is described in the NSA thus: 'At Tornagrain there is *tobar na gul*, or the boiling fountain, where ... there are various intermittent spouts, and with every ejection of the water, the purest sand rises and spreads round the orifice from which the water is thrown till the weight of the sand changes the orifice, and this sand is distributed in the same process anew' (Vol XIV 1845 p.380). The well was described as 'wide and deep' (Fraser 1878 p26). While still marked on the (OS 1:25 000) map with a 'W', it consists today of a series of pipes emerging into a stream through a man-made structure which might have been at one time connected to a larger cistern, the whole in a wet, boggy area which appears to be fed by a spring. Sadly, it no longer 'boils'.

### Tomfat (Plantation)

*Tom Fada, Coille an Tuim Fhada*

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NH 678 373  
57°24.471'N 4°12.095'W

*Long hillock.* This appears as Tomfat Plantation on the 2<sup>nd</sup> 6-inch OS map (pub. 1905) but is entirely absent on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition, as the trees had not yet been planted. The original Gaelic *Tom Fada* is confirmed by Cumming (1982), but Jessie Smith (rec.1962) gave the diminutive *Toman Fad'* ('tome-un FAT') [TD Tr.81647.3].

### Uaigh an Duine Bheò

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NH 727 348  
57°23.172'N 4°07.138'W

*The grave of the living man.* Pron. 'oo-eye un doon-yuh VYÖ'. A small cairn marks the place where a strange and brutal occurrence is said to have taken place around three centuries ago. According to tradition, as recorded in the NSA (Vol XIV 1845 p.99) and by Cumming (1982), the Mackintoshes of Moy and the MacGillivrays of Dunmaglass were in dispute about the location of a boundary between their lands. An elderly man (named by Cumming as Eòin MacGillivray, although his given name is unconfirmed elsewhere), was asked to adjudicate, on the condition that a false declaration would be punished by being buried alive. He swore 'by the head under my bonnet' (an oath of great solemnity) that the soil under his feet belonged to MacGillivray. However, some of those present must have doubted him, and pulled off his hat, only to find the head of a dead cockerel there. Then they looked at his shoes and found them to contain soil taken from undisputed MacGillivray land - so he had told the truth, but not the whole truth. He was sentenced to be buried alive at this spot. The veracity of the story, not surprisingly, has been questioned, particularly as instances of live burial of a human are extremely rare in Gaelic tradition (e.g. Grant 1980 p.115). The cairn can be located on the W side of the old military road, now redeveloped as a vehicular road for forestry vehicles, and its presence is advertised by wooden posts. See **Allt na Rànain**.

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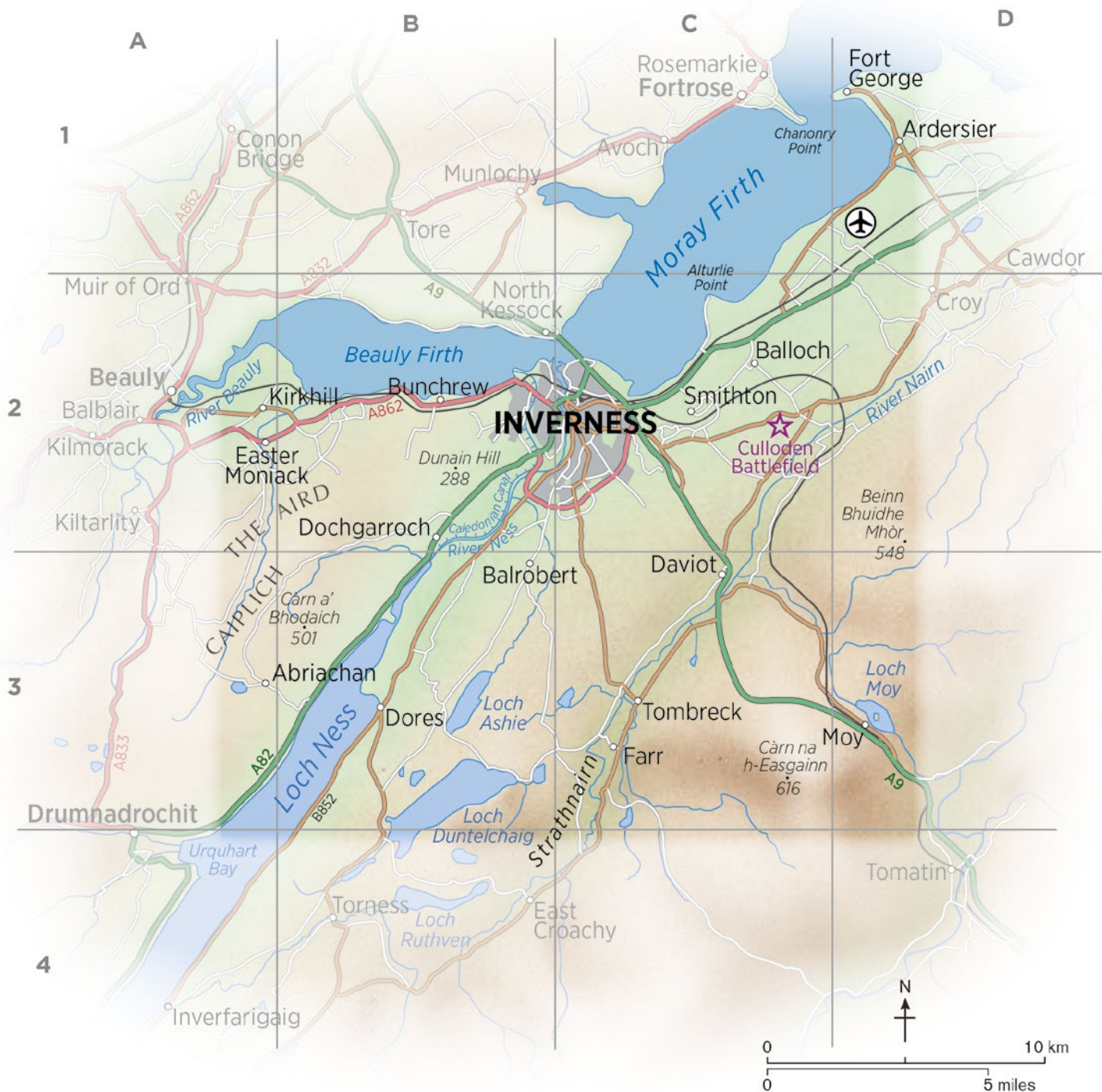
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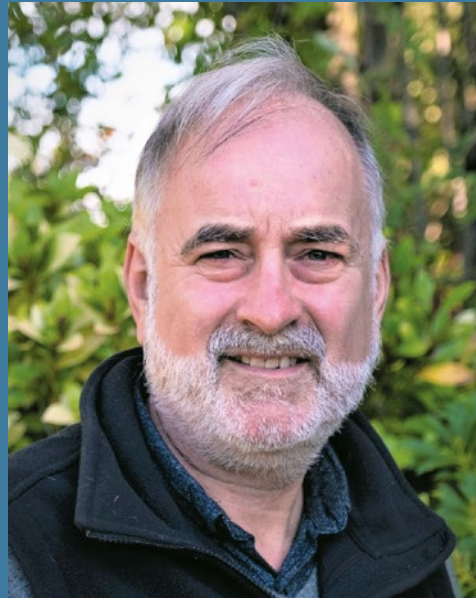
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## The Author

Roddy Maclean (*Ruairidh MacIlleathain*) is an award-winning journalist, broadcaster, educator, author and storyteller, and long-time resident of Inverness, who works mostly in Gaelic. He has family connections to Applecross, Lewis, Elgin and Glasgow, and is the author of several publications about place-names in the Highlands, including 'The Gaelic Place Names and Heritage of Inverness' (2004). Roddy has spent much of his professional and personal life encouraging and assisting the learning of the Gaelic language, and fostering an enhanced understanding and celebration of the rich and widespread links between the language, environment, and cultural heritage of Highland Scotland.





Inverness – the capital of the Scottish Highlands – is a fortunate place. It possesses a fine townscape, congenial pace of life and rich history and, sitting at the northern end of the Great Glen that cuts decisively across the country, its hinterland – peppered with lochs and lochans, rivers and streams, hills and glens, forests and bogs, villages and farms – is a scenic joy, a haven for wildlife and a source of inspiration for humans past and present.

It is also an area with a wonderful place-name heritage. Dominated by the Gaelic language, the place-names tell us of wild animals and plants, and past ecologies. They describe landforms as understood and referenced by people who had an intimate relationship with their immediate environment. They speak to us of old ways of life, of characters remembered in oral tradition, of battles

won and lost, of farming and land-use practices of the past. Our place-names are part of who we are. They link us strongly to our land and environment, and inform our identity and sense of being.

The author endeavours to explain the interpretation that he and others have made of the area's place-names and includes much historical, environmental and topographical information. NatureScot is pleased to partner with him in celebrating the toponymic heritage of Inverness and its environs through this publication.

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