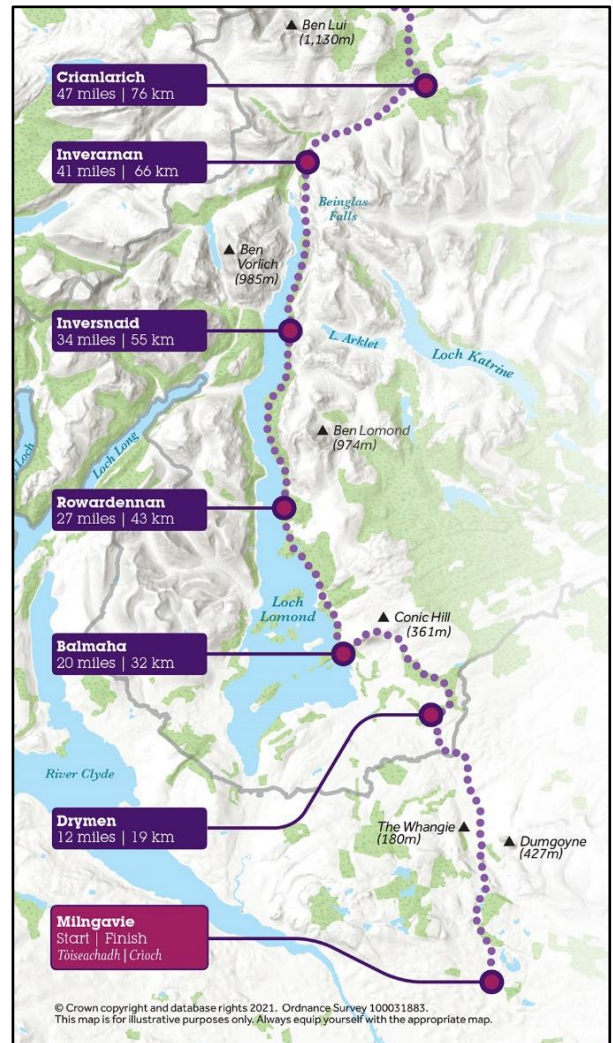
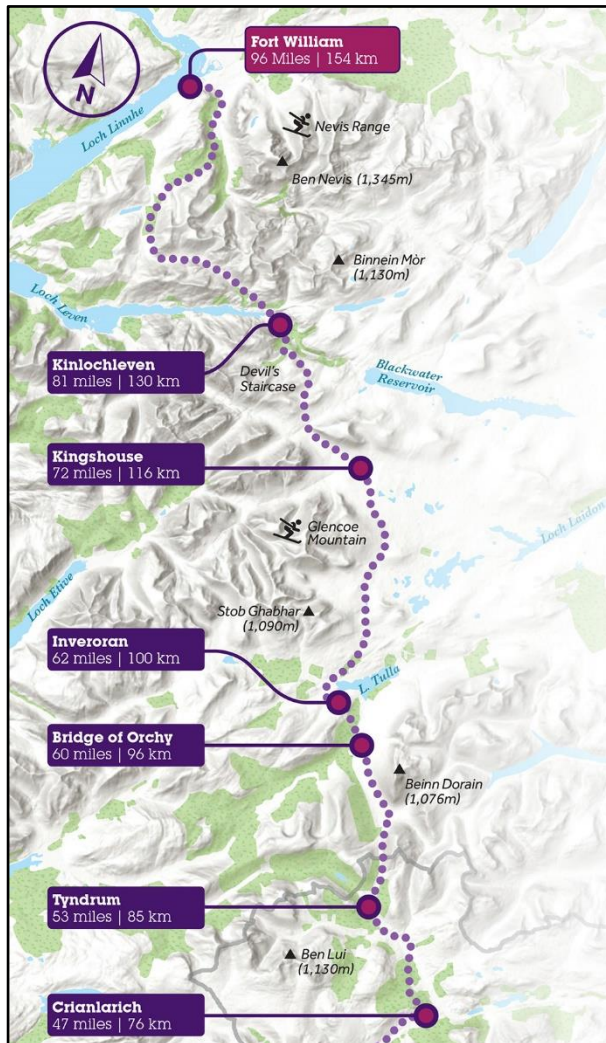


Gaelic Place-names along the West Highland Way



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Abbreviations

en	existing name
G	Gaelic
pn	personal name
S	Settlement
Sc	Scots
SSE	Scottish Standard English

Note that in the analysis line, the Gaelic spellings conform to the modern spellings found in the SQA Gaelic Orthographic Conventions.¹ The modern forms of Gaelic personal names are taken from Colin Mark's *Gaelic-English Dictionary* (London, 2004).

A name preceded by * indicates a hypothetical unattested form.

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¹ http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/SQA-Gaelic_Orthographic_Conventions-En-e.pdf

Introduction

Imagine there are no place-names. How would you find your way around? How would you book a holiday? How would you define your identity in relation to another place? Without place-names it is almost impossible to do any of these things. To go somewhere you need a place-name, or at least a name of some sort, whether it is Aberdeen or Granny's house. You could not book a flight anywhere without a place-name, and to say where you come from requires a place-name, whether that name is a country, city, or hamlet. Place-names have become markers in our mental map of the World, and we can use them to make sense of where we are. If we live in central Scotland watching a programme about the Cold War in the 1960s, for example, we know that London is to the south of us, Moscow is to the east, and Washington is to the west. On the West Highland Way, place-names are both our guide to where we are going and also our pace-maker to measure our progress on the walk. Without place-names we are quite literally lost!

Place-names have the ability to tell us about landscapes and how they were used and viewed by the people who coined them. Many place-names along the West Highland Way are very old, and there are some that may have been coined 1,300 years ago; there are others that are more recent, perhaps only 300 years old. Originally place-names meant something, and once we crack the code, as it were, inherent in each name, we can use them to tell us about the past. Many place-names in Scotland can be dated to the medieval and early modern periods, in other words before the industrial revolution of the mid to late 18th century. Take Perth, for example. That name tells the place-name scholar two immediate things: one is language; the other is environment. The language of the name is Pictish and so has to date before about 900 AD, because by that time Pictish was well on the decline due to political reasons and Gaelic had become the naming language of that area. The name itself means a 'wood' or 'copse'. This tells us that the surrounding area was devoid of trees, because you would not name a wood within a wood. But there are other *perths* in Scotland, there is Logie Pert near Montrose, and Partick in Glasgow and Larbert near Falkirk are also *perth*-names (Watson 1926, 356-7).

Layout of the gazetteer

In this document, following this introduction, is a gazetteer of the place-names studied. There are 96 place-names, one for each mile of the West Highland Way. The names have been selected to give a flavour of the Gaelic language and also to tell us about people and events that happened in the past. Each name is as it appears on the current (2022) Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Explorer map. This is followed by early forms with date and source (the full source can be found in the bibliography). There then follows analysis and meaning, coupled with historical context. For most entries there is a quote from the Ordnance Survey Name Book written at the time of the survey in the 1860s and 70s (usually indicated by a source number, such as OS1/32/15/19, which is found in the entry for Gartness). Not every entry has a OS Name Book quotation, since some of the Name Books, particularly those for Perthshire (i.e. from Glen Falloch to Tyndrum in our case), were destroyed when the German Luftwaffe bombed the Ordnance Survey headquarters and stores in Southampton on the night of November 30th 1940. Note the Name Book meaning is not always correct...! The names are not in alphabetical order, but rather as we find them going from Milngavie to Fort William. Although much remains to be done in terms of researching all of the place-names along the West Highland Way, the examples of the place-names in this report were chosen to show a selection of different elements and topics in the hope that it will encourage people to look at the place-names for themselves and try and discover their meanings. Assume all elements discussed in *italics* are Gaelic unless otherwise stated.

Sources

Maps

Maps are one of the first items a toponymist turns to when looking for the place-names of an area. Apart from the place-names themselves, modern maps give a convenient visual representation of the landscape in which the place-names are situated. The most valuable maps so far as place-name studies are concerned, are old maps and plans. Most useful in particular are those maps dating from the first edition of the Ordnance Survey or earlier. The main earlier maps used for this survey are those by Timothy Pont found online at <https://maps.nls.uk/pont/index.html>. General William Roy's Military map

of c.1750, also found online at <https://maps.nls.uk/roy/index.html>, is limited in that it contains far fewer place-names than modern maps but was nonetheless valuable in many respects. These maps were much less useful for hill- and burn-names for which we are reliant almost totally on later maps. The base map, however, is the current 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey Explorer coupled with the relevant sheets of the OS 6 inch 1st edition published in 1866. It is clear that when looking at Roy there were many more settlement-names than there are now; as has been noted above, this is mainly due to agricultural improvement and resulting clearance in the late eighteenth century.

Documentary sources

The documentary sources used are the main printed royal sources for Scotland, such as the *Register of the Great Seal (Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scottorum, or RMS)*. Other sources included the notes of the late 16th century Scottish maps maker Timothy Pont (see reference in *Maps* above), MacFarlane's Geographical Collections (*Geog. Coll.*), the *Old and New Statistical Accounts (OSA and NSA)*, and the Ordnance Survey Name Books, which provide information about place-names and building-names on the first edition Ordnance Survey mapping which took place in the mid-19th century. In the National Records of Scotland there are large numbers of documents, including estate plans, relating to the route taken by the West Highland Way; however, I was unable look at them for this project, partly due to time constraints, but also due to the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak of 2020 and lasting into 2022.

Gaelic Place-names along the West Highland Way: A Thematic Overview

Place-names can give an indication of an area's past landscapes, whether natural or human influenced; past social organisation and land divisions can be revealed; beliefs, both religious and mythical are contained in the names of many features, whether they be hills, burns or vegetation. Indeed, so varied are the topics for place-name research that a recently published book on the Gaelic landscape by John Murray gives the following categories for looking at place-names in the landscape:²

- landforms – mountains, hills, hollows, valleys
- hydronymy – river and loch-names
- climate, season, sound and time
- landcover and ecology – flora and fauna (i.e. wild animals and birds)
- agriculture – crops, domestic and farm animals
- buildings and settlement
- church and chapel
- archaeology and cultural artefacts
- people and occupations
- events, administration, justice, and hunting
- legend and the supernatural
- routeways
- colours

All of these categories can also be described in terms of colour, pattern, texture, form, size and position, and through metaphor using the anatomy of the whole human body (Murray 2014, 209-10). Note that in the analysis below details of many of the names discussed can be found in more detail in the survey following. Assume all elements are Gaelic unless otherwise stated. In the main text the Gaelic forms of names are italicised where possible.

Many, if not all, of these categories can be found along the West Highland Way. Like much of Scotland, both Highland and Lowland, the area experienced a movement of people off their ancestral lands where their families had been settled for generations and out into villages, towns, and cities across Scotland, as well as emigration to England and overseas, as the area was 'improved' and cleared of people during what has become known to posterity as the 'Clearances'. Fortunately, unlike other upland areas, such as the Ochil Hills, the Ordnance Survey³ charted the area at a time when many of the place-names were still in the memories of Gaelic-speaking people who lived in the area, and consequently much of the vivid culturally- and agriculturally-named landscape has been saved, and there is a great deal of material to help us capture the remnants of past uses of the land in the area. Fuller details of all the place-names mentioned in this brief synopsis can be found in the survey following on from it.

Language

Underpinning a study in place-names is, of course, language. Language itself is a legitimate reason for studying the landscape, for as Thomas Charles-Edwards wrote 'language mirrors society. Not only do languages contain systems of social classification, changes in whole languages are part of the process by which societies change' (Charles-Edwards 1972, 4; cited in Woolf 2009). Place-names are, then, the ideal vehicle for charting this change. The chronology of the main languages of the place-names of the area is British or Pictish, Gaelic, and then Scots. Despite the existence of documentary evidence of Norse activity in the Loch Lomond area in the mid-13th century and before (Cowan 1990, 121 quoting *ER* i, 24), there is no evidence of any permanent Norse settlement, as least so far as the place-names are concerned. The vast majority of the places had been named by the time the Ordnance Survey were

² I have adapted some of these categories slightly.

³ It is surely one of the great ironies of history that, despite the best efforts of the British state from the reign of James VI onwards to eradicate the Gaelic language, it was an arm of that very state, the Ordnance Survey, that was instrumental in helping the place-names survive and be concerned enough to go to great lengths to get the orthography and spelling correct.

active in the area in the mid-19th century, there are very few places that have been named since then, and most of those are in Scottish Standard English.

Although Gaelic is the main language of this project, we cannot be sure when Gaelic first became spoken in the areas covered by the West Highland Way. The area around Loch Lomond was part of a British speaking kingdom variously called Al Clut or Strathclyde; British was a p-Celtic language, similar to Welsh, and Dumbarton was at the heart of this kingdom. The neighbouring kingdom to the west, in basically what is now Argyllshire, was called Dal Riata. This was a Gaelic speaking kingdom and had probably been so for a considerable period of time before the language spread to neighbouring areas from the eighth and ninth centuries (Campbell 2001 and Clancy 2009). Further north and east in Perthshire a language similar to British was spoken. This was Pictish and was widely spoken across eastern Scotland North of the Forth, until it too was replaced by Gaelic. This language replacement of British and Pictish by Gaelic was probably due to missionary activity by the Christian church based in Iona and the west and also by the change in the political situation caused by the advent of the Vikings who raided much of Scotland from about 800 onwards, which caused a collapse in Pictish rule and its replacement by that of Gaelic speakers (see Woolf 2007, 322-42). Dumbarton was devastated by the Vikings in 870 and there are Viking remains on the western shore of Loch Lomond, including a hogback stone and grave at Luss and Midross (see Clarkson 2012, 157). Gaelic spread to the lowlands and by the eleventh century was the dominant language in most of Scotland, with the exception of south-eastern Scotland and the Western and Northern Isles.

From the thirteenth century Scots, the language of south-eastern Scotland, basically Lothian and Berwickshire, began to spread northwards into these previously British, Pictish, and Gaelic speaking areas, probably due to the influence of the Church and trade in the burghs. This was quite a slow and uneven process, for while the cathedral city of Glasgow had been Scots speaking since c.1300 or so, the areas immediately to the north remained Gaelic speaking until the eve of the Protestant Reformation of 1560. The great Renaissance scholar and tutor of James VI, George Buchanan, spent his childhood in Killearn. He famously had a distaste for Gaelic, even though, according to a Catholic contemporary Ninan Winzet, he learned the language at his mother's knee, for she was a native Gaelic speaker from the area (Bannerman 1977, 210).

In 1724 it was said of Buchanan parish that 'the most part of the inhabitants of this paroch use the Irish language (*Geog. Coll.*, i, 347) while it was said of Drymen that 'the inhabitants of the Northern part this paroch use the Irish language' (*ibid.*, 349). By 1796 in Drymen— 'A considerable number speak the Gaelic language; and there are 3 or 4 who do not understand English' (*OSA* xiii, 458). In Buchanan at the same time 'the people on the south side of the Grampian Hills, speak nothing but English; on the north side, such as have been born and brought up there, speak the English and Gaelic. Of late years, several tenants from the south side, have removed to farms on the north side; these speak English only. All the names of places within the parish are Gaelic' (*OSA* ix, 25). Further north in Killin parish it was said that 'Gaelic is the language generally spoken in the country; but most of the younger people understand less or more of the English language, and can converse in it. They make a practice, when young, of going for several years to serve in the low country, principally for the purpose of learning the English language' (*OSA* xvii, 386). By the mid-nineteenth century, however, it was noted in Buchanan that 'the population, though now only one-third of what it was a hundred years ago, is still likely to decline...As the parish is on the Highland border, a part of the inhabitants still retain the Gaelic language. There are few, however, that do not understand English' (*NSA* viii, 95). The poet Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir (Duncan Ban MacIntyre) composed Gaelic poetry in the late eighteenth century and came from a Gaelic speaking community near Bridge of Orchy. Fort William was situated in a mainly Gaelic speaking area, but interaction with the garrison there no doubt encouraged the spread of Scots and English among the townspeople.

Another factor in the decline of Gaelic was undoubtedly the military roads built by General Wade and others during the Jacobite Rebellions. These roads assisted with trade, droving, recruitment into the British Army and the service of the Empire, and, along with the railways in the 19th century, helped facilitate tourism. This contact with the Lowlands to the south accelerated the decline of Gaelic. We can get an idea by looking at the *Old* and *New Statistical Accounts*, all of which are detailed in the Appendix to this report. Despite this, however, some of the place-names – such as *Càrn an t-Saighdeir* 'lumpy hill of the soldier' and *Drochaid an t-Saighdeir* 'small white bridge' – a bridge on Caulfield's road on the Black Mount – must have been named at the time of the Jacobite rebellions, showing that

Gaelic was still a vibrant naming language in the 18th century. We must remember that the population of this area was much more spread out than it is today and the glens would have been teeming with people who would have used Gaelic in their everyday lives. The collapse in the population due to the Highland Clearances undoubtedly had an effect on the number who spoke Gaelic along the route of the West Highland Way. Nevertheless, the census of 1881 showed that from Glen Dochart northwards over 50% of people spoke Gaelic. Ten years later, however, that number had fallen to below 50%. A significant factor was the 1871 Education Act which stipulated that all children in Scotland had to be taught in English; the decline in Gaelic as a result was plain to see by 1891 (see maps below).

The Ordnance Survey has undoubtedly helped preserve the place-names of Callander and the rest of the Highlands, and their survey in Menteith in the 1860s still forms the basis for the vast majority of the place-names on current maps. However, much has been lost. When the great place-name scholar, W.J. Watson was collecting the stories and pronunciations of Gaelic place-names in Menteith, he used local knowledge, but was aware it was fast disappearing: ‘the Gael is acquainted with the name of each place in the region to which he belongs, not as they have been mangled by the English language, but as they have been transmitted of old. ‘I am familiar,’ said Parlan MacPharlain to me as we sat on Loch Venachar side, ‘with every stone and ditch and hillock between Callander and Inversnaid.’ And he spoke truly. Parlan has died, and there’s no one to replace him’ (Newton, 2009, 297).



Maps showing Gaelic and Scots from the 1881 Census (left) and the 1891 census (right) Gaelic majority in Blue; Scots majority in red. www.nls.uk

Despite its name, the West Highland Way begins for our purposes in the Lowlands. Here the Scots language has been the dominant language for the last six or seven centuries. Although here too many of the place-names are Gaelic, they have been anglicised, or rather, scotticised, and can be more difficult to decipher. Often place-names can be ambiguous, it is not always clear what the elements contained within a place-name are, or even if we can be sure what the elements are, it is not always clear what the coiners meant by them. The names and references in this introduction can be found in the gazetteer following. Gaelic spellings of names and elements are in *italics*.

Landforms – mountains, hills, hollows, valleys

As the route of the West Highland Way progresses and reaches Loch Lomond we reach the Highland Boundary Fault, which can be best seen at Conic Hill. The landscape was formed by the movement of ice during the most recent Ice Ages. The Highland Boundary Fault is the remains of an ancient sea called by geologists the Iapetus Ocean which was located between three main tectonic plates called Baltica, Avalonia and Laurentia. The sediments between Avalonia and Laurentia were pushed up and metamorphosed to give the Highlands, during a mountain building episode about 390 million years ago. The Highland Boundary Fault happened sometime later, although there is much that is unknown about the timings, duration, and degree of displacement of this complex geological feature. The rocks would originally have been deposited as sediments in an ocean basin, but metamorphism has twisted them into all sorts of orientations, and led to rocks such as shales becoming slates, sandstones becoming quartzites, with schists representing grain sizes in between.⁴

This dramatic landscape is reflected in the place-names, particularly in the Highland part of the study area. Names were needed to navigate and make sense of an area full of hills and valleys of various sizes and shapes, as well as numerous bogs, and rivers and burns. Gaels have a profusion of names for hills and valleys and their vocabulary is well used even among settlement-names. Here there are many of the different Gaelic words for hills, including *beinn*, *meall*, and *creag*, that most iconic of Scottish hill-naming elements *beinn* ‘mountain, peak’ and anglicised as *ben*. It is usually reserved for large or dominant hills. Its etymology means ‘horn’ in the sense of ‘jutting out’. Along with Ben Nevis, *Beinn Dòrain* is probably the most prominent hill encountered along the walk. The *Dòrain* element is probably *dobhràn* ‘streams, burns’, and the face of the mountain is etched with the channels of burns created by the erosion of countless downpours of rain over many centuries. Some of these channels have names, *Feadan Mhart Donna* ‘channel of the brown cows’, perhaps a route to sheiling grazing or perhaps a legendary name. Although not high, *Beinn Chaorach* ‘sheep mountain’ is one of the highest hills in its local landscape of the Black Mount or *Mondah Dubh*. Another hill-element is *stùc* ‘pinnacle’, this is found in *Stuckiruaigh* ‘pinnacle of the red haired man’ on Loch Lomondside. Also on the eastern side of Loch Lomond are promontories and these often contain the element *rubha* ‘promontory’, found at Rowardennan, Rowchoish, and Rownock. Another word for promontory is *ros* and this is found in Ross. A more metaphoric word, using a part of the human body for promontory is *sròn* ‘nose’, found in *Sròn Uaidh*, *Sròn Nibheis*, and *Sròn a’ Chorie Odhair-bhig*. This last name contains a word that is the opposite of peak which is, of course, hollow. *Coire* is an element that is abundant across the Highlands, and is a word ultimately meaning ‘cauldron, kettle’, and referring to land which has been scoured and hollowed out by glaciers during the Ice Ages. Another hollow can be found at *Allt Slochd an t-Seipine* ‘burn of the hollow of the chopin’. Other place-names also have words for human body parts as part of their names. Drumquassle and *Druimliart* both contain *druim* ‘back’, but here meaning ridge. *Màm Carraigh* near Inveroran had *màm* ‘breast’ as its first element, and *Gualainn Liath Ghiuthais* is a shoulder or corner of a mountain, in this case one that has or had a grey pine tree sitting on it. Smaller hills also have names, much more so than tends to be the case in the Lowlands. *Tom Buidhe* and *Cnoc Buidhe* are both yellow hillocks; *cnoc* is pronounced like ‘crock’. Much of the landscape is rocky and craggy, and here too the Gaels had words for such landscapes. *Creag an Fhirich* is ‘crag of the barren ground’; *Stob Beinn a’ Chrùlaiste* contains *crulaist* ‘rocky hill’; it also contains *stob* ‘sharp peak’, being a prominent point on *Beinn a’ Chrùlaiste*. *Carn na Muice* ‘cairn of the pig’ is a hill that looks like a cairn’.

Hydronymy – river and loch-names

While the mountains loom large, the areas where most people live are largely dominated by water. A common element throughout Scotland where Gaelic was the dominant language is *allt* ‘burn, stream’. The element is found in *Crom Allt* ‘crooked burn’, *Allt a’ Bhalach* ‘burn of the boy’, *Allt Molach* ‘rough burn’, and *Altnafeadh*, i.e. *Allt na Fèith* ‘burn of the bog’. It is often the case that settlements take their names from watercourses. Inversnaid, Inverarnan, and Inveroran all sit at the *inbhir* or confluence of two bodies of water. Kinlochleven is a modern place-name, being situated at the *ceann loch* or head or end of Loch Leven. The modern village is made up of two settlements *Kinlochbeg* ‘little

⁴ My grateful thanks to James Westland of mullgology.net for his help in understanding this complex geology.

Kinloch' and *Kinlochmore* 'big Kinloch' sited on either side of the River Leven. The name Leven is discussed in the gazetteer. Just south of King's House on the Black Mount is *Dubh Lochan*, an area of many small, dark lochs. They are dark due to their peaty colour. Where there are burns they are usually waterfalls. Near Drymen is Gartness, which in Gaelic is *gart an eas* 'enclosed field or settlement of the waterfall'. The waterfall is quite spectacular by Lowland standards and is famous for being the home of John Napier, who discovered logarithms in the early seventeenth century.

Landcover and ecology – flora and fauna

Place-names are a great indicator of past plant and animal life, indeed without them it is possible we would probably not know of the distribution of certain species. The people who coined the names would have done so to indicate areas of resources, but also places of danger, perhaps where wild animals lived or roamed. Trees are frequent in place-names: Carbeth, near Milngavie, had *beith* 'birch' as its second element, while Derrydaroch or *doire darach* in Glen Falloch is or was a grove of oaks, Salloch almost certainly contains *seileach* 'willow', a tree that may have been used for basket weaving. *Gualainn Liath Ghiuthais* is the 'shoulder of the grey pine', may have been used as a navigation aid in the barren landscape of the Black Mount. *Blair a' Chaorainn* on the way to Glen Nevis is 'muir or plain of the rowan tree', a tree that was popularly held in Gaelic folklore to ward off evil spirits. *Port na Craoibhe* 'harbour of the tree' is found on the shores of Loch Lomond near Rowardennan; it is not known what kind of tree is meant in the name. Dumgoyach probably contains *gaoth* 'marsh' which is 'hill-fort of the marsh place'. Bogs were not useless places in pre-modern Scotland, they were places where peat for fuel could be had, and reed like plants could be harvested for thatch or floor coverings.

Place-names containing animals are frequent all over Scotland. Along the West Highland Way wild animals include eagle at *Creag Iolaire* and possibly at *Bac an Nid* 'bank or terrace of the nest', badger at *Toll a' Bhruic*, snake or adder at *Allt Nathrach*, wolf, fox or simply dog at *Creag a' Mhadaidh*. *Madadh* means 'dog', but Gaelic has *madah-ruadh* 'red dog' for fox and *madah-allaidh* 'wild dog' for wolf. Two animals that can be difficult to categorise as either domestic or wild are horses and goats since in pre-Clearance times both were allowed to run semi-feral (Taylor 2016, 67). *Creagan nam Meann* is 'crag of the kids', while horse-names are found at *Allt Doire nam Each* 'burn of the grove of the horses', *Allt Coire an Eich* 'burn of the corrie of the horse' and at *Leum an t-Searraich* 'leap of the foal or colt'. One place that walkers along the West Highland Way might be thankful for not being directly on the route is *Eilean nan Deargannan* in Loch Lomond; being stranded on 'island of the fleas' is an unappealing prospect! Although not directly an animal name, *Tom na Seilge* 'hill of the hunting' near Kinlochleven suggests that there were deer in the vicinity.

Agriculture – crops, domestic and farm animals

Agriculture was the mainstay of life in the Middle Ages and beyond, as indeed it had been for many centuries before that. While the glens look empty of humans now, prior to the Clearances of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they would have been teeming with people. On Roy's Military Map of 1747-55 there are a string of settlements stretching up the eastern shore of Loch Lomond, including that at Doune which shows at least 20 buildings at the settlement; now there are only two which are ruined. People would have lived in settlements of between 20 and 100, and they would have used the knowledge of the landscape accumulated over millennia. Their place-names would have told them where to grow crops, where to make cheese, where to milk cows, where to acquire peat for fuel, and a host of other activities.

Arable farming was practised all over Scotland even in the Highlands prior to the eighteenth century. *Gleann Achadh-innis Chailein* has *achadh* 'field' within its name and is likely to have been named after the settlement of Auch which is perhaps an anglicised form of *Achadh* in Gaelic; the settlement sits within a fairly large area of flat land and was probably very fertile in comparison to other locations. The element *achadh* can be found anglicised as *auch-* over much of the Lowlands in places such as Auchinkilns near Cumbernauld and Auchinleck in Ayrshire. There are two place that contain *gart* 'an enclosed field or settlement', often won out of what medieval people called waste or unproductive land for arable agriculture (McNiven 2007). Gartness is a settlement next to a waterfall or *eas* in Gaelic, while Druimliart, *druim liath ghairt* 'ridge of the grey/green enclosed field' was a place Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir called home. Other settlements, initially of a temporary nature, were established

near water-meadows or haughlands. These are level areas beside the river, which are prone to flooding and so enriched by nutrients making them suitable for grazing or growing hay for winter feed. However, in some places their fertility ensured that they became permanent settlements, or at least gave their names to permanent settlements nearby, and usually contain the element *dail*, a borrowing from Pictish *dol*. These can be found at Dalrigh and *Dail at t-Suidhe*. On the assumption that many of these places produced crops of some kind, they would have needed a mill to process that grain. Mill place-names are rare along the West Highland Way, however, the trail starts at Milngavie which may contain Gaelic *muileann* ‘mill’ which has then been assimilated as Scots *miln*. We know from documentation that there was a mill here since at least 1643 (*RMS* ix no. 1354). Another mill must have been located at *Allt Coire a’ Mhuillinn* near Glen Nevis. Mills were an important source of baronial income and were often resented by the local populace because they were thirled to them, i.e. they had to take their grain to the laird’s mill or pay some form of punishment or fine and this ‘imposition gave the baron courts one of their main tasks’ (Smout 1969, 120).

Not all farming was arable. Pastoral farming was necessary for milk, cheese, hides, and the like. *Meall Ruigh a’ Bhricleathaid* ‘lumpy hill of the sheiling of the speckled slope’. In the summer months transhumance was practised over much of the Highlands, at such times the women and children and the animals would move for a few weeks to the shielings in the hills above the glens, often some distance from their homes, while the crops ripened and so would not be eaten by the animals. Bà Cottage, and by extension the River Bà and Loch Bà, may contain *bà* the plural of *bò* ‘cow, cattle’. *Feadan Mhart Donna* is ‘channel of the brown cows’, suggesting a routeway to sheiling grounds. *Beinn Chaorach* seems to be ‘sheep mountain’, but in pre-Clearance times the sheep were not the familiar blackface sheep we see today, but a smaller variety, something like the sheep found on the island of St Kilda. The reason for all the empty glens was to replace the people of the Highlands with the blackface variety of sheep.

Buildings and settlements

Despite people needing a place to live, habitation elements are scarce along the West Highland Way. Only *taigh* or ‘house’ is found and is in two names. Tyndrum is *Taigh an Droma* ‘house of the ridge’ and in *Tigh na Leirge* preserves the older spelling of *taigh* and means ‘house of the plain’ or house of the pass between two mountains’ - both meanings fit the situation. Crianlarich contains *làrach* which can also mean ‘house, habitation, farm’, but can also signify ‘site or ruin’.

Church and chapel

It has long been recognised by historians and archaeologists that place-names are an important resource for studying many aspects of the medieval church in Scotland. Place-names can shed light on a wide variety of topics that fall under the category of religion. It is often unclear how the medieval Church interacted with the laity and the land at parish level and place-names are one way of helping us understand more about that interaction; indeed, if it were not for place-names our understanding of Christianity in Scotland would be so much poorer. We do not know when Christianity reached the areas covered by the West Highland Way, but the dedications of the local churches and chapels suggest it was relatively early.

A word of warning! Place-names containing the names of saints can be notoriously difficult and complicated, even for experienced place-name scholars. Many place-names with saints’ names attached comprise *G mo* ‘my’, an element that occurs regularly in affectionate or devout forms of names for saints, known as ‘hypocorisms’ or ‘hypocoristic forms’. It causes lenition (i.e. it adds an ‘h’ to the spelling) of the first letter of the following part of the name, which is often a shortened version of the saint’s real name. This can make some saints’ names very hard to recognise, though some remain fairly transparent. Balmaha is *Bealach Mo Cha* ‘the pass of St Mo Cha’. The pass in question, shown as the ‘Pass of Balmaha’ on modern OS maps, *Mo Cha* is a hypocorism, or pet-name, for Kentigerna, the patron of the church on Inchcailloch Island in Loch Lomond. Inchcailloch means ‘island of nuns’, and there was thought to have been a nunnery under the control of Kentigerna situated on the island, and so dating to the eighth century, although to date no trace of a nunnery has been discovered. Another saint in the place-names of Loch Lomond is Adamnán, abbot of Iona from 679 to 704. Rowardennan commemorates him. This place may have formed part of a routeway between Iona and its daughter

house at Lindisfarne on the north-east coast of England; along this route are also Inchmahome in the Lake of Menteith and Inchcolm in the Firth of Forth, which both commemorate St Columba.

An official connected with the keeping of saints' relics can be found in the name Ballinjore Wood, just north of Drymen. The is *baile an deòraidh* 'farm or township of the relic keeper'. The relics in question may have been those of St Kessog, venerated at Luss on the western shore of Loch Lomond; Ballinjore, however, was part of the lands of Luss in the Middle Ages. More modern is *Teac a' Mhinisteir*, which seems to be 'house of the minister', a name which is post-Reformation (i.e. post 1560) and may even be post 1843 when the Great Disruption caused a split in the Church of Scotland. Killearn, a church and parish near the southern part of the West Highland Way, is popularly thought to contain the early Gaelic element *cill* meaning church, however, despite being a church and parish from around 1250, the early spelling of *Kynerine* suggests the first element is *ceann* 'head, end'.

Archaeology and cultural artefacts

Place-names can inform researchers a great deal about archaeology. However, before going into what they can tell us, we need to be aware that there are two basic types of archaeological place-names (Taylor 2003, 50): one refers to those features that were built at the time of naming, for example St Fillan's Priory in Glen Dochart was founded by Robert the Bruce sometime after the battle of Bannockburn in 1314. The second category refers to features that were already part of the landscape when they were named – an example is Drumquhassle, from G *Druim Chaiseal* 'castle ridge', and applying to the Roman fort near Drymen. There is a broch-type structure on the banks of Loch Lomond that is called Cashell, from Gaelic *casieal*. Another *caisteal* name is *Caisteal Ghriogair*, Gregor's Castle, but there is no evidence of a castle or fort here and it may be that the hill looks like a fortified place and has had the MacGregor legend attached to it. The MacGregors, a clan notorious from the sixteenth century, were local to the area. There are five places containing the element *dùn* 'fort'. Dumgoyne is perhaps from *Dùn Goin* 'wound fort' and has spectacular views over Strathblane and across to Glasgow. In the valley of the Blane Water is Dumgoyach, a conical hill guarding the area which sits next to a *gaoth* or marsh. At the opposite end of the West Highland Way is Dùn Deardail, which could be a fort named after the Irish legend Deirdre; it guards the approaches to Glen Nevis. More doubtful as forts are Dùn Falloch near Crianlarich and Doune at the northern end of Loch Lomond. There is no archaeological evidence for forts at either place. A large boulder overlooking Glen Falloch has been given the name *Clach na Briton* or *Clach nam Breatainn* and seems to have been a prominent boundary marker between the kingdom of the Britons, with its centre at Dumbarton *Dùn Breatainn* 'fort of the Britons' and the Gaels of Dál Riata, lying to the west in what is modern day Argyll. There is a suggestion that the stone was the location of a battle described in Irish annals between the Britons and the Gaels in 717.

People, occupations and industry

There are several place-names that contain personal names or those of professions. Dalrigh is water-meadow of the king, probably Robert the Bruce, who fought a battle here in 1306. However, the name may already have been old by then and it may commemorate an earlier, unknown king. Personal names can be quite frequent in place-names. Sometimes they are of legendary figures; at other times they are of real people and depict events, often now lost to us. *Allt a' Bhalaich* 'burn of the boy'; *Lochan Mhic Pheadair Ruadh* 'little loch of red haired Peter'; and *Gleann Achad-innis Chailein* 'the glen of Colin's meadow field' can be found along the route, but any legends or deeds associated with them were not recorded by the Ordnance Survey in the Name Books. *Caisteal Ghriogair* 'Gregor's Castle' in Glen Falloch is presumably associated with the MacGregors, the clan who possessed large swathes of the area and whose exploits were notorious, particularly in the Lowlands and adjacent Highlands in the Middle Ages and beyond.

Events, administration, justice and hunting

There are a number of place-names along the West Highland Way that are indicative of past events and their consequences. *Lochan na Fola* 'little loch of the blood', near Altnafeadh, was popularly held to have been the site of a feud or skirmish among the MacDonalds of nearby Glencoe. The date of this supposed event is not known. On the road north from Inveroran are *Càrn an t-Saighdeir* and *Drochaid*

an t-Saighdeir, ‘cairn’ and ‘bridge of the soldier’ respectively. The soldier in the names was a soldier in the British Army keeping watch on the area in the aftermath of the Jacobite Rebellions. The OS Name Book adds that a soldier was found murdered near here in the 1760s. Near Kinlochleven is *Allt Coire na h-Erighe* ‘burn of the corrie of the rising or rebellion’. It is not known which rising is meant here but, if it is one of the Jacobite rebellions then it shows that Gaelic was still a vibrant enough language in the area to be used for naming purposes. The most prominent name indicating an event is Fort William or, to give it its Gaelic name, *An Gearasdan*. The original fort was set up in the wake of Oliver Cromwell’s occupation of Scotland in the 1650s, but the name is from William II of Scotland, popularly known as William of Orange, who replaced James VII as king in 1689.

Tom na Seilge ‘hill of the hunting’ indicated that this was an area where hunting took place. Hunting is usually an aristocratic or lairdly pursuit but involved much input and support for local communities, often through compulsory obligations. The local communities were held in check through local justice courts, which often dealt with disputes among the community itself, perhaps animals straying onto a neighbour’s land and so forth. These courts were run by the laird or his (for it was usually men) representative. Between Crianlarich and Tyndrum, near Dalrigh, is a small judicial complex consisting of a courthill at *Mòd a’ Cheann Drochaid* ‘courthill or assembly place of the bridge end’ and a gallows hill at *Tom na Croiche*.

Legends and the supernatural

Non-Christian belief was also important to the Gaels. We might wonder how many legendary place-names have been lost due to clearance in the 18th century and before the Ordnance Survey were active in the area, but generally in areas where Gaelic prevailed for longer many more such names survive. Place-names that contain *cailleach* ‘hag, old woman’ can be found all over the Highlands. *Beinn na Caillich* near Kinlochleven is ‘mountain of the old woman’. Pete Drummond speculates that some *cailleach* place-names might commemorate Cailleach Bheur, a legendary figure who wandered the hills calling the deer hinds to her with her siren voice so she could milk them (Drummond 2007, 188). The Cailleach could often be associated with the stories of Finn mac Cumhaill in Scottish Gaelic folklore. Sometimes associated with the Cailleach are place-names with *bodach* ‘old man’. There is no such connection here but overlooking the final stages of the West Highland Way in Glen Nevis is Creag a’ Bhodaich ‘crag of the old man’. *Blàr a’ Chaorainn*, contains *G caorainn* ‘rowan tree’, which are often found in legends and myths in Gaelic tales, particularly those of Fionn Mac Cumhaill and Cúculainn, the legendary Irish heroes whose exploits were also celebrated among the Gaels of Scotland. The rowan tree was believed to ward off evil spirits. An Irish legendary figure found in a place-names along the route of the West Highland Way is Deirdre, in *Dùn Deardail* overlooking Glen Nevis. In Glen Falloch is *Leum an t-Shearraich* ‘leap of the foal or colt’. It is not known why the young horse leapt, but such names can be found over much of the Highlands, usually involving people, e.g. Soldier’s Leap at Killiecrankie. Such names are known to specialists in folklore as prodigious leap names.

Routeways

Appropriately enough along the route covered by the West Highland Way there are place-names indicating routeways. In order to go into and through and beyond there must have been ways through the glens and between the mountains. Roads connected places and local communities, but also from the eighteenth century facilitated more rapid travel for the British Army to enable it to police the Highlands. A common element in Scottish place-names is *bealach* ‘pass’. Balmaha *Bealach Mo Cha* ‘pass of St Kentigerna’ (see *Church and Chapel*) and *Bealach Ard* ‘high pass’ are routes around and over Conic Hill and by extension from the Lowlands to the Highlands over the Highland Boundary Fault. *Tigh na Leirge* ‘house of the pass’ and *Larigmòr* ‘big pass’ contain *làirig* ‘high pass’ or pass between two mountains’, both names are appropriate in describing routes through glens surrounded by high mountains. A more modern route is the military road between Stirling and Fort William, or at least much of it was upgraded for military purposes after the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion. *Drochaid an t-Saighdeir* and *Bridge of Orchy* or *Drochaid Urchaidh* were built as part of Major Caulfield’s roads. Major Caulfield was the successor to General Wade who built many roads in the Highland between the two major Jacobite Rebellions of 1715 and 1745.

Colours, texture and the human body

Many place-names contain colours and texture in their names and the area covered by the West Highland Way is no exception. Gaelic has a wider range of colours than English or Scots – think of the numerous Green Hills in Britain or even the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia; Gaelic is more nuanced and may relate to the geology or the vegetation of a feature. *Glas* and *uaine* both mean ‘green’, but *glas* is a more grey-green; *uaine* a vivid green. In some places, however, *glas* was applied to ‘unripe corn or the new shoots of grass in spring’ (Murray 2014, 197). There are seven colours represented in the place-names of this project, there will no doubt be more to be discovered as you walk along the route – *Sròn a’ Choire Odhair-bhig* ‘promontory of the little dun coloured corrie’ contains *odhar* ‘dun coloured, sallow’. *Dubh Lochan* is ‘black or dark lochs’; *Gualainn Liath Ghiuthais* is ‘shoulder of the grey pine tree’; *Beinglas* is ‘green hill’, while *Cnoc Buidhe* and *Tom Buidhe* are ‘yellow hills’. *Stuckiruish* and *Lochan Mhic Pheadair Ruaidh* both contain *ruadh* ‘red’. Along with colours, textures are also common in place-names although only *breac* ‘speckled’ is found in this report. *Breac* is found in *Breac Leac* ‘speckled declivity or downward slope’ and *Meall Ruigh a’ Bhricleathaid* ‘lumpy hill of the shieling of the speckled slope’. But what makes one hill speckled and its neighbour not, even though they may look similar? Is it vegetation? Or Geology? Or some human influence we have not yet discovered?

The human body was also productive for elements in place-names. *Sròn* ‘nose’ is used for promontory; *druim* ‘back’ is used for ridge; *gualann* ‘shoulder’ is used for corner of a hill; and *màm* ‘breast’ is used for breast-shaped hill’.

Conclusion

Researchers into medieval and later rural society in Scotland have long stated that place-names have the potential to inform us of aspects of rural society that cannot be uncovered by documentary research or archaeology alone. It has been found that it is often difficult for these researchers to match up the documentary and archaeological evidence. While a place might often be found in the historical record in the medieval period, it is usually only the last phase before abandonment that is uncovered archaeologically, perhaps as late as the nineteenth century in many cases. As such, many researchers cite place-names as one potential answer to how we might discover more about rural society in the past. In Scotland place-name research into rural society is hampered by the lack of quality surveys both at a county and national level. However, even small surveys such as this should help meet the needs of historians and archaeologists hoping to understand more about how place-names can help them uncover various aspects of historic rural Scotland. Much more research is needed into the place-names of Scotland, but hopefully it can be seen that place-names have a great deal to offer in helping us understand past landscapes and languages.

Gaelic Place-names along the West Highland Way - Gazetteer

1. MILNGAVIE

Molendinum de (mill of) *Mylnegawie* 1643 RMS ix no. 1354
Mylnghaw 1644 RMS ix no. 1529
Mylnegawie 1647 RMS ix no. 1849
the coale heugh of *Milnogaivie* 1649 RPS NAS PA2/24, f.267v-268v
the mylne of *Milngaivie* 1649 RPS NAS PA2/24, f.267v-268v
Milgay 1654 Blaeu Lennox
Millgavie c.1750 Roy
Mill Gay 1780 Ross
Millguy 1793 OSA vii, 103
Milngavie 1817 Grassom
Milngavie 1845 NSA viii, 50
Milngavie 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *muilleann* + ?

Although *Muileann Dhàibhidh* is often used for Milngavie, this seems to be based partly on an assumption that some of the early forms for Milndavie, a settlement some 4.5 km to the north, are actually Milngavie. It is also based on the assumption that the pronunciation of the English name of [gai] or 'guy' relates to the Gaelic pronunciation of Dàibhidh as [dai]. The loss of the bilabial however surely occurred in a Scots context rather than a Gaelic one. The secondary element in Milngavie is obscure.⁵

2. CARBETH

Gerthbeth 1493 *Knights of St John*, no. 27 [Thome Buthanane (Buchanan) de *gerthbeth*]
Carbethe 1647 RMS ix no. 1849
the house of *Garbeth* 1724 *Geog. Coll.*, i, 349
Carbath c.1750 Roy
Carbeth 1841 NSA viii, 72
Carbeth 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

? Brit or G **cair* or ? G gart+ G *beithe*

On the face of it the name looks like it could be 'birch fort'. Brit. And G **cair* is found in places such as Caerlaverock, Carpow near Perth, and Carlisle. However, the earliest form, *Gerthbeth*, seems to suggest it might be G *gart* 'enclosed field or settlement'. See *PNF* 5 under **cair* and *PNKNR* under Crambeth.

3. DUMGOYACH

Dungoyak 1590s Pont 32
Dungoyack 1636-52 Gordon 50
Dumgoiack c.1750 Roy
Dumgoyack Hill c.1750 Roy
hill of *Dumgoiack* 1790s OSA xviii, 565
the conical hill of *Dungoiach* 1841 NSA viii, 72
Dungoyach 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *dùn* + G *gaoth* + locative

'Fort of the marsh place'. To the north and east the hill of Dumgoyach is surrounded by flat land created by the flood plain of the Blane Water. That this was marshy in past is shown by the place-names Bog Wood, Moss, and Moss Bridge three km to the north of the hill.

⁵ This entry is adapted from <https://www.ainmean-aite.scot/placename/milngavie/>

4. DUMGOYNE

Dungoin hill 1590s Pont 32
Dungoin c.1750 Roy
Dumgoyn 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *dùn* + ? G *gon*

‘Wound fort?’. The name may relate to the fort being separated from the main body of the Campsie Fells almost as it has left a wound from being cleft with a sword or axe.

5. KILLEARN

Kynerine c.1250 OPS i, 40
Kynherin 1320 OPS i, 41
Killern c.1430 OPS i, 40
Killearne 1560s *Books of Assumption*, 554
Killearn 1590s Pont 32
Killearn c.1750 Roy
Killearn 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *ceann* + G *earrann* or G *fearann*

Ceann Earrainn or *Ceann Fhearainn* ‘end of the portion of land’ or ‘end of (the) land’. The ‘land’ probably refers to the Campsie Fells, which lie to immediately to the east of the village (Knight 2014, 21). Note the derivation suggested by the OS Name Book below is erroneous, only later is G *cill* ‘church’ found in the name, suggesting that a reinterpretation has taken place.

‘The parish of Killearn is in the county of Stirling Presbytery of Dumbarton, Synod of Glasgow and Ayr. The name Killearn seems to be compounded of three Celtic words *Kill-ear-rhin*, signifying the cell or church of west point. This etymology is descriptive of the situation, which is at the western extremity of the Campsie Fells, a mountainous ridge running eastward from Killearn to Kilsyth, a distance of twenty miles. The parish is bounded on the west and north west by the parish of Drymen; on the north by the parish of Balfron; on the east by the parish of Fintry; and on the south and south west, by the parishes of Strathblane and Campsie in Stirlingshire and the parishes of New Kilpatrick, Old Kilpatrick, and Dumbarton in Dunbartonshire’ (OS1/32/15/1).

6. GARTNESS

Gartnes 1495 RMS ii no. 2235
Gairtness 1590s Pont 140v
Gartness c.1750 Roy
Gartness 1795 OSA xvi, 107
Gartness 1841 NSA viii, 101
Gartness 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *gart* + G *an* + G *eas*

‘Enclosed field or settlement of the waterfall’. G *gart* is a reflex of Old Gaelic *gort* and both are related to Welsh *garth*, meaning ‘field, enclosure’ (Watson 1926, 198). The word has cognates in many other Indo-European languages, including Latin *hortus* ‘garden’, Russian *gorod* (-*grad*) ‘town’, English *yard* and *garden*, Old Norse *garðr* and Scots and English *garth*. One definition of Scots *garth* found in the on-line Dictionary of the Scots Language is ‘a small patch of enclosed cultivated ground with wasteland around it’ (www.dsl.ac.uk). There are large clusters of *gart*-names in three areas of central Scotland; between the Lake of Menteith and Loch Lomond, between Glasgow and Airdrie, and another in Clackmannanshire (where a survey found that many of the *gart*-names there were the settlements of foresters who supplied timber to the monasteries of eastern Scotland before the 14th century) with a smaller one in the Stirling-Falkirk-Denny triangle, plus a few outliers, mainly in the glens to the west and north of Callander. There are also clusters in Galloway, Argyll and Islay (see McNiven 2007, 61-76, and Drummond 2014).

‘The Pot of Gartness, in the water of Enrick, has, for its beauty and singularity, always attracted the attention of strangers. It is a deep linn, shaped like a caldron or pot, whence the origin of the name. It

is occasioned by the fall of the water over a rock that lies across the river; the fall is not perpendicular, but is interrupted by three or four breaks. This romantic and well known spot affords no little entertainment to the angler; as the salmon and trout from Lochlomond, being frequently unable to force their way over the rock, which requires two or three great leaps quickly made, are detained in the linn... Adjoining the mill are the remains of an old house in which John Napier of Merchiston, inventor of the logarithms, resided a great part of his time (for some years) when he was making his calculations' (OSA xvi, 107-8).

'This name applies to the houses situated on both sides of the Endrick Water. The portion in this parish consists of a dwellinghouse and mill. The mill, of which the motive power is water, is used for dyeing and wauking cloth. Dwellinghouse 2 storeys, slated, and the mill 1 storey, slated; both in good repair. Property of Peter Blackburn Esqr. Killearn House' (OS1/32/15/19).

7. DRUMQUHASSLE

Drumquassel 1560s *Books of Assumption*, 546

Drumquassill 1560s *Books of Assumption*, 548

Drumynhassil 1646 Pont 152r

Drumwhassill 1724 *Geog. Coll.*, i, 348

Drumwhastle c.1750

Drumquhastle 1793 OSA viii, 546

Park of Drumquhassle 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *druim* + G *caiseal*

'Castle ridge'. *Druim Chaiseal*. The name relates to a Roman fort from the first century AD. Although nothing can now be seen on the ground, recent surveys and excavations have revealed a fort that measured about 110 x 130 metres. Also found were annexes to the fort, pottery and other artefacts such as sling bullets (Canmore no. 43408). Constructed during the Flavian period (85-7 AD) of Roman Occupation, the fort at Drumquhassle was one of a line of forts that extended to Inverquarity in Angus. These forts are often called 'glen blockers' as they were situated at the entrance to Highland glens controlling movement in and out. Nearby are forts at Malling on the northern shores of Lake of Menteith and at Bochastle near Callander (Breeze 1996, 56). The Gaelic word for castle comes in two forms – *caiseal* and *caisteal*. Both derive from the Latin *castellum* 'fort, stronghold, citadel', but *caisteal* may be a borrowing into Gaelic from Old French *castel* (McNiven 2013, 71). According to Watson, *caiseal* is the older of the two, and was used for the 'broch-like structures of Perthshire and Argyll' (Watson 2002, 228): it was also used at Drumquhassle; however, this may have been influenced by nearby Cashell on Loch Lomond-side (for which see below).

The OS Name Book for Park of Drumquhassle states that it is 'A small but handsome mansion having Offices, garden and ornamental ground attached. The site of the Castle (that is mentioned in the Origens Parochiales) cannot be identified. The Rev. Alexander Lochore and Miss Govan are of the opinion that it had stood in the wood north west of the present house some distance. Miss Govans opinion is from the late Professor McFarlane who was Minister for some time in this parish, & his father before him, remembered of having seen the remains of an old building in the wood, not a vestige of it now remains' (OS1/32/9/92).

8. BALLINJOUR WOOD BUC S NS45 90 2

Ballindorane 1635 RMS ix no. 274

Ballindorane 1635 RMS ix no. 492

Ballindeor 1721 NAS CH2/606/10/49 [examination roll for the parish of Inchcailloch]

Ballandorin Muir Inclosure 1770 NAS RHP42670 [centred at *circa* NS458910]

Ballandorin arable 1770 NAS RHP42670 [centred at *circa* NS454904]

Ballinjour Wood 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *baile* + G *an* + G *deòradh*

This name seems to represent Gaelic *baile an deòraidh* ‘farm of the dewar or keeper of a saint’s relic’. The lands between Ballinjour Wood and Balmaha were originally part of the lands belonging to the parish of Luss on the western side of Loch Lomond. Luss was associated with St Kessog and the farm at Ballinjour would have helped with the upkeep of the *deòradh* to enable him to look after the relics of Kessog (Márkus 2008, 80-2).

‘A large wood, chiefly oak, having firs planted among it south of ‘White’s Plantation’. The name is well known as it formerly belonged to a Farm Steading near the wood. The name is believed to be a corruption of Gaelic, but from what is not known’ (OS1/32/6/167).

9. BREAC LEAC

Bhreac Leac 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

Breac Leac 1899 OS 6 inch 2nd edn

G *breac* + G *leac*

‘Speckled declivity or downward slope’. The element *breac* ‘speckled’ is frequent in hill-names, but what makes one hill speckled and a nearby one not? Is it to do with vegetation? Geology? Or perhaps a past land use that is not obvious to us today?

The OS Name Book says ‘*Bhreac Leachd*’ – the Mottled declivity is on the eastern side of ‘Ben Lomond’. It is well known. The name is applied to the face of the hill as shewn within the yellow shade. The eastern dots being the bottom & the western the top of ‘*Bhreac Leachd*’ (OS1/32/6/73).

10. BEALACH ARD

Bealach Ard 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *bealach* + G *àrd*

‘High pass’. This one of 3 *bealach* names in short succession: the others are Balmaha (see next entry) and Bealach an Eoin ‘pass of the bird’. Marks geological border with the Lowlands.

‘A wide passage between ‘Tom nan Oisgin [hillock of the ewes]’ and an adjoining similar feature of the ‘Conic Hill’. The name, which is well known, signifies High pass’ (OS1/32/6/138).

11. BALMAHA BUC, LUS S NS421907 1 20m WEF

Bolomohaw 1682 NAS GD220/1/E/6/3/2

Ballamahow vel Lochsyd 1684 NAS GD220/1/E/4/3/6 [Balmaha or Lochside]

Ballomachaw 1686 NAS GD220/1/K/2/3/1 [part of the £40 land of Buchanan]

Ballamacha 1686 NAS GD220/1/K/2/3/4

Ballomacha 1686 NAS GD220/1/K/2/3/5

Bollmachau 1688 NAS CH2/606/9/55

Bollimahae 1688 NAS CH2/606/9/57

Buallamacha 1706 NAS GD220/1/K/2/3/9 [‘part and pertinent of the ffourty pound land of Buchanan and lyes within the parochin of Inchcailloch’]

Ballamachae 1714 NAS CH2/606/10/1

Bollimachae 1721 NAS CH2/606/10/63

Bolomaha 1738 NAS GD220/1/K/2/3/11

Ballamaha c.1750 Roy map

Loch of Ballamaha c. 1753 Roy map [the water between Balmaha and Inchcailloch]

Bualomocha 1759 Smith 1896, 123

Pass of Bualomocha 1759 Smith 1896, 123 [‘there are besouth the Pass of Bualomocha, in the parish of Buchanan of Person 503’]

Ballomaha 1770 NAS RHP42670

Pass of Ballmaha 1777 Ross/Dumbarton

Bwalamacha 1786 NAS GD220/1/K/2/3/10

Balmaha 1817 Grassom/Stirling

Balmaha 1865 OS 6 inch 1st edn.

Pass of Balmaha 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *bealach* + saint's name Mo Cha

Gilbert Márkus suggests that Balmaha is *Bealach Mo Cha* 'the pass of St Mo Cha'. The pass in question, shown as the 'Pass of Balmaha' on modern OS maps, mentioned in 1759 as the Pass of Bualomocha and shown on Ross /Dumbarton (1777) as Pass of Ballmaha, is the narrow and steep road going north out of the village of Balmaha and past the Old Manse, between the hill of Craigie Fort and the south-western shoulder of Conic Hill' (Márkus 2008, 75). *Mo Cha* is a hypocorism, or pet-name, for Kentigerna, the patron of the church on Inchcailloch island (see below and Macquarrie 2012, 374).

'A high narrow pass between two rocky heights on the ridge of the Conic Hill' which terminates here on the south-west in the 'Craigie Fort'. The north & part of the east side of this Pass is very rocky, that near the top being the steepest. The Parish Road from Drymen to Rowardennan is cut through the Pass. The 'Pass of Balmaha', to which tradition gives the name of 'Rob Roy's Pass', is known far & near' (OS1/32/6/142).

12. INCHCAILLOCH

Inischailly 1590s Pont 17

Inchcallioch 1724 *Geog. Goll.*, i, 344

Inishcailloch c.1750 Roy

Inchcaileoch 1841 *NSA* viii, 89

Inchcailloch 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *inis* + G *cailleach*

Inchcailloch is the name of an island in Loch Lomond, lying only 400 metres off-shore from the village of Balmaha. The church on Inchcailloch was the medieval kirk of the parish that later became Buchanan, the island kirk being abandoned in the 17th century and a new place of worship established on the mainland for the convenience of the parishioners. The island name, Inchcailloch, is derived from Gaelic *innis cailleach* 'the island of nuns', suggesting that Kentigerna's cult was associated with actual or legendary vowed women on the island (Márkus 2008, 71; see also Balmaha above).

Timothy Pont described the island as 'Inche-chaille, or wood inche, a myl long, it hath good corneland wood and a kirk upon it' (Pont 150r).

The island is described in the OS Name Book as 'This name is applied to a large Island in Loch Lomond situated opposite Balmaha. it is of a ridge like shape. with three eminences or knolls. the east and west bear no name, the mid is called Tom na Nighinnan. the Island is about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile long and nearly a half broad, covered principally with copse wood intermixed with a few fir. Buchanan was formerly called Inchcailloch (Observe that the name is compounded here), the name of an island in Loch Lomond where the Church was till 1621 when a considerable part of the Parish of Luss, at that time on this side of the Loch, was annexed to the Parish of Inchcailloch. Some years after the annexation the walls of the Church of Inchcailloch failing, and the people not finding it convenient every Sabbath especially in stormy weather, to be crossing over to the Island, worship was performed in a church near the house of Buchanan. See Name Sheet to the Old Grave Yard authorized and described on 1/2500 work, which was originally a Chapel of Ease to the Parish of Luss. From this Chapel which was called the Church or Chapel of Buchanan, the whole united Parish came by degrees to be called the Parish of Buchanan. Inchcailloch signifies the Island of Old Women, so called because in former times there was a Nunnery there. No remains of this nunnery exist now nor can the site be pointed out' (OS1/9/12/14).

13. ARROCHYMORE

Errochymore 1405 *OPS* i, 502

Errochon moir 1590s Pont 117r

Arrochymore 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *arachar* + locative + G *mòr*

'Big arachar place'. Roy shows three settlements containing *Arrach-*, however the suffixes are missing due to the cuts on the joins of the map. G *arachar* is used to describe a ploughgate is exclusive to the ancient Earldom of Lennox and, given the terrain, may have indicated use of a lighter kind of plough than those pulled by oxen (Carmichael et al 2014, 8; Duncan 1975, 319).

The name is found in nearby Milarrochy, and Arrochybeg and at Arrochar at the head of Loch Long.

The settlement is described in the OS Name Book as ‘an old Steading now almost all in ruins, the property of His Grace the Duke of Montrose’ (OS1/32/6/135).

14. CNOC BUIDHE

Cnoc Buidhe 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G cnoc + G buidhe

‘Yellow knoll or hill’. The Gaels used colours frequently in their names for the landscape. However, we should be aware that colours in English do not always readily translate themselves into Gaelic. *Buidhe* ‘yellow’ does not mean the primary yellow found in the light stripe of a wasp, for example, but rather a more pastel colour like in blonde hair. Similarly *ruadh* ‘red’ is not the colour of blood or an Aberdeen football kit, but more a reddish-brown found in ginger hair.

‘An insignificant feature in the rough pasture ground west of ‘Crathroch’. The side next the Loch is somewhat bold. The name, which signifies the Yellow Knoll, is widely known’ (OS1/32/6/123).

15. CASHELL

Caschill 1590s Pont 117r

Rowchassil 1590s Pont 17

Cashill 1724 *Geog. Coll.*, i, 346

Ruechaistle c.1750 Roy

Strathchaistle c.1750 Roy

Cashell 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G caiseal

The Gaelic word for castle comes in two forms – *caiseal* and *caisteal*. Both derive from the Latin *castellum* ‘fort, stronghold, citadel’, but *caisteal* may be a borrowing into Gaelic from Old French *castel* (Aidan MacDonald pers comm). According to Watson, *caiseal* is the older of the two, and was used for the ‘broch-like structures of Perthshire and Argyll’ (Watson 2002, 228; see also McNiven 2013).

In the OS Name Books the settlement is described as ‘A large and superior Farm Steading the property of His Grace the Duke of Montrose. The name is believed to be a corruption of Castle, from the old Castle at Strathcashell point’ (OS1/32/6/115). The ruin after which the settlement is named is described as ‘this ruin stands upon ‘Strathcashell Point’ and is, upon the authorities quoted, the ruins of an ancient castle, of which there is nothing now known except by tradition. Its walls are about 4 feet in thickness and at present stand 2 or 3 feet high. ‘Fingal's Castle’ is a name which the people commonly call it, but this cannot be established upon any better authority. Whatever this object may have been it is generally understood as a building of great age and throughout the entire district it is known as the ‘Castle’ at ‘StrathCashell,’ which, as well as the name ‘Cashell,’ is generally understood to take their names in a corrupted form from the Castle, ‘Cashell’ being a Scotticism of Castle. There is a little Island on the east of the Point, near the main-land, which is an artificial Island, composed of stakes driven into the bed of the Loch, with sticks, stones, & earth across on the top. Some bushes are now growing on it. The tradition respecting this Island is that it was made for the use of the Castle to hide treasure in when it (the Castle) could no longer be a place of safety. The Island is well known to stand upon Stakes driven into the Loch. It bears no name (OS1/32/6/121-2).

The archaeology of the fort is described at: <https://scotlandspplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/rcahms-archives/inventories/stirlingshire-1963-volume-1/202> and in Canmore at <https://canmore.org.uk/site/42530/strathcashell-point-loch-lomond-cashel>

16. CARN NA MUICE

Carn na Muice 1898 OS 6 inch 2nd edn

G càrn + G an + G muc

‘Cairn of the pig’.

‘A well known name given to a small bay of Loch Lomond near ‘Carraig’. It signifies The Pig’s den, often applied upon the Revd. Dr.'s McFarlane’s authority, to the haunt of the wild boar’ (OS1/32/6/108).

17. SALLOCHY

Sallachy 1277 *OPS* i, 32

Sallachy c.1750 Roy

Sallochy 1793 *OSA* ix, 21

Sallochy 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn [Easter and Wester Sallochay shown]

G *seileach* + locative

‘Place of willows’.

For Easter Sallochay the OS Name Book says ‘An old Farm Steading at present occupied by Cotters. It is the property of His Grace the Duke of Montrose. By the proprietor’s Agent & the Tenant of the Farm, the name is used as written upon Trace, & by the principals of the Christian Society at Edinburgh, connected with the ‘School’ near the Steading, it is used, in the form shewn by the last two authorities quoted [in the Authorities for spelling column]’ (OS1/32/6/105).

18. TEAC A’ Mhinisteir

Leac a’ Mhinisteir 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

Teac a’ Mhinisteir 1899 OS 6 inch 2nd edn

? G *teac* + G *an* + G *ministear*

‘? House of the minister’. *Teac* is an Old Gaelic term for house and is now *taigh*. However, the OS Name Book of 1864 states that ‘this name is applied to a small hollow declivity situated near Ross Point, and signifies Declivity of the Minister’ and so perhaps *leac* is meant (OS1/32/6/95).

19. ROSS

Ros 1590s Pont 117r

Ross c.1750 Roy

Ross 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *ros*

‘Promontory’.

The settlement is named after Ross Point, which is described in the OS Name Book as ‘this name is applied to a large point or promontory projecting into Loch Lomond, Extending nearly half way across the Lake, is covered with wood, half fir and copse wood, the remainder all Fir, Two small Isles are situated near this point, generally called Isles of the Ross from this place ‘Ross Point’ is well known’ (OS1/32/6/91-2).

20. PORT NA CRAOIBHE

Port na Craoibhe 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *port* + G *an* + G *craobh*

‘Harbour of the tree’.

‘This name is applied to a small Bay in Loch Lomond a little south of Rowardennan. It signifies The Port or harbour of the tree’ (OS1/32/6/87).

21. ROWARDENNAN

Row-Ardenen 1724 *Geog. Coll.*, i, 346

Ruardennan c.1750 Roy

Rowardennan 1793 *OSA* ix, 15

Inn of *Rowardennan* 1841 *NSA* viii, 90

Rowardennan 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *rudha* + G *àrd* + pn Adamnan.

‘Promontory of Adamnan’s height’. Adamnan was abbot of Iona between 679 and 704. He wrote a famous life of St Columba in about 700. Taylor suggests the Gaelic form of the name is *Rudha àirde*

Eódhnain (Taylor 1999, 69). The place may mark a point on a routeway between Iona and its daughter house at Lindisfarne, founded by Aiden of Iona in the seventh century (see map in Taylor 1999, 50).

The OS Name Book states that Rowardennan Inn is ‘a commodious Inn situated on the Eastern shore of Loch Lomond near the foot of Ben Lomond to the top of which a pony track leads from this place, there is a ferry to Inverbeg called the Kings Ferry, (described in the name sheets of the Parish of Luss). and a Pier for the transit of passengers to and from the Steamboats that ply on the Loch. The property of the Duke of Montrose and occupied by Andrew Blair. The Parish Road from Drymen, on which there are Mile Stones, ends here at the little jetty for the Ferry to Inveruglass’ (OS1/32/6/87).

22. EILEAN NAN DEARGANNAN

Islandnadeargin c.1750 Roy

Eilean nan Deargannan 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *eilean* + G *an* + G *deargann*

‘Island of the fleas’.

‘A small Isle near Rowardennan, Covered with trees. the name Signifies The fleas’ Island from its diminutive size. It is often commonly called ‘Eilean na Circe’ - the hen’s Island, from fowl being put on it when seed is growing &c. but this as well as the proper Name is well known’ (OS1/32/6/92).

23. ROWCHNOCK

Rowchnock 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *rubha* + G *cnoc*

‘Knoll promontory’.

‘A good cothouse. the property of the Duke of Montrose. This name is by the Revd. Dr. McFarlane considered a corruption Rudha Cheanniche - The merchants or Pedlar’s point’ (OS1/32/6/76).

24. CREAG IOLAIRE

Creag Iolaire 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *creag* + G *iolair*

‘Eagle’s crag’.

‘A well known name applied to a rock or Craig, situated near Rowchreeshie and signifies the Eagle rock or Craig’ (OS1/32/6/69).

25. TOLL A’ BHRUIC

Toll a’ Bhruic 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *toll* + G *an* + G *broc*

‘Holl of the badger’.

‘This name is applied to several rocks and holes near Knochield and signifies Badger’s or Brock’s hole’ (OS1/32/6/35).

26. ROWCHOISH

Rowchoishe 1590s Pont 117r

Ruechoise c.1750 Roy

Rowchoish 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *rubha* + G *cas*

‘Foot of (the) promontory’.

‘A well known name applied to two Cothouses. The property of the Duke of Montrose, and occupied by Donald McNab and John Swan’ (OS1/32/6/32).

27. STUICKIRUAGH

Stuk-roy 1590S Pont 117r
Stuckineroy c.1750 Roy
Stùc an Fhir Ruaidh 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn
Stuickinruagh 1899 OS 6 inch 2nd edn

G *stùc* + G *an* + G *fìr* + G *ruadh*

‘This name is applied to an old cothouse and signifies The eminence of the Red Man’ (OS1/32/6/29).

28. INVERSNAID

Innersnayd 1590s Pont 117r
new built Barrock of *Innersnaat* 1724 *Geog. Coll.*, i, 345
Inversnaid c.1750 Roy
Inversnaid 1793, *OSA* ix, 21
Inversnaid 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *inbhir* + G *snàthad*

Inbhir Snàthaid. ‘Confluence of the Snaid Burn’. Snaid is derived from G *snàthad* ‘needle’. Watson states that the Gaelic name for the Snaid Burn is *Allt na Snàthaid* ‘burn of the needle’ (Watson 1926, 512). The original settlement of Inversnaid was at the confluence with the Arklet Water about 1 km west of the Inversnaid Hotel. Inversnaid Barracks shown and named prominently on Roy, as we might expect being a military map. The barracks were built in the aftermath of the Battle of Glenshiel in 1719, although proposals for barracks there were put forward two years previously (Canmore ID 23816, citing NAS GD 220/5/823/10). Alexander Graham of Duchray wrote in 1724 that ‘the new built Barrock of Innersnaat [was] sufficient to accomodat ane hundred men’ (1724 *Geog. Coll.*, i, 345). However, conditions were not always ideal, especially in winter; the barracks apparently leaked like a sieve and the soldiers were not able to cut and burn peat (Murray 1976, 28).

The Snaid burn is described as ‘a good stream rising West of *Creag Caisteil* and after a course of 2 miles is joined by Arklet Water near Garrison of Inversnaid’ (OS1/32/6/7).

29. SROIN UAIDH

Sron na h-Uaidh 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn
Sroin Uaidh 1899 OS 6 inch 2nd edn

G *sròn* + G *an* + G *uaidh*

G *uaidh* may be for Gaelic *uaigh* ‘graves’ or *uadh/uagh* ‘terror’.

‘A considerable projection into Loch Lomond about a mile above Inversnaid Hotel’ (OS1/32/6/7).

30. POLLOCHRO

Powil- chrow 1590s Pont 117r
Pallachro c.1750 Roy
Pollocrow 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *poll* + G *an* + G *crò* or *crodh*

The name may be ‘burn of the blood’ or ‘burn of the cattle’.

‘Two ruined dwelling houses near the side of Loch Lomond unoccupied for a long period’ (OS1/32/6/4).

31. CREAG A’ MHADAIDH

Creag a’ Mhadaidh 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *creag* + G *an* + G *madadh*

‘Crag of the dog (or fox or wolf)’. Dwelly states that *madadh* can be ‘any wild animal of the dog species’. Gaelic has specific words for fox, *madadh-ruadh* (where *ruadh* means ‘red’) and wolf, *madadh-allaidh* (where *allaidh* means ‘fierce’).

‘A name applied to a precipitous rock. on the east side of Loch Lomond. Situated about a quarter of a mile South of Doune’ (OS1/9/2/25).

32. DOUNE

Dune c.1750 Roy

Doune 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *dùn*

‘Fort’. However, since there is no evidence of a fort at Doune, it may be that here *dùn* simply means ‘small hill, hillock’. The meaning of ‘fort’ can be seen in the more well-known Doune near Stirling.

‘A good farm steading the property of Sir James Colquhoun of Luss, Bart. Dr. McFarlan [the minister] supposes this name to have been derived from Dun, a hill or fortification’ (OS1/9/3/27).

33. CNAP MÒR

Cnap Mòr 1899 OS 6 inch 2nd edn

G *cnap* + G *mòr*

Cnap is a knob, lump, protrusion, small lumpy hill’ (Am Faclair Beag).

‘A small rocky knoll on the side of Loch Lomond, about 40 Chains South of Culness. the name signifies, The large lump or knoll’ (OS1/32/6/30).

34. BLARSTAINGE

Plaistaing c.1750 Roy

Blarstainge 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *blàr* + G *stang*

‘Stank muir’. G *stang* can mean a pool of standing water; the settlement is only 600 m north of *Dubh Lochan* ‘little black loch’.

‘A name applied to several ruins situated about half a mile east of Garabal. The property of Sir James Colquhoun Bart.’ (OS1/9/2/8).

35. INVERARNAN

Inverearnan c.1750 Roy

Inverarnan Hotel 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *inbhir* + G *feàrna* or *àirne*

‘Confluence of the alder or sloe burn’ (see *Allt Arnan* in Carmichael et al 2014, 6).

36. BEINGLAS

Binglass 1590s Pont 117r

Benglash c.1750 Roy

Beinglas 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *beinn* + G *glas*

‘Grey/green mountain’.

37. CLACH NA BRITON

Clachnabrethen c.1750 Roy

Clach na Briton 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *clach* + G *an* + G *Breatainn*

‘Stone of the Britons’. The stone is ‘a great roughly oblong slab about ten feet long, standing at an angle of 30° on a cairn of moraine matter’ (Watson 2002, 87). Clarkson (2010, 134, 152) calls the stone *Clach nam Breatainn* and suggests that the stone was a prominent boundary marker between the kingdom of the Britons, with its centre at Dumbarton *Dùn Breatainn* ‘fort of the Britons’ and the Gaels of Dál Riata,

lying to the west in what is modern day Argyll. There is a suggestion that the stone was the location of a battle between the Britons and the Gaels in 717 described in Irish annals and that the stone may be called *Minuirc*, possibly meaning stone of the roebuck (Watson 1926, 387).

38. LEUM AN T-SEARRAICH

Leum an t-Searraich 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *leum* + G *an* + G *searrach*
'Leap of the foal, colt'.

It is not known why or when the foal or colt jumped here. Leap-names are toponyms (or place-names) given to a number of locations throughout the world of varying height, usually isolated, with the risk of a fatal fall and the possibility of a deliberate jump. Quite often these places are associated with legends relating to romantic tragedy (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lover%27s_Leap). Leaps belong to a particular motif of folklore called the 'prodigious jump' (Nicolaisen 2011, 45-59).

39. DERRYDAROCH

Derdarach c.1750 Roy

Derrydaroch 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *doire* + G *darach*
'Clump of oaks'.

40. CAISTEAL GHRIOGAIR

Caisteal Ghriogair 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *caisteal* + pn Griogar

'Gregor's Castle'. There is also a *Caisteal Rab* 'Rab's Castle' 2 km to the south-west. The wider area around northern end of Loch Lomond, including Glen Falloch and Glen Gyle, was territory inhabited by the MacGregors. Their escapades and deeds in raiding became notorious, probably because they were one of the clans based nearest the Lowlands and so more likely to come to the notice of the government there. In 1603, King James VI, with the encouragement of the Campbells who were seeking to cement their dominance in the area, had Clan Gregor and their name proscribed; documents of the time speak of the MacGregors in very harsh terms – barbarous, wicked, inhuman, Godless, wolves (Murray 1982, 21-3).

Writing about Rob Roy MacGregor and his activities in the area, the minister for Buchanan parish wrote that 'Robert Macgregor, better known as Rob Roy, (Red Rob) was proprietor of Inversnaid in Glenarklet. A cave, bearing his name, is still shown in that neighbourhood; but it has no other claim to notoriety, being merely the interstices between huge loose rocks, and well adapted for temporary concealment to an outlaw' (NSA viii, 94).

41. DÙN FALLOCH

Dùn Falloch 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *dùn* + en Falloch

On the face of it this name looks like it could be 'fort of (Glen) Falloch', but there is nothing on Canmore to indicate a fort. It may simply be that *dùn* simply means 'hill' here, albeit perhaps one that looks like a fort. The name Falloch is more problematic. It is often supposed that it means 'hidden glen' or 'glen of hiding', perhaps alluding to the activities of the MacGregors. However, Watson (2002, 175) suggests that name derives from G *fail* 'ring', which he says is common in Irish Gaelic. He does not elaborate further.

42. KEILATOR

Cuillettyrmor c.1750 Roy
Cuillettyrbeg c.1750 Roy
Coiletter 1864 OS 6 inch 1st edn
Keilator 1956 OS 1 inch 7th series

G coille + G leitir

‘Wood slope’. *G leitir* usually means a slope leading to water, whether a fairly significant river or of a loch (Fraser 2008, 185-6).

43. CRIANLARICH

Crinlarig c.1750 Roy
Crianlarich Hotel 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G crìon + G làrach

‘Withered or little house or site’. The Gaelic form of Crianlarich is A’ Chrìon-Làraich. Watson’s derivation of *Crithionnlaraich* ‘aspen site’ seems unlikely for grammatical reasons (2002, 175; <https://www.ainmean-aite.scot/placename/crianlarich/>). Dwelly gives *làrach* as meaning a ‘site of a building, vestige, ruin, habitation, farm’. From these inauspicious beginnings Crianlarich grew firstly when it became a place where two military roads met in the 18th century and then when it became the site of a railway junction and station when the railway reached the area on its way to Oban and Fort William, surveyed by the OS in the 1860s and 70s (Byron 2006, .22).

44. ALLTCHAORAIN

Alltchaorain 2022 OS 1:25,000 Explorer

G allt + G caorann

‘Rowan burn’. This is a modern name, coined by someone with a knowledge of Gaelic, and is not on any historical map on the National Library of Scotland’s map website. The rowan tree is often found in legends and myths in Gaelic tales, particularly those of Fionn Mac Cumhaill and Cú Chulainn, the legendary Irish heroes whose exploits were celebrated among the Gaels of Scotland too. Rowan trees were also believed to keep evil spirits and witches at bay.

45. MÒD A’ CHEANN DROCHÀID

Mod a’ Cheann Drochaid 1900 OS 6 inch 2nd edn

G mòd + G an + G ceann + G drochaid

‘Assembly place of Bridge End’. A mod was a place assembly. In many places this name can mean a ‘court-hill’, where local disputes between the people who worked the land could be resolved. The mod was probably the court hill of the nearby priory of St Fillan, which seems to have been founded by Robert I in 1318, although it was on the site of the earlier abbey of Glendochart (Taylor 2001, 184-5).

46. TOM NA CROICHE

Tom na Croiche 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G tom + G an + G croich

‘Hillock of the gallows’. Anyone who was caught committing a crime punishable by death and so judged at *Mòd a’ Cheann Drochaid*, above, probably found their way here.

47. DALRIGH

Dalry c.1363 *Chron. Fordun* i, 342
Dalree 1793 *OSA* ix, 14
Dail Righ 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *dail* + G *rìgh*

‘King’s water-meadow, haughland’. This is thought to be the site of a battle between forces led by Robert the Bruce and the MacDougalls of Lorn in July 1306. The MacDougalls were allies of the Comyns, Bruce’s enemies (who also sided with Edward I). After Bruce’s coronation at Scone in March 1306, the new king was defeated at the battle of Methven and was forced to become a fugitive. The battle at Dail Rìgh is described in John Barbour’s *The Bruce* (Duncan 1997, 114-17) and in the chronicle of John of Fordoun (*Chron. Fordun*, i, 342; translation in vol ii, 334). Barrow suggests the name may pre-date the battle of 1306 (Barrow 1988, 358, note 99).

Dail-names are usually level areas beside the river, which are prone to flooding and so enriched by nutrients making them suitable for grazing or growing hay for winter feed. However, in some places their fertility ensured that they became permanent settlements, or at least gave their names to permanent settlements nearby, and usually contain the element *dail*, a borrowing from Pictish *dol*.

48. TYNDRUM

Teindrom c.1750 Roy

Tyndrum 1796 OSA xvii, 377

Tyndrum Hotel 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *taigh* + G *an* + G *druim*

‘House of the ridge’. The Gaelic form of the name is *Taigh an Droma*. The village lies on a ridge that is a significant watershed – the waters on one side flow to the west and eventually to the Atlantic Ocean, while those on the other side flow east and out to the North Sea via the River Tay (Byron 2006, 32). The area was also the meeting point for two drove roads and the point at which the railways to Oban and Fort William split.

49. CROM ALLT

Crom Allt 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *crom* + G *allt*

‘Bent or crooked burn’.

50. ALLT SLOCHD AN T-SEIPINE

Allt Slochd an t-Seipeine 1864 OSNB (OS1/2/51/70)

Allt Slochd an t-Seipine 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *allt* + G *slochd* + G *an* + G *seipinn*

‘Burn of the hollow of the chopin’. The name is spelled *Allt Slochd an t-Seipeine* in the OSNB, which states that the feature is ‘A well known stream, rising on the County Boundary, bearing its name from where a small stream that has its source in Perthshire separates into two branches, the one flowing south into Perth (‘Source of the Tay’) the other north (‘Allt Slochd an Seipin’) into Argyle & joins Allt Coire Challain about ½ a mile from the Boundary. Signification ‘The Chopin burn of the hollow’ (OS1/2/51/70). A *chopin* was a Scots liquid measure equal to a Scots half-pint or English quart (DSL), and presumably the *slochd* was perceived to be able to hold such a measure.

51. TIGH NA LEIRGE

Tigh na Leirge 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *taigh* + G *an* + G *learg* or *làirig*

‘House of the plain’ or ‘house of the pass between two mountains’. Either *learg* or *làirig* fits well here; the house lies on a plain that forms a pass that sits between *Beinn Odhar* (dun-coloured mountain) and *Beinn Bhreac-liath* (speckled-grey mountain). Dwelly, however, states that *leirg*, genitive *leirge*, is an alternative form of both *learg* ‘plain, beaten path, sloping declivity of a hill’ and *làirig* ‘moor, sloping hill; way between two mountains’. *Taigh* is the modern form of *tigh* ‘dwelling house’.

‘This name is applied to the Ruins of a dwelling house, a little to the South of Auch farmhouse Signification The house of the plain’ (OS1/2/51/73).

52. GLEANN ACHADH-INNIS CHAILEIN

Achinshi Allan c.1750 Roy

Auch in Glenorchy 1845 NSA xiv, 120

Gleann Auch-innis Challain 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

Gleann Auch-innis Chailein 1900 OS 6 inch 2nd edn

G *gleann* + en Auch-innis Chailein

Auch-innis Chailein is derived from G *achadh* ‘field’ + G *innis* ‘meadow, water-meadow’ + pn Cailean ‘Colin’, so seems to mean ‘Colin’s water-meadow field’. Whoever Cailean was is now lost to us, but one of the Campbells might be a possibility; Cailean was a popular name among the Campbells and the chief was called MacCailein Mòr (Boardman 2006, 10). G *innis* is probably more popularly understood as meaning ‘island’, but can be a piece of raised land beside a river or a river-side meadow. The flooding of the land by the river in winter would provide nutrients for the area making it productive for arable farming, something that was valuable in the Highlands throughout the pre-modern era.

‘A beautiful narrow Glen winding off at Auch farmhouse for about 3 miles, having ‘Beinn a’ Chuirn’ at the head, ‘Beinn Doireann’ on the north side & ‘Beinn nam Fuaran’ & ‘Beinn a’ Chaisteil’ on the South Signification Unknown’ (OS1/2/51/60).

53. FEADAN MHART DONNA

Feadan Mhart Donna 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *feadan* + G *mart* + G *donn*

‘Opening or channel of the brown cows’. ‘*Feadan Garbh* [‘rough opening or channel’] and *Feadan Mhart Donna* are referred to as high gaps and generally draughty places’ (Murray 2017, 101).

‘A green opening between some small scattered rocks on the South end of Beinn Doireann. Signification The Brown Cows stripe’ (OS1/2/51/53).

54. BEINN DÒRAIN

Bin Dowran 1590s Pont 116r

Ben Doran c.1750 Roy

Beindoran 1793 OSA viii, 342

Beinn Doireann 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

Beinn Dòrain 1900 OS 6 inch 2nd edn

G *beinn* + G *dobhràn*, earlier *dobhrán*

‘Mountain of the streams’ according to Murray (2017, 109), but ‘peak of the streamlet’ according to Watson (1926, 456).

‘A Mountain of Considerable extent & elevation, Situated between the Confines of Argyle & Perth & the head of Glen Orchy. Its appearance is bold, stony, remarkably steep & very rugged in some parts. There is great disputing about the signification of this mountain. The general belief is that it means the mountain of storms; as the openings up around it discharge storms with such a noise, much resembling thunder, to be heard a good distance off. Beinn Doireann signifies Mountain of the Storms. Beinn Dorain - Mountain of the Otters. Pronounced ‘Ben Doran’ (OS1/2/51/51-2).

In his poem *Moladh Beinn Dobhrainn (Praise of Ben Dobhrain)*, Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir stated:

An t-urram thar gach beinn
Aig Beinn Dòbhrain;
De na chunnaic mi fon ghrèin,
'S i bu bhòidhche leam:

Precedence over every ben
Has Ben Dobhrain;
Of all I have seen beneath the sun,
She is the loveliest to me

55. BRIDGE OF ORCHY

Bridge of Orchy 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

SSE *bridge* + SSE *of* + en Orchy

The bridge at Bridge of Orchy was built around 1751 by teams under the command of Major William Caulfield who succeeded General George Wade in 1740. The bridge over the River Orchy was erected to carry the road from Stirling to Fort William along part of which the West Highland Way now follows (Taylor 1976, 66-7). The Gaelic form of the name is *Drochaid Urchaidh* (<https://www.ainmean-aite.scot/placename/bridge-of-orchy/>). Watson suggests that Orchy or Urchaidh derives from British (and by implication Pictish) *Are-cēt-ia* ‘on-wood-stream’ (Watson 1926, 475-6).

‘A Common but strong built bridge over the Orchy & on the site of the old one erected under the Command of General Wade. The junction of the roads from Fort William, Tyndrum & Dalmally meet near it, where there are a few thatched cottages & a Church. A drove stance is attached to one of them’ (OS1/2/51/42).

56. TOM AN T-SNAOISEIN

Tom an t-Snaoisein 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *tom* + G *an* + G *snaoisean*

‘Hill of the snuff’.

‘A Small Knoll immediately South of Doire an Tobair. Signification The Snuff Knoll’ (OS1/2/51/38).

57. MÀM CARRAIGH

Màm Carraigh 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *màm* + G *carragh*

‘Breast-shaped hill or pass of the rock or pillar’.

‘Applicable to the slope between the top of Beinn Inverveigh & Doire Darach. Signification Pass of the stone Pillar’ (OS1/2/51/37).

58. INVERORAN

Inveroran Inn 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *inbhir* + G *dobhràn*, earlier *dobhrán*

‘Confluence of the streamlet’. Watson states that ‘the diminutive *dobhrán* is seen in *Inbhir-dhobhráin* (*dh* silent after I), Inveroran, where *Allt Oran* – for *Allt Dobhrain* – falls into *Loch Toilbhe* [Loch Tulla]’ (Watson 1926, 456). The element is also found in Beinn Doràin, see above.

‘A well built inn, affording good accommodation, situate midway between Kingshouse & Tyndrum Hotels & at the west end of Loch Tulla. It commands an excellent & extensive prospect. The property of Breadalbane’ (OS1/2/50/106),

59. TOM NA SPEARRACHAIN

Tom na Spearrachain 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *tom* + G *an* + G *spearrach*

‘Round hill of the fetters’.

G *spearrach* means a ‘fetter placed on one of the fore-feet and one of the hind-feet of an animal to prevent its climbing or jumping over dykes; string tied tightly round the hamstring of an animal with the object of impeding its locomotion’ (Dwelly).

The OS Name Book states that the name applies to ‘a small hillock about half a mile W. of Inveroran Inn. Signification Unknown’. However, a later hand wrote ‘Tom na Spearrachain. Hillock of the Cow – fetter’ (OS1/2/50/102).

60. DRUIMLIART

Drumliart 1751 Land Tax Roll (E106/3/2/19)

Drumliagart 1793 OSA xiii, 546

Archibald MacIntyre *Drumliart* 1797-8 Farm Horse Tax Roll (E326/10/1/139)

Druimliart 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *druim* + G *liath* + G *gart*

‘Ridge of the grey/green enclosed field or settlement’. The settlement was the home of the poet Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir (Duncan Ban MacIntyre), and in 1792 had a population of 30 living there. The ruins of the township can still be seen at the site along with a memorial to Donnchadh Bàn (Murray 2017, 55, 59).

‘On an eminence (green) about 1/2 a mile west of Inveroran stands the remains of a farm house, the birth place of Duncan Ban MacIntyre the well known Glen Orchy bard, who was born in the year 1724. Signification Verdant Ridge’ (OS1/2/50/106).

Druimliaghairt is given as the Gaelic form on the BBC Alba website discussing Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir (www.bbc.co.uk/alba/foghlam/larachnambard/poets/donnchadh_ban/am_bard/), although Charles Robertson recorded it as *Druim liaghart* c.1900 (King 2019, 353).

61. ALLT A’ CHLÀIR

Allt a Chlàir 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *allt* + G *an* + G *clàr*

‘Burn or stream of the smooth surface or plane’ ?

‘A small stream flowing southeastwards into the West end of Loch Tulla. Signification ‘The Stave Burn’ (OS1/2/50/101). Stave here seems to mean a board, plank.

62. ALLT DOIRE NAN EACH

Allt Doire nan Each 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *allt* + en Doire nan Each

‘Burn or stream of Doire nan Each’. Doire nan Each means ‘grove or thicket of the horses’.

‘A small stream rising near Easan Dubh and falling into Ardvrechnish Burn. Signification ‘Stream of the Horses Thicket’ (OS1/2/50/89).

63. BLACK MOUNT/AM MONADH DUBH

Black Mount 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

SSE *black* + SSE *mount*/ G *an* + G *monadh* + G *dubh*

The Gaelic form is *Am Monadh Dubh* (King 2019, 353).

‘A wild & mountainous district, with wild stretches of flat moorland, in the upper parts of the parishes of Glenorchy & Ardchattan. It is celebrated as a ‘Deer Forest,’ & the property of the Earl of Breadalbane. It is bounded on the north by the River Etive, Allt Lochain Ghainmhich, & the west arms of Loch Laidon; on the east by the County Boundary; on the south by the River Tulla, Loch Tulla & River Orchy; on the west by Coire Bhicar, Beinn She, Loch Dochart. & the mountains of Stob Coire na h-Albanach & Beinn Chaorach’ (OS1/2/50/91).

64. LOCHAN MHIC PHEADAIR RUAIDH

Lochan Mhic Pheadair Ruaidh 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *loch* + G *mac* + pn Peadar + G *ruadh*

‘Little loch of the son of red-haired Peter’.

‘A small loch close to the main road about a mile south of Ba Bridge. Signification Red Peter’s Son’s little Loch’ (OS1/2/50/75).

65. CARN AN T-SAIGHDEIR

Càrn an t-Saighdeir 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G càrn + G an + G saighdear

‘Cairn of the soldier’.

Often *saighdear* can mean red-coat in the Highlands, relating to the activities of personnel in the British Army during and after the Jacobite Rebellions of 1715-19 and 1745-6.

‘A small pile of stones about 20 yards west of the main road and a quarter of a mile north of Ba Bridge. A soldier was found murdered here about a century ago, hence the name’ (OS1/2/50/65).

66. CREAG AN FHIRICH

Creag an Fhirich 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G creag + G an + G fireach

‘Rock of the high barren ground’. Dwelly has *fireach* as meaning ‘hill, moor, mountain, acclivity; top of a hill, high barren ground’, while Am Faclair Beag has ‘upper slope, high ground (usually barren; below the *creachann* [rocky summit devoid of trees] but above the *leathad/leitir* [slope])’.

‘A large and precipitous rock about a mile west of Ba Bridge. The signification of the name is unknown’ (OS1/2/50/65).

67. CREAGAN NAM MEANN

Creagan nam Meann 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G creag + G an + G meann

‘Crag or little crag of the kids or young goats’.

‘A small rock about a quarter of a mile west of the main road near Ba Cottage. The name signifies ‘The Kids Little Rock’ (OS1/2/50/66).

68. BÀ COTTAGE

Loch Ba 1590s Pont 134r

Water of Bae c.1750 Roy

Bà Cottage 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

en Bà + SSE cottage

Bà is the name of the nearby river and loch, and on the face of it suggests that G *bà*, the plural of *bò* ‘cow’, is behind the name.

‘A neatly built house used as a place of refreshment by deer stalkers; it is not inhabited’ (OS1/2/50/67).

69. LEACANN NAM BRAONAN

Leacann nam Braonan 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G leacann + G an + G braonan

‘Broad slope of the pignuts’. ‘*Conopodium majus* is a perennial herbaceous flowering plant in the celery family *Apiaceae*. Its underground part resembles a chestnut and is sometimes eaten as a wild or cultivated root vegetable...From its popularity with pigs come the names pignut, hognut’ (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conopodium_majus).

‘Applicable to the hillside between Allt Cailleach, and Allt nam Braonan. Signification. ‘Declivity of the earthnuts’ (OS1/2/50/15).

70. BEINN CHAORACH

Beinn Chaorach 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G beinn + G caora or caorach

‘Sheep mountain’ or ‘berry mountain’. *G coarach* can be the genitive singular and plural of *caora* ‘sheep’ or it can mean ‘pertaining to or abounding in berries (esp. rowan); red-hot, flaming; sparkling, gleaming’ (Am Faclair Beag).

‘Is applied to that round hill on the west side of & overlooking ‘Loch Ba’ Signification ‘Mountain (of the) sheep’ (OS1/2/50/52).

71. GUALAINN LIATH GHIUTHAIS

Golen Lia Guis c.1750 Roy

Gualann Liath Ghiubhais 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G gualann + *G liath* + *G giuthas*

‘Shoulder of the grey pine-tree’. *Giuthas* is the modern form of *giubhas*.

‘A well known name applied to the shoulder of a hill situated about 2 1/2 miles from Kingshouse Signification Shoulder of the Grey Fir’ (OS1/2/50/40).

72. ALLT MOLACH

Allt Molach 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G allt + *G molach*

‘Rough burn’.

‘A large burn having its source near to ‘Leacann nam Braonan’ and joins the ‘Allt nan Giubhas’ about 1/2 mile from Kingshouse. Signification Rough Burn’ (OS1/2/50/40).

73. DUBH LOCHAN

Dowlochen 1590s (Pont 143v).

Dubh Lochan 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G dubh + *G loch*

‘Black or dark loch’. *Lochan* is the plural of *loch*. The early Scottish map-maker, Timothy Pont, who surveyed much of Scotland in the 1590s, stated that ‘at the head of Glen-koen [Glencoe] is *Dowlochen*, twa or thrie small lochis disbogging for the space of thrie myls of bownds’ (Pont 143v).

‘This name applies to several small lochs situated about 3/4 mile South East of ‘Kingshouse’ Signification ‘Black Lochs’ (OS1/2/50/39).

74. TOM BUIDHE

Cnoc Buidhe 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

Tom Buidhe 1900 OS 6 inch 2nd edn

G cnoc, later *G tom* + *G buidhe*

‘Yellow hill’.

‘A well known name applied to a small grassy hillock. Situated about 40 chains East of ‘Kingshouse’ & signifies Yellow Hill’ (OS1/2/50/39).

75. BUACHAILLE ETIVE MÒR

the twa *Bochaletyrs* 1590s Pont 144r

Bochell Ettive Mor c.1750 Roy

Buachaille Etive Mòr 1874 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G buachaille + *en Etive* + *G mòr*

‘The big herdsman of Etive’. Nearby *Buachaille Etive Beag* is the ‘Little herdsman of Etive’. Sometimes *buachaille* is translated with shepherd, and this may be the original interpretation but given the troubled recent relationship the Highlands have had with sheep since the Clearances of the 18th and 19th centuries, perhaps herdsman is more appropriate here (Drummond 2007, 141, 190). *Etive* is the name of the nearby river (Èite in Gaelic) which seems to come from Èitig ‘foul one, horrid one’, and was a goddess who was responsible for a rough and stormy Loch Etive (Watson 1926, 46).

‘A conspicuous high rocky ridge forming the north west side of ‘Glen Etive’ & stretching from half a mile north east of ‘Dalness’ to ‘Stob Dearg’. There are a number of streams rising on both the east & west sides. Those on the east are particularly deep & rocky and falling into the River Etive. On the ridge there are a number of high conical shaped peaks. The most prominent being ‘Stob Dearg’ & ‘Stob a’ Bhroce’ the former being the highest and very deep precipices on east, north & west sides’ (OS1/2/50/35).

‘We now come to the two most striking of all the masses in this wilderness of mountains, those to which the significant names of Buachail Etive, or ‘the keepers of Etive’, have been given. These mountains may be seen in the distance by the traveller, soon after he has left Bunawe, but they assume a bolder aspect in proportion as they are approached; and, a little beyond the termination of the loch, they seem to frown in solemn sullenness on the puny mortals who venture to encroach on the solitudes over which they have for ages so patiently kept watch. They are distinguished by the names of the greater and the lesser, or Buachail-mor and Buachail-beg, not so much from their comparative elevation as from their extent; the former stretching eastward for six or seven miles till near to King’s House, and terminating in that direction as precipitously as towards Loch-etive, while the Buachail-beg does not extend to more than half that distance. Neither of them is supposed to be less than 3000 feet in height’ (NSA vii, 471).

76. ALLT A’ BHALAICH

Allt a’ Bhalaich 1867 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G allt + G an + G balach

‘A stream rising near the head of Coire Bhalach & falling into the River Etive a short distance north east of Kingshouse. Signification The Lads Burn’ (OS1/2/50/31).

77. STOB BEINN A’ CHRÙLAISTE

Ben Crolach c.1750 Roy

Stob Beinn a’ Chrùlaiste 1874 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G stob + en Beinn a’ Chrùlaiste

Beinn a’ Chrùlaiste lies about 1.5 km to the north-east and contains *G crùlaist* ‘rocky hill’ (Drummond 2007, 32).

‘Applied to a very prominent rocky peak on the south west side of ‘Beinn a’ Chrulaiste’. Signification ‘The Peak of the Rocky Mountain’ (OS1/2/50/13).

78. LOCHAN NA FOLA

Lochan na Fola 1874 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G loch + G an + G fuil

‘Little loch of the blood’.

‘A very small loch which tradition asserts to have turned red with the blood of a party of McDonalds from Glencoe who had a skirmish between themselves immediately north of the Loch. Signification The Little Blood Loch’ OS1/2/50/27).

79. ALTNAFEADH

Altnafeadh 1874 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G allt + G an + G fèith

Named from the nearby burn *Allt na Fèithe* ‘burn of the bog’.

‘Applied to two small hatched houses and a well known drove stance situated at the junction of Glencoe Road & that of the old Military Road leading to Fort William. The house on east side of burn belonging to Mrs. McDonald Edinburgh & the other on west side to Miss Downie Appin’ (OS1/2/50/48).

80. SRÒN A' CHOIRE ODHAIR-BHIG

Streignchorie c.1750 Roy

Sròn Coire Odhar-bhig 1874 OS 6 inch 1st edn

Sròn a' Chorie Odhdair-bhig 1900 OS 6 inch 2nd edn

G *sròn* + G *an* + en Coire Odhair-beag

'Promontory of Coire Odhair-beag' Coire Odhair-beag means 'small dun corrie', the change of *beag* 'small' to *bhig* relates to changes in the genitive in Gaelic in this name formation.

'A mountain stream rising at the head of 'Coire Odhar Beag', and falling into the River Leven about half a mile west of Braighe na h-Aibhne. Signification 'Small Burn of the Dun Corrie' (OS1/2/50/6).

81. MEALL RUIGH A' BHRICLEATHAID

Meall Ruigh a' Bhricleathaid 1875 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *meall* + en Ruigh a' Bhricleathaid

'Lumpy hill of Ruigh a' Bhricleathaid', the latter deriving from G *ruigh* + G *an* + G *breac* + G *leathad* and meaning 'shieling of the speckled slope'.

82. BAC AN NID

Bac an Nid 1875 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *bac* + G *an* + G *nead*

'Bank or terrace of the nest'. While there are other meanings, in terms of place-names G *bac* can signify 'terrace on the side of a hill, brink of a bank or brae' or 'Hollow, pit, bend in the ground'.

'A prominent crag on lower and eastern extremity of Garbh Beinn Signification, 'The nest rock'' (OS1/2/49/14).

83. TOM NA SEILGE

Tom na Seilge 1875 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *tom* + G *an* + *sealg*

'Hillock of the hunt'.

'A small circular hill of Fir Planting a short distance East of Kinloch Lodge English Meaning. (The Hunting Hill)' (OS1/17/38/172).

84. KINLOCHLEVEN

Keanlochbeg 1654 Blaeu

Kenlochbeg c.1750 Roy

Kinloch Beg 1875 OS 6 inch 1st edn

Kinlochleven 1927 1 inch popular edition sheet 54

en Kinloch + river name Leven

Roy shows *Kenlochmor* on the north bank of the River Leven; the modern settlement extends across both banks of the River Leven, but it was at Kinlochbeg, on the southern bank, from where the modern settlement first grew. Kinloch derives from G *ceann* + G *loch* 'loch end or head'. Loch Leven is named from the River Leven, one of three such river-names in Scotland (the others are in Fife, flowing out of Loch Leven, and in Dunbartonshire, flowing out of Loch Lomond). Leven could derive from Celtic **le:mo* 'elm', giving G *leamhan* 'elm', or it may derive from Celtic **le:uo* 'smooth', found in Welsh *llyvyn* 'smooth', meaning smooth- or slow-flowing river' (*PNF* 2, 46).

85. ALLT COIRE AN EICH

Allt Coire an Eich 1875 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *allt* + G *coire* + G *an* + G *each*

'Burn of the corrie of the horse'.

‘A small Burn issuing from a Spring at Coire an Eich and flowing in a Southerly direction till it joins Loch Leven, a little North of Allt Coire nam Ba [burn of the corrie of the cattle]. (English The Burn of the Horses Corry)’ (OS1/17/38/171).

86. ALLT COIRE NA H-EIRGHE

Corie na Cherie c.1750 Roy

Allt Coire an Iubhair 1873 OS 6 inch 1st edn

Allt Coire na h-Eirghe 1903 OS 6 inch 2nd edn

G allt + G coire + G an + G èirigh

‘Burn of the corrie of the uprising, rebellion’. It is difficult to account for the 1873 form, which means ‘burn of the corrie of the yew trew’. It was known that there were many mistakes in the first edition OS maps, indeed, W.J. Watson, the great place-names scholar of the early 20th century, lamented in 1904 that the OS were guilty of an ‘outrageous mangling of our Gaelic names’ (Watson 2002, 47).

87. ALLT NATHRACH

Allt na Nathrach 1873 OS 6 inch 1st edn

Allt Nathrach 1903 OS 6 inch 2nd edn

G allt + G an + G nathair

‘Burn of the snake’.

‘A large Burn rising at the North side of Calliach Hill and flowing in an easterly direction till it runs into Loch Leven (English The Adder Burn)’ (OS1/17/38/173).

88. BEINN NA CAILLICH

Beinn na Caillich 1875 OS 6 inch 1st edn

Beinn na Caillich 1900 OS 6 inch 2nd edn

G beinn + G an + G caileach

‘A very prominent hill situate on the North side of Loch Leven and about three miles West from Kinlochmore. It overlooks the surrounding Country and from its summit a very fine view can be obtained. English Meaning. Old Wife’s hill’ (OS1/17/38/170).

89. LAIRIGMÒR

Terbard 1590s Pont 13

Glen Tarbart c.1750 Roy

Glen Tarbart 1807 Arrowsmith

Lairigmòr 1875 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G làirig + G mòr

‘Great pass’. This is shown as Glen Tarbart shown on Blaeu, Pont and Roy, and so seems to have been a glen where boats were portaged between Loch Linnhe and Loch Leven, but it seems quite a long glen to haul boats over. For more on Tarbert and Tarbart names in Scotland see Curtis (2011, 1-34).

90. BLÀR A’ CHAORAINN

Blairhewrin 1654 Blaeu

Blàr a’ Chaoruinn 1873 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G blàr + G an or G caorann

‘Plain or muir of the rowan tree’. There are several *blàr*-names in the area, suggesting the area was at one time called *Am Blàr*. The word in place-names is usually taken to mean ‘field, plain’ (Dwelly s.v.), but can also mean ‘peat-bog, battlefield, or cleared space’. Studies of *blàr* in other parts of Scotland including Fife, Menteith, and the southern shores of Loch Lomond, suggest they were grazing lands (See *PNF* 1; McNiven 2011, and Taylor 2007). *G caorainn* ‘rowan tree, mountain ash’, and is often found in legends and myths in Gaelic tales, particularly those of Fionn Mac Cumhaill and Cú Chulainn,

the legendary Irish heroes whose exploits were celebrated among the Gaels of Scotland too. Rowan trees were also believed to keep evil spirits and witches at bay.

‘A small dwellinghouse, one storey, thatched and in indifferent repair. English meaning, Plain of the Rowan tree.’ (OS1/17/38/67).

91. ALLT COIRE A’ MHUILINN

Allt Coire a’ Mhuilinn 1873 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *allt* + G *coire* + G *an* + G *muileann*

‘Burn of the corrie of the mill’.

‘A long Stream Rising in Coire Mhuilinn from which it derives its name. It flows Northward and it is the principal Stream whose waters form Allt Riasgaig. English Meaning Stream of the Miln Hollow’ (OS1/17/38/52).

92. DÙN DEARDAIL

Dundhairdghall 1793 OSA vii, 438

Dundbhairdghall 1875 OS 6 inch 1st edn

Dùn Deardail 1902 OS 6 inch 2nd edn

G *dùn* + ? pn Deirdre

Watson (2002, 229-30) states that ‘there is no doubt that Deirdre’s name became Dearduil in Scotland’. Deirdre was one of the great figures of Irish mythology and her story crossed over to Scotland as part of the pan-Gaelic culture, where her tales were told and played out in the landscape.

Canmore reports that ‘Dun Deardail, a vitrified fort, occupies the sloping summit of an eminence on the western flank of Glen Nevis. It is near-pear-shaped on plan with its long axis lying ENE-WSW, and measures internally c.46 m by c.27 m at its widest in the WSW and c.11 m at the narrowest part in the ENE. The ruinous stone wall is spread to a maximum of c.8 m in the north, and to a minimum of c.4.5m at the entrance in the west, with a maximum height of c.2.5m, and shows numerous lumps of vitrification, but no evidence of built masonry...The name, now spelled *Dun Deardail*, has been in dispute in the past being published as *Dundbhairdghall* on OS 6 inch 1873, and noted as *Deardinl* and *Dun dearg suil* by MacCulloch [reference unknown], and *Dun dear duil* by W Johnson (Plan of the Lordship of Lochaber, 1831; West Highland Museum, Fort William)’ (Canmore ID 23727).

93. CREAG A’ BHODAICH

Creag a’ Bhodaich 1875 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *creag* + G *an* + G *bodach*

‘Rock of the old man’.

A narrow stretch of broken rock Situated between Beinn Riabhach [grey-brown mountain] and Cow Hill. English Meaning, Old Man's Rock’ (OS1/17/37/14).

94. DAIL AN T-SUIDHE

Dail an t-Suidhe 1875 OS 6 inch 1st edn

G *dail* + G *an* + G *suidhe*

‘Water-meadow, haugh of the seat’.

The OS Name Book describes the place as ‘an arable field Situated a little north of Achantie farm Steading, property of Mrs Cameron Campbell of Monzie, English Meaning - Meadow of the Seat’ (OS1/17/36/70). Nearby Achintee is *achadh an t-suidhe* ‘field of the seat’. Dwelly states that G *suidhe* can mean a ‘level shelf on a hillside where one would naturally rest’, and there are many *suidhe* place-names in Scotland that have saints’ names attached suggesting that they were believed to be the places where saints preached or contemplated (Márkus 2012, 573).

Dail-names are usually level areas beside the river, which are prone to flooding and so enriched by nutrients making them suitable for grazing or growing hay for winter feed. However, in some places their fertility ensured that they became permanent settlements, or at least gave their names to permanent settlements nearby, and usually contain the element *dail*, a borrowing from Pictish *dol*.

95. SRÒN NIBHEIS

Stròn Nibheis 1875 OS 6 inch 1st edn

Sron Nibheis 1904 OS 6 inch 2nd edn

G *sròn* + en Nibheis

‘Nose or promontory of Nevis’. Although this feature sits about 5 km north-west of Ben Nevis, it sits at the entrance to Glen Nevis, and it is there probably named after the glen rather than the mountain. Nevis itself seems to mean either venomous mountain, from *nimheil* or *nibheis*, and perhaps means not the mountain, but rather from the glen which has been described as evil in Gaelic poetry because it was deemed a barren glen (Drummond 2007, 137). Another possibility is that the name derives from an old European root *neb*, meaning cloudy, or even *nèamh* ‘sky, heaven’ alluding to its height (Drummond 2007, 138). Blaeu shows *Bin Novesh*, *Glen-Nevish* and *Avon Nevish* (1654).

G *sròn* ‘nose, promontory’ is one of a number of words for the human body that has come to be used for parts of the landscape. The OS Name Book describes the feature as ‘This name is given to a projection on Cow Hill at the mouth of Glen Nevis. Meaning ‘The Snout of Nevis.’ (OS1/17/36/55).

96. FORT WILLIAM/AN GEARASDAN

Inverlocha 1472 RMS ii, no. 2281

Gordounsburch 1618 RMS vii no. 1951

Achintoir 1654 Blaeu

garrison of *Fort William* 1690 NRS GD26/9/109

Fort William c.1750 Roy

Maryburgh 1752 Taylor 1996, 67

Fort William 1875 OS 6 inch 1st edn

An Gearasdan 1898 MacBain [1922, 48]

SSE fort + pn William/ G *an* + G *gearastan*

The fort, the remains of which are near the railway station, was named after William II of Scotland, more popularly known as William of Orange. However, a fort had existed on the site since Cromwellian times in the mid seventeenth century. The fort was repaired and re-occupied during the Jacobite period. The locals, however, seem to have always called it *An Gearasdan* ‘the garrison’. The poet Iain Lom, born roughly around the time the Cromwellian structure was built, called it *gearasdan fuar* ‘cold garrison’ in his poem *Oran air latha Raon Ruairidh*, so we know the word *gearasdan* is contemporary with either the Cromwellian fort or the later rebuilt Williamite one. In 1799, the fort is called *Gearasdan lonmhuir Lochaidh* ‘garrison of Inver Lochy’ in *Oran air blar na Tolainde am bliadhna* (Mac an Tuairneir, P., 1813, 38, 142).⁶

An Gearasdan is a well-established form. The form should technically be *An Gearastan*, but circumstances beyond orthographic consistency came to bear on this name (<https://www.ainmean-aite.scot/placename/fort-william/>).

The name of the town of Fort William, however, must be one of the most unstable place-names in Britain! Over the centuries the area has variously been called Inverlochy, where a castle was built in the thirteenth century and was the site of two battles, one in 1431 and the other in 1645; Auchintorebeg, ‘field of the dung’; Maryburgh, after William of Orange’s wife, Queen Mary; and Gordounsburch, named after the Duke of Gordon, who changed the name because he objected to King William; and Duncansburgh, after Sir Duncan Cameron, who succeeded the Gordons (MacBain 1922, 48).

For the archaeology of the fort see <https://canmore.org.uk/site/23715/fort-william-fort-and-governors-house>.

⁶ My thanks to Dr Aonghas MacCoinnich and Dr Sheila Kidd for their help with the word *gearasdan*.

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