

PLACE NAMES.

MUCH interest is now being taken in Place Names and a volume regarded everywhere as an example of how such work should be done is *The Place Names of Ross and Comarty*, by Dr W. J. Watson, Rector of the Royal High School of Edinburgh. By his kind permission the following list of the derivations and meanings of the more common of those in Easter Ross is given here.

PARISH OF KINCARDINE.

KINCARDINE.—Gaelic, Cinn-chàrdain “cinn” from “Cean” head ; càrdain of Pictish origin. The word appears in Welsh as “cardden” a wood, when Kincardine means Woodhead or Wood-end. The name originally applied only to the immediate neighbourhood of the church whence it extended to the district round by the church, *i.e.* the parish.

CARRON.—There are two rivers Carron in Ross and some half dozen elsewhere in Scotland all characterised by roughness of channel. The root is Kars, rough.

ALT EITEACHAN.—Probably from éiteach, root of burnt heather. Hence “an fhéil éiteachan,” the Kincardine market. The old established winter market still held at Ardgay, is said to owe its name to a certain quartz stone (clach éiteag) the old custom being that the market was held wherever this stone happened to be at the time. The stone was sometimes shifted west by the Assynt men, and east by the men of Ross, but finally it was built into the wall of the present Balnagown Arms Hotel at Ardgay, and so the market has ever since been held here.

ARDGAY.—G., Ard gaoith, windy point. A deed, granted in 1686 to erect it into a burgh of Barony was never carried into effect.

GLEDFIELD.—This is a translation of Gaelic leth-chlamhaig, half (*i.e.* half strath) of the buzzard.

AMAT.—G., Amait from Norse á-mót, river-meet, confluence, to wit, of the Carron and the Blackwater rivers.

SALLACHY.—On record as pasture land of the Abbey of Fearn ; from Saileach, the old form of “Seileach,” willow.

INVERCARRON.—Estuary of the Carron.

LANGWELL.—Norse, Lang völlr, long field.

CROICK.—G., a’ chròic. It may be a locative of cròc, an antler, thus meaning “a branching glen or side glen” which suits the locality.

OYKELL has been identified with Ptolemy’s Ripa Alta. It must also be identified with the Norse Ekkjals-bakki, *i.e.* Oykell Bank.

LAMENTATION HILL.—G., Creag a’ chóinneachan, rock of the mossy place. The name was given long before the battle of 1650.

CULRAIN of old Carbisdale. The modern name is said to have been imported from Coleraine in Ireland.

EDDERTON.

EDDERTON.—The traditional explanation is eadar dùn, between forts.

CARRIEBLAIR.—G., blàr a' charaidh, caraidh means "The Grave plot." A stone here is said to mark the grave of Carius.

BALBLAIR.—G., baile a' bhlaìr, plain town or "stead."

STRUIE.—G., an t-srùidh. Srùidh appears to be best regarded as a contracted form of sruth-aidh, an extension of the root of sruth, stream.

TAIN.

TAIN.—Tene (1227), Thane 1483. It is difficult to offer a satisfactory etymology.

TARLOGIE.—Talorg, was a Pictish proper name from tal, brow, and the root arg, white.

THE FENDOM.—G., Na fànaibh from fàn a level place. The English form is a curious corruption.

MORANGIE.—G., Móiristidh, from mór-innse, with developed t. The whole means big haugh.

ALDIE.—G., alltaidh, burn place from alt.

GLASTULLICH.—Green hillock.

MORRICH MORE.—G., a' mhoraich mhór, a large, low lying sandy flat by the sea shore.

FEARN.

FEARN from Fèarna, alder. As explained in the history the monastery was founded at Fearn in Edderton and was translated to this place about 1225. It was first called New Fearn then simply Fearn. The parish of Fearn was until 1628 included in the parish of Tarbat.

CADBOLL.—Norse Katta-ból, cat stead. It appears that the rocks facing the Moray Firth were of old a haunt of wild cats.

CADBOLL MOUNT.—The curious story of Cadboll Mount is told by Bishop Forbes. The Laird of Cadboll was on bad terms with his cousin Macleod of Geanies, and built the "mount" to look down on his lands. Geanies replied by planting a belt of trees which in time shut out the view.

BALINTORE.—G., Bail' an todhair, bleaching town. The name goes back to the time when flax was cultivated in the north.

PITKERRIE.—The local derivation is céir, wax: the place was covered with whins from which the bees made wax.

RHYNIE.—G. ràthan, from ràth, circular enclosure or fort.

LOCHEYE.—G., Loch na h-uidhe. "Uidh" here means "slow running water between two lochs."

LOCHSLIN.—G., Lochslinn from slinn a weaver's sleye.

BALNAGORE.—Baile nan gobhar, Goat's town.

TARBAT.

TARBAT.—G., Tairbeart, a crossing, portage, isthmus.

WILKHAVEN.—A translation of Port nam faochag.

PORTMAHOMACK.—G., Port ma Cholmaig. St Colman's port. Colman's well is near the library.

TARREL.—Probably "tar" across, and "ail" rock, over cliff.

GEANIES.—The modern form is an English plural, Gàan is probably a Gaelic plural of Norse "gja," a charm, from the precipitous rocks on the coast.

NIGG.

NIGG.—G., 'n eig, the notch, from the V-shaped gully on the edge of which the parish church stands.

SHANDWICK.—G., seannduaig from Norse sand vík, sand bay.

RARICHIE.—G., Rath riachaidh, fort of scratching (as by brambles), The local derivation is as follows—The Picts lived at Cadha 'n ruigh, and in spring they would say "tiugamaid 'bhàn 'dheanamh rotha riachagan," "Let us go down to make rows of scratches" (to sow seed in).

PITCALNIE.—G., Baile chainidh; "1" silent in English; an obscure name.

PITCULZEAN.—Revived as the name of Westfield; G., Bail' a' choillean, town of the little wood.

CASTLECRAIG.—Here are the new Admiralty Forts and here may yet be traced the lines of the castle built by William the Lion in 1178. Its name was Dún Sgàth, fort of dread, now English Dunskaith.

ANKERVILLE.—Formerly Little Kindeace. It was bought in 1721 by Alexander Ross, late merchant at Cracow, who changed the name.

CULLISSE.—G., Cùl an lios, nook of the lios; Lios, now garden, formerly meant an enclosure or fort with an earthen wall.

TOBAR NA H-IU.—A well near Fairy Hill, a Celtic hill fort at Easter Rarichie. Hard by this well once stood a tree whose branches bent over the water, and while the tree stood the well cured "white swelling." The tree was cut and the well struck. The following is a translation of a Gaelic rhyme which shows the sort of feeling with which such wells were regarded.

" Well of the Yew, Well of the Yew!
To thee it is that honour is due;
A bed in hell is prepared for him
Who cut the tree about thine ears."

LOGIE EASTER.

LOGIE.—G., Lagaidh, "lag" a hollow, with aidh, ending. The name is derived from the little hollow in which the old church at Marybank stands.

CALROSSIE : or Glossery, which is glasaraidh, green place or green shieling.

ARABELLA.—Formerly “the Bog.” It was reclaimed in the earlier half of the nineteenth century by Hugh Rose of Calrossie, who named it after his wife, Arabella Phipps, “the beautiful.”

GLASTULLICH.—Glas, green ; tulaich, hillock.

PITMADUTHY.—G., Pit mhic Dhuibh, better. Macduff’s stead.

SCOTSBURN.—The name has now shifted from the burn to the farm of Scotsburn. There are local traditions of a battle fought here by the Scots supported by cairns in Scotsburn Wood and by the name Lochan a’ Chlaidheimh, sword loch.

POLL A’ BHATHAIDH.—Drowning pool near the Free Church Manse. This was the drowning pool of the barony of Nigg. The hanging hill is near it—G., Cnoc na croiche. Further south near the railway is Cnoc a’ mhoid, the moot hill.

KILMUIR EASTER.

KILMUIR.—G., Cill-Mhoire, Mary’s Church.

MILNTOWN.—G., Baile mhuilinn, with its mills.

NEW TARBAT.—Socalled by the Cromartie family from Tarbat, where their former seat was.

KILDARY.—G., Caoldaraidh, from caol, narrow. The “narrow place” is the river gorge between Kildary farm and the parish of Logie.

BALNAGOWN.—Smiths’ town. The modern Gaelic is as the English form. Near the castle is a steep old bridge over the river, still in good order, known as “The King’s Bridge,” and traditionally associated with James IV. It leads to the King’s causeway, the old road to Tain.

RHIVES.—G., Na Ruigheannan, “ruigh” land sloping up to a hill or ridges.

DELNY.—G., Deilgnidh, “place of prickles.” Here stood a castle of the Earls of Ross.

POLLO.—G., Am Pollan, diminutive of pool.

BALINTRAID.—“Baile” and “traigh,” sea shore.

KINDEACE.—G., Cinn déis, has been transferred from Nigg.

KINRIVE.—G., “ceann,” head, and “ruigh,” ridgy slope.

ROSSKEEN.

ROSSKEEN.—G., Ros-cuibhne, “ros” headland, referring to the promontory on which Invergordon stands. The latter part of the word means “deer horn,” the reference being to the shape of the Cape.

In a field by the roadside, near the Parish Church, is Clach a’ Mhèirlich, the thief’s stone.

SALTBURN.—G., Alltan an t-saluinn. Explained from the tradition that cargoes of salt were hid here in the times when there was a duty payable on that article.

INVERBRECKIE.—The name is now applied to the farm lying north of Invergordon, but formerly included the site of the town. The “inver” implies a stream which must have been called the “Breakie,” and is probably that which enters the firth near Rosskeen church.

INVERGORDON.—See description of the town.

NEWMORE.—G., An neimh' mhór, the great sanctuary.

CULCAIRN.—G., Cul-chàirn, back of the cairn, *i.e.*, Carn na croiche, the hanging cairn in the hill behind it.

ARDROSS.—“Ard-rois,” height of Ross.

STRATHRUSDALE.—G., srath-rúsdail, Norse “hruts-dalr,” ram's dale, with G., srath, prefixed. “Hrutr” was common as a personal name, and is probably so here: “Hrut's Dale.” The name is interesting, and suggestive as to the extent and the character of the Norse occupation of Easter Ross.

EASTER ROSS

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TAIN :

H. T. MACPHERSON

1914.

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