

## Some Place-names in and around the Fleet Valley

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#### Daffin

Daffin is a farm at the head of the Cleugh of Doon above Carsluith. There is a Daffin Tree marked on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map at Killochy in Balmaclellan parish, and Daffin Hill in this location on current OS maps, across the Dee from Kenmure Castle; Castle Daffin is a hill in Parton parish and a house by Auchencairn.

This is likely to be Gaelic *\*Dà pheiginn* ‘two pennylands’. *Peighinn* is ‘a penny’, but in place-names it refers to a unit of land, based on yield rather than area. It probably originated in the Gaelic-Norse context of Argyll and the southern Hebrides, and was introduced into the south-west by the Gall-Ghàidheil (see Ardwell above). It occurs in place-names in Galloway and, especially, Carrick as ‘Pin-’ as first element, ‘-fin’ with ‘softened ‘ph’ after a numeral or other pre-positioned adjective.

Originally a pennyland was a relatively small division of a *davoch* (*dabhach*, see Cullendoch above), but in the south-west places whose names contain this element appear in mediaeval records as holdings of relatively substantial landowners, comprising good extents of pasture, meadow and woodland as well as the arable core, and yielding much higher taxes than the pennylands further north. Indeed, *peighinn* may have come to be used more generally in the region for a fairly substantial estate without implying a specific valuation. *\*Dà pheiginn* ‘two pennylands’ would, then, have been a large and productive landholding.

However, a Scots origin is also possible, or if the origin was Gaelic, reinterpretation by Scots speakers is possible: *daffin* or *daffen* is a Scots word for ‘daffodil’, but as a verb, *daffin(g)* is ‘playing daft, larking about’. Mactaggart (*Scottish Gallovidian Encyclopaedia*) in his typically unbridled fashion says *daffin* is ‘toying with women under night’, while *Chambers Scots Dictionary* (aka *The Scottish Dialect Dictionary*) gives *daffing-green* ‘a village green, where games are played or young people meet to “daff”’. Daffodils or houghmagandie, either would be an enjoyable understanding of this name!

#### Dalavan Bay

Dalavan Burn and Dalavan Bay are marked on the 1st edition OS map. They were probably named from a farm, or at least a piece of land, on the flattish ground beside the bay, subsequently incorporated in the Cardoness estate. The bay is known locally as Laundry Bay: the Laundry Cottage of the Cardoness Estate sits beside the bay.

‘Dal-’ generally reflects the common Gaelic place-name element *dail*, which corresponds pretty closely in meaning with Scots *haugh*, a flat and fertile piece of land, a meadow or grazing field, typically – though not always – by a river. In that sense, early Gaelic *\*dail-abhann* (modern *-aibhne*) ‘river-haugh’ may seem tautologous, but Dalavan on the Fleet estuary is probably so-called in distinction from *dailean* by other, lesser, streams. The house Dalavan across the estuary in Cally Wood must have a transferred name, from that of the Bay, it is not by any stretch of imagination on a riverside haugh.

The linguistic background to *dail* is a little complicated: a Brittonic word, *\*dāl*, is the ancestor of modern Welsh *dôl*; it is conceivable that Dalavan had a Brittonic origin as *\*dāl-avon* (modern Welsh *\*Dôlafon*: although *dôl* is very common in Welsh place-names, this combination does not seem to be recorded). However, the word was adopted by speakers of early Gaelic in Scotland as *dal* (modern *dail*). An Old Norse *dal*, with a similar meaning, may have contributed to its frequency in place-names in Galloway, and to the equivalent, *dayll*, in several names on the Isle of Man. *Dal* fell together with the Gaelic version of another Norse word (ultimately related to *\*dāl*), *dalr* ‘dale’, but that only occurs as the second element in Gaelicised Scandinavian names: where it comes in first position, it is *dal* ‘haugh’ functioning as a fully-Gaelic word.

There was also an Old Irish word, *dál*, meaning ‘territory, portion of land’ (as in *Dal Riata*, *Dalriada*, the early kingdom of Gaelic-speaking Scots in what became Argyll); it is possible that this is ‘Dal-’ in some places such as Dalry (if that is *\*Dál-rìgh* ‘king’s portion’, though it could be *\*Dal-fhraoich* ‘heather haugh’), but in most of the many cases in Galloway, including Dalavan, it is pretty certainly a *haugh*.

## Dally Lane Holm

Dally is the name of a farm in Kirkcolm parish on the North Rinns, there was Clamdally near Rascarrell Bay in Rerrick, Drumdally is a hill in Stoneykirk, and Drumdellie a ridge above Earlston in Dalry. Maxwell associated all these with Dailly, a house now demolished near Springholm in Urr parish, and the villages of Dailly and Old Dailly in Carrick, deriving them all from Gaelic *dealg* 'thorn, prickle'; *dealgach* 'thorny place' would also be possible, and the meaning can also be 'a point, pointed' – Aberdalgie in Perthshire may get its name from an angular confluence.

*Lane* in Galloway is generally 'a shallow, slow-flowing stream', natural or man-made, typically through coastal or upland marsh. The Scots word is apparently from early Gaelic *léna* (modern *lèan*), though that refers more generally to a swampy plain or damp meadow rather than a watercourse. It is common in the Stewartry, there are at least thirty 'Lanes' of this kind (see Grobdale, Lane Burn and Loch Lane below).

*Holm*, as explained under Barholm above, usually refers to a piece of flat, low-lying ground by a river or in marshland, and is more or less synonymous with *haugh* and *dail*.

So, 'a piece of flat ground by a river or in marshland, with a shallow, slow stream that was called in Gaelic \**Dealg* or \**Dealgach*'? But we hit a problem: Dally Lane Holm is not flat, not in marshland or close to the Fleet, nor is there any *lane* or any possibility that there could have been: it is a narrow, quite steep-sided, though arguably 'pointed', ridge in the upper part of Cally Park, running south-west from Whillan Hill towards Belvedere Hill, overlooking the walled Cally Garden.

Even allowing for changes in sea-level, landscape engineering and tree plantation, the name simply does not match the location. Has it been transferred, like Dalavan nearby, from some location lower down, nearer the estuary? Is it a hopelessly disguised re-working of some earlier Gaelic name? Or could it have been (I speculate) a fanciful creation in which 'holm' was used very loosely as a supposed Scotticism for grassland, and 'lane' has its English sense, a narrow road or track, maybe the one from High Lodge to the Temple, where young folk from Cally were wont to 'dally'?

## Dalmalin

Barlay Burn (see Barlay) was also sometimes referred to as Dalmalin Burn, and Dalmalin Lodge was probably the earlier farmhouse at Low Barlay. The name would have been Gaelic *dail muileinn* 'mill haugh', implying that an early mill stood on level ground by the burn. For discussion of *dail*, see under Dalavan above.

## Damhead

A house in Anwoth parish listed in the 1851 Census and appearing on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map near the dam which once served the lint mill and the waulk mill. By 1881, the name was no longer in use, the house on or near the site was then, and is now, named Skyreburn.

## Darncree

The syllable 'Darn-' occurs in several names in Galloway: examples include Darnabel and Darnaw in Minigaff, Darngarroch in both Balmaghie and Kirkpatrick Durham, Darnshaw in Carsphairn, Darnagee and Darnimow In New Luce. Some of these are certainly burn-names, and Maxwell takes the form to be from Gaelic \**dobhar na* 'water of the' followed by a feminine noun. However, Darnaw, and Darngarroch in Kirkpatrick Durham, seem to be primarily hill-names, Darngarroch in Balmaghie is on the Derrygown Burn (see below), and Darncree appears on OS maps as an undefined location to the south-west of the Craigs of Burnfoot, though the name might be that of the anonymous wee burn there, rising from two sources on the hillside, flowing into the Little Water of Fleet just upstream of the railway.

'Dar-' quite frequently reflects early Gaelic *dair* 'oak-tree' (modern *darach*, see Darow Burn below) or *daire* 'oak-wood' (modern *doire*, see Derrygown below), and on the face of it either of these would seem at least as likely as *dobhar*. Michael Ansell has studied *doire* names in Galloway and gives this helpful information: 'these seem to represent small 'scroggy' woods on marginal land where they survived against the odds, in contrast with more valuable *coille* woods such as Killygowan. One interesting point is that in

the Wigtownshire moors there are a lot of these names, and they often apply to unwooded drumlins now, with the implication that these drumlins were wooded islands in the sea of bog. Often the wood survives in the fence line around the drumlin (willow/birch in the main).’ Judging by the 6” map, the locality identified as Darncree is dotted with several small humps which could well be drumlins, so Mr. Ansell’s observation might indeed be relevant here.

‘Dar-’ can also replace *dail* ‘haugh, meadow’ (see Dalavan Bay above), that too could suit the lower part of the burn-side.

As to the second element, it looks the same as the river-name Cree, Gaelic *crioch* ‘boundary’. Darncree does not seem to be on any boundary that I can find, but *crioch* can simply refer to the end, the notional limit, of some piece of land, not necessarily a formally recognised border.

Maxwell’s alternative suggestion in *The Topography of Galloway*, *\*na craebh* (modern *craoibhe*) ‘of the tree’ (not, pace Maxwell, ‘trees’) is also possible, but in that the generic can hardly be *dair* or *doire*, ‘oak or oakwood of the tree’ would make little sense. In earlier Gaelic, *craeb* meant ‘branch’, so *\*dobur na craeb* might have referred to the twin-branched burn.

## Darngarroch

Darngarroch (*Darngerroche* in 17<sup>th</sup> century records, thanks to Alistair Livingston for this information) is marked as a house beside the Gatehouse to Laurieston road on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map, though it is now a ruin. It lies just inside Balmaghie parish, Darngarroch bridge crosses the Derrygown Burn which is the boundary with Girthon. As we have seen (under Darncree above), ‘Darn-’ might be from Gaelic *\*dobhar na* ‘water of the’ followed by a feminine noun: as Derrygown appears to be primarily a woodland or settlement name, Darngarroch might have been an earlier name for the burn. Alternatively, as in Darncree, it could have been formed with early Gaelic *dair* ‘oak-tree’ (modern *darach*, see Darow Burn below) or *daire* (modern *doire*) ‘oak-wood’, though Derrygown probably has the latter element, it would be strange for two different reflexes of the same Gaelic word to be found so close together. And again, it could have originally been *dail* ‘haugh, meadow’, fairly appropriate to the location: a shift from *\*dail na-* to *darn-* would be phonetically simple.

‘-garroch’ is likewise fairly obscure. *Geàrr* in Gaelic is ‘short’, *gearrach* a short thing or person; it could be a burn-name, the Derrygown Burn isn’t conspicuously short compared with its neighbours, though there are very small channels flowing from springs by Darngarroch.

Another interesting possibility is *geamhrach*, from *geamhradh* ‘winter’, Dwelly gives this as ‘winter park’, i.e. a place where overwintering livestock were fed or (more likely here, I think) winter feed was collected. Noting that one of the channels by Darngarroch disappears underground for part of its course, a very tentative suggestion might be that this was a ‘winter-burn’, tending to dry up in summer, and *geamhrach* had that meaning here.

A further possibility takes into account the nasal mutation (eclipsis) which is a regular feature of Irish Gaelic, though less extensive in Scottish. It is evidenced in Galloway place-names, Bengairn being a notable example, and in Darngarroch, *\*na gCaorach* (pronounced roughly ‘na-geurach’) ‘of the sheep’ is a possibility (thanks to Michael Ansell for this suggestion).

Darngarroch is also the name of a hill, as well as a pair of settlements on the Barr Burn, near Corsock in Kirkpatrick Durham parish; *Darngheyrach* on Blaeu’s map here could reflect *gearrach*, *geamhrach* or *gCaorach*, though the two Darngarrochs may not necessarily have had the same origin.

## Darrow Burn

Darrow Burn flows south from Craigwhinnie to join the Benmeal Burn, which feeds The Big Water of Fleet near Cullendoch. On the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map, an enclosure is shown around Darow Faults (sheepfolds) by the confluence with the Benmeal Burn, overlooked by Darow Knowes (hillocks) to the south; both are spelt Darow on OS maps though the Burn is Darrow. The area is now much affected by forestry works.

Maxwell interprets this burn-name as Gaelic *Dúr dubh* (modern *\*Dobhar dubh*) ‘black water’. He regularly uses *dúr* to represent the early Gaelic/ Middle Irish word, as he says, ‘spelt *dobur*’, but this is misleading: *dobur* was pronounced ‘dovur’, the weakening to ‘dowur’ and eventual elision of the middle consonant were later developments, *dobhar* in Scottish and Ulster Gaelic is still disyllabic, ‘do-ur’, ‘do-ar’. It is still possible that ‘Dar-’ in this and several other names in Galloway may reflect *dobur*, but much less likely than Maxwell assumed.

*Dubh* is often used to describe peaty water, but this too seems an improbable explanation for Darow, the ‘d’ would not simply have vanished. *Darach* as an adjective means ‘abounding in oaks’, if we assume an earlier Gaelic name, *\*Allt darach* would be ‘oak- burn’. Darow could be a Scots form of *darach*, assuming a weakened and ultimately lost final consonant as in Irish Gaelic. Forms preserving the final consonant are found in Ardarroch overlooking the Water of Ken in Dalry parish, and in Darroch in Stoneykirk, Wigtownshire, but on the other hand Darrou appears on current OS maps (though not on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition) as the name of the secondary summit south of Little Millyea overlooking the Black Water of Dee in Kells parish. Examples in Ulster include Aghadarragh Co. Tyrone, Ardarragh and Deragh, both in Co. Down and Eshnadarragh Co. Fermanagh; Manx examples include Darrag in Rushen, Cronk Darragh in Arbory and Glen Darragh in Marown; variation in anglicised forms between an audible, aspirated final consonant and its elision seems evident in both Ulster and Mann, as well as in Galloway.

However, if Maxwell’s suggestion implies a pronunciation ending ‘-oo’, it is possible that this is a Brittonic burn-name, early Celtic *\*daru* (modern Welsh *derw*) being a collective noun for ‘oak trees’. Daer Water in Lanarkshire (source of the courtesy title of the heirs to the Earldom of Selkirk) may be from this or a related form, as may Afon Dâr at Aberdare in Glamorgan, south Wales. However, these ‘oak’ words in river-names are a complicated and controversial matter: see also Darncree and Darngarroch above, Derrygown below.

Another possible Brittonic etymology (suggested by John Wilkinson) would be *\*Daearou* (modern Welsh *daearau*), plural of *daear*, which has a broad range of senses from ‘the Earth’ via ‘land, country’ through to ‘territory, taxable land’ (and later ‘(fox’s) earth, lair’ ). *Daear* has been proposed as an alternative origin for the Afon Dâr, it occurs as a noun (spelt *daer*) in an early mediaeval Welsh charter, and in a few Welsh place-names, though not in the plural, and (apart maybe from Afon Dâr) not in watercourse names. The plural could imply a boundary, though it is unlikely that the Darow Burn, a relatively minor stream compared to the Big Water of Fleet nearby, was a significant demarcation.

## Dee

The name of the main river within the Stewartry is unquestionably the oldest and earliest-recorded place-name in Kirkcudbrightshire. In Ptolemy’s *Geography*, written in the early second century but using records from the Roman military campaigns in northern Britain in the late first century, our Dee, as well as that in Aberdeenshire and the longest one, crossing the Welsh border, are recorded as *Dēōia*, representing *Deva* in Latin, and *Dēwā* in early Brittonic.

*Dēwā* is a feminine form from the basic Indo-European word for ‘a god’, etymologically associated with brightness, light, the sky and the day. While *\*Diēus* was probably an Indo-European sky-god, in the Celtic languages *\*dēwos* was a common noun, ‘a god’, not the name of a deity until it was adopted as such with the coming of Christianity, doubtless following Christian use of Latin *Deus*.

*\*Dēwā* ‘goddess’, as well as occurring in the names of three major rivers in Britain, is seen in related forms in river-names or derived settlement-names in Wales (Afon Dwyfawr and Dwyfach, both in Gwynedd), Ireland, Gaul and Spain. As Professor Isaac has pointed out, the use of this word in naming rivers is ‘a diagnostically Celtic cultural phenomenon’. The river could have been given this name at any time after early Celtic had been introduced to these parts; the date for that can never be known with any certainty, neither archaeological evidence nor DNA can tell us what language prehistoric people spoke, but we can safely assume it is a name dating back well into the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC.



## Dergall

Dergall Bridge crosses the Englishman's Burn on Glenquicken Moor just south of the Old Military Road heading west of the Corse of Slakes, on a moorland track over to Cambret and Carsluith. As with Darow Burn (above), Maxwell takes the first element to be *dobur*, which he modifies to *dúr*, but the same reservations apply. *Daire* (modern *doire*), 'an oak-wood', or, more likely here, 'a managed grove or copse, not necessarily of oak' is an alternative possibility, see Darngarroch above and Derrygown below.

For the second element, Maxwell proposes *gall* in the sense of 'standing stones', and indeed there is a fine circle of alternating angled and curved boulders close by, with a standing stone in the centre, and another (now in woodland) to the north across the Military Road; there are traces, or at least records, of two or three similar circles within 2 kilometres. *Gall* may also mean 'strangers, foreigners' (see Ardwall above), and Englishman's Burn is nearby, though this is one case where the rather rare (and maybe unrelated) word for standing stones could be evidenced.

## Derrygown

A 17th cent record lists *Derrygowan* as a habitation (thanks to Alistair Livingston for this information); John Ainslie's 1797 map shows Derrygown as a settlement on the Girthon side of the burn which marks boundary between Girthon and Balmaghie parishes. On Thomson's map, 1821, it likewise appears as a settlement, on the by then improved Gatehouse to Laurieston road, but no trace of it survives today.

This stretch of the boundary stream appears to be treated as the upper reach of Grobdale Lane on the earlier maps, but is marked as Derrygown Burn on the 1st edition OS map, while the bridge is named from Darngarroch (which might preserve an earlier name for the burn, see above); the waterfall just above Darngarroch Bridge is marked as Derrygown Lin.

'Derry' is undoubtedly early Gaelic *daire* (modern *doire*), 'an oak-wood', 'a managed grove or copse (not necessarily of oak)'. In Girthon parish we have Knock Derry and Moss Derry below the White Top of Culreoch, Cairnderry is near Glentrool Village in Minigaff, Derry in Mochrum and The Derrys in Peninghame, both Wigtownshire. In Ulster, the most famous is of course Derry City, *Doire Cholm Cille* (Columcille's, i.e. St Columba's, oak-wood), later called Londonderry, but there are numerous others as single element names or compounds. On the Isle of Man it seems less ubiquitous, though there is (The) Derry, and Arderry nearby, in Lezayre. In Scotland outwith Galloway, *daire*- is generally 'Dar-': the monastic site of Holywood in Nithsdale was *Dercongal*, *Darcungal*, \**Doire Chongail* after either Irish Saint Comgall of Bangor Co. Down, or the British Saint Convall of Inchinnan, Renfrewshire (see Kirkconnel, below); other examples include Darnaconnar in Barhill and Darnconner in Auchinleck, both Ayrshire, and Darngavel in Erskine Renfrewshire. 'Derry' as the reflex of *daire* is an example of the toponymic similarity between Galloway and Ulster.

For the second element, -gow(an)', there are two candidates with equally plausible claims. *Gamhann* would be 'of calves' (in various dialects used more specifically for young bullocks or heifers of particular ages and stages of growth); the modern genitive plural (Scottish and Irish) is *gamhna*, as in Lough Gowna in Co. Cavan and Pitgaveny in Aberdeenshire, but an earlier, Middle Irish, form is reflected in Clonygowan in Co. Ossory. An oak coppice might well have been used for grazing newly-weaned young cattle.

Alternatively, *gobhann* would be 'of smiths': this is likely to be the second element in the two Balgowns in Wigtownshire (in Kirkcolm and Kirkmaiden), and the three Ballagawnes on the Isle of Man (in Arbory, Lonan and Michael). Blacksmiths needed a reliable supply of firewood, as well as wood for tool handles, a copse, even in a rather marginal location like this, would have been a business asset.

## Din Hill

On Irelandton Moor, overlooking the ancient east – west route (followed by drovers and by the earlier of the Military Roads), and just east of the Slack Burn so in Twynholm parish, Din Hill might preserve a Cumbric single element, *dīn* (modern Welsh *din*), though it could simply reflect local Scots pronunciation of the Gaelic cognate *dùn* (see Doon Hill below). Either way the meaning is normally given as 'fort', often, but not necessarily, a hill-fort, and it is not clear whether the primary sense was 'a defensive

enclosure' or 'a hill': 'a place of refuge' might come closest to the core sense; in any case, Gaelic *dùn* is used quite frequently of natural, unfortified hills, though admittedly usually more craggy than this one.

These considerations are relevant to our Din Hill, as it bears no trace of any fortifications. It is overlooked by considerably more substantial hills, though as a prominent but accessible point on an old routeway and a parish boundary, it might well have been an assembly point.

Another Din Hill, in New Abbey parish, is likewise a modest but quite prominent height on a north-easterly spur of Criffel, again overlooking an old road, but lacking any evidence of fortification.

## Disdow

The records of the name of the farmstead overlooking the road into Gatehouse of Fleet from the north-east are a cautionary tale for toponymists: *Durrisdow* in a document of 1512 (NRS GD10/39), *Duirsdow* in a charter of 1664 cited by Maxwell; on Blaeu's map of 1654 (based on Pont's lost one of c1590) it is *Dundow*, on Moll's (1732) *Dusdow*, Roy's (1755) *Dundou*, Ainslie (1797) *Disdow*, Thomson's (1821) *Disdow*; Valuation Rolls of 1819 show both *Disdow* and *Dendow*, and the (New) Statistical Account of 1845 has *Disdow*. When the Ordnance Surveyors came to collect information, they apparently found it necessary to make two visits, as a result of which a total of four informants, Samuel Sheriff, Samuel McLellan, William Heron and David Sturrock, all confirmed *Disdow*, yet *Dendow* was inserted as an alternative, and on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map, the hill is named *Dendow* or *Disdow Hill*. To cap it all, the farm is *Disdow* in the 1851 Census, but *Dirdow* in 1881, though that was surely a mistake, as was *Disallow* in the online transcription of the Name Book.

An added note in the Name Book gives the etymology, 'From the Gaelic *Dun dubh*, the black hill'; that's supported by *Dundow* on Blaeu's map. Gaelic *dùn*, primarily 'a fort', can refer to natural hills, not necessarily with forts, and this seems to be the case here. However, the parallel forms with *Durris-*, *Duir-*, *Dus-*, *Dis-* seem to be at least as early in attestation as those with *Dun-*, *Den-*, and have evidently persisted as the pronunciation up to the time of the Survey and to the present day.

The parallel with Durrisdeer in Dumfriesshire is certainly worth noticing. That's recorded as *Dorisdeir* 1320, *Doresder* 1329, *Doresdeer* 1335, *Dorysder* 1401, *Dorsder* 1426, *Durisder* 1430, *Dusdere* 1566, *Disdeer* 1577, *Dursdyir* 1660. While Disdow is not so dramatically located as Durisdeer, it's worth noting that the old road (shown on Roy's map, mis-labelled 'Old Military Road' on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map) from Trostrie across Irelandton Moor heads towards Disdow; by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and probably even by Pont's time, the route turned down WSW towards Drumwall to cross Galla Hill to Robbers' Gate, and so on down to Pont's *Gait Hous*, and thence to cross the Fleet at the Old Ford. But in earlier times, we can be reasonably sure that it would have continued by Disdow and over the ridge by Hillhead towards a crossing upstream, near the Standing Stone, directly opposite Goatend, the way into the gap through to Anwoth below Trusty's Hill: geophysical tests have shown a track leading to a crossing in this vicinity from the nearby Roman fortlet.

So, might the first element in both Disdow and Durisdeer be Gaelic *dorus* 'a door, an opening'? The Durisdeer Pass could be seen as a fairly wide, dramatic 'doorway' through the Lowther Hills, but it's less easy to see any feature that might be so-called at Disdow. The steadings lie in a small dip between the bulk of Disdow Hill and its small neighbour Disdow Drum; Disdow Burn flows from below the house through quite a steep cleuch, though the routeway would presumably have crossed it by the farm at the head of the glen. Compared with the open landscape of Irelandton Moor, I suppose the gap might have been seen as *dubh*, 'dark, shady'.

However, Johnson-Ferguson (*The Place-Names of Dumfriesshire* 1935, 33) suggests an alternative, Gaelic *dubhras*, which he translates as 'a black wood'; Dwelly has 'gloomy wood', and also, rather mysteriously, 'house, room, habitation' (marked as archaic a century ago). 'Gloomy wood' certainly describes the present-day forestry plantation, and the 1854 map shows Disdow Wood as thick, mixed woodland extending south to Galla Hill Wood and beyond to the Cally Woodlands (all now incuded in the Galloway Forest Park). Although the land around the farmstead had been cleared (rigs are shown on Roy's map, 1755), strips of woodland to the south and east are likely indications that, in earlier times, the

‘gloomy wood’ would have been yet more extensive. \**Dubhras-dubh* ‘dark gloomy wood’ might seem tautologous, but it emphasises the description – and, recalling the grim events on Galla Hill even as late as 1819 (hence Robbers’ Gate), it may have been a stretch of the road with a bad reputation.

## Ditches Pool

This pool in the River Fleet is marked on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map just upstream of the weir and sluice constructed to divert water to the lower mill on the busy industrial site above the bridge. Formerly, the Old Ford would have crossed the river close to this point, but the name Ditches Pool suggests it was largely a by-product of these river-management works.

## Doach Steps

See discussion under Cullendoch above.

## Domins

The name Domins is given to a piece of land between the Cleugh of Eglon Burn and the Carrouch Burn, headwaters of the Fleet, on the now forested north-west edge of the Cairnsmore of Fleet.

Gaelic *domhain* ‘deep’, as a noun can mean ‘a hollow’ or ‘a valley floor’, but neither seems especially appropriate to this location, and in any case this word is more likely to pass into Scots as *dovan* (e.g. Pardovan in West Lothian), in Ulster as *dowan* or *done* (e.g. Glendowan Co. Donegal, Stradone Co. Tyrone), and on the Isle of Man as *dowin* or *down* (e.g. The Dhowin in Andreas, though this may be *dùn*, see Doon below).

More likely would be a variant of Scots *demeyne* ‘demesne, domain, land held directly by its overlord’; *domin*, like Middle English *domyn*, is only recorded in that exact form as a verb, but in Scots legal Latin, *dominium* is used of a (direct or conditional) right over land, and a range of related words in Latin and Scots apply to land held by such a feudal right. This relatively remote corner of Girthon parish would hardly of been ‘demesne’ in the sense of Scots *mains* ‘home farm’, but could well have been a piece reserved for pasture, woodland and/or hunting by its feudal overlord.

## Doon Hill etc.

Doon is very common as a single element name in Galloway: there are 29 Doon Hills on OS maps covering Dumfries and Galloway; 19 of them are in the Stewartry, along with at least 15 other names like Doon, The Doon, Doon of N, etc. The implications of this ubiquity need consideration, but firstly let’s look at examples in and around the Fleet Valley.

Doon Hill in Anwoth parish is the south-eastern spur of Kenlum Hill. There is no trace or record of any man-made defences, though the natural platform at the top could have been taken for a fort. Doon Hill across the Fleet in Girthon parish, above Castramont Wood, is likewise wholly natural, though there are ancient cairns, and the nearby summit to the south-west, the Doon of Castramont, is considered by the RCHAMS to be a ‘fort (possible)’. Doon of Culreoch is the lower summit to the west of the White Top of Culreoch, again a natural hill with no sign of any fort.

There are no less than five Doons in Borgue parish: Auchenhay Doon and Doon Hill at Earlston are natural features, although Conchieton Doon (The Doon, an ancient monument, on OS maps), overlooking the junction with the ‘new’ A75, is a hill-fort; the Doon at Kirkandrews is an impressive promontory fort (Doon Wood and Hill to the north are probably named from it), and the Doon of Boreland is the hill on which Walter de Moreville erected the Moat (motte) of Borgue (there may have been an earlier hill-fort).

The Doon in Twynholm village is marked as an ancient monument on OS maps, it gives its name to Doon Hill and Wood, and to a street, a schoolhouse (on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map), and houses in the village. Doon Hill overlooking the A75 and the Schoolhouse at Ringford, in Tongland parish, has complex traces of fortifications. Other Doon Hills in Twynholm and Tongland parishes are natural hills.

Craig Hill Doon to the east of Laurieston, in Balmaghie parish, is marked as an ancient monument on OS maps. In Kirkmabreck parish, the Doon of Carsluith is well-defined fort, but Doon of Stroans, the higher

hill to the north-east, is a natural feature. In Minigaff parish, Murray's Monument stands on Big Doon, another natural feature; there are more Doons further west and north in this parish.

In Ulster, County Down is named from *An Dún*, Downpatrick, but the single-element names so common in Galloway are otherwise much less frequent, likewise on the Isle of Man (The Dhowin in Andreas is possibly a case, but see Domins above). Elsewhere in Scotland, as in Ireland and Mann, *dùn* is seldom without some qualifying element: Doune in Stirlingshire is exceptional, it may have been, like Downpatrick, and a hill near Oban and another in the Grampians, \**An Dùn*.

Maxwell simply declares that the numerous 'Doon' names in Galloway are from Gaelic *dùn*. Even in Gaelic, although the meaning is normally given as 'a fort', *dùn* is used sometimes of natural, unfortified hills (see Din Hill above). However, the evidence of so many single-element 'Doons', several without even the semblance of any fort, seems to me to suggest that *doon* came to be used by Scots speakers in our region, especially in the Stewartry, as a naming-term for a hill, especially a relatively small but prominent one.

If the widespread use of *doon* as a hill-name in our region was a Scots usage, Old English *dūn* (probably a cognate of *dùn*), which meant simply 'hill', could well have been an influence. Down(e) is the name of several places in the south of England, but not, so far as I can tell, in the north: as a single-element name the word (whether English or Gaelic) seems to occur elsewhere in Northumbrian territory only at Duns in Berwickshire.

*Dun* or *doon* is recorded in the Scottish National Dictionary from the eighteenth century onward, as a learned adoption of Gaelic *dùn* in archaeological contexts. However, the SND also lists *doon* as 'The goal or home in a game', a usage restricted to Galloway and Dumfriesshire, but associated with the more widespread *dool* (older Scots *dule*) used in the same sense. The editors associated *dool* with Middle English *dole* 'a boundary or landmark', and see it as derived from East Frisian *dole*, Middle Dutch *doel*, 'a heap of earth used as a target, a ditch used as a boundary-line'. There is a citation (among others) from Mactaggart's *Encyclopaedia*, but it is worth quoting him more fully: in an entry headed 'Dool-Hills or Doon-Hills' he says 'There are several hills in Galloway whereon have stood castles and other strengths of yore, termed Dool or *Doon-Hills*. These places of refuge seem to have existed prior to the Roman invasion, as the name Dool or Doon is never given to hills where there are remains of Roman camps; the labours of these hills then belong to the ancient British or some Scandinavian wanderers'. He follows this with an entry on 'Dools': 'A school game... the *dools* are places marked with stones, where the players always remain in safety... it is only when they leave these places of refuge that those *out of the doons* (sic) have any chance to gain the game... Now this game seems often to have played in reality by our ancestors about their *doon-hills*.'

It does seem, then, that this playground use of *doon* in Galloway has been influenced by *dool*, but nevertheless, it is evidence that *doon* was current in local Scots as a word for a hill, especially one seen as a place of refuge. As Mactaggart says, 'school games are by no means unworthy of observation, as many of them bespeak matters of the olden time'!

## Dow Craig

Dow Craig on Dow Craig Hill on the edge of Dow Craig Hill looks south across Glengap Burn to Glengap Farm. Dow, pronounced 'doo', and often spelt that way in Scots, is 'dove'. There would surely have been rock-doves here, though nowadays genetically diluted by racing pigeons 'hamecomin' to their ancestral crags.

Gaelic \**Creag dhubh* 'black crag' is less likely, Scots speakers hardly ever reversed the Celtic word order in the names they adopted.

## Dromore

Dromore farm, now the visitor centre, the Clints, and the Deep Nick of Dromore, lie west of the Big Water of Fleet in Kirkmabreck parish, though the railway station was in a projecting corner of Anwoth defined by the Pulwhanner Burn. The farm, Clints, Nick and station are all *Drumore* on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS



map, and in Maxwell's *Place-Names of Galloway*; the station was renamed Gatehouse in 1912. There is a Dromore in Borgue parish, a hill and a dwelling on the Gatehouse to Kirkcudbright road; in Kirkcudbright parish is Drummure (sic) Castle, an important hillfort, with Dromore farm beside (now in the military range), and another Dromore or Drummure in Lochrutton parish gives its name to a roundabout on the A75; these are all *Drummure* on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map, the settlement by the Fleet is *Drummoir* on Blaeu's map.

'Drum', Gaelic *druim*, 'back' of an animal, but in place-names 'a ridge', is very common in Galloway place-names, as ridges are in the landscape: Maxwell reckoned 'the word occurs in about 240 places', and I see at least 120 of those in the Stewartry.

*Mòr* is 'big, great': Drummure Fort near Kirkcudbright has a neighbouring Drumbeg, *\*Druim-beag*, 'little ridge'. Examples of *\*Druim-mòr* in Wigtownshire include Drummure in Kirkmaiden on the Rinns and Drummure Hill, along with another Drumbeg, in Kirkcowan; in Carrick there are Drummures in Colmonell and Crosshill.

However, the spelling 'Dromore' adopted in the Stewartry in the early twentieth century is more typical of Ireland, reflecting the Irish form *droim*, as in the town of Dromore in Co. Down, a townland and village in Co. Tyrone, and others further south: maybe the Irish influence came to the Fleet Valley with the railway line, the spelling there influencing that of the others (which remains variable in the Kirkcudbright and Lochrutton cases).

### Drumbow

Drumbow is the ridge overlooking the A75 from the south at Ringford. Maxwell is probably right to interpret this as *\*Druim-(nam)-bò* 'ridge of (the) cows', comparing Drumbo in Co. Down. Drumboy or Drumbuie Bridge, on the Abbey Burn above Dundrennan, is *buidhe* 'yellow', referring to a ridge that probably looked bleached in winter, cf. Craigenboy above: it is not impossible that Drumbow has the same origin, but the vowel of *bò* is distinct from the diphthong in *buidhe*, and this distinction is reflected in Scots forms like 'boy' and 'buie' versus 'bow'.

### Drumglass

Two ridges in parishes neighbouring our area are described as *glas* 'pale green': one is in Minigaff, in the woodland above Garlies Castle, the other in Balmaghie near Mossdale, between Woodhall Loch and the Water of Dee.

### Drumhastie

A ridge in Kirkandrews parish, overlooking Rattrra to the south-east. Hastie is a Scottish surname, earlier a Scots nickname for an impetuous fellow. A combination of Gaelic *druim* with a Scots personal name would have been by no means impossible in the bilingual context; Drumrobbin south-east of Twynholm village may be another, albeit with a more typically English name.

It is however possible that 'hastie' is a garbled version of an earlier Gaelic word. If the first element were 'ridge of the...', and the following noun were feminine and began with a vowel, the formation would be *\*Druim na h-*, or if it were masculine and began with *f-*, it would be *\*druim an* followed by 'softened' *fh*, e.g. *Druim an fhasdaidh* 'ridge of the hiring' pronounced 'drumanastie' or *\*Druim a'chaisteil* 'ridge for the castle' pronounced 'drumachashtil' (there is no castle, but the hill over looks Rattrra and Roberton Moat, see Rattrra below). But it is hard to find any plausible candidates, if there was a Gaelic predecessor, it is lost in the realms of guesswork.

### Drummuckloch

Otherwise *Drummuchloch*, *Drummuckloch* in 19<sup>th</sup> century census returns, a farm and woodland near the foot of the Skyreburn on the Cardoness estate, is straightforwardly *\*Druim muclaich* 'swine pasture', *muclach* being 'a herd of swine, a piggery'. Gaelic *muc* 'pig', more specifically 'sow', and various words formed from it, occur pretty frequently in place-names across Scotland, e.g. Clachanamuck in Kirkiner across Cree Bay, though *muclach* is not particularly common; however there is another Drummuckloch in Inch parish on the Rinns (with records dating back to 1426); in Ulster there is Mucklagh (otherwise

Fairview) in Co. Armagh, and *Largey ne mucklaugh* is on record in Lonan on the Isle of Man (Maxwell refers to a *Laegynamucklaugh*, which may be the same place).

## Drumruck

Drumruck sits beside the Little Water of Fleet upstream and across the water from Culreoch. It was *Drumrik* in 1509, *Drumruckalie* (perhaps ‘belonging to Cally’) in 1625, and on Blaeu’s map Drumruck as it is today; it was apparently a shooting lodge of the Murrays of Cally before 1742; a ford, stepping stones and a footbridge are marked here on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map.

It is not possible to be sure, but the Gaelic place-naming word most likely to underlie the *-rick/ -ruck* that qualifies *druim* ‘ridge’ would be *riabhach*, pronounced ‘reewuch’, compare Dromrewagh in Michael on the Isle of Man. It could have been contracted to ‘rùch’, then influenced by the Scots word for a stack of hay or oats, which varies between ‘rick’ and ‘ruck’ (Old English *hrēac*, Old Norse *hraukr*). *Riabhach* is a characterful Gaelic adjective implying a greyish-brown colour along with a brindled, streaked or grizzled appearance: the streaking here would have been mineral traces in the rock, copper was mined at Drumruck. It occurs in place-names in the Highlands like Braeriach in the Cairngorms and Cnoc Riabhach at St Fillans, and quite frequently in Ulster, as in Castlereagh in Co. Down.

The Rig of Drumruck preserves the Scots form of Old Norse *hryggr* ‘ridge’; the Scrogs of Drumruck has a Scots word derived from a Norse-influenced form, or a Norse cognate, of northern Middle English *scrogge* ‘bush, brushwood, a stunted or crooked tree’. Mactaggart gives ‘Scroggs: low bushes; *scroggie*, *scrunted*’, and the records in the DOST and SND indicate that this word was common in the dialects of Galloway, Ayrshire and across to the Borders. ‘The scrunted scrogs of the grizzled grey drum’ makes a splendid example of the rich blend of Gaelic and Scots in Fleet Valley place-names!

## Drumshangan

A ruin at the time of the first Ordnance Survey, but now a pair of cottages, Drumshangan also gives its name to a bridge on the Little Water of Fleet, an ‘isle’ (actually a field-name on the narrow tongue between the Little and Big Waters), a small loch (now drained), and a wood on the edge of the ridge to which *Druim*-presumably first referred. There is another Drumshangan in Inch, with Barnshangan in Stoneykirk and perhaps Barnshannon in New Luce, all three on the Rinns, Dalshangan in Carsphairn parish and Dalshangan Wood in Minigaff, both in the Stewartry, another Dalshangan in New Luce in Wigtownshire, and Auchenshangan near Ardrossan in Ayrshire.

Under Barnshangan, Maxwell offers three plausible etymologies for ‘-shangan’. *Sean dhùn* ‘old fort’ could admittedly in modern Scottish Gaelic be pronounced something like ‘shan-gun’, but the pronunciation of ‘dh’ with a ‘g’-like sound is a relatively recent development, doubtfully reflected in any Galloway place-names, something closer to ‘shandon’ found in Irish place-names would be more likely. Likewise *seannán* ‘old man’, perhaps as a personal name or nickname (and not actually recorded in Dwelly’s dictionary), would in the genitive singular form *seannáin* be more likely to survive as ‘-shannin’ or ‘-shannen’; the same would apply to the rare word for a kite, *seannan*.

So we are left with *seangan* ‘ant’ (in origin, literally, ‘little slender one’), the same in the genitive plural, ‘of ants’. Apart from the five or six examples in Galloway and one in Ayrshire, I don’t know of any others with this element in Scotland, though the SND records *shangan* as a Scots word for ‘ant’ as far away as John o’ Groats, while Florencecourt in Co. Fermanagh is known in Irish as Mullach na Seangán, and Knock Abbey in Co. Louth is Cnoc na Seangán. As to the abundance of ants in these places, I have no information: the rather gritty, sandy soil of Drumshangan Wood looks as if it might be favoured by the industrious insects, and Mr. Ansell tells me that Dalshangan in Carsphairn is infested with flying ants in the summer.

However Mactaggart offers quite a different possibility for *shangan*: ‘A cleft stick put on a dog’s tail; when a collie comes snuffing and snoaking about unco houses, this is put on his tail, and so he goes gowling hame.’ The origin of this word, never mind the deplorable practice, is pretty obscure, but it is attested elsewhere (it appears in verses by Burns) in the SND, more often as *shangie*, with the sense ‘a cleft stick’. Perhaps that could be a figurative name for the fork between the Big and Little Waters of

Fleet, in which case the word must have been current in Gaelic to be combined with *druim*. However, the SND editors are sceptical about any connection with *seangan*, even in its ‘slender one’ sense. It’s a bit of a mystery!

## Drumwall

There are references in documents relating to the Cally Estate of Drumwall being given as a gift when Robert Lennox of Cally married Barbara Kirkpatrick about 1600. At that time, it lay close to the old route from the east across Irelandton Moor, near its junction with the way from Twynholm. Sometimes Drumwalls, referring to the two settlements, Drumwall and Upper Drumwall.

Maxwell interprets this as *\*Druim ghall* ‘ridge of the strangers’, but as *druim* is masculine, the qualifying element should be *gall* (cf. Dergall above); it could be *\*Druim a’ghoill* ‘ridge of the stranger’, ‘softened’ *ghall* might possibly be replaced by ‘-wall’, see Ardwall above. A Cumbric formation, *\*drum-wal* (modern Welsh *trum-gwal*) ‘ridge with a wall’ is another possibility, though there is no trace of any pre-enclosure period wall here. Cumbric *\*wel(t)* (modern Welsh *gwellt*) ‘grassland, pasture’ is less likely here, though it may be present in Drumwall in Mochrum parish on the Machars.

## Dumbie’s Grave

This name appears on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map at a location just north-east of Darow Faults on the Benmeal Burn, now deep within FCS forestry. If this really was the burial-place of a person, he or she is likely to have been either a suicide or a social outcast.

*Dumbie* appears in the Scottish Dialect Dictionary, and as a variant of *dummy* in the DOST, *dummie* in SND, as a word for someone who lacked the power of speech (though Mactaggart in his *Encyclopaedia* adds sharply ‘or one so deaf that will not hear’). Deaf-mutes were regarded with fear and some awe, they were believed to possess the power of second sight, and some such superstition might explain the sad interment of ‘Dumbie’ in this remote spot.

## Dunharberry

Dunharberry is the secondary, south-eastern summit of the large hill topped by Benmeal, now surrounded by forestry. While ‘Dun-’ is in most of Scotland the commonest reflex of Gaelic *dùn*, in our area it stands out from free-standing ‘Doon’ (see Doon Hill etc. above) in what is certainly a Gaelic formation. Here again, *dùn* seems to refer to the natural hill, there is no trace of any fort.

Maxwell interprets the name as *\*Dùn-Chairbre*, involving the personal name Cairbre, not at all common in Scottish Gaelic nomenclature, but found very frequently in the legends and histories of early Ireland. At the head of the list stands the founder of the dynasty of Carbury in Co. Kildare; he was a son of Niall of the Nine Hostages, ancestor of the various branches of Uí Néill who dominated Ireland for many centuries, though Niall was himself the son of a captured British slave. Niall is credited with raids and conquests in many places furth of Ireland, including Galloway. Other Cairbres feature in the Ulster Cycle, including a King of Tara, Cairbre Nia Fer, who antagonised the irascible hero Cúchulainn, and was subsequently claimed as an ancestor of St. Columba of Iona.

Among several saints of this name, Cairbre of Coleraine is said (like Niall, and St Patrick) to have been captured as a slave in his boyhood, he was freed by the intervention of St. Ninian of Whithorn. Another legend names Cairpre (sic) as the father of St Finnian of Movilla above Newtownards in Co. Down; the same legend has Finnian visiting *Futerna*, an Irish form for Whithorn, as a young monk.

Whatever the real history behind these stories, they are reminders of the links between the ‘dark age’ chieftains and early churches in Ulster and Galloway, not to mention the prevalence of slave-raiding on the dark side of this network of interaction across the Irish Sea. Whether Dunharberry is a trace of some lost history or legend involving one of these Cairbres, or – perhaps more likely – a local person who bore that prestigious name, is impossible to say, but it is a tantalising hint.