Place-names in and around the Fleet Valley

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Tanniefad

Tanniefad is marked on the 1st edition OS map as a small house uphill above Low Creoch; the name only survives now in the Tanniefad Burn that flows down into the Fleet at Stroquhain's Pool. It is surely Gaelic *Tamhnach fada* 'distant cultivated spot', very appropriate to the location.

The Gaelic word *tamhnach* (in place-names often in the locative form *tamhnaich*, as was probably the case in Tanniefad) is an interesting example of a place-name element shared between Ulster and Galloway. It is used in Ulster for a small piece of arable land in an upland location that is otherwise unsuited for cultivation: examples include Tamnaghbane Co. Armagh, Tamney (otherwise Tawny), and Tawnalaghan Co. Donegal, Tonaghmore and Tonaghneeve (Saintfield) Co. Down, Tamnabrady and Tamnamore Co. Tyrone. It is less common in the rest of Ireland, and in Scotland is found most frequently in Galloway, but occurs in Ayrshire, in Argyll and Bute, in the north-east, and even in Caithness, although the word is not to be found in Scottish Gaelic dictionaries.

In the Stewartry, besides the three examples of *tamhnach* in our corner (see Tannymaas and *Tenniewee* below), there are three former small farms named Tannoch, one above New Abbey (with Tannoch Hill and Gill), one in Colvend (spelt *Tannock* on the 1st edition OS map and by Maxwell), and the third (with Tannoch Flow) in Kells overlooking the Black Water of Dee, the north-eastern boundary of Girthon; each of these has a Tannoch Burn flowing past the site; another Tannoch appears on OS maps as a location in Kells parish on a hill overlooking Glenlee Mains and Old Glenlee. Tannochbrae at Culdoach, across the Dee from Tongland, appears on modern OS maps, but one suspects it may be named from the fictitious town of that name in A. J. Cronin's novel 'Country Doctor', adapted for television as the well-loved series 'Dr. Finlay's Casebook'. In Wigtownshire, *Tannoch* in Penninghame is now lost; Tannylaggie (*Tynalagach* on Blaeu's map) and Tannyflux are in Kirkcowan; *Tannieraggie* in New Luce and *Tannieroach* in Old Luce, are both listed by Maxwell but now lost. In Ayrshire, Tunnocks (*Tannock* on Blaeu's map) is in Kilbirnie parish, on Bute there is Tawnich in North Bute, in Wesl Lothian, Tannock in Torphichen.

Tannymaas

'A cottage situated partly in Borgue and partly in Twynholm' was, according to Malcolm Harper's 'The Bards of Galloway' (1889) the birthplace in 1783 of William Nicholson, celebrated with some justice as *The* Galloway Bard. . It occupies a formerly cultivated area a short distance from the later route of the Old Military Road, between Twynholm and Gatehouse, though the cottage is now apparently unoccupied and is enclosed by a patch of mixed woodland. On OS maps it is shown (as *Tannymaws* on the 1st edition; also often spelt Tannie-). It is located in the northernmost point of Borgue parish, with Twynholm across the Mooryard (Muiryard) Burn to the east, and Girthon across the Littleton Burn slightly further to the west.

The first part of the name is *tamhnaich* '(at a) small piece of arable land' (see Tanniefad above), The second looks like Gaelic *màs*, genitive *màis*, which translates as ''buttock, rump, loin, thigh' etc.' It occurs in Irish place-names referring to long, rather low hills, as at Maas in Co. Donegal. Tannymaas is on a relatively level stretch of fairly high ground, but there is no feature that would obviously

suggest the anatomical analogy – there are other sites in this part of Girthon parish that it would suit at least as well. An alternative possiblity would be *magha* '(of, on) plain, level ground', with the plural -s commonly added for no obvious reason to Scots forms of Gaelic names (see under Barneywater above). That might match the location more appropriately.

An antiquarian etymology invoking *teine* 'fire, beacon' and suggesting pagan ceremonies is sometimes recycled, but *teine mhagha* would be 'a field fire' not 'a fire field'.

Tarff Water

Gaelic *tarbh*, possibly earlier Cumbric *taru* (modern Welsh *tarw*), 'a bull'. There is another Tarf Water in the Machars, a tributary of the Bladnoch (nowadays the Kirkcudbrightshire river is spelt with 'ff', the Wigtownshire one with 'f', historically there was of course variation). Elsewhere in Scotland, there is a River Tarf in Atholl, Perthshire, and a Tarf Water in Angus, as well as related river names such as Tarvie, and a number of place-names that imply further, lost, watercourse names of this family. Rivers and streams were often named after animals in the Celtic languages, especially totemic ones like bulls and boars. Such names may well have connoted strength and/ or fertility, but they are rooted in ancient beliefs about which we can only speculate. See also Enrick above.

The railway station at Ringford is marked 'Tarf Station (for Gatehouse)' on the 1st edition OS map, though *Drumore* Station was subsequently renamed Gatehouse Station, see under Dromore above.

The Temple

The 'Gothick' folly built in 1778-9 in Cally Woods as part of the landscaping project carried out by James Ramsay, and now happily restored, was presumably named The Temple by James Murray or his wife Lady Catherine. I am not aware of any explanation – the building does not bear any resemblance to reconstructions of the biblical Temple, not to any oriental type of temple, though both would have been well-known, and even fashionable, models. Bearing in mind the strength of Freemasonry around that time, I wonder whether that might have had some influence – though I am not able to say whether James Murray or James Ramsay were Freemasons, nor whether any Masonic symbolism can be found in The Temple.

Tenniewee

This pleasant-sounding name is listed by Maxwell in Kirkmabreck parish, but it is not shown on any OS map, nor can I find it in other records. Nevertheless, it is of interest as, very probably, another *tamnach*, a small piece of arable land in an upland location, see Tanniefad and Tanniemaws above. The descriptive element is *bhuidhe*, 'pale yellow', typical of moorland grass in winter, cf. Craigenboy and Drumbow above.

Thorn, Thorns of Fleet and Thorny Hill

The 1st edition OS map marks 'Thorn (site of)', evidently a farm building on the south-west edge of the Doon of Culreoch, overlooking the Little Water of Fleet upstream of the confluence with the Cleugh Burn. The single-element name would have referred to a conspicuous, solitary hawthorn in this pretty remote spot.

That map also marks 'Thorns of Fleet' near to the railway viaduct over the Little Water of Fleet, these must likewise have been a conspicuous feature, maybe before the railway was built. Thorny Hill is shown as a small summit on the old high road between High Auchenlarie and Bardritson. None of these names has survived to appear on later maps.

Tor Hill, Tor Wood, Torr Knowe, *Tormick*

Tor Hill is the westernmost of the three small summits between Ornokenoch Burn and Rusko. Tor Wood is shown on the 1st edition OS maps, and other earlier maps, as a fairly substantial piece of woodland covering a hillock north of Ardwall House. The road from Anwoth Kirk, and subsequently the Mail Trust road, were diverted in a wide curve around this feature, but the realigned A75 cut across the northern end, leaving the remaining woodland in the grounds of Ardwell. Tor Wood is also the name of a modern house in Boreland Wood, to the north-east of Ardwell. Torr Knowe overlooks the Carsluith Burn to the north of Kirkdale Hill. *Tormick* appears in a 1777 tack as a 'part of Filillarg' (Fleuchlarg): its location is unknown, the second element might be Gaelic *muice* 'of swine', or a Gaelic or Scots short form of Michael.

The root sense of *torr* is 'something bulging or protruding'. The word was current in both Brittonic and Gaelic (though not common in Irish) and in Gaelic names a *tòrr* is typically 'a steep or conical hillock, a knoll or knowe', though in Welsh *tor* (adopted into English in place-names especially in the south-west) refers to a heap of rocks. *Tor* or *torr* is common in place-names in south-west Scotland, there are at least two dozen examples in the Stewartry alone, at least as many in Wigtownshire, and others in Dumfriesshire and Carrick. The three examples in our area were probably originally knolls named **Tòrr* by Gaelic speakers, but re-named by Scots speakers who added their generics.

Townhead

A typical Scottish name for a location up a hill on the way into or out of a *toun*, there are at least ten places named Townhead in the Stewartry, and a good twenty or more in Wigtownshire and the rest of the Region. Most are farms - or were, some in less profitable locations were already in ruins on the 1st edition OS map – the Townhead of Girthon is still a substantial farm on the later route of the Old Military Road as it climbs out of Gatehouse towards Twynholm. A track and pathway over Townhead Hill link the farm to the earlier road at Upper Drumwall, this may have been an alternative route down to the crossing of the Fleet, so the farm may have stood at the town-head before the new road was cut through. Townhead Burn flows from the hill past the farm and under Townhead Bridge, after which it becomes the Kirk Burn. See also Miller Hill.

Trostrie

Trostrie stands close to where the road north from Ross Bay through Twynholm to Glengap and beyond crossed the ancient routeway from the crossing of the Dee at Glenlochar westwards over the Tarff/ Fleet watershed and Irelandton Moor, before dropping to cross the Fleet (in the first millennium, the crossing would probably have been a little downstream of the Roman fortlet north-west of Barwhill), and continuing through the Boreland gap immediately below Trusty's Hill, see below. Trostrie Loch and Lane form the boundary between Girthon and Twynholm parishes, and may have marked a more ancient division between territories centred on The Doon at Twynholm and Trusty's Hill.

This is *Trostaree* 1456, *Trostre* 1481, *Trostari* on Blaeu's copy of Pont's map, *Trostary* in the 17th century. It is certainly a Brittonic (Cumbric) name, formed with **traus-* (Modern Welsh *traws*), 'across' and *–trev* 'farm', so 'farm at a crossing-place', as at Troustrie, Crail, Fife, and *Trawstre* or *Trostre* in eight places in Wales, common enough to suggest it may have been current as a common noun. It is likely to have been a place of some importance over a thousand years ago. The fortification

of the natural strongpoint at Trostrie Moat was a later recognition of its strategic and territorial significance.

Trusty's Hill

Trusty's Hill is a relatively modest summit in the Boreland Hills, but occupies a commanding position overlooked the Fleet estuary and Wigtown Bay. It is topped by an Iron Age fort, reoccupied and substantially refortified in the sixth century, and dramatically destroyed by fire in the early seventh, so it is one of the several 'vitrified' forts in our region. The stone slab with carvings in 'Pictish' style, and the artificial bowl, both near the entrance to the fort, suggest it was a place of some particular importance, though the dating of the carving is a matter of controversy, and the significance of the site in the very obscure history of the 'dark ages' can at best be no more than speculation, if not fantasy.

Two stories about the place-name Trusty's Hill (recorded by Maxwell, perhaps significantly, as 'Trusty Knowe' without the possessive 's') were current in the nineteenth century. The Ordnance Survey Name Book relates one that has the typical qualities of a folk-etymology: 'formerly there had been a house at the base of the hill which had been occupied by a man named Carson who had married one of the minister's servants, which servant the minister had always styled her as his Trusty Servant, from whom it is said the hill took its name.' The other, obviously an antiquarian speculation based on the apparently Pictish carvings near the summit, associated Trusty with a Pictish King Drust. Drust (in fact a Gaelic form for Pictish *Drost*) was the name of several rulers in Pictland, the one associated with the hill would be the king mentioned in an Irish account as the father of a princess named Drusticc, who was sent by his father to be educated at Whithorn by the then abbot, Mugint, and got up to some mischief that prompted Mugint to compose a hymn, 'Spare us, Lord...'. Both these are delightful examples of stories made up to explain a place-name, but names are not created to suit stories, it is the other way around, both these yarns must have served to make sense of a pre-existing name.

In the absence of any documentation for the name prior to the Ordnance Survey, any suggestion as to the real origin of the name can only be very tentative. Nevertheless, it is worth comparing it with the better-documented Trostrie, above. Trusty's Hill might perhaps be another Brittonic formation with *traus-*, though the generic in this case may have been *-tī* (Welsh *tŷ*) 'a cottage, a small house'. *Traus- tī* would suggest some building on the way through the narrow gap where a watch was kept, maybe some toll levied, on those passing through. If this were the case, the idea in the folk-etymology that the hill was named after an inhabitant of a modest building at its foot would not have been too far from the truth. So it is possible (though of course far from certain) that 'Trusty' was, like Trostrie, a strategic crossing-point on the ancient east-west routeway, and the hill was named after it.

Tuphow

There is some confusion about Tuphow. It has never appeared on any OS map. In the 1851 census an un-named dwelling is listed at no. 866 apparently between Enrick Copper Mine and Townhead: this may be Shiphowes (see above) or Tuphow. In the 1881 census Tuphow is listed between Littleton and Townhead farms. It might correspond to the dwelling now called Townhead Cottage.

It seems, anyway, that Shiphowes and Tuphow were both in this locality and may well have been one and the same. Tuphow is Scots, 'ram hollow', obviously similar to Shiphowes, 'sheep hollows'. Wherever these hollows were, they were apparently close together, and again the two names might have referred to the same feature. It is possible that 'tup' was considered a slightly indelicate word,

bearing in mind its verbal sense, and 'sheep' may have been substituted (compare Hilltop, above). There are, however, a few 'tup' place-names in Galloway, such as Tup Knowes in Carsphairn.

Twynholm

The name of this parish is of considerable interest in relation to the history of Northumbrian English rule and settlement in our area. At a date between 1154 and 1165 it was recorded as *Twignam.* This might imply that the generic element in the name was Old English *ēam*, 'waters': Northumbrian **twīen-ēam* would mean 'between watercourses'. The West Saxon equivalent **twēoxan-ēam* occurs in a number of places in south-west England, including *Twinham*, the former name of Christchurch, now in Dorset, and Twyning Gloucestershire. Christchurch is indeed situated between the Hampshire Avon and the Wiltshire/ Dorset Stour, Twyning between the Warwickshire/ Gloucestershire Avon and the Severn. Maxwell points out that Twynholm lies between the Tarff Water and the Corraford Burn, but the latter is a very modest watercourse, if travellers in this area were seeking a settlement 'between waters', they would surely have found it between the Dee and the Tarff at Tongland, not Twynholm: we shall return to this question anon.

But first we have to note that the second recorded form is *Twenham* 1200x6, and of eight more records from the thirteenth century, nearly all (except *Tuinam* 1296) show the final syllable as *-ham*. Old English *hām* is the English word 'home', Scots *hame*, but its application would have included the landholding associated with the homestead and its set of buildings. In place-names it may have referred to quite a substantial area, comparable to a later parish; indeed, it may have referred primarily to extensive estates, and only came to be attached to particular settlements when large landholdings were broken up in the later Anglo-Saxon period. Place-name scholarship has demonstrated that this element was the most favoured term for their settlements among the earliest Germanic-speaking settlers, and that it remained in use up to around the time of Bede in the early eighth century, but radical changes in settlement patterns, land-holdings and fiscal systems caused it to fall into disuse as a place-naming term from about the middle of that century.

If the name referred originally to a substantial estate, that could have extended from the coast up to the head of Glengap, and along the coast from the estuary of the Dee to that of the Fleet, comprising the whole of what eventually became the parishes of Twynholm (with Kirkchrist), Borgue (itself combining Kirkandrews and Senwick), and possibly Tongland. If so, the name might, as suggested above, have been *Twīen-ēam* 'between waters', but referring to the Fleet and the Tarff or the Dee. Otherwise the first element may be an Anglo-Saxon personal name such as *Twiċġa*: this is perhaps favoured by the earliest form, *Twignam*, but if so the origin is likely to have been **Twiċġan-hām*, 'Twiċġa's estate'. Either way, it is reasonable to infer that Twynholm was a substantial estate that came into the possession of an English-named landholder at some date before the mid-eighth century.

Whatever the origin, one thing is certain: the modern spelling with '–holm' (*Twyneholm* in the Old Statistical Account 1795) is misleading. *Holm* in Old English, Scots and (until recently) English, 'a low-lying piece of land alongside water', is quite common in Galloway, as at Barholm and Springholm, but it was never a part of 'Twynam'. *Tuynam* on Blaeu's map, and other seventeenth-century spellings like *Twyneme, Twinem*, accurately reflect the local pronunciation, it's unfortunate that 'enlightened' pedantry mis-corrected this and gave currency to an unhistorical spelling. The same is true of its neighbour, Tungland (thus even in Sir Herbert Maxwell's 1930 book), now gentrified as Tongland.