

Some Place-names in and around the Fleet Valley

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Eagle Island

This small isle at the northern end of Loch Grannoch is unnamed on the 1st edition OS map, it first appears on 20th century maps and may well be a relatively modern name, perhaps given by sportsmen or gamekeepers to a place where the birds were frequently seen. If records were earlier, White-tailed Sea Eagles might have been present, but that seems unlikely if the name is that recent.

Golden Eagles nested on the Cairnsmore of Fleet pretty regularly until the early 1980s, when increasingly dense forestry cover rendered the habitat unsupportable. Two pairs have nested elsewhere in the Forest Park in most years since the 1980s, and prospecting birds are seen fairly frequently.

Edgarton

Although it seems now a relatively remote place, Edgarton, with Edgarton Loch, Moat (motte) and Cothouse (otherwise Pulnachie), in Balmaghie parish close to the meeting of boundaries with Girthon and Twynholm, is a long-established farm site overlooking the route up the Glenkens: as well as the motte to the north-east, there is a hill-fort nearby to the east. It is *Egerton* and *Eggertoun* on Blaeu's maps.

The name could date from the time of Northumbrian rule. Places named Egerton in Cheshire and Kent both involve an Anglo-Saxon personal name, *Ecghard* or *Ecghere*, and while both are nowadays pronounced 'Edgerton', the Cheshire one is regularly Scandinavian-influenced *Eggerton* in mediaeval and early modern records (the surname likewise varies between Edgerton, Egerton and Eggerton). If so, it would be a *tūn*, the common term used for naming farming settlements from the mid-eighth century onward.

Edgar, as *Eadgar*, was an Anglo-Saxon name too, that of the first King of all the English: he reigned as such 959-75, though by his time Galloway was outwith the English realm. More significantly for Scottish history, Edgar the Atheling, who came with his elder sister Margaret to the court of Malcolm III Canmore of Scotland, was the surviving male heir to the throne of England that had been seized by William of Normandy, and Margaret and Malcolm's son Edgar was King of Scots 1097 – 1107. It is possible that Edgarton was named from a man of that name, perhaps the builder of the motte; as Galloway was predominantly Gaelic-speaking at that time, he would have been an incomer, most likely in the retinue of the de Morvilles. Nor should the Norse name *Edgeirr* be ruled out: formation with Old Norse *tún* is unlikely (see Girthon below), but the name might have been adopted into Scots and combined with *toun*. On the other hand the present form could be a much later adaptation of *Egerton*, as recorded by Timothy Pont and copied onto Blaeu's map.

A couple of possible parallels are found elsewhere in Galloway. Edgar's Hill in Kirkmaiden parish on the Rinns was reported in the OS Name Book as named from a former proprietress, presumably Edgar was her surname. Eggerness, with Eggerness Castle, Point and Wood, across Cree Bay near Garlieston, is well documented from c1185 *Egerness* on. Maxwell fancies this is Old Norse **eggja nes* 'headland of eggs', but apart from the lack of any parallels for such a name that I can find in Scandinavian toponymy, *Eger-* in the early forms is very unlikely to have been from **eggja*. A personal name seems more likely here, such as *Edgeirr* mentioned above, though even a Scandinavianised form of English *Ecghere* would not be impossible in the multilingual context of 10th – 11th century Galloway.

Enrick

Enrick is certainly a historic location in Girthon parish. Camp Hill has an Iron Age fort, Palace Yard is a moated site that was probably a property and occasional residence of the Bishops of Whithorn. The house appears on Blaeu's maps as *Ainrick* and *Ainryick*, and is likely to have been in continuous occupation since the Middle Ages; the Dairy and farm cottages (Enrick Cothouse and Enrick Cottage) are shown on the 1st edition OS map and in the Census returns; in the mid-nineteenth century the Waulk (fulling, cloth-dressing) Mill and Mine (for copper, active from 1835, though only sporadically after 1857, eventually closed early in the twentieth century) were part of the busy industrial scene around Gatehouse.

However the name is likely to be early Brittonic and to refer primarily to Enrick Burn, being probably identical in origin to Endrick Water that flows westwards from the Fintry Hills into Loch Lomond and forms the border between Stirlingshire and West Dunbartonshire. In early modern Welsh, *enderig* was ‘a steer, a young bullock or draught-ox’, but the 13th century forms *Anneric* and *Annerech* for Endrick Water, and Blaeu’s *Ainrick* for that river as well as for the name in Girthon, may imply a feminine **andereg*, presumably ‘a heifer’.

Words for animals are a feature of Celtic stream- and river-names: to the east we have Tarff Water which is Gaelic *tarbh*, possibly earlier Brittonic *tarvos* (modern Welsh *tarw*), ‘a bull’. A tributary of the Tarff marked on present-day OS maps as Spout Burn flows from a hill above Barcaple named Black Enrick. ‘Black’ no doubt to distinguish this Enrick (in Tongland parish) from the one in Girthon, but again the name probably belonged earlier to the burn, in which case the ‘heifer’ flowed into the ‘bull’!

Enrick Burn in Girthon was severely straightened to drive the Waulk Mill, it now runs alongside the Sandgreen Road between Clauchan of Girthon and Enrick, it is difficult to visualise its original, natural course.

Ewe Hill

The summit neighbouring Benowr, separated from it by The Nick of Knock, is one of five Ewe Hills in the Stewartry, there are at least ten more elsewhere in the region, and some 25 other place-names involving ‘ewe’ (leaving aside Ewes, with Ewes Water and associated names, that is an early river-name, probably Old English). Needless to say, they reflect the importance of sheep in the hill-farming economy, especially from the eighteenth century on. It’s a little disappointing that the English form is ubiquitous, Scots *yowe* is not to be found. Maillie Knowe in Eskdalemuir parish, Dumfriesshire, might have the south-western Scots affectionate word for a sheep (as recorded by Mactaggart and memorialised by Burns), though it’s also (like English Molly) a pet-form for Mary, and Mailzie Burn in the Machars is an older, Celtic, stream-name.