

Place-names in and around the Fleet Valley

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Lady's Well

This well, with clear water running under covering stones now overgrown by bushes, is in Skyreburn Glen near the site of Kirkbride Chapel.

Lady's Well, Lady Well and Ladywell are common throughout England and Lowland Scotland. In most cases probably, and in a good many certainly, the name refers to Our Lady. That is probably the case here, given its proximity to the chapel dedicated to St Bride or Brighid (see Kirkbride above), who was known from as early as the seventh century as 'Mary of the Irish' or 'of the Gaels'. Among many other powers ascribed to her, she was patroness of women in childbirth, and a late-recorded legend from the Hebrides even portrays her as midwife to Mary.

A similar hint of an association between the Blessed Virgin and St. Bride is found in Kirkcolm parish in the North Rhinns, which contains St. Mary's Well (marked as a historic monument on OS maps) to the south of the kirktoon, Lady Bay to the north, and Kirkbryde, with St. Bride's Well, to the west.

In the absence of evidence, we should be cautious of speculating, but it is reasonable to suppose that some beliefs connecting St. Bride and the Blessed Virgin were associated with these places, and maybe there was some cultic use of the wells, with pre-Christian roots. As suggested above, the cult of St. Bride may have been introduced in the tenth century by the Gall-Ghàidheil, and such beliefs and practices would have come with it.

Elsewhere in The Stewartry, Lady's Well is marked on the 1st edition OS map below Lady's Well Hill which overlooks the Ken Bridge from the east, between Balmaclellan and New Galloway; on modern maps it is simply 'Spr(ing)', but the old road down to the bridge is called Lady's Well. A Lady Well lies below Lady Well Knowe near the Carsphairn Lane and the road north across the regional boundary to the east of Loch Doon, it is still named on OS maps. There is a Ladywell below Ladywell Brae (otherwise just Well Brae, on Well Hill) near Margley in Kirkpatrick Durham parish, the well can still be seen here. Ladywell is the name of a group of houses and a bridge across the Preston Mill Burn in Kirkbean parish, the well is shown on the 1st edition OS map between the houses and the bridge, but it seems not to be visible now.

In Wigtownshire there is a Lady Well marked as a historic monument near Monreith Mains, Maxwell found two in Old Luce, one is still mapped near Milton, and McQueen mentions a Ladywell in Drummore in Kirkmaiden parish. To the north, in Carrick, there is a Lady Well to the east of Culzean, another near Drummuck in Dailly parish, with a Ladywell Wood on Kirk Hill north of the town, and a small settlement named Ladywell is near Grangerton north of Girvan.

Just south of Dumfries, Lady's Well is on the hillside west of The Crichton grounds, above Kingholm Quay. Ecclefechan has a Lady Well, and there is also a place between Ecclefechan and Middlebie named Ladywells. And, across the Selkirkshire border to the north of Eskdalemuir, near the Southern Upland Way approaching Wedder Law, is a Gaelic-named Tobermory, *Tobar Moire*.

Although such wells elsewhere in Britain are often close to chapels (either free-standing or within nearby churches) dedicated to Our Lady, this is not obviously the case with these fairly numerous

examples in south-west Scotland (though I have not investigated the historical or archaeological records in any detail, and more may yet come to light). This makes the proximity of our Lady Well to the chapel dedicated to St. Bride all the more intriguing.

Laganory

Now the name of one of the range of Finlay's Farm cheeses, Laganory (otherwise Laganorie, Lagganory, etc.) is the name of a field on Rainton Farm, across the Sandgreen road from the site of the Mill of Girthon by Garniemire. The name is recorded in the ancient Valuation Roll of 1642 as *Laggan Airy*. The first part of the name is undoubtedly Gaelic *lagan* 'a hollow', see Laggan below: there is indeed a hollow at the south end of the field.

Airy is early Gaelic *áirge*, modern *àirigh*, normally translated as 'a shieling'. This word was very probably introduced by the Gall-Ghàidheil and adopted by Norse speakers too (see Arkland above); it is an important piece of evidence for the language and settlements of the Gall-Ghàidheil and in the study of mediaeval farming practices. *Airie* in Balmaghie and Kells parishes, *Airyhill* Cottage in Rerrick, and *Airyland* in Kelton are other examples, there are at least two dozen more in Galloway. Some, like the single-element 'Airies' are in upland locations where people (probably mainly women) would have stayed during the season of summer hill-pasturing, tending and milking the herds and making butter and cheese: in these cases, 'shieling' is appropriate, but in relatively lowland situations like Laganory, the role of these seasonal camping-places may have been somewhat different. It may be safer to say that **Lagan-(na h-) àirighe* would mean 'hollow of the seasonal camping-place'.

Lagg, Laghead

Gaelic *lag* is 'a hollow', and Lagg farm stands in a hollow in the hillside beside the Lagg Burn, above Lagg Bridge; the burn rises on Laghead Fell and above the confluence with Drumcleugh Burn it is named Laghead Burn, with Laghead Farm, Cottage (at one time Cottages) and Bridge.

Unsurprisingly, given the topography, there are a good many names in Galloway formed with *lag*, though as a single element form it is not so common: Lag is the name of a house in Irongray parish, and, with Lag Hill and Lag Tower, of another in Dunscore in Nithsdale; The Lag is a hill (with a hollow) in Glasserton, Wigtownshire.

Laggan

Although *-án* can have a diminutive sense, that is not necessarily the case, and in Galloway, *lagán* (modern Gaelic *lagan*) becoming *laggan*, seems to have been as common a term as *lag* for a place in a hollow, small or large. There are at least a dozen places named Laggan in the Stewartry, in many cases qualified with another word to distinguish them from each other: see Kings Laggan and Laganory above and Lagganmullan below. Laggan o'Dee is the farm in Kells parish by the Raiders' Road forest drive towards Clatteringshaws, with Laggan Pool in the river below. In Wigtownshire, alongside other Laggans (in Glasserton and Kirkcolm), *lagan* appears as Logan on the South Rhinns, a form also found in Ayrshire, Midlothian and Peebleshire, as well as in Ireland.

Laggan in Anwoth parish has moved since the first Ordnance Survey, when it stood in an embayment in the hillside beside the turnpike road to Portpatrick (now the A75). The farmhouse named Laggan, with the Activity Centre on its land, is higher up the hill, by the old, pre-turnpike, road. Lower Laggan Cottage is across the new road from the earlier Laggan, on or near the site where Laggan School was shown on the 1st edition OS map. Low Laggan, a dwelling recorded in the 1851 and 1881 Censuses,

must have been close by. Past the newer and older locations flows the Laggan Burn, down towards Mossyard Bay; Burnside Cottage is by the burn near the ‘new’ Laggan.

Lagganmullan

Lagganmullan, otherwise Laggamulland or Laggamullen, refers to a location in the Skyreburn glen where the Stranamug Burn joins the Skyreburn. It is **Lagan a' mhuilleinn* ‘hollow of the mill’, referring to the Skyreburn Mill downstream below Kirkbride bridge. Lagganmullen Shed, now the house named Lagganmullan, has Older Scots and northern Middle English *s(c)hed*, from Old English (*ge*)*sċēad* ‘a division’, used as a term for a portion of arable land (it has nothing to do with English ‘shed’ ‘a simple wooden building’, that comes from a variant of ‘shade’, i.e. ‘a shelter’).

Lagganmullan Smithy was close to the mill.

The Lakens

Ruins of a small farm called The Lakens are marked on the 1st edition OS map in the Skyreburn glen below Lagganmullan Wood. No trace of it survives. The name was very probably Gaelic *leacann*, which Dwelly translates ‘the broad side of a hill, broad slope, steep, shelving ground’, suiting this location perfectly. While the word is related to *leac* meaning ‘a flat stone slab’, and the hillside no doubt was stony, in place-names both Scottish *leacann* and Irish *leacan* refer primarily to the generous slope rather than (as Maxwell’s list of elements suggests) its stoniness. The added –s implies there was in more recent, Scots-speaking, times more than one settlement here, or maybe the hillside was divided into portions for grazing.

Lane Burn

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 *lèana*), 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 Dally Lane Holm and Grobdale above and Loch Lane below).

The Burn rises on Mill Knock and flows down through Cardoness Wood past Meadowhead and alongside the turnpike road (now the A75) into the sea at Lanefoot (Bridge and Cottage) on Skyreburn Bay. It is in its lower stretch a typical ‘lane’; it had obviously been straightened by the time of the 1st edition OS map, probably when the road was built, it is at least partly man-made.

But, unusually, ‘Lane’ is the qualifying element in this name. What may have been simply ‘The Lane’, or even originally a Gaelic name for the damp meadowland that it drains, has at some stage had ‘Burn’ added by speakers who may not have been aware of the local usage.

Lane of the Loop

This *Lane* (see Lane Burn above) flows in a wiggly curve around Meikle Cullendoch Moss to join Benmeal Burn and then the Big Water of Fleet just above the meander named Rough Loop (see below). Its course is probably natural, it shows little sign of engineering, though much of it is now shaded by forestry plantations.

Larg

Larg, from Gaelic *learg* ‘slope, hillside’ is common in our region. The nearest Larg is south of Creetown with Larg Hill further south, towards Kirkmabreck church. Larg, Larg Fell, Larg Hill and Larg Tower are near Kirroughtree in Minnigaff; there is another Larg Hill, with Larg Scar, in Minnigaff parish, west of Bennan Hill. Largs in Twynholm parish, like the town of that name in Cunninghame, and settlements near Straiton in Ayrshire and another in Kintyre, has an added –s; Largs in Ayrshire and in Kintyre were plural in Gaelic, *na Leargaidh*, and that is possibly the case here, though there could have been a division into more than one holding at some time after the name passed into Scots. An alternative possibility might be that the Gaelic form was **Larg-as*, with the name-forming suffix *–as* discussed under Knockbrenn above. However there is also a tendency for monosyllabic names throughout England and lowland Scotland to acquire an adventitious –s for no apparent reason (cf. Airds above).

Further afield in The Stewartry, Larghill north-west of Crocketford has several associated names including Larglanglee. In Wigtownshire Larg names a group of locations in Leswalt parish, and The Larg is a hill in Inch, but Lurg Hill in Wigtown is more likely to be from *lorg* ‘leg, shank, shin’, referring to the shape of the hill; that word can also mean ‘a path or track’ (see also Largoes below).

Largoes

Largoes is marked on the 1st edition OS map as a small ruined settlement, the name survives in Largoes Moor traversed by the Laurieston road between Knocktinkle and Laghead.

No doubt the same in origin as the town and parish of Largo in Fife, with its prominent hill, Largo Law: Gaelic *learg* plus the name-forming suffix *–ach*, so ‘place on a sloping hillside’.

Whilst places named with *learg* tend to be on the sunny sides of hills, Largoes is on the north-east of Brad Hill. As at The Lakens above, the –s (whether or not the underlying Gaelic form was plural) might imply more than one holding here at some time, though given the unfavourable, marginal location that seems improbable; again, maybe the hillside was divided into portions for grazings; the *–as* suffix mentioned under Larg above is, for phonetic and morphological reasons unlikely here. Sometimes, Scots *–is* seems to have been added to Gaelic-origin names for no apparent reason (see Dinnance, and Largs, above).

I do not know the local pronunciation of Largoes; Largo in Fife is locally pronounced ‘Largie’, again perhaps reflecting a plural *leargaich*. Largie, with Largie Hill and Larghie (sic) Point, are between Ardwell and Logan in Kirkmaiden parish on the south Rhinns (according to Maxwell they are pronounced ‘lurgy’), and Lurgy occurs quite frequently in Ulster, though there (and quite possibly in Kirkmaiden too) the underlying form is Irish *leargaidh*. Lurgie in Penninghame may be another or, like Lurg Hill (see Larg above) be from *lorg*, ‘leg, shank, shin’.

Lauchenlarie

see Auchenlarie above.

Lauchentyre

Lauchentyre is on the course of the Old Military Road from Anwoth kirk over Ardwall Hill to the Skyreburn Glen, now a track. It is *Lacchantyre* on Blaeu’s map, which also marks *Laghantyr b(urn)*, though it is hard to reconcile the watercourses presumably surveyed by Timothy Pont with those on the ground. The first element of the name may be Gaelic *lagan* ‘a hollow’, as in Kings Laggan (see

also Laggans), the farm nearby across a burn to the east, or *leacann* ‘the broad side of a hill’ (see Lakens). There seems to have been overlap between forms and (presumably) pronunciation of *leacan* and *lagan*, judging by names in Galloway, Ulster and Mann. Either *lagan* or *leacann* could equally suit the location of this settlement on the south-facing flank of Doon Hill.

The second element could be (*an*) *tir*, ‘of (the) land’, referring to the broad area of upland pasture above the farm, perhaps common grazing as distinct from royal land at Kings Laggan. Otherwise, it could be *an t-iar* ‘to the west’, though the phrase in earlier Gaelic could also mean ‘second in order’, i.e. the second place along the road. Any of these senses, ‘(common?) land’, ‘to the west’, or ‘second in order’ imply a relationship to Kings Laggan, so favouring *lagan* as the first element.

Laughenghie

This farm is *Laggenghy* on Blaeu’s map, so it existed in the time of Pont’s survey in the late sixteenth century, and there are traces of its field system and rigs, as well as a kiln barn and sheiling huts, but it was a ruin on the mid-nineteenth century OS map; the name survives in Laughenghie Hill. The farm was on the north-east side of the hill, overlooking the Grobdale Lane, south of Loch Skerrow.

The name, judging by Blaeu’s form, is **lagan na gaoithe* ‘hollow of the wind’, at nearly 200 metres it surely is a ‘windy hollow’. The more modern spelling suggests possible confusion with *leacann* ‘hill-slope’ (see Lauchentyre above), and maybe some influence from the spelling of Balmaghie to the east; if the place were in Ireland, the ‘gh’ would be silent and it would suggest **leamh na gaoithe* ‘windy elm’, but that would be very unlikely here, and the Blaeu map form confirms it was pronounced (roughly) ‘lahgan-guy’.

Laundry

Laundry Cottage, in Laundry Wood, is in fact a fine house familiar to walkers, cyclists and riders on the road through the Cally estate towards Sandgreen. It appears on the 1st edition OS map as simply Laundry, and in the 1881 Census as Laundry House. There were dwellings here earlier, listed but unnamed in the 1851 Census, and the Ass House Strand had been diverted here presumably to serve the laundry, so it is likely that the washing for the great house was being done here by the mid-century, and may have been since the mansion was first occupied in the 1760s.

Laurieston

Laurieston, like Gatehouse of Fleet, was the creation during the mid-eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries of a family of enterprising proprietors, the Lauries of Redcastle (near Haugh of Urr). The name seems to have been given during the time of Walter Sloan Laurie, shortly before 1800.

Prior to this, such habitation as preceded the village was called *Clauchanpluck*. Although this looks like a Scots name (compare Clachan of Girthon above), the formation here is more likely to be Gaelic: Scots *clachan* generally refers to a kirktoon, which was never the case here, and ‘-pluck’ seems to be the qualifying element, in second position as in Gaelic. **Clachán pluic* would be ‘hamlet of (the) *ploc*’ which can mean a hump, stump, block of stone, heap of peats, or any rounded mass: perhaps Milntack Hill.

There is another Clachanpluck, in Inch parish in Wigtownshire. However, caution is advisable, the latter place is on record in 1456 as *Clovetturplak*, *Clouturplak*, which may just be garbled, but might

suggest the name has been reinterpreted over the centuries, and of course the same could apply to the former name for Laurieston.

A house stood on the site of Laurieston Hall at the time of Timothy Pont's survey around 1590, it appears on Blaeu's map as *Grenoch*, and the name remained current as late as the 1st edition OS map, where what is now Woodhall Loch is named Loch Grenoch. This is likely to be *grianach* 'gravelly' (see Loch Grennock below). Subsequently, the house and its substantial estate became Woodhall, still so named on the 1st edition OS map, and preserved today in Woodhall Woods and the present name of the Loch.

Laurieston in Glasgow was named after a nineteenth century developer, Laurieston near Falkirk after Sir Lawrence Dundas who planned the settlement in the mid-eighteenth century (it was formally Lawrencetown, but soon contracted to Lauriston), and Lauriston (sic) Castle in Edinburgh belonged to the Laurence, otherwise Lawers, family in the fifteenth century.

Lea Larks

This intriguing name refers to a craggy, south-facing scar on the eastern spur of Craigwhinnie, south of Loch Fleet and looking towards the Nick of the Dead Man's Banes, now pretty much hidden in FCS plantations. On some maps and documents it is spelt as one word, Lealarks.

The second part is pretty sure to have been Gaelic *learg* 'slope, hillside' (see Larg above), the –s here a plural justified by the series of steep rocky slopes between craggy outcrops. Maxwell guessed the Lea was *liath* 'grey' which certainly describes the rocks here; adjectives normally follow nouns in Gaelic, but colours do more commonly come first in place-names in Ireland, e.g. Leitrim *Liathdroim* 'grey ridge'. Otherwise, Scots *lea* is a variant of 'lee', the sheltered side, which is arguably appropriate to the location and might have been added to distinguish these from other 'larg's'.

Leathlobhair

A pair of holiday cottages on the site of a former piggery opposite Woodend on the Old Military Road through to Anwoth are named Leath and Lobhair, apparently on the basis of a Gaelic name for the location. Early Gaelic *leth* (modern *leath-* in compounds and suffixed forms) has a wide range of meanings, including, in place-names, 'side', 'slope', or 'small field' – any of those senses could suit this location. *Leath-lobhair* would, sadly, have meant 'leper's *leath*', a plot outwith the clachan allocated to some victim of that dreaded disease.

Littleton

The earliest mention dates from 1469, when *Litiltoun* was recorded alternative name for Gaitgil (see above), a mile or so to the south. However, by the time of the 1st edition OS map, Littleton was where the farm now stands, on the Old Military Road east of Gatehouse, just east of the Littleton Burn which is at this point the parish boundary between Girthon and the northernmost corner of Borgue. To add to the complication, Littleton Cothouses are listed in Girthon parish in the 1881 census, so were presumably west of the burn, which flows south-south-west towards Enrick, being variously named Gategill Burn (see Gaitgil above) and Waulkmill Burn (referring presumably to the fulling mill at Enrick, but works from the 18th century through to the realignment of the A75 in the 1980s have made the lines of watercourses here very hard to disentangle).

The name Littleton could have been given during the time of Northumbrian rule, or later when the Scots language had come to be used in place-naming. Although today Littleton is a substantial farm, at the time the holding (apparently at some distance away) was first named it must have been perceived as ‘little’ compared to some neighbouring settlement or settlements. Its apparent origin as an alternative name for Gaitgil suggests that maybe the two holdings had been combined, and that *Litiltoun* had formerly been a smaller neighbour, or earlier subdivision, of Gaitgil; if so the range of possible dates of origin lies probably between the twelfth and mid-fifteenth centuries.

Lochenbreck

Lochenbreck Loch (*L. na Braic* on Blaeu’s map) lies east of Loch Hill, north of the Laurieston Road (which was originally built as a toll road by the Lochenbreck Trust) in Balmaghie parish, just beyond the boundary at Darngarroch Bridge. It is now somewhat hidden in forestry plantations. On the 1st edition OS Map, two dwellings, Lochenbreck and High Lochenbreck are between the Loch and the road, which crosses the Kenick Burn at Lochenbreck Bridge. The only dwelling by the road now is Lochenbreck Cottage, but in the later 19th century this was the site of Lochenbreck Hotel and Spa (belonging to Colonel Laurie of Woodhall, closed 1905, and apparently burnt down subsequently). This establishment offered the health-giving benefits of Lochenbreck Well, a mineral spring on the opposite side of the road. Even on the 1st edition OS map, this well was set in a somewhat formal square enclosure with a direct path to it, and the water channel straightened and crossed by a little bridge, suggesting it might already have been landscaped as an attraction to visitors.

It is either **loch nam breac* or **loch an breac* ‘loch of the trout’ or ‘loch an of the trout’ (though Pont’s form, on the Blaeu map, might reflect the singular, **loch na bric*), *breac* as a noun being literally ‘the speckled one’ (cf. Knockbrec above). The addition of the second ‘Loch’ on OS maps seems superfluous, but presumably Lochenbreck was (and is) no longer perceived as the name of the loch rather than the associated places. There is Loch Brack in Balmaclellan parish to the east of St. John’s Town of Dalry, and many other ‘trout lochs’ throughout Gaelic Scotland. The trout and the mineral water together would surely have made this a healthy spot!

Loch Gower

This small loch is in what appears to be a glacial hollow near the summit of Knocknevis, towards the northern tip of Girthon parish, is now surrounded by FCS plantations, though it is not far to the west of the cycle route NR7; in the Lake District it would be called a tarn.

The name is probably **Loch a’ghobhar* ‘goat loch’ (cf. Algowder Strand above). Maxwell lists it along with Lochengower near Laurieston and Lochingore near High Newton in Twynholm parish (a tiny lochan on the 1st edition OS map, but already turned to a damp meadow by the time of Maxwell’s publication, 1931); he prefers to interpret these as **loch an gCorr*, an Irish formation meaning ‘heron lochan’ (Scottish Gaelic would be **loch an corra*). He may well be right about ‘herons being more likely objects ... than goats’ on these two lowland lochans, but the phonetic form of the name Loch Gower is different, it seems unnecessary to speculate that it was originally the same, and in its remote, hilltop location, wild goats would surely be just as likely visitors as herons.

Loch Grannoch

Grannoch in 1555, and so pronounced locally today, though it is *L. Greenoch* on Blaeu’s map. This loch between Craigronald and Craigwhinnie is the largest in Girthon parish (though misplaced by Maxwell in Minnigaff, part of the west shore of the loch forms the boundary with that parish).

Maxwell is probably right to interpret this, and Loch Grenoch (Woodhall Loch) by Laurieston, as **greanach*, ‘gravelly’, that describes both these popular angling lochs pretty well, and Grainyford Isle on the river below Bridge of Dee is likely to have the same origin. *Grian* is the Irish and early Scottish Gaelic word for ‘gravel, lake or river bottom’, *griannach* ‘gravelly’ occurs in stream-names in Ireland. In Scottish Gaelic, the word fell together with *grian* (Irish *grían*) meaning ‘sun’, and ‘gravel, gravelly’ in modern Gaelic are usually *grinneal*, *grinnealach*, but *grianach* ‘sunny’, while an agreeable name, is probably less appropriate to these lochs, and to Grainyford Isle, than ‘gravelly’.

Loch Lane

This *lane*, ‘a shallow, slow-flowing stream’ (see Lane Burn above) flows from the Flesh Market between the Rig of Burnfoot and Laughengie Hill northwards across marshy ground into Loch Skerrow. Although both parts of the name are Gaelic in origin, their order is English or Scots, the name was formed in either of those languages, it would have distinguished this ‘lane’ from others in the area, including Grobdale Lane and Lane of the Loop.

Loch Lee

A small loch in a loop in the Barlay Burn where it is fed by the High Creoch Burn is marked on the 1st edition OS map, and the Laurieston road still crosses the Barlay Burn just downstream over Loch Lee Bridge. By the nineteenth century the loch had been dammed, perhaps initially (by around 1700) to control the flow of water to the flour mills of Barlay and Fleuchlarg, and more certainly later as part of the substantial hydraulic engineering associated with the industrial mills in Gatehouse; the loch has gone, only a trace of the dam survives today. Nevertheless, it was probably a natural lochan, and the name is likely to be Gaelic, ‘Lee’ being *liath* ‘grey’. There is a Lochlee Hill north-east of St. John’s Town of Dalry, and another small one of that name south-east of Balmaclellan (close to another Barlay, though this is surely coincidental): neither of these seems close enough to any loch that might have been so named, they are something of a mystery.

Loch Skerrow

This substantial Loch, *Skarrow* on Blaeu’s map, is *sgeireach* ‘rocky, full of rocks’. *Sgeir* is from Old Norse *sker*, which is more often associated with ‘skerries’, offshore rocks or reefs more or less covered at high tide, so a threat to shipping – The Scares in Luce Bay, for example – but, as Maxwell says of Loch Skerrow, ‘There are several rocky islets therein’.

When trains stopped at Loch Skerrow Halt it was a popular place for anglers, who could come with their fly-fishing tackle, and curlers who could carry their heavy stones by train. It was also a source of freshwater pearls, and the sand was collected for sharpening knives and scythes. But nowadays it is little visited.

Loch Whinyeon

This fine loch, fed by numerous springs in the surrounding hills, has played and continues to play an important role in the supply of drinking water to Gatehouse and neighbouring areas. The first element in its name may be Brittonic *winn* (modern Welsh *gwyn*), ‘white, light, pale’, also ‘bright, shining’, implying freshness and purity. A suffixed form, early Celtic **wind-ianā* would be a possible name for a water feature.

However, Maxwell associates it with St. Winnian, an important figure in the early church in our region. While it is not certain that they were one and the same, the name (probably originally **Winniau*, with *winn* carrying a sense of ‘blessed’) was borne by a sixth century cleric (author of a widely copied guide to penitential practice for monks and addressee of an epistle concerning monastic discipline from the even better-known critic of declining moral standards, Gildas), by one or more British saints including the patron(s) of Kirkgunzeon (preserving the later, Cumbric, form, *Gwinnian*; St. Winning’s Well is near the parish church, and Falgunzeon farm is in the west of the parish) and of Kilwinning in Ayrshire, and, in its Old Irish form, Finnian, by the founder of the influential early monastery at Movilla at the head of the Ards peninsula in Co. Down, in sight of the Rhinns of Galloway; his legend has him spending some time at *Futerna*, Whithorn, and he was mentor of St. Columba, founder the abbey of Iona; the cult of St. Finnian in Galloway is evidenced in the remains of Chapel Finian on the east coast of Luce Bay, and possibly by those of St. Inan’s church next to Parton Kirk. Suffice to say it is possible that Loch Whinyeon, and Loch Winnoch in Renfrewshire, were named in honour of this saint, or amalgam of saints, but there is no trace of any chapel or other evidence for the cult of St. Winnian in the vicinity of our loch.

Finally it should be mentioned that John MacQueen, explaining Ballochagunnion in Kirkmaiden parish, Wigtownshire, as *bealach na gCoinnin* ‘rabbit defile’, suggests a similar origin for Loch Whinyeon. Again, it is not impossible, but the loss of the /g/ needs explaining, and there are many places around the Fleet Valley where rabbits are more likely to be seen in multitudes than here.

Loopmabinnie

This amiably-named, serpentine meander in the Grobdale Lane is undoubtedly a Gaelic *lùb*, ‘a bend or loop’ (the latter word in English, only recorded from the 14th century, could be from Scottish or Irish Gaelic, though the dictionaries declare it ‘of unknown origin’, and its connection with ‘loop-holes’ in castle walls a matter of doubt). The remainder of the name is a mystery to me: the formation is Celtic, not Scots, but no Gaelic or Welsh word or phrase seems phonetically or topographically appropriate.

Binnie is on record as a rare Scots word in the 19th century for a slab of limestone, Binny in West Lothian being the site of an important quarry; as a surname in Scotland, Binnie, Binny or Binney generally indicate ancestry from that place; the origin of its name is probably Gaelic *binnean* ‘a little peak’. *Binnein*, or some other suffixed form of *beinn* ‘peak’, could underlie our ‘binnie’, though the flat, marshy ground is without peaks of any kind. On the other hand, Binney in Kent (again with associated surnames) is from Old English **binn(an)-ēa* ‘(land) within, enclosed by, a stream’, and that would suit Loopmabinnie very well.

But if the final part of the name were either *binnein* or *binn-ēa*, ‘ma’ would need explaining. It is possible that early Gaelic speakers may have adopted **binn-ēa* as something like **binneach*. Gaelic *ma* ‘my’ quite often precedes a saint’s name, usually in an affectionate form, in place-names: see, for example, Kirkmabreck above. Gaelic speakers might have mistaken **binneach* for a saint’s name, or else a separating vowel between *lùb-* and -**binneich* (genitive) was heard by the Ordnance surveyor as *ma*, but these are speculations.

‘Binnie’ might conceivably represent **Beannach*, a possibility perhaps reinforced by the presence of the surname Bennoch in Dumfriesshire, including that of a Covenanting martyr, James Bennoch of Glencairn. **Beannach* could be an elided and/or affectionate form of *beannachte* ‘blessed’, which

would be a translation of Benedict. In that case, the name would be **lùb-ma-Beannaich(te)*, ‘Benedict’s loop’. However, there is not much evidence for any cult of St. Benedict in our region: the Benedictine order was not represented among the monastic foundations (though the Cistercians of Dundrennan and Sweetheart would have followed a version of the Rule of St. Benedict), and in the fullest record of Scottish saints’ cults, the Aberdeen Breviary, his name simply appears in the calendar with no special readings or other observances indicated.

Another saintly possibility, with more local associations, would be an affectionate form of the name of the patron of Kirkbean. His identity is obscure, there was a cult of a Saint Bean around Killin and Crieff in Perthshire, and his feast-day was the same as that of one of the Irish saints named Beoán, associated with Meenan in Aghaderg, north of Newry in Co. Down, who according to a late legend came from Britain. That he might be connected with Kirkbean is a reasonable possibility, but there is no record of **Beannach* as a name for him (only *Mo Beóc*) – and, again, no good reason to connect him with this location.

Finally, *Mabon*, literally ‘son’, is an ancient Celtic name, that of a deity, as in Lochmaben (with Brittonic *luch* ‘marsh, shallow lake’) and the Lochmabenstone (with early Gaelic *cloch* ‘a rock’) near Gretna; *maban* is a Welsh word for a baby. It is just conceivable that a personal name or nickname derived from this root could be involved here, but that is grasping at straws.

Luckie Hargs

This cottage stands on the Old Military Road at the foot of Luckie Hargs Brae, where it enters the gap through the Boreland Hills towards Anwoth kirk. A path branching from the road down the valley at Goatend to join the route through the gap at this point would also have been well-used in the past. The cottage is marked on the 1st edition OS map, though its place in the 1851 Census seems to be taken by Goatend Cottage, probably a more formal name for the same dwelling.

Luckie followed by a surname is found very frequently in Scots, especially of the 18th and 19th century, as a polite, complimentary, or at least good-humoured term for an old lady. Luckie Harg could simply have been ‘(Old) Mrs. Harg’, perhaps ‘Grandmother Harg’ or ‘Widow Harg’. Records from Galloway show the word being used in these ways, also for a midwife, and for the hostess of a tavern – which might well have been the goodwife’s trade in this location. The Kirkcudbrightshire Places website also mentions ‘a witch’, but only two (from Angus and Lanarkshire) out of three dozen citations in the SND use the word in that sense.

The surname Harg is certainly local: it is first recorded in 1760, when one Andrew Harg was living in Wigtown. It must be an anglicised form of the Kirkcudbrightshire surname MacHarg, According to a family history website, ‘There were two main branches of this family: the MacHargs of Shalloch in the parish of Kirkpatrick-Irongray... and the MacHargs of Cardorkan in the parish of Minnigaff [= *Cordorkan, now a cottage in the Wood of Cree*]. The latter group ... appear to have been of a turbulent nature; Finlay M’Quharg and others of the name were "charged with fire raising, and the burning of houses belonging to Steward of Fintillauch" in 1581, and in 1592 they took an active part in a Galloway feud. Further rare forms of the name include: *M’Quharge, MacElharge, MacIlhargy, MacIlhagga* and *Maharg*. In 1597, one Martin M’Quharg was burghess of Kirkcudbright, and on June 29th 1798, Isabella, daughter of Ebenezer and Barbara MacHarg, was christened in Newcastle-upon-

Tyne, Northumberland. The first recorded spelling of the family name is shown to be that of Marion M'Quharge, which was dated 1493...'

The origin of the name has puzzled a good many scholars. It is generally taken to be from early Gaelic **Mac gille Chairge*, 'son of the servant of Cairge'. Cairge has been taken (as on the website quoted) to be the name of an obscure saint, but there is no record of such a person, and in any case *c(h)airge* is the genitive singular form of *carrraig* 'a rock' (see Carrick above). It is just possible that **Carraig* was a Gaelic name for the Apostle Peter, patron of the Anglian monastery at Whithorn, whose name in Greek meant 'rock' (Matt. 16:18), but there is scant evidence for such a usage. Otherwise, 'lad of rock' is a credible nickname for a tough guy, 'boy from Carrick' is another possibility (Cordorkan lies more or less midway between Carrick on Fleet Bay and Carrick Isle where the Cree becomes the border of that district in south Ayrshire).

Luckie Hargs is associated by the Kirkcudbrightshire Places website with the surname Harcus, otherwise *Arcarse*, *Arcase*, *Orcas*, *Harcarse*, *Harkus* or *Hercus*, and most frequently Herkes(s). It is mainly a Berwickshire name, originating from the place-name Harcarse (*Harcarres* in 1200) now a farm in Fogo parish near Duns. However, leaving aside Hargs, no trace of this name is found in Galloway, indeed Harcus and Harkus are only recorded from Orkney, and it is notable that there is no record of any spelling with 'g'. There is unlikely to be any connection between this name and the Kirkcudbrightshire Harg and MacHarg.

So, whatever the real origin of her surname, we can reasonably infer that Luckie Harg was the wife or widow of a descendant of the MacHargs, probably of the Cordorkan branch, and that she may well have kept a tavern here at the entrance to the Boreland Gap.

Luskie Hill

The little hill overlooking the Gatehouse to Borgue road from the east near Barharrow may be Brittonic/ Cumbric **losgi* (Welsh *lloggi*) or **losgīg*, or else Gaelic *loisgte*; the literal meaning in any case would be 'burnt'. The Cumbric form may be found across the Solway at Newton Arlosh in Cumberland, originally *Arlosk*, '(place) near burnt land', and equivalent forms occur in Welsh, Cornish and Breton place-names, while the Gaelic one is used fairly commonly in the Highlands of parched ground or places where, for one reason or another, the vegetation had been, or appeared to have been, burnt.

Big and Little Loskie, rather more substantial hills to the east of Carsphairn, and Craiglosk south-east of New Galloway are likely to share the same origin. A little more doubtful are water-names apparently involving this element: the name of Corselus Strand flowing beneath the western edge of the Rinns of Kells probably refers to brown vegetation on the marshland through which it flows (for the first element, see Carstramon above), the same may have been true in earlier times at the location of Luskie Plantation and Luskie Dam near Old Garroch east of St. John's Town of Dalry, and perhaps at Luskie Burn between High and Low Nunton, north-east of Borgue, in Twynholm parish. However, an alternative possibility in these watery cases is Gaelic *lusach* 'herby, weedy, abounding in plants'. Overall, it is somewhat intriguing that there are so many names apparently of this type in The Stewartry.