The Expansion and Contraction of Gaelic in Galloway.

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For at least 600 years, between the tenth and the sixteenth centuries, Galloway was a Gaelic speaking land. Although both the beginning and the end of Gaelic Galloway are uncertain, that Gaelic was the language of the kingdom of Galloway established by Fergus in the early eleventh century and was still the main language of the Douglas lordship of Galloway at its end in 1455 is indisputable. In addition to the Gaelic personal and place names recorded in medieval charters, the thousands of Gaelic place names which survived to be recorded by the Ordnance Survey in the 1850s bear witness to Galloway's Gaelic past. Furthermore, despite the language shift to Scots, there is evidence of cultural continuity between the agriculture of Gaelic Galloway and the farming practice of seventeenth and early eighteenth century Galloway. Then, at the end of the eighteenth century, the process of agricultural improvement began, a process which has continued to the present. The cumulative effect of this process in the lowlands combined with afforestation in the uplands has been the erasure of Galloway's past. The Galloway landscape known by the Galloway Levellers and the Covenanters would have still been familiar to the medieval Gaelic farmers who named the land, but none would recognise the landscape of the present.

In 1755, it is estimated that 23% of the Scottish population (concentrated in the Highlands and Islands) spoke Gaelic. In 1901 only 4.5 % were still Gaelic speakers and by 2001 the numbers had fallen to 1.2%. Concern over the decline of Gaelic led to the passing of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act in 2005 and the establishment of the Bord na Gaidhlig in 2006. The Bord na Gaidhlig's priority is to increase the number of Gaelic speakers. In November 2010, Dumfries and Galloway's Community Learning and Development Service received funding of £45 000 from the Bord to support adult Gaelic learning in the region.[1] As the number of Gaelic speakers in the region increases, interest in the region's Gaelic history and the traces it has left in the place names of the region will also increase. The following is therefore a preliminary outline of the

1 Dumfries and Galloway Council Press Release 9 November 2010

expansion and contraction of Gaelic in Galloway which also includes suggestions for further research.

To begin with then, who were the Gaelic speakers who made such an impression upon the linguistic landscape of Galloway? This is not an easy question to answer. One possibility is that Gaelic had a very early origin in Galloway. The hypothesis is that in the fifth century, Gaelic speakers from the north of Ireland crossed over the North Channel to settle in the Rhinns of Galloway and gradually spread their language eastwards. If this happened, then Galloway was the first place in Scotland outwith Dál Riata where Gaelic was spoken. The difficulty with the early origin hypothesis is that it relies on the interpretation of place name evidence, in particular the distribution of the Gaelic place name element *sliabh*. This can mean mountain, hill or upland moor and there is very dense cluster of *sliabh* (as *slew-)* place names in the Rhinns of Galloway where Herbert Maxwell listed over thirty in 1887.[2] In compiling this study of over 4000 Galloway place names, Maxwell used the Ordnance Survey's six inch to the mile maps of Galloway. The fine detail provided by these maps was not preserved in later smaller scale maps. As an example, Maxwell found a *sliabh* place name, Slaeharbrie, in Kelton parish. Attempting to find Slaeharbrie using modern editions of Ordnance Survey maps proved impossible, but eventually it was found at NX 747 566 using the National Library of Scotland's digital archive of the six inch to the miles maps. Since the Scotland wide distribution of *sliabh* place names was later plotted using smaller scale maps, the Galloway cluster appeared more significant than it actually is. Recent research by Simon Taylor has found a much wider distribution of *sliabh* place names. This wider distribution also shows that *sliabh* cannot be used as an indicator of early Gaelic settlement.[3] Although there was close contact between Gaelic speakers in Ulster and the Rhinns of Galloway, this did not lead the early expansion of Gaelic in Galloway.

That Gaelic speakers from Ulster did not cross the North Channel to settle in the Rhinns of Galloway is indicated by an entry in the *Annals of Ulster* which Alex Woolf draws

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2 Maxwell H, *Studies in the topography of Galloway*, (Edinburgh, 1887). Also in Maxwell's *The Place Names of Galloway*, (Glasgow, 1930).

3 Taylor S, 'Sliabh in Scottish Place-names: its meaning and chronology', *Journal of Scottish Name Studies*, 1 (2007).

attention to.[4]

> AU 913.5 The heathen inflicted a battle-rout upon the crew of a new fleet of the
> Ulaid, on the 'Saxon shore' an many fell including Camuscach son of Mael
> Mochergi, king of Lecale.

As Woolf explains, the 'heathens' would have been Vikings, Lecale was the area around Downpatrick and the 'Saxon shore' (in this context) meant the coast of a Galloway still under Northumbrian control. Woolf goes on to wonder 'what the long-term-consequences might have been if the Ulaid had managed to establish their hegemony in Wigtownshire.' If the Ulaid of Ulster had been able to take such advantage of the collapse of western Northumbria, then one consequence would have been that events in Galloway would have been recorded in the *Annals of Ulster.* Another is that the region may never have acquired the name 'Galloway' since the Gaelic speaking people who gave their name to the region were the Gall-Ghàidheil, the 'foreign (Viking descended) Gaels'.

Up until 1986, the theory that Gaelic was brought to Galloway by the Gall-Ghàidheil in the tenth century was generally accepted. In that year a conference of the Scottish Society for Northern Studies was held in Gatehouse-of-Fleet where papers (subsequently published in 1991[5]) presented by Edward Cowan and Daphne Brooke cast doubt on this theory. Cowan highlighted the lack of evidence for Viking settlement in Galloway and Brooke drew attention to the difficulty of connecting historical references to the Gall-Ghàidheil with Galloway. Consequentially, the Gall-Ghàidheil hypothesis fell into disrepute. However, recent work by Thomas Clancy has helped to clarify the relationship between the Gall-Ghàidheil and Galloway.[6] The following is a summary of Clancy's very detailed findings, which include research carried out since 1991.

Although the Gall-Ghàidheil are first recorded in mid-ninth century Ireland, their origins are likely to have been in Scotland, possibly in the Kintyre/ Argyll area where Viking

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4 Woolf A, *From Pictland to Alba* (Edinburgh 2007), p. 140.
5 In Oram R and Stell G (editors) , *Galloway Land and Lordship*, (Edinburgh, 1991).
6 Clancy T, 'The Gall-Ghaidheil and Galloway', *Journal of Scottish Name Studies*, 2 (2008).

settlers were absorbed into a Gaelic speaking community. This was a different situation to that found in the Hebrides and Western Isles where Gaelic did not survive Viking settlement and where Gaelic did not return until the twelfth century. In contrast, the suggested Kintyre/Argyll settlement led within a generation or two to the emergence of a Norse influenced but Gaelic speaking people who were established on Bute by 900. By 1034, when the *Annals of Ulster* record the death of Suibne mac Cinaeda as *ri Gall Gaidel*, the Gall-Ghàidheil territory Suibne ruled probably extended along the coast of the lower Firth of Clyde and into Renfrewshire and Ayrshire, including Carrick.. By the beginning of the twelfth century the term Galloway (implying the territory of the Gall-Ghàidheil) was loosely used to describe a large part of south-west Scotland. This 'greater' Galloway stretched from Renfrewshire in the north-west as far south-east as the Annandale/ Nithsdale border.

Confusingly, the region now called Galloway (Wigtownshire and the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright) may not have been part of this Gall-Ghàidheil territory. In 1065 Echmacarch mac Ragnaill died on pilgrimage to Rome and his death was noted by an Irish chronicler who described him as *rex ina renn,* king of the Rhinns. This is assumed to mean the Rhinns of Galloway (which had still been the 'Saxon shore' in 913) and his kingdom included the Machars of Wigtownshire. Between 1036 and 1052, Echmacarch was twice ruler of Dublin and for a time the Isle of Man was part of his kingdom, although it is not known if Echmacarch's kingdom extended into the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright. The conclusion Thomas Clancy draws from this is that 'the Gall-Ghàidheil were not the only Norse-dominated Gaelic-speaking group to have been colonising the south-west'. The implication is that Gaelic may have arrived in Galloway both by land, via the Gall-Ghàidheil of the Firth of Clyde and Ayrshire; and by sea, via Dublin and Norse-Gaelic Ireland.

Although the precise details of how it was achieved remain elusive, by the beginning of the twelfth century Gaelic was established as the language of a Galloway which embraced south-west Scotland. It was within this greater Galloway that Fergus of Galloway carved out his smaller kingdom. With benefit of hindsight, if it had not been for

Fergus, Gaelic may have vanished much sooner than it did from south-west Scotland. On the other hand, it is possible that the survival of Gaelic in Fergus' lesser Galloway was at the expense of a more rapid decline of Gaelic in greater Galloway.

The key figure here is Fergus' contemporary, King David I of Scotland. Amongst the problems faced by David I when he became king of Scotland in 1124 was that he had little control over south-west Scotland. David's response, continued by his successors, was the feudalisation of south-west Scotland which started the Bruce, Stewart and then Douglas families eventual rise to power. The introduction of these Norman and Flemish families into south-west Scotland prevented Fergus from expanding his kingdom and thus reduced Gaelic Galloway to the region (which included Carrick) controlled by Fergus. Critically, although described by Richard Oram as a 'failed kingdom',[7] the territorial unit created by Fergus survived until the forfeiture of the Douglas lordship of Galloway in 1455 and Gaelic was to persist in the remnant of this 'failed kingdom' for a further hundred years.

It is to this persistence of Gaelic in Galloway that we now turn. There are two main factors to take into account when considering the survival of Gaelic in Galloway. The first factor could be described as political and the second as economic. The political factor can be illustrated by the career of Edward Balliol. The *Chronicle of Lanercost* notes that the people of Galloway supported Edward Balliol's bid for the Scottish throne since they regarded him as their 'dominus specialis', their 'special lord'.[8] This support for Edward Balliol derived from his descent from Fergus of Galloway and was maintained throughout Edward's reign. Significantly, his last toe-holds on Scottish soil were at Buittle and Hestan Island in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright. Without the support of Galloway's Gaelic kindreds (or clans) like the McDowalls, McLellans and the McCullochs, [9] Edward Balliol's attempt to rule Scotland may have been over by 1336 rather than lasting to 1356 when he finally admitted defeat.

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7 Oram R, *The Lordship of Galloway*, (Edinburgh 2000), p.284
8 *Chronicon de Lanercost*, (Edinburgh, 1839), p. 269
9 Beam A, *The Balliol Dynasty 1210-1364* (Edinburgh, 2008), p. 223.

That Edward Balliol was able to rely on the support of Galloway's Gaelic kindreds long after the rest of Scotland had rejected him as king indicates the strength of his position as Galloway's 'special lord'. This in turn reveals the failure of feudalisation to transform the Gaelic political structure of Galloway. Although Fergus' son Uchtred had attempted to feudalise western Galloway, for example through his son- in- law Walter de Berkeley who built the still impressive Motte of Urr, the feudal system did not become established in the Galloway created by Fergus. In contrast, outwith Fergus' Galloway, the process of feudalisation led to the rise to power of the Bruce, Stewart and Douglas families. With exception of Carrick (which was probably part of Fergus' domain), Gaelic declined more swiftly in the lands controlled by these families than it did in Galloway. As discussed below, it is likely that the decline of Gaelic in Galloway began during the period of Douglas rule (1369-1455). The Douglases were given political control over Galloway in response to Gaelic Galloway's support for Edward Balliol. Although Gaelic survived the Douglas era in Galloway, it did so with diminished political status. The Gaelic which survived was the everyday language of the people while Scots had become the language of the region's administrative and land holding elite.

The economic factor which influenced the survival of Gaelic Galloway was its integration with agricultural practice. The main evidence for this comes from Galloway's (approximately) 2000 Gaelic farm names. More ambiguous is the possibility that patterns of medieval farming practice which the Gaelic farm name evidence reveals persisted into the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

In 1933, a number of sacks were found in the loft of the Tolbooth in Kirkcudbright. On examination the sacks were found to contain several thousand seventeenth century documents and the find was brought to the attention of R.C.Reid. With the support of the marquis of Bute, Reid arranged for the documents to be transcribed and published as the *Kirkcudbright Sheriff Court Deeds 1623 -1674* in 1939 and as the *Kirkcudbright Sheriff Court Deeds 1675-1700* in 1950. While researching the 1724 uprising of the Galloway Levellers, I found the *Deeds* contained a wealth of information on life in the seventeenth century Stewartry, including approximately 500 entries (mainly tacks -rental agreements)

which gave a key insight into pre-Improvement agricultural practice. After completing the Galloway Levellers research, I returned to the *Deeds* and extracted over 1500 farm and crofts names from them. Although the language of the *Deeds* is Scots, the overwhelming majority of the farms recorded have Gaelic names.

Unfortunately, in most cases it is not possible to compare the tacks found in the *Deeds* with earlier evidence. However, in a few cases it is possible to use information from the *Exchequer Rolls* to make a comparison with mid-fifteenth century agricultural practice. In 1456, following the forfeiture of the Douglas landholdings in Galloway to James II, a detailed inventory of the Douglas lands in Galloway was made. This included information of the crops grown and livestock held, revealing, for example, the use of oxen for ploughing on various grange lands like those of Kelton. Two hundred years later, the *Deeds* contain several references to the use of oxen for ploughing, including a specific reference in a tack for Kelton Hill farm,[10] which is recorded as Ovirkelton in the *Exchequer Rolls*.

While this example indicates continuity of farming practice between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries neither Kelton Hill nor Ovirkelton are Gaelic farm names. Of more interest are two tacks for Drumbuie farm in Kells parish.[11] Both tacks include the instructions that if any cattle pasturing on Staiverran in the summer half of the year stray down to Drumbuie, the tenants of Drumbuie are to return them to the 'heft'. Staiverran (now Staverran Hill) is on the west side of the Rhinns of Kells and to reach Drumbuie the cattle would have had to pass through Clenrie. As Clunaree, Clenrie, along with Drumbuie and neighbouring Largmore, Largvey and Barskeoch was one of the Douglas lands forfeited in 1455 and recorded in the *Exchequer Rolls* in 1456. These are all Gaelic farm names and Clenrie/ Clunaree is likely to contain the Gaelic place name element *airigh* meaning sheiling or (summer) hill pasture. If this is so, then although the tenants of Drumbuie were probably Scots speakers by the mid-seventeenth century, the pattern of farming practice revealed by their tacks had been established by Gaelic speakers.

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10 *Kirkcudbright Sheriff Court Deeds 1623-1674* (Edinburgh, 1939), entry 430.
11 *Kirkcudbright Sheriff Court Deeds 1623-1674* (Edinburgh, 1939) entry 1280 and *Kirkcudbright Sheriff Court Deeds 1675-1700* (Edinburgh, 1950) entry 1938.

As similar example can be found in a tack for Kilnair [12](near Lochnivar) in Dalry parish. As well as revealing that sheep's milk cheese was being made, the tack mentions 'cornland' and 'beirland' and 'two naigis for labouring of the ground' - so this small hill farm grew oats and bere and had two horses to plough the 'arrable land'. Herbert Maxwell in his *Place Names of Galloway* suggested that Kilnair is from the Gaelic *cuil an air* meaning either 'corner of the slaughter' or 'corner of the ploughing'. Michael Ansell, who is researching the Gaelic place names of Galloway and Carrick, has visited Kilnair (where traces of arable enclosures can still be seen) and considers that 'corner of the ploughing' is the more likely. So Kilnair provides another example of farming practice established by Gaelic speakers which continued into the seventeenth century and probably until the end of the eighteenth century.

In Balmaghie parish, close to another *airigh* farm (Airie farm and Airie Hill) three pre-Improvement settlements similar to Kilnair have been surveyed by Piers Dixon [13]of RCAHMS. These are on Stroan Hill, Laughenghie Hill and near Darngarroch Bridge (on the Laurieston to Gatehouse road). At Stroan, Dixon found traces of lazy-bed (spade-dug) cultivation which may indicate cultivation by cottagers of corners which could not be cultivated by ploughing. Dixon notes that there are more extensive areas of lazy-bed cultivation at Laughenghie, at High Eldrig in Wigtownshire and Auchensoul in south Ayrshire and that although the distribution of lazy-beds (*feannagan* in Gaelic) is mainly confined to north-west Scotland, they are also found in Argyll as well as Galloway and Ayrshire. Significantly, however, the lazy-beds of the north-west can be distinguished from those of the south-west by their form of construction. In addition, a distinctive 'Galloway-type' curvilinear plough formed rig and furrow is found across Galloway, southern Ayrshire and Argyll. More generally, the rig and furrow of this south-west zone can be also be distinguished from the types found in eastern Dumfriesshire and the Borders.[14]

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12 *Kirkcudbright Sheriff Court Deeds 1623-1674* (Edinburgh, 1939), entry 1110.

13 Dixon P : 'Field Systems, rig and other cultivation remains' in Foster S and Smout T: *The History of Soils and Field Systems* (Edinburgh, 1994), p.46.

14 www.startrust.org.uk/RIG%20AND%20FURROW-AF.PDF accessed 7 February 2011

Unfortunately, surveys of surviving areas of rig and furrow around abandoned upland settlements do not provide clear dating evidence. So although Galloway, south Ayrshire and Argyll appear to form a distinct region with a shared pattern of pre-Improvement cultivation forms, a cultural (Gaelic language) connection originating with the Gall-Ghàidheil cannot be directly established. On the other hand, the evidence of Galloway's *airigh* farm names and of that of Kilnair does show a connection between their Gaelic names and the agricultural practices the farm names reveal. For *airigh* farms in particular, a study comparing the *airigh* farms of Wigtownshire with those of the Stewartry would be useful.

In contrast to the uplands, physical evidence of medieval Gaelic agriculture in lowland parishes is almost entirely absent. The main exception is the Kirkcudbright Army Training Range which occupies most of the medieval parish of Dunrod, gifted to Holyrood Abbey by Fergus of Galloway.[15] Here extensive areas of rig and furrow survive around the site of a moated manor house and Dunrod kirk. Elsewhere agricultural improvement and the intensification of dairy farming have swept away all traces of the medieval landscape. This loss of evidence from the lowland landscape is frustrating. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, what Piers Dixon has described as 'an influx of Anglo-Norman and Flemish immigrants'[16] introduced new agricultural techniques and systems of land management across lowland Scotland. Richard Oram has analysed the 'cultural complexity' of these changes as they occurred in medieval Galloway.[17] The complexity of the changes in Galloway follow from the existence side-by-side of a native Gaelic nobility and Anglo-Normans introduced by Roland (Lachlann) and Alan of Galloway.

It is possible that careful sifting of place and farm name evidence could reveal the patterns of this cultural complexity in the landscape. As an example, the correlation between *Ingleston* farm names and Norman style mottes may indicate the continued presence of English speakers established by Anglo-Norman lords. However, as Oram

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15 Barrow G, *The Acts of William I, King of Scots, 1165- 1214*, (Edinburgh, 1971), p.147.
16 Dixon P, *Puir Labourers and Busy Husbandmen, the Countryside of Lowland Scotland in the Middle Ages* (Edinburgh, 2002) p.8.
17 Oram R, *The Lordship of Galloway* (Edinburgh, 2000), Chapter 9 'Land and Society'.

explains, mottes were built by both native and incoming land owners.[18] Thus in Borgue there are three mottes. Two were built for Anglo-Normans; Hugh de Morville at Boreland of Borgue and Robert de Campania at Roberton, while the motte at Barmagachan can be linked to the native Askeloc or McGachen family who were granted land in Borgue by Dervorgilla in 1282. In 1260, Robert de Campania's lands in Borgue were called Castleton and, assuming the Roberton motte was the de Campania motte, Ingleston in Borgue would have been part of these lands since the present farm house is only 500 metres from the Roberton motte while its 1 km from the Barmagachan motte.

But does this mean that in the thirteenth century Ingleston was being worked by English speaking farm labourers while the neighbouring farm of Barmagachan employed Gaelic speaking labour? Or were the Ingleston farms (of which there are five in the Stewartry, three in Dumfriesshire and one, now extinct, in Wigtownshire) given their names two or three centuries later by Scots speakers through proximity to nearby mottes , traditionally believed to have been built by 'the English'? For Ingleston in Borgue, its close proximity to Robert de Campania's Castleton on one side and to Barmagachan and its motte on the other suggests that its name originated in the thirteen century when it was farmed by the de Campania's English speaking tenants. If (see discussion of farm formation in Buittle and Kelton below) Gaelic speakers had formed the farm, it would have been given a Gaelic name.

Adam Gray, whose family have farmed Ingleston in Borgue since 1840, found that the average 'arable acreage amongst the knowes' of Ingleston's fields is 15.8 acres. This is close to the 15 English acres of a bovate (Scots oxgate). These bovate sized fields are 1/8 divisions of the 120 acres of an English carucate (Scots ploughgate). As Gray explains, the carucate 'was the amount of land that could be ploughed by a team of eight oxen in a year', so that 'in simplistic terms there would be about eight families living in a ferme-toun', each owning one ox.[19] The implication is that when Ingleston and other farms were improved in the late eighteenth century, the 'new' fields conserved rather than replaced a medieval field system based on bovates. In Borgue, this pattern of land division may date

18 Oram R, *The Lordship of Galloway* (Edinburgh, 2000), p. 228.
19 Gray A, *Borgue- its Land and People* (Wigtown, 2001), p.46.

back to the 1160s, when Hugh de Morville from Cumberland was granted land there by Uchtred of Galloway. On the other hand, the only reference to bovates found by Richard Oram was a grant by Robert I of eight bovates to Richard McGuffog at Claunch and Kilstire in Sorbie, Wigtownshire. Using place names, Oram found greater evidence for the presence of the Gaelic *ceathramh* and *pheighinn* land divisions, but found that the 'eclecticism' of the various Gaelic and non-Gaelic land valuation units used in Galloway made it difficult to draw any firm conclusions.[20] Michael Ansell's ongoing research into the Gaelic place names of Galloway and Carrick will help to resolve this confusion.

Turning to Buittle, another lowland parish, there are fourteenth century records which reveal the continued presence of Gaelic in the farmed landscape. In 1324, King Robert 1 granted most of Buittle to James Douglas.

> Charter by King Robert the Bruce to James, Lord of Douglas, knight, for his homage and service, of the whole land of Botle in Galloway, namely, the whole parish of Botile, except Corbettoun and Patrick MacGibbothyn's lands, namely, from the place where the water of Vr falls into the sea, and along the old Vr until it again runs into the water of Vr, and along the water of Vr to the marches of the land of Crossmychelle and of Corbettoun, and thence by the old marches to a certain land which is called Knokynbotile, and so from Knokynbotile by the old marches to the land of Torrys, and thence by the old marches to the lands of Brethtathe and so to the marches of the lands of Torrys and Brethtathe as far as the marches of Keltoun, and as the marches of Keltoun and Brethtauth coincide, to a certain stream which runs from the mill of Keuilstoun [Gelston], and so by a certain stream that runs between the lands of Brethtauth and Keuilstoun, and from that stream as it runs until it comes to a certain land called Rinteishey : To be held by the said James and his heirs, of the King and his heirs, in free barony, fee and heritage, with the right of patronage of churches, freedom of burgh, wreck of the sea, anchorages of harbours, and all other privileges belonging to the said barony, with exemption from all prisages, captions, carriages, etc., by the King's bailies or

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20 Oram R, *The Lordship of Galloway* (Edinburgh, 2000), pp.235-241

servants within the said barony ; reserving the four pleas belonging the Crown, only : Rendering yearly at Trequer a pair of gilt spurs, at the feast of the Nativity of our Lord, for all other service, ward, relief, marriage, suit of court, and all other demands. Berwick-on-Tweed, 24th February [1324].[21]

Working from the present boundaries of Buittle parish, this charter gives its boundaries in anti-clockwise order. Urr Waterfoot lies between Castlehill Point in Colvend parish and Almorness Point in Buittle. The parish boundary then follows the windings of the Urr north-west up to Corbieton House and farm. The boundary with Crossmichael parish follows the march dykes of Dunjarg and Blackerne farms south -west towards Ernespie farm. The boundary then follows the march dyke of Ernespie and a stream south towards Torrs farm which is in Kelton parish. The Kelton/Buittle boundary now follows Leathes Burn to Torrs Moss (formerly a loch) and then another stream from Torrs Moss south-west again towards the Gelston Burn. Where sections of stream have since been straightened, the boundary follows the straightened course.

The Gelston Burn flows west into Carlingwark Loch. The Buittle boundary follows the burn east towards Gelston, where the remains of a mill still exist.. Near Breoch Cottage, the Gelston burn turns south-west towards Gelston mill and the Buittle boundary follows the edge of Gelston Estate for a short distance before reaching the Doach Burn. The Doach Burn then Potterland Lane (a straightened watercourse) divide Buittle from Kelton and finally the Orchardton or Chapelcroft Lane (another watercourse), which flows into Orchardton Bay is the Buittle / Rerrick boundary. The Almorness peninsula separates Orchardton Bay and Auchencairn Bay from the mouth of the Urr. Hestan Island, which can be reached at low tide from Almorness Point, is in Rerrick parish.

The following is a list of the fourteenth century farms recorded in Buittle.
1324 : Corbettoun, Patrick McGybbothyn's lands, Knokynbutil, Brethtath or Brechcach, Rinteishey.
1330/33: Lathys.[22]

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21 Fraser W, *The Douglas Book*, (Edinburgh 1885) Vol. III, Charter No. 15, p. 12/13
22 *Registrum Honoris de Morton* (Edinburgh, 1853) Vol. II, p.73, no. 95

1370 : Knokys, Sewynkirk Kenmore, Logane, Colenknauc.[23]

1374/6 : Clouchlarbane, Ambrenes, Marnauch, Barteane, Castlegour, Brekauchlug, Mikilbrekauch, Duo Knokis, Balgirdane, Logane and Porthuly, Clak..tis, Villa de Butyll, Munchyes, Towarde and Tibernes with Culnaw, Buittle mill.[24]

1393 : Forty mark lands of Meykle Bregauch of Bregauchlug and of Castlegour. [Written in Scots rather than Latin.][25]

In the *Exchequer Rolls* for 1456[26] the farms listed were : Almorness, Munches, ville de Buttil, Balgreden, Hanckcolathez, Mikilknox, Litilknox, Guffokland. Marynach, Clune, Culegnaw, Corvare, Cule, Brekhalch, Corbartoun, Irisbutil, mill of Buttil. Most of these are still farms. The 20 which can be identified are: Almorness, Balgredan (until circa 1820), Barchain, Breoch, Old Buittle Mains (Buittle Castle), Castlegower, Clone, Corbieton, Corra, Cuil, Cullinaw, Guffogland, Hacketleathes, Leaths, Little Knox, Meikle Knox, Logan (East and West), Marnoch (until circa 1750), Milton of Buittle, Munches and Orchardton (Irisbutil in the *Exchequer Rolls*). This leaves Patrick McGibbothyn's lands, Rinteishey, Sewynkirk Kenmore, Clouchlarbane, Porthuly, Clak..tis, Torward and Tibernes unidentified. For Sewynkirk Kenmore, a rough location can be given. Near Meikle Knox there is a Kenmore Hill and, until it was drained in the early nineteenth century, below Kenmore Hill there was a Kenmore Loch. From its context as a boundary feature, Rinteishey may be another name for the Almorness peninsula. The other locations are more difficult to identify.

A question which arises from this evidence is that of farm formation. Did all the farms recorded in 1456 already exist in 1324, or had some new farms been created? The 1324 charter mentions *Brethtathe*. By 1376 this farm had become *Brekauchlug* and *Mikilbrekauch* (also in 1393) but by 1456 there was once more only a single farm, *Brekhalch* which is now Breoch farm. In the area between Torrs and *Brekhalch,* the farms of *Cule* and *Corwar* (now Cuil and Corra) are first recorded in 1456. The Kelton/Buittle boundary forms a distinct 'corner' here, and the Gaelic *cuil* means corner. Cuil

23 *Registrum Honoris de Morton* (Edinburgh, 1853) Vol. II, p.10, no.13
24 *Registrum Honoris de Morton* (Edinburgh, 1853), Vol. I, p. lix
25 *Registrum Honoris de Morton* (Edinburgh, 1853), Vol. II, p.190, no. 200.
26 *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1883), Vol.VII, p.191

farm occupies this corner of Buittle. If there had been a farm here in 1324, it could have been used as a reference point in Robert I's charter. If Cuil had existed in 1376, it would have been included in the rental roll. In 1376, *Mikilbrekauch* had 10 tenants, the largest number of all the farms listed. Since *Brekauchlug* with two tenants and *Castelgour* with one tenant had already been formed from the *Brethtathe* of 1324, it is likely that Cuil and Corra were created by a division of *Mikilbrekauch* sometime after it was recorded as *Mykle Bregauch* in 1393.

When a comparison is made with the situation in Kelton, an interesting linguistic divergence emerges. By 1456, a farm called *Qhuitpark* (now Whitepark)[27] existed on the other side of the Kelton/ Buittle boundary from *Cule*. *Qhuitpark* is a Scots farm name. Does this mean that the tenants of *Qhuitpark* were Scots speakers, while their neighbours in *Cule* only half a mile away were still Gaelic speakers? Or was *Qhuitpark*, like *Carlynwerk* (Carlingwark) on the west side of Carlingwark Loch, and which also first appears in 1456, Scots in name only and worked by Gaelic speaking tenants? The other farms in Kelton recorded in 1456 are Nether, Middle and Over Kelton; Nether, Over and Middle Lochdougan; Slagnaw, Dildawn and Kelton Grange (now Kelton Mains). Torrs is not included. Across the Dee was Threave Grange (now the derelict Threave Mains) in Balmaghie. Unlike the farms in Buittle, these farms were part of David II's 1369 grant of 'all the lands between the Nith and Cree' to Archibald the Grim and so would have been directly managed to supply his new castle on Threave Island.

Richard Oram has traced the ownership of Buittle between 1324 and 1388.[28] After the death of James Douglas in Spain in 1330, between 1332 and 1354 Edward Balliol recovered Buittle which, along with Hestan Island, became the last piece of Scottish territory he held. Despite this practical detail of possession by Edward Balliol, in 1342 David II confirmed Henry Douglas' as his brother James successor to Buittle. After Henry died in 1347, his nephew William, the first earl of Douglas acquired Buittle. However, William Douglas was a minor and living in France in 1347 which allowed William Douglas of Liddesdale to gain control over Buittle. After William of Liddesdale

27 *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1883), Vol.VII, p.192.
28 Oram R, 'A Note on the ownership of the Barony of Buittle', *TDGNHAS,* Third Series, Vol. 67 (1992)

was murdered in 1353, his daughter Mary inherited. After her death in 1367, Buittle passed to James Douglas of Dalkeith for whom the Buittle rental roll of 1376 was produced. When Arrchibald the Grim became the 3rd earl of Douglas in 1388, the Douglases of Dalkeith became his vassals. Despite the forfeiture of Douglas lands in 1455, the Douglases of Dalkeith continued to claim their rights over the baronies of Buittle, Preston (Kirkbean) and Borgue until 1567 [29] but by 1587 John Maxell as earl of Morton had his tenants in several farms in Buittle.

> Buittle: John Maxwell in Balgreddan, Robert Maxwell in Braecroft, George Mayre in Haughmuir, James Muir in Dalveen, Alexander Gordon in Slognay, David Max[well] in Trowgrain, John MacGill in Knock, Allan Muir, Robert Lowrie in Little Knock, George Carns in Munches, John Gourlay in Castelgower, John Gordon in Cuil, David Neilson in Ha Cleuch, Thomas MacCartney in Craigton, John Smith in Guffogland, John Smith in Corbartoun, John MacCallolby in Lochdougan, Herbert Paterson there, John MacGee there, Paul Fowler there, John Hannay there.[30]

A feature of the above list, which is even more obvious in the full text which contains over one hundred names of Maxwell tenants, is the loss of most of the Gaelic surnames found in the 1376 rental. For example, in 1376 the tenants of Mikilbrekauch were Gilbert McGuffok Andrew and John McOrry, Gilbert McCorrill, Thomas McGilrewy, John McCrikir, John McClafferty, Andrew Fullon and Donald McGilreigne. In Almorness there were Patrick McGilqwhud, Gilbert McWren, Patrick McGilalwy, Gilbert McGillyn, Gilbert McCumyne, Gilbert McGilfud, Henry McAlcok and John Herwynd. Very few of these can be identified in George Black's *The Surnames of Scotland.* Like the McGilbothyns, who are included in Black's work, these members of Buittle's Gaelic community seem to disappear after the fourteenth century. Only the Gaelic names of their farms have survived.

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29 *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, K.M. Brown et al eds (St Andrews, 2007-2010), 1567/4/23. Date accessed: 10 November 2010.
30 *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, K.M. Brown et al eds (St Andrews, 2007-2010), 1585/12/38. Date accessed: 10 November 2010.

Through their support for Edward Balliol as lord of Galloway (rather than as king of Scotland), the leaders of Galloway's Gaelic community; the McDowalls, Mclellands and McCullochs,[31] became losers in a civil war. This led to their replacement as tenants-in-chief by Scots speakers loyal to the Douglases. In Borgue, Archibald the Grim gave the barony to James Douglas of Dalkeith in place of the McDowells. In the Glenkens, Archibald gave his allies the Glendinnings lands in Parton and persuaded Gilbert McLellan to sell him his lands in Balmaclellan. To manage his affairs in the Stewartry, Archibald appointed Thomas Hert and Alexander Mure as stewards of Kirkcudbright.[32] If the McGilbothyn family of Buittle supported Edward Balliol, this would explain their subsequent disappearance from historical records.

With more Scots speakers in positions of power, Gaelic/ Scots bilingualism would have become more necessary. On estates with Gaelic speaking tenants-in-chief, the everyday management of the farms could be carried out in Gaelic. But as Archibald the Grim and his successors began ruling Galloway, wherever their Gaelic tenants had to engage with the Douglas administration, the language used would have been.[33] The shift to Scots under the Douglases would still have left Gaelic as the everyday language of the less important tenant farmers as well as their cottars and crofters. Such use of Gaelic continued even after the Douglas lands passed to the Scottish Crown in 1455. Then, during the sixteenth century, Scots began its gradual take-over.

This advance of Scots is likely to have had two main sources. Firstly, the Crown began a piecemeal disposal of the Douglas lands, either selling them off to the existing tenants or to larger landowners. This process can be followed in the five volumes of P.H. McKerlie's *The Lands and their Owners in Galloway*.[34] While McKerlie could occasionally trace the ownership of an estate back earlier, usually his accounts of lands and their owners begin in the late fifteenth century. The records McKerlie used to

31 Beam A, *The Balliol Dynasty 1210-1364* (Edinburgh, 2008), p.223.
32 Brown M, *The Black Douglases : War and Lordship in Late Medieval Scotland 1300-1455* (Edinburgh, 2009), p.171
33 Fraser W, *The Douglas Book*, (Edinburgh 1885) Vol. III - see charters 103, 327, 354, 357, 360, 367, 371, 373, 375, 382,
34 McKerlie P, *The History of the Lands and their Owners in Galloway*, (Edinburgh, 1877)

document the bewildering complexity of the shifts and changes in the subsequent ownership of several hundred small estates across Galloway were legal records - charters, marriage agreements, sasines and wadsets. Even the least of Galloway's 'bonnet lairds', owning only two or three farms, had to engage with a Scots speaking legal system when inheriting, buying, selling or mortgaging their lands..

This leads on to the second source for the expansion of Scots in Galloway. After Threave castle ceased to be the administrative centre for the Douglas lordship of Galloway, the burghs of Wigtown and Kirkcudbright became the administrative centres for the Shire of Wigtown and the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright. These burghs were also trading and market centres. The formal language of these burghs was Scots and the Wigtown Burgh Court Book shows that Scots had become the formal language of the burgh by 1512.[35] Dr. Joanna Kopaczyk (formerly Bugaj) of the Adam Mikiewicz university in Poland has made a detailed study of the Wigtown Burgh Court records.[36] Her research suggests that Scots was already well established in Galloway by the early sixteenth century. Gaelic may have survived, but its status and importance had been reduced so it was only spoken by members of the 'lower classes'.

 Written records for the burgh of Kirkcudbright cannot be traced as far back as those of Wigtown, but it is likely that Scots had become the burgh language by the beginning of the sixteenth century as well. Once established in the burghs, the distribution of Galloway's population would have facilitated the spread of Scots from the burghs into the countryside. Although it is a later source, *The Parish Lists of Wigtownshire and Minnigaff, 1684* [37] shows that a Machars farm like Baldoon in Kirkinner parish (which was one of the Douglas lordship of Galloway's arable grange lands) supported 45 persons aged 12 and above. In contrast, none of the 13 Gaelic named farms in the upland Barony of Sleudinle (which contains the Gaelic place name element *sliabh*) in Kirkcowan parish had more than five occupants over the age of 12.

35 Truckell A, 'Wigtown Burgh Court Book 1512-1535', *TDGNHAS*, Third series, Vol. 62 (1987)
36 http://dspace-unibg.cilea.it/bitstream/10446/210/1/LeF19%282004%29Bugaj.pdf accessed 23 February 2011 and Bugaj J, *Middle Scots Inflectional System In The South-west Of Scotland* (Oxford, 2004)
37 Scott W, *The Parish Lists of Wigtownshire and Minnigaff, 1684* (Edinburgh, 1916)

A similar pattern is found in Minnigaff parish where an upland farm like Kirriereoch (which contains the Gaelic place name element *ceathramh,* a quarter division of land) in the Forest of Buchan had only four adult occupants while the Mains of Machermore on the fertile carseland of the Cree had 18 occupants. By 1684, the village of Minngaff had 165 adult inhabitants and according to Andrew Symson (see below), it also had

> a very considerable market every Saturday, frequented by the moormen of Carrick, Monnygaffe, and other moor places, who buy there great quantities of meal and malt, brought thither out of the parishes of Whitherne, Glaston, Sorbie, Mochrum, Kirkinner &c.[38]

It is not known when this weekly market at Minngaff was established, but it is likely to have been after 1455. Before then, the relationship between pastoral uplands and arable lowlands would have been managed and mediated as part of the internal working of the lordship of Galloway. Only after the traditional political and economic unity of Galloway became fragmented in the sixteenth century would the need for such markets arise. The moormen may still have spoken Gaelic amongst themselves, but the merchants they bought their meal and malt from would have been Scots speakers.

And yet, on the Isle of Man, on the Isle of Arran and in Ulster, Gaelic survived long after it did in Galloway. If Gaelic survived in these neighbouring locations, why did it not survive as the language of Galloway's farmers and cottars into at least the seventeenth century?

If Gaelic was still spoken in seventeenth century Galloway, its survival would have been noted by Andrew Symson. Symson was the Episcopalian minister of Kirkinner parish in Wigtownshire. In 1684, responding to an enquiry by Sir Robert Sibbald, Geographer Royal of Scotland, requesting information for a national atlas of Scotland, Symson began composing his *Large Description of Galloway.* Responding to Sibbald list of questions, Symson describes in detail the geography, climate, agriculture, customs, antiquities and

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38 Symson A, *A Large Description of Galloway*, (Edinburgh, 1823) p.30

superstitions of Galloway. If any there were any Gaelic speakers in Galloway, or if Gaelic had recently become extinct in Galloway, Symson would surely have noted this. Where Symson does discuss the language of Galloway, it is in the context of the local variations on the pronunciation of Scots.

> Some of the country people, especialy those of the elder sort, do very often omit the letter h after f, as ting for thing; tree for three; tacht for thatch ; wit for with ; fait for faith ; mout for mouth. So also, quite contrary to some north countrey people, (who pronounce v for w, as voe for woe; volves for wolves,) they oftentimes pronounce w for v, as serwant for servant; wery for very ... [39]

Yet, with the exception of some recently constructed cattle parks, Symson's descriptions of agriculture in Galloway indicate continuity with the region's medieval (Gaelic) pattern of farming. To explain the final end of Gaelic in Galloway, it is necessary to look for a decisive cultural and linguist break in Galloway's continuity with its medieval past. The most likely source of this break is the Scottish Reformation. The spoken language of the Reformation was Scots and its written language the English of the Bible. As the events of the later seventeenth century show, the Reformation and its 'renewal' through the Covenants became deeply embedded in the social fabric of Galloway. The key social group through which the Reformation spread in Galloway were the bonnet lairds who owned four or five farms which they worked themselves along side their tenants. The *Kirkcudbright Sheriff Court Deeds* indicate that there were as many as 700 such owner -occupier farmers in the Stewartry in the later seventeenth century. Traditionally, it was one such bonnet laird who began the Reformation in Galloway.

> Galloway was not far behind in the great work of Reformation. Early in the sixteenth century, Alexander Gordon of Airds, in the Stewartry, entertained some of the followers of Wycliffe, and had a New Testament in the Vulgar Tongue,

39 Symson A, *A Large Description of Galloway*, (Edinburgh, 1823) p.97

which he read to his neighbours, in a wood near his house, at a time when severe penalties and pains were enacted against all who did so.[40]

The tradition, established by Alexander Gordon, of the master of the house reading from the family Bible, became part of everyday life in Galloway as the Reformation developed.

Ultimately then, as the following lines from Robert Burn's *The Cottar's Saturday Night* suggest, it may have been the introduction of the Bible into even the most remote of Galloway's farms, cots and crofts which finally brought to an end Gaelic's centuries old place as the region's native tongue.

The cheerful supper done, with serious face,

They, round the fire, form a circle wide;

The sire turns over, with patriarchal grace,

The big hall-Bible, once his father's pride.

His bonnet reverently is laid aside,

His grey side-locks wearing thin and bare;

Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,

He selects a portion with judicious care,

And 'Let us worship God!' he says, with solemn air.

Robert Burns himself played a part in the age of improvement which swept away the last vestiges of Dumfries and Galloway's Gaelic landscape. On Whitsunday 1788 Burns became tenant of Ellisland farm, owned by Patrick Miller of Dalswinton. Before he could move into Ellisland, a new farmhouse had to be built (a process which took a year to complete) and the fields had to be dyked and ditched. Even then, Ellisland was not good arable land so Burns and his wife (Jean Armour, who managed the dairy) attempted to diversify into dairy farming using Ayrshire cattle – as the Old Statistical Account of

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40 Morton A, *Galloway and the Covenanters* (Paisley, 1914), p.26. The tradition was first recorded by Robert Wodrow (1679-1734) in his *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the Revolution* (Glasgow, 1829) Vol.III, p.108. Thomas Gordon of Earlston was one of Wodrow's correspondents., so the tradition is likely to be based on Gordon family history.

the parish of Dunscore notes.

> The black cattle, in general, are of the Galloway breed; but Mr. Robert Burns, a
> gentleman well known for his poetical productions, who rents a farm in this
> parish, is of the opinion, that the west country cows give a larger quantity of milk.
> [41]

The first these west country cows to arrive at Ellisland was a gift 'of the finest Quey in
Ayrshire' from Major Dunlop, son of Mrs Frances Dunlop.[42] Pioneered by Robert and
Jean Burns at Ellisland, the Ayrshire style of dairy farming expanded across the lowlands
of Dumfriesshire and Galloway in the nineteenth century. In the uplands, sheep farming
became the dominant land use from the late- eighteenth century until the mid-twentieth
century when sheep were replaced by extensive forestry plantations.

And yet, although Gaelic vanished from Galloway over 400 years ago, its presence
remains. From the tenth century to the fifteenth century, Gaelic was the language which
shaped and sustained the region through a long drawn out conflict with the kingdom of
the Scots. From the emergence of Fergus of Galloway and his 'failed kingdom' to the
disappearance of Edward Balliol, the last of Galloway's 'special lords', successive Scots
kings had to deal with problems created by the region. The eventual solution, the creation
of the Douglas lordship of Galloway, did not endure. Adding Galloway to the Douglases
already extensive lands made the family too powerful and led to James II's siege of
Threave castle in the summer of 1455. The resulting fragmentation of Archibald the
Grim's lordship revived the fortunes of Galloway's surviving Gaelic kindreds, including
the McCullochs, MacLellans and McDowalls who had supported Edward Balliol a
hundred years earlier. The 86 years of Douglas rule had, however, begun the language
shift to Scots.

The medieval pattern of farming which had developed in Gaelic Galloway survived for
another 300 years after the end of Douglas rule. This survival meant that the thousands of

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41 http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/link/1791-99/Dumfries/Dunscore/3/142/ Accessed 15 February 2011.

42 Wallace W, *Robert Burns and Mrs Dunlop,* (London, 1898), p.112, letter dated 17 November 1788

Galloway's Gaelic farm and place names were preserved and left an enduring legacy in the land itself. For the historian and the linguist, this means that Galloway's Gaelic past persists in the present, despite the intensification of agriculture in the lowlands and afforestation in the uplands. It also means that hundreds of Gaelic words are still spoken everyday in Galloway, preserved in the names of farms, fields, hills, rivers, moors and lochs. As more people begin to learn Gaelic in Dumfries and Galloway, they will be able to discover that the region's Gaelic heritage is written in the land itself.

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