

PLACE-NAMES
OF
ROSS AND CROMARTY

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KINCARDINE.

Kincardine—Kyncardyn 1275—G. Cinn-chàrdain; ‘cinn’ is the locative case of ‘ceann,’ head; cardain is of common occurrence in names on Pictish ground, cf. Adamnan’s Airchartdan, now Glen-Urquhart, Plus-carden, Carden-den, and the various Kincardines and Urquharts. Though not found in Gaelic, it appears in Welsh as ‘cardden,’ a wood, brake, whence Kin-cardine means Wood-head or Wood-end. The name originally no doubt applied only to the immediate neighbourhood of the church; whence it extended to the district served by the church, i.e., the parish. Such is the origin of most parish names. The parish falls into two divisions: the part drained by the Carron and its feeders, and the part beyond the watershed, toward Sutherland. We shall begin with the former.

Carron—There are two rivers Carron in Ross, and some half-dozen elsewhere in Scotland, all characterised by roughness of channel. The root is *kars*, rough, and, on the analogy of Gaulish rivers such as the Matrona, the primitive form of Canon would have been Carsona. It is doubtless pre-Gaelic, that is to say, Pictish; cf. Carseoli in Italy.

Pools in Carron are: *Poll na muic*, sow’s pool, opposite Gledfield; *poll a’ chapuill*, horse pool, near Braelangwell; *linne sgàinne*, pool of the burst, a large dam-like pool opposite Dounie; *poll an donnaidh*, pool of the mishap; *poll an t-slugaid*, pool of the gulp or swallow. With the last named we may connect Braghlugudi, which appears in 1529 as belonging to the Abbey of Fearn, and no doubt refers to the bràighe or braeface above the pool. In 1623 appears “part of Carron called Polmorral,” still known as Pollmoral. Mr Macdonald (Place-names of West Aberdeenshire) collects the following instances of this name: Balmoral, Polmorral on Dee near Banchory, Morall in Stratherne, Drummorrell in Wigtown, Morall and Lynn of Morall in the lordship of Urquhart, Morall mòr and Morall beag on Findhorn. Mr Macdonald suggests mòr choille, great wood, which is far from suiting the phonetics. The examples collected above may not all be of the same origin (Morel at Tomatin. for instance, is in Gaelic Móirl), but the second part of Poll-mòral above can hardly be other than mòral, majestic, noble. The pool in question is one of the largest on the river. Craigpolskavane appears on record in 1619, and appears to refer to a pool somewhere below Craigs, near Amat. There is a Loch Sgamhain in Strathbran.

Esbolg—Waterfall of bubbles, appears on record in 1657. On one of T. Font’s maps it is located on the river now known as the Blackwater, which joins the Carron at Amat, but on the old map called Ayneck (perhaps from confusion with the Eunag, a tributary of the Oykell). There is a large waterfall on this stream near Croick, now *Eas a’ mhuilinn*. Perhaps, therefore, Esbolg is the “Big Fall” on Carron. Balgaidh, bubbly stream, is the name of a river in Applecross; cf. also the better known Strathbhalgaidh, Strathbogy. Working from the eastern part of the parish along the south side of Carron, we have **Ardchronie**, G. àrd-chrònaidh, an obscure name; àrd, of course, means height or promontory; crònaidh may be from either crón, dark

brown, or crón, a hollow, both found in Irish names. Dr Joyce gives Ardcrone in Kerry as meaning brown height, and Ardcrony appears in the “Four Masters.”

Gradal—G. Gràdal, Norse Grá-dalr, gray dale; now usually called Badvoon.

Allt Eiteachan—(O.S.M. AUt na h-éiteig), probably from éiteach, root of burnt heather. Hence ‘an fhéill éiteachan,’ the Kincardine market.¹

¹ The old-established Feill Eiteachan, the winter market still held at Ardgay, is said to owe its name to a certain quartz stone (clach éiteag), the old custom being that the market was held wherever this stone happened to be at the time. The stone was sometimes shifted west by the Assynt men, and east by the men of Ross, but finally it was built into the wall of the present Balnagown Arms Hotel at Ardgay, and so the market has ever since been held there. I give the story for what it is worth. Ma’s breug bhuan e, is breug thugam e. But éiteachan cannot be based on éiteag, which is a loan word from English *hectic* (Macbain).