

Senchus

notes on early medieval Scotland

Clan Galbraith: Part 3 – Viking Britons? by Tim

Recently I've been wondering what the name Galbraith really means. In an earlier blogpost I mentioned that the Clan surname derives from Gaelic *Gall Breathnach* which incorporates the words for 'foreign' and 'Briton'. The second element indicates an ancestral connection with the Britons, a people whose identity is represented today by communities in Wales, Brittany and (to a lesser extent) Cornwall. In the second half of the 12th century, the period when the name *Galbraith* first appears in documents, a 'British' identity lingered also in a fourth region – the area around Glasgow. Here, in what had once been the kingdom of Strathclyde, the language of the Cumbri or North Britons had only recently been supplanted by Gaelic. Historians call this language Cumbric to distinguish it from Old Welsh, although the two were actually very similar. Cumbric had almost died out by the mid-1100s but might still have been spoken by a few older folk in remote Clydesdale villages.

It is generally accepted that the ancestors of the Galbraiths were identifiable, in some sense, as 'Britons', otherwise they would not have been called *Breathnach*. When we first encounter them in the earldom of Lennox in the late 12th century they are indistinguishable from other Gaelic-speaking families and seem to be just as 'Scottish' as everyone else. Their 'Britishness' was therefore bound up with their name but may already have been a distant memory by 1150. How, then, did the name originate?



(<https://senchus.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/benlomond1.jpg>)

Land of the Galbraiths: Loch Lomond and Ben Lomond (c.1780)

As stated in previous blogposts, I take the view that the Galbraiths are descended from the Cumbric-

speaking aristocracy of Strathclyde. The idea that the clan forefathers held land and authority in the old kingdom has been voiced by various people, not least by the Galbraiths themselves in their own histories and traditions. Against this scenario is the possibility that the clan ancestors came to Lennox from Wales, perhaps in the early 1100s, at the invitation of a Scottish king. Either theory could explain the 'British' connotation of their surname. The hypothesis of a Welsh origin has the added advantage of easily explaining the prefix *Gall*, 'foreign', because a Welshman in Strathclyde would not have been a Cumbric-speaking Briton but a 'foreigner'. Otherwise the prefix is hard to explain, for it is unlikely that any indigenous Briton of Strathclyde would be regarded as a foreigner in his homeland.

There is, however, another possibility. This popped into my head a few days ago while I was reading about the Gall-Gáidhil, the mysterious people who gave their name to Galloway. The Gall-Gáidhil first appear in the 9th century as warriors in Ireland, and later as raiders and settlers on the western seaboard of Scotland. In the chronicles of the time their origin is left unexplained but their name, which means 'foreign Gaels', indicates that they spoke Gaelic. Their recorded activities suggest that they had much in common with the Vikings. Indeed, they seem to have comprised several Gaelic-speaking groups who prowled the seaways between Scotland and Ireland in the period 850 to 1100, some of whom no doubt claimed Scandinavian ancestry. The first Gall-Gáidhil may have originated in Ireland, or in the Hebrides, or perhaps in both areas at the same time. They were, to some extent, distinguishable from the 'true' Vikings whose ancestors had come from Norway and Denmark, but the differences were probably quite blurred by c.1000. The name applied to the original Gall-Gáidhil may have identified them as native Gaels who had adopted a 'Viking' way of life, possibly as a result of intermarriage with Scandinavians. This would be the reverse of a situation that had already led many Scandinavian settlers to settle down as 'Gaelic' farmers within a few generations of the first Viking raids.

Although the Gall-Gáidhil are usually associated with what is now Galloway – clearly one of their main areas of settlement – their colonies in southwest Scotland evidently stretched northward to Ayrshire, into lands bordering the kingdom of Strathclyde. Much of Ayrshire had been ruled by the Clyde Britons in the 8th century, and again in the 10th, but by c.1000 large parts of the modern county had fallen to the Gall-Gáidhil. By c.1030, when Strathclyde was weakening, Gall-Gáidhil lords probably controlled a continuous band of territory between the Solway Firth and the North Ayrshire coast. In 1034 we hear of a Gall-Gáidhil king called Suibhne ('Sweeney') who may have ruled this area as a single realm.

So, where does this leave the origins of Clan Galbraith?



(<https://senchus.files.wordpress.com/2011/08>

[/galbraithtartan.jpg](#))

Clan Galbraith tartan

The following questions popped into my head while musing on the Gall-Gáidhil:

1. Could the name of this mysterious seafaring folk offer a clue as to why the Galbraith ancestors were regarded as 'foreign' Britons?
2. What did the prefix *Gall* really mean when applied to a particular group of people in the 10th and 11th centuries?

To answer the second question we need to look at the old Irish chronicles of the period. The authors of these texts didn't use our word 'Viking' but instead referred to a Scandinavian raider as *Gall*, 'Foreigner'. Since this term was used without any ethnic qualification we can assume that it conveyed a sufficiently precise meaning by itself, especially in the context of the time. Every native of Ireland in the period c.800 to c.1100 would have understood the connotations and implications of *Gall*. To them it meant simply 'Viking'.

The Gall-Gáidhil, then, were not merely 'Foreign Gaels' but 'Viking Gaels'. They behaved like the original Scandinavian Vikings but spoke Gaelic rather than Old Norse. Some may have had Danish or Norwegian ancestry mingled with Irish or Hebridean blood but their primary cultural affiliation or preferred 'ethnicity' defined them as Gaels. We can be reasonably certain that Gall-Gáidhil was a nickname bestowed by their neighbours and not a label they adopted for themselves. More than this we cannot say, for history tells us little about who they were and where they came from. But there might be enough here to permit some speculative musing on the origins of Clan Galbraith.

Returning to the first of my two questions, I've devised a new theory about the meaning of the clan surname, based on the above discussion. If one possible translation of Gall-Gáidhil is 'Viking Gael', might not a possible translation of *Gall Breathnach* be 'Viking Briton'? I'm not sure if this is actually a new theory, or if it has already been suggested by somebody else, but I'll run with it to the end of this blogpost and see how far it goes.

For the theory to have any substance it needs to fit with the circumstances of the period. In this regard it does not seem too preposterous. Everything we know, or can guess, about 10th-century Strathclyde suggests that the kingdom developed close links with several Viking powers. Relations in the previous century had been dominated by a significant event in 870: the destruction of Alt Clut, the

ancient capital of the Clyde kings at Dumbarton Rock, by a Viking force from Dublin. By the early 900s, however, these two erstwhile foes were getting along much better. Alliances were forged and combined military expeditions were undertaken, often in co-operation with Scottish kings against mutual enemies in England. Dynastic marriages between the Strathclyde royal family and the Scandinavian dynasties of Dublin and York probably sealed a few of these political agreements. When the last Viking kings of York were expelled by the English in the middle of the 10th century, it is quite possible that some of their henchmen sought sanctuary with the Clyde Britons. This would, at least, provide a plausible context for the Scandinavian-style hogback tombstones at Govan, the main centre of political and religious power in Strathclyde.



([https://senchus.files.wordpress.com/2011/08](https://senchus.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/govanhogback2.jpg)

[/govanhogback2.jpg](https://senchus.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/govanhogback2.jpg))

Hogback tombstone at Govan Old Parish Church, Glasgow (photo © B Keeling)

Any Scandinavian exiles from York or elsewhere who made permanent settlements among the Clyde Britons would have assimilated with the native population by adopting Cumbric speech and local customs. Otherwise they could not have thrived in their new home. Within a couple of generations they, too, would have become 'Britons', even if there was something noticeably different about their origins, a difference that identified them not as true natives of Clydesdale but as 'Viking Britons'. Their descendants in the following century would have been caught up in the displacement of Cumbric by Gaelic after the Scottish conquest of Strathclyde (c.1040-1070). But their Scandinavian ancestry might not have been forgotten, even after they adopted Gaelic speech, and a prominent individual among these 'Viking Britons' perhaps became known by the nickname *Gall Breathnach*. Or, in self-recognition of his family's heritage, he may have coined the nickname himself.

The above scenario would not be inconsistent with the earliest mention of the Galbraiths in medieval landholding documents. In the late 12th century we hear of Gillespic and Rodarcus *Galbrait*, sons of Gilchrist *Bretnach* ('the Briton'), and of their kinsman *Mac an Bhreatnaich* ('son of the Britons'). The epithets or nicknames show that these men treasured their ancestral Britishness, with Gilchrist being also keen to highlight the 'foreign' aspect by using the prefix *Gall*. The name Rodarcus, incidentally, looks like a Latin rendering of *Radharc* or *Riderch* (Welsh: *Rhydderch*), a name borne by at least one famous king of the Clyde Britons in former times. The early Galbraiths, of course, were not Britons in any meaningful sense, nor was anyone living in Scotland in the late 12th century. Both *Bretnach* and *Gall Breathnach* (=Galbrait) were anachronistic labels in any Scottish context after c.1100. If *Bretnach* here does not mean 'Welshman' – and I presently believe it doesn't – then its usage by the early

Galbraiths was little more than a nod to the past. It was, nevertheless, an important part of their family's identity and an aspect of their heritage that they wanted other people to know about.

This is about as far as I can take the theory right now. The whole thing is pretty much straight off the top of my head, with minimal consultation of primary or secondary literature. For instance, it hasn't been tested against current scholarly thinking on acculturation, language acquisition and other relevant topics. As a viable hypothesis it seems to work on a historical level, given what we know of political events in southern Scotland in the 10th and 11th centuries, but it might not stand up to scrutiny by an expert in Celtic linguistics. In any case, I'm not sure how far an ethnonym (Gall Gáidhil) given to a dispersed collection of pirate colonies can be employed as a plausible analogy for the surname of a prosperous Scottish landowning family. It's a question I'll leave for another day.

Comments welcome.

Notes

* As stated above, my idea about 'Viking Britons' might not be new, but the only similar thinking I know of at the moment is a footnote by the place-name scholar William Watson: *The name Galbraith goes to show, as has been noted, that there were 'foreign Britons' as well as 'foreign Gael'* (Watson 1926, p.174, n.1).

* The usual Gaelic name for the Hebrides recalls their colonisation by Vikings: *Innse Gall*, 'Isles of the Foreigners'.

* The Galbraiths call their clan, in Gaelic, *Breatanuich* ('The Britons') or *Clann-a-Breatannuich* ('Children of the Britons').

* I haven't discussed the possibility that the Galbraith ancestors originated among the Gall-Gáidhil. The latter's settlements in North Ayrshire were close to the heartland of Strathclyde and probably encroached on the kingdom before 1050 (see Broun 2004, p.139, n.117).

* Some theories on the identity of the Gall-Gáidhil, any or none of which might seem relevant to this blogpost:

'Gaelic-speakers perceived to be of Norse origin' (Broun 2004, p.136)

'renegade Irish associates of the pagan Norse and Danes' (Kirby 1975)

'A Gall-Gáidhil, a foreign Gael, was clearly a foreigner who spoke Gaelic' (Cowan 1991, 72)

'They are described as Scots and foster-children of the Norsemen, and sometimes they are actually called Norsemen' (Watson 1926, 172)

* Why did Gilchrist and his sons portray themselves as Britons? Here's a possible answer from my book *The Men of the North*: 'a Gaelic-speaker might identify himself as a *Bretnach* in contexts where a claim to British ancestry conferred some specific advantage, such as in property disputes over land formerly held by Britons' (Clarkson 2010, 198)

* And finally, a rather wild shot in the dark... Thinking about Inchgalbraith, a tiny artificial island or crannog in Loch Lomond where the early Galbraiths had their main stronghold, and musing on the idea that *Gall Breathnach* might mean 'Viking Briton', I'm wondering whose grave was marked by the hogback tombstone at Luss Church on the western side of the loch. Could this 'Viking' monument, carved in typical Strathclyde style by a Briton of the Govan stonecarving school, commemorate a *Gall Breathnach* from the island-fortress further along the shore?



(<https://senchus.files.wordpress.com>

[/2011/08/motn27.jpg](https://senchus.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/motn27.jpg))

Hogback tombstone at Luss Church (photo © B Keeling)

References

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Click here for [Clan Galbraith Part 1 \(https://senchus.wordpress.com/2010/05/29/clan-galbraith/\)](https://senchus.wordpress.com/2010/05/29/clan-galbraith/)
(which has a link to Part 2)

The series continues with [Clan Galbraith Part 4 \(https://senchus.wordpress.com/2014/09/29/clan-galbraith-part-4-viking-britons-again/\)](https://senchus.wordpress.com/2014/09/29/clan-galbraith-part-4-viking-britons-again/)

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66 comments on “Clan Galbraith: Part 3 – Viking Britons?”

Michelle Ziegler says:

August 30, 2011 at 4:41 am

Tim, I like this theory. I think its worth working on. Perhaps they were considered Irish or British because of their native language that may have continued as an accept into later times. Its not hard to imagine that a Viking warrior would join the retinue of a Strathclyde king, be given a local wife, and be given land where they became among the trusted retainers of the king. Children would probably be proud of their mixed ancestry from a high ranking local woman and a Viking who gained local respect.

Tim says:

August 30, 2011 at 7:38 am

That’s a good example of the kind of scenario I’m envisaging, Michelle. The military elite of 10th century Strathclyde was probably a melting-pot of different ethnicities (in so far as these were openly proclaimed or displayed by individual warriors). Intermarriage would have been a key factor, I think.

Elizabeth Roberts says:

August 30, 2011 at 6:35 am

I have forwarded this post to Alistair Moffat because it seems quintessentially the kind of inquiry that his DNA researches with Jim Watson illuminate

Tim says:

August 30, 2011 at 8:00 am

Thank you, Liz. I hope Alistair finds the post interesting. The genetic history aspect hadn’t occurred to me until you mentioned it, but I now see a possible connection. Last year Alistair kindly gave me a copy of his book *The Highland Clans* which is an excellent introduction to the broader topic.

Elizabeth Roberts says:

August 30, 2011 at 7:09 am

On the question of cultural assimilation, which I think can safely be assumed has not changed in its essentials since the 12th century: I grew up in north Kent and there were Gilchrists locally, well known as ‘growers’ and market gardeners like my grandfather Willy Gordon, a Scot who had come south from Glasgow with his brother when they were in their twenties to farm for Tate & Lyle. We were aware of Grandpa Gordon’s ‘Scottishness’ – he had a broad brogue – and we

ourselves kept Hogmanay because my father had grown up in Alloa, whence Oor Wullie was sent every week with Imperial mints and home made tablet to help us survive 'down south'. It is important in the context of this discussion that there was never any sense that, while retaining our right to certain tribal food and customs, such as to throw spilled salt with the right hand over the left shoulder and never give a purse without a coin in it for luck, we and families like the Gilchrists were 'immigrants'. We were among 'friendly tribes' including the Angles and Saxons with whom our grandparents had intermarried. A show of hands of those who are (in this sense) of mongrel extraction ie are of mixed Welsh, Scottish and/or English lineage at a recent discussion of Scottish 'independence' at Traquair House surprised the platform by how many we are – and it seems to me a factor that all 'Nats' should take into account.

Tim says:

August 30, 2011 at 8:17 am

Your family history provides a useful modern analogy for the kinds of processes I think were going on in early medieval times. I wouldn't be at all surprised if it was mirrored in the 10th century, by a Strathclyder moving south to render military service to a West Saxon king, receiving land and an English bride while continuing to observe the customs of his homeland.

I imagine the show of hands at Traquair House would also be mirrored 1000 years ago. Ethnic identities were probably just as blurred back then, at least in the upper levels of society where there was more scope to seek opportunities outside the area of origin.

Buannan says:

August 31, 2011 at 4:44 pm

Politics in scotland have nothing to do with perceived ethnicity and everything to do with political identity, but thats a different topic. Something similar may however be at the root of this topic ;~)

Gal, Gall, Gol: denotes a foreigner of any kind and it seems unlikely that it's common usage would have been restricted to those of Norse extraction alone.

In the case of Galbraith, if the Gal element does come from gall, as seems likely, I would think that the ever lineage centric gaels would add the designation to denote someone of non gaelic extraction, without prejudice simply noting "not of us", in that context it makes perfect sense.

Interestingly, William Wallace's family name is simply "Wallace" coming from the early english root word for foreigner, a saxon form of gall, which has come to be identified with the Welsh, in English only it must be said. Could it be that Wallace's family came from Wales and the rendering of the name coined in a slightly later age where english had come to be in common usage and replaced gaelic? Or perhaps local, but the family not having the prominence at a time when the name would have been rendered in gaelic and so we have the english form for the same thing? Equally the Wallaces may have arrived, as is the usual explanation, with the name in this form incoming under the fledgling scots feudal system of tenure?

The Gall-Gáidhil I feel were never one grouping and I think it possible the term may have been originally applied to any gaelic raider or follower of ethnically mixed or otherwise viking raider/magnate, who'd specifically renounced their baptism or simply joined with the heathens. As opposed to those gaels who fought with the vikings, but under the leadership of gaelic chiefs and kings in alliance with the vikings, and therefore nominally christian.

In other words their like us, but, "not of us". After all the clergy of later years may have had issues

accounting for the the fact that some supposedly christian gael's fought under the raven banner. The silence of the chroniclers, the fact that we have virtually no written records from the north west of scotland or the isles for this period, until the 12-13th centuries, says a lot about the state of the christian religion on the western seaboard during these turbulent times.

It is an interesting thought that intermarriage between britons of the clyde valley, or there about's and members of the fleeing post 1014 groupings of Gall-Gáidhil (the classic Gall-Gáidhils of the period) may have preserved such a family link in their family name. But I can't help but think any gaelic connection would have been to the fore whilst promoting ones family credentials in gaelic society. The enduring Gall-Gáidhils are still sat in the comfort of their houses nestled among the islands of their former Kingdom, the kingdom of the isles (earlier lochlinn perhaps?); MacLeod MacIvar Somerled's Clan Donald etc, all ceased to be Gall-Gáidhils once they embraced, or re embraced, the bosom of the church.....

Elizabeth Roberts says:

August 31, 2011 at 5:12 pm

A propos nothing in particular – well, I suppose a propos Britishness/Merlin etc – : my immediate neighbours in the upper Clyde valley are named MacArthur

Tim says:

September 1, 2011 at 8:28 am

There is a slight connection with the Galbraith topic, at least in folklore/legend. Although the conventional history of MacArthur origins claims a great-grandson of the Scottish king Malcolm Canmore (died 1093) as the clan ancestor, an alternative theory points to King Arthur himself (in his North British guise). Hence the three crowns on the clan shield represent the three kingdoms under Arthur's rule: Rheged, Strathclyde and Dal Riata

Tim says:

September 1, 2011 at 9:15 am

Thanks for your thoughts on this, Buannan. You have, of course, spotted the Achilles Heel in my theory, namely the likelihood that Gaelic Gall/Gal remained a non-specific term from c.800 onwards and meant no more than 'foreigner', even when used in contemporary references to Viking raids.

Another point on which I'm in agreement with you is the width of meaning in the term Gall-Gáidhil. Here, however, I still think 'Viking Gael' can be used in some contexts – although I've not yet worked out what these are.

Re: Wallace and the origins of his name. I lean towards the view that the family came originally from Wales and already had this name (given by the English) when they came to Scotland as Anglo-Norman knights.

Buannan says:

September 1, 2011 at 2:02 pm

Achilles heel or not, your post is most thought provoking, as usual and finds me completely distracted musing on the possibilities having read it.

Living on the northwest coast of scotland the viking connection is still visible in place and family names. The Norse continued to hold sway in the isles until the Treaty of Perth, the battle of Largs being inconclusive but setting the scene for the absorption of the isles under

the control of the scottish crown.

I'd think it likely that the origins of the gall-Gáidhil phenomena are to be found in the isles, especially given the relatively late date of lingering Norse overlordship. First in, last out? It seems possible. I'd also reckon that Norse overlordship was seen as a more attractive proposition to the local isles rulers and affording more independence than that the Scots crown would facilitate, due to proximity. The lords of the isles being a very independently minded group of families that had difficulty accepting their status as mere lords, preferring to style themselves kings. A claim they kept up for a good few hundred years after the Treaty of Perth.

It is also possible that certain parts of the isles had a tradition of pirating before the Norse arrived and that wider pirating opportunity without the ensuing repercussions made possible under Norse overlordship would make alliance with the Norse a very attractive proposition to the local Gaels.

It was often complained in later times that Mhic Nail of Barra was nothing other than a pirate, old habits dying slowly perhaps. Indeed after 1746 it was felt more expedient that the now rebel MacNeil should be persuaded to accept the peace offering on the table rather than try to winkle him out from his island stronghold by force. This provides some understanding of the security these islands afforded if the then mighty royal navy, the dominant world naval power of the time, would rather sue for peace rather than lose their cannon. Castle Bay is well named in that regard.

The last operable Gaelic court in these islands including Ireland, that nourished native high art under its patronage, was the MacNeil court on South Uist which operated for another 20 years or so after 1746.

Camus na Gall (shore dwelling of the foreigners), is one local name that is held up as a place name indicating a one-time Viking presence. It can be found on OS 33 and is a bay on the southern shore of Lochalsh just out of the main current pull of the Kyle Rhea narrows. I think it such a handy spot to await a favorable tide that it was no doubt used by Vikings and may even have been held by them for a time, controlling a significant coastal route as it does and affording the possibility to beach boats.

It would also be a handy ambush base from which to pirate shipping heading north out of the narrows, as any aspirant pirate would be out of sight until the last moment. So this name appears to point to a possible Viking presence termed in Gaelic rather than a Norse name taken into Gaelic, as is the norm up and down the coast here.

Having said that it is equally likely that the bay was used by travelers and traders over the years to the extent that it was simply termed as such to indicate their presence, and only later acquiring a specific Viking association.

Tim says:

September 2, 2011 at 7:53 pm

A very informative comment, Buannan. It adds a wider picture of continuity to the topic of the Gall-Gáidhil. I have only a limited grasp of the later period – the battle of Largs, the Lordship of the Isles, etc – and even less knowledge of MacNeil of Barra and his time. These are among the topics I would like to read more about, if I ever get a chance

to do so. I remember visiting an old church on Skye twenty years ago and seeing several impressive tombstones depicting Gaelic chieftains of c.1500, some with carvings of galleys, and also a trip to the Clan Donald centre on the island. No bridge back then. I remember Kyle Rhea from the ferry journey but Camus na Gall is a new name to me. Seems to be one of those enigmatic place-names that belong to a historical context we can't quite put our finger on. Such names of course, are the most interesting kind to work with.

Jonathan Jarrett says:

September 4, 2011 at 9:43 pm

Tim, I can't say much about this beyond that I like it—you are as well acquainted with the scholarship as I am here if not better—but I don't think there's anything too implausible about your theory. I will just say, however, that I sometimes wonder if there's *any* theory about early Scottish history that isn't somehow anticipated by a passing remark of Watson's! Such a rich book, that, even now.

Tim says:

September 4, 2011 at 11:46 pm

Thanks for these encouraging words, Jon. While drafting the post I hesitated at several points, wondering if it was too speculative even for the blogosphere, but the response has been quite positive so far.

I totally agree about Watson. His book has been so intricately wired into my brain these past 20+ years that I'm pretty sure most of my ideas link back to him in some fashion. CPNS is one of about a dozen books I regard as essential reading for anyone who delves into this period of Scottish history. I'd probably put it in the top five.

Buannan says:

September 5, 2011 at 1:44 pm

When looking through various references for a little context for various treatments of the term "Gall" and then specifically "Camus Na Gall", CPNS was my first port of call. With no specific reference to Camus Na Gall available therein, I then turned to his earlier work: "Place Names of Ross and Cromarty (WJ Watson 1904)".

Aware that Camus Na Gall, if dealt with in that volume (Camus Na Gall, technically, is not located within the county of Ross-Shire), would be on the extreme geographical limit of the region covered. I was pleased then to find that it had been included in the chapter covering Glensheil.

The discovery of a reference however was a little frustrating in so much as his translation; "Bay of the Lowlanders" raises further questions and struck me as being unusually under developed when compared to his later work (no context offered and a rather narrow specific translation of both terms).

Could this rather literal translation actually tells us more about gaelic usage in Watson's own time? Whether this usage, gall = lowlander, had currency in Watson's native Easter-Ross or Kintail at the time is rather unclear, although it is possible that this treatment emanates from popular usage current across the contemporary mainland-gaeltach of his day.

I rather suspect that Watson either translated this name (and perhaps that of "Eilean Na Gall", a tidal Island at the head of Loch Duich) as he found it, due perhaps to having received little or no

information regarding local tradition as to the naming. Or simply, he accepted the local explanation of these rather simple terms without further question, after all, this rather basic gaelic is still in everyday usage in gaelic speaking areas today.

The treatment of "Camus", simply rendered as "Bay", in Place Names of Ross and Cromarty, is also rather stark. It isn't until CPNS is published some 22 years later that the context that this term occurs is elaborated on (roughly then: favorably located maritime interface between land and tide(or river and particularly tidal reaches of rivers) where human activity/business/settlement occurs).

Reading Watson's etymology for Galloway (see CPNS p. 174) in addressing his note's to the same, (notes 1. p 174), where he offers the following;

"The name Galbraith goes to show, as has been noted (p. 14), that there were 'foreign Britons' as well as 'foreign Gall'*

(Gall*; I take as a typo for gael(?)).

Is he missing further possible explanations for the name Galbraith, given the possible specific and general usage of the term found within the body of his own work, Gall = Lowlander, later, more generally equalling simply "foreigner" in association with the Gall-Gáidhil, then the eventual evolution of the name of Galloway by association of the settlement of the area by the Gall-Gáidhil. The regional context of Gall within the area named Galloway Gallowa; could give us Galbraith as, "a Britain from Galloway", rather than Gall-Bhreatnnaich, foreign britain coined in gaelic, for which he doesn't really offer any occurrences?

Then there is the traditional gaelic rendering of the name "Mac a' Bhreatnnaich", no hint of the Gall element there, simply "son of the britain(s)".

The name of the island associated with them on Loch Lomond however is named: Inchgalbraith (island of the foreign britains, termed in gaelic in an area where both languages would have been current at one time, and one can well imagine the conversation on a high pass over looking the loch from the west where the land marks are being pointed out and named), could it be that the Gall element in the family name is simply taken from their association with the island thus named?

Buannan says:

September 5, 2011 at 2:57 pm

"could it be that the Gall element in the family name is simply taken from their association with the island thus named?" myself above

Having thought about this a little further it's likely the island name came from the family association rather than the other way round.

Tim says:

September 6, 2011 at 8:28 pm

Interesting to see *Gall* translated as 'Lowlander' which adds yet another ingredient to the mix.

Camus is an interesting term by itself. Today I looked at CPNS (p.202) where Watson explains the Clydesdale names Cambusnethan and Cambuslang as, respectively, 'Neithon's

bight or bend' and 'bight of ships'. Here he seems to define Gaelic *camas* as a river-bend where light vessels can be berthed/beached when the tide allows. I picked up on your reference to 'human activity/business/settlement' which got me thinking of *camas* taking on the additional meaning 'beach market' or 'river-bend market'. Elsewhere, Watson translates *camas* as 'bay', e.g. Camas-longart on Loch Long (p.494) just as he did with 'Bay of the Lowlanders' in the Ross & Cromarty book (which I've not seen). I notice on p.514, in the appendix 'Additional Notes', he mentions Camas nan Geall ('a lovely little place on the south side of Ardnamurchan') for which he proposes an original Camas na gCeall, 'bay of the churches', because of an old graveyard and holy well nearby. He doesn't mention a place I'm particularly interested in: Burn of Cambus between Doune and Callendar, close to Kilmadock the ancient church of Clan Doig of Menteith. This may or may not be a *camas*.

Moving on, here's an extract from your comment:

Reading Watson's etymology for Galloway (see CPNS p. 174) in addressing his note's to the same, (notes 1. p 174), where he offers the following;

"The name Galbraith goes to show, as has been noted (p. 14), that there were 'foreign Britons' as well as 'foreign Gall"*

(Gall; I take as a typo for gael(?)).*

I've been rumbled

In the first version of the blogpost I quoted the footnote by Watson as it appeared in CPNS. This was in my first endnote, as now. Underneath the quote I suggested correcting 'foreign Gall' to 'foreign Gael', believing it to be an error by the typesetter or (blasphemy!) by Watson himself. Then I decided to correct the typo regardless without giving an explanation, thinking the post looked tidier and simpler that way. I suppose I could have put *sic* after Gall, or even something like 'Gall [i.e. Gael]' but didn't. So, Buannan, I consider myself well and truly rumbled. I'm sure it's poetic justice for my utter temerity in suspecting the great man of making a mistake.

Galbraith meanings: your suggestion of 'Galloway Briton' is another useful possibility which I'll keep in mind.

Thanks again for your input.

Buannan says:

September 7, 2011 at 9:43 am

The thanks is all mine.

CPNS is such a treasure trove I'm sure we can forgive the great man a typo or two.

If it's of interest:

"Place Names of Ross and Cromarty (WJ Watson 1904)": ISBN 0 950 98826 X

Republished by Highland Heritage Books 1996. Still available in paperback from "The Ceilidh Place" cafe bookshop in Ullapool, last time I looked (priced at £10.99).

Tim says:

September 8, 2011 at 8:23 am

Thanks for the ref. This is a book I'd like to see sitting alongside CPNS on my shelf.

Buannan says:

September 8, 2011 at 10:29 am

I think the key element with "Camus" on rivers or the sea is the human activity factor. In that regard your "'beach market' or 'river-bend market'" is rather astute IMVHO. Some such named locations are of course now long abandoned whilst others have grown into bustling towns with their focus perhaps now having moved from the shore to the high street.

Camas-longart on Loch Long is a good example. Now the name is applied to the settled area to the south of the bay, in fact if you follow the road map to Camaslongart, opposite Dornie and referred to locally as Camus'tay, you'll end up having to walk round the shore to find the bay. It's marked Conchra on OS sheet 33 and known as such locally. Something to keep in mind when checking out your "Burn of Cambus" as if it was a "Camus" it may have moved.

Camaslongart, the bay proper, was in living memory a traditional boat building place, my neighbour's family had a boat building business there until the 30's or 40's I believe.

I was actually on the brine there yesterday out in the bay running the bilge pump and the engine of my incapacitated friends creel boat which has it's mooring there. Right in the nape of the bay there are still the remains of a couple of boats to be seen, keel and rather reduced ribs. One of which was a former Dornie ferry so I'm told, so out of service some time before 1943 when the first bridge was built. How long boats were built there is another question, but I suspect given the very sheltered nature of the location it's more than likely been used for this purpose for a very long time.

Tim says:

September 9, 2011 at 8:15 am

Your mention of boat-building at Camaslongart ('bay of the ship-stations') is very interesting and makes me wonder if this was one of several activities associated with a *camas*. So, as well as being used as mooring-places and markets, perhaps these bays and river-bends were also commonly used for boat-building, similar to a modern 'dry dock'. If this was indeed the main activity at some of these sites, it could be the explanation behind the suffix *long* ('ship') as in Camaslongart and Cambuslang (on a bend of the Clyde).

Buannan says:

September 11, 2011 at 12:29 pm

I'd tend to see *camus* as occurring in specific geographical locations that have a quality enabling the activity to occur and as a result have attracted some settlement permanent or seasonal resulting from the activity carried out there.

Watson seems to see the *cam* element of "camus" as having a similar meaning to the "cam" element in Camlan Camlinn etc meaning bent or twisted, Cam-beal Campbell, twisted or bent mouth. So *camus* seems to equate to bend or bight. An angler or white water paddler would know that many river bends have an area of faster flow on one bank whilst the other may well hold a body of slack water or a back eddie, where a salmon or canoeist could rest out of the main flow, thus providing a handy place to stop and recuperate, or catch a fish.

Camus na Gall is a bay on the sea rather than river bend and not particularly bent, more of a gentile curve, it is however just out of the Kyle Rhea tidal pull which is significant running at 8 to 9 knots at various stages of the tide, enough to over power most modern displacement hulled motor powered boats. Camuslongart on Loch long is also similarly positioned relative to the tide on Loch Long, which runs like a river throughout it's length with the ebb and flow. Both are also sheltered from the prevailing south westerly winds, Camuslongart being very sheltered from wind from most directions.

Camusluinie (CPNS p. 202 also see notes 1. at the foot of the page) on the river Elchaig which flows into the head of Loch Long, has the remains of a small wooden dock in a "lagoon" on the river which seems to have been "improved" for the purpose at some point in the past. This would seem to be an example of a local camus on a river rather than sea or sea loch, accessible from the sea loch at high tide. There isn't a bend here now but then it's possible that the improvements have changed the course over time. Redundant now for sometime due to the building of the road.

There are also quite a few camus settlements on Skye that seem to be positioned to take advantage of shelter and tide (see Camustianavaig "Shore Place/Settlement of Tianavaig Bay": OS 23: MR 509 389, note the orientation of the bay which provides shelter from the northerly wind, the most problematic and dangerous wind direction to affect Portree Sound, a body of water also affected by a strong problematic tides).

Luib is the gaelic term I'd generally associate with a river bend/loop or bay, Luib an Eorna (the corn bend or loop, named on OS Explorer sheet 414) on the river sheil in upper glensheil, the family of MacRaes associated with the croft on this bend and branch of the river still have the nickname "Loopy", to distinguish them from the other MacRaes who in turn have their own family nicknames. Useful when you have so many people with the same name settled in a small geographical area.

I may be completely wide of the mark here but I would think "camus" as something more than a just a bend or a settled bend, on a river or shore (Luib). I tend to think of the primary "camus" attribute as initially comprising an environmental condition associated with a bend (or bay) that lends a particular foreshore/bay/riverbank to specific human activities dependent on tide flow and shelter, conditions that dictate all aspects of boating. A favorable place for a ship or boat to interface with the land, to perform drop offs pickups of goods livestock and people, or perhaps process goods, curing fish etc and the transportation of the same. Perhaps also a shore station at a favorable location to service or otherwise act in support of vessels and the building of the same. Then we would need some sort of settlement associated with this "use" enduring long enough for the name to make it onto our modern map or be otherwise remembered, or not as the case may be. In the days before our ability to significantly "engineer" our environment to suit our needs one would have had to exploit the available natural features in the landscape, which in turn would dictate to some extent the pattern of settlement. I think the Camus element signifies a location where these favorable conditions prevail with the secondary element attributed to the activity (directly or indirectly, Cambusnethan and it's church situated nearby).

The possibility occurred to me that the junction of the Annet Burn and Teith could be a possible Camus location also. The Teith is navigable from here to the Forth, getting a little more problematic as you travel up stream from here. It's possible that the Camus/Cambus was associated with the church (ruin) or an attached settlement. The Burn of/Miltown of;

Cambus, possibly remembers a Camus/Cambus on the Teith that they once served, if not revealing earlier activity on the Annet burn it's self (both?), milling (and the transportation of the product presumably) seems to have been a key activity.

Cambuswallace, nearby, or Cambuskenneth down stream on the Forth at Stirling would suggest that river transport was a feature of the district and that Camus was a term associated with business on the rivers here.

Sorry for getting so off topic.

Buannan says:

September 11, 2011 at 12:51 pm

My "Luib an Eorna" translation should read "The Barley Bend" or more romantically "The Barley Loop".

Tim says:

September 13, 2011 at 8:19 am

I think you are probably right about camas/camus/cambus having a specific economic connotation beyond the topographical meaning 'bend' or 'bay' or whatever. The Teith one may indeed be associated with transporting produce from the mill at nearby Milton. I shall have to investigate possible candidates for the original 'cambus' next time I'm in the vicinity but my initial thoughts point to the church or monastery at Kilmadock as the owners of both cambus and mill, with adjacent lands around the Annet Burn forming the core of an ecclesiastical estate. This is something I hope to look at as part of an ongoing project on the early history of Kilmadock which, coincidentally, has a connection with Cambuslang via the legends of St Cadoc who supposedly founded both places. Cambuslang now has additional interest for me as a result of this discussion about 'river-bend markets' because of its Strathclyde location and for what it might say about the economy of the local Britons.

Peter A. Kincaid says:

September 25, 2011 at 8:55 pm

The concept of Galbraith not being a surname relating to one particular family, but that relating to an ethnic group is one I've held for a number of years. I discussed the matter with Dr. Alan James of the Bliton (Brittonic Language in the Old North) database with the Scottish Place Name Society back in 2007. He seemed to share the same thoughts: "I've always assumed Galbraith was *gall-Bhreath[nach], a nickname developing to a surname, analogous to the Gall-Gaidheil."

Discussions on this with Dr. Alan James were revived in the summer of 2010 and it became clear that one should not think of Galbraith as a family but a ethnic group. I then noted this to my fellow Kincaid researchers (see <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/kincaid/2010-07/1279470439>).

Your thoughts about the Vikings I also shared with him; writing:

- > Now as to the Galbrait part I see this the Briton equivalent
- > of gæl-gaèil for 'foreign Irish' or gall-ghàidhil for 'foreign Gael.'
- > The question is what made them foreign. Surely there were
- > others around who were of Strathclyde Briton descent so
- > having a handful of Galbrait to me rules it out as a name for
- > a typical Strathclyde Briton. This leaves it to represent either

- > 1) a person from perhaps Brittany who came to hold a position
- > with the Earls of Lennox or 2) a Strathclyde Briton of mixed
- > ethnic origin.
- >
- > Personally, I'm leaning towards the latter. The Stewarts were
- > from Brittany and were not referred to as Galbrath. They
- > were not the only family with suspected origins from
- > Brittany. Thus, you would think there would be lots of
- > Galbraiths. There were only a handful. That is why I suspect
- > they were either Strathclyde Britons who intermarried with the
- > Northumbrian (i.e. Angle) Earls of Lennox or Strathclyde Britons
- > whose predecessors had intermarried with the Vikings. With
- > regards to the former it is on record that Gillaspec Galbrad and
- > his brother Roderick were nephews of Alwyn, Earl of Lennox.
- > With regards to the Vikings, we know a few Vikings had settled
- > among the Strathclyde Briton elites as evidenced by the
- > hogbacks at Govan church. Govan is opposite the mouth of
- > the Kelvin River and Partnick where the Kings of the Strathclyde
- > Britons apparently had a royal residence. Looking at Bleau's
- > maps the Galbraith's Bardowie is the first really significant estate
- > up the Kelvin river.
- >

His response was that it was possible, however it may not be limited to Viking but a those of mixed Briton, Gael and Norse; something reflected in place names for that area.

All in all, I certainly concur that Viking Briton is plausible. Kincaids, taking their name from lands granted to one of these Britons (and more likely than any of being directly descended from him) have been shown to have DNA common to the area where some of the Vikings came from.

Peter Kincaid

Tim says:

September 26, 2011 at 9:54 pm

Thank you for this information, Peter. Reading your comment makes my blogpost seem like a worthwhile use of webspace. I am relieved to see I'm not alone in speculating about 'Viking Britons'. One aspect I picked up on was the point about Scottish landowning families of Breton origin not being nicknamed *Galbraith* or similar. Another was the territorial connection with the Kincaids. A third was the mention of the Bardowie estate, which I shall certainly take a closer look at.

The Bliton project is of particular interest to me and I've used it a few times. When completed it will be an essential resource for anyone researching Brittonic/Cumbric place names. Speaking of which, I was unaware of the theory of a Brittonic origin for the name Kincaid. The clan's own history seems to derive the name from *Pen Coed*, 'Head of the Wood', and I immediately thought of Pencaitland in East Lothian which has the same compound with Brittonic *pen* resisting the change to Gaelic *ceann*->*kin*. I'm very interested in all of this and will add the Kincaids to my list of pending blog topics.

Peter Kincaid says:

September 27, 2011 at 4:24 am

Thank you for your reply. Kincaid is recognized as a Clan, but this is a modern creation. I documented this clearly at: <http://kyncades.org/clan.htm>. Kyncades was formed by myself to document our real history. The site for this is at <http://kyncades.org/>.

Similar discussions with Dr. Alan James led to the conclusion that Kincaid was a tract or territory of land with parcels being labelled with the same meaning (wood head), but in the language of the time it was allocated. Kincaid was first and derives from the Brittonic pen-ced, but has a Gaelic influence. Next came the portion known as Kinkell which is its full Gaelic equivalent (deriving from ceann [na] coille). Last came the residue known as the Lennox estate of Woodhead (deriving from the Scots wuidheid).

Tim says:

September 27, 2011 at 9:34 am

I had a look at the Kyncades website and was particularly interested in the page dealing with the place-name Kincaid. The references cited there do seem to add weight to a theory of Brittonic origin via the form *Pencoed*. This got me wondering about a possible connection with a poem attributed to Taliesin, court-bard of Rheged, who lists *Gweith Pencoet*, 'the strife at Pencoed', among the battles fought by his patron King Urien in the 6th century. While I'm fairly cautious about using Old Welsh poetry in historical research I wouldn't rule out the possibility that some of the battles listed by Taliesin were genuine North British events. One battle is placed at *Rhyd Alclud*, 'Ford of Dumbarton', and I am inclined to identify this as historical. If *Gweith Pencoed* is also a real event we might tentatively place it in Kincaid. This would give us two battles fought by Urien Rheged against the kingdom of Alt Clut/Alclud, one at the ancient ford below Dumbarton Rock, the other across the Clyde in the future earldom of Lennox.

Peter Kincaid says:

September 27, 2011 at 5:47 pm

Excellent observation. Perhaps this is an explanation for the field in the vicinity called the "Field of blood." You can see it on the Ordnance maps. My only question is why assume it was against Alt Clut. Urien was considered an ally of Riderch of Alt Clut. Furthermore, I assume the what you are referring to is the line "mawr kat glutuein gweith pencoet." I don't see any reference in the stanza to any enemy other than the Angles on the last line – in which they are called hostile. Could he not have simply gone up against the Angles in his ally's territory?

It is ironic that we are talking about a battle in the age of Arthur. The first reference to the Kincaid lands were when they were granted to William son of Arthur son of Galbrait.

Tim says:

September 28, 2011 at 11:03 am

You are right about the poem's mention of *Eigyl*, which Sir Ifor Williams interpreted as a reference to Angles (Welsh *Eingyl*). If this relates to Pencoed, and if it is not a later Welsh interpolation, then we could cautiously describe the battle as 'Rheged versus Bernicia'. Although Kincaid might seem a long way from Bamburgh we certainly can't rule it out as a target for Bernician raids. My own view, however, is that the *Eingyl* reference is not part of the original poem but was added much later in Wales. The same term appears in the later Welsh

material added to the original core of the *Gododdin*, presumably to promote the idea that the northern heroes of the past were involved in an ethnic struggle to defend Celtic Britain against the dreaded Saxons. I'm equally sceptical about the conventional view of North British kings forming an alliance against Bernicia. My views on this are given in an older blogpost about the [Lindisfarne campaign](#). So, for myself, the idea of Urien raiding Rhydderch's territory is consistent with what we know or can surmise about what motivated these kings to maintain warbands and to launch military expeditions. I think the ethnic dimension to these activities was probably a lot smaller than the later Welsh bards wanted it to be.

Interesting point about the Galbraith Arthur. The possibility of a connection with his famous namesake was noted by Cynthia Neville in her book on the earldoms of Lennox and Strathearn:

'Some important Lennox families still celebrated their British past. Such, for example, were the men who called themselves Galbraith, already in this period among the wealthiest and most important of the earl's tenants. The representative of one generation invoked his distinctive past openly with the use of the personal name Arthur, another by referring to himself as Mac an Bhreatnaich, son of the Britons.'

The above quote appears in [Part 2](#) of my series on Clan Galbraith. Coincidentally, I've quoted from the very same charter granting the Kincaid lands to William, son of Arthur, in [yet another post on this blog](#).

Peter Kincaid says:

[September 28, 2011 at 10:46 pm](#)

In looking at the Pencoet reference: "mawr kat glutuein gweith pencoet" one thing that struck me it has an element of Clyde in it; namely Glut. Dumbarton has been called Caer Glut. I wonder if the second element is an equivalent of the Gaelic inne (being a channel) making glutuein something akin to a tributary of the Clyde. If so, the Kelvin River on which Kincaid lies, would fit well making the battle on the Kelvin, the affair of Kincaid.

This is not my domain, so I certainly defer to the view of someone like Alan James or Peter Drummond.

Tim says:

[September 29, 2011 at 9:00 am](#)

Your thoughts on the first element of Clutuein echo my own. As the initial consonant in *Glutuein* represents the Welsh 'hard C' we can take the first element as *Clut* and propose a connection with the Clyde.

In his detailed analysis of the Taliesin poems, Sir Ifor Williams suggested that Clutuein might derive from *clud+mein* where the second element is the plural of *maen*, 'stone'. He also wondered if the entire word might be an error for *cludweir*, 'heap'. He added that another eminent Welsh scholar, John Lloyd-Jones, had already noted a possible link between the first element and *Clut*.

I'm no expert on Celtic languages but it has always seemed to me that we are dealing here with a place-name: 'Clyde Stones'. Taliesin's *mawr kat glutuein* might

therefore be 'the great battle at Clyde Stones'. I think we can probably disregard the suggestion in Glennie's 'Arthurian Localities' that the Dumfriesshire river Cluden is meant. It would be an interesting exercise to look for the Clyde Stones but the phrase 'needle in a haystack' springs to mind. If the second element isn't 'stones' but the first is still 'Clyde' then your idea of Clutuein being a tributary river is certainly worth considering.

I've long been puzzled by the name Kelvin. A Gaelic origin from *caol abhainn*, 'narrow river', has been suggested ('on rather doubtful grounds' according to one place-name dictionary). As the spelling is *Kelvin* in the earliest record of the river (c.1200) we don't possess intermediate forms so I assume the Gaelic theory is simply a guess. Unfortunately it isn't mentioned by Watson in CPNS but I suspect he would have considered a Brittonic origin. This is the kind of puzzle the experts at SPNS/BLITON could no doubt cast a bit of light on.

William Gilbreath says:

November 24, 2011 at 12:42 pm

A question after a comment:

Back in early September Tim tossed in "Interesting to see Gall translated as 'Lowlander' which adds yet another ingredient to the mix." Southwest Loch Lomond, the home of first chief Gilcrist Bretnach, was always consider a region of Highland Clans. While 20 miles to the east, Culceuch Castle with its Chief James I Galbraith (fl 1400) was then a Lowland Family (as was Kincaid, Campsie, and the whole of Balfron Parish.

My question is re the post of Provost-were they appointed by the King? I reference Hugo de Galbrath, Provost of Aberdeen in 1342. Would he have been plucked out of the Lennox--the home of the Galbraiths and sent to Aberdeen? Or could he be of a different origin (Peter's Sept 25 post).

I was uncomfortable trying to move Hugh of Lanark to Aberdeen 40 years later (viz:Dec. 30, 1303.

Inquisition at Lanark on Monday the morrow of St. Thomas the Martyr 1303, by the king's command in presence of Magnus de Strathearne and Nicholas de Benbathe, viceregens of the earl of Carrick Sheriff of Lanark, by Patrick de Achenlek, Hugh de Galbrathe, [in a long list of jurors, it is only Patrick and Hugh who 'sealed' the findings])

Related question: Who had seals? Was it regulated or could anyone with a need (able to write, 'owned' land, in commerce) use one?

Happy T-giving to those in the US, Bill

ps. More recently Peter noted that the Kincaids were largely of a single DNA, the Galbraiths have now 9 DNA Groups and a few singles. Does this hint at multiple origins (beyond he expected 'non-paternal' events)? Maybe a couple lines perserved from the introduction of surnames in Scotland: 11- to 13 hundreds.

Peter Kincaid says:

November 24, 2011 at 3:53 pm

William:

Anyone who thinks southwest Loch Lomond was a region of Highland clans has Gaelic biases. This was once the heart of Briton territory with the once fortress of the Britons being only five miles from the south end of Loch Lomond. Above the north side of Loch Lomond was a marker believed to have been to noted the border of the Briton kingdom. This was all clearly Briton lands. Certainly Highlanders later moved in, but this was first Briton territory.

You seem to have bought into the highland clan culture that you want to make your Galbraiths highlanders. You continue to hold to Gilchrist Bretnach being the first chief when there is nothing to even connect him to any later individuals to bear the surname Galbraith. I am trying to find the origins of the claim that the Galbraiths of Culcreuch were chiefs. From Robert Pitcairne's 'Ancient criminal trials in Scotland' (volume 1, part 1, p. 13) I get this impression that early historians called Thomas Galbraith, Laird of Culcreuch and that it was Sir James Balfour who called him 'Chieffe of the Galbraithes'. Now Sir James Balfour was also Lord Lyon King of Arms. This suggests to me that, given his heraldic background, Sir James Balfour might have been using the heraldic term 'Chief of the Name' with this designation. This has nothing to do with a Gaelic clan chief. It has to do with who had the right to bear a particular coat of arms. Again, I think it worthwhile to determine whether this designation chief is any earlier than Sir James Balfour.

Provost was a position like many of us call Mayor today. The Provost of Aberdeen would have been elected by the council and burgesses of Aberdeen.

Your seal was something a person possessed to note their authority and consent. Since only you possessed it, then it was hard for someone to fraudulently consent to something in your name; like a forged signature. If you were in a position to regularly execute binding legal documents then you probably had a seal. Otherwise, with other credible witnesses one might use the seal of another. We do something similar today in executing legal documents. The document will read 'signed and sealed' and one will sign and a red sticker is added to represent the seal. Then the lawyer adds his own real, unique and registered real seal to the document and he and another witness signs. If a legal document does not have a seal then its legitimacy can be questioned.

Tim says:

November 24, 2011 at 5:32 pm

Peter,

During my own (rather limited) reading of Galbraith origins I came across the theory or tradition that Gilchrist Bretnach had two sons surnamed Galbrait who were witnessing charters in the 1190s. Hence, in my first blogpost in this series, I ran with the idea of Gilchrist being the 'first chief' in some nominal sense.

I gather from your latest response to Bill that you don't support this tradition. As it's pretty fundamental to the root question of Galbraith origins I'd be interested to hear your views on where Gilchrist fits into the picture.

On the related topic of Highlanders vs Lowlanders, I agree with you that Loch Lomond must be part of the Lowland Zone, in spite of it being promoted to modern tourists as a 'gateway to the Highlands'. I usually imagine the upper part of Glen Falloch towards Crianlarich as the boundary between Lowlands and Highlands (the Stone of the Britons being a useful marker, as you point out). This doesn't, to my mind, preclude our use of

'clan' in relation to powerful Lowland families such as the Galbraiths, or even those further south, as long as we use it in the correct sense of an extended kin-group (e.g. 'The Children of X', 'The Descendants of Y') rather than picturing a bunch of tartan-clad Braveheart types.

On provosts and seals I'm out of my time-period and way off my comfort zone so I'll leave those topics to you and Bill and whoever else might want to join in.

Peter Kincaid says:

November 24, 2011 at 6:46 pm

Tim: I have a tendency for being a thorn in the side with regards to claims not supported by good evidence/documentation. So I tend to speak my mind bluntly at times.

In an anonymous history of the Galbraiths of the Lennox, dated 1944, Gilchrist is not mentioned as the patriarch of the Galbraiths. From what I have seen, Gilchrist Bretnach has been added since. Gilchrist Bretnach was simply the name of a witness to the gift of Moybothelbeg (Maybole beg), etc. to Melrose Abbey in 1193. I do not recall seeing any tradition or records linking him to the Galbraiths of the Lennox.

It seems to me the notion of the Galbraiths being a highland or Gaelic clan is a myth created by clan enthusiasts; just like with the Kincaids (see my article touching the Kincaid myth at <http://kyncades.org/clan.htm>). The genesis of this seems to be the 1944 article in which the author states:

"It is strange that in more modern times the Galbraiths have never been recognized as a separate clan. In lists of clans they are usually known as septs or dependents of other clans, e.g. of the Macfarlanes and the Macdonalds. But in the year 1489, Thomas Galbraith of Culcreuch, who was hanged for taking part in a rising headed by the Earl of Lennox, Lord Lyle and others is called "Chieffe of the Galbraiths" by Sir James Balfour in his "Annals of Scotland." And in the Acts of the Scottish Parliament of 1587 and 1594, the Galbraiths are mentioned as a clan, along with many others, whose "brokin men" are accused of being "wickit thevis and lyrnmaris." (Vide, Historical Geography of the Clans of Scotland, by T. B. Johnston and Col. James R. Robertson, 3rd Edition 1899.) But they do not seem to have emerged as a later clan, like the other numerous clans of Scotland, including the Colquhouns and Buchanans, among whom they lived and with whom they intermarried."

The first is a misinterpretation of what Chieffe is to Sir James Balfour. He did not say Chief of the clan X which what one did when referring to a clan. He says Chieffe of the Galbraiths; which to a Lord Lyon implies Chief of the name or the senior person entitled to bear the arms of. The 1944 author also misread the Acts of 1587 and 1594. You can see these online. In the 'Act For the quieting and keeping in obedience of the disordered subjects, inhabitants of the borders, highlands and isles' [29 July 1587 sitting. Parliament of 8 July 1587 at Edinburgh. <http://www.rps.ac.uk/>. 1587/7/70] the laird of Kilcreuch (James Galbraith's name was added in the translation) was listed as a landlord or ballie of lands where broken me dwell or have dwelt. Galbraiths are not listed in the roll of clans at the end of the record. In the 'Act For punisement of thift, reif, oppressioun and sorning' the Galbraiths are listed as a surname and again

not with the list of clans [8 June 1594 sitting. Parliament of 22 April 1594 at Edinburgh. <http://www.rps.ac.uk/>. 1594/4/48]. Neither record say the Galbraiths were a clan.

I agree with you that Gaels do not have a monopoly on the notion of a Clan. However, clan meant something different to a Briton or Welshman than it did to a Gaelic Scot. It is certain that Kincaids over time had a strong sense of kinship, and Galbraiths perhaps as well, but this is a long way from our modern notions of, as you say, 'tartan-clad Braveheart types.'

Tim says:

November 24, 2011 at 10:04 pm

Peter,

I went back to my first Galbraith blogpost to see what I said about Gilchrist Bretnach. Here's what I wrote there in an endnote:

'My information on Gilchrist comes from clan history websites such as <http://www.scotclans.com>. I have not yet been able to confirm it. The only Gilchrist Bretnach I knew about previously was a witness to a charter from Carrick (Ayrshire) in c.1190.'

I think this is the charter in the Book of Melrose.

At the moment, I cannot see where the presumed connection between Gilchrist and the Galbraiths originates. On the POMS database of Scottish charters the ancestor of the Galbraiths is identified as Gillespic Galbrait, nephew/grandson of Earl Alwin c.1200.

Perhaps Bill can shed some light on the Gilchrist tradition? If the connection turns out to be tenuous I'll have to regard Gilchrist and the two Galbrait brothers (Gillespic and Rodercus/Ruairi) as separate strands in future blogposts.

Peter Kincaid says:

September 27, 2011 at 6:40 pm

Last year, I pointed out to a Glasgow archaeologist an interesting site on the edge of the Kincaid lands. It is a hill at Carlston and its Google map reference is 55.949873,-4.191027. On the Ordnance survey maps the hill is noted as Castle Hill. There is no written record of a castle there so one would have to look prior to the 14th century. Aerial imagery does indicate significant debris or rubble there. Nearby is supposed to be a cairn. This location has excellent sight lines and certainly is a strategic place for an ancient fortress protecting the eastern approaches to Dumbarton. It would be nice to see some field work done there someday.

Tim says:

September 28, 2011 at 12:08 pm

This looks intriguing, Peter. I looked up the Canmore record and saw the following description from 1726:

'On the top of the hill above Carlestown is a large cairn under which Roman 'medals' have been formerly found. Along the N side of the hill are vast numbers of stones in the ground resembling the tracks of streets or buildings, but the ruins are not conclusive to say that this was a town.'

According to a note by RCAHMS the cairn is no longer visible.

Looking at the OS map I agree with you that this may be a strategic location. It is just above the old Campsie Road on what looks to me like an ancient north-south route between the Clyde and Forth valleys. The Antonine Wall runs 1 mile to the south of the road with the River Kelvin flowing between. Local folklore must have had a reason for bestowing the name *Castle Hill* in the first place so the site is probably worth investigating. It would be good to see a photograph of it, to check how it relates to the surrounding landscape.

Peter Kincaid says:

September 28, 2011 at 1:16 pm

While you don't get a view from the top of the hill, using Google's Street view, for the road following its south east and eastern side, you can get a good sense of its great sight lines.

Tim says:

September 28, 2011 at 9:18 pm

As you pointed out in your previous comment, the site does seem to contain an intriguing stone feature. The Google satellite image shows it quite clearly on a high zoom setting. I assume this is the 'cairn' mentioned as being visible on top of the hill in 1726 but now apparently destroyed. It was not located on the ground by the RCAHMS observers who visited the site in 1982. To me, it certainly doesn't look natural, but it's hard to say one way or another without visiting it.

One possibility is that the 'cairn' was assumed by local people in medieval and early modern times to be the remains of a small castle. The 18th century antiquarian (Gordon) plainly thought it was prehistoric and associated it with a pair of tumuli at nearby Balgrochan. If it isn't prehistoric it could be Roman or early medieval, i.e. either a watchtower or beacon-stance north of the Antonine Wall or an enclosed settlement (something like a dun, or even a Lowland broch). An archaeological survey would no doubt provide the answer, although an experienced field archaeologist could probably get enough clues just by walking the site.

Tim says:

September 28, 2011 at 11:07 pm

To the above I should add that we cannot exclude the possibility of the 'cairn' being the remains of a medieval structure, perhaps the foundations of a tower house similar to the bastles of the Border area.

Elizabeth Roberts says:

September 29, 2011 at 10:48 am

'Clyde stones' might refer to the standing stones in the valley where I live in south Lanarkshire where the Daer and Potrail Water meet, – in effect where the river formed thereby becomes known as 'the Clyde'. There is only one stone now standing, but there are traces of others in the same field, possibly at one time a circle.

Tim says:

September 29, 2011 at 2:17 pm

The vicinity of the Crooked Stane would certainly tick the necessary boxes, Liz. In any case, I tend to imagine Urien Rheged's core domain in this general area, around the upper valleys of Clyde and Tweed, rather than over near Stranraer.

William Gilbreath says:

November 17, 2011 at 7:01 pm

Tim: Clan Galbraith is reprinting the lengthy report by historian Sir Harry Pirie-Gordon (commissioned in 1963) of "The Galbraiths". These were my editorial comments on his first part (first 3 chiefs). I find it most interesting (my comment 5) that Hugo Le Brit and our Chief Bretnach are, in the 1100s, the seem to be the sole users of this name. I perhaps missed it, but I saw no mention in your Blog-3 and replies as to Dr. Neville's belief that Bretnach was native.

Bill

Editors' Notes: 1) A major issue is the origin of first Chief Gilchrist—was he and some generations of immediate forebears born in Lennox, say at the south part of Loch Lomond? Or was he a stranger in the region? Sir Harry and current scholars believe it is the former choice, but we must keep in mind that Bretnach is often translated as 'stranger Briton', which seems to imply a newcomer. Pirie-Gordon discounts the notion, mostly held during his lifetime, that Gilchrist might have been of Galloway (the large peninsula below Glasgow about 70 miles due south of Loch Lomond) or Wales (about 250 miles to the south). Discussions with Dr. Cynthia Neville (Professor of Mediaeval History, Dalhousie University, Halifax Canada) and consulting her superb work (Native Lordship in Medieval Scotland) show a determined belief for a native (following many generations) Bretnach. Her arguments are twisted somewhat by two passages: ". . . of Galbraith. Although originally of British origin, its members had become thoroughly Gaelicized by the later twelfth century" (p.191); and, when discussing important native landholders (p. 58-9) ". . . early representatives of the families of Colquhoun and Galbraith, the later perhaps an import, some time previously, from Brittonic Strathclyde" But Neville, in speaking of trusted counsel to the Earls Lennox (as well as in many other mentions) clarifies her conclusions (p.55), with: "were, without exception, of native stock. . . Gilleasbuig Galbraith, Mael Coluim son of Gilleasbuig . . .", where her Gaelic Gilleasbuig is our second Chief Gillespic and Mael Coluim (Malcolm) is a younger half-brother to third Chief Sir Arthur. Rather than contradictive assessments, the difficulty appears to be in defining with exactitude when the Galbraiths had settled—perhaps several generations or even centuries earlier? Recall we have weak DNA inklings that the Galbraith ancestors may have reached Kentish Britain in the 4th century after a millennium in Frisia (Holland).

2) The early succession of the Earls of Lennox is a problem for us as the rights enjoyed by the early Galbraith Clan depended on the ruling Earls and apparently on the marriage of Bretnach to an heiress of Lennox, likely Alwyn I. (The undocumented marriage is concluded to explain the Galbraith nephews in Lennox charters, but nephews might be from other relationships.) Pirie-Gordon is possibly amiss in his interpretation of the status of the Earl Huntington, brother to the King. Neville (p. 15) and others show that the Lennox was in the possession of King William's (ruled 1165-1214) younger brother David of Huntington around 1178 and potentially from c1165 to 1190. Although mentioned is made (Neville, p. 14) that an Earl of Levenax was likely present at the 1061 coronation for King Malcolm IV, a more recent Lennox Earl—Alwyn (II) son of Alwyn (I)—is not again mentioned in extant documents until c1195. It might simply be that King William and his brother David were happy to leave the Lennox region to the Alwyns' responsibility for a buffer between their Scottish kingdom and the intransigent western isles of Argyll. Likewise, Alwyn I was pleased to have someone (Bretnach) with long-time native ties, at the small cost of his daughter's hand, to help consolidate his eastern and southern holdings. It might be that Alwyn I had a formalized position granted by David I and successor Malcolm IV, which was reversed by the ascension of William I. Perhaps Bretnach was recognized by Alwyn I prior to 1165 or maybe the marriage was somewhat later.

3) How accurate is the timing of early events? Most charters are undated and refer to the ruling monarch. This is a potentially horrendous error with charters during William I, the second longest

reigning Scot King, from 1165 to 1214, and only somewhat better with his son Alexander I who ruled for a 35-year term. Often events and other personages can be better dated, which helps to narrow the timeframe. Gilchrist Bretnach appears in a Melrose Abbey charter, usually dated as 1193 (Donald Tod writing in his 1928 paper, *Clan Galbraith*, places the date as 1180), and his sons begin appearing a couple years later.

4) Can we pin-point the early lands of Bretnach? Pirie-Gordon suggests (his page 7) that Inchgalbraith of Loch Lomond may have been their stronghold at the time of Bretnach. This is a very small island (Figure 4,) of about $\frac{1}{4}$ acre just off the western shore and about two miles south of Luss. Figure 5 pin-points the island within Loch Lomond. Note that Balloch is at the southern tip of Loch Lomond, the early seat of the Earls Lennox. The Leven (Lennox) River at the tip, which flows south to the Clyde where Dumbarton Rock stands, empties the Loch.

The problem is that the castle has not been definitively dated. Guide books reporting its construction sometime between 1542 and 1700 are likely wrong. Pont, in his c1585 survey for the first Scot atlas, reported it old at that time. This area, from his atlas, is shown in Figure 6 and Pont's accompanying descriptions says "Item hard upon the nordwest syd of Inche-Merin is Inch-Moin a myl long with wood and berryes in it. Thrie flight shot west Inch-moin is ylen na Chastel, al ovrcovered with wood bind. it hath ane old caste" . Or, in modern English: "Hard upon the northwest side of InchMurrin is Inchmoin a mile long with wood and berries in it. Three flight shot [by bow, $\frac{3}{5}$ miles total] west Inch moin [now Moan] is islet na[med] Castle, all over covered with vines. It has an old castle". Thus, he called the isle 'Castle' and drew a small icon at the location. The bottom of Figure 6 has the top of Inch Murrin, the largest island in Loch Lomond—with the Earl Lennox castle—but placed too far north (see Figure 4 for the correct perspective). Note that 'Gabracths yl' has been written onto 'na Chastel'. In the context, Pont's 'ane old caste' probably denotes centuries rather than decades. William Fraser, writing in 1869 (*Chiefs of the Colquhoun*, p 142-), says the island was first called Elan-na-Gaul (island of the Gaul) and believes the castle was of the first chiefs. The castle on InchGalbraith, according to archeological studies, was substantial, two stories with walls 4 feet thick and over 30×40 feet in extent. However, the robust nature of the castle perhaps precludes an early date as the 12th century manses of the Lennox were mostly log or timber.

Below the Inch Galbraith tag in Figure 5 is 'Bandry' (Bannerad) the area called out by Pirie-Gordon as the c1250 grant from Earl Maldouen, which included several islands near Inchgalbraith, to the sons of Gilmychel of Figure 3. The identification of this area as a Galbraith grant is tenuous, as, although all Galbraith writers and others (e.g., William Fraser) make this connection, Gilmychel is not surnamed nor identified in the charter or by Neville in her discussion (p. 56-note). The lands of Bannachra (adjacent on the southwest of Bannerad) appears in Galbraith inventories for several centuries, but not continuously as the land was seized by the King in 1489 when Chief Thomas was hanged and lost permanently by Chief Robert in 1619. It was also the seat of the Colquhouns for generations. The first Galbraiths certainly lived somewhere in the Lennox and most likely it was at southwest Loch Lomond.

5) The genealogy chart of Figure 3 and the Table of contemporaries of Figure 1 shows a possible ancestor to Bretnach, namely Hugo le Bret who appears in many charters between 1120 and 1141. Sir Archibald Lawrie in his *Early Scottish Charters, Prior to A.D. 1153* shows more than a dozen charters witnessed (but no land grants to him) by Hugo as Brett, Bretton, Brito etc. (unique cognomens in that no one else among thousands, signed as 'the Brit'). Although these charters covered areas of southern Scotland, a majority involved Glasgow. Alwyn MacArchil (i.e., son of Archil), whom we call the Elder of Lennox, was sometimes included with Hugo but he is never identified as an Earl of Lennox. Thus we know that Alwyn I was acquainted with both Hugo and Bretnach and this strengthens the thought that there is a familial connection (perhaps with a missing generation) between the latter pair.

Peter Kincaid says:

November 17, 2011 at 11:16 pm

William Gilbreath: Much of what you understand about the early Galbraiths is based on speculations and not documentary evidence. The connection to Hugh the Briton is simply because he has in his name Briton. There is nothing linking him to the Galbraiths of the Lennox. The same thing with Gilchrist Bretnach. He is simply a person whose only connection is that he was a witness to a charter along with a son of the earl of Lennox.

Cynthia Neville has made a real mess of Lennox genealogies. She has made many families Gaelic simply by giving them Gaelic cognates to Latin names. She has some pretty far fetched claims about the Galbraiths. She says that "Gillescop Galbrad" was not related to the earl of Lennox. She says that nepote does not mean nephew but that the scribe used the term in place of foster son (see p. 70). She at first seems to note a British origin for the Galbraiths, but then outright states that Patrick Galbraith was of a Gaelic family (see p. 73 & 92); they apparently became Gaelic (p. 191 & 211).

The father of Alwin I is unknown. The link to the prominent Alwyn MacArchil is simply that they both had the name Alwyn and that earl Alwyn must have come from someone important. That is it. Perhaps he did, but this is pure speculation. More concrete evidence is needed.

Personally, I think one needs to discard much of what is said about the early Galbraiths and then reconstruct the family using solid documentary evidence.

Tim says:

November 18, 2011 at 1:48 am

Bill,

Many thanks for sending your notes on the Pirie-Gordon reprint. You wondered if I had previously mentioned Cynthia Neville's belief that Bretnach was native. I think my second blogpost in the Galbraith series might touch on this point (see, for instance, the quote from Neville p.211). Gilchrist Bretnach appears in the first blogpost.

Regarding your notes a couple of things caught my eye...

In note (1) you refer to weak DNA indicators of possible Kentish/Frisian ancestry. As a sceptical, non-scientific type I'm quite curious about this. Has anyone on the clan side offered a scenario to explain how ancestors with such an origin (if true) ended up in Scotland?

The name *Elan-na-Gaul* mentioned in note (4) seems to contain the same element *gall*, 'stranger, foreigner', that we see in Galbraith. Maybe 'island of the foreigners'? If the Gaul/Gall are the ancestors of the Galbraiths I might even be tempted to glue this onto my blogpost as possibly meaning 'island of the Vikings' (i.e. 'island of the Viking Britons'). A wildly speculative notion, of course. It would probably require the island to be ancestral Galbraith territory as far back as c.900, a scenario that may be completely at odds with such evidence as we currently possess.

Note (5) mentions Hugo le Bret. I'm not sure where he fits into the picture. I'm inclined to agree with Peter (see comment above) that Hugo may have no connection with the Galbraiths. Could he perhaps be a Breton knight in the service of Scottish royalty or nobility? To me, the name 'Hugo' conjures an image of a French-speaker in Norman garb.

Finally, I should add that my knowledge of Lennox charters doesn't run as deep as yours or

Peter's. I've read Cynthia Neville's book and greatly enjoyed it, having approached it not so much for the genealogical data as for hints of possible continuity of the Strathclyde landholding elite beyond c.1100 (hence my interest in the Galbraiths).

I'm definitely interested in getting hold of a copy of the reprint. Do you have a publication date for it?

Peter Kincaid says:

November 18, 2011 at 5:20 am

Tim: I have followed DNA testing for genealogical purposes since its infancy. I started the Kincaid DNA project over 10 years ago. Looking at the Galbraith DNA test results at <http://www.clangalbraith.org/DNATesting/DNAResults.htm> you see there were multiple origins for Galbraiths in terms of DNA. The first group appears to be the largest, but on closer inspection it has multiple samples from the same lines. There seems to be only 14 unique samples for Group 1 making it not far ahead of groups 2-4. I assume it is considered the original line because it has a sample with the earliest known ancestor being Andrew Galbraith of Culcreuch fl. 1433 (61713). I leave it up to William Gilbreath to comment on how solid the paper genealogy is for this sample.

When William speaks of Frisian DNA, I suspect he does so because of the label given years ago to one pattern of STR results. However, that label has been shown to be inappropriate as that pattern is found in similar frequencies in places in northern Europe other than Frisia; including south west Britain. The label also got misapplied to the SNP U106. R-U106 is found across the UK and north west Europe. One can't state for certain its place of origin other than northern Europe.

Now sample 14584 of Group 1 of the Galbraith DNA project appears to have tested positive for the SNP L257 (he is labelled R1b1a2a1a1a4a) which is a sub branch of R-U106. Kincaids, like the Galbraiths and most other families, also have multiple DNA origins.

However, unlike the Galbraiths there is only one dominant group (Group A) for Kincaids; and that group's age lines up with the period of the surname founding. These Kincaid are also R-U106, but they are of a different sub-branch than the Galbraiths; Kincaids being R-Z1. However, it is interesting that the Group A Kincaids and Group 1 Galbraiths (both with origins in the Campsie Parish area of Scotland) are of the same R-U106 family. R-U106 does not suggest a Gaelic origin for either the Galbraiths or Kincaids. The common R1b haplogroups for Ireland and northwest Scotland fall under the parallel branch R-P312.

To me it is clear that DNA testing only shows that the Galbraiths and Kincaid were not likely Gaelic in origin. Both families could have been Strathclyde British in origin, but other areas of Britain and northern Europe can't be ruled out.

Elizabeth Roberts says:

November 18, 2011 at 11:09 am

Can anyone tell me:

- a) what Camps/campsie means and in what language? We have a reservoir here at Camps, south Lanarkshire
- b) Who was the patron saint of Moffat in Annandale – Ninian or Kentigern/Mungo?
- c) To whom was the old parish church in Moffat dedicated? (the Victorian church is St Andrews)

Peter Kincaid says:

November 18, 2011 at 1:44 pm

Elizabeth: Regarding your first question, none of the placename experts I contacted over the years wanted to commit themselves to a meaning for Campsie. I even see that in the Oxford Dictionary of British place names the Campsie part of Campsie Fells is noted as "etymologically obscure."

Tim says:

November 18, 2011 at 11:01 pm

As Peter says, the origin of Campsie is unknown. George Mackay in his handy little book on Scottish place names mentions the early forms *Kamsi* (1208), *Camsy* (1300) and *Campsy* (1522). The 'p' seems to have arisen from confusion with the word 'camp'. The first element might be *cam* which means 'crooked' in both Gaelic and Brittonic. It has been suggested that the second element relates to Gaelic *sith* (pronounced *shee*) which can mean 'fairy' or 'fairy hill' Crooked Fairy Hill?

I suspect the Camps reservoir in South Lanarkshire takes its name from the Camps Water which I assume has its source at Campshead below Whitecamp Brae. The name might derive from traces of old settlements/earthworks if any are visible along the Water before it joins the Clyde at Crawford. Alternatively it could be another *cam* name, referring to a 'crooked' stream like the one near the Roman fort of *Camboglanna*, 'Crooked glen', in Cumbria.

Unfortunately, Liz, I don't have any info on the saints of Moffat. The dedication to Andrew is likely to be medieval, replacing an earlier one to a native British saint such as Ninian or Kentigern, unless it reflects a Hexham connection from the era of Northumbrian rule. I wonder if an old antiquarian history of the parish church was written in the dim and distant past?

Elizabeth Roberts says:

November 19, 2011 at 6:25 am

Many thanks for the possible meanings of 'camps', including a derivation that might be 'crooked'. An area of many thousands of hectares immediately adjacent is all named 'Crookedstane' – whether Rig, Craig, Farm etc, including my house on Crookedstane Rig. I had assumed this was after the enormous megalith or 'Crooked Stane' still to be seen at Crookedstane Farm by the Clyde just southwest of Crawford.

Tim says:

November 20, 2011 at 8:26 pm

I think your assumption about the Crookedstane names is still correct. The crookedness must be from the stone itself, because of the way it leans at an angle, as in crooked=stooping.

William Gilbreath says:

November 18, 2011 at 1:22 pm

Tim and Peter: I am pleased to see all the posts on the Galbraiths. Perhaps some of it is from a feeling of guilt because of all the land we lost to you all, just because we only could produce daughters (as in my own case).

I have to admit that I am on the fence in most of this and simply tend to believe what I read most recently. I had not heard from Peter for a number of years, when he reported he was writing a book on the subject. I am heartened to see that he is indeed in this for the long haul. I believe Peter also instructed me as to the Melrose charter of Carrick. With that association to Galloway, I took

up the notion that first Chief Bretnach was grandson to King Fergus by a bastard daughter of Henry 1. Tim interest is terrific and I love Sanchus, but for some reason had missed his Blog 3 and all the great comment engendered (as well as Peter's). I have read Prof. Neville's Lordship at least twice (only the Lennox half) and am impressed by her material and with the current scholarship in the area—unfortunately, I am locked out of JSTOR, not getting remote access as I sit at home. Here are some points on your comments.

- 1) I am thinking that there is no Kincaid-Galbraith DNA match within historic times.
- 2) Yes, our Galbraith DNA Group 1 (of 9 groups) is the largest and most diverse. Male descent from the Chiefs line can only (so far) be brought forward to 1690. We have several males that can be traced back to intersect with Chief Andrew c1460—I think we are good to that point as one line goes to son James who became a later chief and the other to son Humphrey who got the Balgair lands. From our first chief to the present is about 30 generations, as there is, they say, a 2 to 5% chance per generation of a non-paternal event, it is a pure guess if a direct descent male now lives from Bretnach or if he is now even called 'Galbraith'.
- 3) As Peter says Group 1 is R1b etc. With about 80 tested, around 70 percent is R1b, over 6 of our unrelated Groups. I would not term R1b Viking. Our Group 3 is I2b1—it is about ten members, and most can be traced to Ireland. "I2b" is more likely of Viking origin.
- 4) DNA is not going to help much with Bretnach at present.
- 5) Hugo Le Brit, is most often given a latinized name Hugonia Bretone in the charters. He is an often used witness. He may be utterly unrelated to Bretnach; but it does appear that Alwyn is a common connection to the two and could have found a daughter and some land for Bretnach.
- 6) There are parts of Neville, which I still question. And it took effort to resolve some statements that seemed to be opposites. I think I recall her questioning if Bretnach ever married the Lennox daughter. I would certainly like to hear more on her 'fostering' concept as applied to the Lennox Lords. Alwyn II has an impressive list of sons, all becoming adults—were they biological sons?
- 7) Tim: If you send me your own email I will send the Pirie-Gordon's work on the first three chiefs. I have added several graphics to, hopefully, make it more understandable.
- 8) Peter: While looking for my past correspondence with you on my computer (which I did not find) I found a 1956 paper from the Arlington VA NGS between Herbert Kincaid and Robert (I presume Kincaid)—about ten pages. You likely have it, but if not give me your email.

Bill

Peter Kincaid says:

November 18, 2011 at 2:02 pm

I am well aware of Dr. Herbert Clark Kincaid's family history. It is not a reliable work. One can find discussions on the Internet correcting claims he made in it.

I agree that, while Galbraiths and Kincaids are linked to the same area, their common ancestor probably was from the Roman period or earlier.

There is no reason to believe that Alwin II's listed sons are anything but his biological sons. Maldouen would not have succeeded him if he was not his son and heir; as was stated in charters. The custom of fosterage had nothing to do with succession. It was more about peaceful relations and strengthened family links.

William Gilbreath says:

November 18, 2011 at 4:54 pm

Peter:

The Maitland publication of Cart. Lennox has nine sons to Alwyn II. Prof. Neville lists 11

sons. In a time when only 1/2 made it to adult hood, Alwyn was remarkable. If we use this factor and assume he also had daughters, Alwyn had 30 to 40 children—granted with several consecutive wives. I have no doubt that the succession is correct. It was an advantage to have boys rather than daughters, look at all the great marriages, lands, and allies that came to Lord Lennox. Who wouldn't be tempted to have a few undocumented sons.

First Chief Bretnach, had but two known sons, but given their charters beginning in the mid-1190s they both lived into their 70s. It might be possible, but is it at all likely?

Bill

Peter Kincaid says:

November 18, 2011 at 6:00 pm

William: The problem you are having comes with you assuming things. From charters we have the names of 11 sons and 1 daughter. That is it. Anything beyond that is pure speculation. Suggesting 30 to 40 children is not credible in any way. Biases to one gender happens all the time. My mother's mother had 10 girls and 2 boys (all reached adulthood) and they were a poor family. I have poor relatives that had 16 children. I know of even larger families that were even poorer. There is nothing to suggest that a wealthy earl could not have had 12 surviving children with a bias of males; whether by one wife or more. Cynthia Neville also list 10 children for the Earl of Strathearn. Large families were not uncommon as you imply.

William Gilbreath says:

November 18, 2011 at 7:16 pm

Peter:

On the DNA, I should have mentioned, that our Group 1 is U106 as you say. However, they are not L257. Our subjects are stuck at L47*. There are a large number of U106 folk in the same boat, 57 as of this morning. The kit you mentioned has tested at all known downstream SNPs for L47, and is negative.

Peter Kincaid says:

November 18, 2011 at 9:46 pm

You are correct. I was relying on the data on Family Tree DNA's website at: <http://www.familytreedna.com/public/U106/default.aspx?section=ysnp>. Galbraith sample 14584 is listed as R1b1a2a1a1a4a. According to the International Society of Genetic Genealogists R1b1a2a1a1a4a is L257/S186+ (see http://www.isogg.org/tree/ISOGG_HapgrpR.html). They clearly have different nomenclature than Family Tree DNA. The Galbraith sample has the following test results:

L1-, L163-, L44-, L46-, L47+, L48+, L5-, L6-, M126-, M153-, M160-, M173+, M18-, M207+, M222-, M269+, M343+, M37-, M65-, M73-, P107-, P25+, P66-, SRY2627-, U106+, U152-, U198-

So as William Gilbreath says he is R-L47. This brings the common ancestor of the Kincaid and Galbraiths closer. Perhaps to the Roman period.

Tim says:

November 19, 2011 at 2:46 pm

The discussion between Bill and Peter reminds me to point out that If anyone feels curious about how DNA is being used in Scottish genealogical research a good place to start is this book: Alistair Moffat & Jim Wilson, *The Scots: a Genetic Journey* (Birlinn, 2011)

William Gilbreath says:

November 25, 2011 at 2:43 pm

Tim has received so many replies, that it is difficult to find the proper string, so I will come in at the bottom:

Highlanders:

On the subject I was attempting to reply on Buannan's & Tim's observation that 'Gall' could have a meaning 'lowlander' and, if I am reading them correctly, Gall-brat may simply have been someone from the Lowland. I then raised the point that sw Loch Lomond was considered highlands and it possibly made sense to considered a low-lander unusual.

Peter brought in the 'broken men' references and hurried to point out that Galbraith was not listed there as a Clan. But he failed to mentioned that the same Acts classified the Lairds of Culcreuch as highlanders. [As well as the Colquhouns of Luss, which I would certainly say is sw Loch Lomond-and we can go with that defining list to the Lords of Lennox etc]. Peter also referenced the work of T. B. Johnston and Col. James A. Robertson, but did not mention that their maps show Galbraith within the highlands, as well as all of south Loch Lomond. They even fudged to drag Culcreuch 15 miles to westward so it falls there also. The town of Balfron is within the Highlands.

Peter Kincaid says:

November 25, 2011 at 5:59 pm

William: I don't see your point as I failed to mention most of the document. I gave the link for people to check things for themselves. As far as the highland claims you make it seems clear to me that you are misreading things.

The wording for 1587/7/70 is "The roll of the names of the landislordis and baillies of landis duelland on the bordouris and in the hielandis quhair brokin men hes duelt and presentlie duellis." In this document they give the names of those who own lands that are in the highlands and where broken men were. It is not saying that any lands named in their title are lands in the highlands. If that were the case Elphinstone, East Lothian would be in the highlands because the master of Elphinstone is named under the highland landlords list. The wording for 1594/4/48 is "surnames following inhabiting the hielandis and iles." It is not saying that all Galbraiths are highlanders and living in the highlands. It is referring to the Galbraiths living in the highlands. I suggest you read the documents again.

One can easily look up what people mean by the highlands. It is the area north and west of the highland fault line. It runs from Helensburg north east. It cuts through Loch Lomond so the northern part of Loch Lomond is indeed considered part of the highlands. Southwest Loch Lomond, Culcreuch, Balfron , Fintry are all below this fault line. I certainly will consider any authority that places the fault line elsewhere, but I am not inclined to consider someone's family history as a source for it.

William, it seems to me that you consider Galbraiths to be Gaelic highlanders and not Britons. Is this correct? If so, what is your proof for this?

Tim says:

November 25, 2011 at 6:30 pm

A message for Peter and Bill (and anyone else who follows this topic)

The comments count for this blogpost has now passed 60 which is quite a long thread on one subject so I'll be closing it off this weekend after giving Bill an opportunity to respond to Peter's latest comment.

Thank you to all who have contributed.

The next post in this series will look at animal symbolism in heraldry, sculpture and personal names. It's in the pipeline for next year.

William Gilbreath says:

November 26, 2011 at 4:35 pm

Peter:

I see the distinction you are making with the 1587 list. It might be that James VI was warning everyone to be responsible for their relatives. As far as I know the only Galbraith holding at the time, that you might place in the Highlands, was the Barony of Millig. Helensburgh was founded there, which you place on the southern cusp.

You are the only one I know who says that the Johnston-Robertson map of 1899 is incorrect. They bring the Highlander boundary up from Dumbarton Rock along the Levan R, than follow the east shore of Loch Lomond to just past the Endrick R. and continue north east and then north. This is based on the Parliamentary Acts of 1587 and 1594. They include the whole of Loch Lomond within the Highlands, and call-out the ancient Galbraiths just south of Luss as well as the Galbraith Castle on InchGalbraith.

This map is very clear to me, but one of you is incorrect. Do you have a map or reference with your boundaries?

Peter Kincaid says:

November 27, 2011 at 12:13 am

Tim: Forgive me for this reply as I don't want to leave any misunderstanding.

William: First, I agree that Millig and the Kilbrides might have been considered in the Highlands. Second, you seem to be basing your sense of what the Highlands is based on the 1899 map. I am not going by the 1899 map. I am going by the actual physical boundary of the Highlands. The Highland Boundary fault line creates a visible change in the geology and was something people identified with in the past. To help see the fault line note that islands of Inchmurrin, Creinch, Torrinch, and Inchcailloch all form part of the Highland Boundary Fault. Evidence seems to support this fault line as the highland boundary.

There were no boundary definitions in 1587 and 1594 Acts. It is not until the 1716 penal laws established against the Highlanders that I see any official boundary. In what we refer to as the Disarming Act of 1716 the western bounds were established as "within the Shires of Dumbarton on the North-side of the Water of Leven, Stirling on the North-side of the River of Forth." At that time, people must have understood the Highlands to be north of the River Forth and north of the river Leven. If you run a line due west from the mouth of the river Leven it hits the Clyde roughly where the Highland boundary fault line hits the river Clyde. This seems to suggest the fault line was considered. In what we call the 1746 Act of Proscription, the Loch Lomond bounds are stated as "That such parts of the said shire of Dunbartain, as lie upon the east, west and north sides of Lochlomond, to the northward of that point where the water of Leven runs from Lochlomond". This created confusion because a good part of the lands east of Loch Lomond are below the other stated boundary; namely the river Forth. This was clarified by an 1753 Act titled "An Act to explain, amend, and continue the provisions made by two Acts of Parliament of the nineteenth and twenty first years of His Majesty's reign, for the more effectual disarming the Highlands in Scotland, and to make provision for the more speedy ascertaining the lawful debts or claims upon the lands and hereditaments, that some time belonged to Alexander Robertson of Strowan, which, with other forfeited estates, are by an Act of the twenty fifth year of His Majesty's reign annexed to

the Crown unalienable". It set the bound as: "lying or being on the North or North-west Side of an imaginary straight line from the Place called Ballamachall upon the Lock Loman, in the Parish of Buchanan, to the Kirk or Bridge of Aberfoyl upon the River of Forth." This line (Balmaha to Aberfoyle) is following the Highland Boundary fault to the River Forth. Thus, the evidence supports the notion that the Highlands were considered, from a legal point of view, to be north of the river Forth and northwest of the Highland Boundary Fault line from Aberfoyle to near Helensburgh. There were further changes years later, but these give one the sense of what people then thought the Highlands to be.

Finally, being on the north side of the line does not make one of Gaelic heritage. One has to look where one started. One also has to bear in mind that the Briton kingdom of Alclud, given their fortress of Dumbarton, must have included a good part of the later earldom of Lennox; especially Loch Lomond.

Tim says:

November 27, 2011 at 1:30 am

Well, I just can't resist having the last word here...

On Peter's final point about the extent of the kingdom of the Clyde Britons, the northern boundary went up Loch Lomond at least as far as Luss (which has hints of 'Govan School' sculpture) and probably beyond the top of the loch as far as Clach nam Breatainn in Glen Falloch, therefore including much of the Lennox.

Thanks again to all who have commented in this thread.

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