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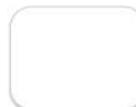
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Viking Place Names of East Lothian

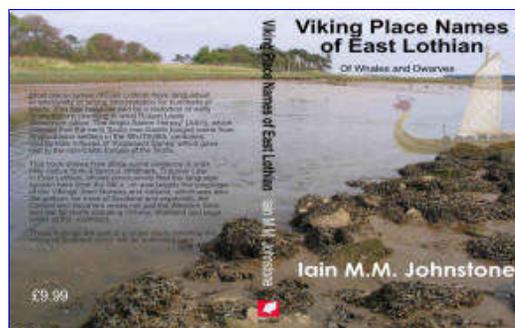
By Iain M. M. Johnstone

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FISHER INVESTMENTS



Book Description

It is the second book on Scots place names completed by Iain M.M. Johnstone but the first to be published. The unexpected discoveries of the Old Norse, that is Vikings from Norway, source of most of the place names in the first book made him consider writing a more compact book with historical and linguistic information limited to a six mile radius of the main town, Haddington, in East Lothian, Scotland. The more comprehensive book, covering all Scotland, will be published soon.

The book has various sections devoted to Viking history, language, religion and social customs which are reflected in the place names, showing that from an early age, 9th/10th c., that they had settled this area to the same extent as the author had found in most of southern Scotland. The implications for Scots early history and the origins of their early non-Celtic tongue are of startling proportions. The official position of the early Scots tongue having developed from Old English or a dialect of it must now be dropped. Why have the place name 'experts' and official 'historians' not found this out before? Decide for yourself-after reading the book.

Further details of background to the book and where to purchase it at: <http://www.tarmagan.com> and <http://www.scotsplacenames.com>

Viking Place Names of East Lothian

Of Whales and Dwarves



Chapter 1

Whittingham(e) XE "Whittingham(e)" is a hamlet situated in East Lothian, a few miles from Haddington, the county town, and facing the great bulk of the misnamed Traprain Law. This is our starting point for a stroll in the surrounding countryside to have a look at the place names and see what clues they give us as to the people, where they came from, their language and activities.

In the 18th. century, Adair's map shows Traprain XE "Traprain" as Dupenderlaw XE "Dupenderlaw", while Timothy Pont's map of the 16th. century shows it as Dunpendrylaw. It is only in the late 18th. century that some cartographical vandal has inserted the name of the nearby hamlet of Traprain, early Brythonic for a 'tree standing', instead of the ancient name of Dupender XE "Dupender", and previously probably, Gaelic, Dulpelder, from Brythonic, Dinpaladyr XE "Dinpaladyr", which according to Prof. Watson, means, 'Fortress of Spearshafts'. This would have been at least one of the main fortresses of the Brythonic Votadini XE "Votadini" tribe, who encountered the Romans in the first and second centuries A.D. and made peace presumably with them at that time, because of the evidence of Roman treasure discovered here in the 1920's and residing and on display in the Scottish National Museum in Edinburgh.

Prof. Watson believes this is the place where the mother of the Brythonic (Old Welsh) St. Kentigern XE "Kentigern" (Mungo XE "Mungo"), Thenaw XE "Thenaw", was cast down from for being unmarried and pregnant with a child that one day would be the patron saint of Glasgow. Thenaw survived and was cast adrift into the Firth of Forth near Aberlady XE "Aberlady". This story is taken from Jocelin XE "Jocelin", a 12th. century monk of Furness, Lancashire. He had been commissioned to look into the lives of the older saints. He actually says that Kepduff XE "Kepduff" was the place she was thrown from, but Prof. Watson thought it wasn't big enough and suggested Dupender. Today, Kepduff is called Kilduff XE "Kilduff", since there was a fashion for such name changes some years ago. Makes it look like a saint's abode, 'Church of Duff' or the like, whereas it actually means in Gaelic, 'Black block'. I think it big enough to give you more than a sore head if you were cast from one of its slopes down to the ancient fortress, still visible, at the foot of it.

The Brythons, Old Welsh speaking Celts, seem to have left en masse for other parts in the direction of Wales, in various waves from the 6th. to the 9th. centuries, including Kentigern. After the Siege of Dumbarton XE "Siege of Dumbarton" by Norse and probably Scots in 870 a.d., there was a major exodus of Brythons from Strathclyde to Wales. It may also have been at this time that many of their fellow Brythons in the old Lothian, decided to join them. Some of course would have stayed, like possibly Cospatrck XE "Cospatrck" of Dunbar. The family of William Wallace XE "William Wallace", a Brythonic name, possibly returned to Strathclyde after a period of exile in Wales.

Now the question is who took their place in Strathclyde and the Lothians? The history of this time is murky to say the least, but there are significant pointers that more than suggest that it was the Scots and Norsemen, their allies at the Battle of Brunanburh XE "Battle of Brunanburh" in 937 and related to the Scots kings since king Kenneth MacAlpin XE "Kenneth MacAlpin" was the father-in-law of Olaf the White XE "Olaf the White", Norse king of Dublin about the middle of the 9th. century. Kenneth MacAlpin had already burned Dunbar five times in the middle of the 9th. century, probably in the company of the Norse.

There is no question of there being Saxons or Angles in Scotland at this time, unless they were refugees from their own people or the Vikings. Saxons lived in places where their name still survives, like Wessex, Sussex, Middlesex. The Angles stretched from East Anglia to Newcastle and had already lost much of their power and influence, especially in the North. Simeon of Durham reports that the English of Northumbria lost most of their army and their king, Eadbert XE "Eadbert", abdicated in 757 (became a monk) after a disastrous defeat (almost certainly by the Picts under Angus XE "Angus") in southern Scotland, which led to anarchy and confusion for the next hundred years in whatever remained of Bernicia XE "Bernicia"/Northumberland. Nonsense stories of Edinburgh being named after an Anglic king of Bernicia called Edwin, are just that. There was no Edwin XE "Edwin". There was an Eadwine XE "Eadwine", who died in 633, chopped up by a king of Mercia, without giving his name to anywhere in Scotland, because it is etymologically impossible, historically impossible and logically impossible—if you read the history.

It was the Norsemen who restored their version of order with successive kings of York and Northumbria, and established the Danelaw XE "Danelaw", (see Glossary on Scots word *Law*) which covered most of England, and showed who ruled the land. The very name England, could be Norse (C/V say it comes from Öngull land, Öngull XE "Öngull" being a Norse personal name and a name for the Angles. It means 'an angle, fish hook, bent'). After all, Scotland, Ireland, Iceland, Greenland, Shetland, Vinland etc. were named by the Norse. If it had been English, it would have been something like *Anglecyn* XE "Anglecyn", which was a term used by Bede, or *Angle* something. The Saxons of course were not Angles XE "Angles", or indeed Engles (A/S *engle* means Angel), and being the greater number and of the greater influence, would have probably preferred another name. The Scots called England, *Sassan*, land of the Saxons and thus Sassanach XE "Sassanach" for an Englishman. The Irish have *Sasana* and the Brythons, *Lloegr*, 'lost lands'.

Now, I am perfectly aware of the eyebrows ascending heavenwards and lower lips navel gazing at this rough sketch of those times and its being at some variance with the accepted official story. This is where toponymy can play a significant role. Prof. ÓCorráinn, of U.C.C. says that "toponymy (the study of place names) is a surly, inarticulate and ambiguous witness, even in the hands of the best counsel", but when the numbers and spread of the inarticulate witnesses are great enough, I think even sceptics must concede some worth to them, especially when there is historical and

topographical evidence in support. The area which is under study in this book is a good example.

Norse names abound all over southern, central, northern Scotland and the islands. They have been suppressed through ignorance and/or perhaps for perceived political advantage from succeeding dynasties. The ignorance I can deal with; the political spinning mentality I am afraid is dead wood, beyond help. The ignorance I refer to is the result of an education like mine, and millions more, which was based on 'accepted wisdoms' which no history teacher or officially sanctioned publication would dare to question. It has been a self-perpetuating delusion with no one questioning the emperor's lack of apparel—and unfortunately I have unwittingly played my part in this delusion. I must mention several people who have helped me to see the emperor—not a pretty sight—starkers (from Norse *sterk*, A/Saxon is *stearc*).

Robert Louis Stevenson XE "Robert Louis Stevenson" in his last letter to his brother referred to the Anglo-Saxon heresy of the official histories, which said Anglo-Saxons had settled here and left their language. It set me on a path which led to Dorothy Dunnett XE "Dorothy Dunnett" and her great work, 'King Hereafter', wherein she showed, using painstakingly assembled genealogies, how the Earl Thorfinn XE "Thorfinn", Viking ruler of the Orkneys and ten other earldoms in Scotland was better known in his day as the Scots king MacBeth XE "MacBeth". I laughed at first, but soon came to realise, as did the Scots Historiographer Royal of the time, that it just had to be true. More than 90% of Scotland was under the sway of Thorfinn, and his mother was Bethoc XE "Bethoc", making him MacBeth, i.e. son of Bethoc. We had a Norse king. The more Norse names I uncovered, the more relaxed I became with my preposterous findings—everywhere in Scotland

One of the places in this area that I visited, Stenton XE "Stenton", was fairly well known to me. There is a nearby loch, Pressmennan XE "Pressmennan", in a wooded setting, which was a favourite place of mine for teaching my dogs how to swim. The higher slopes of the wood provide magnificent views to Stenton, North Berwick and the Forth. What I hadn't realised before was the Norse origins of this place.

Old spellings of the 12th century, give Steinton. This is from Norse, *stein*, (pronounced in the distinctive Scots fashion, *steen* or *stain*) 'stone' and *tún*, 'an enclosure'. Later of course, the *tún*, pronounced toun/toon, would refer to larger living places, sometimes finishing up as a 'toon, toun or ton. This *tún*, was common in Iceland (Ekwall, 1924), where many of our Norse visitors came from via Norway and also Ireland. The A/Saxon word for stone is, *stan*, as in Laurel.



A star pupil at Pressmennan Loch, nr. Stenton

Now if this place was isolated, surrounded by Gaelic or Brythonic place names, then there would be grave doubts as to its provenance, never mind the 12th century Norse spelling, which could be put down to other causes. There are Gaelic and Brythonic places, like Ballencrief XE "Ballencrief", Achingall XE "Achingall", Tranent XE "Tranent", Trabroun XE "Trabroun", Traprain, Dunbar, etc., but these names merge into the local Norse names and in no way overwhelm them. On the contrary, I have found that the Norse names are predominant. And it is in this context that Stenton can confidently be sourced as Norse. Of course you will demand quite rightly for solid proof of these other places.

In Timothy Pont XE "Timothy Pont" 's 16th c. map can be seen a place in Pressmennan Wood named *Fattlapps* XE "*Fattlapps*", which does sound humorous and many place name commentators seem happy with that. However, *Fatt* is Norse for 'upturned or bent backwards' and *lapps*, may come from Old Scots *lippie*, 'flax or corn seed measure'. This would then give us a meaning *perhaps* of upturned flax flowers or corn heads.



Stenton with N. Berwick and Firth of Forth in background

Just outside Stenton, we find Meiklerig XE "Meiklerig" and Meiklerig Wood. This is Norse, *Mikill* XE "*Mikill*" , *mikil*, 'great, tall, large size', *hryggr*, 'ridge', *viðr*, 'wood'. 'V' in Norse is pronounced 'W', and the end 'R', indicating the nominative case, usually disappears. 'K' is a Norse feature, not found naturally in Anglo-Saxon, which used the Latin *c*. This word *mikil*, is found all over Scotland in various guises as mykel, mukel, mykyll and many more. Old English didn't have a 'K'. Bit of a giveaway.

Close by Stenton is a little place called Ginglet XE "Ginglet" . Strange sounding name and I have no old forms of it. However here goes. There is Norse, *Göngu-líð*, 'footmen, also, help or assistance'.

A short distance away is Spott XE "Spott" Wood, Farm, Mill, Burn, etc. This is Norse, *Spotti*, 'bit, small piece'. Anglo-Saxon word is *splott*. Norse for a 'mill' is *mylna*, found all over Scotland spelt similarly and a common Scots name, Mylne XE "Mylne" . 'Burn' comes (with metathesis) from Norse *Brunnr*, 'a spring, running water'. The Gaelic is *bùrn*, probably from the Norse. Farm is French. Overlooking Spott is Brunt Hill XE "Brunt Hill" and The Brunt XE "The Brunt" . *Brunt* is Norse 'burnt, barren heath', and incidentally possibly the meaning of Burntisland XE "Burntisland" in Fife. A bit above Pressmennan (Brythonic 'wood of the hill') is Rammer Wood XE "Rammer Wood" , which is Norse, *Ram(m)r*, 'strong, mighty'.

Robert Louis Stevenson had relatives in this area, and he used to go to North Berwick amongst other places for holidays. Not far from Whittinghame is Stevenson House XE "Stevenson House" and Stevenson Mains. On Pont's late 16th. c. map it is *Steenstoun*. R.L.S. had tried for some years to trace his family roots in order to satisfy certain worries but died before succeeding. I think his name is probably Norse, *Stefanson* a fairly common name still today. I also noticed a *Stefansdottir*. A medial *f* in Norse commonly changed later to a *v*. Stefan is recorded as an Old Norse name, so R.L.S. has no fears.

Within a short distance from here we have Coldale XE "Coldale" , and several Colstouns. The Norse for coal, and dark, was *kol*, but it is recorded that there is no coal around here, in the Statistical Account of the 18th. century. There is however, the Norse personal name *Kol* XE "*Kol*" , and still today in Scandinavia. What about the C? In the 12th. c. Icelandic grammarians laid down rules when C could be used instead of K. These rules seem to have been very flexibly observed, and the result was the names we see today.

On the other side of Stevenson House we have Hailes XE "Hailes" (Hales in 16th.c.) Castle, situated near Nether Hailes. Nether is *Neðar*, in Norse, and means 'lower', as opposed to *ofarr*, 'over, higher up' as in Over Hailes XE "Over Hailes" which is opposite Hailes Castle further up the slope, which is *hallr*, or *háls*, 'ridge, hill', and very common in Scotland. The owner at one time of the castle was Francis, Earl of Bothwell XE "Francis, Earl of Bothwell" , a Norse name of difficult etymology. However, I suggest, N. *Boð*, 'an order, command, summons, a battle', and *vel*, 'well, good, fine'. There is also *veldi*, 'power'. There are several other possibilities. He was the third husband of Mary, queen of Scots XE "Mary, queen of Scots" , and died in a prison in Denmark.



Hailes Castle

Along from Hailes there is Garlabanck XE "Garlabanck" as it was in the 16th.c. map of Pont. This is N. *Geir-laukr*, 'garlic', plus *bakki*, 'bank, slope leading to a river, usually'. Today there is Gourlay Bank XE "Gourlay Bank" , in nearby

Haddington. The Norse were keen on their condiments. Double 'K' in Norse commonly became *nk*. Whenever you see the word *bank*, in this sense, in early times, you may count on a Norse origin, because there was no Anglo-Saxon word like it.

A bit north of Hailes XE "Hailes" there are several places with Markle XE "Markle" , (15th.c. Walter Bower, Marcle, which he claimed meant *miracle*), possibly N. *Mark*, 'wood' and *hlið*, 'cultivated hill, slope or farm'. A church here dedicated to St. Mary had been destroyed some years ago.

Heading down the hill from Pencraig we find the village of East Linton XE "East Linton" . This is B. *llin*, G. *lin*, or Norse, *lin*, meaning 'flax', plus *tún*, or it could be B. *llyn*, G. *linn*, 'pool'. On its outskirts we have Knowes XE "Knowes" , Norse, *Knollr*, 'rounded small hill, mound' and Hedderwick XE "Hedderwick" , farther on towards Dunbar, N. *Heðarvík*, 'heather or moorland bay'.

* * *

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