NOTES AND COMMENTS

A. NOTES ON SCOTTISH PLACE-NAMES

18. *Lane* in Galloway

In an earlier volume of this journal we discussed the etymology and semantic development of the Gaelic word *lòn* in Scottish stream-names (2[1958]196-8), also touching shortly on the difficulties of linking Scottish *lane* with this word family. We now intend to follow up this rather negative argument by a more positive approach outlining the very special place *lane* has in Scottish river nomenclature.

There is first of all its geographical distribution which in limitation and actual locality is not unlike that of *strand* (Scottish Studies 5 [1961]200-201], for, in the words of Christison (1892-3:271] stream-names containing the element *lane* have their centre in "the hilly country round Loch Doon, at the junction of Ayr, Dumfries and Galloway, . . from which they radiate but a short distance into Western Ayr, Upper Nithsdale, and chiefly Northern Galloway, although a few, in the south of it, reach the Solway Firth." In this small region Christison counted 52 names, 38 of which are traceable on the one-inch Ordnance Survey maps, apart from 9 which are place-names containing *lane* as a defining element.

The geographical scatter of the names in question is best shown by listing them in conjunction with the water-courses with which they are associated. The most easterly group is found in the drainage area of the Nith; to which belong *Beoch Lane*, *Fingland L.* and *Under Brae L.* Draining into Urr Water and the adjoining stretches of the Solway we have *Kirkgunzeon Lane*; *Auchencairn Lane*, *Fairgirth L.*, and *Potterland L.*, and reach the largest cluster in the valley of the Dee. From this central group we only mention *Barend Lane*, *Carlingwark L.*, *Carsphairn L.*, *Craigencallie L.*, *Dargall L.*, *Fingland L.*, *Keoch L.*, *Loch L.* and *Minnigall L.* Into the Cree drains *The Lane*, and the Ayrshire valleys of the Doon and the Lugar contain the remaining instances: *Balloch Lane*, *Whitespout L.*, *Boghead L.*, *Head Mark L.*, and others.

Unfortunately space does not permit us to illustrate this distribution by a map, for although the waters of *Beoch Lane* flow into the upper reaches of the Nith and therefore ultimately

into the Solway, whereas *Head Mark Lane* joins the Black Water and via Burnock Water, Lugar Water and the River Ayr finally drains into the Firth of Clyde, these two burns flow parallel to each other at a distance of just over a mile. The area involved is, consequently, much more compact than might be inferred from the geographical position of the rivers enumerated above. From a linguistic point of view, it is also completely within the formerly Gaelic speaking regions of south-west Scotland. This can be proved by general place-name evidence as well as by a closer look at the "defining elements" of the names mentioned. Out of the 38 names listed only 10 show first elements which are definitely of Germanic origin, like *Whitespont* and *Potterland Lanes*, but also containing loan-words from Gaelic.

This does not mean that we want to ascribe any of the other 28 names to the Gaelic period. No, these names must be younger than the seventeenth century when the Gaelic language ceased to be spoken in the region. Not only is the word-order Germanic but semantically these names belong to a very late category, i.e. that of "names from names", the primary names being of various linguistic origin.

To which language, then, does *lane* belong? Is it identical with the word *lane* meaning "a narrow street or road", with a peculiar semantic development in the Scots dialect of Galloway? The *Scottish National Dictionary* Vol. 5, p. 505, has indeed several quotations which confirm that in Galloway a lane is "a slow . . . piece of water" or "a small tributary stream". The same dictionary, however, also points to the most probable origin of this word *lane* in this particular meaning and toponymic usage, deriving it from Gaelic *lèan*, Irish *léana*, "a marshy meadow". The question now arises whether the word was borrowed into Scots in the meaning of "meadow" and subsequently influenced by English *lane* (which seems to be implied by the SND), or whether it had already partly undergone this semantic change in the Gaelic dialect of Galloway, at least in onomastic usage. Three reasons appear to speak for the latter: (1) English *lane* never had the meaning "water-course". (2) There do not seem to be any names containing *lane* of post-Gaelic origin in the region referring to meadows, as one might expect to find as survivals from the earlier semantic stage. (3) We do have a number of names clearly going back to the Gaelic period in which *lèan* can only mean "stream", although the meaning "meadow" is also attested. Amongs

the names listed by Maxwell (1930:192-3) we find (*Loup o'*) *Lanebreddan* in the parish of Minigaff, *Lanedripple* in Inch, *Lanehulcheon* in Balmaghie, *Lanemannoch* in Kells, *Laniewee* in Minigaff, *Lannigore* in Old Luce. In some of these the element in question appears to be definitely "meadow", as in *Lannigore*; in others only field-work can tell us to what geographical feature these names apply, but Maxwell himself calls *Lanemannoch* "a stream" (1887:235), and *Lanebreddan* in which the second element is Gaelic *bradan* "a salmon" can hardly be "salmon meadow" but must surely be "salmon stream". If this is so, we can assume that in the Gaelic of Galloway, and particularly of the Stewartry, the word *lèan* "meadow" also developed the meaning "small (sluggish) stream", was borrowed as such into the Scots dialect of the region during a bilingual period, and was phonemically equated with English *lane* which may have helped to complete the semantic separation from the notion "meadow" which it originally had. The various modern forms in which the word appears—*Lane*, *Lanie-*, *Lannie-*, raise further interesting grammatical and phonological problems the discussion of which we must deny ourselves this time.

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B. NOTES ON COLLECTION AND RESEARCH

The "Moss Houses" of Kincardine, Perthshire, 1792

Public imagination was considerably stirred in the 1790's by the reclamation of a substantial part of Kincardine Moss, in southern Perthshire, and much was made of it at the time in Sir John Sinclair's improving propaganda. Through the initiative of Lord Kames and his son, George Home Drummond, rich arable lands between Forth and Teith were being systematically recolonised after centuries of submergence beneath wastes of peat-bog. Even the Gaelic-speaking Highland colonists—mostly from the parishes of Callander, Balquhidder and Killin—came in for praise, and interesting details were