Notes and Comments

Popular Courts in Early Medieval Scotland: Some Suggested Place-Name Evidence—Additional Note

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Since publication of the article under the above title in 1981 (*ante,* vol. 25, 1-24) some further evidence has come to light which it may be useful to communicate. First, there are four place-names which can be added to the gazetteer in Appendix I, as follows:

1.2(A)	COTHALL Forres	NJ019549	Perhaps cot + hall	O.S. 7th ser., sheet 29.
1.17(A)	CUTHILE HARBOUR Inverkeilor	NO701469		O.S. 7th ser., sheet 50.
2.29(A)	Kincardine in Menteith		Cuthil Brae, Cuthel(l) Brae (inhabited residence) NS725991. N.W. of tumulus and ¼ m. S by E. of Standing Stone. See O.S. 1:25,000, Sheet NS69/79.	J. Stobie, Map of Perthshire (1783); also information obtained from occupier.
Ayr				
2.30	Probably Galston		Cothill (supposedly 13th century). Associated with Loudounhill (in Loudoun), Pokelly (in Fenwick) and Allantoun *alias* Allerton, doubtless Allanton in Galston. Presumably this is the place named Coathill shown on A. and M. Armstrong's *A New Map of Ayrshire* (1775), south of Allanton (square FD). I have used the edition produced to accompany *Ayrshire at the Time of Burns* (Ayrshire Arch. and Nat. Hist. Soc., 1959); the approximate NG Ref. would be NS605369. Most probably cot + hill.	J. S. Dobie (ed.), *Cunningham Topographized* (1876), quoting 'The Lineal Descent of Muir of Rowallan'.

Secondly, we should note what is apparently a second documentary instance of the word *comhdhail* dating, like the agreement of 1329 dealt with in the 1981 article (p. 3), from the early fourteenth century. A charter by which Robert, janitor or porter of Kincardine in Mearns, granted to Duncan Kymbdy, burgess of Aberdeen, the lands of 'Achichdonachy', dating to *c*.1317, included in its clause of warrandice the phrase *cum curia et conthal*, 'with court and conthal'. The charter is printed (from the Arbuthnott Charter Chest) in *The Frasers of Philorth* (ed. Alexander Fraser, Lord Saltoun, 1879), vol. II, p. 197, no. 2. It has survived in the form of a notarial transumpt of 21 April 1453, made by Laurence Dunecani, priest of Aberdeen diocese, and is now preserved with the other muniments of the Viscount of Arbuthnott in Aberdeen University Archives (2764/53/1/8). The notary has copied the lost original apparently with care. He has written the word *conthal* (line 12) with the Tironian abbreviation sign for con- or com- followed by thal, the final letter having a horizontal stroke through the ascender to indicate a vernacular term lacking a declensional ending or whose ending was uncertain. The care taken over this transcription suggests that the notary was not altogether familiar with the word and had copied it exactly as it stood in the original. This raises the strong presumption that the word written as *couthal* in the Arbroath cartularies (in both extant MSS) should really be *conthal*, and this spelling could be seen as preserving the nasal in the first element of the compound *comhdhail*.

The charter printed by Lord Saltoun has, unfortunately, nothing by way of a gloss on the significance of the word, unlike the Arbroath agreement of 1329. Nevertheless, it does clearly associate *conthal* with the ordinary term for a court, and it may be safely inferred in this instance that whatever the precise meaning of the phrase it had to do with the ordinary indwellers on an estate of very modest size. The place-name given as 'Achichdonachy' in Lord Saltoun's text should perhaps be read as 'Athithdouachy' or 'Achithdouachy'. Endorsements in hands of the earlier and later sixteenth century render the name respectively as 'Ardwthouy' and 'Ardufthequhy'. Later, as is shown by more modern endorsements, this became Arduthie, and according to J. C. Watt (*The Mearns of Old*, 1914, p. 296) the lands were taken for the building of Stonehaven railway station.

A Correction
In Appendix II delete 3.3 ERROCHT. Information kindly supplied by the Reverend William Matheson makes it certain that this unexplained place-name is not an instance of *eireachd*, 'assembly'.