

NOTES

- 1 A short feature on Donald McColl, who died in 1977, appeared in *Tocher* 34 (1980: 248-251).
- 2 At the beginning of the interview DAM was thinking of the *nasg* in terms of something like the circular one he knew, a continuous collar made, as for instance Dwelly's definition suggests, of birch twigs. See note 4 below for the actual meaning to Donald McColl.
- 3 The Gaelic adjective *caol* is also used as a noun to mean the osiers or saughs used in making wicker baskets; its use might be taken to imply that the birch twigs here were of a similar thickness, but they may well have been thinner.
- 4 *Nasg* is here primarily the name of the U- or V-shaped branch of wood which formed the greater part of the collar, though it may also include the birch-twig with the permanently fixed to it, closing it at the top and the fixture beneath attaching it to the tether-stake, which Donald usually simply refers to as *ròp* ('rope'). A parallel appears to be an example from East Holstein, illustrated by A. Lühning, 'Stopping the cattle from running away', in H. Cheape (ed.), *Tools and Traditions. Studies in European Ethnology presented to Alexander Fenton*, National Museums of Scotland 1993, 118 (Fig. 3). This example has openings through which a pin goes, instead of hooks over which the fastening band goes as in the iron version (Fig 2).
- 5 Both the larger loop here and the smaller one at the other end would presumably be made by twisting round the end of the withe and knitting the twigs in among the strands further back, much as the end of a basket handle is made.
- 6 Oak seems to have been preferred, no doubt for strength, and perhaps also because many of its branches would naturally have the beginnings of the sort of curve needed for the collar. These practical reasons probably meant more than any survival of druidic beliefs in the tree's magical powers: powers of magical binding in recent times have been more closely associated with the more flexible *buarach* or fetter which bound the cow's hind legs together for milking.

ALAN BRUFORD AND DONALD A. MACDONALD

Clawbare, otherwise
Ruchlaw West Mains, Stenton,
East Lothian (O.S. NT 617 729)

'Ruchlaw West Mains is sometimes known as Cla-bair but the meaning of these words is obscure, and the name is not agreeable, for some reason, either to proprietor or tenant' (Lang 1929, 189).

The farmers in the area of Stenton, East Lothian, today (1992) know the farm by the name of Clawbare or Clawbair (they have no particular spelling for the name), especially the family of Jeffrey, branches of which farm Bielgrange, Deuchrie and Halls, and whose descendants have been in this area since the nineteenth century. The farmer at Ruchlaw West Mains today, Mr Dobson, knows of the name but does not use it as much as the Jeffreys (he and his family have farmed here since the late

1950s). Mr Dobson stated that a field immediately north of the farm is known by the names of both 'Old Clabair' and 'South Blakelaw' (the latter being the name of a small settlement between the farm and Stenton, of which only a couple of walls remain, now built into the field boundary dykes). However, a neighbouring farmer, Mr Kinnaird of Pressmennan, knows this field only as 'Old Clawbare' (he knows of no particular spelling), and the field north of it (which is on his property) as 'Blacklaws' or 'Blakelaws'; he and his family have farmed at Pressmennan since the 1930s.

There is a Gaelic word, *clàbar*, meaning 'filth, dirt, nastiness, mire, mud, clay; a puddle' (MacLeod and Dewar 1887, s.v.), and most of the local farmers agree with the description of clayey ground.¹

At West Register House, there is a map of the roads in this area, dated May 1750, which has both 'Clabar House' and 'West Mains' at the location of Ruchlaw West Mains.² This map is possibly related to a dispute over a right of way near Stenton in 1748: various people were cited as witnesses to a committee of justices of the peace. One of these witnesses was James Young who was described as having lived at 'Ruchlaw West Mains or Clawbare' for the first twenty-two years of his life, he being aged sixty-seven at the time of this dispute. However, whether the place was 'Clawbare' in the late seventeenth century, when James Young was a youth, or at the time of this dispute (1748) is not made clear.³

In a 1799 map of East Lothian, the farm is named only as 'Clawbare'.⁴ However, in no other maps, past or present,⁵ nor in appropriate estate papers,⁶ nor in Stenton Parish Records, is the farm referred to other than as Ruchlaw West Mains (if mentioned at all in some of the earlier maps).

Incidentally, Ruchlaw West Mains took its name from being part of the estate of Ruchlaw, by Stenton. It was formerly known as the West Mains of Stenton.⁷ (It is not west of Ruchlaw, but almost due south).

There are records of another Clawbare in East Lothian, near East Linton, some three or four miles north of Ruchlaw West Mains, although there is a problem in identifying exactly where this land was.

The first record was in May 1819, of 'parts of the lands of Ruchflatt or Porks now known by the name of Clawbare or Barebones', a description which remained in use in various documents dated to 1919/20, when Ruchflatt or Porks became used instead.⁸ An earlier record of these same lands of 'Ruchflatt or Porks' dated February 1738 made no mention of the other names.⁹

These records all implied that these lands were part of the farm of Phantassie, by East Linton, but the farmer there today (1933), Mr Hamilton, knows of no such name of Clawbare (or Ruchflatt or Porks), though there is an Under and Upper Barebones lying west of the town, two fields about O.S. ref. NT 583 766.¹⁰ There is also a reference to these two fields in a book published in 1890, though nothing is said about any other names (Martine 1890: Prestonkirk Parish), and to one field

called Barebones in this general area on an undated map (but which pre-dates the local railway, so before the 1840s).¹¹ The farmer, Mr Hamilton, suggested the name of Barebones was 'because the soil in the fields is shallow in places over rock'.¹⁰ Perhaps this Clawbare was a modern English descriptive name—'claw/bare', though the comparable Gaelic name *clàbar* should not be forgotten.

Lastly, there is a field by the name of 'Claw Bear' on the farm of Aitchisonbank, some two miles north of Gretna, Dumfriesshire, O.S. ref. NY 318 702.¹² The history of this name is not known to this writer.

NOTES

- 1 From interviews with farmers and landowners in the Stenton area, May-June 1992, including Mr and Mrs Dobson, Ruchlaw West Mains, branches of the Jeffrey family at Bielgrange, Deuchrie and Halls farms, Mr Kinnaird, Pressmennan Farm, and Mr Blair of Clint.
- 2 Scottish Record Office: RHP 56/1.
- 3 Biel Muniments, Scottish Record Office, GD6/1274 (No. 3).
- 4 William Forrest's Map of East Lothian, 1799.
- 5 Map of East Lothian, surveyed by Mr J. Adair, for John, Marquis of Tweeddale (late seventeenth century); Johan Blaeu's 'Atlas Novus' of Scotland (mid-seventeenth century); maps and plans held in the Buchan Sydserff of Ruchlaw Papers, SRO, GD1/494; precursors to the Ordnance Survey from 1850s onward, and O.S. maps to date.
- 6 Especially Buchan Sydserff or Ruchlaw Papers, SRO, GD1/494, in particular Nos. 113, 117, 121 and 126.
- 7 As recorded in several documents, including General Register of Sasines, RS2/1 f.208; Particular Register of Sasines for Haddington & co. RS26/2 f.329; Inventory of Ruchlaw Writs, held in Buchan Sydserff of Ruchlaw Papers, SRO, GD1/494/84 (and others).
- 8 Abstract of Sasines for Haddington, vol. 1781-1820 Nos. 2298, 2300, and miscellaneous references in various volumes to vol. 1919 No. 385, vol. 1920 No. 13.
- 9 Register of the Great Seal of Scotland (RMS) (SRO) C.2/96 f.50v.
- 10 Correspondence with Mr Hamilton, farmer, Phantassie Farm, East Linton, Jan.-Feb. 1993.
- 11 SRO RHP 3682.
- 12 Place names survey of Aitchisonbank-Goldilelea (1982), held at School of Scottish Studies.

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