Scottish Fairs and Fair-Names

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This essay is based principally on a paper entitled 'Scottish Fairs and Fair-Days: Some Thoughts from a Celtic Perspective' given at the fourth annual conference of the School of Scottish Studies Cosmos Project in 1995. Following (1) some preliminary comments on the origins of our oldest fairs, I will (2) consider the existing literature on the subject, and (3) lay out some academic desiderata. I will then discuss (4) the nature of medieval fairs in general, and (5) the 'fencing' of fairs in particular. Next (6) I will return to the question of the antiquity of fairs, presenting the types of evidence that can be offered by (7) particular place-name elements, (8) Celtic saints' names and quarterdays, and (9) races, fires, handfasting, etc., finally (10) moving on to specific discussion of some of the more opaque or intractable of the fair-names, grouping them according to what may loosely be described as calendar customs, (11) place-names, (12) personal names, (13) material culture or (14) religion, specifically including the moveable feasts, the feasts of the B.V.M., the two feasts of the Rood, and saints' days. I will give slightly more extended consideration (15) to Aikey Fair in Aberdeenshire, based on a paper entitled 'Aikey Fair and the Cult of St Fĕchín' given in 1996 at the fifth Cosmos Project conference, and (16) to the *Feill Eiteachain* in Ross-shire. After some discussion (17) of the seventeenth-century innovation of naming fairs after members of the contemporary landlord class (sometimes with the prefix 'Saint'), based on a paper on 'Scottish Fair-Names' presented in 1997 at the sixth annual conference of the Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland, I will (18) consider the thorny issue of Sunday Markets (*Feilltean Dòmhnaich*), then (19) touch on how the imagery of the fair came to be woven into the fabric of religious thought. Finally (20) I will suggest a categorisation for the corpus of fair-names thus presented.

1. THE EMERGENCE OF FAIRS

People have always come together to trade, or, in earlier societies, to exchange gifts. This tended to be connected with worship, with the observance of holy or festive days, with pilgrimages at certain times to wells and shrines. The whole cumulative process was well described by the Rev. Alexander Maxtone in 1837 in his account of the parish of Fowlis Wester in Lowland Perthshire:

> St Methvanmas market is held at Fowlis annually, on the 6th of November, and is a useful market for the sale of black-cattle, and hiring servants. This was anciently the festival of the parish, and the anniversary of the saint to whom the church was dedicated at its consecration,

> when the people constructed pavilions and booths to indulge in hospitality and mirth, which also became a commercial mart, and assumed the name of *feriæ* or holy-day. Many of our most ancient fairs have a similar origin. (*NSA* 10: 260)

The same model is presented in greater detail in this discussion of St Fioghaid (Fichit, Figget, Figgat) of Inverallan on Speyside.

> The old Celtic habit was in vogue in Fichit's day. As he was no famous man, no head of Iona or Lismore, we are safe in believing that he was a humble and quiet monk or missionary, who came to Inverallan preaching the gospel, who lived beside the 'well', where he drank for his daily use, and where he baptised his converts, who probably ended his days here, and was afterwards regarded as the 'founder' of the Christian Church in this district. He of course was never formally 'canonised' but simply regarded as a 'saint' by 'popular repute'. The day of his death was annually consecrated to his memory. In order to avoid a saints' day falling on a Sunday, the *day of the week* and not the day of the month was kept. Fichit Fair was on the first Friday of June, Old Style. At first religious gatherings would be held on that day in the Churches consecrated with the saint's name – to recount his life, extol his faith, laud his good deeds, exhibit his relics, perhaps visiting his 'well', to commemorate the local saint, and invoke his intercession. The day came to be regarded as the parish annual holiday (Holy Day). At the parish shrine or chapel the people of the district would assemble annually with visitors from the parishes round and pilgrims from a distance, and after the preliminary religious service, the crowd would take opportunity for business or for pleasure; so on the saints days *markets* came to be held with booths, pedlars, crowds of visitors, for merchandise or feeing, and naturally they bore the saint's name. Fichit Fair was held down till about the year 1870.'

Another excellent example is provided by the equally extensive comments of the Rev. Allan Stewart in 1793–94 on the Michaelmas market at Kirkmichael in Highland Perthshire (*OSA* 12: 671), summarised and updated as follows by Sir James David Marwick:

> An annual fair called the Michaelmas market was also held here from of old. It probably took its rise from the concourse of people who assembled on the day sacred to St Michael at a place consecrated to his memory and worship. Half a century ago this fair was one of the principal cattle markets in the kingdom, and continued for several days . . . The population of the Highlands was much larger then than now, and the only supplies to be obtained were through these fairs. For the last ten years at least no transaction of any kind has taken place at this fair, and latterly no one has attended it. The weekly sales at Perth and Blairgowrie have superseded it. (Marwick 1890: 77)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Marwick's *List of Markets and Fairs now and formerly held in Scotland*, prepared for the Royal Commissioners on Market Rights and Tolls, is the main source for the present study. Marwick (1826–1908), an Orcadian who became Town Clerk of my native city

of Glasgow, was a founding member of the Scottish Burgh Record Society and editor of its publications. He also wrote two of our most fundamental historical studies of Glasgow and the Clyde, *Early Glasgow* and *The River Clyde and the Clyde Burghs*. The *List of Markets and Fairs* is an encyclopaedic collection of lightly-edited information, arranged alphabetically by place, whose sources can be categorised as follows: (1) *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland* and *The Register of the Great Seal*, two very substantial and well-indexed publications which may readily be consulted today (these have not, however, been revisited in preparing the present study, the intention of which is mainly to map out paths to further research); (2) a large variety of charters, burgh records and other documents, both published and unpublished, listed by Marwick (1890: 1–2), some of which have since appeared in such series as *Regesta Regum Scottorum* (again, no attempt is made here to revisit these, and indeed an analysis by a historian of their nature and present location would be valuable); (3) the 'Old' and 'New' Statistical Accounts (*OSA* 1790s, *NSA* 1845) of all the parishes of Scotland (Marwick frequently paraphrased these, so I present his citations as they stand in the original accounts and provide full references, which in the case of *OSA* are to the reorganised 1983 edition – the chaotic first edition can still be accessed via the parish name); (4) information obtained during the 1880s by personal communication, described by Marwick (1890: 1) as 'supplied by sheriff clerks, town clerks, clerks of police commissioners, inspectors of poor, &c.'. Needless to say, even when the first three categories of source material have all been reploughed the fourth will remain as Marwick's lasting contribution to the subject.

Marwick's book is not without a small number of errors. At p. 19, a paragraph on Auchtergaven has found its way into the account of Auchterarder, and it is stated that *NSA* gives the market at Auldearn on the first Wednesday after 19 June as St Colin's, but this should read St Colm's (*NSA* 13, pt 3: 18). His substantial *NSA* quotation under 'CAMPBELTOWN, Argyleshire' belongs under 'CAMPBELTOWN. – Village in Inverness-shire', i.e. Ardersier (p. 28). His reference to 'Kessogs fair' under 'CUMBRAE. – Buteshire' belongs at Comrie in Perthshire (pp. 32, 36). Some of his information about Innerwick and Kinloch Rannoch will be found under those heads, some under Fortingal (pp. 55, 65, 75). Similarly, some of his information about fairs at the Kirktown of Lochell will be found under 'LEOCHELL, parish in Aberdeenshire', which is really the same name (pp. 81, 83). As a glance at *NSA* (14, pt 2: 37) will show, a quotation about 'Hugh's fair' under 'KIRKMICHAEL. – Parish in Ross and Cromarty' (p. 77) belongs to another parish in the same county, Nigg, which is therefore deprived of any entry at all; this explains why Marwick reports of Kirkmichael, 'No such fair has been held here during the recollection of the oldest people in the parish.' A paragraph under Milton of Glenesk at p. 88 belongs under Methlick on the same page. Two paragraphs at p. 103 under 'RUTHVEN. – Village and parish in Forfarshire' which refer to a charter granted to the Duke of Gordon have in fact to do with Ruthven in Badenoch, and therefore belong under Kingussie at p. 74. And the intriguing 'Lung fair' at Tarland in July (p. 112) has nothing to do with

internal organs; it is merely a misprint for 'Luag fair', dedicated to St Mo-Luag (*NSA* 12: 843). Such errors serve as a warning (though they are as nought compared to the courageous Victorian sweep of the work as a whole), and indeed Marwick himself was conscious of the deficiencies of his work, which he later described with exquisite modesty as 'a memorandum':

> Market Rights and Fairs in England, Scotland, and Ireland formed the subject of investigation by Royal Commissioners, whose Reports on 9th August, 1888, and 15th January, 1891, and the voluminous evidence taken by them, fill fourteen folio volumes. A memorandum on the history of these institutions in Scotland, hurriedly prepared by the writer of this article, is incorporated in volume vii. pp. 559–674. But the subject, which is closely associated with the development of this country, deserves fuller treatment. (Marwick 1903–04b: 274)

This requires some elucidation. The fourteen 'volumes' (I refer to them below as 'parts') produced by the Royal Commission on Market Rights and Tolls were bound as nine volumes and published as UK Parliamentary Papers 1888 vols 53–55 and 1890–91 vols 36–41. As these form a fundamental work of reference for the study of our fairs and markets, I summarise their contents here:

1888	vol. 53	part 1	Commissioners' First Report: history of fairs and markets in UK, referring to Scotland at p. 7, with appendix of Scottish legal texts at pp. 94–103, and lists of relevant Scottish Acts of Parliament at pp. 224 and 230. I note at p. 224: 'The Scottish legislation with respect to fairs and markets appears to have commenced with Acts in 1456 and 1493 as to excessive distress and freedom of sales. Markets held on Sundays and holidays, or in churchyards, are dealt with by Acts of 1503, 1579, 1581, 1592–3–4, 1640–1, 1656, and 1661. Marketing on Mondays and Saturdays was prohibited by Acts of 1644, 1663, and 1695. Trading was limited to regular market days in 1567.'
		pt 2	Minutes of evidence taken in England.
	vol. 54	pt 3	Minutes of evidence taken in England.
	vol. 55	pt 4	Minutes of evidence taken in England.
1890–91	vol. 36	pt 5	Minutes of evidence taken in Ireland.
		pt 6	Minutes of evidence taken in Ireland.
	vol. 37	pt 11	Commissioners' Final Report, referring to Scottish historical matters at p. 13, and to the contemporary condition of Scottish markets at pp. 32–44, 62–63, 67–68 and 114–15.
		pt 7	Minutes of evidence taken in England, Ireland and Scotland. The Scottish evidence is at pp. 377–455. Marwick's 'List of Markets and Fairs now and formerly held in Scotland' (pp. 559–674) forms the last of a number of appendices. He arranged for some copies of it to be run off as a monograph, paginated 1–116. This monograph (a signed copy presented to Edinburgh University

Library, pressmarked Zq.2.20) has been used as the basis for the present study.

vol. 38	pt 8	Minutes of evidence taken in England.
	pt 9	Minutes of evidence taken in England.
vol. 39	pt 10	Minutes of evidence taken in Ireland.
	pt 12	Précis of minutes of evidence.
	pt 13.1	Statistics of markets in London and of markets owned by local authorities in England and Wales.
vol. 40	pt 13.2	Statistics of markets owned by persons other than local authorities in England and Wales.
vol. 41	pt 13.3	Statistics of markets in Scotland and Ireland. The Scottish statistics are at pp. 9–59, with a table of charges for tolls, rents and stallages in selected markets in Scotland at pp. 281–93.
	pt 14	Reports on foreign markets.

The introduction to Marwick's *List* ranges through the history of markets and fairs throughout the world, but stops short of any analysis of the history of markets and fairs in Scotland. This is also true of his later work (Marwick 1903–04a), whose approach is anthropological and strongly Frazerian. The influence of his introduction upon the study of Scottish fairs is thus revealed mainly in the way subsequent writers on the topic (e.g. Haldane 1952: 133) seem to echo its ringing tones about how 'wherever large numbers of persons were drawn together at fixed times for purposes of business, or religion, or pleasure, an inducement was offered to the marchant or pedlar, as well as to the craftsman, to attend, and to provide by the diversity and quality of his wares for the requirements of the persons there congregated' (Marwick 1890: 3).

The first academic reaction to the *List* appears to have been a paper on 'The Incidence of Saints' Names in Relation to Scottish Fairs' (Paul 1918). Paul provides a list of dedications and points out that Marwick mentions nearly 900 places in which fairs are or were held, 317 of which are specified to have been held on the anniversary day of 102 saints. The next scholar to give undivided attention to the subject was Mrs Mary MacLeod Banks. In vol. 1 of *British Calendar Customs: Scotland* she devotes a twenty-page section to it (1937: 171–90), consisting of a succinct introduction and a tabulated list of 'fairs of which there is evidence before 1500', including place, date, name, authority and notes.

Next into the ring was A. R. B. Haldane with *The Drove Roads of Scotland* and a paper given to the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society (1952; 1961). Other general studies since then have included Skinner (1962) and the chapters 'Pillars of the Year' and 'Fairs and Trysts' in Cameron (1997: 85–101). To these however we must add more specialised items like the miscellaneous references to fairs in *The Celtic Place-Names of Scotland* (Watson 1926), a paper on Highland fairs read to the Gaelic Society of Inverness in the same year (MacDonald 1925–27), and a geographical study of the growth of fairs and markets in the seventeenth century (Whyte 1979; cf. Whyte 1995: 180–82). There

are also studies of aspects of celebrated fairs such as Pitlessie (Andrews 1966; Megaw 1966) and Skirling (Skinner 1966) and items on specific fairs in *Tocher* and other journals. Most of the material on fairs in *Tocher* is in nos. 40 and 41 (1986–88). Also ripe for study and analysis is the information given in countless almanacs untouched by Marwick, such as *The Exact Dealer's Companion* (Smith 1727) and many others both earlier and later (see McDonald 1966). McCraw's excellent *The Fairs of Dundee* (1994) contains much of general as well as of local interest, and demonstrates how rewarding the subject can be when tackled in depth at a local level; as the present study will reveal with regard to Dumfries and Galloway (see especially sections 8, 11 and 15), a regional approach could be equally rewarding.

Above all, for our purposes, a wealth of information has come out piecemeal since the late nineteenth century in countless works on local history. Some, such as Warden (1880) and Melville (1935), devote entire sections or even chapters to the subject; other authors have contented themselves with passing references, but sometimes these are substantial. Recent Scottish historians have paid too little attention to fairs, however, and it is difficult to find historical monographs which include 'fairs' or 'markets' as headwords in the index, even though there may be valuable references to fairs and markets in the text. Some useful works which I would exempt from this criticism are Adams (1978), Mair (1988) and Ewan (1990). Mair, in particular, devotes a chapter to 'Merchants, Shops and Markets'; his book is for the general reader and contains no references or bibliography, but instead there is a section 'How to find out more' in which stress is quite properly laid on the appeal of his subject to ordinary individuals who wish to understand the evidence that surrounds them. Recent work with which I am familiar on fairs in Ireland – a comparable country where the study of fairs is currently more advanced, although it never found its Marwick – includes O'Flanagan (1985), Logan (1986) and Buttimer (1992); useful anthropological contextualisation is provided by Hodges (1988).

3. DESIDERATA

In the short term, we need a volume of essays on aspects of Scottish fairs and fair-days, looking at topics such as the administration of fairs, legislation,[2] names, dedications, origins, weekly markets, the relationship between churches and fairs, eighteenth–twentieth century almanacs, tales, verse and proverbs about fairs in Scots, English and Gaelic,[3] illustrations of fairs in different media,[4] chapmen and cramers, specific types of fairs such as seed fairs (see Marwick 1890: 55), hiring fairs, wool fairs, harvest fairs, cattle fairs, horse fairs and so on, fairs associated with races and with plays, and the way fairs and markets have changed and adapted to modern times, turning into Highland games or agricultural shows. In the longer term, we need a complete updating of Marwick: in other words, a database or gazetteer of information on fairs and markets, listed alphabetically by place overall, and chronologically within each entry. Within

each entry there would be three types of information: (1) introductory, gathering together general information (location, origins, etc.) and references, and, very importantly, attempting to distinguish the different annual fairs, whether named or not, in that location; (2) date-specific discursive information such as the above three quotations; (3) date-specific non-discursive information. Type (3) would consist mainly of computer-sorted references from fair-lists in almanacs; I have experimented with it, and the first few entries produced by an analysis of fair-lists in just five almanacs,[5] once sorted alphabetically, read as follows:

Abbotshall, at the Links of, 10 April. *EDC* 1727.
Aberdeen, 1st Tuesday and Wednesday of December. *EA* 1754, 1759.
Aberdeen, 1st Tuesday of May. *EA* 1754, 1759.
Aberdeen, 1st Tuesday of October. *EA* 1754, 1759.
Aberdeen, 2nd Tuesday of June. *EA* 1754, 1759.
Aberdeen, 7 December. *EDC* 1727.
Aberdeen, Old, see Old Aberdeen.
Aberdeen, St Monence in, 1 March. *EDC* 1727.
Aberdour, 6 June. *EDC* 1727.
Aberdour, 8 June. *EA* 1750, 1751.
Abernethy, 2 July. *EDC* 1727.
Abernethy, 4 October. *EDC* 1727.
Abernethy, 9 June. *EDC* 1727; *EA* 1750, 1751.
Abernethy, St Bridge Fair at, 1 February. *EDC* 1727.

The last item picked up here is clearly ancient and of great interest – a St Brigid's Fair in a Pictish cult site of major importance, where the parish church is dedicated to St Brigid to this day.

To see how complete a guide Marwick is, I checked the available literature on Peebles fairs in my local library there – basically Chambers 1864, Gunn 1908, 1912 and 1914, Renwick 1912, and Buchan 1925 (I have the good fortune to live in a remarkably well-documented burgh). In summary, what I found is that Peebles appears to have had ten fairs at various times, of which Marwick gives seven. He has Fasten's E'en in March, Beltane in May/June, St Peter's in June/July, a fair on the Tuesday after 18 July, St Bartholomew's in August, St Dionysius' in October, and the Siller Fair in December. In addition to these, however, there were St Giles' or Roodsmas in September, the Runt Fair in November, and the Yule Fair in December/January. Seven out of ten is not bad, but I noticed that Marwick only scores about 5 out of 10 for overall information. For example, St Peter's was also known as the Lamb Fair, the fair on the Tuesday after 18 July was called the Wool Fair, and it appears that St Bartholomew's was known as the Hook (Heuk) Fair, presumably for the hire of reapers with their hooks or sickles, as was Old Cumnock's Scythe Fair in July (Skinner 1962: 4; Cameron 1997: 95). The Siller (Silver) Fair was also called the Winter Fair or St Andrew's, and only Chambers (1864: 301) explains it:

> This is a settling-day among farmers and others for many transactions during the season. Lime, drainage materials, and other articles connected with farming, are paid for this day, which is accordingly the busiest day with the banks during the whole year.

The above figures will be true for the present study too, since it is based on Marwick: that is to say, detailed study of local historical sources seems likely to yield 50 per cent more fair-names and 100 per cent more crucial information.

4. MEDIEVAL FAIRS

Traders needed a recognised circuit or 'market ring' by which they could travel from place to place, finding large numbers of people congregated in some suitable location, ideally a flat, open space with plentiful grazing, good access, a water supply and an alehouse (cf. Whyte 1979: 14). At a given time in its history, a place might have anything from one to a dozen fairs in a year, depending on its commercial importance. Each of these would have originated according to one of two economic principles which may safely, I think, be described as 'market forces' and 'interventionism'. In other words, many fairs appear to have existed from time immemorial (indeed, that is a phrase frequently used by Marwick's informants), such fairs having been created, or at least sustained and carried forward until we catch sight of them, by 'market forces'. By 'interventionism', on the other hand, I mean the active establishment of a fair, on the historical record, by commercial interests. In Scotland this goes back to the Normans, and specifically to David I (1124–53), Malcolm IV ('the Maiden', 1153–65), and William the Lion (1165–1214), who, through their agents in the Church, brought in foreign craftsmen, merchants and traders. This did not happen without conflict. In 1587 the burgesses of Forres complained of the injury suffered by their town 'from the holding of markets and fairs at kirks, chapels, and other unfree places near it, to the prejudice of the liberties of burghs'. In 1599 Wigtown complained to the Convention of Burghs about unfree fairs being held at Minnigaff and at landward kirks in the vicinity. And in 1692 a report to the Convention of Burghs states that a fair was being held at North Water Bridge in Angus 'without any warrant, within four miles of Brechin, and that it altogether destroyed the town's markets' (Marwick 1890: 54, 93, 116; Whyte 1979: 21).

These three examples synthesise the clash between Celtic and Anglo-Norman, rural and urban, or what O'Flanagan (1985: 364) has called 'franchised and clandestine' market centres. A good example of the Celtic/rural/clandestine part of the syndrome is the cult of St Angus in Balquhidder – a saint, not in the Roman breviary, who was commemorated down to the nineteenth or twentieth century in sacred stones, in oratories, and in rural fairs never authorised in legislation (Marwick 1890: 74, 111; Watson 1926: 272; Beauchamp 1986: 24–33, 37; MacilleDhuibh 1989). Moreover, in addition to the enemy 'without' there might be an enemy 'within', as exemplified by a letter of James V in 1541 which charged the freemen of Peebles not to make any private market within the freedom of the burgh (Marwick 1890: 96).

Although our earliest extant burgh charters are from the reign of William the Lion, they tend to refer back to that of King David. For example, a charter granted by William to the bishop and culdees of the church of Brechin confirms a grant by David I of a right of market on Sunday (Marwick 1890: 25). William's three extant charters to Glasgow are particularly interesting. The first, datable to 1175–78, grants to Bishop Jocelin the right to have a burgh in Glasgow with a market on Thursday, and all the freedoms and customs which any royal burgh in Scotland possessed. The second, datable to 1189–95, grants the right to an annual eight-day fair beginning on the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul, 6 July; this sounds familiar, and the suspicion that this represents a remarkable piece of continuity is confirmed by an Act of the Town Council of 1744, referred to in more detail in section 11 below, which speaks of the Glasgow Fair as being traditionally held on 7 July. The third, probably datable to 1202–10, is interesting for what it tells us about the legal protection of commerce, for it renews the grant of the King's peace 'to all who shall come to Glasgow Fair and to the burgh of Glasgow, in coming thither, remaining, and lawfully returning; provided they do what they ought to do according to the assize of his burghs' (Marwick 1890: 59; Barrow 1971: 413).

From the twelfth century to the eighteenth, there is a continuous stream of speculative sheepskins granting to local magnates, for a fee, the legal right to hold a market. The Glasgow Fair was one that has survived, albeit developing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries into a 'working class festival' and trades holiday (Burnett 1999). Most vanished sooner or later. Others never 'took' at all, as far as one can judge, an example of this being Stornoway. In 1597 an Act of Parliament ordained a burgh to be established in Lewis with all the privileges granted to other burghs in the realm. On 18 October 1607 the King, who had now become James I of England as well as James VI of Scotland, granted a charter to Lord Balmerino erecting Stornoway into a burgh of barony with a weekly market on Saturday and two yearly fairs – on St Andrew's Day, 30 November, and on St George's Day, 23 April. Clearly the days were chosen for no reason other than that they symbolised James's rule over the two kingdoms. Since the MacLeods succeeded in expelling Balmerino's 'Fife Adventurers', it was a piece of legislation that remained entirely symbolic, and the next charter on the matter acknowledged political reality in the shape of Kenneth, Lord Mackenzie of Kintail, who was in 1610 granted the right of 'new erecting' Stornoway into a burgh of barony as before, this time without mention of fairs (Marwick 1890: 109).

The early burgh was a commune of skilled entrepreneurs of diverse origin, operating under a set of precise rules which tied them legislatively to the King – either directly, in the case of Royal Burghs, or indirectly through some great landlord, abbot or bishop. The burgess had both privileges and responsibilities. He must, says Adams (1978: 42), defend his burgage, build a house on it within a year, and maintain it thereafter. He should keep long weapons for defence, help guard prisoners, and keep watch at night. Houses were usually of timber and thatch, so fear of fire was ever present. The night watch started by seeing that all fires were covered. He must also attend three head

courts yearly, keep his weights and measures sealed with the burgh seal, pay his part of the civic burdens, and take his turn as a burgh official. Last but not least:

> Once the burgh was established under the charter of erection, the duty of the burgesses was to establish trade, undertaken during markets and fairs. Two weekly markets and an annual fair were usually granted. Stallengers set up their open stalls or booths and the dues were an important item of burgh revenue. Trading restrictions were often removed for the period of the market, and other community restraints were also lifted so that no one could be arrested unless he broke the peace of the fair. Special courts . . . were set up to deal immediate justice to any wrongdoer. (Adams 1978: 37)

The right of holding fairs and markets was a prerogative of the King, exercised only through Act of Parliament. Anyone setting up a fair or market without such authority was liable to penalties, while those duly authorised to hold one could prevent the establishment of another near enough to be a nuisance (Marwick 1890: 9). The right to hold a fair was valuable, for it carried with it the right of exacting toll on goods sold, while giving certain judicial rights to the holder. Those attending fairs became subject to laws made for and peculiar to the occasion, and the sites of fairs thus acquired some semblance of community organisation. The laws of the fair were administered in courts set up for the purpose. They gave special protection to traders going to or returning from fairs as well as while at the fair itself. In fact, as Haldane once pointed out (1961: 2), the 'Peace of the Fair' seems to have carried with it almost the rights of sanctuary.

There was logic in this. Annual fairs were held on holy days, and dedicated to a saint. They would come under the protection of this saint and thus have the same status as one of his (or her) relics. They were normally held in the churchyard until this practice was, in theory, stopped by Act of Parliament in 1503. Commercial announcements continued to be read from the pulpit, however, and trading was allowed in the church porch except during divine service (Adams 1978: 44). Many fairs continued to be held in churchyards, such as at Kincardine O'Neil, where the table-tombs were still being used as stalls in the late eighteenth century (McCraw 1994: 13).

5. FENCING

There is a further strong parallel between fairs and religion. The fair was 'fenced' in the same way that all medieval courts were 'fenced', and in exactly the same sense in which the tables are, or were, 'fenced' at communion – that is, reserved to those who had earned the right to sit at the Lord's Table, a form of preaching defined in Gaelic as *a' cur gàrradh mun bhòrd*, or, less commonly, *a' dìon nam bòrd*, or *a' cuartachadh nam bòrd* (Murchison 1960: 133, 180, 185). 'Fencing' is well described by John McLean, minister of Grantully, speaking of *Feill nam Bannaomh*, the 'Fair of the Female Saints', which was held on 26 July (the Feast of the Nine Virgins, daughters of St Donald) every year at Kenmore in Highland Perthshire (Gillies 1938: 56).

> The 'Holy Women's Fair' used to be opened with great state and ceremony. We have it from one who, in his youth, less than fifty years ago, was a delighted spectator of the scene, that the ground officer, carrying a drawn sword, walked in state, preceded by a piper, and followed by a dozen or so of young men walking in regular order, each carrying a halbert. On the procession arriving at the cross or centre of the market the official proclaimed the 'Peace of the Fair'. (McLean 1887: 43)

The following describes in detail the fencing not only of *Féill nam Bannaomh* but also of *Faidhir Mhór an Earraich*, the 'Big Spring Market' held at Kenmore on the first Tuesday of March OS.

> In connection with this market, and the one held in March, a time-honoured ceremony, abolished about 1840, was wont to be held. We refer to the fencing of these by the market guard, accounts of which we have from those who witnessed the proceedings. The lands on Loch Tayside were formerly divided into officiaries, for the most part according to the different estates. In each of these officiaries was a resident ground officer, chosen from among the tenants, who had to bring with him a certain number of stout young men, who constituted the guard. The old public school, which stood on Kenmore brae, formed the last guard-house. There the halberts of the rank and file were stored. At twelve o'clock noon, on the day of the fair, the market guard was mustered in front of the guard house by the Taymouth ground officer. A halbert was delivered to each man, and with the Breadalbane piper up front, the company started on its march of the boundaries of the fair. On their return to the guard-house the men delivered up their halberts, and the ordinary business of the fair, meanwhile at a standstill, was allowed to proceed. Although denuded of its insignia of office, the guard was still responsible for the peace of the fair, and any one raising a disturbance was committed to durance vile in the guard-house, to await the sentence of the Baron Bailie Court next day. The Taymouth ground officer received from the Earl of Breadalbane a yearly allowance of two merks, which was expended in regaling his company in Kenmore Inn. A ceremony similar in character to the above took place, we believe, at the Killin markets. The old halberts have been lost sight of, but one, now in the writer's possession, was found some four years ago in Loch Tay, when crossing by boat betwixt the Island and Taymouth gardens. (Christie 1892: 26–27)

'The Island' is a reference to *Eilean nam Bannaomh*, 'the Isle of the Female Saints', now known as Priory Island, a substantial crannog off the north shore. McLean interpreted the ritual as follows (1887: 43–44; cf. Marwick 1890: 11):

> This was no unmeaning ceremony in the days when fairs were first instituted. From the moment the peace of the fair was cried there was perfect liberty. The debtor could not be taken up for his debt, or the riever for his theft; even the fugitive bondman was free from arrest on that day, and though his owner met him in the fair he dared neither 'chase nor tak him', nor apprehend him, on his way home. And besides, there was unrestricted free trade, while at other times only those privileged to sell could do so.

As on holy ground, then, there was a form of amnesty for crimes committed under secular jurisdiction, but so, too, did outrage and bloodshed become a form of sacrilege.

Time and again the site of a fair was changed after an act of violence had been committed during its term. There was a tradition at Whitsome in Berwickshire, for example, that there were once two annual fairs there, but that the privilege was lost when a scuffle took place at one of them which resulted in a man being killed (*NSA* 2, pt 3: 169; Marwick 1890: 116). Similarly, of Lord Lovat's Regality of Beauly in 1628 we learn from the Rev. James Fraser (1634–1709):

> The 3 prime men in Beuly, William Fraser, Patrick Anguis, and John Whit, undergo the regulation of the faires, and ingages for a set soum for a tack of the faires yearely; and the Hallowmas marcat being then at Kilmorack, there happened a great riot betuixt the Frasers and Mckenzies, and severalls wounded; therefore by Act of Court, wherin the Master sat personally, the Hallow faire is transplant to the town of Beuly for the future, and the Cross which stood westward from the Town, in the spiggadach near Teawigg, is carried to Beuly and erected where now we see it, fixed in the midest of the town. It was called the Reed-Cross, either becaus Abbot Reed, Bishop of Orknay, built it, or becaus of its collowr, I will not determin; but it is a necessary ornament now in a marcat town wherein stand 3 fine faires yearely – 1/ Crose Beoday, May 3; 2/ Michaelmas day, Septr. 29; 3/ All Saints or Hallowmas day, the first of November; and Beuly lyes in a fit place for faires. (Mackay 1905: 249–50)

I understand *spiogadach* to be equivalent to English 'picketing', i.e. it would have been a stockade or other area fenced off with wooden stakes. However, as Fraser says it was near Teawigg, we are not to understand that it was the original market site, which was a mile still farther west at the parish church of Kilmorack. The clear implication is that when a fair was moved to a different site, or simply outgrew its churchyard, it remained imperative for the Peace of the Fair that it continue to have a sacred centre and a well-understood perimeter. 'In an age when few people were able to sign a written contract,' explains Marian McNeill (1957: 87), 'the parties to a bargain touched the Cross and thus came under solemn obligation.' The fact that a standing stone served just as well – as for instance at the *Feill Mo-Chalmaig*, St Colm's or Colman's market in February at Moulin in Perthshire – appears to illustrate the antiquity of our fairs (Watson 1926: 279; Fraser 1978–79). For other instances of the moving of crosses into towns for this purpose see Stewart (1979: 7–8).

The Law of the Fair must be proclaimed at the cross and its marches publicly delineated, and these marches might well enclose the entire burgh. So for example the records of the Royal Burgh of Edinburgh of 10 June 1584 state:

> Ordanis the provest to be wairnet to gadder his awin customes at the Trinity fair now at hand, and proclamatioun to be maid that forswamekill as it wes statute in December last that the town suld visy thair mairchis at the Trinity fair on fute, that thairfore the nichtbouris convene on Setterday nixt at fyve houris in the morning, at the provests lugeing, to pas and visy the sam, ilk persoun vnder the payne of xviij s.; and ordanis that the loch be visitet the said day. (Marwick 1882: 341)

In many other cases, by contrast, the King's grant of the fair was not direct to a burgh but to a local magnate, and he it was who rode the marches. Thus, for example (to return to Beauly), the Rev. James tells us of Hugh Fraser, 10th Lord Lovat (d. 1544):

> He settled Cross faire in Beuly, which Lord Thomas had tabled and purchased act of Parliament in favoures of the Monkes there for a Wednesday market also. As for the old faires of his country they were beyond debat of an ancient date, such as Coans fair in Convents, S. Mauritius in Dounbachlach, All Saints faire in Kilmorack, and Michaelmas faire in Beuly, all which markets he usually did ride with a noble train at their proclamation. He once had 3 lords and 6 barrons with him at the rideing of a faire in Beuly, with all their retinue, a very fair sight. (Mackay 1905: 131–32)

At a later date the Duke of Perth similarly used the fencing of the Michaelmas Fair at Crieff to assert his authority.

> In former days the principal fairs at Crieff were opened with considerable pomp by the Duke of Perth in person. He held his court (often in the open air) in the morning, with a view to make the necessary arrangements, settle differences, and provide against the commission of outrages among the community. He afterwards rode through the market at the head of his guard, and proclaimed his titles at the different marches or boundaries of his property. Many of the feuars are bound by their charters to provide a given number of the halbert-men that composed the guard at the fairs; and it is not many years since their services were dispensed with. The regulation and management of the fairs are now entrusted to the committee (formerly mentioned) who have the charge of the town's affairs; and the public funds of the town are principally derived from the grass upon the bleaching green, the public weights, and the rates of customs charged upon the different articles, and subjects that are exposed for sale during any of the market days. (*NSA* 10: 525–26; cf. Marwick 1890: 35)

That account conceals any historical tensions that may have existed between landlord and burgh over the right to hold the fair, but they are laid bare for Dundee in this reference of 12 October 1643 to the Feast of the Assumption there (15 August):

> Indenture between James Viscount Dudhope, constable of Dundee, and the magistrates acknowledging the right of the former to customs of first fair, and consenting to his riding through the town during the fair, accompanied by not more than 20 followers. (Marwick 1890: 44)

The indenture settled what we may call, from the Constable's surname, the 'Scrymgeour Affair'. This long-running dispute was about the Scrymgeours' hereditary right 'of ryding the first faire of Dundie throw the toun thairof, receaving the keyes of the tolbuith, uplifting the customes of the said faire and doing justice'. The last-named privilege was described by one deponent as 'judgeing all causes civill and criminall for the space of eight dayes', that is, for the duration of the fair; the 1643 settlement stipulated that the court was henceforth to be held in the Tolbooth instead of on the Castlehill (McCraw 1994: 19–23). Tension is also evident in the unexpected use of the word

'trespassers' in a charter by Charles II in favour of Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh for the lands of the barony of Bute – it speaks of 'the keeping of the fairs within the burgh of Rothesay' and 'a right to have a gallon of ale out of each brew-house in the burgh, as use is, and of fining all trespassers within the burgh during the time of the fairs' (Marwick 1890: 102).

After 1700 such tensions disappeared to some extent, but the need to keep the Peace of the Fair remained, and although heritable jurisdictions were abolished by Act of Parliament following the '45, the last success of Duncan Forbes of Culloden (who died in 1747) was the preservation to the baron courts of a 'modest but meaningful jurisdiction' which included the keeping of the peace at fairs and markets (Lenman 1984: 280). The minister of Kiltearn in Easter Ross writes in 1791 of two annual fairs at Drummond where 'though the proprietor exacts no toll or custom, he maintains a guard while the market lasts, to keep order, and prevent riots' (*OSA* 17: 491), while in 1797 the minister of Dunkeld in Perthshire writes of six yearly fairs at which 'a *guard*, paid by the Duke of Atholl, and provided with arms, is always in readiness to preserve the peace, and apprehend any offenders who may be detected' (*OSA* 12: 336; cf. Marwick 1890: 45).

After 1800 the economic landscape changed. Communications improved, shops opened, people were driven from the land, and, by legislation of 1846, the burghs lost their privileges (Paul 1918: 161). Marwick (1890: 11) commented that 'fairs and markets for general commodities thus became practically valueless, and the right to hold them – whether conferred by charter or Act of Parliament – has fallen largely into disuse'; a later writer described the disappearance of fairs and markets as 'one of the most significant changes that have come over the rural districts of Scotland in recent times' (Stewart 1928: 186). Sometimes customs were kept alive for their own sake, however. By 1840, in the fair at Eaglesham on the last Thursday of August OS, 'the feuars have a procession, which generally terminates with a horse race for a Kilmarnock bonnet' (*NSA* 7, pt 1: 404–05). In Berwickshire by 1890, even though the fair at Chirnside on the last Thursday of November had dwindled to one or two stalls selling gingerbread, it was still 'cried' by a servant of the lord of the manor, and a penny was still levied from each stallholder; nearby in Swinton the 'crying of the fair' was still gone through twice a year, even though the two annual fairs had been discontinued (Marwick 1890: 30, 47, 111).

I will conclude this account of the fencing of the fair with two quotations which demonstrate exactly how it survived into modern times. First, an account of the great July fair at St Boswells in Roxburghshire – known to the Highland drovers as the *Feill Boisil*, if we may judge from the Gaelic almanacs – which begins with a reference to 'burley' or 'birlie' (local customary law, English 'by-law').

> Until 1870 the custom, known as 'cryin' the Burley' was observed. Shortly before 11 a.m. on the Fair day, three men, carrying halberds on their shoulders, and preceded by a drummer in a 'tile hat', marched through the Fair ground proclaiming the Fair open. The last man to 'Cry the Burley' was Mr Charles Lamb. One of his henchmen, known as Black Davey, had dark bushy hair and whiskers and dressed for his part in a claw-hammer coat with a double

> row of bright metal buttons down the front. The drum and tile hat are still in existence, in the care of Mrs Tom Melrose of Elderbank. (Lawrie 1974: 12)

Next, the First Fair (Lady Mary Fair), held at Dundee, as we have seen, on the Feast of the Assumption (15 August OS, 26 August NS):

> To protect the legitimate stallholders who had paid rent to the Constable, and to maintain order in the days before a police force, it had been customary for a small company of retainers to march out on the morning of the First Fair, preceded by a piper, and to assemble at a bell tent pitched on the muir. Each man had been armed with a halberd as an emblem of authority, with the but at least, on occasion, being used to quell a disturbance. Circular forms had been provided on which these men sat grouped around the tent in the course of their guard duty. This office continued even after the police assumed responsibility for preserving order. Old traditions die hard and on the morning of 26 August 1908, although the Fairmuir was deserted, apart from a few youths playing football, Mr Charles Nicoll, tenant of Balgray Farm, and thirteen other men assembled on the muir and drew their pay of 4s. per head for their service, good remuneration at the time for what was merely a token appearance. While the tent was not erected, nor did they bear their arms, it along with the forms and the halberds were reported to be still in good condition and in the custody of Mr Nicoll. (McCraw 1994: 63–64)

Mr McCraw points out to me (personal communication, 4 January 2000) that First Fair was officially proclaimed until 1930, possibly until 1933, on Friday morning at 6 o'clock, latterly by the Superintendent of Markets.

6. THE OLDEST FAIRS

I now turn from 'interventionism' and the historical record to those fairs held 'from time immemorial'. Can it seriously be suggested that the above-mentioned MacLeod of Lewis, for example, did not have gatherings of his own? The trained historian has a tendency to claim that the thing that is not written down did not happen. Says Marwick (1890: 11),

> In Scotland as in other countries markets and fairs have existed from the earliest period in which men have been drawn together in villages and towns, and any record of their mode of life is preserved. Evidences of this are to be found in charters granted by Scottish sovereigns to religious houses and ecclesiastical lords, to royal burghs, and to lords of regality and barony. Undoubtedly, however, the trade and manufacture of Scotland in early times may be said to have been practically confined to royal burghs.

Were they? There is evidence here of something slightly less than an open mind. It is a point of view whose most extreme, not to say absurd, articulation came from William Cunningham (1916: 170): 'There seems to be no reliable evidence of periodical assemblies for purposes of trade in primitive times. Medieval fairs in Scotland were not so ancient as those in England.' In point of fact there is no way to be sure, even in such a case as

the fair in Glasgow beginning on the feast day of the apostles Peter and Paul, that the first charter was not simply legalising, regularising or renaming a fair that already existed. In other words, the Glasgow Fair in July may be older than the twelfth century, and indeed it is not unlikely that an annual gathering would have taken place at the lowest point where the river could be forded and at a time of year when it could be forded in safety (the same applies to Fochabers on the Spey, see section 11 below). Haldane's viewpoint (1961: 3) was the opposite of Cunningham's:

> It is not possible to attach even an approximate date to the earliest Scottish Fairs. All we can say is that they are of great antiquity and that the Christian Saints whose names came to be associated with many Fairs in historical times may well have been only the successors of pagan gods associated with the more primitive gatherings of earlier ages.

An instance of this is the possible connection between St Boswell's, once the biggest sheep-market in the south of Scotland, and nearby Eildon Hill North, which archaeologists are coming to believe was an Iron Age site of ritual importance (Dent and McDonald 1997: 65–66). Around its summit are at least 290 house-platforms which could only have been occupied in summer, and St Boswell's is a July fair.

> For many years the Fair was held on Maxton Haugh below the heights where Boisil's church had stood. In 1743 the river, Tweed, rose rapidly on July 18th and covered the Haugh to a depth of 2ft. flooding the Fair. After that date the Fair was transferred to the Green. (Lawrie 1974: 11)

Could this be, to use Máire MacNeill's terms (1962: 12–25), a Lughnasa survival? A pre-Christian hilltop gathering?

7. *AONACH* AND *CÒMHDHAIL*

We know that the ancient Celts had great gatherings, frequently on hill-top sites, for law-making and other purposes. Caesar tells us for example that the tribes of Gaul met for this purpose at a place in the territory of the Carnutes (Rees and Rees 1961: 158, citing *De Bello Gallico* vi, 13). In early medieval Ireland such gatherings took place (usually on certain quarterdays, every third year or so) at Tara, Tlachtga, Tailtiu, Cruachan, Carman, Nenagh (*an tAonach*) and other places. A great deal went on besides law-making. There were judgements, political discussions, religious observances, entertainments, feats of arms, horse-racing, sports and trading. Our most graphic source for all this is a Gaelic poem on the fair (*aonach*) of Carman, which was somewhere in south Leinster in Ireland, possibly at Wexford. It portrays a market with three clear divisions – foodstuffs, livestock and luxury goods.[6]

With regard to *aonach* in Scotland, it has (historically, at least) two meanings: not merely a market-place, as in Ireland, but a mountain plateau, as in *an t-Aonach Eagach* ('the Notched Plateau') above Glencoe. Watson (1926: 491) points to five instances of it as 'market-place'. One is *Taigh an Aonaich*, Teaninich ('the House of the Market-Place')

at Alness, which gave its name to a distillery and a malt whisky. Another is *an t-Aonach*, a fine flat field on Drummond Farm near Evanton, formerly the site of a market (presumably the 'Goose Market' referred to in section 10 below). Then there is *Blàr an Aonaich* in Strathpeffer, Blairninich or 'the Market Ground'. These three places are within a couple of hundred yards or so of the parish churches of Alness, Kiltearn and Fodderty respectively; this establishes a pattern which can be looked for elsewhere. Watson's fourth instance is *Aonachan*, perhaps 'Little Market Place', on the south side of the Spean in Lochaber; Spean Bridge nearby is *Drochaid Aonachain* in Gaelic. *Aonachan* does not fit the pattern, but comes close to it, as the parish church of Kilmonivaig faces it just a mile away across the river. Was the original *Aonach*, as opposed to *Aonachan*, close to the church on the north side of the river? Watson's fifth is a quotation from a *port à beul – Gobhainn Druim an Aonaich*, 'the Smith of the Ridge of the Market (or Plateau)'. One Druim an Aonaich that I know of is in Raasay, another is in Mingulay, the latter site (on the shoulder of Hecla) being one for which, for entirely different reasons, I have postulated a Lammas gathering:

> We can assume that MacNeil had brought his gentlemen with him from Ciosmul in a fleet of galleys; did they climb the slope of Hecla that summer's evening to greet the new moon atop the sheer 800-foot cliff of Biolacreag, and feast upon *fachaich* ['farlings', the young of the shearwater] and ale, and cast some upon the waters for good luck? There is no doubt that Mingulay had symbolic, perhaps even ritual, significance for the MacNeils – in the island was the only church dedicated to Calum Cille in all their territory, and 'Biolacreag' was their gathering cry. Was it here, perhaps, that MacNeil proved his manhood and received inauguration as king of his people? Did he then preside, like many an Irish king, over horse races and boat races? (MacilleDhuibh 1991)

Barrow (1981; 1992: 217–45) offers a list of 56 placenames which seem to contain the element *còmhdhail* ('assembly'). With one exception (*Clach na Còmhalaich* at Achiltibuie) all are in the eastern half of Scotland, and Barrow bases his understanding of the term on a passage in a Latin contract of 4 April 1329 between the Abbot of Arbroath and a certain Fergus son of Duncan:

> Fergus and his heir shall have the court which is called Couthal for the men residing within the said land, to deal with the countless acts arising amongst themselves only, and they shall have the fines arising therefrom. (Barrow 1981: 3; 1992: 220)

So he sees the *còmhdhail* as a court for mediating local disputes, and indeed he points out that there hardly ever seems to be more than one *còmhdhail* per parish; this suggests that each parish had its meeting-place. Moreover, a great many such meeting-sites were on hills, resulting in names like Cuttlehill, Cult Hill, Coleduns, Cothiemuir and so on. But it would accord with the Celtic style of doing things if such land-courts also went hand in hand with activities like games and markets. In the Carman poem a stanza on legal functions is sandwiched between lines on horseracing and foodstuffs.

> They would hold seven races, for a glorious object, seven days in the week. There they would discuss with strife of speech the dues and tributes of the province, every legal enactment was settled right piously every third year. Corn, milk, peace, happy ease, full nets, ocean's plenty . . . (Gwynn 1991: 19, slightly rearranged).

So we must look for evidence linking *còmhdhail* names with fairs. I have some examples. One is Cockhill Fair at Callander on 16 May, a major event in the Highland drover's year. The drovers enjoyed the extraordinary privilege of grazing their cattle free of charge for the week previous to the fair, over the whole area of Cockhill, which was very fine grazing. The origin of the privilege was unknown in 1890, and it all suggests a meeting-ground of great antiquity (Marwick 1890: 28; Macdonald 1938: 190–99; Black 1996: 48, 56).

Another is Cuff Hill in the parish of Beith, Ayrshire, where a fair was held every St Inan's Day, 18 August. The fair was moved into Beith itself when the town had increased in population and become a more suitable place for a market (Marwick 1890: 22–23, 36). Cuff Hill bears all the marks of having being a sacred site. It has a cleft in the rock called St Inan's Chair, while not far away there is, or was, a well of excellent water called St Inan's Well – reflecting Gaelic *Suidhe Fhìonain* and *Tobar Fhìonain*, no doubt. Dr Thomas Clancy has kindly investigated the name locally for me, and reports that the 'Cuff' element is free-standing – Cuff Farm, etc. The proposed derivation from *còmhdhail* is therefore unsupported, but remains tempting in light of the older evidence.

There are other candidates. Glencuthell in Aberdeenshire, which was granted two annual fairs in 1672. Saltpans in East Lothian, where in 1669 Sir Alexander Morrison of Prestongrange got parliamentary authorisation to have a weekly market on Tuesday and a free annual fair on 27–28 July, both to be held at the place in the town commonly called Cuthil. And perhaps Cuttieshillock in the parish of Strachan in Kincardineshire, which had an annual fair down to sometime after 1842 (*NSA* 11, pt 2: 243; Marwick 1890: 60, 105, 109). Two 'kettle' names which appear in Marwick's *List* are Kettle (now usually Kingskettle) in Fife, where in 1608 a person was ordained by the Convention of Burghs to be punished for trading at the kirk, and Bonnakettle in the Aberdeenshire parish of Udny, where John Forbes of Bonnakettle was authorised by Act of Parliament in 1701 to hold two annual fairs, a Thomas Fair on the third Tuesday of June and a Latter Mary Fair on the third Tuesday of September (Marwick 1890: 24, 70). Our evidence here is rather confusing. Forbes's fairs look bogus and therefore unlikely to date from before 1701, as there is no feast of St Thomas in June and Latter Mary Day is 8 September, see sections 14 and 17 below. Barrow (1981: 8) believes that 'kettle' is unlikely to represent *còmhdhail*, but I am not so sure. Judging from Bonnakettle (*Balnakeddill* 1390, *Bannacadill* 1544), the element is in origin a Gaelic feminine noun, and it may be that in the change of vernacular the common Gaelic word *còmhdhail* simply became assimilated to the common Scots word *kettle*; indeed, this can be seen happening to the first element in the eighteenth-century forms *Bonnykeddle* and *Bonnykettle* (Alexander 1952: 16).

It has of course to be pointed out that *aonach* and *còmhdhail* are by no means the only place-name elements indicative of gathering sites. As Barrow (1981: 12) reminds us, Gaelic also offers *eireachd* 'an assembly' and *tional* 'a mustering or rallying place', as in the names Ericht and *Cnoc an Tionail* (Watson 1926: 491–92). There are also Anglo-Saxon *mōt*, Gaelic *mòd*, and Norse *þing*, all of which mean a court of assembly rather than a fair or market *per se*, and which are found, for example, in Meet Hill (Peterhead), Moathill (Cupar), Moothill (Rosemarkie), in innumerable hills called *Tom a' Mhòid*, and in Dingwall and Tinwald (Dumfriesshire), both of which represent Old Norse *þing vǫllr* 'field or place of the court of assembly'. Nor should the obvious be neglected, i.e. the Gaelic words *feill* and *faidhir* (as in *Cnoc na Feille*, *Cnoc na Faidhreach*, both meaning 'Market Hill'), *margadh* ('market'), and *dròbh* (from English 'drove'), as in *Beinn na Dròbh* (Bennadrove) in Stornoway, and the English words 'fair' and 'market' themselves, as exemplified by the Fairmuir in Dundee (see section 13) and by street-names and close-names in various towns such as Glasgow's Saltmarket, Edinburgh's Haymarket and Grassmarket, Fleshmarket Close and Market Street. The meanings of such names are not necessarily obvious – while hay was certainly sold at the Haymarket, 'Grassmarket' denotes a market held upon grass (and therefore devoted mainly to the sale of stock) as opposed to a 'causey fair' held upon cobblestones, see section 11.

8. QUARTERDAYS

There are, or were, fairs all over Scotland bearing the names of Celtic saints. If a fair is named after a Celtic saint like Patrick, Brigid, Columba, Finan or Maolrubha, it is reasonable to guess that it rose naturally out of commercial transactions between people visiting the church, chair, well, shrine or tomb of such a saint, and that it developed gradually from the date of the saint's death, or at least from the date of the first miracle ascribed to him or her at that place. For example, St Columba died AD 597, but his relics were not transferred from Iona to Dunkeld until the time of Viking attacks in the ninth century; his great fair at Dunkeld, the *Feill Chaluim Chille*, is on record from 1512, so we should assign its development to AD 800–1512. Conversely, we must look closely at the history of unnamed fairs held on the feast-days of such saints in order to determine whether or not they represent survivals of their cults. An unusually large number of unnamed fairs took place on or around St Columba's Day, 9 June. Examples of this are a yearly fair at Strathmiglo in Fife on 9 June and another at the Port of Menteith on the second Wednesday of June (Marwick 1890: 45, 89, 111). The Lake of Menteith is *Loch Inis Mo-Cholmaig*, the Loch of Inchmahome, the priory on Inchmahome being dedicated to St Colmán or Mo-Cholmóc of Druim Mór in Ulster (7 June), but I believe it is unlikely that popular tradition distinguished him from St Columba (Watson 1926: 279). As proof of the validity of such an exercise, we may note that *Latha Fheill Mo-Cheasaig*, St Kessog's Fair at Callander, became known to non-Gaelic-speakers in the nineteenth century as 'The Tenth of March Fair' (Marwick 1890: 28).

In the same way, the Celtic quarterdays of Lammas (1 August), Samhain (1 November), St Brigid's (1 February) and Beltane (1 May) are of great antiquity, so fairs on these days deserve particular investigation. There are many Lammas fairs which look old. Some are on record from an early date – Fettercairn 1504, Merton in Berwickshire 1504, Newburgh in Aberdeenshire 1509, Turriff 1512, Stonehaven 1567, Stranraer 1595, Dumbarton 1600, St Andrews 1614, Melrose 1621, Torphichen 1669, Tomintoul 1686, Finhaven in Angus 1686 (Marwick 1890: 42, 52–53, 87–88, 92, 104, 108–10, 113–14). Some may be disguised by dedications to St Peter ad Vincula or St Peter's Chains (1 August), St Margaret (31 July) or possibly St James (25 July). A number are on hilltop sites, thus fulfilling an important criterion for Lughnasa survivals cited by MacNeill (1962: ix, 67, 71–243). Examples of this for investigation would be the Lammas Fairs on the Hill of Invermarkie in Aberdeenshire (on record from 1669) and on the top of a range of hills to the north-east of Lockerbie, mentioned in 1836 (*NSA* 4, pt 1: 458; Marwick 1890: 66, 84). We should also note St James's Fair on the Hill of Garvock in Kincardineshire, whose duties were paid immemorially to a Mr Scott of Commiston even though the ground belonged to the Earl of Kintore (Marwick 1890: 58). As always there are warnings: there were trysts on 31 July at Pennymuir in Roxburghshire and in Selkirk, but it appears that these were established in 1830 and 1832 respectively (Marwick 1890: 96, 106). The Burryman Fair at South Queensferry, where a man is led around covered from head to toe in burrs from the burr thistle or burdock, is also worth noting in this context, because it is a St James's Day festival, held on 25 July OS, 4 August NS. It was described in 1843 as having been observed 'from time immemorial' (*NSA* 2, pt 1: 16; Marwick 1890: 100; McNeill 1968: 189–92).

Likely Samhain survivals come disguised as All Saints, All-Hallows, or Hallowmas. Early references include Edinburgh 1447, Falkland 1458, Fordyce in Banffshire 1499, Kilmorack *ante* 1544, Fortrose 1592, Innerroy in Lochaber 1669, Strathblane 1670, and the Burn of Scoulag in Bute 1681 (Marwick 1890: 48–49, 52, 54–55, 65, 106, 110; Mackay 1905: 132). The All-Hallow Fair in the Grassmarket in Edinburgh about 1800 is the subject of a print in the Central Library as well as of Howe's paintings (Haldane 1952: plate 11). The fair held on the first Wednesday of November at Kilwinning in Ayrshire was Bell's Day (see section 13 below). Perhaps most interesting however is the 'fair of Hill' at Lochwinnoch in Renfrewshire, held on the first Tuesday of November OS. The Rev. Robert Smith wrote in 1836 that it was the oldest of the three Lochwinnoch fairs and had been held 'from time immemorial' (*NSA* 7: 110; cf. Marwick 1890: 84). It took place originally on the Market Hill, from which it got its name, and was then transferred to the village.

We should also regard as potential Samhain survivals the feasts of the Apostles Simon and Jude (28 October) and of St Tallerican (*Taraghlan*, 30 October). St Orland's (or Airland's) Stone is a carved Pictish monolith that stands at Cossins in the Angus countryside; its name suggests a connection with Tallerican and therefore with Samhain assemblies and rituals (Allen and Anderson 1993: 216–18). We may also note the parish

of Tarland in Aberdeenshire, an unexplained name, Gaelic *Tarulan*, in 1171 *Tharueland*, *Tharflund*, in 1268 *Taruelone* (Macdonald 1899: 314, Alexander 1952: 387); cf. *Cill Taraghlain*, the parish of Kiltarlity in Inverness-shire (Watson 1926: 298).

For St Brigid's, due no doubt to the inhospitable time of year, there is not a great deal, but the few that there are certainly seem old. A St Brigid's Fair in Logie Wester (*Lagaidh Bhrìghde* or St Brigid's Hollow) near Dingwall had moved to Inverness by 1592. Other places where a St Brigid's Day fair is on record as early as 1727 are Forres, Blair Athol and (as we have seen) Abernethy. If we also include fairs at Candlemas, 2 February (which may be referred to as the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary), as I think we must, the list extends to Dingwall, Kinloss in Morayshire (on record from 1497), Banff, Methlick in Aberdeenshire, Dunkeld and Rattray in Perthshire, Cupar in Fife, Biggar and Douglas in Lanarkshire, and Dumfries (Smith 1727; Marwick 1890: 22–24, 40, 42–43, 45, 67, 75).

For Beltane there is a splendid crop of early references: Kilmun in Argyll 1490, Kirkcudbright 1509, Pitlessie in Fife 1541, Beauly *ante* 1544, Kilconquhar in Fife 1609, Rothiemay in Banffshire 1617, Gartmore in Stirlingshire 1681, Moybeg in Strathdearn 1669 (Marwick 1890: 57, 71, 73, 76, 90, 97, 102; Mackay 1905: 131–32, 250). These include not just Beltane itself, varying from 1 to 5 May, but the feasts of SS Philip and James (1 May) and of the Invention of the Holy Cross (James Fraser's 'Crose Beoday', presumably *Feill na Croise Beò*, 'the Feast-Day of the Living Cross', 3 May, see section 5). Smith (1727) refers under April to 'Belton the first, being the 26 Day, at Ruthglen 28 Day', perhaps meaning that Beltane fairs might occur at any point from 26 April. There were 'Bailton' or 'Belton' fairs at Comrie on the second Wednesday of May, and at Montrose, Kinnocher and Peebles as late as the third Tuesday of May, even before the change in the calendar (Smith 1727; Marwick 1890: 32). Of particular interest is the fair at Tullybelton in Perthshire, since the name is clearly *Tulach Bealltainn* ('Beltane Hillock'); according to the Rev. Thomas Nelson, minister of Auchtergaven, writing in 1838, 'an annual fair or market was once held on the banks of the Ordie, at a place called the Hole of Tulybelton, a beautiful dell, at which many Highlanders attended to sell wool, cheese, and butter, and other produce of their land and industry' (*NSA* 10: 449; cf. Marwick 1890: 114). Was it held at Beltane?

The Beltane Fair at Peebles, or at least the Beltane horse-race, is on public record from 1608, and there is also a poem in Scots about Beltane Day, 'Peblis to the Play', which dates from *c.* 1430–50, and was dubiously attributed by John Mair or Major to James I (1394–1437). It describes the journey of some country people to Peebles to take part in Beltane celebrations there. Young girls get out their best clothes before setting off; groups begin to arrive, singing or preceded by a piper; boys and girls pair away to enjoy the games and the dancing. Two men get into a fight over the bill in a tavern, the brawl then spilling into the street. A nearby carter is drawn in and is soundly beaten until pulled out of the gutter by his wife. Coming to, he declares that he doesn't know what it was . . .

I wait weill nocht quhat it wes,
My awin gray meir that kest me,
Or gif I wes forfochtin faynt,
And syn lay doun to rest me
Yonder,
Of Peblis to the play.

The worst offenders are clapped into the stocks, but good humour is restored when someone strikes up a tune on the pipes; everyone dances until it is time to say farewell until the next feast day (MacLaine 1996: 1–9). Clearly James, if he it was, enjoyed the annual pilgrimage to the Church of the Holy Cross (or Holy Rood) at Peebles, but we can dig deeper than that. Beltane was christianised as the Feast of the Holy Cross, as we have seen, so we need not doubt but that the Church of the Holy Cross was established (in 1261) in response to existing Beltane rituals. The same would have been true of Holyrood in Edinburgh. The evidence of Peeblesshire placenames suggests that Gaelic lingered long in the county – perhaps to around 1261, with accompanying traditions surviving to King James's time. Such traditions clearly included the enthusiastic celebration of Beltane. We can take things a step further back still, to a time in the early Middle Ages when Peeblesshire was Celtic but not Gaelic, for the name Peebles is Cumbric *Pebyllau* and means 'tents', that is, shieling bothies.[7] Beltane is in its very origin the time when cattle were brought up to the shieling pastures, so the connection between Peebles and Beltane can be shown to be intimate in every way (see for example Rees and Rees 1961: 84 and Carmichael 1928: 190–91).

I think I have made the point that a fair attached to a quarterday may turn out to have its roots in something very old. I believe I have also shown that it takes a long time for those connected with a great religious or sporting event to acknowledge that its commercial aspect has become the most important thing about it.

Now we should look at places which boasted fairs on more than one of the Celtic quarterdays. Going from north to south, Beauly had fairs at Beltane, Lammas and Hallowmas. Ardersier in Inverness-shire had fairs at Candlemas and Lammas, the latter becoming a so-called 'gingerbread fair', where gingerbread was sold in attractive shapes, such as miniature men and women, covered in gold or silver paper (Marwick 1890: 22, 28; McCraw 1994: 33). The gingerbread women of Ardersier seem to have been unusually buxom. 'One reverend researcher at least took them to represent the knights of the Crusade,' says Cameron (1997: 95–96), 'though in view of Ardersier's numerous inns and the wildness of the event they may well have symbolized something erotically nearer to nature.' Kildrummy in Aberdeenshire had fairs at St Brigid's, Lammas and All Saints, two of them on record from 1593. Aboyne had fairs at Candlemas and Hallowmas, Stonehaven at Candlemas and Lammas, and Doune in Perthshire, again, at Candlemas and Lammas. In 1890 Shian in Glenquoich, Perthshire, had fairs on 12 May and 12 November, which may be understood as Beltane and Samhain OS; the name Shian (*sìthean*, 'otherworld dwelling') is suggestive of a primal sacred site.

Campbeltown had Lammas and Hallow fairs (Marwick 1890: 15, 28, 41, 71, 106, 108–09).

Falkland in Fife, too, had important fairs at All Saints and Lammas, on record from 1458 and 1595 respectively, and in 1845 the Rev. Andrew Wilson, minister of that parish, tells us that 'these markets were held at one time upon the Lomond Hills, but of late years they have been held alternately in the streets of Falkland, and in a small commonty adjoining the town' (*NSA* 9: 936; cf. Marwick 1890: 52). Similarly, Redding in Stirlingshire had fairs at All Saints and Lammas, both held out in the hills. In 1672 an Act of Parliament authorised a yearly fair on the last Wednesday of October at the Redding, 'in a moorish place within the barony of Polmont'. The Wallacestone Fair took place on 2 August on a hill beyond Redding which was named after a stone said to have marked the spot from where Wallace watched the Battle of Falkirk (Marwick 1890: 98, 101). The Redding and Wallacestone fairs gave rise to the great cattle-markets at Falkirk, for which see Haldane (1952: 138–43, 211, 219–21, 240–41).

Cumulatively, the evidence from the far south-west is the most impressive of all. Maybole in Gaelic-speaking Carrick seems to have had the 'full set' – Lammas 1516, Candlemas 1599, Beltane and All Hallows 1672. So did Sanquhar in Dumfriesshire, except that one must constantly peer through a disguise – in 1484 we have St James and SS Simon and Jude, which are close to Lammas and Samhain, and in 1693 an Act of Parliament simply authorises a free fair there on the first Thursday of every quarter. By 1794 Thornhill in Dumfriesshire had fairs on the second Tuesday of February, May, August and November. And by 1661 Whithorn in Wigtownshire had fairs on 30 July and 1 November (Marwick 1890: 86, 105–06, 112, 115–16). What this suggests to me is that, thanks to surviving Celtic influence of a kind about which we know little, the people of the south-west remained particularly devoted to their ancient quarterdays; or, to put it another way, perhaps it was by clinging to the quarterdays that they remembered their roots.

9. CUSTOMS

'Where races and fires have outlived certain ancient fairs we may suspect an origin earlier than that of the fair itself,' says Banks (1937: 175). I am not quite sure why the races or fires should have to *outlive* the fair for this to be an indication of early origin; what is more, it is clear from John Burnett's work that races are a characteristic feature of the workers' festivals which arose in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. But at this stage in research I am content to agree that we should look for fairs with races or fires, and see what lasted the longest, and what traces of extreme antiquity they seem to exhibit. One example picked up by Marwick is the annual Cadgers' Fair and races at Stewarton in Ayrshire. Another is the big fair at Errol in Perthshire in July called the Errol Race – it lasted two or three days, a race always being held on one of them, then developed into Highland Games and a funfair. It was in fact started *c.* 1830

by an innkeeper, James ('Mickie') Watson of the Errol Arms (Marwick 1890: 51, 108; Melville 1935: 74).

There was a fair near the church at Broughton in Peeblesshire every 22 September OS (3 October NS) which was 'distinguished by horse and foot races' (*NSA* 3, pt 2: 97). At Eaglesham, as we have seen, a fair in August began with a procession and ended with a horse race for a Kilmarnock bonnet. There was a fair at Carnwath on 10 August with a race and other games the day after. The race was one of the conditions of the Lockhart family's tenure of Carnwath, the prize being a pair of red hose. By 1836, at least, there were horse and foot races at the Lammas Fair at Inverkeithing (*NSA* 9, pt 1: 248). In 1845 Torryburn in Fife still had the remains of a fair in July which might have been the same one authorised there in 1669, and in the evening there was usually a horse race (Marwick 1890: 26, 29, 47, 66, 114).

The examples of fire festivals given by Banks are Galston and Irvine in Ayrshire. At Galston in 1792 fires were still being lit on all the neighbouring hills on the eve of St Peter's Fair (10 July), even though the fair itself was in decay. At Irvine there was a Marymas Fair on 15 August (the Feast of the Assumption). On the eve of the fair a beacon of wood was lit on a nearby hill, and the people 'made merry' round it. This custom was kept up till the late eighteenth century after the fair had been forgotten (Marwick 1890: 57, 68). The beacon was called a tawnel, in origin Early Irish *tendál*, later *teannál* ('beacon-fire').

Equally, there are other customs which may indicate antiquity, though of course evidence based on customs alone must be treated with extreme caution. The annual fair at Eskdalemuir in Dumfriesshire was held 'time out of mind' at the meeting of the Black and White Esks. It was 'entirely laid aside' by 1793, when the Rev. William Brown wrote:

> At that fair, it was the custom for the unmarried persons of both sexes to choose a companion, according to their liking, with whom they were to live till that time next year. This was called *hand-fasting*, or hand in fist. If they were pleased with each other at that time, then they continued together for life; if not, they separated, and were free to make another choice as at the first. The fruit of their connexion (if there were any) was always attached to the disaffected person. In later times, when this part of the country belonged to the Abbacy of Melrose, a priest, to whom they gave the name of Book i' bosom (either because he carried in his bosom a bible, or perhaps, a register of the marriages), came from time to time to confirm the marriages. (*OSA* 4: 165; cf. *NSA* 4, pt 1: 404–05 and Marwick 1890: 51)

It is reminiscent of the 'Teltown Marriages' that survived at the *Aonach Tailteann* or Teltown Fair in Meath down to the eighteenth century. There was a wall at Teltown with a hole in it, and if a woman put her hand through the hole, the first man to grasp it would be her husband for nine months, even though the wall was so high that they could not see each others' faces (MacNeill 1962: 316–17, 424). Handfasting has been the subject of some controversy among Scottish legal historians – the continued existence of the principle of trial marriage in customary law, long after the introduction of Christianity, was denied by Anton (1958) but reasserted by Sellar (1978–80).

At St Serf's fair at Culross in Fife on 1 July the people marched in procession carrying green boughs: clearly a pre-Reformation survival. Serf or Servanus was a Celtic saint whose Gaelic name is given by a nineteenth-century Perthshire source as *Searbh – Latha Fheill Seirbh*, St Serf's Day (Black 1996: 48). Culross was a centre of his cult, so it is interesting to note that the first Culross charter mentioned by Marwick (1890: 36) appoints a fair on St Matthew's Day, 21 September. That was in 1490. Only in 1592, after the Reformation, is St Serf endorsed – but massively, with the authorisation of an eight-day fair beginning 1 July.

At Bothwell in Lanarkshire a procession of flowers on the unlikely date of 13 November marked the site of an old fair till about 1870 (Marwick 1890: 24). Banks (1937: 175) says it may commemorate an ancient well-dressing. And at Kilbarchan in Renfrewshire on the third Tuesday of July, St Lillias' Fair was celebrated for many years by the erection of floral arches across the streets of the town (Marwick 1890: 70). I suspect however that Lillias was in reality the wife or daughter of William Cunningham of Craigend, who obtained a charter authorising the fair in 1704; McNeill (1968: 127) calls her 'the lovely Lilias Cuninghame, a descendant of the Earl of Glencairn'. Many further examples of this kind are cited in section 17.

10. STRANGE NAMES

Fair-names form an extraordinary litany. There are Whistle Fair and Troit Fair, Stobbs Fair and Bells Fair, Aikey Fair and Pepper's Fair, Gowk Fair and Trewel Fair, the Rook Fair and Porter Fair, the Clog Market and the Goose Market. There are Paldy Fair and Groset Fair, Hagg Fair and Bathie Fair, Hogget Fair and Seingie Fair, Breag Fair, the Japping Market and the Sleepy Market, not to mention strange-sounding fair-days like Tennant's Day, Play Feersday and Scarce Thursday. There are of course many fairs dedicated to saints, but what of those seemingly unknown to calendar or martyrology? St Tarse and St Norman's, St Carden's and St Marthom's, St Tear's and St Trothersmas – who are they all? In this section I will introduce, in calendar order, what may be described as the most miscellaneous of such names.

'There are six annual fairs held at Alyth,' wrote the Rev. William Ramsay in 1843, 'but two of these, St Malogue's, and another about Christmas, known by the unaccountable name of *Troit* Fair, have fallen into disuse, and are now merely nominal' (*NSA* 10: 1125; cf. Marwick 1890: 16). Troit Monday was an alternative name for Handsel Monday, the first Monday after New Year's Day, and it may be assumed that Ramsay was referring to Christmas OS, which fell in the nineteenth century on 6 January. The word means 'treat', Handsel Monday being the one legally-sanctioned holiday in the year for farm servants, associated above all with presents and treats. The younger and poorer members of the community went from door to door in quest of bannocks and other gifts, and favours (handsels, small gifts) were exchanged in school between teacher and pupils, following which the class was dismissed for the day. In Gaelic the day was

Di-Luain Sainnseil (from 'Handsel') or *Di-Luain Traoight* (or *Troight*, or *Trait*, or *Traoit*, or in Skye *Traosta*, from 'troit' or 'treat'). The English word 'treat' is applied to this festive context even in the highest register of Gaelic in the present day, e.g. of New Year: *Bha 'n oidhche crìochnachadh leis an* treat, *far an robh na chaidh a chruinneachadh sna taighean air a riarachadh a-mach eadar na gillean* ('The night ended with the *treat*, where what had been gathered in the houses was shared out among the lads', O Hianlaidh 1999). By 1843, it seems, the minister of Alyth no longer had any need to know how the English language was used or misused by Gaelic-speakers.

In 1581 Parliament ratified the fair or market called the Seingie Fair of St Andrews, extending for 15 days from (and including) the Monday after Easter Monday, and held within the city and cloisters of the Abbey 'from time immemorial' (Marwick 1890: 104). A senzie is a synod or deliberative meeting of clergy (*SND*). A charter of 1614 referred to the Sengie Fair beginning on the ninth day after Pentecost and lasting 15 days, while an account of the pre-Reformation monastery of St Andrews, written in 1683, states:

> The CLOYSTER stood just west from the prior's house, the Dortour only intersected, and is a quadrangle, and of old was the great mercat-place of that renowned faire of St Andrews, called the Senzie mercat, held and kept for fifteen dayes, and beginning the second week after Easter, whereunto resorted marchants from most of the then trading kingdomes in Europe, trade in this kingdome being then in its infancie. The place over the merchants stalls was covered, to defend them and their goods. The cloyster is now turned into a little orchard, having the south side wall of the church for a pairt of its fence. The four pairts of the cloyster were covered by William of London the thirteenth prior. The SENZIE-HOUSE, senzie-hall, and senzie-chamber, called the sub-prior's house, is a tolerable dwelling. (Martine 1797: 188, quoted in part *NSA* 9, pt 1: 495)

By the 1840s the Senzie Fair was confined to a single day (the second Thursday of April OS) and very little business was transacted.

The 'Gowk Fair' was recalled about 1890 by an 80-year-old resident in Kippen, Stirlingshire, as being held on the second Wednesday of April OS for seed, oats and barley sold by sample, and also for a stallion show. By then it had been discontinued for some years (Marwick 1890: 76). The OS dating proves that it was in existence in 1752 when the calendar was changed; the name 'Gowk Fair' ('Cuckoo Fair') is another seasonal one, but I am unsure as to whether it refers to 'hunting the gowk' – being sent on a fool's errand – on 1 April, or to the arrival of the real 'gowk' later in the month.

The 'Hogget Fair' and April Show at Lockerbie in Dumfriesshire were held on 10 April (Marwick 1890: 84). This will be hogget in the sense of a hog or yearling sheep.

Biggar had a 'Seed Thursday' in March (Cameron 1997: 95). Further north, by 1838 Fortingall in Perthshire had a 'Seed Fair' in the end of April 'because the tenants and others resort to it for their lintseed, clover-seed, &c' (*NSA* 10: 557). Stewart (1928: 188) gave its date as 28 April and its name as '*Feill Ceit an Fhrois* or St Catherine's Seed Fair', but both elements can be readily explained. The feast-day of St Catherine of Siena (d.

1380, canonised 1461) was 29 April; the word *fras* ('shower' or 'seed'), though feminine elsewhere, was masculine in Perthshire, so the unexpected genitive *an Fhrois* is correct (Armstrong 1825: 267; Gillies 1938: 354).

At Logierait, also in Perthshire and also in April, was '*Feill 'an vois*, or the seed market' (Marwick 1890: 84). It was of considerable importance in its day, but was discontinued about 1825. There are two equal possibilities here. *Feill 'an vois* is either a misreading of *Feill an rois* (for *Féill an Fhrois* 'the Seed Fair', with silent *fh* as is normal) or a characteristically Perthshire corruption of *Feill Eoin Baiste*, the Feast of St John the Baptist. Since his day is 24 June, the calendar referent would be to Holy Thursday in Easter Week, which was sacred to the memory of John the Baptist (and also, at least in more westerly locations, to his *doppelgänger* St Bannan or Manannan). Given the very strong associations of these figures with water, the fact that Logierait is situated at one of the most important confluences in Scotland – that of the Tay and Tummel – may not be coincidental.

Thursday of Easter Week was a popular fair-day in pre-Reformation times. In Gaelic it was generally known as *Diar-Daoin a' Bhrochain* ('Gruel Thursday', 'Porridge Thursday') from the gifts or sacrifices made to Bannan, Manannan or St John on that day (MacilleDhuibh 1987). In Scots it was Skire or Skires Thursday (*SND*), a name capable of infinite degrees of corruption; according to public records, 'Skyre Thursday' was held at Old Aberdeen, 'Sky-Thursday' at Coupar Angus, and 'Skyries Thursday', 'Skeir Thursday' or even 'Scarce Thursday' at Melrose. Fairs were held 'on the Wednesday before Skeirs Friday in April' in both Fenwick and Stewarton, and a 'Skeir Fair' survived in Glasgow till 1890 on the third Friday of April (Marwick 1890: 14, 33, 52, 59, 87, 108). The term means 'clear, bright', hence 'pure', and appears to be connected with Old Norse *Skíriþorsdagr*, Norwegian *Skirtorsdag*, *skjærtorsdag* ('Holy Thursday'), on which ritual bathing, symbolic of purification, took place (*SND*).

'A hundred years ago, for the majority of people in rural areas,' wrote James Mackie in 1949 of the Aberdeenshire parish of Auchterless, 'life was pretty grim and few travelled out of the parish, except to the markets at Turriff. Farmers and workers attended the feeing market, Porter Fair, held twice a year, the farmers using their gigs, but the workers generally having to walk' (Hamilton 1960: 685). One such farmer was a man named Swaggers.

Come all ye jolly ploughman lads,
I pray you, have a care,
Beware o' going to Swaggers,
For he'll be in Porter Fair.

He'll be aye lauch-lauchin',
He'll aye be lauchin' there,
And he'll hae on the blithest face
In a' Porter Fair.

Wi' his fine horse and harness,
Sae well he'll gar ye true,
But when ye come to Auchterless,
Sae sair's he'll gar ye rue. (Cameron 1997: 88)

Porter Fair at Turriff was a hiring fair, then, held at the Whitsunday and Martinmas terms, but why is it so called? 'Porter' is an English word rather than a Scots one, so the name cannot be very old. Curiously, it matters little whether it refers to drink or people, since the two meanings are etymologically one: *Chambers 20th Century Dictionary* defines 'porter' as 'one who carries burdens for hire, or does similar manual labour: a dark-brown malt liquor, prob. because a favourite drink with London porters'. Such a liquor was brewed and consumed no less than in Scotland than in England or Ireland, but it has to be said that while fairs in general – and these Whitsunday and Martinmas hiring fairs on Saturdays at Turriff in particular – were condemned by the clergy for the dissipation at their edges (see section 18 below), they seem to have received their names from the dedication, function or symbolism at their heart (cf. *NSA* 12: 1004).[8] The function of the Porter Fair was to provide porters (what might nowadays be called 'heavies') for manual labour, and there can scarcely be a better illustration of the word than a letter in the *Dundee, Perth and Cupar Advertiser* of 16 July 1819 which speaks of an incident that year at Stobb's Fair in Dundee.

> There was indeed no lack of landward idlers, trying to commence their destructive operations, but to counteract their wicked designs there was sent out by your Provost . . . a party of porters about a dozen strong headed by a feeble town's officer or two . . . The fair thus passed off without any broken heads . . . Two of the porters, I heard, fonder of keeping up the ancient character of this fair than of preserving the peace, did indeed get drunk . . . (McCraw 1994: 41)

The 'Sleepy Market' was held in May on the green beside Christ's Kirk of Udny at Kennethmont in the Garioch. It began about sunset and ended an hour after sunrise. Around 1758 the proprietor changed it from night to day, but so devoted were the people to their custom that they abandoned it completely rather than comply with the alteration (Marwick 1890: 30, 70). Its name is preserved in a farm called Sleepytown (Cameron 1997: 101).

The fair at Callander on the third Tuesday of July, still surviving in 1890 and generally known as the 'Groset Fair', was a fruit market. By 1955 a fair of the same name was being held nearby in Doune (*SND* s.v. groset). Also called the Groset (or Grozete) Fair was one at Rutherglen, also still existing in 1890, and held on the Friday after 25 July for horses and cows (Marwick 1890: 28, 103). The most celebrated Groset or Grozet Fair of all, however, was the one held in Kilmarnock on 25 July OS and thus, latterly at least, in the beginning of August.

> 'Grozet' Fair. – The customary agricultural July fair was held on Thursday last . . . In the cattle market . . . there was a considerable turn-out of horses, which were sold briskly at

> high prices . . . There was also a good number of pigs . . . An immense number of people left town by rail on Saturday – the town holiday known as 'Grozet Saturday'. (*SND*, citing *Ayr Advertiser*, 4 August 1870)

Clearly such a fair was held when the corn was still growing but the grosets (gooseberries) were ripe. There were Gooseberry Fairs at this time of year throughout Ireland, too, 'called by that name for the good reason that gooseberries are then ready for sale, the first of the cultivated fruits to ripen, just as bilberries are the first of the wild fruits' (MacNeill 1962: 307).

The Japping Market was at Dowally, on the Tay between Logierait and Dunkeld. According to *SND*, to 'jaup' or 'jap(p)' is 'to make a splash by throwing water, striking the surface of water, puddles or the like, in riding, walking, etc.' Our only source for the event is, I believe, Thomas Baird, writer in Dunkeld, describing the parish of Dunkeld and Dowally in 1843:

> The ancient markets within the parish were the Kindallachan market for sheep, and the herd's 'japping' market at Dowally for fruit. The japping market was discontinued about 100 years ago. The herds, in the course of the day, arranged themselves on each side of the Burn of Dowally; on a signal given, they beat the water one against the other with sticks, till one of the sides gave way. The vanquished then left the market, and the victors had the exclusive honour of treating the lasses to fruit, and of enjoying their society at the ball. (*NSA* 10: 998; Banks 1937: 175)

According to Baird, then, the Japping Market was discontinued *c.* 1743. He does not say at what point in the year it was held, but its identity as a fruit market would appear to place it around 1 August, and it is possible that the japping custom is connected with a tradition in Ireland of young men racing horses in water at Lughnasa assemblies held by lakes and rivers: 'Coming from far-apart places,' says MacNeill (1962: 243), 'it testifies to the existence of a once widespread and significant custom.' There are some hints of horse-worship in the Irish evidence, including the leaving of sacrificial offerings, so it may be that the japping is connected to stories about kelpies or other river-spirits (MacNeill 1962: 252, 256). But that is pure speculation.

The next seasonal marker along the line appears to have been 'Rook Fair', that being the name of a fair held at Rutherglen, again for horses and cows, on the Friday after 25 August (Marwick 1890: 103). The word appears to be 'ruck' or 'rouk', a hay- or corn-stack of a standard shape or size (*SND* etc.).

The 'Goose Market' was the name given to the annual fair at Drummond, near the present village of Evanton in the Easter Ross parish of Kiltearn, in the first week of December (Marwick 1890: 41; Maclennan 1985: 15). Being one of those referred to in section 5 above where the proprietor exacted no toll but maintained a guard to 'prevent riots', it was clearly a long-established gathering, and we may contrast it with Drumoak on the Kincardine/Aberdeenshire border: there were five annual fairs there, and 'being of recent appointment, they are exceedingly ill-attended, and consequently little business

is transacted in them' (*NSA* 12: 898). In 1791 the minister of Kiltearn, Harry Robertson, explained:

> As no geese are sold at it, the name Goose-market has probably taken its rise from an entertainment usually given by the gentlemen of the parish to the principal inhabitants on the second day of the market, where a goose (being then in season) always makes a part of the feast. On this occasion, there is no excess in drinking encouraged; and the company meet merely for the sake of social intercourse. (*OSA* 17: 491)

It is comforting to know that the Christmas goose was being enjoyed in the North even in 'the Days of the Fathers'. A moderate minister was once reputedly censured for eating it. One of the opposite inclination, the Rev. Murdoch Mackenzie of Elgin – said to have been so zealous that he swore to the Covenant fourteen times – searched the houses of that town at Christmas 1659 in an effort to root out the cooking of the pernicious bird. 'These feathers,' he is alleged to have told the people, 'will rise up against you one day.' Another story tells of an old lady whose Christmas dinner was boiling merrily over a blazing fire when she saw the minister coming to the door. She snatched the pot from the fire, but could not think of any better place to hide it before the minister entered the door than under the bedcover. She was sitting at her spinning-wheel when he came in. He was so delighted to find that she 'longed not for the flesh-pots of Egypt' that he overstayed his welcome, and suddenly the bedclothes burst into flame (Banks 1941: 225–26).

Finally, 'Pepper's Fair' was held at Dingwall, five miles from Drummond, on the Tuesday before Christmas OS (Marwick 1890: 40). First mentioned in 1837 as the Pepper Market, its OS dating shows that it already existed in 1752 (Macrae 1974: 161–62, 253). In his account of the Ross-shire *feills*, as he calls them, Colin MacDonald remarks (1944: 71): 'Then there were the more local markets – *Feill a' Pheabair* (The Pepper Market) was one; it died out in Ross-shire in the seventies.' I deduce from this that it originated as a spice market aimed principally at the Christmas dinner-plate, that the possessive-sounding 'Pepper's Fair' arose by analogy with Janet's Fair, Colin's Fair and Martha's Fair in the same location, and that MacDonald regarded its name, or at least its function, as being replicated elsewhere, perhaps both within and outwith Ross-shire. It may be, then, that a 'pepper fair' should be seen as a type rather than merely an individual fair, in the same way as 'groset fair', 'rascal fair', 'gingerbread fair', etc.

11. PLACE-NAMES

In the naming of fairs the temporal element may be described as the specific, the spatial as the generic: 'the Goose Market at Drummond', for example, or 'the 10th of April at the Links of Abbotshall'. As a rule, then, the role of place-names is merely as a qualifying element. It may be said to be of four types: (a) in the absence of any other

designation, a primary name; (b) traditionally, a name informally applied to a well-known fair outside its own locality; (c) more recently, the result of a single fair surviving (or being created) to dominate the annual cycle of its community; (d) the result of a fair being moved. So when Cameron (1997: 95) states that Pitlessie Fair was 'held twice-yearly in Fife in May and October' he is treating it as type (a); by 1804, the time of Wilkie's painting, however, the October fair had shrunk to nothing, and the 'Pitlessie Fair' that he depicts is of type (b), a Beltane survival, first recorded in 1540–41 as a yearly fair on SS Philip and James's Day, 1 May (Marwick 1890: 97). A true example of type (a) is Dunsmuir Fair in Angus, which Erskine of Dun held by parliamentary permission of 1669 on the second Wednesday after Whitsunday upon the Muir of Dun, through which passed the road from Perth to Aberdeen (Marwick 1890: 46; McCraw 1994: 15, 39). In addition, I have noted three curious instances in Marwick's *List* of Parliament bestowing a place-name on a fair while giving traditional names to other fairs in the same location. An Act of 1681 granted Gartmore in Stirlingshire a Beltane Fair in May, St Mark's Fair in July, Gartmore Fair in October, and St John's Fair in December. An Act obtained by Sir John Johnston of Caskiebend (now Keith Hall) in Aberdeenshire in 1705 stated that one of three annual fairs to be held on Tyrebagger Hill in the parish of Dyce was simply to be called Tyrebagger fair, the others being left with their much more medieval-sounding titles of Pasch fair and Martin Bulyeon fair. And an Act of 1707 granted Sir David Carnegie of Pittaro two yearly fairs to be held on Cammockmuir in Kincardineshire – one on the last Tuesday of May to be called Cammock fair, and one of the third Tuesday of June to be called St John's Fair (Marwick 1890: 28, 57, 114).

The 'Glasgow Fair' has developed, as pointed out in section 4, from a yearly fair held since the twelfth century at least on SS Peter and Paul's Day (6 July). Exceptionally, it was formally named as such on 3 January 1744, when an Act of the Town Council ordained a horse fair called 'the twenty day of Yule' to begin on the second Monday of January, and to continue for that week and each Wednesday thereafter till Skyre Thursday, and 'the Glasgow fair' on 7 July to begin on the first Monday of that month and to continue for a week, a cow fair being held on the Friday (Marwick 1890: 59). The Council had of course the authority of William the Lion's charter of 1202–10 (referred to in section 4) as well as the precedents just mentioned, but we may nevertheless be permitted to view their use of the name as a gesture of economic confidence by the fathers of what was now Scotland's fastest-growing community.

Generally speaking, when a traditional fair-name incorporates a place-name it is because, in the same way as a saint, the place gives it legitimacy. If a fair is moved, for example, it may retain the name of its previous location. Good examples of this are to be found amongst the names of the great cattle fairs at Crieff, for, as James Fergusson wrote in 1838 (*NSA* 10: 525), 'As Crieff occupies a central situation, and as Lord Willoughby has granted a commodious stance, it has been found expedient to transfer the markets that previously belonged to the neighbouring parishes, to this place.' He

then listed nine names: (1) St Thomas' fair on the first Thursday of January, (2) Strowan fair on the third Thursday of February, (3) Big Thursday fair on the second Thursday of March, (4) Lady fair on the first Thursday of April, (5) Turret fair on the first Thursday of June, (6) Douchlage fair on the last Thursday of June, (7) Monivaird fair on the second Thursday of July, (8) Monzie fair on the third Thursday of August, and (9) Michaelmas fair on the Thursday immediately preceding the October Falkirk Tryst. Five of these – Strowan, Turret, Douchlage, Monivaird and Monzie – are names of places outside Crieff. Douchlage (otherwise Duchlage) was the first to be moved; Turret (otherwise Turrat, Terot) was only half a mile from the town, but was transferred anyway (Marwick 1890: 34–35, 78, 89; Whyte 1979: 25). An earlier example is St Brigid's Fair at Inverness, referred to in section 8 above. Having been moved from the churchyard of Logie Wester (*Lagaidh Bhrighde* or St Brigid's Hollow) near Dingwall at some point before 1592, its name was recorded in the burgh's charter of that year as 'Legavrick' and in an Act of Parliament of 1641 as 'Legrievrike or Legraweik' (Marwick 1890: 67).

Other fair-names containing place-names may be found here and there in the *List*. The 'Reaster market' was held at Reaster in the landward part of the Caithness parish of Dunnet on the third or fourth Tuesday of October OS, but was identified to Marwick in the 1880s as Lukemas (*NSA* 15, pt 2: 47; Marwick 1890: 46, 100; Waugh 1985: 258). This is St Luke's Day, 18 October. The old Shandon fair was 'brought down from the Muir, north of the town . . . to the square in Drymen' about 1850. The annual sheep markets at Cortachy in Angus were called the Collow Markets, as they were held beside a farm of that name. A fair on 15 September at Balloch in Dumbartonshire was 'popularly known as the Moss of Balloch'; for Jimmy McShannon's song 'The Moss o Balloch Fair' see *Tocher* 43 (1991) 11–13. The Croft (or Craft) Fairs at Brechin and Kirriemuir were so called because they were held on a croft or crofts behind the houses rather than on the street or square in front of them, which was the location of a 'calsay' or 'causey' market, that is, one held on cobblestones, such as Brechin's 'calsay market on Tuesday weekly, beginning on the first Tuesday of Lent, and continuing till Pasche Sunday, being four days' (Marwick 1890: 25, 32, 36, 41, 78). An identical distinction is preserved to this day in the street-names of Edinburgh – cattle were brought for sale (usually by the Cowgate) to the Grassmarket on the meadows below the Castle Hill and slaughtered in the vicinity of Old Fleshmarket Close, the meat being exposed for sale either there or in the Lawnmarket above, whose name (originally 'land market') has been defined as 'a flesh-market held in some burghs for the unfree fleshers . . . from the country; the place where this was held, surviving as a place-name in the Lawnmarket, a street in the Old Town . . . of Edinburgh' (Robinson 1987: 356).

Conversely, 'Hill's Fair' on the third Tuesday of June at Balquhapple (now Thornhill) in Stirlingshire appears to have been so called because it was held on the hill, as opposed to the Lentron Fair in March, Margaret's Fair in October and the Martinmas Fair in November, which we may assume to have taken place in the village itself. By this analogy, I assume that 'Edzerstouns Day at Tillibardin' indicates a fair held on a farm

called Edzerstoun; held by 1727 on the first Thursday of October, it may be identified as the 'yearly fair on 6th October' authorised at Tullibardine by Act of Parliament in 1672 (Smith 1727; Marwick 1890: 21, 114).

In 1685 the December fair at Fochabers in the parish of Bellie was called the Belliefair; in 1598–99 it had been named Lady Day, subsequently it was given no name at all (Marwick 1890: 53). This appears to reflect the constantly changing course of the lower Spey, which dominated the parish. 'Bellie' can only, I think, represent *Beul Àtha* ('Ford'), given its strategic position at the river crossing. It was said locally that 'the Spey is like a bad woman wha winna keep to her ain bed' – she had gradually moved her course to the west, causing floods and leaving the church no longer at the natural place of commerce, and the focus of the parish moved two miles upstream to the ford at Fochabers, where a new parish church was eventually built in 1797 and a bridge in 1803 (*OSA* 16: 81; Hamilton 1965: 236, 248–50).

Uniquely, perhaps, the Kelton Hill Fair in Kirkcudbrightshire may be regarded as belonging to all three types (b), (c) and (d). A large hill-top gathering, it was held on 17 June OS, or the first Tuesday after 17 June OS, which points to possible primal associations with St John, Manannan and the summer solstice; it has no recorded name that I know of other than the Kelton Hill Fair, despite the fact that six other fairs appear to have been held annually on the hill, and about 1878 it was transferred to Castle Douglas (*NSA* 4, pt 2: 148, 177; Marwick 1890: 29–30, 70; Harper 1908: 32; Cameron 1997: 95).

> It may not be generally known that the once famous Kelton Hill Fair was in early times held on this hill. The account of the origin and importance of this fair here given is taken from *The Castle-Douglas Miscellany*, published eighty years ago, and now a very rare volume. The writer says that he had his information from oral tradition, and that, at that time, 1825, the commencement of the fair was far beyond the reach of any living recollection. It was the greatest assemblage of the sort in the south of Scotland, but for many years there was no field appointed for the purpose. It was sometimes held on the Grainyford Island [in the R. Dee], especially when a dispute arose concerning the spot which had the original claim. About the year 1758 it was held on the eastern side of the hill called Kelton Hill, and very near the present manse of Kelton. For many years it was held on the south side of the road, and directly opposite to its present situation. It was also held on the farm of Hightae, and on the Furbar Hill. The tradition as to the origin of this fair is as follows:– A plodding pedestrian chapman from Glasgow, with a long pack *chuck-full* of finery, finding that his goods required an airing, spread them one fine day upon a thicket of whins upon the side of the hill, about half-way between Castle-Douglas and the place where the fair is now held. In the course of the day a great number of people collected, and purchased to a considerable amount. Encouraged by this lucky incident, the packman promised (health permitting) to appear in the same place on that day twelve months. This promise he punctually kept, and brought with him some other brethren of the trade, with a great variety of articles for sale. From that small beginning the fair gradually became so considerable, that in 1793 the following graphic picture was given of it by Heron, in his *Journey through Scotland*:–"Here are assembled from

> Ireland, from England, and from the most distant parts of North Britain, horse-dealers, cattle-dealers, sellers of sweetmeats and of spirituous liquors, gypsies, pickpockets, and smugglers . . .' (Harper 1908: 31–32)

Like Aikey in Pictland and St Boswells in the Borders, when placed in its geographical context this Galloway fair leaves one with the feeling that it may represent something profoundly ancient. It was 'a horse fair of European celebrity' (Agnew 1893: 188), 'perhaps the largest in Scotland, frequented by large numbers of horse dealers from England, Ireland, and the east, west, and south of Scotland' (Marwick 1890: 70, citing *OSA* 5: 165), and it was in this same parish of Kelton, in a bog at Torrs Farm *c.* 1820, that the 'Torrs pony cap' was found. This beautiful bronze chamfrain was presented to Sir Walter Scott by the local exciseman, and is now in the Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. It has been dated to the 3rd century BC. In general terms Kelton (where my great-great-grandfather, Adam Black, a master joiner, was born in 1806) was notable for its antiquities.

> On the farm of Torrs there is an imperfect circle of upright stones, the remains of a Druidical temple, in the neighbourhood of which there is a copious spring of excellent water . . . Various antiquities, of different ages, have been found in the parish. Numerous hill forts occur on different hill tops. A sepulchral tumulus opened near Gelston (towards the south of the parish), contained a stone coffin 7 feet in length, in which was found human bones, a brass or copper helmet, with several implements of war, that were greatly corroded . . . Near Glenlochar Bridge . . . was turned up by the ploughshare, several years since, the head of a war horse in bronze . . . And lastly, the loch of Carlingwarth, with its islands and crannogs, has furnished many relics of antiquity in bronze and iron . . . (Smith 1870: 335–36, citing *NSA* 4, pt 2: 153–54)

Skitten Market was held at Killimster in the parish of Wick on the first Tuesday of March (*NSA* 15, pt 2: 176; Marwick 1890: 73). The name appears once again to be that of a gathering-place of some antiquity, and was the site of two battles. In the first, a Scottish earl called Macbeth and Skuli, son of Thorfinn Earl of Orkney, were defeated by Skuli's brother Ljot; concerning this, the Rev. Charles Thomson wrote in 1841 of how 'the confederates were encamped in an advantageous position in the Bogs of Skitten (*paludibus Skidensibus*), a name by which the Moss of Kilminster was anciently called', adding that 'the fair held on this moss is to this day called Skitten market' (*NSA* 15, pt 2: 178). The second battle arose from a challenge by a Scottish earl called Finnleik (*Finnlaech*) to Sigurd, Earl of Orkney, 'to fight him on a particular day at Skitten'. Says the saga of Sigurd:

> He got the support of the Orkney farmers by giving them back their land-rights, then set out for Skitten to confront Earl Finnleik. The two sides formed up, but the moment they clashed Sigurd's standard-bearer was struck dead. The Earl told another man to pick up the banner but before long he'd been killed too. The Earl lost three standard bearers, but he won the battle and the farmers of Orkney got back their land-rights.

It can be seen, then, how Skitten became a place of significance to the farmers of Orkney (by whom we may assume those of Caithness are also meant). In Old Norse the name is Skíðamýrr (Pálsson and Edwards 1981: 36–37, 250). Anderson (1873: xxvi, 112, 209–10) gives it as 'Skida Myre' and Foden (1996: 9–10), indicating that it has long since been drained, as 'the Skitten Mire'; it is not discussed by Waugh (1985).

Finally, an Act of Parliament of 1681 empowered Sir James Campbell of Lawers to have two free fairs at Easter Aberlednock in Perthshire, one on 30 June to be called St Serf's fair or market, another on 25 November to be called Fordew fair or market (Marwick 1890: 14). From being paired with St Serf's, it looks as if Fordew may be a pre-existing name. Easter Aberlednock is at Comrie in the old Pictish kingdom of Fortriu. Fordew is now Fordie, a mile and a half east of Comrie, while in the hills above it is Braefordie. The name appears as if it may preserve that of the Pictish kingdom, and the fair, like the Skitten Market, may thus be a relic of the gathering place of its people.

12. SURNAMES

If we were to seek an alternative origin for Fordew, we might wish to consider the possibility of its being a surname based on such a placename. In addition to Fordie at Comrie, Fordell (Fife), Fordie (near Dunkeld), Fordoun (Kincardineshire) and Fordyce (Banffshire) come to mind. All occur as surnames (Black 1946: 272), but, surprising though it may seem, fair-names of this type are rare. One example is Crawford's Day at Kilbirnie in Ayrshire, held on the last Tuesday of October OS. William Dobie of Grangevale, Beith, described it in 1840–41 as 'a cow-fair, instituted, it is said, by the Crawfurds of Kilbirnie', going on to say that it 'has long since ceased to be a cattle-market, or even to be observed as a holiday' (*NSA* 5, pt 1: 725; cf. Marwick 1890: 71). There is sufficient evidence to allow speculation as to its origin. The Crawfurds or Craufurds of Kilbirnie originated in 1470. Descent in the male line failed in 1661 on the death of Sir John, the 9th laird. By then, however, his second daughter had married Patrick Lindsay, second son of the 14th Earl of Craufurd, and Sir John had settled the estate of Kilbirnie on the heirs of this marriage on condition that they assume his own name of Craufurd (*NSA* 5, pt 1: 699–700; Paterson 1847: 114–16). My guess is that this marriage – which secured the preservation of the Craufurd line in the parish and took place at a time, *c.* 1660, when fairs were being created all over Scotland to take advantage of the new cattle trade with England – was marked by the declaration of an annual holiday in the parish to be called Craufurd's Day. A better-documented example comes from Dornoch in Sutherland:

> An effort had been made in 1739 to arrest the decay of trade in the Burgh by the appointment of another fair 'to hold and Bear the name of Wemyss's Mercat', to be held yearly on the second Wednesday of June and to last for two days. It was so named after the Countess of Sutherland, who was a daughter of the Earl of Wemyss. (Bentinck 1926: 281; cf. Marwick 1890: 40)

It should be noted that in both of these cases the name is that of an earldom and has high social status. This must, I think, influence our consideration of a third 'surname fair', Melvin's, which, though not mentioned by name in public records until 1837, can perhaps be identified with a hiring fair at Dundee on the first Tuesday of October which was established in 1669 (McCraw 1994: 37).[9] Yet again we have the name of an earldom. George, 4th Lord Melville, was created 1st Earl of Melville in 1690; according to Black (1946: 594), 'James Melville, the Reformer, in his *Diary* (Bannatyne Club ed.) spells his own name Melville and Melvin even on the same page (e.g. p. 87, 238), and among older people in the country districts the name is still commonly pronounced Melvin.'

Other possible surname derivatives are Hagg Fair, Bathie Fair, Stobbs Fair and Bell's Fair. Hagg, Bathie, Stobbs and Bell are all on record as surnames, but that does not necessarily mean that it is as surnames that they became the names of fairs, and it is important to note that none of these surnames enjoyed the same status as Crawford, Wemyss or Melvin.

13. COMMODITIES, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Hagg Fair and Bathie Fair were both held at Greenbarn or Greenburn in Newhills parish, which is today the western part of the City of Aberdeen. They were authorised by Act of Parliament in 1701 for the second Thursday of June and the last Thursday of July respectively. They seem to have been well attended until the 1860s, and till the 1880s one of them (presumably the Hagg Fair) was still being held there on the second Tuesday of June OS, but by 1890 the stance had been 'enclosed by the Messrs Pirie, of Stoneywood Works, and given over as a people's park for the use of their workpeople' (Marwick 1890: 61). The names seem to make a pair. Bathie in particular is suggestive of a saint's name, but none of the candidates, Baithene (9 June), Bartholomew (24 August) and Bathan (25 December or 18 January), fit a date in late July; the feast of St Bartholomew, held at the Kirk of Kincardine O'Neil, was known as Bartel Fair (Marwick 1890: 74). I would in fact argue that Hagg and Bathie are not surnames, saints' names or place-names but vocabulary words. A hagg is defined by *SND* as (among other things) 'the cutting or felling of a certain quantity of timber . . .; that portion of a wood which is set aside each year for cutting'. On the face of it, any large-scale labour which occurs in an annual cycle and results in a commercial product might give rise to a yearly fair; the following *SND* quotations (*s.v.* hagg) make these points effectively.

(a) With regard to the oak woods, . . . they will be divided into 21 hags, and from that time a hag of nearly 30 acres can be cut down every year continually. (*Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 21 January 1819)

(b) That the Growing Woods in the high Parks of *Hamilton* . . . are to be exposed to Sale by way of publick Roup . . . either in Wholesale or by Parcels, or Hags, as the Purchasers shall incline. (*Caledonian Mercury*, 14 December 1747)

'Bathie' is given by *SND* as a variant of bothie, bothy, and I do not think it is too fanciful to suggest that the Hagg Fair in June began with the felling of a stand of trees, and that the Bathie Fair in July began with the making of bothies, booths or 'tents' from what was left of the previous month's timber. This theory is, I think, supported by the Rev. John Brown's description of the parish of Newhills, written in 1792:

> About 200 acres are covered with plantations; and there is a nursery of forest timber and fruit trees upon the lands of Auchmull . . . There are three annual fairs held at Greenburn in this parish, for the sale of cattle, horses, and different kinds of hard-ware. – There is plenty of fuel, not only for consumption, but also for sale. (*OSA* 14: 632, 635–36)

It should also be noted that by 1839 Aberdeen had a Timmer (Timber) Market – 'A brose caup, a horn speen, / A chapper and a ladle / Fae the Timmer Market, Aiberdeen, / Tae grace your kitchen table' (McCraw 1994: 35). It was held in Castle Street on the last Wednesday or Thursday of August 'for the sale of tubs and other wooden articles' (*NSA* 12: 102; Marwick 1890: 13).

> Even Aberdeen's Timmer Market, held once for the sale of wooden implements but later for the purpose of re-stocking the North-East Lowlands kitchens with their ubiquitous brose caups, coggies, luggies, spurtles and potato-mashers as well as the creepie-stools that could bring the bairns in to the fire between the big folk's chairs, was in sad decline by 1890 and an anachronism long, long before its move from that city's historic Castlegate in the 1930s. (Cameron 1997: 99)

Stob(b)s Fair was established by an Act of Parliament obtained by the magistrates of Dundee in 1669. It was held on the Muir of Craigie (Stobsmuir or Stobb's Muir) in the parish of Mains and Strathmartine, then just outside the burgh, on the first Tuesday of July, the date subsequently being altered to the first Tuesday after 11 July (McCraw 1994: 24).

> On 23 June 1679, the Council gave instructions 'for ane fair to be holden at the Mure of Craigie and within this brugh, beginand the first tusday of July nixt and to continue all that weik and the sd faire to be Custome free for this yeir alanerlie'. This seems to have been one of the earliest Stobb's Fairs with a custom-free concession, presumably to encourage trading at the relatively new market. The fair would appear to have been split at this time, partly on the muir and partly in the town, as was the case with the First Fair. It has not proved possible to identify on which part of the Muir of Craigie Stobb's Fair was located, or indeed to delineate the muir itself, maps of the period being of little assistance. However, it seems likely that the market would be held on or near the present recreation ground known as Stobsmuir, covering a greater area, and including ground which was later used for other purposes, including house feus. This was the part of the muir which the town agreed with a subsequent laird of Craigie should be used as the fairground. It had good road access, being near the main roads from Dundee to Forfar and Brechin. It has been claimed that the fair was called after the person renting the field where it was first held, or that the name derives from a Scots word for a post. Another suggestion links it to St Abb, but the few dedications to this saint are in Berwickshire and there is nothing to suppose an ecclesiastical connection.

> The first reference to it under this name traced in official records is in 1717, when the Council Treasurer was instructed to arrange for intimations in the parish kirks to the effect that the fair was not to be held at the Muir of Craigie, but at 'the Cowgait of Dundie and waist ground wt out the port'. Efforts were to be made to have similar announcements made at country markets, evidence of the importance placed on attracting patronage from rural areas. In the following July the fair was proclaimed to be held once more 'in the ordinari place in the muir'. (McCraw 1994: 38)

Stob(b)s Fair was transferred west to 'the Town's fair muir' (Fairmuir), north-east of Dundee Law, in 1845, and was still being held there for cattle, sheep and horses in 1890 (Marwick 1890: 44, 85). The Stobsmuir became the nucleus of the suburb of Maryfield; the specific survives there today not merely in the Stobsmuir recreation ground but also in Stobsmuir Road, Stobswell Road and Stobswell School. Mr McCraw tells me that these names are sometimes reduced colloquially to Stobie, e.g. the 'Stobie Ponds', formerly reservoirs, which were created when the Dundee Water Company purchased part of the Muir in 1850. It is certainly impossible to know for sure whether Stob(b) represents a surname or a vocabulary word – individuals bearing the surname Stob appear in the Perth area between 1365 and 1506, and as Stobb, Stobbie or Stobie it remains common in the Dundee area to this day (Black 1946: 750; Ian McCraw, pers. comm.). But a 'stob(b)' is a post or stake, while *SND* defines the word additionally as 'a Y-shaped stick with sharp points acting like a staple driven into the sods laid on the sarking of a roof so as to compress the bundles of the overlaid straw used in thatching (Bnff., Abd. 1971), later a two-pronged stick or rod used to push thatching straw into roof sods'. Stob-thatching (stob-thacking, stob-theeking) was high-quality thatching using stobs, and it is tempting to hypothesise that it was a demand for such materials in high summer that had brought the fair partly into town in 1679; it also occurs to me that a good supply of stobs would not go amiss in a scenario such as the one depicted by Tennant for 'Anster Fair' (Scott and Lindsay 1989: 30):

> On the green loan and meadow-crofts around,
> A town of tents, with blankets roofed quick;
> A thousand stakes are rooted in the ground;
> A thousand hammers clank and clatter thick.

The '-s' might be thought to indicate a surname, but compare Pepper's Fair (section 10 above) and Bell's Fair below. All in all, it can be suggested with some confidence that Stobb's lines up with the Hagg and Bathie fairs as a gathering held in summer with the object of exploiting a woodland area to the benefit of the neighbouring city.

A hiring market for married farm servants called Bell's (or Bells) Fair was held on the Fairmuir on the first Friday of October. Nominally at least, it survived as late as 1972, still appearing in the *Dundee Directory* for that year (Marwick 1890: 44, 85; McCraw 1994: 45; Ian McCraw, pers. comm.). Bell's may perhaps be another name for Melvin's, for which see section 12 above – Mr McCraw has pointed out to me that the names of

fairs were by no means constant, and cites by way of example a kirk session fornication case of 1768 which stated that the offending deed had been committed at the time of the Duke of Douglas's Fair, meaning the First Fair of Dundee (see sections 5, 14), of which the Duke was superior at that period. By 1842 there was a Bell's Day at Kilwinning in Ayrshire on the first Wednesday of November, formerly for cattle, now for both cattle and horses; by 1890 it was being held on the first Monday of November (*NSA* 5: 833; Marwick 1890: 73). Thus far it seems likely that Bell is a surname, and indeed Mr McCraw informs me that a certain Bailie Bell seems to have owned part of the Meadows (cf. Meadowside) where the entertainments of the First Fair of Dundee were held, and to have given his name to Bell Street. However, other evidence makes me feel less certain. At Airth in Stirlingshire was a Whistle Fair, held till about 1890 on the last Tuesday of July. There was also a Clog Market at Comrie, held till about 1890 on the first Wednesday of December (*NSA* 10: 595; Marwick 1890: 15, 32). A 'clog' is a log of wood (*SND*), which suggests an origin similar to that posited for the Hagg, Bathie and Stobbs fairs, but it is equally likely that the word could represent Gaelic *clog* or *clag* 'a bell'. By this argument, the Whistle Fair, Clog Market, Bell's Fair and Bell's Day were so called because they started and finished to the sound of these instruments. In some (perhaps indeed most) burghs a bell sounded the start of selling, just as happens in the world's largest and richest fair today, the Wall Street Stock Market. In 1618 the Guildry of Dundee instructed all merchants 'by bell and drum' to observe St Clement's Fair (23 November), while the records of Banff declare in 1682: 'No man to buy or sell before the ringing of the bell at 9 o'clock in the morning' (McCraw 1994: 12; Mair 1988: 120). The Dundee fairs were announced by the bellman of the barony of Hilltown, a street which to this day leads due north from the city centre towards Fair Muir Park; as recently as 1845 the First Fair was proclaimed early on Friday morning on the High Street by John Frazer, the Town Drummer, while further announcements were made later in the day by the bellman, David Watt, who received 1s.2d. for '2 calls of the bell' (McCraw 1994: 55).

In the case of fairs which involved races, it is also possible that the bell was a prize. 'The greatest attraction at fairs were undoubtably the races,' says Mair (1988: 206), meaning principally horse races. 'At Lanark the most notable prize was the famous silver bell, which seems to have dated from around 1600 and was competed for until recent times when the local race course closed.' And of the July Fair in Errol, Melville says (1935: 74): 'The winner of the foot races carried a bell, and was chased by the other competitors who were blindfolded.'

14. RELIGIOUS NAMES

Religion provides a very large proportion of our fair-names. I have already noted in section 8 the influence of primal religious practice in the form of quarterdays. Other fairs take their name from moveable Christian feasts such as Shrove Tuesday ('Fasten's

E'en'), Lent ('Lentron'), Palm Sunday, Easter ('Pasch', i.e. Passion), Low Sunday, Ascension Day ('Holy Thursday in May', as at Inverbervie), Whitsunday, and Trinity Sunday. The 'Lentron Fair' at Balquhapple (now Thornhill) in Perthshire was on the first Tuesday of March, and 'Huntly spring fair or Lentron fair' was on 29 April. 'Midlentron Fair at Tarnty Banchry [Banchory-Ternan, Kincardineshire] on the Tuesday before Midlentron Sunday' was 'whiles in March, and whiles in April' (Smith 1727). In 1492 the burgesses of Kethick in Perthshire were empowered by a charter of James IV to set up a cross in the burgh in front of the gate of the monastery of Coupar Angus, with 'a weekly market on Friday, and an annual fair on the day of the *Cena Domini* and the octaves thereof', that is, on Holy Thursday in Easter Week (the day of the Last Supper) and throughout the following week. The fair at Fortrose on Whit Sunday was called Pardon Day, reflecting the *OED*'s definition of 'pardon' as 'a church festival at which indulgence is granted'. The fairs at Brechin, in particular, were strung along these moveable feasts, finishing with a great Trinity ('Tarnty') Fair; these seem to have been allocated fixed dates after the Reformation (Marwick 1890: 21, 23, 25–26, 55, 64, 70, 113). However, many other places kept the moveable dates – under the heading 'Whiles in May, and whiles in June' Smith (1727) lists:

> Ascension-day at Annan, Stirling, and Stonehyve in Merns-shire, and at Alyth in Shire of Angus, on Tuesday before Whitsunday; Newlesly on Thursday before Whitsunday; Whitsunmonday at Glasgow, Dumbartoun and Jedburgh; Whitsuntuesday, called Pardonday, at Chanry in Ross, Borrowstounness, Peterhead, Kirk of Ninians, Ormistoun, Linlithgow, Dumblain; Trinity-monday at Edinburgh; . . . Trinity-tuesday in Ruthglen; Trinity-wednesday at the Moor of Dun; Trinity-thursday at Falkirk . . .

Many fair-names derive from the four annual feasts of the Virgin Mary. There were actually five, but for purposes of analysis the Purification of the B.V.M. (Candlemas, 2 February) should be taken together with St Brigid's (1 February), see section 8 above. From the Annunciation (25 March), which commemorates the mystery of Christ's incarnation, come 'Our Lady day' in Thurso and 'Lady Day in Lent' in Fochabers. An eight-day fair called 'Our Lady Day in Lentron' was established at Nairn in 1589, and subsequently also outside the burgh at Geddes (1600) and Rorichies (1661). The 'Lady Fair' at Crieff was on the first Thursday of April (Marwick 1890: 35, 53, 58, 91, 101, 113). Other Lady Day fairs were held at Banff, Auchtermuchty, West Wemyss and Carnwath on 23 March, and at Dunkeld on 25 March (Smith 1727). Finally, Lady Day at Anstruther Wester, first mentioned in 1587, is the forerunner of the Anster Lintseed Market (held by 1812 on 11 April or on one of the six following days) which inspired Tennant's poem 'Anster Fair', a riotous celebration of spring and abundance (Marwick 1890: 17; Scott and Lindsay 1989: 31).

The greatest of the Virgin's feasts was the Assumption (15 August), which commemorates her death in this world and her assumption into heaven, known in Gaelic as *Latha Fheill Moire* or *Latha Fheill Moire Mór*. The day was marked by fairs in

Dunnet (Caithness), Inverness, Kinloss, Fochabers, Boharm (Banffshire), Kintore in the Garioch, Monymusk, Ruthven in Badenoch, Kilmalie (Lochaber), Islay, Irvine, Cults of Leny in the Pass of Callander, Cambusmore (Perthshire), Dundee, Dunglass (East Lothian) and Jedburgh. These went under names as varied as Marymas, Mary Fair, St Mary's Fair, Lady Day, Lady Mary Fair, and (to distinguish them from the Nativity) First Lady Day in Autumn and First Fair (Marwick 1890: 24, 28, 44–46, 53, 67–69, 72, 74–75, 81, 89, 103). The Mary Fair at Inverness on 15 August 1668 was marked by an affray long remembered as *Cath na Càise* ('the Battle of the Cheese') or Kebbock Day. An Inverness man, Fionnlagh Dubh, picked up a kebbock of cheese being displayed for sale by a Strathnairn woman and asked the price. On hearing it, whether by accident or design, the cheese fell out of his hand and rolled down the hill into the river. The woman demanded that he pay for it. He refused. A Strathnairn man pinioned him and captured his bonnet as a pledge that he would pay. So the fighting began. Hearing that his guards were losing control of the situation, Provost Alexander Cuthbert donned steel cap, sword and targe, rang the alarm bell, and gathered reinforcements, who began firing. Two people were killed outright and ten wounded, of whom two died later. The Provost is said to have defended his men with the words, 'Who durst disturb the King's free burgh at a market time?' (Mackay 1905: 479–80).

The third of these feasts was the Nativity of the B.V.M. (8 September), fairs on that day being known as Latter Lady Day, Latter Mary Fair, Latter Fair or Latter Lady Day in Harvest. They were held in, among other places, Fochabers, Boharm in Banffshire, Inverurie, Bervie (Inverbervie) in Kincardineshire, Dundee, Stirling, Irvine, Saltcoats, Ballinclach in Wigtownshire, Terregles in Kirkcudbrightshire, Dunbar, and Greenlaw in Berwickshire (Marwick 1890: 21, 23–24, 43–44, 53, 61, 67–68, 105, 108, 112; McCraw 1994: 11–12).

The fourth and last was the Immaculate Conception (8 December), approved by the Pope in 1476. The clearest examples of it are fairs called Lady Day on 6 December at Dunkeld and West Wemyss and on 8 December at Fochabers (Smith 1727; Marwick 1890: 53). One of the four annual fairs in Brora *c.* 1630 was 'our Ladye's fayre'; its identity is revealed by a charter of 1601 to the Earl of Sutherland erecting 'Inverbroray' into a burgh of barony with a weekly market on Saturday and four yearly fairs – the Feast of the Conception, St Peter the Apostle, St Peter Ad Vincula and St Michael (Gordon 1813: 7; Marwick 1890: 26, 65).

Fochabers and Banff appear to have been outstanding for their devotion to the Virgin Mary. In a charter of 1592 James VI granted Banff 'annual fairs on all the days formerly dedicated to the Virgin Mary', and in another of 1599 he made Fochabers a burgh of barony *cum potestate habendi crucem foralem, et forum hepdom(ad)atim die Sabathi, et liberas nundinas 8 Dec. (die Dive Marie), et 25 Mar. (die B. Marie tempore Carnisprivii), et 14 Aug. (primo die Dive Marie tempore autumnali), et 5 Sept. (posteriore die Dive Marie), cum custumis &c.* – 'with the right to have a market cross, and a weekly market on Saturday, and free fairs on 8 December (St Mary's day), and 25

March (the day of Blessed Mary of Lent), and 14 August (first St Mary's day of autumn), and 5 September (latter St Mary's day), with customs etc.' (Marwick 1890: 21–22, 53; Thomson 1984: 279).

The Invention of the Holy Cross (3 May) was mentioned twice in section 8 in connection with Beltane. It was one of two festivals dedicated to the cross, the other being the Exaltation of the Cross on 14 September. Both are referred to in Scots as the Feast of the Rood or Roodsmas; the Gaelic equivalent *Feill an Ròid*, however, refers exclusively to the September festival, 3 May being *treas latha na Bealltainne* ('the third day of Beltane') or even *Bealltainn* itself, as opposed to 1 May, *Latha Buidhe Bealltainne*, 'the Yellow (or Lucky) Day of Beltane'. At Backlass Hill (Backleshill) in the Caithness parish of Bower, the Roodmas Fair in Barlin (barley-sowing time) was held on the second Tuesday of May and the Roodmas Fair in Harvest on the last Tuesday of September. Other Rood Fairs were held on the last Tuesday of April at Rattray in Buchan, on the Tuesday after 3 May at Ellon in Buchan, and in September at Inverness, Kilmonivaig, and, most famously, Dumfries (Smith 1727; Marwick 1890: 20, 25, 42–43, 67, 72).

Banks (1937: 176) pointed out that 'the names of Scottish saints underwent strange disguises on the lips of pedlars and hucksters, who could use greater freedom with these on merry fair days than with those of wider fame'. This is undoubtedly true. Trewel Fair at Kennethmont is the Fair of St Rule (or Regulus), just as St Trinnian's or St Ringan's is St Ninian's, Tantan Fair at Laurencekirk (and at the Kirk of Betheny in the Garioch) is St Anthony's, and Tennant's or St Inan's Day at Beith in Ayrshire is the Day of St Finan – in Gaelic *Latha Fheill Fhìonain*, with silent *Fh*. Similarly, Paldy or Padie Fair at Auchinblae in Kincardineshire is the Fair of St Palladius, and Polander or Pollnar Fair at Inverurie is that of St Appolinaris (Smith 1727; Marwick 1890: 18, 53, 60, 67, 92).

By 'St Malachi day' at Milton of Belveny in Banffshire is meant St Moluag's day, as is clear from its date – 25 June. 'St Marthom's fair' at Ordiquhill in Banffshire is St Matthew's, again betrayed by the date – 20 September (Marwick 1890: 88, 94). Sumereve's Fair at Elgin and the Summer Eve Fair at Keith, despite being held on 5 September, had nothing to do with summer evenings: their name is that of St Ma-Ruibhe of Applecross (Cameron 1997: 95). A fair-name of similar construction is Sammaneuke's Day at Stevenston in Ayrshire, held on 30 October and therefore a possible Samhain survival; the saint in question is Monachus, Gaelic *manach* ('a monk'), anglicised as 'St Monk' (Forbes 1872: 412; Marwick 1890: 108).

In the 1880s an 80-year-old native of Kippen in Stirlingshire remembered 'Semvies Fair' being held there on the second Wednesday of October OS; it is clearly an abbreviation of St Mo Bhì, whose day was 12 October (Marwick 1890: 76; Watson 1926: 273). Little Dunning at Perth was latterly on the third Friday of October; a butter and cheese market and a hiring fair, its name is that of St Dionysius or Denis of Paris (9 October), assimilated to that of the burgh and parish of Dunning, seven miles away.[10]

Dunning itself had an annual eight-day fair at the Feast of St Fyndoc (13 October), which appears to have survived on the Monday before the first Tuesday of October, so it can clearly be seen why the Perth fair was called 'Little' Dunning. Fyndoc is here a hypocoristic form of Findsech ('Fair Lady'), who is given by the martyrologies at 13 October as 'a virgin from Sliabh Guaire' in Meath (Marwick 1890: 46, 97; Watson 1926: 286–87).

As stated in section 1, Grantown-on-Spey had a Figget (or Figgat) Fair on the first Friday of June OS, still existing in 1890 (Marwick 1890: 61). Figget may be identified with Fioghad or Fothad, a bishop of St Andrews who died AD 963 and whose day was 4 June (Forbes 1872: 350; Thomson 1908–09, bk 5: 3–4). *Clach Fhioghaid*, 'Figgat's Stone', may still be seen in the old churchyard of Inverallan, and the village also had a Figget's Well, 'Touper Uiget' or *Tobar Fhioghaid* (Thomson 1908–09, bk 2: 7).

> Originally (old Mr Grant, Balliefurth told me) the Fair was held near the Well, behind it; then near H.R. Station; then at Ballintomb; then Tornagarroch; then into Grantown (doubtless by Sir James). He removed the local Fairs into his new village, Abernethy Fair being the 'George Fair', after its Patron St George of the Dragon. Long ago 2 of the heads of Davochs were arguing as to the advisability of shifting the market site; the son of one was handling a heavy stone used at the market to 'try your strength' like the stones seen recently at Achernack gare; the other Davochman said, 'I'll consent to let the market go as far west as your son can carry that stone.' The lad carried it past Gaich to Ballintomb . . . According to Inkson MacConnachie 'Fichids' Fair' was held at Belivat (in Ardclach) down to about 1750 when it was transferred, it is believed, to Grantown, and there called Figgit's Fair. But Figat may have been patron saint also of Ardeclach. Belivat, Buaile Ichid, means the enclosure of Ichid. A well at Wester Belivat is known as Ichid's Well and a stone there used to be called Ichid's Chair . . . A man Figat Grant is named on a Strathspey Rent Roll, as at Gaich about 1770. Probably he had been born on the Market Day. (Thomson 1908–09, bk 2: 6)

Tarland in Aberdeenshire had a Breag Fair at Martinmas (around 11 November). By 1890 it was on 22 November, if a Tuesday; if not, it was on the Tuesday and Wednesday following (*NSA* 12: 843; Marwick 1890: 112). The *Aberdeen Almanack* of 1665 lists a 'Bryak Fair' at 16 November, but assigns it to no particular place (Forbes 1872: 291). The November date makes it clear that this is not St Brieuc, Brioc or Broc of April 29/30 and 1 May (patron of Rothesay), but it may well be Brice, Martin's successor as Bishop of Tours. *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints* gives this Brice at 13 November and adds:

> Perhaps his early association with St Martin partly accounts for the reverence afterwards paid to Brice's memory: his name appears in many early English church calendars, and it still figures in the calendar of the Book of Common Prayer, in a Latin form, Britius. (Attwater 1983: 70)

The same dedication occurs in Inchbrayock (now Rossie Island) in the mouth of the South Esk at Montrose (Forbes 1872: 291). Similarly, in 1571–72 Anstruther Easter in

Fife had a fair on 'St Caran's day before Christmas', 23 December (Marwick 1890: 16). Caran is identified by Forbes (1872: 297–98) as an east-coast saint whose churches are at Premnay and Fetteresso, and there is a St Carran's well at Drumlithie in Kincardineshire. Another saint from this area is Fotin, whose fair was held at Torrie in Kincardineshire on 2 June; the church at Kirkpottie, formerly Potyn, was presumably another of his dedications (Forbes 1872: 350–51; Marwick 1890: 114).

A charter of 1593 confirmed one of the two yearly fairs in Cromarty as St Norman's Market, beginning 8 March and lasting five days (Marwick 1890: 35). William Mackay Mackenzie, the Cromarty historian, alleged that there never was a St Norman, and that the name derives from 'the Norman's market' – it appears to have been held in the gorge of a deep wooded ravine beneath the walls of the old castle of Cromarty, and may therefore have been presided over at one time by William de Monte Alto (later Mowat), who by 1264 had become first Sheriff of Cromarty and keeper of the royal castle (Miller 1994: 240). However, as even Mackenzie is willing to admit, St Neiman, bishop of Dairinis in Wexford, appears in the Irish martyrologies at 8 March, and though the phonological argument is weak, that based on the feast-day is incontrovertible (Todd and Reeves 1864: 70–71; Stokes 1895: 50–51). 'St Norman' can only be Neiman, and we must now look carefully at Normandshaw or Ormondshaw near Cromarty, St Norrie's Well at Stuarton, Inverness-shire, and Rothienorman in Aberdeenshire (Mackenzie 1903–06: 109–10; Mackenzie 1919–22: 339–41, 343–44; Mackenzie 1922–24: 295).

The Tarse Fair at Comrie in July, still existing in 1890, probably preserved the name of St Serf (Servanus) rather than that of St Tears (Marwick 1890: 32). There was in any case, as Watson (1926: 332–34) makes clear, no St Tear; the name, that of a fair in the parish of Wick, refers to the Feast of the Holy Innocents (the children slain by Herod), 28 December, presumably in Gaelic *Feill nan Deur*, cf. *Cell na nDér*, 'cella lacrimarum', St Beccan's church of Cluain Aird in Co. Tipperary. One writer has suggested that Tear is St Theodore the Confessor (28 December), but this seems unlikely (Craven 1886: 272; cf. Butler 1954: 1635). Describing a visit to Caithness in 1762, Bishop Robert Forbes (1708–75) wrote of the Chapel of St Tear:

> The country people, to this very day, assemble here in [the] morning of the Feast of the Holy Innocents, and say their Prayers, bringing their Offerings along with them, some Bread, others Bread and Cheese, others Money, &c., and putting these into the Holes of the Walls. In the afternoon they get Music – a Piper or a Fiddler – and dance on the Green where the Chapel stands. The roof is off, but the walls are almost all entire. One of the late presbyterian preachers of Wick thought to have abolished this old practice; and for that end appointed a Diet of catechising in that corner of the Parish upon the day of the Holy Innocents, but not one attended him; all went, as usual, to St Tear's Chapel. (Craven 1886: 272; cf. Foden 1996: 239)

The market of St Trother(s)mas at Olrig in the same county appears on maps as Trothanmas and is remembered in oral tradition as Tustimas (cf. Waugh 1985: 228); as has been pointed out in *Tocher* 42 (1989: 426), the saint here is neither Norseman nor

Gael but a Pict, St Drostan of Deer in Buchan, whose feast-day is variously given as 11 July and 15 December (26–28 December OS), see for example Towill (1983: 75). Given that the dedication of the Chapel of St Tear was also attributed to Drostan, it would appear that the name of his principal monastic foundation had endowed him with a winter feast-day as well as a summer one (Foden 1996: 239). 'Columba gave Drostán that monastery,' says a note in the Book of Deer (Jackson 1972: 33), 'and blessed it, and left the curse that whoever should go against it should not be full of years or of success. Drostán's tears [*déra*] came as he was parting from Columba. Columba said, "Let Deer [*Dér*] be its name from this on."'

15. AIKEY FAIR

By 1800, thanks to the cattle trade, the market held in the first week of July on Aikey Brae near Old Deer had become the biggest in the north of Scotland.

> On the day of the fair fifty or sixty acres of Aikey Brae were covered with human beings, cattle, horses, and various kinds of merchandise. Aikey Fair day was regarded as the great summer holiday; and both old and young flocked to it. Indeed, it was the boast to have seen so many fairs . . . As many as 10,000 persons are said to have been sometimes present, all attired in their Sunday best . . . Most of the cattle sold in the fair were driven south . . . to be fattened on the rich pastures of England. Seventy years ago as many as 6000 beasts are said to have passed through Tarves in a continuous drove, a mile long, on their way south on the day after the fair. (Alexander 1877: 80–81)

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the notoriety of Aikey Fair had come to exceed its commercial importance. 'Its reputation was such,' says Cameron (1997: 94), 'that genteel folk spoke of it only in whispers and after the children had gone to bed and even then with a shake of the head that suggested wickedness beyond all understanding.' First mentioned in 1640, by 1661 it began on the first Tuesday of July and continued for the rest of the week (Alexander 1952: 4). The earlier Alexander (1877: 79–80) described how Aikey Brae slopes downward to the north, affording an extensive view, with the ruins of the Abbey of Deer nestling among the orchard gardens of Pitfour. Six miles to the north, he pointed out, is Mormond Hill, the highest in Buchan, where the figure of a white horse occupies an acre of ground on the south slope, the space within the outline of the animal being covered with white quartzose stones. Banks (1937: 178) was equally captivated by the antique atmosphere of the place.

> The district was recorded by the Romans as a seat of Pictish authority, and the remains found in peat-bogs near, those of red deer and wild bulls of enormous size, with battle axes and flint arrow-heads, coffins with clay urns, as well as sculptured stones, carry us back to times long before its fame as a centre of Christian teaching. Legends tell of its first stone church, of St Drostan, commemorated by Dunstan Fair in December, and of the abbey, keeper for many years of the Book of Deer, with marginalia and decoration of early Celtic character. This treasure of historical and pre-historical remains points to early settlement

where gatherings for trade and entertainment must have been widely known long before an Act of Parliament gave them licence in 1661.

The notes in the Book of Deer (now in Cambridge) date from the twelfth century and are now regarded as the oldest surviving texts in Scottish Gaelic. But who or what is Aikey?

Tradition, as relayed at some length by Alexander (1877: 79), has it that Aikey Brae and Fair are named for a pedlar known as Aul' Aikey who had the misfortune to drop his pack into the water while crossing the River Ugie on some stepping-stones, a mile west of the Abbey. The rest of the story is similar to that told of Kelton Hill in far-off Galloway, see section 11 above. Fishing it out, Aikey laid the contents to dry on the slope above the river, 300 yards downstream. He had prints and woollens, some in gaudy colours, and passers-by were so taken by them that he was soon sold out. He promised to show them something better still if they would meet him next year at the same time and place. Thus was a popular annual market established. A more concise version was recorded in 1972 from Lucy Stewart, Fetterangus, by Hamish Henderson and James Porter:

> There wis a packman, he wis calling on people door to door wi drapery – wi a pack, on his back. An he wis wantin a near cut, ye see, fae . . . the yin tae t'ither side o the water. He wis wantin a near cuttin, ye see. There was no bridges at that time, it wis stepping stones. So he wis steppin across, an he lost his fittin, an in he fell, pack an aa . . . He gaed up tae Aikey Brae, he thocht that wis the best place, 'cause it wis grow'd(?) wi fine broom bushes, there was never ony (?markers or nothing on the hill?) there. An he spread oot aa his claes, ye see, on the tap o this broom bushes an whin bushes – whitever he could get. An the folk aa wondered at the other side, ye see, whar aa this bonny fite things wis, aa on bushes. So that, them wantin to see what it wis, they aa hail't tae Aikey Fair. And the mannie sellt aa his pack. The folk startit tae buy the stuff, ye see. So he says, 'I ken whar I'll come anither year,' ye see. So, he cam back anither year, an, oh, he made an aafa trade . . . So, they did that for twa or three year, till there wis a great big market startit . . . 'At startit Aikey Fair, the packman. (*Tocher* 41, 1987–88: 313)

The story, or one like it, has also been told to account for the fair of St Ma-Ruibhe at Keith ('The Origins of Aikey Fair and Maggie Fair', *Tocher* 41, 1987–88: 313).

Not surprisingly, Aikey's name was assumed to refer to the 'aik'- or 'oak'-tree. The fair was referred to as *Mercatus Querceti* in 1732, its location as 'Oaky Brae' in 1793 and 'Yackie Brae' in 1859. 'The name is descriptive, although there are no oaks now on Aikie Brae' (Alexander 1952: 4). I would argue however that Auld Aikey cannot be ignored, and that he is St Féchín of Fore in Westmeath, who died in 665 or 668 and whose name means 'little raven' (from *fiach*, later *fitheach*). He appears, through the Latinisation 'Vigeanus', to have given his name to St Vigeans near Arbroath (Watson 1926: 321–22). Judging from the substantial concentration of symbol stones there, St Vigeans was, like Old Deer, a seat of Pictish authority, and it may be conjectured that Féchín was particularly venerated by the Picts, or later by the Gael of Pictland. The

hypocoristic form of his name in Cumbric territory was *Mo Fhécu* (or, when *Fh* became silent, *Mo Écu*). This occurs in the placename Lesmahagow in Lanarkshire, *Lios Mo Fhécu*, which may thus be translated 'My Aikey's Enclosure' (Watson 1926: 197). Further evidence is to hand in the Book of Deer, in which two separate legal documents are witnessed by a person or persons, *Mael Fhéchín*, whose name ('the Servant of St Féchín') arises from the cult of St Féchín. In one case it is spelt *Malæchín* and in the other *Malechí*, which may reflect the form 'Aikey' itself (Jackson 1972: 32, 35; Ó Maolalaigh 1998: 35).

The date of the fair offers another check, and here there is a difficulty. Aikey Fair is in July, but Féchín's day is 20 January, and indeed the best proof of all that St Vigeans near Arbroath is named after Féchín is that St Vigeans Fair was held there on 20 January. I would like to offer alternative solutions to this problem. Firstly, it may be that Féchín was commemorated in July as well as in January. Some evidence for this is forthcoming from Kirkcudbrightshire, where Auchencairn, five or six miles from Kelton Hill, boasted a 'Fykes Fair'.

> I wonder if there are in this district any old residents who have personal recollections of a rural gathering which was held every year at the village of Auchencairn, in the parish of Rerwick, and known as Fykes Fair. At these trysts our sires met and talked over the concerns of horn, corn, wool, and yarn, and transacted their business; pedlars gathered from many a shire and exposed their most tempting wares, and lads and lassies did wonders in courtship. Fykes Fair was one of the last of the old rural trysts. It was generally held in the latter part of July, and many visitors from the coast used to attend it. The principal sports consisted of pony, 'cuddy,' and foot races. The most popular event was a footrace between a party of old dames for a packet of tea. The old ladies 'kilted' their garments for the contest, and strained towards the winning post amid the cheering of their friends. The out-of-door sports being concluded, the houses of the village – public and private – were filled by the company, who enjoyed a regular tea and toddy drinking; the younger people held a dance. The happy recollections excited by Fykes Fair supplied the neighbouring rural population with matter for gossip until the advent of the same occasion in the succeeding year. (Rusticus 1913)

Banks (1937: 179) says that Fykes Fair 'began at 10 o'clock at night and continued through the night and part of the next day'; if true, this would make it another sleepy market, a sign of antiquity. The word fyke means 'fuss, bustle, commotion, excitement, pother' (*SND*), which might be considered an appropriate description for such a gathering, but, if so, it would be unique in Scotland as a fair-name; as I think I have shown by now, derivation from a saint's name is statistically the most likely option, and would also account for the use of the possessive. Fyke, then, may have been our saint.

My alternative solution is this. Aikey Fair in July makes a pair at Old Deer with St Drostan's in December. By 1890 Aikey Fair was being held on the Wednesday after 19 July, St Drostan's on the Wednesday after 19 December. Even at that late date, both were still large horse markets (Marwick 1890: 39). As we have seen, St Drostan's feast-day appears to have been 11 July, but the Feast of the Innocents effectively gave him a

second one in December. Both days would have been of great importance to the monks at Deer, the one commemorating their foundation, the other the founder's death. Drostan's fair ('Dustan fair') was also held at Aberlour in Banffshire on 11 December, and at Rothiemay in the same county on 14 December; his fair in Caithness, St Trothersmas at Olrig, took place latterly on the fourth Tuesday of November, which is a little early, but provides further confirmation that his winter commemoration gained precedence over his summer one (Marwick 1890: 14, 94, 102). The next step – a political act, perhaps – was to give the summer festival completely to Féchín the Gael, reserving the winter one to Drostan the Pict. Ultimately, however, it may be that the most convincing evidence of the identity of Auld Aikey with St Féchín lies in the thought-provoking similarity of Aikey's legend to this incident in the Life of St Féchín (Stokes 1891: 342–43). It refers to the people of 'Imaid' in Conamara.

> At another time, when Féchín went at the angel's command to preach to the folk of Imaid, (he and his monks) lost their way, and Féchín got from them neither food nor drink, because of their envy and jealousy towards him. And they used to throw those who were submissive to the monks, and their books and their garments, into the neighbouring sea (*7 rocurdis lucht umoloide na manach 7 a leabair 7 a n-edaigi isin muir comfhoguis*). And the divine power would bring them to land, every whit whole, without suffering loss of garment or book or human being (*7 dobered in cumachta dïadha docum tire gu hoghslan, gin dith etaigh ina leabuir ina duine forro*).

16. THE *FÉILL ÉITEACHAIN*

This fair was held annually in December at Ardgay in the parish of Kincardine. Formerly in Easter Ross, Ardgay has now been brought into Sutherland, to which it has been linked by the Bonar Bridge since 1812. *Feill Eiteachain* is the spelling preferred by Professor Watson, who came from Boath a few miles south over the Struie. It was still being held in 1924 (Watson 1924: 128), but does not appear to have survived the Second World War. An anonymous parishioner wrote in 1840:

> There is one public fair held in this parish, which is called 'Feille-Edeichan;' or the market of the quartz-stone. It takes place in the last week of November, and sometimes on the first week of December; and continues for three days. There is commonly a fine show of Highland cattle; and quantities of cheese and butter, as well as merchandise, are to be had at it. (*NSA* 14, pt 2: 432)

The church of Kincardine is a mile south of Ardgay along the shore of the Dornoch Firth, at the foot of a river called the *Allt Éiteachain*, originally noted by the Ordnance Survey as *Allt na h-Éiteig*. That is where the name *Éiteachan* belongs; it was only after the building of the Bonar Bridge that Ardgay, being closer to the bridge-end, began to increase its population at the expense of the ancient focal point of the parish. A glimpse of the situation before the bridge was built was offered by the Rev. Andrew Gallie, who

wrote in 1790: 'This parish has but one fair. It holds in the last week of November. There is commonly a fine shew of Highland cows, fattened on the best heath, and whose beef is allowed to be of the first flavour and taste' (*OSA* 17: 517).

It will have been noted that the *NSA* writer explained the *Féill Éiteachain* as 'the market of the quartz-stone'. Professor Watson gave the Gaelic name of the stone without endorsing it as equivalent to the name of the fair.

> The old-established Feill Eiteachan, the winter market still held at Ardgay, is said to owe its name to a certain quartz stone (clach éiteag), the old custom being that the market was held wherever this stone happened to be at the time. The stone was sometimes shifted west by the Assynt men, and east by the men of Ross, but finally it was built into the wall of the present Balnagown Arms Hotel at Ardgay, and so the market has ever since been held there. I give the story for what it is worth. (Watson 1904: 3)

The story of the stone's Assynt connection is a persistent one. Mary Beith, Melness, who knows it as the 'Bargain Stone' – bargains being sealed upon it – heard that it came from Assynt in the first place (personal communication, 1985). Another version is as follows.

> Apart from the regular, all-the-year-round traffic, crowds would gather in from all sides to the Feill Eiteachan, the winter market which was held at Kincardine for a year or two and then at Ardgay, after the famous stone, now placed in a prominent position in the village, was brought from the Sutherland side towards the end of the 18th century. The market, now a thing of the past, used to be held wherever the stone might be. (Maclennan 1985: 43)

It may be that, as a bargain stone, the *clach éiteag* was carried wherever it was required to legitimise a fair. It is worthy of note that the timing of the principal market in Assynt was linked to that of the *Féill Éiteachain* – Marwick (1890: 64) was informed that the only recognised fair at Inchnadamph was held 'on the fourth Thursday of November before the Kincardine market'.

So far, then, we have a river, a fair and a stone all bearing the same name, more or less – *Éiteag* for the river and the stone, *Eiteachan* for the river and the fair. Is there a connection between the name of the stone and the name of the fair? Colin MacDonald (1882–1957), a native of Strathpeffer, clearly thought that they were distinct. By implication, he derives *Éiteachan* from *aodach, éadach*, 'clothing'.

> *Feill Èideachan* was originally the special market at which the women bought ribbons and laces and such finer articles of apparel as they could not weave at home, and at which the men got themselves properly equipped with the 'harness of war' – body armour, shirts of mail, etc. – for the purveying of which the smiths and armourers were in attendance and did a roaring trade. But *Feill Èideachan* had lost all its original significance long before my time. (MacDonald 1944: 71–72)

By this token the name would mean something like 'the Accessories Market'. Watson (1904: 3) also thought that stone and fair were distinct. He took the river name from

éiteach ('root of burnt heather') and suggested that the name of the fair was based upon that, adding: 'But éiteachan cannot be based on éiteag, which is a loan word from English *hectic* (Macbain).' The reference is to Macbain (1896: 140), where *éiteag* is given as a 'white pebble, precious stone; from Eng. *hectic*, lapis *hecticus*, the white hectic stone, used as a remedy against dysentery and diarrhœa'. Macbain refers in turn to Martin's description of Skye (1981: 134).

> The *Lapis Hecticus*, or white Hectick Stone, abounds here both in the Land and Water: the Natives use this Stone as a Remedy against the *Dysenteria* and *Diarrhea*; they make them red-hot in the fire, and then quench them in Milk, and some in Water, which they drink with good success. They use this Stone after the same manner for Consumptions, and they likewise quench these stones in Water, with which they bathe their Feet and Hands.

I have traced the fair back to what appears to have been its origin at the parish church of Kincardine. To whom was this church dedicated? Was it a saint bearing some name like Éiteag or Éiteachan? Let us look at the date of the fair to see what saint is associated with that particular time of year. Marwick (1890: 74) tells us clearly that it was held on the third Tuesday after 1 November OS (i.e. the third Tuesday after 13 November in today's calendar, which is what pushed it latterly into December). This provides us with a possible answer: 25 November (6 or 7 December OS) was the feast-day of St Catherine of Alexandria, a fourth-century virgin martyr whose persecutors tried to break her on a revolving spiked wheel, hence the name of the firework; finally she was decapitated, her veins spouting milk instead of blood. There is some evidence that her cult focused on the name 'Carden'. Kincardine in the Mearns, like our Ross-shire Kincardine, bore a Gaelic name which was in part ultimately Pictish – *ceann* ('end') and *càrdainn* ('wood', 'thicket'), from a Pictish word resembling Early Welsh *carden* (/ð/) – but clearly this was unknown to its burgh council in 1540 when they proclaimed annual fairs dedicated to St Catherine of Siena (canonised 1461) on 30 April and to St Catherine the Virgin on 20 November (Marwick 1890: 73–74). Again, there is evidence of a cult of St Catherine on the Sutherland coast just north of our Kincardine – by 1630 both Golspie and Loth had St Carden's fairs (Gordon 1813: 7; Marwick 1890: 61, 85). All in all it seems highly likely that a place near Golspie which bore the name Kincardine and boasted a fair in the last week of November must have had a church dedicated to St Catherine.

Another parish that boasted fairs to both St Catherines was Fortingall in Perthshire, where a modest *Feill Ceit an Fhrois* ('St Catherine's Seed Fair') was held – as we saw in section 10 – on 28 April, and a much more substantial *Feill Ceit nan Gobhar* ('St Catherine's Goat Fair'), to which droves of goats were brought from Lochaber and the Braes of Rannoch, was held on 6 and 7 December (Stewart 1928: 187–88).

Why then was the Kincardine fair called not *Feill Ceit* but *Feill Éiteachain*? It must have to do with the stone. I would begin by rejecting Watson's 'root of burnt heather' and MacDonald's implied 'Accessories Market'. I would suggest that the stone had

healing powers very like Martin Martin's *lapis hecticus*. That would indicate a very good reason why the men of Assynt, Sutherland and Ross would want to claim it, and why people would flock to it wherever it was set up. By this argument, *éiteag* and *éiteachan* may be seen to derive equally from the word 'hectic' and from the name of some Celtic saint whose cult preceded that of St Catherine at Kincardine; it would have been the saint's power that gave the charm its efficacy, and I suspect that it was used by being dipped in the water of *Allt Éiteachain* or *Allt na h-Éiteig* which flows by the church, the water being thus made curative, and the river named after the saint or the stone. In fact, Watson himself provides a convincing explanation of the name in his discussion of the loch- and river-name Etive in Argyll.

> It represents M.Ir. *Loch Éitchi* (for *Éitche*), and *Éitche* is gen. sing. of *Éitig*, a feminine proper name (declined like O.Ir. *sétig*, gen. *seitche*, a mate, a wife), meaning 'foul one', 'horrid one'. The lady who had this ugly name was really the goddess of the loch and river, and if we ask why she was so called, we have only to know the stormy and dangerous nature of the loch, and in particular to look at the formidable sea-cataract at its entrance, known as *a' Chonghail*, the Connel. She is still well known as *Éiteag*, a diminutive form, 'the little horrid one'. In literature, *éitig(h)* is coupled with *salach*, foul, of which it is nearly a synonym, and it is not by accident that Eiteag's haunt is traditionally placed in *Gleann Salach*, Foul Glen, beyond Ardchattan . . . A man of my acquaintance declared that he knew a man who had met her in Glen Salach – after a funeral. (Watson 1926: 46, 426)

I would therefore argue that the name of our fair can be linked to a group of river- and loch-spirits which include Cuachag, Môrag, Seileag, Airceag, Niseag, Éireag and Speitheag as well as Éiteag (see MacilleDhuibh 1999a, 1999b, 1999c).

17. PITFALLS: THE VANITY OF POST-REFORMATION LANDLORDS

I have discussed a series of fair-names which represent the names of saints in extraordinary disguises, culminating in one which I believe to represent the name of a primal water-spirit. I would now like to move still deeper into the territory of historical pitfalls, beginning with an apparent conflation of two very different saints, and moving on to fairs which are older than their names or descriptions would suggest, then to some which are in fact younger than their names would suggest.

The saint venerated at Inveraray and Barra on 16 May was Brendan the Navigator. Charters of 1474 and 1648 to the Burgh of Inveraray refer to a fair held on St Brendan's Day in May, yet an Act of Parliament of 1641 refers to the same fair as St Andrew's. Marwick (1890: 65) took this to be an error, but I am not so sure. A pre-Reformation chapel in Vatersay, south of Barra, is on record as *Cill Bhrianainn* (St Brendan's), yet the late Nan Mackinnon, *Nan Eachainn Fhionnlaigh*, a very reliable informant, gave the name to the School of Scottish Studies as *Cill Anndrais* (St Andrew's).[11] Is it possible that traditions of the two saints had become fused in the same way as those of Manannan and John the Baptist?

On 4 October 1780 the town council of Lauder in Berwickshire abolished 'Maitland Fair'. At first this looks straightforward. The Maitland family were the local magnates, Earls and Dukes of Lauderdale, kings of the valley. The Maitland of the 1660s and 1670s was Charles II's Secretary of State for Scotland, as powerful as the spring tide and as corrupt as a barrel of apples. Kilbirnie had its Crawford's Day; why should not Lauder have its Maitland's Day? Yet Maitland Fair is a genuine religious festival. In 1641 Parliament had granted Lauder a fair for eight days to commence on 'St Magdalen's Day', 22 July. This is the day of St Mary Magdalen, often called simply the Magdalen, to whom the risen Christ appeared. The Lauder fair may well have been held then since the Middle Ages, but it would appear that with the rise of the Maitlands and of Presbyterianism, Magdalen Day had turned by a process of evolution into Maitland Day (Marwick 1890: 80).

In 1890 the isle of Coll had two annual markets, held on the Tuesday before the Mull fairs in the middle of May and October (Marwick 1890: 32). Earlier in the century, fairs were being held in both Coll and Tiree in May, August and October 'solely for the sale of black-cattle' (*NSA* 7, pt 2: 218). Information of this kind (no early references; no fair-name; no precise date; purpose of fair specified) usually seems to indicate something recent. But Marwick rivets us with the words 'held here from time immemorial', and we remember the deep roots of *an Fhaidhir Mhuileach*, the great Mull Fair at Druim Taigh Àrais – the mossy ridge above Aros Castle in that island – described by Ramsay of Ochtertyre (Allardyce 1888: 405–06). Once again, then, we have a fair that is older than it looks.

A St Monance Fair was held every year at Dunblane on 1 March. This was the feast-day of St Monan, who had given his name to St Monance in Fife, where his fair was held on 1 March – an event of some importance which, according to a charter of 1596, continued for eight days. St Monan was identified by Watson (1926: 294–95, 328–29) with Móenu, whose name in the genitive case was Móenenn, later Maoineann, and who was a bishop and abbot of Clonfert in Ireland and died AD 572. Unfortunately, St Monance Fair at Dunblane, for all its ancient credentials, turns out to have been the invention of an enterprising landlord. An Act of Parliament of 1669 tells of 'a new fair granted to Lieut.-General William Drummond and his heirs, to be held on 1st March yearly, and called St Monance fair' (Marwick 1890: 43). Drummond clearly wanted a fair on his land on 1 March for economic reasons – it is, or was, a profitable time of year for markets, the start of spring labour. King Charles was on the throne, however, and the old saints were still in fashion. So St Monance Fair at Dunblane is not evidence for a cult of St Monan in that particular place. It is a new fair with an old name.

The beginnings of landlordly vanity – and humour – in the matter of fairs can be traced to 1609, when a charter was granted by George Archbishop of St Andrews to George Lauder of Ban, granting a yearly eight-day fair at Leven in Fife to be held on 23 April, which is of course St George's Day (Marwick 1890: 82). As long as Episcopalianism remained strong the old names retained their power, and it is worth noting that when

a fair at Selkirk was moved in 1641 from 8 December to 4 July, 'chiefly on account of the swelling of the rivers in December preventing the transport of goods', the new date was given its correct traditional name, St Martin of Bullion's Fair (Marwick 1890: 106). It was not until the corrupt era of Lauderdale – a Presbyterian who served an Episcopalian king – that a touch of blasphemy crept in. In 1670 Sir George Monro got a charter authorising him to hold two yearly fairs at Culrain in Ross-shire, one to begin on 20 June to be called Monro's Fair, the other to begin on 24 September to be called St George's Fair (Marwick 1890: 36). This was the golden era of fair-making. Smout (1972: 109) points out that while only one grant of a market or fair outside a burgh had been made in 1517–70, and only ten 1571–1660, no fewer than 246 such grants were made between 1660 and 1707. The Maggie Fair at Garmouth is said to have been named after Lady Margaret Kerr, wife of the Laird of Innes, in the 1660s.[11] In 1681 James and David Bethoune of Balfour got an Act of Parliament allowing them to have two free annual fairs at Kennoway in Fife, each for two days – on 2 March, called St David's Fair, and on 24 September, called St Mary's Fair (Marwick 1890: 70). The first is only a day off St David of Wales, but the second is entirely spurious, being a full sixteen days adrift of the Nativity of the B.V.M., and may be another instance of a man naming a fair after his wife.

By the 1690s Lauderdale was gone, but so was King Charles. Presbyterianism was firmly entrenched as the state religion, and saints could be mocked with impunity. In 1693 Sir Alexander Mackenzie got an Act of Parliament authorising him to change a free fair belonging to him at Contin in his barony of Coul from the first to the third Wednesday of October and to call it Janet Fair. At the same time he got permission to change another free fair from the first to the third Wednesday of January and call it St John's Fair, so we begin to suspect that Janet and John were relatives of his own. He may have had in mind St John the Almsgiver, 23 January, the patron of the 'Knights of Malta', but that is very doubtful, and indeed the name was to sink without trace – in 1837 when the town council of Dingwall, seven miles east, resolved that these fairs be held thenceforth in the burgh, they referred to St John's merely as the New Year Market. Janet Fair, or the *Feill Seònaid* as it was by then generally known, was fixed at the first Wednesday of June, a huge leap through the calendar which was unthinkable for a saint's day. By 1837 there were also a Colin's Fair and a Martha's Fair, the latter held on the first Wednesday of November (Marwick 1890: 32–33, 40; Macrae 1974: 161–62, 253).

Macrae confirms (1974: 161) that Janet's and Colin's Fairs both embodied Coul family names, and the list of Sir Alexander's children is indeed highly suggestive. By his first wife (Jean, daughter of Sir Robert Gordon of Gordonstown) he had John, his heir, 3rd Mackenzie of Coul; Colin, who succeeded John as 4th Mackenzie of Coul; an unnamed daughter who married Mackintosh of Cullachy; and Janet, who married Alexander Mackenzie of Davochmaluag in 1695 (Mackenzie 1879: 449). It is thus highly likely that the fair in Dingwall on the first Wednesday of November supplies us with the missing name of the daughter who married Mackintosh of Cullachy – Martha.

Colin's Fair, the *Féill Chailein*, presents us with a tangle of sacred and secular

nomenclature which is difficult to resolve. When the town council transferred it to Dingwall in 1837 they fixed its date on the first Tuesday of July (Macrae 1974: 161–62, 253). Subsequent accounts refer to it variously as *an Fheill Chailein* and *an Fheill Cholum*, placing it at the first Tuesday of July, the last Tuesday but one of July, or the second Tuesday of August (Marwick 1890: 40; Watson 1926: 279). With this we may compare a charter of 1684 in favour of George, Duke of Gordon, which authorised a free yearly fair at Gordon's Burgh, formerly the Burgh of Barony of Inverlochy, for three days, on 9 July, called St Colin's or Colm's fair (Marwick 1890: 61). The apparent free variation between Colin and Colm, Gaelic *Cailean* and *Calum*, need not surprise us – on the analogy of *Moirean*, *Maol Moire*, *Gille Moire* (names derived from *Moire*, the Virgin Mary), *Peidirean*, *Maol Pheadair*, *Gille Pheadair* (names derived from *Peadar*, St Peter), etc., *Cailean* would certainly have been seen as related to *Maol Caluim* and *Gille Caluim*; Highland families which used Colin (e.g. MacKenzies, Campbells) tended not to use Malcolm, and *vice versa*. What *is* puzzling is the firm adherence, both at Contin and at Inverlochy, to a fair-day one full month later than the very well-known feast-day of Columba, 9 June. I would reject Watson's tentative suggestion (1926: 279) that the dedication is an ancient one to Mo-Cholmóg, 19 July. Pending further research, I can only guess that Sir Alexander initiated the trend in 1681 by establishing a fair at Contin on the first Tuesday of July in honour of his second son Colin;[11] that it was referred to indifferently in Gaelic from the beginning as the *Feill Chailein* or the *Feill Chaluim*; that it was economically successful; that its name was misunderstood by many outside Ross-shire as being in honour of St Columba; and that the Duke of Gordon sought to emulate its success in his proposed new burgh in Lochaber by fixing his own new fair there at the same time of year but with the kind of overt links to the saint that befitted both the more westerly location and his own Episcopalian beliefs. His charter of 1684 also authorised for 'Gordon's Burgh' a free yearly fair for three days on 2 September to be called St Giles' fair; St Giles' day is indeed 1 September (Marwick 1890: 61); here, then, were two loyal Episcopalian dedications in an Episcopalian era, and if my hypothesis is correct, the fixing of St Colin's or Colm's fair at 9 July rather than 9 June is the Duke's acknowledgement of Sir Alexander Mackenzie's pioneering work in establishing new Highland markets.

It must be admitted, however, that other fairs seemingly dedicated to St Columba are on record for dates which defy explanation. An Act of Parliament of 1670 confirmed two fairs 'called St Colmes days, in use to be kept' at Drymen in Stirlingshire on 9 June and 23 August (Marwick 1890: 41); stranger still, an Act of 1681 authorised Archibald Earl of Argyll to hold two free fairs, each for three days, to be held at the clachan of Torsukbeg in the parish of Torosay in Mull – one on 5 March to be called St Columb's fair, and one on 15 July to be called St Ann's fair (Marwick 1890: 114). Given the state of affairs in Mull at that time it may well be that the Act was never put into effect, nor does Earl Archibald's choice of dates and patrons seem likely to have endeared him to his newly-purchased MacLean subjects, for they appear to me to reflect nothing more

than his vanity. There is no St Columb at 5 March, no St Ann at 15 July; St Ann, mother of the B.V.M., is at 26 July (Paul 1918: 165). My guess is that these were simply his relatives, Columb being a 'translation' of the characteristic Campbell name Colin into the form used by the MacLeans. If a concession, it was a clumsy one. Of one thing I feel certain, however: Dornoch's 'Callons fair in January' reported to Marwick (1890: 40) will not be a *Feill Chailein* but a *Feill Challainn* or New Year's Fair, literally a 'Fair of the Kalends', and this leaves open a possibility that 'Sanct Callen his fayre', held in nearby Rogart at an unknown time of year (Gordon 1813: 7), was also a *Feill Challainn*, for Calum Cille was not well remembered north of Inverness.[14]

On 15 June 1693, Parliament authorised Sir Ludovick Grant to hold a free fair to be called Louis Fair after himself, to be held at the church of Kilmore in Urquhart on the last Tuesday of August in each year, and another, to be called Lady Fair in honour of his wife, to be held yearly in November at the same place (Mackay 1914: 225–26; MacDonald 1925–27: 135). Twelve years earlier, in 1681, an Act of Parliament had granted the Duke of Atholl authority for a 'Lady Fair' on 15 February at Moulin (Marwick 1890: 90). It is hard to know quite what to make of this – it appears to be an alternative name for *Feill Mo-Chalmaig*, St Colm's or Colman's market, referred to in section 5 above; what is more, Smith (1727) refers under February to 'Valentines Day being still the 14. at Moulen in Athole', adding: 'Linlithgow and Forfar, 15 Day, holding eight Days'. Paul (1918: 168) assigned it to Candlemas, but Candlemas was never known as Lady Day, and in any case it is thirteen days adrift from Candlemas at a time long before the Calendar Act (1751) made such confusion commonplace. I can only pull these strands together by suggesting that 'Lady Fair' is Atholl's parliamentary name for the *Feill Mo-Chalmaig*, devised as a St Valentine's Day gift to his wife on the same principle as Grant's later 'Lady Fair' of 1693.

Similarly, Nigg in Easter Ross had a Hugh's Fair in November (*NSA* 14, pt 2: 37; cf. Marwick 1890: 77). It was dying away fast in 1836. Probably Hugh was the name of one of the Ross or Munro heritors of the parish; it is unlikely to represent St Adomnán, whose feast-day, 'Hughie's Festival' or *An Fheill Eònain*, was 23 September (MacDonald 1925–27: 127).

Some Lowland landlords were more brazen still. In 1695 Thomas Forbes of Waterton was authorised to have four free fairs at Ellon, each for three days: on the first Tuesday of June, to be called St John's Fair; on the first Tuesday of July, to be called St Jean's Fair; on the first Tuesday of November, to be called St Thomas' Fair; and on the first Tuesday of December, to be called St Elizabeth's Fair (Marwick 1890: 50). His neighbour William Gordon showed a little more taste. He got permission in the same year to have four free fairs at Huntly, each for three days: on the last Tuesday of February, to be called Huntly Fair; on the second Tuesday of May, to be called May Fair; on the second Tuesday of September, to be called Charles Fair; and on the second Tuesday of October, to be called the Marquis Fair. The Thursday of the Marquis's Fair came to be called Play Feersday, because its main feature was amusement (Marwick 1890: 64).

I am uncertain about the motives of the Laird of Swinton in Berwickshire, who in 1693 obtained free fairs on the second Tuesday after Trinity Monday, to be called Allan's fair, and on 12 October, to be called St Francis' fair. The feast-day of St Francis of Assisi (canonised 1228) is 4 October, that of St Francis Borgia (canonised 1671) 10 October. I know of no saint called Allan, however, except perhaps the unidentified patron of a fair at Clyne in Sutherland 'called Sanct Aloyne his fayre' (Gordon 1813: 7), and this leads me to suspect that Allan, and perhaps also Francis, were members of the Laird's family. The last such in-the-family canonisations appear to have taken place in 1705 in Aberdeenshire, when Sir Samuel Forbes of Foveran got an Act of Parliament allowing him to have two yearly fairs at Swanfoord – on 1 July, to be called St Margaret's Fair, and on the first Thursday of November, to be called William's Fair. There were saints of this name, but not at the dates given (Marwick 1890: 111).

After all this it is not difficult to see through 'St Jonah'. In 1669 Parliament authorised Adam Urquhart of Meldrum to hold a three-day fair at Old Meldrum in Aberdeenshire on the third Tuesday of May to be called St Jonah's Fair, and a subsequent charter of 1671 authorised a three-day fair there on the last Tuesday of May to be called St Jonas Fair (Marwick 1890: 87). The only St Jonah known to me is a Persian martyr Jonah or Jonas whose day is 29 March (Attwater 1983: 200). It is much more likely that Adam was thinking of someone like his Uncle Jonah.

Such naming practices, which may seem bizarre if not blasphemous to the Roman Catholic or the Episcopalian, must be understood in their Presbyterian context. Fairs were secular institutions which nevertheless required a semi-religious prop – a mercat cross, a religious-sounding name – to give them legitimacy. In due course new churches also required names, and this gave rise to a related set of onomastic practices which continue today. I know of no study of modern church dedications, so one example will suffice. My old parish church in Joppa (Edinburgh), St Philip's, received its name at a meeting of the Kirk Session in 1900. I have no doubt that part of the elders' intention was to honour the Apostle Philip, but their stated purpose was 'to honour the Rev. Alexander Philip, during whose ministry the congregation was built up, and whose name and services were remembered with affection' (Mekie 1999: 2).

18. SUNDAY MARKETS

The last fair-name that falls to be discussed is the *Féill-Dòmhnaich*. My attention was first drawn to it by its appearance in a list of calendar terms recalled by Angus Campbell from Ness in Lewis (1903–82): *Bha na faoiltich gheamhraidh is earraich, Féill-Mhàrtainn, Féill-Phàdruig, Féill-Bhrighde, agus Féill-Dòmhnaich.* ('There were the winter and spring wolftimes, Martinmas, St Patrick's, St Brigid's, and *Féill-Dòmhnaich*.') Campbell's editor, John Murray, pointed out in a note (I translate): 'The author says that this is not one particular festival, but festivals that were kept on a Sunday, like Easter Sunday or Whit Sunday' (Caimbeul 1973: 46, 362). Literally translated, *Féill-Dòmhnaich* means 'the

Lord's Festival' or 'the Lord's Market'; it is in fact simply a reference to the ubiquitous Scottish 'Sunday Market' (cf. *Di-Dòmhnaich*, the Lord's Day). The story of the Sunday market is one of tension between religious and civil authorities, relating to matters such as the desecration of churchyards, the intrusion of secular concerns – commercial announcements, for example – into religious observances, and impious behaviour in church, such as drunkenness. Marwick (1890) cites countless instances of Sunday markets being switched to other days, the earliest being at Glasgow in 1397.

I have already mentioned one or two fairs which were noted for being held at night, pointing out that this may be a sign of antiquity. People do not meet in the dark for purposes of trade, after all, but if the aim is to hold a fire festival, to carry out a rite of sacrifice, to mark a boundary of time, or to greet the arrival of some particular dawn, the hours of darkness are entirely appropriate. One such gathering was held at night, however, for a very different reason. The weekly market on Saturdays at Kirkcaldy in Fife began between 3 and 4 a.m. and was generally over by 6 a.m. The custom appears to have been introduced, as the Rev. Thomas Fleming pointed out in 1795, to evade the law which prohibited Saturday and Monday markets. 'And the convenience of attending the market in the morning, and returning home in time for the ordinary labour of the day, has induced the country people to continue the custom, notwithstanding that frequent attempts have been made to alter it' (*OSA* 10: 559; cf. Marwick 1890: 76).

That is just one of the strange twists in the story. Markets have always arisen where people have congregated on a regular basis, and in historic terms the most basic market of all was the one that took place at the door of the church every Sunday once the service was over. But there were bound to be conflicts of interests. For parishioners from remote districts it was the only chance of the week to buy essential supplies. For traders it was therefore an opportunity too good to miss. But for the church it might mean sacrilege and desecration. A few generations ago tobacco was sold in Uig (Lewis) after the sermon, and before the eras of travelling vans and of shops, the *ceannaichean siubhail* or pedlars clustered round the church door on Sundays like bees to a honey pot (MacThòmais 1938: 103). Back a little further, in the seventeenth century, the Baron Court records of Breadalbane tell us how Sunday markets were regulated. Every Sabbath the tenants of Campbell of Glenorchy in Kenmore parish had to come to church with their 'bowis and baggis, or ellis with swordis and targis under paine of XX. lbs. for disobedience'. It may be assumed that the 'baggis' should contain a good clutch of arrows to practise with. The quality of ale was controlled by 'cunstaris' (*cunnstairean*?) or inspectors who visited the ale-houses every Sunday. To ensure that the ale was fit for use on Sunday it must be brewed on Thursday. No ale could be sold before preaching on Sundays. And whisky was completely banned (Gillies 1938: 254–55).

Governments swayed this way and that. In the Middle Ages, Sunday markets were encouraged (or at least legislated for) by Acts of Parliament. For example, when Robert I erected Seton in East Lothian into a free burgh he gave it liberty to have a market on the Sabbath Day. And in 1542 Crawford in Lanarkshire was made a free burgh of barony

with a right to a weekly market on Sunday. One of the latest grants of a Sunday market was to Prestonpans in 1552, when Queen Mary granted the town as a burgh of barony to the abbot and convent of Holyrood; in 1617 a charter of James VI confirmed the town's status but changed its market day to Saturday (Marwick 1890: 34, 99, 106).

When things got out of hand, however, or when spiritual interests predominated over commercial ones, governments went the other way. In 1397 Robert III directed his chancellor to issue a charter empowering the burgesses and community of Glasgow to keep their market day on Monday instead of Sunday (Marwick 1890: 59). It was perhaps the earliest of a number of statutes in which pre-Reformation governments can be found trying to prohibit the holding of markets or fairs on Holy Days because of the ungodliness they created. They tried, but with only partial success, for what people do on Sunday cannot ultimately be controlled by legislation – as is demonstrated, I feel, by these stanzas composed by a Skye poet remembered as Mac an Lighiche, presumably a Beaton (MacDonald and MacDonald 1911: lviii, 346).

Moch 's mi 'g èirigh air bheag èislein
Madainn Chèitein Dhòmhnaich,
Bha eòin an t-sléibhe gairm gu h-eutrom
'S grian nan speur cur ròs dheth;
'N tùs moch mhadainn 's mi 'm èideadh
Ghabh mi sìos gu sràid na féille –
Choinnich na càirdean r'a chèile
'S dh'fhalbh mi fhèin 'nan còmhdhail.

Dh'fhalbh mi fhèin agus fear no dhà dhiubh
Ghabhail sràide còmhla:
Smaointich sinn, 's an latha fuar,
Ruaig thoirt don taigh òsta;
Chunnaig mi fear gàireach ruadh
A' tighinn a-nall le làn na cuaich –
Bha glacadh làmh againn mun cuairt
Le gloine chruaidh ga pògadh . . .

As I rose early despite some weariness
On a Sunday morning in May,
The birds of the hill were calling cheerily
And the sun of the skies glowed red;
In dawn's first light once I was dressed
I walked down to the market stance –
Friends and kinsfolk met each other
And I went along to join them.

I went off with one or two of them
To take a walk together:
We decided, the day being cold,
To drop in at the tavern;
I saw a laughing red-haired man
Come over with brimming cupful –
Joining hands around the circle
We kissed the sturdy glass . . .

The balance was tilted against commercial interests by the Reformation. The General Assembly of the earliest Reformed church, *c.* 1560–75, began by expressing disapproval of the holding of markets on the Sabbath. This, as session records show, was merely part of a wider campaign to avoid distractions in time of preaching (Smout 1972: 77). So, for example, an Act of the Privy Council of 1574 enjoined the magistrates of Aberdeen to prohibit the keeping of Sabbath markets, and from this point on, successive burgh charters of Aberdeen specified the power of holding a weekly market on Saturdays (Marwick 1890: 13).

Sabbatarianism of a more Mosaic kind gained ground in the time of Andrew Melville. In 1579 the Scots parliament forbade all forms of working by hand, bodily recreation

and drinking on Sundays, and the General Assembly added condemnation of Sunday dancing and travel. There commenced a spate of legislation in which Parliament struggled to enforce its hardline views on the merchant burgesses who controlled the country's markets. So a charter of James VI, 1587–88, changed the weekly market at Tain from Sunday to Saturday (Marwick 1890: 111). Reading between the lines of such legislation, one can detect a long-standing tendency for markets to be held on Sundays in defiance of the law. For example, a charter of 1540 had granted Dalkeith a weekly market on Thursday, yet in 1581 it somehow required an Act of Parliament to change its weekly market from Sunday to Thursday. Again, Parliament changed Crail's weekly market in 1587 from Sunday to Saturday, yet another Act of Parliament was required in 1607 to change it from Sunday to Friday. In 1589 Nairn was given a weekly market on Saturday, yet in 1661 another Act of Parliament was required to change it from Sunday to Friday. In the case of Pittenweem no legislation appeared to be necessary, given that pre-Reformation statutes of 1526 and 1540–41 had provided for markets on Saturday and Monday. Yet an act of 1663 changed the markets hitherto held on Sunday and Monday to Tuesday. Combined with the decay of such little Fife towns, the result was perhaps inevitable – by 1692 there was no weekly market there at all (Marwick 1890: 33, 37–38, 91–92, 98).

In other cases one senses that a process of weaning was deemed necessary. So, for example, Culross in Fife had a Sunday market, with a charter of James IV from 1490 to justify it. The charter of James VI which erected Culross into a Royal Burgh in 1588 granted the town a weekly market on Tuesday, but a further charter of 1592 authorised it to be held on a Saturday (Marwick 1890: 36).

Rural districts appear to have received less subtle treatment. In August 1590 Lord Somerville was cited before the General Assembly for holding a market on the Sabbath in his burgh of Carnwath in upper Lanarkshire. He appeared, brandishing the charter of 1491 that authorised a market to be held there on Sundays, and pleading 'an ancient custom and privilege granted to him and his predecessors by the kings of Scotland, and confirmed by James IV and V'. But on being threatened with the censure of the Church, he agreed that no market should be held there any more on that day (Marwick 1890: 29).

Legislation could be a tortuous matter, however, as regimes changed and policies shifted accordingly. A charter of 1594 to the burgh of Elgin confirmed all previous charters and granted the power to hold free markets and fairs 'as often and on such days as they had been in use to be kept'. A tactical error, perhaps, for by 1696 the magistrates of Elgin were being warded by another Reforming government for not executing the acts against holding markets on Sundays. Again, a charter of 1598-99 specified that the Elie market should be on Saturdays, but it seems to have done little good, for in 1672 an Act of Parliament changed the town's market from Sundays to Tuesdays (Marwick 1890: 50; Smout 1972: 80).

If Elgin could be overlooked, far-off Fortrose could be forgotten. A charter was issued to Fortrose on 6 August 1590 confirming its burgh charter of 1455. Unfortunately

for the Reformers' point of view, this had given its burgesses and inhabitants the right (among other things) to two weekly markets, one on Monday, the other on the Sabbath. Not until 1661 was the mistake rectified, and the Fortrose markets changed by Parliament from Sunday and Monday to Tuesday and Friday (Marwick 1890: 55).

Parliamentary meddling of this kind must have caused great local strife. We have already noticed the fate of Pittenweem. Traditional market days were strung along the circuits of merchants and pedlars like beads on a necklace. Sunday markets were among the most lucrative, and communities losing them faced an uncertain economic future. The point is well illustrated by the plight of Forfar. In 1593 Parliament changed its weekly market from Sunday to Friday (Marwick 1890: 54), but by 1792, when the Rev. John Bruce wrote his account of the parish, it was being held on Saturdays.

> At what time is [*sic*] was changed from Friday to Saturday, the incumbent has not been able to learn, but the reason of the change has evidently been, that Friday interfered with the great weekly market in Dundee, and that the other days in the week were kept as fair days by the other towns in the shire. (*OSA* 13: 265)

During the seventeenth century the cattle trade increased gradually in importance just as sabbatarianism was gaining an emotional grip on the minds of the Scottish people. Drovers were 'rough folk to whom it seemed that the Sabbath was made for man', and all through the century the records of the Privy Council and of the Church contain constant complaints of Sunday droving and describe efforts to prevent it (Haldane 1952: 43). For that and other reasons, markets which fell on a Saturday or Monday were gradually switched to another day of the week. The Fife town of Largo had a Saturday market, granted by charter in 1513 and confirmed in 1542 and 1594, but in 1596–97 it was changed to Friday. An Act of Parliament of 1603 granted weekly markets to Edinburgh on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, but successive Acts to prevent the profanation of Sunday in 1639, 1640 and 1644 transferred all Monday markets in Edinburgh and Glasgow to Wednesdays. According to the 1640 Act, wool, butter, cheese, skins, hides, shoes and 'unfreeman's work' were traded on Mondays in Edinburgh, while horses, live cattle, meal, bear (barley), craftsmen's work, salt, salt butter, cheese and timber were traded on Mondays in Glasgow (Marwick 1890: 49, 80).

Later accounts spell out graphic reasons for such changes. In 1645 the town council of Linlithgow 'appointed Tuesday and Saturday to be market days for the sale of leather, but afterwards substituted Friday for Saturday on account of the drinking which took place on the latter day, with the consequent effect that many could not attend church on the Lord's Day with becoming preparation' (Marwick 1890: 82). Two hundred years later the Rev. James Cruickshank described the Porter Fairs at Turriff like this:

> Feeing-markets have also been established at the terms of Whitsunday and Martinmas, for the engagement of male and female servants; and if these have been found an accommodation in some respects, it has, we conceive, been dearly purchased, by their corrupting influence on the morals of a large class of society. At all events, if these markets are to be kept up, it

> would be well if the Scots statute of 1605 were acted on, and any other day than Saturday chosen for holding them. (*NSA* 12: 1004)

Feeing markets were of course for the hire of agricultural labour, and it is worth noting that the Turriff hiring fairs remained on Saturdays for as long as they lasted – into the twentieth century. The Reformers' legislative tide had long since ebbed. It had reached its high-water mark in an Act of 1656 which forbade anyone to bake bread, 'profanely walk', travel, or do any other worldly business on Sundays, and even then, at least two Lowland markets were still being held on Sundays as they had been 'from time immemorial' (Smout 1972: 80). The last little splash of the tide had been, perhaps, when at some point prior to 1799 Arbroath unilaterally changed its Saturday market to a Thursday (*OSA* 13: 40; cf. Marwick 1890: 17).

19. THE FAIR IN RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

The imagery of the fair came in post-Reformation times to be woven in various ways into the fabric of religious thought, at least in Gaelic. Firstly, the communion season was often spoken of by the godly as a *fèill* or fair. So when James Mackay of Proncy in Dornoch came back from a communion at Tain where the Rev. Dr John MacDonald of Ferintosh was preaching, he said, *Chaidh mi gu Baile Dhubhthaich dhan fheill agus nuair a rainig mi bha Iain a' piobaireachd, 's cha b'fhada nach robh mi fhìn san ruidhle.* 'I went to the fair at Tain and when I got there John was piping, and in no time I had joined in the reel.' MacDonald had been a piper in his youth (Kennedy 1978: 286–87). Next, the so-called 'tent' from which the minister preached at outdoor communions was in Gaelic *bùth*, from English 'booth', the same word that would be used of a market stall or shop. In the early days of communions the tent might be a few oars in the form of a cone, covered with sails or blankets, with a fixed board in front to hold the Bible ('R.M.' 1927a: 206). Later it would be purpose-built of dressed timber. Finally there was the Lord's Table, which brought people to speak of entering the *seòmar aoidheachd* or hospitality room, just as one might do to seal a bargain on market day (MacLeòid 1948: 28, 75).

Now a couple of anecdotes to emphasise the point. The first concerns a pious man called William Main, known as Willie Teetee, who lived at Ardersier in the parish of Petty during the ministry of the Rev. John Morrison. Willie was once walking to the communions at Inverness, and somewhere between Castle Stuart and Lonnie, Mr Morrison came riding by on his shaggy pony, on his way to assist at the same event. Morrison asked Willie where he was going, and he said, 'I am told there is to be a market in that big town to the west, and I have got a lot of coppers that I want to get rid of. I am also told that a man will attend at the market who will be glad to give me good valid coinage for my worthless coppers, and I am going to strike a bargain with him.' By which he meant, of course, that he was going to communion in Inverness with his sins, and that Christ would be there to exchange them for grace. This answer

pleased Mr Morrison so much that he got off his horse and told Willie to mount in his place, saying, 'Willie Teetee, you are far more worthy of having a horse to carry you than I am.' The saint got on the horse and the minister walked at the horse's side all the way to Inverness (Maclennan 1906: 24–25, quoted in Sutherland 1987: 175).

Finally there is a story about Tormad mac Shomhairle, one of the saints of Harris in the nineteenth century. He was once asked, *A Thormaid, nach eil òrain dìomhain idir agaibh?* 'Don't you have any secular songs at all?' He said, 'I did at one time but on the great day of the Lord's grace they were spoiled on me (*chaidh am milleadh orm*) and anyway, at the fair I am going to, I wouldn't get a penny for them' ('R.M.' 1927b: 230).

These anecdotes are by no means marginal to my subject. They demonstrate the power of the imagery of the fair even on the minds of those farthest, one might have thought, from the habits of commerce. This power is evidence of an economic phenomenon that has deep cultural, religious, linguistic and onomastic roots throughout Scotland. I have tried in this essay to sketch some of these roots, and to illustrate the difficulties involved in doing so. I would like to think that I have made some reflections on the *List* of which Marwick might at best have approved, or which he might at least have tolerated. But a full and comprehensive account of Scotland's fair-names in general, and of the names of fairs dedicated to saints in particular, remains to be written.

20. TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF FAIR-NAMES

The following is an attempt to categorise the corpus of fair-names presented above. It is hoped that it may serve both as a stimulus to further research and as a guide to where in the essay particular types of name are discussed. Figures in brackets are the sections in which the examples may be found; examples are given in the order in which they appear in that section.

1 Non-onomastic evidence (e.g. archaeological) suggestive of assemblies, e.g. on Eildon Hill North (6).

2 Place-name elements suggestive of assemblies, fairs or markets:
   (a) *aonach*, e.g. Teaninich, *an t-Aonach*, *Blàr an Aonaich*, Aonachan, *Druim an Aonaich* (7).
   (b) *còmhdhail*, e.g. *Clach na Còmhalaich*, Cuttlehill, Cult Hill, Coleduns, Cothiemuir, Cockhill Fair, Cuff Hill, Cuttieshillock, Bonnakettle (7).
   (c) *eireachd*, *tional*, e.g. Ericht, *Cnoc an Tionail* (7).
   (d) *þing*, e.g. Dingwall, Tinwald (7).
   (e) *féill*, *faidhir*, *mòd*, *dròbh*, e.g. *Cnoc na Féille*, *Cnoc na Faidhreach*, *Tom a' Mhòid*, Bennadrove (7).
   (f) *mōt*, e.g. Meet Hill, Moathill, Moothill (7).
   (g) *fair*, e.g. Fairmuir (7); Fair Muir Park (13).

(h) *market*, e.g. Saltmarket, Haymarket, Fleshmarket Close, Market Street (7); Grassmarket, Lawnmarket (11).
(i) other, e.g. Tullybelton, St Orland's Stone (8).

3 Calendar evidence:
(a) unnamed fairs, e.g. at the Links of Abbotshall, 10 April, or first Tuesday and Wednesday of December in Aberdeen (3).
(b) unnamed fairs whose dates are suggestive of a saint, e.g. at Strathmiglo on 9 June or at Port of Menteith on second Wednesday of June = St Columba(?), 'the Tenth of March Fair' at Callander = St Kessog (8); at Leven on 23 April = St George (17).
(c) unnamed fairs whose dates are suggestive of a primal calendar day, e.g. 1 or 2 February = St Brigid's, last Wednesday of October at Redding = Samhain (8).
(d) fairs bearing religious names whose dates are suggestive of a primal calendar day, e.g. All Saints or All Hallows = Samhain, Candlemas Fair = St Brigid's, SS Philip and James (1 May) = Beltane, Invention of the Holy Cross (3 May) = Beltane (8).

4 Fair-names denoting:
(a) commodities, e.g. Wool Fair (3); gingerbread fair (8); Pepper's Fair, Groset Fair, Seed Fair (10); Hagg Fair, Bathie Fair, Timmer Market, Stobbs Fair (13).
(b) live animals, e.g. Runt Fair, Lamb Fair (3); Goose Market, Hogget Fair (10).
(c) activities, e.g. Siller Fair, Hook (Heuk) Fair, Scythe Fair (3); Seingie Fair, Japping Market (10); Play Feersday (17).
(d) occupations, e.g. Cadgers' Fair (9); Porter Fair, Rascal Fair (10).
(e) symbolic features, e.g. Sleepy Market (10); Bell's Fair, Whistle Fair, Clog (=Bell?) Market (13); *Fèill Èiteachain* (16).

5 Fair-names denoting:
(a) months or seasons, e.g. Winter Fair (3); *Faidhir Mhór an Earraich* (5); April Show (10).
(b) quarterdays, i.e. Lammas, Samhain, St Brigid's, Beltane (8).
(c) days of the week, e.g. Scarce Thursday, Rascal Friday, Seed Thursday, Skyre Thursday (10); Big Thursday at Crieff (11); Whitsunmonday, Trinity-tuesday, Trinity-wednesday (14); Play Feersday (17); *Fèill Dòmhnaich* (18).
(d) miscellaneous calendar terms, e.g. Troit Fair, Gowk Fair, Handsel Monday (10).

6 Fair-names denoting:
(a) saints' days, e.g. St Peter's (3); Trewel Fair, Tennant's Day, Paldy Fair, Breag Fair, St Norman's Market, Tarse Fair, St Trothermas (14); Aikey Fair, Fyke Fair (15); Maitland (=Magdalen) Fair (17).
(b) other religious festivals, e.g. Yule Fair (3); Scarce or Skyre Thursday (10); Fasten's E'en, Roodsmas (14).

(c) secular forenames, e.g. Thomas Fair, Latter Mary Fair on third Tuesday of September (7); St Lillias' Fair (9); St George's Fair at Culrain on 24 September, Maggie Fair at Garmouth, St Mary's Fair at Kennoway on 24 September, Janet Fair at Contin/Dingwall, St John's Fair at Contin, Martha's Fair at Dingwall, Louis Fair at Kilmore in Urquhart, St Jonah's Fair (17).

(d) secular titles or surnames, e.g. Crawford's Day, Wemyss's Market, Melvin's Fair (12); Monro's Fair, Lady Fair in November or on 15 February (17).

7 Fair-names including place-names or locations:

(a) as primary element, e.g. Wallacestone Fair (8); Dunsmuir Fair, Tyrebagger Fair, Glasgow Fair, Reaster Market, Croft or Craft Fair, calsay market, Skitten Market, Fordew Fair (11).

(b) informally applied to fair outside its locality, e.g. Pitlessie Fair (11), *an Fhaidhir Mhuileach* (17).

(c) as single fair dominating annual cycle of community, e.g. Anster Fair (14).

(d) as result of fair being moved, e.g. Strowan, Turret, Douchlage, Monivaird and Monzie fairs at Crieff, Shandon Fair at Drymen (11).

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NOTES

1 Thomson 1908–09, bk 5: 5–6. The Rev. William Thomson was born in Inverallan in 1861. He was minister at Wallaroo, S. Australia, 1889–92, but resigned on account of ill-health and returned to live at Grantown-on-Spey, where he took charge of the mission at Dulnain (Scott 1928: 600). Portions of his typescript, in the possession of Mr Bill Sadler, Grantown, were re-typed by Mr Bruce Morgan, Grantown, and copies sent to me by his son, Mr Peadar Morgan, Culbokie. I am grateful to them all.

2 A relevant issue here is the difference between a fair and a market. As Marwick says (1890: 3), quoting Lord Coke, 'Every fair is a market but every market is not a fair.' A report on Glasgow to the Convention of Burghs in 1692 states that the city had a weekly market, a yearly fair of five or six days' duration, and three yearly markets, each of one day's duration (Marwick 1890: 59). I draw three conclusions from this: that no 'market' lasted more than one day; that 'fairs' drew people from far and wide, and had their own laws, suspending the burgesses' monopolies on trade; and that 'markets' were more local in catchment, relying on a settled pattern of trade with an urban infrastructure, and falling within normal burgh jurisdiction.

3 For Scots poems and songs about fairs see for example McCraw (1994: 40) and Cameron (1997: 88–93). For William Tennant's huge mock-epic 'Anster Fair' (1812) see Scott and Lindsay (1989: 1–100). Gaelic poems include an unpublished song on Portree Fair in 1694, full of valuable detail, in NLS MS 14876; Mary Flora MacDonald's 'Bliadhnach Ailein' in Cameron (1932: 311–12); two songs published by Shaw (1977: 122–27), with a related passage in John Campbell's 'Òran a' Pheinsean' (Black 1999: 26–29); and one in *Tocher* 41 (1987–88: 328–31), for which see also *The Stornoway Gazette*, 18 March 1989. Among the stories are those concerning the name *Loch a' Bhaile Mhargaidh* ('the Loch of the Market Town'), e.g. in Jura, telling how a great market town with paved streets was flooded by the wrath of God for its iniquities (MacGille Sheathanaich 1954: 134). Gordon (1935: 316) offers a more functional explanation for the Jura name, i.e. that this was where Islay cattle destined for mainland markets were rested after crossing the Sound of Islay.

4 I hope that this might lead in turn to an exhibition on the subject in one of our galleries or libraries. Skinner (1962) discusses the following paintings of fairs: Pitlessie (one picture by David Wilkie, 1785–1841); Skirling (three by James Howe, 1780–1836); St Andrews (one by Alexander Fraser, 1786–1865); All Hallows, Edinburgh (two by Walter Geikie, 1795–1837). There is a painting of a fair at Dundee by an unknown artist, dated 1763 but probably later; 'Home from the Fair' by Alexander Burr (1837–99) should also be noted (McCraw 1994: 35, 51–52). Mrs Elizabeth Ferro, Dept of Fine Art, University of Edinburgh, has drawn my attention to 'Oldhamstocks Fair, 1795' by Alexander Carse (d. 1843); a painting by Paul Sandby (1731–1809) of a horse fair on Bruntsfield Links, Edinburgh, provides the cover for Whyte (1995).

5 James Smith, *The Exact Dealer's Companion* [*EDC* 1727]; *Edinburgh Almanack, For the Year M.DCC.L.* [*EA* 1750]; *Edinburgh Almanack, For the Year M.DCC.LI.* [*EA* 1751]; *Edinburgh Almanack, For the Year M.DCC.LIV.* [*EA* 1754]; *Edinburgh Almanack, For the Year M.DCC.LIX* [*EA* 1759].

6 The poem on Carman will be found, with translation, in Gwynn 1991: 2–25, with notes at 469–80. The threefold division is mentioned at 24–25: 'Three busy markets in the land, / the market of food, the market of live stock, / the great market of the Greek foreigners, / where were gold and fine raiment.' In his paper at the Cosmos Project conference in 1995 (the year of his death), Dr Bruford drew attention to the fact that the poem describes a gathering which is by no means exclusively Celtic in nature: Gwynn dates the poem on historical grounds to 1040–79, and the language (Middle Irish) certainly supports such a dating.

7 Fraser (1995: 182) sees the name as designating not shielings but 'conventions of various kinds, necessitating the erection of temporary booths as accommodation'. He adds: 'Flat land at the confluence of the Eddleston Water and the River Tweed was used for the usual jousting and sporting activities which invariably accompanied these meetings.' This supports my view of Peebles as a primal site of Beltane ritual.

8 A fair-name, or rather fair-nickname, that by no means fits this model is 'Rascal Friday', 'Rascal Fair', held a week after a feeing market. 'The people who came there were those who had either run away from their places after they'd fee'd or those who had been unable to get a fee. And it was common all over the country.' Not being the name of any particular fair but of a *type* of fair, it belongs in the same category as terms like 'hiring fair', 'feeing market', 'gingerbread fair', etc. See 'Porter Fair and Rascal Fair', *Tocher* 40, 1986: 225–27.

9 An Act of Parliament of 1837 (7 Giulielmi IV Cap. lix) authorised the magistrates and council of Dundee to allow the fairs named Stobs and Melvin, held annually on the field named Stobbs Muir belonging to the Town and Community of Dundee, to be held on part of the Muir (permission being granted for the rest to be sold or feued) or to be transferred to the Fair Muir (Ian McCraw, personal communication, 4 January 2000).

10 For more on Little Dunning see 'Perthshire and Angus Feeing Markets', *Tocher* 41, 1987–88: 319–23.

11 I am grateful to Anke-Beate Stahl for this information.

12 *Tocher* 41, 1987–88: 314, citing *SND*, but I can find no mention of the Maggie Fair in *SND*.

13 It was in 1681 that he obtained a charter under the Great Seal 'by which his lands of Coul and others were, upon his own resignation, erected into one free barony in favour of himself and heirs male, holding of the Crown' (Mackenzie 1879: 449).

14 Paul (1918: 166) puts Gordon's 'St Callen' at 28 November, on what authority I know not.

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