



Atholl Shieling Names

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In the Central Highlands, the Gaelic for shieling is *ruidhe* or *righe*, which appears in early maps and manuscripts in the abbreviated forms of *ri*, *re*, *rei*, or *r'*. *Ruidhe* often related to an open, exposed pasture for dairy herds, while *righe* referred to a mixed grazing area, often in a valley.

The parish of Blair Atholl is dominated by two features — Blair Castle, seat of the tenth Duke of Atholl, where the charter room contains a great many charters, manuscripts and maps relating to the shielings in the area — and secondly the Grampian Mountains, many of which are over 3,000 feet. The parish is situated in north Perthshire, equidistant from Edinburgh and Inverness, astride the military road built by General Wade in the early part of the eighteenth century. North Perthshire names are largely Gaelic, with only a few Pictish elements remaining. An early example of a genuine Gaelic name in this part of Pictland, representing deep Gaelic penetration eastwards, is Atholl itself (early Gaelic *Athfhodla*), 'New Ireland' — obviously given by Gaelic newcomers. Since this name is recorded in 740, we know they had reached northern Perthshire by that date.

In addition to the Atholl family, Robertson of Lude was another landlord of substance and his Barony, formed in 1448, lay east of Glen Tilt, on the east side of the parish. It is a huge parish measuring thirty miles across at its widest point and nearly twenty miles deep. It stretches from the Perth/Inverness county boundary in the north, the famous Drumochter Pass in the west, to Tummelside in the south. It is a very mountainous parish consisting of six principal glens, the most important of which is Glen Garry, which bisects the area laterally. This glen was described in 1792 as being 'an extensive strath, which in the summer season is green with corns, grass and woods'. Glen Tilt joins the Garry in the east of the parish and was described by a traveller in 1769 as being 'famous in old times for producing the most hardy warriors. It is a narrow glen, several miles in length, bounded on each side by mountains of an amazing height.' Glen Fender is a feeder glen of the Tilt and, being much shorter, was farmed for most of its length, with a few shielings on its upper reaches. Glen Bruar is the most remote and desolate of the Atholl

glens. It is wild and uncompromising and, apart from a keeper and his family, no one lives there now. Glen Errochty, formerly a Robertson stronghold, is a short glen, with a number of farmsteads still occupied, and shielings further up. Finally, Glen Edendon starts from a loch at the watershed and flows into the Garry.

Mountain shielings are found wherever climate or topography causes a seasonal variation in the value or availability of pasture, so that man and his flocks must move their base at least twice a year to win maximum use from the land. Only when the terrain was fit for nothing but pasture — at least for part of the year — and was quite incapable of conversion to arable land, would a shieling system persist. Such conditions are to be found in the Highlands, where outpastures were occupied by cattle as well as other stocks during the summer months, and the grazing grounds and bothies were known as shielings. The bothy was a low-roofed erection of turf and stone, with a door in the centre but with no window. It needed rebuilding at the start of each season, and there would have been a turf fire at one end of the room and a bed of straw at the other. The women and children were employed in making butter and cheese for the landlord as it formed part of their rent, and they lived there for several months in the summer.

The practice of transhumance began when arable agriculture started, because stock had to be moved to a safe distance from crops under cultivation. It was an integral part of the life cycle of every farming community, a means by which cultivation of crops was balanced with animal husbandry, and it was this balance which helped to determine the early pattern of settlement. The early shielings were located in the foothills, and as pressure for space in the valleys increased, these well-manured grazing areas became sites of individual farms, developing into settlements, and the shielings moved further up the glen. Where documentation is scarce, place names are essential in identifying these early shielings, and this is an example: Rinegalloch (Gaelic *Ruidhe na Coilloch*), 'Shieling of Cock Grouse'. It refers to a communal display ground called a *lek*, where courtship and nesting of the black grouse occurred. Here up to twenty males would defend their territory by means of an impressive threat display. This shieling was allocated to tenants of Strathgroy, four miles distant in the valley, yet within a hundred years it had been converted into a permanent settlement, Thomas Mackenzie being the first tenant; it appears as *Rinakylach* in the rental of 1725.

Riefichet (Gaelic *Ruighe a' Bhiocair*) means 'vicar's shieling', though which vicar it relates to is not known. This remained a shieling till 1722 when it was 'set aside for improvement', the

tenant paying no rent for the first three years and then £30 scots for the next two. Another shieling nearby is Reinasrone (*Ruidh na Sroine*), 'shieling of the promontory'. This is a topographical name, the pasture being on a promontory or ridge below Mealbeg Vraickich. Again, this remained a shieling till 1722 when a 'parcell of new ground' was leased to two tenants and Lude agreed to build 'two or three ordinary houses and byres consisting in all of eight couples'. Towards the end of the last century, the settlement was pulled down and the stones used to build dykes; today there is little left save for some footings in the ground.

Three of these early shielings in Glen Bruar appear on the map of 1780 by James Stobie, the Atholl factor. *Richlachrie* (*Ruidh Chlachraidh*), 'stony shieling', must relate to a rocky outcrop nearby, as it was described by a man who lived there in the 1920s as being a good croft, capable of taking at least thirty sheep and some cows. In a rental of 1725 it was described as '*Richlachry* a shealing', and was leased to two tenants who paid 20 merks (13s 4d each) for the first three years and £18 scots for the remaining four years of their lease. By 1813 it was being developed as a farmstead, records showing that £37 was spent on transporting lime and wood, mason work and slating. *Richlachrie* appears on a list of Atholl Shieling rentals dated 1687, along with *Ririach* (*Ruidh Riabhach*), 'brindled shieling', a topographical term to describe the pasture. At this time the tenant was paying £25. 6s. scots, which included the conversion of a stone of cheese, a quart of butter and a wedder. Other shielings appearing on the rental of 1687 are: *Ffassmoull* (*Fas Bhaoghal*) meaning 'danger shelter'; *Glackmarluk* (*Glaic nam Meirleach*) meaning 'thief's hollow'; and *Carn Dairge* (*Carn Dearg*) meaning 'red cairn'.

Cuiltamuck (*Cuiltmhuic*), 'a place of pigs', is situated on the west bank of the Bruar. In 1687 it was a shieling, paying rent of cheese, butter and a wedder. Again, by the early part of the last century, it had been developed as a farmstead. My favourite character comes from here. He was known as the 'laughing man of *Cuiltmhuic*' who, over a hundred years ago, was found lying in a water trough, blind drunk and laughing his head off. To this day no one has discovered the subject of his merriment, whisky excepted. There are a number of other shieling-names on this list of 1687. *Ridorich Beg* (*Ruidh Dorcha Beag*) and *Ridorich More* (*Ruidh Dorcha Mor*), 'little dark shieling' and 'big dark shieling'. This meaning related to the pasture; perhaps the heather here was a particularly dark species, or thicker than elsewhere. From

the rental it would seem that *beag* was half the size of *mor*, a proportion one would expect from these terms, though it does not always follow. Research into the use of these two might be revealing.

Keiries (*Ruidh a' Chireichean*) is situated at the confluence of two rivers. It often appears in manuscripts as 'the *Kirrachen* Shieling' and means 'shieling of the combs', used for carding wool. Aldavoulin (*Allt a' Mhuillinn*) means 'Mill Stream' and next there is Richael (*Ruidh a' Chail*), 'shieling of the kale'. In 1687 it was leased as a pasture to a local landlord for 4 wedders or £8. In 1725 it was still referred to as a shieling, appearing in the rentals as *Richael a sheall*. The land was sold in 1834 to an Englishman who promptly developed the area for sporting purposes, building a substantial shooting lodge, kennels, a coach house, servants' quarters and a gamekeeper's cottage.

Badnabiast (*Bad nam Beiste*), 'the beasts' thicket', was a shieling in 1687 with a rental of 6 wedders or £12 scots. The '*Shealling of Badnabiast*', appears in a tolerance of 1708 in which Alexander Stewart renewed his rights to graze his cattle in this shieling. By 1800, however, it had been developed into a substantial farmstead, and the farmhouse is still used as a barn by the tenant. Other names appearing on the list of rentals are Rinaleckin (*Ruidh na Leacainn*), 'shieling of the slope', and Dallinlongart (*Dal an Longan*), 'haugh of the boats', so named because it is situated on the shore of Loch Garry, where the rental was a fat cow and two wedders. It appears in a document of 1669 as *Dalnalongan*, and this is important as it gives the derivation of the name. Nearby is Dallinspidal (*Dal na Spideal*), 'haugh of the hospice', *dal* being a term for a field or flat meadow, often beside a river. Remains of the shieling bothies can be seen in the ground beside the shooting lodge. The coming of the military road in 1729 saw a rapid development of this area, as the community seized the opportunity to be gained from the passing traffic. A public house was opened for drovers, who were allowed to pasture their cattle here provided they paid grass money. In Glen Tilt there is Dalinachy (*Dail Fheannach*), 'shaggy haugh', referring to the terrain. It is mentioned in a contract of 1590, and by 1725 had been taken over by the Duke of Atholl for grazing his sheep. Patrick Murray, herdsman, lived here at this time and he was paid two pecks of meal a month for killing deer for the Duke's use. By 1780 it had been developed into a twenty-acre arable farm, and scattered on both sides of the river are the remains of sixteen buildings, together with enclosure dykes and a kiln.

Fealair (*Feith Lair*), 'stream of the mare', is the remotest of the Atholl shielings and is 1,800 feet up, along a fifteen-mile track

from the nearest road. *Feith* refers to rents or veins made by water in moorland, and is therefore a sluggish stream or bog. The meaning is supported by documentary evidence, as a letter dated 1686 deals with the delivery of horses and mares to this shieling. Unlike other shielings, it was leased to tenants outside the area, who would pay grass money of five shillings a head, and sometimes as many as 750 head of cattle, sheep, oxen, horses and goats would be pasturing here. They were looked after by five herdsman who, in addition to their wages and free meal, were provided with whisky 'for encouragement', at three shillings a bottle. By 1820 a shooting lodge, houses and a byre had been built here; grazing has continued right up to the present day, with 450 ewes clipped annually, and Fealair is inhabited all year round.

That concludes the section on early shielings which developed into settlements, and I would now like to look at shielings further up the glens. There are nearly a hundred of these and time does not permit me to look at them all, so I have divided these into name-groups. Starting with names relating to people, there are two with personal names. Riecharlotte, 'Charlotte's shieling', is in the barony of Lude and was named after Charlotte, Lady Lude, in the sixteenth century. Remains consisting of at least ten buildings and a kiln are visible. Rineill (*Ruidh Niall*), 'Neil's shieling', almost certainly relating to Neil Stewart, an important tenant of Glen Tilt, covers a large area of hill-top pasture at a height of over 1,600 ft. A topographical name on the list of 1687 is Garraran (*Garbh Sron*), 'rough promontory', which appears in later documents as *Garrison*. Continuing the personal theme, there is a tolerance dated 1659 for Mungo Murray to pasture in Rinastalkat (*Ruidh'n Stalcair*), 'shieling of the stalker', possibly a hide used by a stalker posted here, either to observe deer movements or prevent poaching. By 1725, *Rienastalker a sheall* had been merged with another one called Aldveick (*Allt a' Bhaic*), 'burn of the bank'. and it was indeed located on the north bank of the Garry. Rienascolarin (*Ruidh nan Sgolearan*), 'shieling of the scholar', is on both sides of a stream of the same name, a few miles south of the Drumochter Pass. A Tennoch plan dated 1773 also shows the shieling of Alt Fuirvanna (*Allt Fuar-Mhonaidh*), 'stream of the cold mountain', where at one time there were five bothies. There is only one shieling named after a trade or craft and this is Auld na Pladen (*Allt nam Plaidean*), 'stream of the plaids', located south of Loch Garry. Plaids were woven here on a narrow hand loom. This was a primitive loom where the shuttle had to be passed from side to side of the web by hand, and therefore only a narrow width of cloth of about twenty-seven inches was woven. These were not

tartan plaids, but a type of coarse flannel or blanket. In the eighteenth century there was a disturbance here, as a sheep fank was demolished because it was on the wrong side of the stream and in someone else's pasture. Streams are often named after trees and bushes on their banks, and this applies to Ault na Derg (*Allt nan Dearcag*), 'stream of the billberry or blaeberry'. This shieling appears in seventeenth-century documents as *Allt nan Derkach*, and the bothies are visible in a wide expanse of pasture above Bruar Water. The bilberry was used for dyeing a violet or purple colour and also had an astringent quality and was given in cases of dysentery. Frequently the berries were eaten with milk, which provided a cool, refreshing drink, and sometimes they were made into tarts and jellies, occasionally laced with whisky.

As one would expect, there are a number of shielings named after wild and domestic animals. Ruidh Caochan nan Laogh, 'shieling of the stream of the calf', is beside Auld na Luie in Glen Tarf. *Caochan* is a term used for a small stream or rill. It also describes the first process of whisky distillation — the pounding noise made by worts fermenting. But, alas, I cannot associate this more glamorous meaning with this place. The Shieling of Auldchlais (*Allt a' Chaise*), 'cheese burn', is beside the 'Cash burn' on the map of 1780, and reflects the good quality of grazing in this part of Glen Bruar. Substantial remains of it survive. Rent was often supplemented with casualties and services and, as we have heard, this included butter and cheese. Four types of cheese were produced in nineteenth-century Perthshire shielings, from cow, sheep or goats' milk alone, or a combination of all three. There is the shieling of Aldanasaovy (*Allt na Saobhaidh*), 'stream of the fox's den', where the remains of bothies are visible on both sides of the stream of the same name. It was described as a 'vacant shieling' in 1725. Foxes still pose a threat, especially in the lambing season, and this is one of the first places the Dalnamein keeper makes for when culling foxes in the spring. In the 1740s this shieling was still 'lying lee and waste', but by 1786 it had been given to tenants in Glen Tilt whose shielings had been converted into a deer forest. Further up the glen we come to Ruidh bad an Fheidh, 'shieling of the place of deer', where the footings of twenty-eight oval and rectangular bothies are visible in a large area of pasture. In a record dated 1669 this shieling was also given the name of Liavad (*Liath Bhad*), 'the grey thicket'. In nearby Glen Edendon, there is Ruidh bad na Seabhaig, 'shieling of the clump of falcons', on a stream of the same name, and this relates to the peregrine falcon. Loch an Duin is near the shieling, and this, with its precipitous sides, is perfect terrain for the peregrine, renowned for its stoop.

Finally in this section, in Glen Tilt, there is the shieling of Aldvaine (*Ruidh Allt Mheann*), where the remains of six substantial ruins can be seen beside a stream of the same name. This part of the glen is so steep that the bothies had to be cut into the hillside. It means 'stream of the kid' or young goat, and rentals were sometimes paid in kids, along with lambs and poultry. Goats' milk was considered the best for restoring lost strength to the weak, according to a proverb: 'It is the milk of the goat, foaming and warm, that gives strength to the men that were'. The milk was also believed to be a cosmetic, as another proverb tells us: 'Rub thy face with violets and goats' milk and there is not a king's son in the world but will be after thee'. Next to that of the deer, the tallow of the goat was considered the most efficacious for rubbing on stiff joints.

Predictably, the largest collection of shieling names is associated with topographical features. We have already seen how steep the sides of Glen Tilt are, and on shelves 500 feet above the glen there are a number of shielings.

Rinirich (*Ruidh an Fhirich*), 'shieling of the high ground', aptly describes its situation. Here there are at least forty footings of bothies stretching for nearly a mile on the west side of the glen. Rental for this huge pasture was four wedders a year.

Also in Glen Tilt there is the shieling of Altnamarick (*Allt na Maraig*), 'stream of the pudding', in this case either *marag gheal*, made from meal, or *marag dubh*, with blood added to the oatmeal. Linked with this shieling in 1687 was Dalchrochie, astride Auld Crochie. It appears in the rental of 1725 as '*Rinachrochy*, a shealing' (*Ruidh Allt a' Chrochaidh*) and means the 'hanging burn'. This term applies to a feature which is suspended, like a waterfall or cascade, as shown in the map of 1780. The shieling consisted of a number of buildings beside the stream and below a waterfall. The shieling was leased to Neil Stewart till 1780 when his tenants were removed to make way for a deer forest. Still in Glen Tilt, a prominent hill, Dun Beg, gives its name to two more shielings, Rieindowne (*Ruidh an Duin*), 'shieling of the hill-fort', and Ruidh Feith an Duin, 'shieling of the stream of the hill-fort', where a number of substantial remains can be seen beside a track which Thomas Pennant took when he passed this way in 1769. He stopped off at one of these shielings and wrote a vivid impression of the scene. 'Here we refreshed ourselves with some goat's whey at a shealin' or bothay, a cottage made of turf, the dairy house where the Highland shepherds or graziers live, with their herds and flocks. Their food is oat-cakes, butter or cheese and often coagulated blood of their cattle spread on their bannocks. They drink milk, whey, and sometimes, by way of indulgence, whisky.'

The shieling of Auldnalloch (*Allt a' Bhealaich*) lies at the top of Glen Fender, where substantial remains of twenty houses and barns can be seen astride the river. It means 'stream of the pass', in this case the Cromalltan pass rising up behind the shieling, a way through the Beinn a' Ghloe mountains. *Bealach* is a common word for a defile, passage or pass through a mountain.

The Bohally shielings were a large area of pasture leased to tenants of a settlement called Bohally in a nearby glen, hence the name. It was also known as the Garbrough (*Garbh Bruthach*), 'rough hill-side'. *Garbh* is a term used to describe a slope which has a rough, uneven surface, harsh and coarse: in the eighteenth century, this area was described as having 'moss and poor pasture towards the summit'. *Bruthach* describes the gentle gradient of a hill — an ascent or brae. There were two parts to this shieling, *Garbh Bruthach Shios* and *Garbh Bruach Shuas*. When used in eastern dialects of Gaelic, *sios* means 'down below' or eastwards, while *suas* means 'above' or westwards, in this case further up the glen. The shieling gets its name from *Allt Garbh Bruaich*, and half a mile up the stream is a small shieling called Riefuirst (*Ruidh a' Phuirt*), 'shieling of the pipe-tune', described as an old shieling already in 1669.

The shieling of Aldanderg (*Alltan Dearg*), 'the little red stream', lies north of Loch Loch; remains are scant, as it was demolished in the seventeenth century and never rebuilt. Reinaguie (*Ruidh na Gaoithe*), 'windy shieling', is on the other side of the stream, where remains of twenty-three bothies can be seen across a wide area of pasture. This was a scene of violence as the laird of Lude 'did make civil interruptions by casting down of certain divots and timber of said bothies'. But it was rebuilt soon after. There is another 'shieling of the wind' near the head of Glen Bruar in a green pasture below the impressive hill called Creag na-h-Iolair Bheag, 'little hill of the eagle'. Here on a gently rising slope are substantial remains including the site of Bruar Lodge, one of the Duke's shooting lodges, rebuilt in enlarged form a mile down the glen in 1789.

A unique feature of the Grampians is the extraordinary distance over which they remain level — a three-mile plateau at a height of over 2,500 feet. Yet at this height, there is the shieling of Caochannaluib (*Caochan Lub*), 'meandering stream'. The pasture stretches for about a mile before this winding stream plunges into the Bruar river. It appears in a memo of 1704, in which the factor was checking on the tenant, Aeneas Macpherson. Because of the height of the shieling, the pasture was coarse, and the factor maintained that the tenant was grazing too many cattle on it.

Subsequently, Aeneas reduced the number from fifty-seven to forty head. *Caochan* is used for a shieling at the watershed in Glen Tilt, *Ruidh Caochan Dubh*, 'shieling of the black stream', reflecting the colour of the water, darkened by peat, as it flows out of Loch Tilt. There are substantial remains of this shieling; in 1718 the tenant was permitted to shiel 'on the haugh at the foot of the burn coming out of Loch Tilt, for payment of a stone of butter'. I shall finish the topographical section with *Riechraggan (Ruighe a' Chreagain)*, 'rocky shieling'. It gets its name because the ground is harsh and stony, being 1,500 feet up the southern flank of the 3,300 ft mountain called Carn Liath, 'grey mountain'.

In the north-east of the parish, there is a very remote area centred on Loch Loch, called the Seven Shielings. No one lives or works there now, but 200 years ago there were hundreds of people working in the shielings in this area. This was the subject of interminable disputes in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, because, whereas Atholl had the superiority of tenure of the land, Lude owned the grazing rights. This meant that Atholl could order Lude's tenants off the land every time he went hunting, and this proved fertile ground for a lengthy and sometimes violent dispute. The names of the seven shielings in a document dated 1716 are: *Cragangorm*, *Aldnahery*, *Reenacloch*, *Reenahelreg*, *Ryholten*, *Leadnacallad* and *Stronadeas*, and we will briefly look at each one in turn.

Cragangoram (Creagan Gorm), 'little green rocky place', is a rugged knoll strewn with rocks, many of which are covered in moss and lichen, to give rise to the name. On the top of the knoll is a green pasture where the remains of four or five bothies are visible. In the seventeenth century, Lady Lude leased this for cattle-grazing on payment of two salmon each year.

Number 2 is called Auldnachieri (*Allt na H-Eachdra*), 'stream of the pen', a place for confining straying cattle and sheep, a pound, from Gaelic *eachdarran*. It lies close to the Seven Shielings boundary and was the place where straying Atholl livestock were impounded. Certainly the Duke's foresters were instructed to confiscate any beasts found pasturing outside the area, and this was a reciprocal arrangement. There was more green pasture on this shieling than on any other, because it was bounded by two rivers on a well-drained, south-facing slope, and this would have attracted Atholl livestock.

Shieling number 3 is *Rienacloich (Ruidh na Cloiche)*, 'shieling of the stone': remains of the bothies are barely visible. When the early shielings of Riefichet and Rienasrone were developed as

settlements in the eighteenth century, tenants were given this shieling for their summer pasture.

Number 4 is Rienahildrick (*Ruidh na H-Eilrig*), 'shieling of the deer enclosure'. This comes from the Gaelic *iadh*, 'encompass, encircle', and *learg*, 'a plain, field on a slope'. This shieling was in the bend of two rivers where a large area of green is on a gently rising slope, surrounded by bog, heather and rocks. Elrigs are often found on rising ground, flanked by water, and in an open area. Here the king, clan chief or other visiting nobleman would stand with his friends, all of them armed, while the vassals would drive the deer from miles around into the manned enclosure. Hounds would be unleashed and as many deer as possible killed by bow and arrow and sword. It was said that a certain John Stewart from Atholl cut a deer clean in two with a single stroke of his broadsword.

Number 5 is Riechullan (*Ruidh Chuilean*), 'shieling of the whelp', which lies over the watershed and in Glen Loch. These were probably a rough breed of collie for herding cattle, essential for maintaining the shieling. In 1716, Lude was losing the conflict with Atholl, and was restricted to a 'bare servitude of pasturage for three months each year'. One of the conditions imposed on him was that his tenants were not allowed to keep dogs on the shielings. This restriction was the final straw for Lude, who wrote: 'This and other unacceptable clauses must render this sentence far from being a final one and it appears to be rather the groundwork of future discontent and litigation'.

Next we come to Strondias (*Ruidh Sron nan Dias*), which literally translated means 'point of the blade', describing the location of the shieling, standing several hundred feet above the glen on a promontory. It must have had special characteristics, as Lady Lude's cattle were taken here to pasture in the sixteenth century.

A large pasture lies across the glen, and this is the final shieling, Leachnadiald (*Leacainn Diollaidh*), 'the saddle slope'. Two legends give rise to this name. Close by was a saddle stone, and a strange tradition existed that if any lady, unable to bear children, sat on this rock, she would in due course become the happy mother of a large family. The other legend is more sinister and concerns 'Big Comyn', an evil baron of Norman descent. Ewan MacIntosh of Tirinie, known derisively as 'Pitiful Ewan', seeking revenge for the slaughter of his family twenty years earlier, surprised the Comyns at a marriage ceremony near Blair Castle. Big Comyn fled and was pulled from his saddle at this place and killed by Ewan. There is another version of the way he met his fate, which I will cover in a

moment. The remains of this shieling are substantial, and there are at least forty footings of circular and rectangular bothies visible in the pasture. Loch Loch lies to the north, and gets its name because there appears to be more than one loch, as shown on a map of 1790. It appears that Comyn evaded Ewan at the shieling and sped along the east side of the loch, with Ewan in hot pursuit; as Comyn was in the act of wiping the perspiration from his brow, Ewan shot him dead from across the Loch, nailing his hand to his forehead. The place where he fell is marked by a small cairn called Carn Chuimainach, 'Comyn's Cairn', near the north end of the loch. You may take your pick of which of these two legends applies to the shieling: personally, I favour the first one.

My final shieling continues the legend-theme and concerns Walter Comyn, an ancestor of Big Comyn. Walter was travelling to his other Castle in Badenoch and failed to return home. On a search being mounted, his mangled body was found on the watershed, a just reward for his sensuous deeds. His horse wandered off and was found at a place in Glen Tilt known as Lachois (*Leth-Chois*), 'place of one foot'; the Gaelic word *leth* meaning one of two or one of a pair. Comyn's horse was found here, foaming at the mouth with no rider on its back, and one of Walter's legs hanging from the stirrup. The Comyns had a reputation in the area for unrivalled savagery and treachery, and this has passed into a proverb: 'While in the wood there is a tree, A Comyn will deceitful be'. In 1687, the shieling was taken over by the Earl of Atholl for his cattle.

By studying the shieling names in Atholl, one glimpses a microcosm of life in this mountainous area. Important landlords are reflected in the names, while their major sporting activities and problems with neighbouring estates are touched on. The church is present too, and people's work and trade are mirrored in these names. Much attention is given to the basic essentials of their lives, through their livestock (pigs, horses, cows, goats and dogs) and their food (berries, puddings, cheeses and crops), their clothing, and indeed their medicine. One can begin to see a pattern in their choice of shieling-sites. Water was essential: it might be beside a fast-flowing river or a sluggish stream or winding rill or cataract. Many were situated on sheltered hill-sides, while others were in rough and exposed positions on ridges and slopes high above the glen. And through them all are the legends — the supernatural was never far away in those remote places. The story of Atholl can be told through its shielings.

NOTES

This is a revised version of the paper given on 28th March 1987 at the XIXth Conference of the Council for Name Studies held at the University of Nottingham.

The majority of the spellings of the early forms came from two shieling lists for 1669 and 1687, housed in the Charter Room of Blair Castle, Perthshire.

See also:

Dwelly, Edward *Illustrated Gaelic to English Dictionary* (1967).

Watson, W. J. *History of the Celtic Place-Names in Scotland* (1926).

ATHOLL SHIELING NAMES

<i>Early form</i>	<i>Gaelic</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
		(* = Shieling of ...)
Rinegalloch	Ruidhe na Coillich	*Cock grouse
Riefichet	Ruighe a' Bhiocair	*Vicar
Rienasrone	Ruidh na Sroine	*Nose/promontory
Riclachrie	Ruidh Chlachraidh	*Stones
Ririach	Ruidh Riabhach	*Brindled
Ffassmoull	Fas Bhaoghal	Danger shelter
Glackmarluk	Glaic nam Meirleach	Thief's hollow
Carn Dairge	Carn Dearg	Red cairn
Cuiltamuck	Cuiltmhuic	Pig's place
Ridorich Beg	Ruidh Dorcha Beag	Little dark shieling
Ridorich More	Ruidh Dorcha Mor	Big dark shieling
Keiries	Ruidh a' Chireichean	Combs
Aldavoulin	Allt a' Mhuillinn	Mill stream
Richard	Ruidh a' Chail	*Kale
Badnabiast	Bad nam Beiste	Beast's thicket
Rinaleckin	Ruidh na Leacainn	*Slope
Dalnalongan	Dal an Longan	Haugh of boats
Dallinspidal	Dail na Spideal	Hospice haugh
Dalinachy	Dail Fheannach	Shaggy haugh
Fealair	Feith Lair	Burn of the mare
Riecharlotte		*Charlotte
Rineill	Ruidh Niall	*Neil
Garraran	Garbh Sron	Rough nose

Rinastalkat	Ruidh' n Stalcair	*Stalker
Audveick	Allt a' Bhaic	Burn of the bank
Rienascolarin	Ruidh nan Sgolearan	*Scholar
Alt Fuirvanna	Allt Fuar-Mhonaidh	Stream of the cold mountain
Auld na Pladen	Allt nam Plaidean	Stream of the plaids
Allt nan Derkach	Allt nan Dearcag	Bilberry stream
	Ruidh Caochan nan Laogh	Stream of the calves
Auldchlais	Allt a' Chaise	Cheese burn
Aldanasaovy	Allt na Saobhaidh	Stream of the fox's den
	Ruidh bad an Fheidh	Clump of the deer
Liavad	Liath Bhad	Grey thicket
	Ruidh bad na Seabhag	Clump of falcons
Aldvaine	Ruidh Allt Mheann	Stream of the kid
Rinirich	Ruidh an Fhirich	*High ground
Altanamarick	Allt na Maraig	Pudding stream
Rinachrochy	Ruidh Allt a' Chrochaidh	*Hanging stream
Rieindowne	Ruidh an Duin	*Hill-fort
	Ruidh Feith an Duin	*Stream of the hill-fort
Auldnavalloch	Allt a' Bhealaich	Stream of the pass
Garbrough	Garbh Bruthach	Rough hill-side
Riefuirst	Ruidh a' Phuirt	*Pipe tune
Aldanderg	Alltan Dearg	Little red stream
Rienaguie	Ruidh na Gaoithe	*Wind
Caochannaluib	Caochan an Luib	Meandering stream
	Ruidh Caochan Dubh	*Black stream
Riechraggan	Ruighe a' Chreagain	*Rocks
Craggangoram	Creagan Gorm	Little green rocky place
Auldnachieri	Allt na H-Eachdra	Stream of the pen
Rienacloich	Ruidh na Cloiche	Stony shieling
Rienahildrick	Ruidh na-Eilrig	*Deer enclosure
Riechullan	Ruidh Chuilean	*Whelp
Strondias	Ruidh Sron nan Dias	Point of the blade
Leachnadiald	Leacainn Diollaidh	Saddle slope
Lachois	Leth-chois	One foot

The majority of the early forms are seventeenth-century.