Place-name losses and changes—a study in Peeblesshire: A comparative study of hill-names and other toponyms

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I have explored elsewhere the apparent degree of name change experienced by the hills of southern Scotland, on the basis of the names recorded in maps from the early 17th to the mid-19th centuries.[1] Table 1 below, a modified version of Table 1a on page 29 therein, summarises some of my evidence. In this paper I want to look in detail at one map, Armstrong's 1775 map of 'the county of Peebles or Tweedale', to see how the degree to which hill-names and other toponyms appear to have been lost or re-named between his map and the OS first edition, surveyed in the late 1850s, compares with the loss and re-naming of other topographical and settlement features.

Before proceeding to the details, I refer to a possible framework for analysing loss and change in Ainiala's study of name change and loss in a rural district of southern Finland, which found that hill-names had survived quite well compared to settlement, farming and forest names, although not as tenaciously as hydronyms and in particular marsh names.[2] Of course there are many differences between Finland and Scotland: the topography of the area of southern Finland she studied is low-lying and gently-rolling, dominated by lakes, marsh and forest: and as Finland was one of the last European countries to industrialise, much of the name loss and change she observed had taken place in the 20th century. Methodologically, Ainiala had access to extensive records for her study area—including oral surveys of known place-names at intervals throughout the 20th century—whereas my survey is based purely on map data.

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[1] P. Drummond, 'The hill names of Southern Scotland: a work in progress studying name change', *Journal of Scottish Name Studies*, 1 (2007), 27–36.

[2] T. Ainiala, 'On perpetuation, demise and change in place-names', in *You Name It: Perspectives on onomastic research*, Studia Fennica, Linguistica 7, edited by R. Pitkänen and K. Mallat (Helsinki, 1997), pp. 106-115.

Table 1: Changes in Southern Uplands hill names from old maps to OS present day

Change types:	Blaeu 1654*		Roy 1755	
	Number	%	Number	%
Unchanged (bar spelling)	128	32%	256	40%
Lost name	34	9%	41	6%
Change of specific	78	20%	115	18%
Change of generic	48	12%	42	7%
Change specific + generic	48	12%	113	18%
Minus 'Hill' since then	35	9%	14	2%
Plus 'Hill' since then	3	1%	31	5%
Order changed since then	23	6%	22	3%
Total	397		634	

*(repeated names on adjacent maps not included)

Ainiala suggests that the concept of 'lost' names is a continuum, with at one end names totally forgotten, and at the other names remembered perhaps only by a few people but no longer used. Thus in Table 2 below I record a place-name as 'lost' on the basis that it has disappeared even from OS maps at 1:25000 scale, while it is possible—although very unlikely—that it is known to some local people. I venture that this will have minimal impact on the results, especially as the OS were and are more thorough in collecting place-names than previous surveyors could have been—and an OS 1:25000 map is probably a pretty accurate measure of 'use' of a name.

My two cartographic sources are from the mid-18th and mid-19th centuries; the former is Mostyn Armstrong's 1775 map of 'the county of Peebles or Tweedale', the latter the first edition of the Ordnance Survey, which for this area was surveyed in the late 1850s but published in 1873, nearly a century after Armstrong. Armstrong, besides being a cartographer, might be viewed as an early onomastician, and in *A Companion to the Map of the County of Peebles and Tweedale*, wrote:

'. . . Hills are as variously named, according to their magnitude; as Law, Pen, Kipp, Coom, Dod, Craig, Fell, Top, Drum, Tor, Watch, Rig, Edge, Know, Knock, Mount, Kaim, Bank, Hope-head, Cleugh-head, Gare, Scarr, Height, Shank, Brae, Kneis, Muir, Green, etc'

What a fine list of hill name generics, or oronyms!

The data in Table 2 below are drawn from a comparison of Armstrong's map and the first Ordnance Survey edition for Peebles. The term 'spelling change' in the table indicates that the specific and generic in the name are recognisably the same in spite of minor spelling variation, or that the generic 'hill' has been added without altering the name, perhaps as an epexegetic exercise: thus, for example, the Coulter Fell, Harley Muir and Trahannah of 1775 are recognisably Culter Fell, Harlaw Muir and Trahenna Hill in 1860. Whereas 'changed' in the Table indicates that either the specific or the generic (or both) have changed in a manner indicating a new specific or generic. There are however a few grey areas: is the *Hairstane* farm on the Tweed, 1775, the same name as its 1860 incarnation as Hearthstane—i.e. is a corruption (or possibly a correction, if indeed Armstrong got it wrong) of the

specific a minor or a full change? For the purpose of this exercise, I counted the few such examples as minor changes, i.e. unchanged in the table.[3]

Table 2: Place-name loss and change from Armstrong (1775) to OS (c1860)

Category	Unchanged / spelling change	Lost	Changed	Number
Hill names	72%	4%	24%	243
Other topographical names	76%	14%	10%	42
Watercourses & loch names	88%	0%	12%	114
Settlement names	75%	22%	3%	482

Looking at Table 2 above, the rates of loss and change of names vary considerably across the four categories. As would be perhaps expected, settlements have the highest rate of loss: expected because with the decline of rural economy and the rise of urban industrialisation, many remoter farms would have fallen into disuse between the mid-18th and mid-19th centuries, and this is what we find here. Names like *Esk Head*, *Bogend*, *Bents* and the several *Herds Houses* mapped in 1775 almost tell their own story as places where an existence was eked out on very marginal land, and whose children were probably glad to leave even for the grim mills of the towns. Occasionally their name lives on in a nearby hill or wood, such as the lost *Rushyden*, high on the Pentlands, ancestor of Thrashiedean Plantation, or Highlandshiels Burn, another onomastic tombstone for a summer settlement or 'shiel'. In contrast to name loss, the degree of name change applied to settlements is small, again as one would expect since settlements are very fixed points of reference and their names known to many people. The bulk of the name changes are to the specific, and in some way resemble a late 'christening': thus farms

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[3] The only other examples are Yarnycleugh / Kerrcleugh, Harbourshaw / Herbertshaw, and Woolandslee / Williamslee. (Armstrong name first, OS second).

mapped in 1775 as simply *Mains* or *Know*[e] or *Lint Mill* are shown in 1860 as Skirling Mains, Broughton Knowe and West Mill respectively; while *West Millburn* becomes simple Millburn, and *Middle Whitefield* simple Whitefield (the *East Millburn* and *Nether Whitefield* farms having disappeared). Changes of both specific and generic are rare: *Naked Knows* became Townhead, *Johnshome* became Heavyside, *Thanes Mains* became Drummelzier Haugh, and *Kayscraigs* morphed into Holms Waterhead: these comprise 1% of all settlements, and are mainly in the Biggar area. (The first of these remained Townhead well into the 20th century, but latterly became Galalaw, perhaps chosen for its more euphonious nature?)

Before we leave settlement names, it is worth considering Table 3 below. It shows the very few settlement names which changed after the OS 1st edition. This suggests that OS mapping had the effect on place-names that the first dictionaries and grammars had on spelling generally, in that names and words which for centuries had evolved spellings and possibly pronunciation were suddenly arrested as if photographically snapped, and subsequent evolution did not continue at the same pace—the OS had set a standard which brooked no competition.

What Table 3 shows is that, subsequent to the OS 1st edition, any remaining changes to settlement names were not only very few in number but minor in nature: two mills eventually gained a new specific; two settlements that fell into disuse and ruin and were resurrected with marginally different specifics; one (Innerleithen) had a name change by one letter; another had a minor sound and spelling change (Ruddenleys); while Linton village became West Linton in the 20th century, presumeably to distinguish it from East Linton village near Dunbar. The anomaly of Townhead / Galalaw has already been mentioned.

Topographical features other than hills named in 1775 were mainly mosses, passes and small cliffs. Their rate of name loss to 1860 at 14% may seem high, but the losses are mainly remote moors or mosses whose economic significance will have declined with the retreat of marginal farms: *Bowbeat Eye*, *Cadon Pool*, *Rotten Moss*, *Holms Common*, *Huntlaw Moss* and *Cow Craig* illustrate this category. The changes of name leave the original form still 'visible': thus *Megget*

Table 3: Settlement names that changed later than OS 1st edition

Armstrong 1775	OS 1st ed. (1850s)	OS 2nd ed. (1890s)	OS 3rd ed. (1900s)	OS (1920s)	Current map
Dolphington Mill	Mill	Mill	Newmill		Newmill
Hepcarton	no building mapped	no building mapped	Hopecarton (new build)		Hopecarton
Hulhope	no building mapped	no building mapped	Woolhope (new build)		Woolhope
Inverleithing	Inverleithen	Innerleithen		Innerleithen	Innerleithen
Linton	Linton	Linton	West Linton	West Linton	West Linton
Naked Knows	Townhead	Townhead	Townhead	Townhead	Galalaw Farm
Posso Mill	Mill	Mill	Mill	Mill	Dawyck Mill
Redlandlees	Riddenlees	Riddenlees	Riddenlees	Ruddenleys	Ruddenleys
Tweedhope	Tweedhope	Tweedhope	Tweedhopefoot		Tweedhopefoot

Moss became Talla Moss, suggesting a change of farm usage rights from west to east of its watershed; *Penicuik Muir* became Auchencorth Moss (probably because the Penicuikers no longer used it for grazing, being now millworkers and the like, while the farmer at Auchencorth did); *Yellow Moss* became Yellow Mire, and *Beefstand* north of Moffat became the Devil's Beeftub, probably due to the influence of the popular Walter Scott novel *Redgauntlet*, which locates a Jacobite rebel fleeing through it: 'A d—d deep black blackguard-looking abyss of a hole it is'.[4]

Watercourses cannot really disappear (in rural areas certainly), and their linear nature makes it difficult to change their name because of their importance to people living along their lengths. Not surprisingly then, lost hydronyms are rare, though changes are fairly commonplace. These changes mainly affect very small burns in marginal land, where the disappearance of the farms may have taken the old specific out: thus *Millhope Burn* became Henderland Burn, the *Powrail Burn* the Drummelzier Burn, and the *Glengaber Burn* the Fingland Burn. Normally only the specific has changed, although the *Lugate Burn* became the Lugate Water, and the Pentlands' *Linhouse Water* became the Crosswood Burn, reflecting the fact that Crosswood farm was much closer to its upper reaches than Linhouse much further downstream.

There is however an anomalous group of changed hydronyms on the north edge of the Moorfoot hills. The substantial loch mapped in 1775 as *Water Loch* (as it also appears on Roy's 1755 map)—a intriguingly tautological name—appears in 1860 as Portmore Loch: this is almost certainly due to its position as a feature of an estate centred on the new grand mansion bearing the name Portmore House. The stream flowing northwards from the loch is mapped in 1775 as the *South Esk*—as it was still named in the 'New' *Statistical Account* for Eddleston parish[5] —but in 1860 the OS referred to it as the Loch Burn.[6] Meanwhile, the next substantial north-flowing watercourse to the east was *Moorfoot Water* in 1775, but *Gladhouse Water* in 1860, named after the farm downstream:

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[4] Sir Walter Scott, *Redgauntlet*, chapter 9, edition *ad libitum*.

[5] *The New Statistical Account of Scotland*, 15 vols (Edinburgh, 1834-1845; repr. 1945), III, 146.

[6] The Loch Burn is nowadays classed as a tributary of the South Esk.

a reservoir now covers the farm, and the same watercourse is now mapped as South Esk, a change that took place between 2nd and 3rd OS revisions, viz. 1890 and 1901. Possibly this re-naming was at the behest of the water board's bureaucracy. The other substantial watercourse that has undergone re-naming is that which flows south through Eddleston to Peebles, where it joins the Tweed: Armstrong recorded it as the Peebles Water, the OS as Eddleston Water. Blaeu in 1654 had it as *Peebles Water*, but Edgar's map of 1741 had it as Athelston [Eddleston] Water, and both names appeared on two competing maps in the 1820s: Armstrong's map's patron, to whom he dedicated the map, was Viscount Peebles, so perhaps he chose the alternative, Peebles, as it was more politic for him. The First and Second *Statistical Accounts* for Peebles parish, written by the local ministers respectively in the 1790s and 1830s, indicate that either name was acceptable, but both tend to use 'Eddleston' most frequently as the specific.[7] Certainly the name has remained Eddleston Water since the OS. This example illustrates another point Ainiala makes, that the process of name change often involves the emergence of a parallel name—only rarely does a name undergo a sudden change.[8]

Hill names or oronyms, while showing a small number of lost names, have a striking incidence of name changes. Dealing briefly with the lost names: sometimes they are substantial eminences, but have fallen out of use in favour of the individual names for their discrete parts; *Dolphington Hills* of 1775, a rather vague term with no prior map existence, becomes the two neighbouring peaks of Black Mount and White Hill in 1860 (the former was also on the 1775 map). *Cairn Edge* and *Bavelaw Edge*, well-named shelves running south-west from West Cairn Hill and Hare Hill respectively, disappeared along with another in the Pentlands of similar topography, by the time of the OS mapping—in both cases, the bigger hill at the northern end was deemed to name the whole ridge or edge. Most of the other lost hill names are, as would be expected, of minor hills like *Gruntlawcraig* and *Bells Craig*, and some in 1775 were in almost embryonic, generic form, like *Kip* (south-west of Dolphinton),

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[7] *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, edited by J Sinclair, 21 vols (Edinburgh, 1791-99), XII, 1-2; *The New Statistical Account of Scotland*, III, 1, 16.
[8] Ainiala, 'On Perpetuation, Demise and Change in Place-Names', p. 109.

Coom or *Swire* (by Innerleithen): their subsequent failure to take on a specific condemned them to die out from later maps. An exception to the above features of lost hill names is *Three Lairds Cairn*, which Armstrong records on high ground between Hart Fell and White Coomb: there are hill names elsewhere that echo this marking of a junction of three estates, like Carn nan Tri-tighearnan near Inverness and Three Lairds Hillock in Ross-shire, but this one has sadly gone.

But what is more remarkable about hill names is their degree of apparent change, with nearly a quarter of the hills having undergone some alteration in the space of less than a century. Table 4 shows the data.

Table 4: Hill name change between Armstrong 1775 and OS 1860

%	Change type	Number
64	Unchanged (bar spelling)	154
4	Lost name	12
10	Change of specific	25
7	Change of generic	17
7	Change specific + generic	16
2	Subtract 'hill' from 1775 name	5
6	Add 'hill' to 1775 name	14
	Total	**243**

We have already seen how watercourse or settlement names changed mainly by adding a specific to a simplex form, or by changing the specific to that of a farm more important or relevant. This has happened to some hill names too. Simplex forms mapped in 1775 like *Craig, Kipps,* and *Knock* became on the OS map Dreva Craig, Newby Kipps and Muckle Knock: in a similar vein of clarification (or intensification), 1775's *Black Dod* and *White Hill* near the upper Tweed became North Black Dod and Whiteside Hill, to distinguish them perhaps from the many black- or white-named hills. Examples of ownership specifics more relevant to the changing land management might include *Great Law* becoming Drummelzier Law, *Cleughhead* becoming Talla Cleughhead, and *Quarter Law* becoming Parkgatestone Hill, as these eponymous farms or estates rose to prominence locally.

The Broughton Heights area has several names of Cumbric origin including the still-extant Penveny and Penvalla hills, but Armstrong's map also records *Tramores Hill*, possibly a *tref* name: Dramore Wood still exists on its slopes, but the working of the local stone means the hill became known by 1860 as the sadly anodyne Quarry Hill. Another hill in this area with a potential Cumbric origin is *Driterton Hill* (*Dridder-don* in Blaeu) which appears to have become one of the few names to show corruption into the form Riding Hill. One hill near Peebles has an interesting onomastic history: in Blaeu (1654) it was *Kingkyps Hill*, in Roy (1755) simply *Kipps*, while Armstrong had it as *Shieldgreen Kipps*, and the OS 1860 as *Makeness Kipps*. More recently however the OS has re-named it Shieldgreen Kipps—perhaps reflecting the rise of the specific in the form of the Shieldgreen Outdoor Centre at its foot—but the name Makeness Kipps remains applied to the second lower set of pointed rocks ('kips') on its north-east summit.

However what makes changes in hill names especially distinctive is not the changes in specifics but the changes in generics, from *Clover Hill* to Clover Law, *Quarter Law* to Quarter Hill, *Paperbrae* to Paper Hill. There is no obvious pattern to these changes, for while although not surprisingly the English 'hill' has often been the winner, the generics 'dod', 'head', 'knowe', and 'rig' have all made gains. To this category might be added the dozen or so names where the generic 'hill' has been added: sometimes to simplex forms in Gaelic (two hills called simply *Tor* in 1775) or in unusual Scots (*Coom*—meaning arched in shape, and *Tortie*—meaning 'tortoise [-shaped?]'); and sometimes to names whose forms were perhaps felt (either locally, or maybe by the OS surveyor) to need the explanatory term 'hill' added—thus *Birks Cairn*, *Gather Snow* and *White Side* all took on 'Hill', effectively as an added generic. Another instance might be *Caresman* (*Karesman* in Blaeu), which has remains of prehistoric settlements on two of its promontories. Possibly, the old form included Cumbric *caer*, a fort (usually a hill-fort), one of several in the upper Tweed basin, but since *caer* would be opaque to Scots speakers, it became Caresman Hill. One reason that hill names seem more prone to changing generic than other toponyms is that while there are limited alternatives in Scots for hydronyms (e.g. *burn* and

water), there are a wide range of oronyms in the language, as Armstrong's list, quoted earlier, attests.

A step further in name-change is taken when we consider the names that have changed not just in generic but also in specific. Table 5 below lists the apparent members of this category.

Table 5: Changes involving the specific and generic, 1775 to 1860

Armstrong 1775	OS 1860
Bank	Breach Law
Black Dody	Cramalt Craig
Cala Cairn	Wether Law (Prehistoric cairn on summit)
Chester Rig	Logan Head
Cross Skrine	Pyatknowe Hill
Earickle	Erie Hill
Fingland Hill*	Big Dod
Glenkerie Rig	Cocklie Rig Head
Law	Keppat Hill
Law	Totto Hill
Mousdean Head*	Black Knowe
New Hall Hill*	Blake Muir
Noult Rig	Shielhope Hill?
Penairs	Wether Law OR Brown Dod
Pinnacles	Snout Hill
Sandyknow Head	Stob Law
Shaw Hill*	Taberon Law
Torpedy	Hopekist Rig
White Hill	Moss Law
White Law Dod	Badlieu Rig
Wolfhope Law	Horse Hope Hill

There are 21 hills in Table 5, compiled by comparing the two maps. On closer examination however, four of the Armstrong names (indicated by an asterisk) can be found extant on the slopes of the OS-named hill, e.g. Fingland Hill is still mapped on the northern slopes of Big Dod. This suggests that sometimes hills have alternative names from different

angles—compare Ainiala's observation, above, re parallel forms—a point we will return to. Of the remaining 17, two are clearly simplex generics that needed at least a specific but actually took on a generic as well, i.e. the two *Law* hills; and one Erie Hill, which may be a corruption of *Earickle* (perhaps from Gaelic *eileirig*, a deer trap). The rather quaint *Pinnacles* may in fact be the Scots word *pendicle*, a detached piece of a landholding, as the *Scottish National Dictionary* indicates.[9] This still leaves a goodly number which seem to have been re-named wholesale.

The bulk of these—as well as the bulk of those which have changed specific or generic alone—are located in the south-west corner of Peeblesshire, in the hilliest part of the county. (Armstrong drew a meridian and a parallel both centred on Peebles, on his map: over 81% of the three types of changed hill names are located south and west of these lines.) This is the part of the county where, as a result of the terrain, communications are difficult and farming relatively marginal, and in consequence the names of any one hill would be known to but a few people: if a farmer died or moved away, the name could go with him, and any subsequent settlement might bring a new name, or at least a changed name. Shepherds from one glen would encounter those from neighbouring glens on the tops, but the names each had for the hills would have been more strongly shared with the people they dwelt with in their separate glens, and of course any one hill has two or more sides and thus could have two or more names (as the four asterisked names in Table 5 suggest)—or different names for different parts of the hill's skyline or shoulders could get confused. This harks back to Ainiala's point about the emergence of parallel names. Indeed, several well-known hills in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK have, or have had, more than one name—Snowdon / Yr Wyddfa, Pen y Fal / Sugarloaf, Blencathra / Saddleback, Suilven / Sugarloaf, Ben Arthur / The Cobbler, often reflecting linguistic deposits in the surrounds. The name recorded by map-makers could thus be a matter of chance, depending on who they spoke to, and which glen they travelled up. The OS were naturally

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[9] *The Scottish National Dictionary*, edited by W. Grant *et al*. (Edinburgh, 1931-76), s.v. pendicle, *n*. 2.(1). The obsolescent variant, *pinnackle*, recorded in the dictionary, may be relevant here.

more thorough in this process, often getting names from several sources; whilst Armstrong in 1775 with limited resources could not have had that luxury. It is even possible that the names which appeared for the first time on the OS map did exist in 1775, but that Armstrong never encountered people who shared that name with him.

In conclusion, Ainiala's observations regarding the tenacity of southern Finnish hill names do not seem to apply in southern Scotland. Unlike in Finland, hill names have *not* survived well compared to settlement names and other toponyms. This is probably in part a reflection of the fact that whilst a low southern Finnish hill (a *harju* rather than a substantial *tunturi* of the far north) is a distinctive feature of its well-peopled landscape, thus known to many people, this cannot be said of one top in the crowded hill masses of thinly-populated upper Peeblesshire, where one glen's people may have known a hill by a different name than the neighbours on the far side.