

# Oil and gas field names in the central and northern sectors of the North Sea: their provenance, cultural influence, longevity and onshore migration<sup>1</sup>

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## **Abstract**

A review of the oil and gas field names of the Central and Northern Sectors of the North Sea shows that although there are no official regulations relating to choice of name, unofficial rules prevent names from being confusing, offensive or farcical. Field names follow themes chosen by the companies who originally developed them. For example, Shell's fields are named after birds. Names in the Central and Northern Sectors of the North Sea are different to names in the Southern Sector in that they have an overwhelming Scottish feel. They appear to have been deliberately chosen to acknowledge the surrounding culture. It is likely, but difficult to prove, that names took on a more Scottish feel in the late 1970s. It is suggested that this was because of a combination of companies increasingly moving their offices to Aberdeen, Scottish nationalism gaining strength and American influence in the UK oil industry waning. Culture and censorship play an important part in the naming of oil and gas fields. In contrast to the conservative naming in the UK, Dutch offshore fields are numbered rather than named, Norwegian field names are required to be in the Norwegian language and American names are highly individualistic. Although the oil and gas industries will have a limited lifespan in the UK, the names of some of the oil and gas fields are likely to outlast the fields themselves. Some have already migrated onshore in the form of street and building names and so are likely to remain for some time. This is an extension of past practice; whereby names associated with past industries in the North East of Scotland have left their mark on the area.

The oil and gas industry has been a crucial part of the North East economy for over thirty years and oil and gas have been described as 'the most important British natural resources to be discovered' in the

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<sup>1</sup> This is a revised version of the essay awarded the 2008 Essay Prize by the Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland.

twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> In 1975 a small entrepreneurial American company, Hamilton Brothers, working in the Argyll field, brought the first British oil ashore, to be followed very soon after by British Petroleum (BP) in the massive Forties field. Discoveries of oil grew in number as more companies, British, European and American, took out leases on sectors of the North Sea.<sup>3</sup>

While considerable research has been carried out into a variety of technical and social fields, one area that has not been researched is oil and gas field naming. This paper intends to look first at why oil and gas fields are named, before going on to look at how names have been selected and by whom. Comparisons will be made with the naming process in three other oil producing countries and an attempt will be made to link culture to name choice.

This paper will also attempt to identify if there has been a migration of offshore names onshore and if so in what capacity and why. Finally, it will look at the impact of oil and gas field names on the people of the North East of Scotland, speculating at their longevity.

The area under study is the UK sector north of the Mid-North Sea High (approximately latitude 56° to 62° North), termed the Central and Northern sector of the North Sea and the UK Atlantic Margin north of 60° North, hereafter 'the field area'. The Median line provides a border between UK and Danish and Norwegian waters.

The names under investigation were taken from the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) list of current producing fields (Appendix 1).<sup>4</sup> At the time of research, 2005, there were 173 oil and gas fields in this field area, operated by 22 different companies. The companies involved in the naming process have or had (as some no longer exist) their headquarters in a number of countries across the world, for example, Total, Elf (France); Phillips, Texaco (USA); Shell (Netherlands/UK); BP (UK) and Petro Canada (Canada).

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<sup>2</sup> UK Offshore Operators Association and the Natural History Museum, *Britain's Offshore Oil and Gas* (London, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> Shell UK are gratefully acknowledged for permission to use the map in Figure 1.

<sup>4</sup> There are between 50 and 100 other discoveries, fields and abandoned fields which do not appear on this list because they are no longer producing or are about to be developed. The importance of these names will be discussed later.

Oil companies are generally multi-national and the employees multi-cultural, an important factor when considering field names.

The provenance of each of the names listed in Appendix 1 was researched over a period of 6 months in 2005.<sup>5</sup> At first sight, it can be difficult to find commonality amongst the names. The reason for this is that since the earliest days of oil exploration, companies have merged, been taken over and closed down, and fields have been relinquished and bought over by other companies. Take for example, the disparate group of field names operated by CNR International (a subsidiary of Canadian Natural Resources Limited): Balmoral, Glamis, Stirling, Kyle, Lyell, Murchison, Ninian, Ninian-Columba, Playfair, Thelma, Tiffany, Toni, Banff. It is only once the fields are sorted into their company of origin that they can be seen as part of an onomastic web (see Appendix 2). This gives force to the argument that 'names do not exist in isolation but in relationship to other names'.<sup>6</sup> These 13 fields were named by 7 different companies.

The first obstacle then, was to find out which company had originally been involved in the naming of the field, before trying to locate someone who had been involved in the naming process. This was no mean task since there is considerable movement at both company and employee level within the oil business. It was rare indeed to find a company still owning a field it had named and rarer still to find the person who had named it still within that company. However, with some detective work most field names could be discussed with either the namer or with someone with a close association.<sup>7</sup>

On first examination, looking simply at the list of names in the field area (Appendix 1) it would be possible to sort most of the names into onomastic webs. For example, first names: Andrew, Angus, Beryl, Blake, Bruce, Clair, Don, Fergus, Flora, Franklin, Grant, Hamish, Heather, Iona, Jade, James, Janice, Joanne, Judy, Keith, Kyle, Magnus, Mungo, Ninian, Petronella, Renee, Ross, Rubie, Scott, Thelma, Tiffany,

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<sup>5</sup> Although there were 173 producing fields there were 152 individual names due to duplication of names (e.g. Brae East, Brae West).

<sup>6</sup> W. F. H. Nicolaisen, 'Names in Northern Scotland Workbook' (unpublished course handbook, University of Aberdeen, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 4.

Toni. However, a number of these names could also refer to place names: Angus, Don, Iona, Keith, Kyle, Ross, and several could refer to Scottish saints: Andrew, Magnus, Mungo, Ninian. It is only after enquiry that the true onomastic webs emerge, confirming that it is important to ‘ascertain at all times what the exact content of a name happens to be at any one time’, since ‘a name without content is like a word without meaning.’<sup>8</sup> For this reason each field name was personally discussed with a representative from that company.

Place names allow orientation. ‘They also turn potentially threatening wilderness into a familiar habitat. There would be no landscape without names.’<sup>9</sup> Flying across the North Sea, there is something vaguely comforting in seeing the flares from oil platforms, allowing orientation in an otherwise featureless seascape.

The question of how to choose a name for an oil or gas field with no visible features on the surface is an interesting one. Where a field lies relatively close to shore one could choose a topographical feature or place name from onshore for the name, but when the field lies many miles offshore with nothing surrounding it but sea and more sea, the problem becomes more difficult.

In fact before the naming process is explained, the question needs to be addressed, ‘Why name a field in the first instance?’ After all, the fields are already designated by their block number, for example 15/29. Indeed, these numbers seem to be more firmly ingrained in the minds of the geologists and others who worked on them even than the field names are; ‘Mention of 53/4–1 reminds me of my first offshore experience’.<sup>10</sup>

However, there are also practical reasons for naming blocks, as John Wham explains: ‘First to preserve secrecy in advance of a lease round application and second, to distinguish one field from another within a licence block.’<sup>11</sup> The names are unique to each field and become the main identifier throughout development, production and decommissioning.

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<sup>8</sup> Nicolaisen, ‘Names in Northern Scotland Workbook’.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Tales from Early UK Oil Exploration 1960-1979*, edited by R. Moreton (London, 1995), p. 29.

<sup>11</sup> John Wham, Chevron Corporation, personal correspondence, 2005.

Some knowledge of the licensing process is needed to understand the naming process. Following the signing of the Geneva Convention in 1958, the Continental Shelf Act came into being. This permitted for the first time the exploration of continental shelves worldwide. In 1964 the UK government designated each degree-square quadrant as far north as 62° into blocks for the oil and gas industry. Blocks in each quadrant were numbered from 1–30 and offered to companies in the first licensing round. Licensing rounds take place quite regularly (approximately every second year), when new blocks are offered and old ones are relinquished.

Exploration companies explore these blocks and identify features that might be suitable for drilling. At the ideas stage these are called *leads* and when they are ready for drilling they are called *prospects*. Companies name leads and prospects and usually these names are chosen by the geologist/seismic interpreter working on the evaluation. These ‘names’ are either straightforward numbers and letters, for example 15/23—A, or more commonly, names which can be quirky, idiosyncratic and original, for example Dumbledore, Hermione etc.

*When I was in Jakarta with Enterprise oil we had exploration prospects that were named after Manchester United football players ... a lot more imagination goes into the naming of prospects as there are far more of them than there are oil or gas fields’.*<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, many people I interviewed spoke with affection of names of prospects they had worked on. These names are every bit as interesting as the official field names, and deserve research, but this would be difficult, since oil companies are very secretive when it comes to exploration. Exploration departments often have restricted access.

In the UK, BERR has responsibility for sanctioning new names and the approach is very free. Clearly, the naming of an oilfield ‘is a matter of company pride’,<sup>13</sup> which perhaps is why BERR is keen to allow as much freedom to companies in the choice of names as possible. In the

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<sup>12</sup> Paul Griffin, Dana Petroleum, personal correspondence, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> J. Gillard, ‘Christening of a North Sea rig takes deep consideration’, *The Scotsman*, 26<sup>th</sup> December 2001, p.18.

words of Simon Toole of BERR, 'It would seem to me to be a really heavy handed bit of red tape to deny the people who pay for a well to make a discovery the pleasure of naming it.'<sup>14</sup> Freedom of choice and expression is clearly a cultural more. As expressed by Hofstede,

*A classic joke puts it that in Britain everything is permitted except that which is forbidden; in Germany everything is forbidden except that which is permitted and in France everything is permitted, even that which is forbidden.'*<sup>15</sup>

The British, it seems, do not have a fondness for unnecessary rules.

Having said that, on the odd occasion names will be rejected. For example, Simon Toole recalls rejecting 'Brahms and Liszt' because of the Cockney rhyming slang. 'Parliament' was also rejected because of its connection with the government. 'Monroe' (after Marilyn Monroe) was rejected but a compromise change of spelling to Munro was suggested by BERR. Munro was part of a number of prospects named by geologists from ConocoPhillips and while 'Monroe' could be easily 'Scotticised', they considered that their next prospect name, 'Bogart', 'might prove a little more difficult'.<sup>16</sup>

Although there are no official written rules, there are clearly unwritten ones. Many company representatives who I spoke to stated, 'We thought of calling it X, but felt that the name would be rejected by BERR'. As a general 'rule' names may be rejected if they are **confusing** (i.e. duplicated elsewhere or difficult to pronounce) or **likely to cause offence** (i.e. they should not be 'political', in bad taste or farcical). Simon Toole of BERR says that, in spite of their best efforts, there has been duplication. For example, a number of companies have chosen whiskies and castles for their naming convention. Mispronunciation can be a safety hazard, so names are generally kept simple. This is borne out by the lack of Scottish Gaelic names. Of course, it would also be fair to say that there are few fields in the waters off the Highland West Coast, where Scottish Gaelic is still in fairly widespread use, and those closest

<sup>14</sup> Personal correspondence, October 2005.

<sup>15</sup> G. Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London, 2001), p. 375/2.

<sup>16</sup> Heather Auld, ConocoPhillips, personal correspondence, November 2005.

to this area do have Scottish Gaelic names: Foinaven and Schiehallion. As John Hart of the Chevron Corporation expressed it:

*'As a general rule, naming of prospects was agreed by the Geologists / Geophysicists whereas the naming of fields was the prerogative of management and they had to be politically correct.'*<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, BERR is willing to accept names which are light hearted; for example, they accepted the fields 'Fyne and Dandy' located in the Central North Sea.<sup>18</sup>

It is interesting to compare the approach of BERR in the UK to the naming process with its equivalent bodies elsewhere in the world. We will return to this question later, when considering the influence of culture on naming.

When the first oil field names were chosen in the North Sea in the early 1970s there was no offshore precedent set. The companies who proposed the first names were trend setters. The earliest fields named by BP and Shell were named after sea areas, for example, Forties, and sea bed features, for example, Leman, named after the Leman Bank, a major sandbank in the North Sea. Since then the choice of names has been incredibly varied and colourful, for example, Frigg, Petronella, Osprey, Halley, Gryphon, Machar and Beinn.

Could it be that these names have been chosen to be as far removed as possible from the 'grease and grime of the energy industry and a stark contrast from many of the other unimaginative names used in the jargon-ridden sector'?<sup>19</sup> It should be remembered that the people who name the oilfields, the geologists/seismic interpreters, generally *are* far removed from the aforementioned 'grease and grime', in comfortable city-based offices. As Barbara Lewis notes, oil fields are given 'human and super-human faces, suggestive of the affection or awe with which the industry views its deposits of black gold.'<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Personal correspondence, November 2005.

<sup>18</sup> These fields are not yet producing.

<sup>19</sup> Gillard, 'Christening of a North Sea rig takes deep consideration'.

<sup>20</sup> B. Lewis, 'They're not always slick but oil names match the industry's spirit', *The Birmingham Post*, 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2001, p. 26.

Indeed, in an industry that continues to be male-dominated, many of the names display an unusual ‘softness’; this is similar to the naming of boats. In fact, the installations which sit atop the fields are always referred to in the feminine form and interestingly enough are normally referred to using the definite article: ‘I’m going to *the* Schiehallion.’

Of the fields examined (see Appendix 2), a number of observations can be made. First, over half the fields (56.3%) have a name with a strong Scottish connection, whether that be through iconography (e.g. Tartan, Piper, Heather, Highlander, Thistle), places (e.g. Banff, Don, Lomond, Montrose, Schiehallion), or famous Scots (e.g. Miller, Rob Roy, MacCulloch). This seems to have been a deliberate ‘tactic’ on the part of the oil companies to acknowledge the distinct culture in which they were operating.<sup>21</sup>

Most companies prefer naming conventions as they are convenient and provide a sense of continuity. A number have been identified in this field area:

Natural History (birds, animals, trees and flowers)	
Topographical features (mountains, rivers)	
Famous People (engineers, geologists, explorers)	
First names	Miscellaneous
Celtic saints	Scottish Iconography
Place Names	Sir Walter Scott
Castles	Dances
Scottish Clans	Whiskies

Just over 20% have a Natural History theme; Shell’s bird fields account for the vast proportion of these (e.g. Kittiwake, Fulmar, Bittern, Auk). Around 13% have a topographical theme, particularly through names of mountains (e.g. Schiehallion, Nevis, Loyal), rivers (e.g. Deveron, Don, Clyde) and lochs (e.g. Skene, Ness).

11% are named after famous people, most of whom are famous Scots (e.g. Murchison, Telford, Hutton). First names are next in popularity, at around 10%. These have mostly been named by American companies (e.g. James, Rubie, Thelma). 9% are termed ‘miscellaneous’ and cover a

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<sup>21</sup> See Appendix 4 s.n.n. Ardmore, Heather, Pict, Telford.



wide variety of themes, some being part of a larger naming convention in the southern North Sea, such as Captain. Others are named after people who have been involved in their discovery (e.g. Pierce). Saints (e.g. Madoes, Mirren, Ninian, Columba) and Scottish iconography (e.g. Alba, Caledonia, Chanter) are at around 8%, while place-names (e.g. Arbroath, Brechin, Angus) and names connected with Sir Walter Scott (e.g. Fergus, Flora, Ivanhoe) are 7%. Castles (e.g. Tullich, Glamis, Stirling), dances (e.g. Strathspey, Petronella), Scottish clans (e.g. Bruce, Erskine) and whiskies (e.g. Ardmore) have only a small representation.

However, it is important to note that **all** fields are generally part of a larger naming convention. This project can only give an idea of the much bigger picture. An imaginary border has been drawn to tie the project to Scotland and to limit its size. However, the oil industry is very much a British industry and it would be wrong to look at the names in the field area in isolation. The Blake field, for instance, would appear not to fit with any other naming convention. To find its companions, Hawkins, Seymour and Drake, one has to look at the Southern sector of the North Sea (see Appendix 3).

As well as using a naming convention, many companies have also opted to use alphabetical order (e.g. Auk, Bittern, Curlew, Dunlin, Eider, Fulmar). Fifty-eight of the one hundred and fifty-three fields start with the first six letters of the alphabet (see Appendix 1). This is when narrowing down the study to a list of **producing fields** can give a false picture; Hamilton Brothers had a number of prospects named alphabetically, including Argyll, Bruce, Crawford, Duncan, Esmond, Forbes, Gordon, Hamilton and Innis, yet only Argyll (renamed Ardmore) features on the list in our field area.

To identify clusters of fields it was common to refer to them as the 'J' Fields or the 'B' Block, etc. American companies such as Mobil and Phillips seem to have favoured eponymous names, with some arbitrary others referring to specific people—Beatrice and Beryl for example, are the names of the wives of company directors. This leads conveniently back to the issue of culture. Eponymous names are generally not popular in the UK. A study of the route names of Scottish mountain Lochnagar shows a move away from the eponymous names of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century: 'The paucity of eponymous names can be

accounted for by the fact that naming protocol generally prevents climbers from using eponymous names.<sup>22</sup> How much of this is censorship by the Scottish Mountaineering Club (SMC), who approve the names, and how much is the climbers themselves not wishing to use eponymous names because it would be boastful, is not certain. The editor of the *SMC Guide* writes: 'I always thought it was to encourage modesty. Climbs have character and features. There is nothing in a person's name to help you remember the climb. Personal names are dull.'<sup>23</sup> The same question could be asked of BERR, although there would not appear to be any censorship against eponymous names here in the UK.

For my dissertation, in an attempt to see how culture might affect name choice, three other countries were examined: The Netherlands, Norway and the USA. In the Netherlands, offshore fields do not tend to be named, but rather numbered. In Norway, naming is sanctioned by the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate. The system seems to be somewhat more regulated there: 'The Norwegian Language Council has recommended that field names shall be spelt and pronounced in compliance with the Norwegian language system.'<sup>24</sup> What this actually means is that all names must be Norwegian. And speaking of language, problems can occur in the translation. The Frigg field, which straddles both the Norwegian and the UK sectors, while perfectly respectable in Norway has negative connotations in English.

In the USA, the Texas Railroad Commission is responsible for sanctioning field names. Like BERR, they accept just about anything as long as it is 'not vulgar or profane and the name is less than 32 characters in length'.<sup>25</sup> They confirm that it is common practice to name fields after

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<sup>22</sup> S. Young, 'Between a rock and a hard place: a study of the function, structure and semantics of the route names on Lochnagar,' (unpublished dissertation, University of Aberdeen, 2009).

<sup>23</sup> Andy Nisbet, Scottish Mountaineering Club, personal correspondence, November, 2009.

<sup>24</sup> J. Ellingsve, 'Naming the Unseen: Theoretical Problems and Pragmatic Solutions Concerning the Naming of Norwegian Oil and Gas Fields in the North Sea', in *Proceedings of the XIXth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, Aberdeen, August 4–11, 1996*, 3 vols (Aberdeen, 1998), II, 90–96 (p. 90).

<sup>25</sup> Jim Melear, Texas Railroad Commission, personal correspondence, 2005.

company staff or their wives. Nevertheless there is a wide variety of names in offshore fields; for example, Third Choice:

On our applications for New Field Designation we ask for 3 possible field names. This operator only gave us 2 options, both were already taken. So they named the field Third Choice. We have a field named Guacolote Suerte which is 'lucky turkey' in Spanish. A turkey had roosted in the substructure of a drilling rig. The rig was moved to a new location and the turkey followed the rig to the new location; that well was a prolific producer. We also have a field named One Joint Off which is a reference to a mistake in the pipe tally of a well.<sup>26</sup>

The question of how culture affects name choice is a fascinating one. As has been seen, the Dutch offshore fields tend not to be named, only numbered; the Norwegians insist on the names fulfilling certain Norwegian language requirements; the Americans choose highly individualised, unconventional, often two- or three-word names and the British have no official rules and enjoy a wide variety of names and naming conventions, the majority fairly conventional.

That the British prefer not to be weighed down by rules should not come as a surprise; the right to free expression is deeply ingrained in the British psyche. The British seem to enjoy names:

Drive through an English suburb and the thing that strikes you is the fact that almost everyone has given their house a name. Why? There's a perfectly adequate numbering system ... But naming a building implies an emotional attachment to the place in which people live. Names express individuality. A number implies communality or anonymity.<sup>27</sup>

And if the 'spirit of individuality is the basis of the English character',<sup>28</sup> it could also be said that the Dutch are known for their pragmatism, egalitarianism and communality—hence the straightforward use of block numbers. The patriotism of the Norwegians comes out in the nam-

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> J. Paxman, *The English* (London, 1999; repr. 2007), p. 123.

<sup>28</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Journeys to England and Ireland* (London, 1958), p. 88; quoted in Paxman, 2007, p. 137.

ing process. They are also protective of their language and culture and very proud of their history; this is reflected in the rules governing the naming of fields and also in the names themselves, which feature Norse mythology, Norse fairytales and Norse sagas. With the USA ranked as the most individualist culture in the world,<sup>29</sup> American field names reflect this. Names are highly individualist and do not seem to be bound by the strictures of naming conventions. Many names are two or three words in length, perhaps indicative of the influence of Native American culture, which is very descriptive of people and places. There certainly seems to be a lot of pride in the stories behind the names.

While name choice is clearly different in other countries there is another question which requires to be answered. To what extent did foreign involvement in the oil industry affect the choice of names of oil and gas fields in the Northern and Central sectors of the North Sea? In other words, did American companies bring their style of naming with them?

Until exploration got underway in the UK the expertise had to come in from outside as the UK government had no experience in large scale oil exploration. That expertise came from the USA. Initially British participation was around 30% and the remainder was largely from American based companies. Furthermore, 'oil exploration was an American skill, the jargon was American, the literature was American, the equipment was American'.<sup>30</sup> It would be only fair to assume therefore, that naming might also have been influenced by American culture. American companies such as Phillips Petroleum continued the American tradition of eponymous names, for example James, Joanne, Jade, Janice. However, eventually there was a move away from this.

Names changed as the oil industry developed, taking on a more Scottish feel as time passed, although when this happened is very difficult to prove definitively.<sup>31</sup> The information held by BERR states only the date when a field was approved, not when it was named. Without that information it is impossible to say that in a given year there was a shift in the type of names given. From the 300 names listed on BERR's

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<sup>29</sup> Hofstede, 'Culture's Consequences', p. 217.

<sup>30</sup> *Tales from Early UK Oil Exploration 1960-1979*, Moreton, p. 32.

<sup>31</sup> A field can be developed as late as 20 years after it was named.

'List of Producing Oil and Gas Fields in the UK,' it was possible, by and large, to guess which fields were in the field area (Scottish sector) and which were not, purely by looking at the names (Appendix 3). Compare Brechin, Piper, Linnhe and Scapa with Anglia, Dalton, Kirby Misperton, Trent and Welton.

There may be several reasons why oil field names became more Scottish. A probable reason for this was the migration of company offices to Aberdeen from the south of England in the late 1970s, making Aberdeen the 'oil capital of Europe'. In the early days, most companies' headquarters were based in London and Scottish influence was probably limited.

Change may also have occurred as American influence waned. Certain companies, for example, Amerada Hess, could be considered 'more Scottish than the Scots'<sup>32</sup> with their choice of names. There are a number of fields categorised by the author under the title 'Iconography'. These include: Piper, Tartan, Claymore, Heather, Thistle, Alba and Caledonia. Names, it could be suggested, unlikely to be chosen by a Scot. They are, to the outsider, icons, symbols of Scottish culture. However, their mere selection is interesting in that it gives some idea of how Scotland is perceived by others.

It could also be that the rise in nationalism in general, and Scottish Nationalism, in particular in the early 1970s, was also a contributory factor.

In order to ascertain how long oil and gas field names will be with us, it is necessary to see where they can be found at the moment. Just as nothing is visible on the surface to initially help name a field, very little remains once a field has been abandoned. While the field is being developed, produced and decommissioned, its name will appear on a wide variety of documents held by the company (seismic sections, survey drawings, etc), the Government (consents, Pipeline Works Authorisation Applications, etc) and by the Hydrographic Office, who produce Admiralty Charts, which are essentially maps of the sea bed and the surface.

There is a very sophisticated system operating which advises mariners of changes to admiralty charts. They are informed when a new field

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<sup>32</sup> Gillard, 'Christening of a North Sea rig takes deep consideration'.

is developed and ‘a Notice to Mariners will be issued to instruct mariners to insert the well into their chart’.<sup>33</sup> Likewise when a well on a particular field has been either suspended or abandoned a similar notice would be issued to remove the well from their charts, allowing mariners to navigate more freely in the area. However, ‘the abandoned well would be removed at the next new edition of the chart’.<sup>34</sup>

The implication for the longevity of these names is clear; once the field is abandoned the name is likely to disappear also. At least that is what one would think. However, it appears that a number of oilfield names have already migrated onshore in the form of street and building names. There is a cluster of names at Dyce Airport, Aberdeen: Brent Rd, Forties Rd, Montrose Rd and Close, Argyll Close and Way, Thistle Rd, Ninian Rd, Dunlin Rd, Buchan Rd, Hutton Rd and Foinavon Rd. These roads were built between 1975 and 1977 and are managed by the British Airports Authority, whose responsibility it was to name the roads. Appendix 2 shows that with the exception of Foinaven, which is a recent addition to the airport roads, the others were all amongst the first fields to produce oil in the North Sea. They are also some of the largest producers. Of Foinaven, a company representative reported: ‘We made a mistake with the spelling of Foinaven and used an ‘o’ instead of an ‘e,’ much to our embarrassment’.<sup>35</sup>

It does not come as any surprise that roads around the airport should be named after oilfields. After all, it is the world’s largest commercial heliport and the majority of through traffic consists of flights to and from the North Sea oil rigs.

The Offshore and Technology Park at Bridge of Don is home to oil companies undertaking research, developing innovative products and testing new products and techniques. The main road through the park is named after the industry itself, Exploration Drive, and this leads to Claymore Drive and Avenue.

The use of oilfields to name streets is not confined to the city of Aberdeen. In Cove, just south of Aberdeen, are Dunlin Rd, Cormorant Brae and Tern Rd. In Ellon, a town north of Aberdeen, are Brent Field

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<sup>33</sup> Helen Goodey, UK Hydrographic Office, personal correspondence, 2005.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Wendy Buist, British Airports PLC, personal correspondence, 2005.

Circle, Forties Field Circle and Forties Field Rd. The town of Montrose south of Aberdeen also has a number of streets named after oilfields, including Brent Avenue and Forties Road.

A number of companies have named their offices after oilfields, for example, Apache reside at Alba House, CNR at St Magnus House and Total at Ninian House. Unfortunately, due to local government reorganisation it was not possible to talk to any counsellors involved in the naming of any streets or buildings. Considerably more time would need to be spent trying to find the individuals who were involved with this.

The practice of naming streets after local industry is, of course, not new. A cursory glance around Aberdeen city gives plenty of insight into earlier industries, for example Tanfield Avenue, Weavers Row, Clayhills, Mealmarket Street and Creel Wynd, to name but a few.

The oil industry in Aberdeen and the North East of Scotland has been similar to the Californian Gold Rush. It has made an already wealthy area considerably more affluent. It is fitting then that the people of the North East would wish to acknowledge the contribution the oil industry has made to the economy and the lives of people who live here by taking a name from a temporary subsurface structure and giving it permanence in the form of street and building names. It will be interesting to see how long this practice continues.

Permanence has also come in the form of geological formations, many of which have now been named after oilfields. For example, the Brent Group is a made up of the Broom, Rannoch, Etive, Nevis and Tarbert sand formations.

Some oilfield names will also continue in the unlikely form of board games. In the 1970s, during the Oil Boom, a number of games were produced based on the oil industry, with the aim of entertaining, educating and gaining the support of the public. These games contain both maps of oilfields and playing cards with oilfield names. Waddington's produced *North Sea*, a board game for Shell UK and Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology; BP had *North Sea Oil Strike*; Petroleum Geo-Services (PGS) produced a card game entitled *Top Trumps* and there were at least two other board games, *Oilopoly* and the *North Sea Oil Game*. These vintage games are now collector's items and fetch interesting sums on

Ebay. Ebay also lists North Sea Oil Discovery memorabilia, for example commemorative stamps, mugs and even beer mats!

In conclusion, names are not what they at first may seem. There is a difference between *leads/prospect* names and *field* names. The former are given by seismic interpreters, whereas the latter are usually given by company managers. Prospect names have colourful or quirky origins and often have much to do with popular culture. These names are generally lost once a prospect becomes a producing field. Field names are generally chosen to fit with an existing naming convention.

The majority of oil fields in the field area have been given a Scottish name, which may reflect the strong nationalist movement that existed in Scotland during the early 1970s. North American companies chose different naming conventions to those of British and other European companies, favouring eponymous names and also Scottish iconography. The naming process is influenced by culture and UK names are different to those of other countries. However, names in the Southern sector of the North Sea are different to those in the Northern sector, reflecting the individual cultures of Scotland and England in the British Isles.

Oil field names have been around for 30 years or so and may be with us for more than another 30. The oil industry has made a huge impact on the North East of Scotland and this is reflected by the fact that a number of oil field names have already migrated onshore in the form of street and building names. This trend may or may not continue; it matters not as the oil industry already joins a large list of other industries which have come and gone in Aberdeen and the surrounding area. One new industry that has the potential to prolong field names for decades, if not centuries to come, is that of Carbon Capture and Storage. In this new industry, options are being considered to store carbon dioxide in depleted oil and gas fields for millennia.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> David Perry, 'Scots energy firm in "clean coal" power station race', *The Press and Journal*, 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2009. Accessed from <<http://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/Article.aspx/1476191>>, 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2009.



**Appendix 1: BERR's List of Producing Fields in Field Area in 2005**

Alba	Deveron	Jade	Nuggets
Alwyn North	Don	James	Orion
Angus	Dunbar	Janice	Osprey
Arbroath	Dunlin	Joanne	Otter
Ardmore	Egret	Judy	Pelican
Arkwright	Eider	Keith	Penguin
Auk	Elgin	Kestrel	Petronella
Balmoral	Ellon	Kingfisher	Pict
Banff	Erskine	Kittiwake	Pierce
Beatrice	Everest	Kyle	Piper
Beaully	Fergus	Larch	Playfair
Beinn	Fife	Leadon	Renee
Beryl	Flora	Leven	Rob Roy
Birch	Foinaven	Linnhe	Ross
Bittern	Forties	Lomond	Rubie
Blake	Franklin	Loyal	Saltire
Brae	Frigg	Lyell	Scapa
Braemar	Fulmar	MacCulloch	Schiehallion
Brechin	Gadwall	Machar	Scoter
Brent	Galley	Maclure	Scott
Brimmond	Gannet	Madoes	Shearwater
Britannia	Glamis	Magnus	Skene
Broom	Goldeneye	Mallard	Skua
Bruce	Grant	Marnock	Statfjord
Buchan	Gryphon	Medwin	Stirling
Buckland	Guillemot	Merlin	Strathspey
Buzzard	Halley	Miller	Sycamore
Caledonia	Hamish	Mirren	Tartan
Captain	Hannay	Monan	Teal
Carnoustie	Harding	Montrose	Telford
Chanter	Heather	Mungo	Tern
Clair	Heron	Murchison	Thelma
Clapham	Highlander	Nelson	Thistle
Claymore	Howe	Ness	Tiffany
Clyde	Hudson	Nethan	Toni
Cook	Hutton + NW	Nevis	Tullich
Cormorant	Hutton	Ninian	
Curlew	Iona	Ninian-	
Cyrus	Ivanhoe	Columba	





No	Name	Date of Field Approval	Current Operator	Named by	Scottish	Natural History	Topographical	Famous People	First Names	Misc	Saints	Iconography	Place Names	Sir Walter Scott	Castles	Dances	Scottish clans	Whiskies
17	Blake	Jan-00	BG	BG					1									
23	Britannia	Dec-94	BOL	BOL						1								
55	Forties	Sep-75	Ap	BP						1								
100	Magnus	Dec-78	BP	BP	Y						1							
40	Cyrus	Nov-84	BP	BP	Y						1							
97	Machar	Apr-94	BP	BP	Y						1							
3	Andrew	Jul-94	BP	BP	Y						1							
70	Harding	Sep-94	BP	BP				1										
54	Foinaven	Nov-94	BP	BP	Y		1											
102	Marnock	Dec-95	BP	BP	Y						1							
107	Monan	Dec-95	BP	BP	Y						1							
109	Mungo	Dec-95	BP	BP	Y						1							
94	Loyal	Apr-96	BP	BP	Y		1											
134	Schiehallion	Apr-96	BP	BP	Y		1											
22	Brimmond	Jun-96	Ap	BP	Y		1											
33	Clair	Nov-01	BP	BP	Y						1							
98	Maclure	Jan-02	BP	BP	Y			1										
99	Madoes	Jan-02	BP	BP							1							
106	Mirren	Jan-02	BP	BP	Y						1							













No	Name	Date of Field Approval	Current Operator	Named by	Scottish	Natural History	Topographical	Famous People	First Names	Misc	Saints	Iconography	Place Names	Sir Walter Scott	Castles	Dances	Scottish clans	Whiskies
69	Hannay	Mar-01	T	T	Y									1				
144	Tartan	Mar-79	T	Texaco	Y							1						
73	Highlander	Nov-83	T	Texaco	Y							1						
123	Petronella	Apr-86	T	Texaco	Y											1		
142	Strathspey	Sep-01	Ch	Texaco	Y											1		
30	Captain	Jan-95	Ch	Texaco						1								
49	Erskine	May-95	Ch	Texaco	Y												1	
60	Galley	Mar-97	T	Texaco						1								
43	Dunbar	Nov-92	Total	Total	Y										1			
48	Ellon	Feb-93	Total	Total	Y													
64	Grant	Apr-98	Total	Total	Y													
117	Nuggets		Total	Total						1								
2	Alwyn North	Oct-82	Total	Total/Elf	Y													
57	Frigg		Total	Total/Elf						1								
120	Otter	Jul-01	Total	TFE		1												
26	Buchan	Mar-78	T	TP	Y								1					
6	Ardmore	Oct-02	Tuscan	Tuscan	Y													1
71	Heather	Oct-78	LO	U/SO/Te	Y							1						

	Scottish	Natural History	Topographical	Famous People	First Names	Misc	Saints	Iconography	Place Names	Sir Walter Scott	Castles	Dances	Scottish clans	Whiskies
Totals	85	31	22	17	15	13	13	11	11	7	5	2	2	1
Percentages	55.9	20.4	14.5	11.2	9.9	8.6	8.6	7.2	7.2	4.6	3.3	1.3	1.3	0.7

### Notes and Abbreviations

Scottish = having Scottish connotations; ? uncertain

Am	Amerada	Ent	Enterprise	PC	Petro Canada
AmH	Amerada Hess	ExM	Exxon Mobil	PO	Pan Ocean
Amo	Amoco	Exp	Exploration	PP	Phillips Petroleum
Ap	Apache	HB	Hamilton Brothers	SO	Signal Oil
B	Britoil	HI	Hunt International	St	Statoil
BG	British Gas	LO	Lundin Oil	T	Talisman
Ch	Chevron	KM	Kerr McGee	TFE	Total Fina Elf
ChT	Chevron Texaco	M	Marathon	TP	Transworld Petroleum
Co	Conoco	MesaP	Mesa Petroleum	V	Venture
CoP	Conoco Phillips	Mon	Monsanto	VO	Viking Oil
CP	Clyde Petroleum	Occ	Occidental		
D	Dana	P	Paladin		

**Appendix 3: Full List of Field Names in the UK in 2005**

Alba	Brechin	Dawn
Albury	Brent	Deben
Alison	Brigantine	Deborah
Alwyn North	Brimmond	Delilah
Amethyst West	Britannia	Della
Andrew	Brockham	Deveron
Anglia	Broom	Don
Angus	Brown	Douglas
Ann	Bruce	Drake
Apollo	Buchan	Dunbar
Arbroath	Buckland	Dunlin
Ardmore	Bure	East Glentworth
Arkwright	Caister	East Sean
Artemis	Calder	Egret
Arthur	Caledonia	Eider
Audrey	Callisto	Elgin
Auk	Callow	Ellon
Bains	Camelot	Elswick
Baird	Captain	Erskine
Balmoral	Carnoustie	Europa
Banff	Carrack	Everest
Barque	Caythorpe	Excalibur
Beatrice	Chanter	Farleys Wood
Beaufort	Clair	Fergus
Beaully	Clapham	Fife
Beckingham West	Claymore	Fiskerton Airfield
Beinn	Cleeton	Fleming
Bell	Clipper North	Flora
Beryl	Clyde	Foinaven
Bessemer	Cold Hanworth	Forties
Big Dotty	Cook	Franklin
Birch	Cormorant North	Frigg
Bittern	Corvette	Fulmar
Blake	Crosby Warren	Gadwall
Boulton	Curlew	Galahad
Boyle	Cyrus	Galleon
Brae	Dalton	Galley
Braemar	Davy	Gannet

Ganymede	Keddington	Monan
Gawain	Keith	Montrose
Glamis	Kestrel	Mordred
Goldeneye	Ketch	Mungo
Goodworth	Kingfisher	Munro
Grant	Kirby Misperton	Murchison
Gryphon	Kirklington	Murdoch
Guillemot	Kittiwake	Nelson
Guinevere	Kyle	Neptune
Halley	Lancelot	Ness
Hamilton	Larch	Nethan
Hamish	Leadon	Nettleham
Hannay	Leman	Nevis
Harding	Lennox	Newsham
Hatfield	Leven	Newton-on-Trent
Hawkins	Linnhe	Ninian
Hawksley	Little Dotty	Ninian-Columba
Heather	Lomond	North Davy
Helvellyn	Long Clawson	North Morecambe
Heron	Loyal	North Sean
Herriard	Lyell	Nuggets
Hewett	MacCulloch	Orion
Highlander	Machar	Orwell
Horndean	Maclure	Osprey
Horne	Madoes	Otter
Hoton	Magnus	Palmers Wood
Howe	Mallard	Pelican
Hudson	Malory	Penguin
Humbly Grove	Malton	Petronella
Hutton	Marishes	Pickering
Hyde	Markham	Pict
Inde	Marnock	Pierce
Iona	McAdam	Playfair
Ivanhoe	Medwin	Ravenspurm
Jade	Mercury	Rempstone
James	Merlin	Renee
Janice	Miller	Rob Roy
Joanne	Millom	Rose
Johnston	Minerva	Ross
Judy	Mirren	Rough

Rubie	Stockbridge	Viking
Saltfleetby	Storrington	Viscount
Saltire	Strathspey	Vixen
Scampton North	Sycamore	Vulcan
Scapa	Tartan	Wareham
Schiehallion	Teal	Watt
Schooner	Telford	Waveney
Scoter	Tern	Welland
Scott	Thames	Welton
Seymour	Thelma	Wensum
Shearwater	Thistle	West Firsby
Singleton	Tiffany	West Sole
Sinope	Toni	Whisby
Skene	Trent	Whittle
Skiff	Tristan	Windermere
Skua	Trumfleet	Wollaston
South Cormorant	Tullich	Wren
South Valian	Tyne North	Wytech Farm
Stainton	Vampire	Yare
Statfjord	Vanguard	
Stirling	Victor	

#### Appendix 4: Provenance of Oilfield Names

Below is a list in alphabetical order of all oilfields currently producing in the field area with an explanation, where possible, of which company named the field (in brackets) and the provenance of the name.

**Alba** (Chevron) Named for its Scottish connection.

**Alwyn North** (Total) After the **Frigg** field, Total decided to begin again alphabetically with names with Scottish connotations. **Alwyn North** was one of the earliest fields operated by a consortium of three French companies Total, Elf and Aquitaine and ‘strangely enough was thought to be Scottish’.<sup>37</sup> It is of Celtic origin and is easily pronounceable in both French and English.

**Andrew** (BP) Early Celtic saints theme. Andrew is Scotland’s patron saint.

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<sup>37</sup> Derek Pallet, Total, personal communication, 2005.

**Angus** (Premier Oil) ‘I would guess that Angus is a character in Macbeth’.<sup>38</sup>

**Arbroath** (Amoco) Named after towns in Angus

**Ardmore** (Tuscan) Tuscan Energy acquired acreage on a relinquished block which had incorporated amongst others, the famous **Argyll** field. This had not been done before and a decision had to be made about whether or not to rename the field. At a meeting of the five directors, it was decided that a new name be chosen. As Tuscan intended to drill completely new wells it regarded the field as a new development. This being so, Tuscan would not be liable for either the Treasury’s Petroleum Revenue Tax or Royalties to BERR. Had they retained the existing name they would have been operating an existing field. Over and above that, Tuscan wished to facilitate differentiation in the minds of people. The **Argyll** field was no ordinary field, after all, being the first oil field in the North Sea. All five were keen on Formula 1 and, wanting a theme that could be built on, considered naming the first field Alesi after racing driver Jean Alesi. This theme would then be continued alphabetically. However, it was felt that BERR might reject the name and so they opted for a more traditional Scottish theme. The board consisted of 2 English and 3 Scots. Each member was asked to come up with an idea and the top three were then considered in greater detail. These were: Names of the Gordon Highlander’s Campaigns; Castles in Scotland; Whiskies. The campaigns were rejected as the names were mainly Far Eastern, lengthy and ‘difficult’ to pronounce. Tuscan had wanted a Scottish theme. It was felt that castles had been done already, (for example, the Kildrummy field, operated by Talisman), leaving whiskies. It was decided to opt for distillery names with the suffix *-more*: ‘We liked the concept of ‘more’, hoping that one find would lead to more finds. The *-more* suffix also guaranteed the first four letters of the alphabet: Ardmore, Bowmore, Cragganmore and Dalmore’.<sup>39</sup> Thus the **Argyll** Field became the **Ardmore** Field.

**Arkwright** (Amoco) Named after Richard Arkwright, eighteenth century industrialist, perfecter of the Spinning Jenny and inventor of the factory system.

**Auk** (Shell) Shell’s naming convention began in the Southern sector of the North Sea with fields named after seabed features, such as Inde (from Indefatigable, a major sandbank) and Sole (from the Sole Pit Basin). In the Central and Northern sectors the first field was the Auk field in 1970. Myles Bowen the then Exploration Manager had a keen interest in ornithology and

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<sup>38</sup> Steve Crozier, Amerada Hess, personal communication, 2005.

<sup>39</sup> Paul Schofield, Tuscan Energy, personal correspondence, 2005.

began the naming convention of birds, generally but not exclusively, connected with either sea or freshwater.

**Balmoral** (Sun Oil) Named after Scottish castles.

**Banff** (Sun Oil) No information available. Banff is a Scottish town on Grampian's North Coast.

**Beatrice** (Mesa Petroleum) This is the closest field to the Scottish mainland and was named after the wife of T. Boone Pickens, a famous US entrepreneur and the man behind the company that discovered it.

**Beaully** (Talisman) Named after the Firth and the town of Beaully near Inverness. The **Beaully** field lies in a block which already had the names **Balmoral**, **Blenheim** and **Bladon**. **Beaully** gave continuity to this 'B' group.

**Beinn** (Marathon) A topographical feature, meaning 'mountain' in Scottish Gaelic. This name is linked to **Brae**.

**Beryl** (Mobil) 'The **Beryl** field was named after Beryl Solomon, the wife of Charles Solomon, who was the president of Mobil Europe in 1972 when the field was discovered.'<sup>40</sup>

**Birch** (Britoil) Tree naming convention.

**Bittern** (Shell/Amerada Hess) '**Bittern** was discovered by Shell and Amerada Hess in different blocks. Obviously Shell wanted a bird name, and since the Bittern features in one of Scott's poems (it might be the *Lady of the Lake*) this was agreed as suitable to both companies.'<sup>41</sup>

**Blake** (British Gas) British Gas has a history of using nautical/naval names to name its UK fields, for example **Drake** and **Armada** in the Southern North Sea. Robert Blake was one of the most famous British admirals in the seventeenth century, involved in defending the realm against the Dutch and Spanish.

**Brae** (Pan Ocean/ Marathon) A topographical feature meaning 'hill; slope'.

**Braemar** (Marathon) This a small field close to the **Brae** fields. Braemar is a village in Aberdeenshire.

**Brechin** (Paladin) Named after towns in Angus.

**Brent** (Shell) The name **Brent Group** is an acronym for the **Broom**, **Rannoch**, **Etive**, **Nevis** and **Tarbert** sand formations. Conveniently it also fits with the Shell bird theme (i.e. there is a bird called the Brent Goose).

**Brimmond** (BP) Named after the hill of the same name near Kingswells, Aberdeenshire.

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<sup>40</sup> C. A. Knutson and I. C. Munro, 'The Beryl Field, Block 9/13, UK North Sea', in *United Kingdom Oil and Gas Fields 25 Year Commemorative Volume*, edited by I. L. Abbots, *The Geological Society Memoir*, 14, (London, 1991), pp. 33–42, (p. 33).

<sup>41</sup> Crozier, personal correspondence, 2005.



- Britannia** (Britannia Oil Company Ltd) A massive gas field spanning several licence blocks, it formerly came under the general name of **Bosun** after the Bosun Sandstone Trend. Chevron was the operator of block 16/26, which they named **Kilda**, and Conoco operated the block next door 15/30 named **Lapworth**. They eventually realised that it was all one and the same and eventually it was renamed **Britannia** because of its sheer scale.
- Broom** (DNO) Either named after Loch Broom, or the shrub which grows in profusion in the Scottish Highlands.
- Bruce** (Hamilton Brothers) Part of their clan naming convention.
- Buchan** (Transworld Petroleum) Named after Buchan, NE Scotland.
- Buckland** (Mobil) Named after the Rev. William Buckland, a famous nineteenth century British geologist.
- Buzzard** (PanCanadian/Encana) 'Encana had a naming convention of naming prospects after pubs in the Chilterns. Following this convention, **Buzzard** is named after The Buzzard's Bar, a bar in Calgary, Canada.'<sup>42</sup>
- Caledonia** (Chevron) Named for its Scottish connection.
- Captain** (Texaco) Texaco's early names were based on a nautical theme.
- Carnoustie** (Amoco) Named after towns in Angus.
- Chanter** (Occidental) Scottish iconography.
- Clair** (BP) Adopted as part of the early Celtic saints 'theme', although contrary to popular opinion there is no St Clair. There is however a Saint *Clare* of Assisi.
- Clapham** (PetroCanada) Thought to have been named by a geologist who experienced a long commute to Clapham each day.
- Claymore** (Occidental) Scottish iconography.
- Clyde** (Britoil) Scottish rivers theme.
- Cook** (Enterprise) Ocean explorers/famous seamen naming convention; named after Captain James Cook.
- Cormorant North/South Cormorant** (Shell) Bird naming convention.
- Curlew** (Shell) Bird naming convention.
- Cyrus** (BP) Early Celtic saints theme. St Cyrus is a village on the coast near Montrose.
- Deveron** (Signal Oil) NE rivers naming convention.
- Don** (Signal Oil/Britoil?) In 1988 BP took over Britoil and acquired a number of already named fields such as the **Don** field, named after the river Don.
- Dunbar** (Total) This was informally named the **Alwyn** field and later renamed the **Dunbar** after the Scottish town.
- Dunlin** and **Dunlin South West** (Shell) Bird naming convention.

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<sup>42</sup> Jeremy Rhodes, Nexen, personal correspondence, 2005.

- Egret** (Shell) Bird naming convention.
- Eider** (Shell) Bird naming convention.
- Elgin** (Elf) Named as a tribute to a geologist called Nigel, who was instrumental in the field's discovery. 'Elgin is an anagram of his name and of course, one of the most important centres of medieval Scotland.'<sup>43</sup>
- Ellon** (Total) Part of Total's Scottish town theme.
- Erskine** (Chevron) Named for its Scottish connection.
- Everest** (Amoco) 'Named after Sir George Everest, Surveyor General of India (1780–1872), after whom Mount Everest was named.'<sup>44</sup>
- Fergus** (Amerada Hess) Named after Fergus McIvor in a character in Walter Scott's novel *Waverley*.
- Fife** (Premier Oil) '**Fife** was apparently named after a character in Macbeth.'<sup>45</sup> Presumably this is Shakespeare's MacDuff, Thane of Fife.
- Flora** (Amerada Hess) Named after a character in Walter Scott's *Waverley* novels, the sister of Fergus.
- Foinaven** (BP) Situated West of Shetland is named after a mountain in the North West Highlands.
- Forties** (BP) One of the earliest fields to be discovered, it was named after a sea area.
- Franklin** (Elf/Ultramar) Named after John Franklin who commanded several Arctic expeditions and who went in search of the North West Passage in the early nineteenth century. Ultramar had strong Canadian/UK links.
- Frigg** (Elf) The **Frigg** field is in both UK and Norwegian waters. It was named by Elf and 'had been unofficially called Papillon, because of the contours of the field.' However, the name was found to be 'too exotic' and it was given a Nordic name. It is the name of the Norwegian goddess of married love and the hearth, who was one of Odin's four wives.<sup>46</sup>
- Fulmar** (Shell) Bird naming convention.
- Galley** (Texaco) Part of Texaco's nautical theme.
- Gannet (A–G)** (Shell) Bird naming convention.
- Glamis** (Sun Oil) Named after Scottish castles.
- Goldeneye** (Shell) Bird naming convention.
- Grant** (Total) The provenance of this name is uncertain but it could be named after the Grant family/clan.

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<sup>43</sup> Pallett, personal correspondence, 2005.

<sup>44</sup> Paul Carragher, BP, personal correspondence, 2005.

<sup>45</sup> Crozier, personal correspondence, 2005.

<sup>46</sup> Ellingsve, 'Naming the Unseen: Theoretical Problems and Pragmatic Solutions Concerning the Naming of Norwegian Oil and Gas Fields in the North Sea', p. 93.

**Gryphon** (Kerr McGee) Mythological beast naming convention. Maersk (who took over this field) also had **Phoenix** in the same series but abandoned this naming convention as ‘all the other mythological creatures they considered were rather nasty. They did not want to put over a negative image’.<sup>47</sup>

**Guillemot** (Shell) Bird naming convention.

**Halley** (Talisman) The **Halley** field, named after the comet, was chosen by means of a naming competition among staff. A comet symbol was used as the field motif.

**Hamish** (Amerada Hess) Named after a character in Rob Roy.

**Hannay** (Talisman) Linked to the **Buchan** field, it is named after the hero of John Buchan’s novel, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*.

**Harding** (BP) This was originally named the **Forth** field, but was renamed in 1993 ‘in memory of David Harding, who was the Chief Executive of BPX UK operations during the field appraisal’.<sup>48</sup>

**Heather** (Unocal/Skelly Oil/Tenneco) Chosen for its strong Scottish connection.

**Heron** (Shell) Bird naming convention.

**Highlander** (Texaco) Scottish iconography.

**Howe** (Enterprise) Ocean explorers/famous seamen naming convention. Named after Lord Howe.

**Hudson** (Amoco) Named after the seventeenth century explorer Henry Hudson of the Hudson River and Hudson’s Bay Company.

**Hutton** (Conoco) Scottish geologists naming convention. James Hutton, known as the father geology, was an eighteenth century geologist.

**Iona** (Occidental) Part of a general Scottish theme which also included **Piper** and **Claymore**.

**Ivanhoe** (Amerada Hess) Part of the Sir Walter Scott naming convention.

**Jade** (Phillips) This field is in the ‘J’ Block and girls’ names were chosen starting with this letter.

**James** (Phillips) See previous.

**Janice** (Phillips) See previous.

**Joanne** (Phillips) See previous.

**Judy** (Phillips) See previous. **Judy** is named after Judy Allen, the wife of the Aberdeen based drilling manager who later became CEO.

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<sup>47</sup> Mark Reeder, Maersk, personal correspondence, 2005.

<sup>48</sup> J. Beckly, T. Nash, R. Pollard, C. Bruce, P. Freeman and G. Page, ‘The Harding Field, Block 9/23b’ in *United Kingdom Oil and Gas Fields, Commemorative Millennium Volume*, edited by J. G. Gluyas and H. M. Hichens, *The Geological Society Memoir*, 20 (London, 2003), pp. 283–290 (p. 283).

- Kestrel** (Shell) Bird naming convention.
- Kingfisher** (Shell) Bird naming convention.
- Kittiwake** (Shell) Bird naming convention.
- Kyle** (Ranger) No information available. Possibly named after the village on the west coast of Scotland.
- Larch** (Britoil) Tree naming convention.
- Leadon** (Clyde Petroleum) River in Hertfordshire, where the company had its base.
- Leven** (Britoil) After the **Clyde** field was found, three other smaller fields were found nearby and ‘rather neatly they were named after tributaries to the River Clyde’.<sup>49</sup> (See **Medwin** and **Nethan**.)
- Linnhe** (Mobil) Scottish lochs naming convention.
- Lomond** (Amoco) Uncertain whether this is named after the loch or mountain.
- Loyal** (BP) Part of **Schiehallion**. Situated West of Shetland is named after a mountain in the North West Highlands.
- Lyell** (Conoco) Scottish geologists naming convention. Named after late eighteenth-early nineteenth century Scottish Geologist Charles Lyell.
- MacCulloch** (Conoco) Scottish geologists naming convention. Named after John MacCulloch a nineteenth century Scottish geologist.
- Machar** (BP) Initially BP chose the theme of early Celtic saints beginning with the letter ‘M’ to name their fields. St. Machar is associated with Aberdeen.
- Maclure** (Conoco) Scottish geologists naming convention. Named after late eighteenth-early nineteenth century Scottish geologist, William Maclure, who immigrated to America.
- Madoes** (BP) Early Celtic saints beginning with the letter ‘M’ theme. Little is known about St Madoes; the name also denotes a village in Perthshire.
- Magnus** (BP) Early Celtic saints beginning with the letter ‘M’ theme. St Magnus is associated with Orkney.
- Mallard** (Shell) Bird naming convention.
- Marnock** (BP) Early Celtic saints beginning with the letter ‘M’ theme. St Marnock is associated with Kilmarnock.
- Medwin** (Britoil) One of the smaller fields found near the Clyde field, and named after a tributary of the river (see **Leven** and **Nethan**).
- Merlin** (Shell) Bird naming convention.
- Miller** (Conoco) Scottish geologists naming convention. Hugh Miller made a contribution to Scottish geology in the early nineteenth century.
- Mirren** (BP) Early Celtic saints beginning with the letter ‘M’ theme. St Mirren is associated with Paisley.

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<sup>49</sup> Colin Tannock, Talisman, personal correspondence, 2005.

**Monan** (BP) Early Celtic saints beginning with the letter ‘M’ theme. St Monan is associated with the village of St Monans in Fife.

**Montrose** (Amoco) Named after a town in Angus.

**Mungo** (BP) Early Celtic saints beginning with the letter ‘M’ theme. St Mungo is associated with Glasgow.

**Murchison** (Conoco) Scottish geologists naming convention. Named after late eighteenth-early nineteenth century geologist Roderick Murchison.

**Nelson** (Enterprise) Ocean explorers/famous seamen naming convention. Named after Lord Horatio Nelson.

**Ness** (Mobil) Scottish lochs naming convention.

**Nethan** (Britoil) One of the smaller fields found near the Clyde field, and named after a tributary of the river (see **Leven** and **Medwin**).

**Nevis** (Mobil) Scottish lochs naming convention.

**Ninian** (Burma/Chevron?) No information available. Ninian is a Scottish saint associated with bringing Christianity to Scotland. No connection with BPs saints theme.

**Ninian-Columba** (Chevron) See previous.

**Nuggets** (Total) This is an acronym for **N**orthern **U**nderwater **G**as **G**athering **E**xport and **T**reatment **S**ystem.

**Orion** (British Gas) Named after the constellation.

**Osprey** (Shell) Bird naming convention.

**Otter** (Fina) Fina decided to do no further exploration in the UK but to buy into an undeveloped discovery and develop that. A review of all undeveloped discoveries resulted in a list of names; all based on an aquatic theme, hence **Otter**, **Pilot** (whale) and **Orca**. In addition, Fina sponsored environmental projects relating to the subjects, such as Otter sanctuary in England, whale research etc.<sup>50</sup>

**Pelican** (Shell) Bird naming convention.

**Penguin (A, C and D)** (Shell) Bird naming convention.

**Petronella** (Texaco) **Petronella** came about as a result of an internal competition. Bill Doyle, Managing Director at the time, suggested a new theme of Scottish Dances. Jim Hart was the winner with the name Petronella, which was actually suggested to him by his aunt, a keen Scottish Country dancer. His aunt received ‘a nice hamper from Harrods’ as a prize.<sup>51</sup> ‘Coincidentally Petronella was also the name of the Public and Government Affairs person of that era.’<sup>52</sup> The aforementioned (American) MD commissioned a dance group

<sup>50</sup> Jim Scallon, Petrofina, personal correspondence, 2005.

<sup>51</sup> Hart, personal correspondence, 2005.

<sup>52</sup> Peter Fowler, Chevron, personal correspondence, 2005.

to perform the Petronella at the inauguration of the field, donned a kilt and duly played his part in the proceedings.

**Pierce** (Enterprise/Ranger Oil) Named after Jack Pierce, the founder of Ranger Oil. ‘Jack had been with Ranger from the start and it had been a long term aim of his to see the field developed. Unfortunately, he died before he ever got to see it come into production. If you like, this was Ranger’s price that they wanted to agree to the asset swap that brought Enterprise an increased stake in the field and the operatorship. As a consequence Ranger approved the transfer (as a Joint Venture partner needs to) and the field was named accordingly—actually it was me who pushed this through Enterprise as I thought it was a nice touch and our management agreed.’<sup>53</sup>

**Pict** (PetroCanada) A ‘tribes of Ancient Britain’ naming convention, ‘to reflect the culture of the country they were operating in’.<sup>54</sup> Close to the **Pict** field is the **Saxon** field, not yet in production.

**Piper** (Occidental) Scottish iconography.

**Playfair** (Conoco) Scottish geologists naming convention. Named after John Playfair, a geologist and mathematician, and associate of James Hutton.

**Renee** (Phillips Petroleum) Girls’ name. All of the prospects on a single block would have girls’ names beginning with the same letter, in this case blocks 15/27 and 28 were known as the ‘R’ block.

**Rob Roy** (Amerada Hess) Part of the Sir Walter Scott naming convention.

**Ross** (Ultramar) Named after Sir Clements Ross, Antarctic explorer. Ultramar used the theme of British explorers. Another was the **Markham** field in the Southern sector of the North Sea named after Antarctic explorer James Clark Markham.

**Rubie** (Phillips Petroleum) Girls’ name. All of the prospects on a single block would have girls’ names beginning with the same letter, in this case blocks 15/27 and 28 were known as the ‘R’ block.

**Saltire** (Occidental) Scottish iconography.

**Scapa** (Occidental) Part of a general Scottish theme.

**Schiehallion** (BP) Situated West of Shetland is named after a mountain in the Highlands.

**Scoter** (Shell) Bird naming convention.

**Scott** (Amerada Hess) Named after Scottish author Sir Walter Scott. ‘Scott was actually a compromise name. The field was originally named **Waverley** when Amerada first discovered it in 1984 (along with **Ivanhoe** and **Rob Roy**) but another operator (I think Amoco) discovered part of the same field

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<sup>53</sup> Paul Griffin, Dana Petroleum, personal correspondence, 2005.

<sup>54</sup> Michael Pyszka, Petro Canada, personal correspondence, 2005.

in the block next door. They were naming fields after explorers, I think, so some bright spark came up with Scott (Sir Walter and “of the Antarctic”) which fits both’.<sup>55</sup>

**Shearwater** (Shell) Bird naming convention.

**Skene** (Mobil) Scottish lochs naming convention.

**Skua** (Shell) Bird naming convention.

**Statfjord (UK)** (Statoil) The **Statfjord** field is the largest oil field in the North Sea. It straddles the UK/Norway boundary but is predominantly in the Norwegian sector and as the name suggests, was named by the Norwegians. *Stat* refers to the fact that it was operated by a state-owned company, Statoil, and the name ‘reflects the wish to keep up a naming tradition well-established onshore, by using the topographic element *fjord*’.<sup>56</sup>

**Stirling** (Sun Oil) Named after Scottish castles.

**Strathspey** (Chevron) Continuing a theme of Scottish dances begun with the naming of the Petronella field.

**Sycamore** (Britoil) Tree naming convention.

**Tartan** (Texaco) Scottish iconography.

**Teal/Teal South** (Shell) Bird naming convention.

**Telford** (Amoco) Originally named the **Brunel** field by Amoco after Isambard Kingdom Brunel. However, it was later renamed by **Telford** by Amerada Hess after the Scottish engineer, Thomas Telford.

**Tern** (Shell) Bird naming convention.

**Thelma** (Phillips). Girl’s name. As well as numbers, fields were also allocated a letter of the alphabet, for example the ‘T’ Block and names were chosen starting with this letter.

**Thistle** (Signal Oil) Chosen for its strong Scottish connection.

**Tiffany** (Phillips). Girl’s name. One of the ‘T’ Block names.

**Toni** (Phillips). Girl’s name. One of the ‘T’ Block names.

**Tullich** (Kerr McGee) Scottish castles naming convention.

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<sup>55</sup> Crozier, personal correspondence, 2005.

<sup>56</sup> Ellingsve, ‘Naming the Unseen: Theoretical Problems and Pragmatic Solutions Concerning the Naming of Norwegian Oil and Gas Fields in the North Sea’, p. 95.

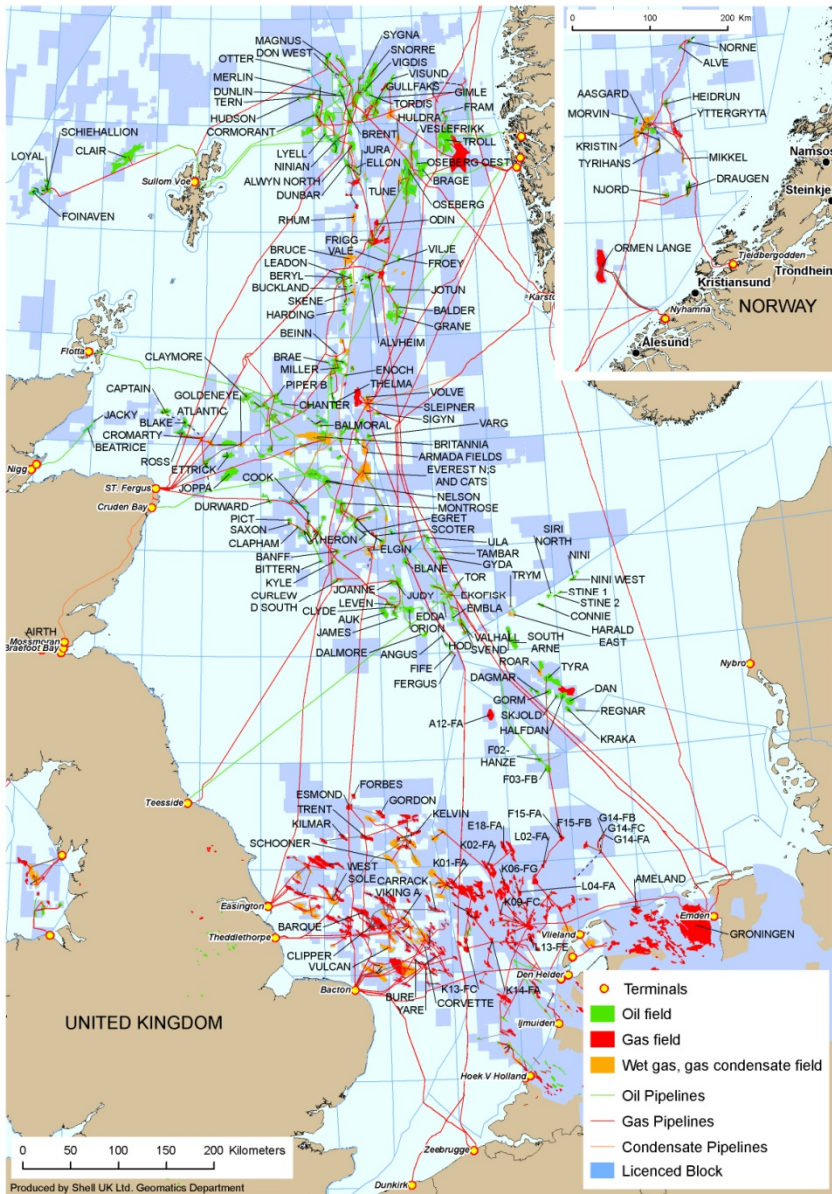


Figure 1: North Sea Oil and Gas Fields