

Scottish Language Dictionaries Newsletter

Autumn and Winter 2011

SLD News

Scottish Language Dictionaries is pleased to have four new trustees on the Board. We extend a warm welcome to Dr Warren Maguire, Dr Robert Millar, Ms Cate Newton and Mr Adrian Bell of Morton Fraser. We thank those who have stepped down for their continuing interest in our work. They are Dr Mackay (now SLD's President), Dr Rhiannon Purdie of St Andrews University, Professor John Corbett formerly of the University of Glasgow, who has now taken up an appointment at the University of Macau, Matthew Fitt and Professor Graham Caie of the University of Glasgow. We offer our congratulations to Matthew Fitt and Mirka on the birth of their son David Miroslav Fitt.

On a sadder note, several members and supporters have passed away since the last AGM. We have lost good friends to people and projects with the deaths of Sheriff Peter McNeill, Professor Michael Samuels and Derek Britton.

Sheriff Peter McNeill (1929 – 2011) made an immense contribution to the life of Scotland. He was on the Council of the Scottish National Dictionary Association and was an active member of SLD, often providing valuable legal guidance to these bodies. An expert in Scottish legal history, he edited *The Historical Atlas of Scotland 400 – 1600* with Professor Hector MacQueen (Scottish Medievalists 1973, 1996) and supported many historical societies as an author and editor.

Professor Michael Samuels (1920 – 2010), Professor of English Language at Glasgow University from 1959 to 1989, supported lexicography and associated research in Scotland throughout his long and distinguished career. He was closely associated with Professor Angus McIntosh of Edinburgh University and his colleagues in the preparation of dialect atlases of Middle English and instigated — and saw through to publication — the monumental *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* (2009). He shared his scholarship generously and many owe him a profound debt of gratitude, including all associated with SLD.

Derek Britton (1941 – 2011) was another warm supporter of the work of SLD and most recently he was Director of the Institute for Historical Dialectology at the University of Edinburgh. His encouragement of language study, research and publication is remembered widely and a student access bursary fund has been established in his memory. Details may be found on the website of University of Edinburgh Development Trust (Derek Britton Access Bursary).

Ongoing lexicographical work

Work on *The Concise Scots Dictionary* continues. We are currently working on letters *s*, *v* and *w*. The integration of *A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* (DOST) into the later part of the alphabet is therefore almost complete and we look forward to the very different challenges of re-editing the earlier part of the alphabet. Considerable progress has been made with etymologies.

Since the last newsletter we have created a development version of the *Scottish National Dictionary* component of DSL, and completed an exercise to allocate part of speech labels to every entry for search purposes. We have also carried out a review of part-of-speech labels across DOST and SND, with a view to standardising these in the future. We are currently working on the coding for the cross-references between SND entries.

The National Word Collection

The National Word Collection is SLD's ongoing electronic record of spoken and written Scots. We research a wide variety of sources through two major programmes, the Reading Scheme and the Oral Collection Scheme. The information we gather is compiled into the Collection, which now contains 40,763 quotations and 63,211 keywords. Of these keywords, 8,600 are now tied to their SND headword and have their part of speech and meaning attached. A further 18,183 have been processed electronically but still need to be checked.

Reading Scheme

The Reading Scheme involves trained volunteers checking through a range of literature to record the use of Scots. This raw information is held on a database and then edited by SLD staff. There is information about the Reading Scheme on our main website www.scotsdictionaries.org.uk. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer please get in touch directly with Pauline Cairns Speitel at pcspeitel@scotsdictionaries.org.uk.

Education and Outreach

SLD staff regularly visit schools, writers' groups and community groups to discuss Scots in literature and as a community language. We have been very busy with recent visits to community-based groups in Edinburgh and West Lothian.

Elaine Webster, our Education and Outreach Officer, assisted at the Creative Scotland's Creativity Lab 'Molecules in Motion' stall at the Scottish Learning Festival as part of the Literature in Learning group. Film-maker Kevin Cameron, artist Gillian Steel and dancer Daniel Aing worked with Gavinburn Primary School children and staff on the theme of movement in class and they continued this work at the festival. The youngsters developed skills in animation, dance and screen-printing as well as language. They printed Scots words on T-shirts as well as recording and editing Scots words on to the soundtrack. There was great interest in the stall.

The Scuilwab

More material has been added to the website (www.scuilwab.org.uk), including new items in the resource list for teachers and parents. We are grateful to Bruce Eunson, Shetland's Dialect Coordinator, for sending us some audio samples of young voices. We are keen to have voices from all over; if you have contact with schools or community groups in your area, who could give us appropriate recordings for inclusion, please get in touch.

Input to Continuing Professional Development sessions has continued with ongoing interest in the work of Scottish Language Dictionaries and the Scuilwab. Elaine Webster visited the new Burns Birthplace Museum to celebrate the culmination of workshops completed by youngsters from all over Scotland who were being interviewed and filmed as part of a television programme entitled *Scots Scuil*.

Conferences and meetings

SLD staff have enjoyed disseminating information about their work at various meetings and conferences. Dr. Chris Robinson was invited to the first *GreenNet Seminar* in Barcelona to give lectures on grammar and plagiarism. She hosted the Association for Scottish Literary Studies Language Conference (in her capacity as chair of the ASLS Language Committee) on the Report of the Scots Language Working Group. Alasdair Allan MSP, the Minister for Learning and Skills with responsibility for Gaelic and Scots, opened the event with a very encouraging statement on the introduction of Scottish Studies into schools. Dr Robinson also chaired the Scots Language Society Annual Colloquy on Scots in Schools.

Elaine Webster attended Education Scotland's Studying Scotland Initial Engagement events on behalf of SLD. She represented SLD at the Scottish Learning Festival and at the ASLS schools conference, talking to teachers there about the Scuilwab and the work of SLD.

Travels of the Scots Thesaurus

We know that Scots dictionaries and thesauruses are important worldwide. We are delighted with this photograph which shows the *Scots Thesaurus* taking centre stage.



The event was organised to mark the 10th European Day of Languages on 26th September at the offices of the Delegation of the European Union to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in Skopje. The title of the panel discussion was 'Many tongues, one family: achieving intercultural competence through plurilingualism.' The European Day of Languages is organised jointly by the Council of Europe and the European Union. It involves millions of people in a range of activities to celebrate Europe's linguistic diversity and promote lifelong language learning.

The man holding up the *Scots Thesaurus* is Robert Liddell, a senior member of the delegation staff, who was introducing the audience to Scots. Thank you to Ruth Martin for sharing the photograph with us.

Supporting SLD

We are grateful to have received core funding from the Scottish Government but many of our projects need ongoing help from businesses and trust funds. If you have an association with any businesses or foundations who could support parts of our work as part of their charitable giving, we would love to hear from you.

Sponsor a word

We are keen to promote our ‘sponsor a Scots word’ scheme with schools and are delighted that Aileymill Primary School in Greenock has sponsored the word *Galoshans*. They were keen to encourage the use of that word locally in the run up to Halloween. As part of the publicity this project has generated, SLD’s Senior Editor Pauline Cairns Speitel was interviewed for Reporting Scotland regarding the origins of the word.

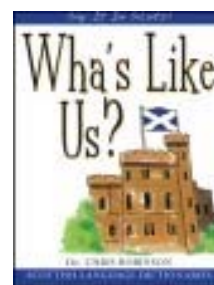
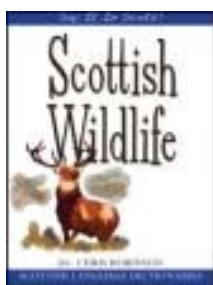
There are many businesses who celebrate Scots words in their trading name. We are delighted that ‘Fantoosh Fish’ recently joined our list of sponsors.

If you would like to sponsor a word or gift a word sponsorship to a friend to help fund work on the new edition of *Concise Scots Dictionary*, you can download a form from our main website www.scotsdictionaries.org.uk. We are always delighted when a business or a school shows interest by sponsoring a Scots word; please pass on details of the scheme.

Publications & publicity

SLD has a range of publications, including our popular compact dictionaries and thesaurus as well as the *Say it in Scots!* series which make ideal gifts. If you order books or other goods through Amazon, please remember to access Amazon through our website www.scotsdictionaries.org.uk. There are links to Amazon on our home page.

We have SLD leaflets and postcards which we distribute throughout Scotland. If you could help by taking some to events please get in touch with Elaine Webster at elaine.webster@scotsdictionaries.org.uk. To date, we have placed them in libraries, museums, shops, writers’ groups and in a range of educational establishments as well as at book and music festivals.



Thank you

Establishing international contacts is important to SLD. Thank you to Waverley Books for taking SLD Leaflets and postcards to distribute in Frankfurt.

The Scots Words and Place-names Project (SWAP)

Thank you to Ellen Bramwell and Dorian Grieve, both Research Assistants at the University of Glasgow University and members of the SWAP team, for the following articles about the project.

Scottish Words and Place-names

Ellen Bramwell

The Scots Words and Place-names (SWAP) project, in which SLD and the Scottish Place-Name Society (SPNS) are partners, will come to a close at the end of November. SWAP is based at the University of Glasgow and funded by JISC.

The project has been using the internet and various social media to promote and investigate Scots language use. This has been spread across several online platforms. The website (www.glasgow.ac.uk/swap) provides input forms, which allow members of the public to submit either Scots words or place-names using Scots elements. The Scots words will be considered for inclusion in SLD's Word Collection, which contains the raw data used to construct Scots dictionaries. The place-name examples are being used to supplement a comprehensive glossary of Scots place-name elements, created by Dr Alison Grant of SLD using *A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* and the *Scottish National Dictionary*. In addition to this, Scots-related discussions have been encouraged using social media on SWAP's Facebook (www.facebook.com/scotswap) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/scotswap) platforms.

SWAP Schools Competition

Dorian Grieve

Alongside the public side of the project, SWAP organised a Scots schools competition which encouraged pupils and teachers to engage with the Scots language. The SWAP school competition is now over and we are pleased to report it was a great success.

Encouraged, and greatly aided, by Elaine Webster, outreach officer at Scottish Language Dictionaries, we decided to run the competition on GLOW, the Scottish schools' intranet. As well as proving an effective means of advertising the competition to a large number of schools, this method was also very much in keeping with the 'new media' remit of the wider SWAP project.

The competition was open to school children of all ages and required only that they submit written work related to Scots words or place-names. We had entries from schools the length and breadth of Scotland. Three finalists were chosen from each age group by our judges: novelists Amal Chatterjee and Louise Welsh, and representatives from our project's collaborators, Elaine from SLD, and Carole Hough, convenor of the Scottish Place-Name Society. The winners were then decided by peer vote on GLOW.

The prize-giving took place on Saturday 3 September at the University of Glasgow and was attended by almost all of the finalists, travelling from Oban on the west coast, Carnoustie on the east, Shetland in the north and the Newcastleton in the Scottish Borders. The finalists and

their guests were taken on a tour of the University, followed by a marvellous exhibition hosted by the University Library's special collections department which charted the progress of Scots in print from the 16th century to the present day.

The ceremony itself was conducted by the Rector of the University, Rt. Hon. Charles Kennedy M.P., who announced the winners before saying a few words about the importance of the Scots language. On a humorous note, he also recalled appearing on a radio programme where the presenter, another Scot, James Naughtie, asked him to characterise a particular dispute. When he replied that it had 'moved from being a stooshie to being a stramash', James Naughtie nodded and moved on before noticing the confused signals from the producer's box. Mr. Kennedy observed that the ensuing explanation in standard English took many more words.

Two of the judges, Elaine and Louise, spoke about the high standard of the entries and how much they enjoyed judging them. Newcastleton Primary School finished the ceremony by treating us all to a wonderful rendition of their winning song, 'The Boozie Woods'. All the finalists received a certificate, a set of the SLD's 'Say it in Scots' books, Alison Grant's *Pocket Guide to Scottish Place-Names*, Amazon vouchers and a bag of mementoes of the University. The winning schools also received a Scots Dictionary for their libraries.

Since the event we have heard back from several of the schools saying how much they enjoyed the day. On the back of the event, a couple of schools are also planning to set up their own Scots language projects to celebrate and maintain the Scots spoken in their areas.

Throughout the competition we were conscious of reinforcing and building on the work of many others. The teachers themselves, of course, played a huge part, whether they were already experienced in working with Scots language, as many were, or whether the competition had provided an impetus for a first attempt. However, it was clear that encouragement had been available to many of our entrants outside the school curriculum as well, with several pupils having participated in workshops, including ones held by Mathew Fitt of Itchy Coo and Newcastleton's Music Festival. The strong showing in the senior secondary category by Brae High School in Shetland was a tribute not just to the teachers and pupils but to the strong sense of tradition fostered there. It was a great pleasure for the SWAP team to be able to play a part, albeit a small one, in such a great community effort. There is a link to the winning entries on the front page of the main SWAP site: www.glasgow.ac.uk/swap

As well as those already mentioned, our thanks go to Dawn Adams at Learning and Teaching Scotland who helped set up and maintain our GLOW site, and the Friends of Glasgow University Library who helped fund the prize giving.

The SWAP team: Carole, Ellen, Dorian and Jean, University of Glasgow

Indecision or something else...

Marace Dareau

The Older Scots tongue is not anything like as remote from Modern Scots as Middle English, or even the Early Modern English of Shakespeare, is from Modern English. But there are some wee words that can easily cause a tangle. ‘Or’ is not the least of these.

In Older Scots, ‘or’ is a conjunction, or rather it is two conjunctions, the first (DOST Or conj²) is the one we all know in Scottish English and modern Scots ‘are ye comin or goin? mak up yer mind’. It is the logical and linguistic expression of alternatives — you can have that one or the other, not both. It contrasts with ‘and’ as the logical and linguistic expression of inclusion, where the choice is to have both. With ‘or’, we only have the choice of one:

That owt of mynd zone man is hie/Or sum hes done him confort kyth

William Dunbar (Bawcutt edn) Vol 1, 18/9¹

The poem treats the eternal theme that there is always somebody trying to take you down. Dunbar says in the first two unquoted lines of the stanza:

Gif I be gallant, lusty and blyth Than will they say on me ..

Then we have, in the lines quoted above, the two equally unpleasant interpretations of the poet’s upbeat state of mind; either he is mad or he has been the recipient of some (amorous) encouragement.

That ‘or’ is straightforward still being much the same in the Scots we use today:

ye’re mad or ye’re in love comes tae much the same thing in the en.

The other ‘or’ (DOST Or conj¹), meaning ‘before’ does still exist in modern Scots but has disappeared from modern English. SND quotes the proverb ‘He that marries or he be wise, will die or he be rich’ (Ramsay).

He that marries before he gains wisdom will die before he becomes rich — perhaps better to stick with Dunbar and get comfort where you can — even if it does lead to financial insecurity. This use still exists in the phrase used from Orkney to Tayside: ‘or a’ be dune’ (‘before it’s all over’).

Another meaning for ‘or’ is ‘until’ as in the quotation in SND ‘Wait or I get the tickets’, and this is the meaning attributed to ‘Or ze the narrest way had past’ in Dunbar (Bawcutt) 22/18. Bawcutt glosses this as ‘Until you had taken the shortest route’.

Before going any further, I should say that Priscilla Bawcutt’s edition of *The Poems of William Dunbar* should be known (and well-thumbed) by anyone interested in Older Scots. It is a work of remarkable scholarship and erudition, on a par, in the list of editions of Scottish literature, with Denton Fox’s edition of Robert Henryson — indeed these two are in a class of their own.

However, even Homer nods. Stanza 5 reads:

*Zett in a pairt I was agast/Or ze the narrest way had past/Fra toun of Stirling to the
air. / Welcom, my awin lord thesaurair!*

¹ Bawcutt, P. (ed.) (1998) *The Poems of William Dunbar*. Glasgow. Association for Scottish Literary Studies, Nos. 27 & 28.

The whole poem deals — as so often in Dunbar — with his financial situation, and in stanza 3 we learn that:

*Ȝour nobill payment I did assay/And Ȝe hecht sone, without delay,/Againe in
Edinburgh till repair:/Welcom, my awin lord thesaurair!*

This seems to indicate that he has been in touch with the treasurer and is expecting to be paid at the due date: usually the term day. In this case, we can tell from the later line ‘Had I my wage wantit quhill Ȝuill’ that the term day concerned is Martinmas at the beginning of November. The treasurer seems to have promised that he would indeed come to Edinburgh. And stanza 4 says the treasurer has been reliable, Dunbar has faith in his trustworthiness, no one needs be anxious on that account...

Nonetheless, Dunbar was worried that something might prevent the treasurer coming to Edinburgh at the due date, and delay payment — as sometimes happened. So Bawcutt takes stanza 5 to mean that the treasurer did indeed come directly to the justice air (or circuit court) which she takes to have been on that occasion in Edinburgh.

However, we don’t know that the justice air was in Edinburgh; it might have been elsewhere, either south or north of the Forth. All we know from stanza 5 is that, if the air were elsewhere than Edinburgh, the shortest route from Stirling to its location was not through Edinburgh.

Surely the location of the air would be known months in advance and the treasurer’s presence there seems not to be the issue for doubt. In which case if the ayre were scheduled for Edinburgh there would be no point to the poem as Dunbar would know that the treasurer would be in Edinburgh to attend it. What is doubtful is his route. And the only way that can be a reason for anxiety is that he could go from where he was (Stirling) to the location of the air (unknown) without passing through Edinburgh. And if that happened Dunbar would not have the occasion to be paid. This seems to be the basis of his anxiety in the lines:

*Ȝett in a pairt I was agast/Or Ȝe the narrest way had past/Fra toun of Stirling to the
air.*

Bawcutt says this means: ‘I was terrified/Until you had taken the shortest route/From Stirling to the justice ayre (DOST Or conj¹ 1b).

But a much better reading is DOST Or conj¹ 1c ‘lest, in order that ... not’. The line will then mean ‘I was terrified/Lest you go the nearest route/From Stirling to the ayre’ and miss out Edinburgh, and Dunbar’s payment.

How he would react to that is precisely the subject of the next stanza:

Thane had my dyt beine all in duill,/Had I my wage wantit quhill Ȝuill –

‘Then my poem would have been a lament had I had to wait till Christmas to get my pay’...

Jess Smith is a traveller and writer who has penned several autobiographical volumes chronicling her childhood and young adulthood experiences travelling the countryside.

Whilst reading her book *Tears for a Tinker*¹ I came across the word *tushni*. As someone with a lifelong interest in the language of Gypsies and Travellers, it puzzled me because it's something I had never come across before. I checked the glossary at the back of the book, which gave the explanation 'tushni: scraps of hand-made lace'. I realized this word required serious detective work, yet none of my usual sources for Gypsy and Traveller material contained *tushni* or anything remotely similar.

However, when working on the revision of the Concise Scots Dictionary my first port of call for checking is the Dictionary of the Scots Language (www.dsl.ac.uk) and the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). Having exhausted the more likely resources, I searched for *tushni* or anything similar in the dictionaries, and uncovered a Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue (DOST) entry *tische* n, meaning 'a rich or fine kind of cloth, a garment made of this' and also 'a band, ribbon, girdle or belt of such stuff'. The word is first attested in the early fifteenth century as *tisew*, but subsequently as *tuscheis of trast silk* c1450-52, *a silkin dun tuscha of siluer* in 1488, and *A siluer belt with a red tusche* in 1522. This led me to the related OED entry *tissue* n, 'A rich kind of cloth... applied to various rich or fine stuffs of delicate or gauzy texture... any woven fabric or stuff', first recorded in the late fourteenth century, which also notes that the Scots forms are *tusche*, *tuscha*.

It seems very likely that *tushni* must be related to, and possibly evolved out of Older Scots *tusche*, *tuscha*, and that in the language of the Travellers the meaning has contracted from fine woven cloth in general to scraps of lace in particular. In English and Scots more generally, the word evolved in a different direction, into *tissue* 'fine paper, a paper handkerchief' (see the Scottish National Dictionary *tishie* n).

On closer examination of other examples of the Gypsy language with 'ni' or 'nie' endings I have discovered similar patterns emerging. For example Walter Simson, who made records of the speech of Scottish Gypsies in the late nineteenth century, attests *paurie* meaning 'water' and also notes the variant *pani* which is the more usual form in both Romany and Scots Travellers' language. Romany also has the variants *parni* and *pawni*.² Simson also records *goroo* 'a cow' but he also attests the variant *gournie* with the same meaning.³ A further example cited by James Hayward⁴ is *hukni* meaning a confidence trick or something stolen or counterfeit, which is a variant of *hookey* which has passed into English from Romany.⁵

There is, perhaps, some long-forgotten grammatical reason for this type of variant. Much more exploration is required into the structure of Scots Gypsy language and also into Romany itself where it overlaps with Scots. This is no easy task as both traditions, until relatively recently, have been entirely oral.

¹ *Tears for a Tinker Jess's Journey Concludes* Mercat Press Ltd 2005

² Simson, Walter *A History of the Gypsies: with specimens of their Language*, Edinburgh and London 1865 and James Hayward *Gipsy Jib A Romany Dictionary* Holm Oak Publishing 2003

³ Simson, Walter *A History of the Gypsies: with specimens of their Language*, Edinburgh and London 1865

⁴ James Hayward *Gipsy Jib A Romany Dictionary* Holm Oak Publishing 2003

⁵ Manfri Frederick Wood *In the Life of a Romany Gipsy* Routledge and Kegan Paul 1973 and 1979
<http://www.lowchensaustralia.com/names/romany-english-words.html>

The *Scottish National Dictionary* entry for *flash* noun (1) is very minimal, containing only a single quotation harvested from Jamieson's dictionary "a depository for timber" (Leith, 1808), and an etymological note suggesting that this word might be related to an English term *flash*, *flosh* 'a pool, a marshy place' commonly found in place-names south of the border, and a note to compare the related word 'flush'. As a result, the word was not included in the *Concise Scots Dictionary*.

There is indeed an English word 'flash', meaning 'a pool, a marshy place' with lexical examples in the *Oxford English Dictionary* from c.1440, and place-name examples including *Flass Hall* in Durham (recorded as *Flaskes* 1313),¹ *Flosh Gate* in Cumberland (recorded as *Floshe*, *Floche* in 1278),² and in the field names *The Flash* (Lancashire), *Flash Field* (Cheshire) and *Flash Croft* (Northumberland).³

However, the word is in fact also attested in Scottish place-names with exactly the same meaning, with evidence dating back as far as the late fourteenth century. Examples from the Borders region include *Flass* in Berwickshire (recorded as *Flas* 1388-89), *Flass Well*, also in Berwickshire, and *Flask Wood* in Dumfriesshire.⁴ In West Lothian, the lost place-name *The Flash* in Dalmeny Parish was recorded as (*lie*) *Flass* in 1573 and *The Flash* in 1663.⁵ There was also a lost *Flask* name in Linlithgow Parish, recorded as *Flasche* 1550-51, (*The*) *Flass* 1569 and *Flask* 1653,⁶ and two further lost *Flask* names in Abercorn Parish and Bo'ness & Carriden Parish respectively.⁷ Additionally, there was a lost *Flask Hill* in Linlithgow Parish (recorded as *Flashill* 1531, *Flaschehill* 1550-51, *Flaskhill* 1560 and *Flaskhill* 1653).⁸ In Midlothian, there is *The Flash* at Queensferry (recorded as *The Flash* in 1573, and *Flass shot* in 1757),⁹ *The Flashes* at Corstorphine,¹⁰ and also *Flesh Cleugh*.¹¹ In Fife, examples include *Flass* (recorded as *Flask* 1390-1405 and *Flesk* 1391-1405),¹² *Flesh* in western Fife,¹³ and also perhaps *Flisk* in central Fife.¹⁴

The substantial body of onomastic evidence for *flash* names seems not to have come to the attention of the editors of either the *Scottish National Dictionary* or *A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*, although there is a small *SND* entry for *flush* noun, 'a piece of boggy ground (where water lies on the surface); a swampy place, a pool of water', with attestations in the Borders, the South-West and Argyllshire from 1789 onwards. The entry lists *flosh* as a variant form, and the editors of the original *Concise Scots Dictionary* linked the word to two stub entries in the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*: *flush*, *fluche* noun 'a pool or run of water' and

¹ Ekwall, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* (3rd Edn, 1951), p. 173.

² Armstrong *et al*, *The Place-Names of Cumberland* (1952), p. 187.

³ Field, *English Field Names: A Dictionary* (1972), p. 78.

⁴ Williamson, *The Non-Celtic Place-Names of the Scottish Border Counties* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1942), p. 260

⁵ MacDonald, *The Place-Names of West Lothian* (1941), p. 9.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 58.

⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 21, 36.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 58.

⁹ Harris, *The Place Names of Edinburgh* (1996), p. 272.

¹⁰ Dixon, *The PlaceNames of Midlothian* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1947), p. 88.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 185.

¹² Taylor, *The Place-Names of Fife*, Volume 4 (2010), p. 411.

¹³ Taylor, *The Place-Names of Fife*, Volume 1 (2006), p. 243.

¹⁴ Taylor, *The Place-Names of Fife*, Volume 2 (2008), p. 198.

flosche noun ‘a watery swamp’. These tiny entries contain only three quotes between them (as variant forms of a single Douglas quotation appear in both entries).

This lexical evidence can be augmented with various place-name examples, including *Flosh* in Dumfriesshire (*Floshe* in 1569),¹⁵ together with *The Flosh* (Selkirkshire), *Flosh Burn* (Roxburghshire), *Isle of Floss* (Dumfriesshire), *Flosh Burn*, *Floshend*, *Floshknowe*, *Floshland Burn* (all in Dumfriesshire) and quite possibly *Flosh* in southern Kintyre. The *flush* place-names +include *Flush Hill* in Wigtownshire, *Flush Plantation* in Roxburghshire and *Flush Knowes* in Ayrshire, and *Piper’s Flush* in Dumfriesshire.¹⁶ To these I would also add the single-quotation *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* stub entry *flus*, *floos* noun ‘a pool’, as the quotation in question, from Barbour’s *The Brus*, ‘*Thair...was...sua richt gret spilling of blud That on the erd the flus it stud*’ seems to correspond well with the sense of ‘ground where fluid pools on the surface’ attested in the *Scottish National Dictionary* entry for *flush*.

What is significant here is that on the basis of the Borders examples, May Williamson had postulated a Scots word *flash*, *flosh* derived from Middle English *flasse*, *flosshe*, ultimately from Old English **flæsc* (cognate with Old Danish *flask(e)*).¹⁷ It is therefore quite likely that rather than being merely ‘related’ as is suggested in the *Scottish National Dictionary*, *flash* and *flush/flosh* may actually have evolved as variant forms of the same word, and that the two sets of evidence should be considered as constituent parts of the same entry.

Thus, although *flash* makes a very brief appearance in the *Scottish National Dictionary*, there is considerable onomastic evidence for its use in the Older Scots period, and the place-name formations incorporating the definite article, such as ‘*The Flash*’ and ‘*The Flosh*’, appear to imply a degree of lexical use as well. It is likely that the “depository for timber” reference is something of a red herring, as the site was probably named for its marshy state and its subsequent use for timber storage was merely incidental, something which would not have been apparent when considering the name in isolation. The existing *Concise Scots Dictionary* entry for *flush* will be revised and expanded on this basis, with *flash* being incorporated as an obsolete variant. Similarly, the early place-name forms and the incorporation of the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* stub entry *flus*, *floos* will allow the revised entry to be ante-dated to the late fourteenth century. Additionally, whilst the evidence collected for the *Scottish National Dictionary* entry implies that usage of the word was limited to the south-western Scotland, the onomastic evidence reveals that it originally had a much wider geographical distribution, incorporating the Border counties, the Lothians and Fife as well. Finally, the place-name material provides a very useful background context for interpreting the handful of Older Scots literary quotes which comprise the existing *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* entries, unifying them within this framework and revealing them to be components of a single entry rather than three individual words.

¹⁵ Williamson, *The Non-Celtic Place-Names of the Scottish Border Counties* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1942), p. 260.

¹⁶ See Johnson-Ferguson, *The Place-Names of Dumfriesshire* (1935) for further instances of ‘flush’ names in Dumfriesshire.

¹⁷ Williamson, *The Non-Celtic Place-Names of the Scottish Border Counties* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1942), p. 260.

