

# TARAN'S WHEEL: A COMPANION

## NOTES ON PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS IN AND AROUND CROMAR MENTIONED IN TARAN'S WHEEL

Jim Forbes

*Taran's Wheel* by Jim Forbes (2014: Kinord Books, Edinburgh) is a work of fiction into which are woven real places and real historical people and events. Not all the historical detail is verifiably factual (and some is at odds with commonly accepted theory), but by the same token none of it is provably untrue. A few people, places and events are fictional and are so indicated below by underlining (e.g., Agnes Cromar, Praisewell). Characters in the contemporary narrative of *Taran's Wheel* are entirely fictional and are not listed below.

Etymology of place names is always open to interpretation but derivations given below are, in the author's belief, the most reasonable of those that have been proposed. Sources include Macdonald, J.: *Place Names of West Aberdeenshire* (1899, New Spalding Club, Aberdeen) and Alexander, W.M.: *Place Names of Aberdeenshire* (1952, Third Spalding Club, Aberdeen). Languages are abbreviated as follows: *B.*, Brythonic; *E.*, English; *G.*, Gaelic; *N.*, Norse; *P.*, Pictish; *S.*, Scots. As Scots spelling has never been formalised, names in that language are rendered according to local pronunciation.

**Aberdeen Arms Hotel, Tarland.** Inn, established late 18th century, at the NE corner of the **Square**. The sign features the arms of the **Earls of Aberdeen**, whose motto as given in Ch. 23 is *Fortuna sequatur* (Let fortune follow).

**Aberdeen, Earls of.** Title held 1682–1916 (when the 7th Earl was created Marquess of Aberdeen and Temair) by a branch of the **Gordon** family. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Earls were major landowners in **Cromar**. George Hamilton-Gordon (1784–1860), 4th Earl, was Prime Minister of Great Britain 1852–1855. His grandson John (1847–1934), 7th Earl, was at various times Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and Governor General of Canada. Their treatment in Ch. 47 is in accord with history, except for the 4th Earl's interactions with Agnes Cromar and Prince Albert over a proposed royal residence, which are fictional.

**Aberdeen, Lady** (Ishbel Maria Hamilton-Gordon, *nee* Marjoribanks, Countess of Aberdeen, later Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair, 1857–1939). Wife of John Hamilton-Gordon, 7th **Earl of Aberdeen**, later 1st Marquess of Aberdeen and Temair, resident at **Cromar House** until her tenancy under **Lady MacRobert** was terminated. She was a noted philanthropist and advocate for women's rights (see Ch. 49).

**Aboyne.** Etymology uncertain; once known as 'Bonty'. Village (pop. ca. 2,200) at a bridging point (formerly a ferry) on the **Dee** 8 km SE of **Tarland**.

**Aeth** (pre-12th century BCE). The legend of Aeth and the kingfisher recounted in Ch. 11 is invented. Regarding the prophecy that kings would bear his name, Aeth (or Aed), a son of Kenneth MacAlpin, was briefly king of the Picts in 877–878; his reputed place of burial is at Inverurie. The suggestion in Ch. 29 that **Macbeth** was originally named Aeth is not universally accepted.

**Agricola, Gnaeus Julius** (40–93). Governor of the Roman province of *Britannia* 77–85. His treatment in Ch. 25, though fictional, is largely consistent with known facts. In the account by his son-in-law Tacitus, he defeated the *Caledonii* under **Calgacus** at the battle of **Mons Graupius** in 84.

**Alastrean House, Tarland.** Formerly **Cromar House**, renamed by **Lady MacRobert** in honour of her three sons (Alasdair, Roderic and Iain). Its claimed derivation from a Latin phrase signifying 'a place of honour by the hearth of the winged heroes of the stars' is highly dubious. The house was almost totally destroyed by fire in 1952 (Ch. 49), and was subsequently rebuilt. It is now a care home.

**Alford** (pronounced 'Aaford'). Possibly *Aal ford* (S.): old ford. Village (pop. ca. 2,000) at the centre of the Howe of Alford, 15 km NE of **Tarland**. The battle of Alford was fought 2 km NW of the village in 1645, in which a Covenanter force led by **William Baillie** was routed by Royalists (Ch. 43).

**asteroid impact.** Although there is no geological evidence that the circular basin known as the **Howe of Cromar** (the Pleasant Vale or Seely Howe of *Taran's Wheel*) represents the site of an asteroid impact in the Jurassic era or at any other time, the idea suggested in Ch. 1 that the basin reflects 'memory in the rock' of such an impact cannot be ruled out. The Howe of Cromar is the most physically distinct and most perfectly circular of three adjacent basins of similar size; the others are the Howes of **Lumphanan** and **Alford**.

**Baderonach Hill.** Possibly *Bad drothanach* (G.): breezy thicket; Alexander proposes 'clump of ferns'. Hill (alt. 475 m) on the NW rim of the **Howe of Cromar**, above **Tillypronie** House.

**Baillie, William** (fl. 1645). Commander of Covenanter troops that camped between **Coull** and **Tarland** in the aftermath of the 'cleansing' (Ch. 43). He was defeated by a smaller Royalist army at the battle of **Alford**.

**Baird, Margaret** (fl. 1288–1314). Fictional (Ch. 33) lady's maid to **Joanna Countess of Fife** and later her daughter Isabella (Isobel of Coull).

- Ballachbuie.** *Bealach buidhe* (G.): yellow pass; not the same location as the **Ballochbuie Forest**. Hill crossing (alt. ca. 392 m) on the NW rim of the **Howe of Cromar**, between **Baderonach Hill** to the W and **Molly Watt's Hill** to the E, over which an old drove road passes (Ch. 45). There are remains of a Pictish settlement here. The croft of Ballachbuie situated here is, like its resident Molly Watt, fictional. The spring at Ballachbuie known as the **Lazy Well** still provides a trickle of pure, clear water.
- Ballamore.** *Baile mor* (G.): big (farm) town. Farm, no longer existing, 2 km W of **Logie Coldstone**. Ch. 41.
- Ballater.** Possibly *Baile leitir* (G.): hillside town (an inappropriate description). Village on the **Dee** (pop. ca. 1,500) 16 km SW of **Tarland**; terminus of the **Deeside railway** (Ch. 47) which closed in 1964.
- Ballochbuie Forest.** *Bealach buidhe* (G.): yellow pass; not the same location as **Ballachbuie**. An isolated remnant of native Scots pine forest in the upper Dee valley (Ch. 47), partly on the royal estate of **Balmoral**.
- Balmoral.** *Baile* (G.): town + 'moral': etymology unknown. Royal castle and estate on Deeside between **Ballater** and **Braemar**; 25 km SW of **Tarland**. The history of Balmoral Castle presented in Ch. 47 is factual.
- Balnagowan Hill.** The easternmost spur of the low ridge between the **Howe of Cromar** and the valley of the **Dee**, named for the *fermtoun* of Balnagowan (*Baile nan gobhan* (G.): smiths' town). The hill (alt. 262 m) forms the W flank of the defile through which the **Tarland Burn** makes its exit from the Howe to join the Dee near **Aboyne**. The cairn-field or necropolis on 'Balnagowan Hill' referenced by **Ogston** (1919) is actually on **Craig Dhu** according to the OS.
- Banchory.** *Beannchar* (G.): holy place. Town (pop. ca. 6,500) near the confluence of the Water of **Feugh** with the **Dee**. As mentioned in Ch. 25, the 5th-century Christian missionary **Ternan** founded a monastery here.
- Beaker People.** The prevalent belief on Bell Beaker culture (named after distinctive funerary pottery) is that it represented a set of technologies that spread to indigenous late neolithic peoples across W Europe. That culture came late (ca. 1850 BCE) to northern Britain, where it was introduced by a new race of people probably of Iberian origin, taller and heavier-boned than the indigenous neolithic circle builders they replaced. The arrival of these Beaker People coincided with the appearance of bronze working and it is assumed they brought that technology with them. See Ch. 4.
- Begg.** Fictional family having their home and place of business at **Braes of Cromar** (Ch. 43). Annie Begg (fl. 1643, later Annie Crichton) and her mother were **Keepers of Taran's wheel**.
- Bel.** Celtic sun-god, not related to the Babylonian Bel or Phoenician Baal (names that can apply to any god). The contention in Ch. 4 that the Green Man or Jack-in-the-Green is Bel's incarnation is not widely accepted.
- beltane.** Pre-Christian Celtic festival of **Bel**, celebrated around 1st May; one of four cardinal dates in the ancient Celtic year. See Ch. 3.
- Bennachie.** *Beinn na ciche* (G.): breast mountain. Hill (alt. 528 m) in central Aberdeenshire with several tops, of which the most easterly (*Mither Tap* (S.): mother top; alt. 518 m) is the most prominent though not the highest. The *Mither Tap* famously resembles a female breast. Despite this, Macdonald offers non-breast-related derivations of Bennachie, e.g., *Beinn a chithe* (G.): rain mountain. In an alternative etymology proposed in *Taran's Wheel*, the final syllable could be derived from **Ce**, the ancient Pictish kingdom or province of which the hill is at the geographic centre. Bennachie is one of the most widely favoured locations for the battle of **Mons Graupius** (though not according to *Taran's Wheel*).
- Birk Hill.** *Birk* (S. from N.): birch + hill (E.). Hill crossing (alt. 371 m) between **Baderonach Hill** and **Craig Glas** (*Creag glas* (G.): green hill, alt. 490 m) in the NW of the **Howe of Cromar**, near the source of the **Tarland Burn**. It features in Ch. 54.
- Bishop Steen** (Bishop's Stane/Stone) *Bishop* (E.) + *steen* (S.): stone. Large boulder by the roadside near **Ordie Gordon** and **Campfield**. Its connection to **Ternan** (the 'Bishop of Pictland') as suggested in Ch. 40 is conjectural but plausible.
- Blelack.** *Baile aileach* (G.): stony (farm) town (cf. **Pitellachie**). Estate S and E of **Logie Coldstone** featuring in traditional rhyme recited in Ch. 45.
- Bloody Burn.** *Bloody* (E.) + *burn* (S.): stream. Tributary of the **Tarland Burn** descending from slopes of **Mortlich**; scene of skirmish in 1057 in which **Macbeth** was wounded by forces of Malcolm Canmore prior to his death at **Lumphanan** (Ch. 29). Some sources place that skirmish on the **Cairn o' Mount**.
- Bog** (Boig). *Bog* (G.): marsh or swamp. Farm 3 km N of **Tarland**, home in 1597 of **Elsbeth Forbes** (Ch. 41) and in 1919 of **Francis Donaldson** (Ch. 21).
- Bog More.** *Bog mor* (G.): great swamp. Low-lying former wetland, drained in 1840 (Ch. 47), between **Tarland** and **Coull**.
- Boultenstone** (Boutensteen). Locality by the Deskry Water 10 km NW of **Tarland**; the property here was formerly an inn. There was once a standing stone nearby (Ch. 38); derivation of the name from 'beltane steen' (S.) is fictional but inspired by a comment by Alexander.
- Braemar.** *Braigh Mharr* (G.): upper **Mar**. District and former parish covering the upper reaches of the **Dee** valley; the name now attaches chiefly to the village of Braemar, formerly two adjacent villages called **Castleton** and **Auchindryne** (*Ach an droighinn* (G.): hawthorn field). Braemar village (pop. ca. 400) is 21

- km W of **Ballater** at an altitude of 340 m and is the coldest populated place in Great Britain. The Jacobite rebellion of 1715 began with the raising of a standard here (Ch. 45).
- Braes of Cromar.** *Braes* (S.): slopes + **Cromar**. Locality 1 km W of **Logie Coldstone**. That **Kate Ferries** had her home and a herb garden here (Ch. 41) is fictional.
- Bridge Street, Tarland.** (E.) Street running S from the **Square** to the bridge over the **Tarland Burn**.
- Bruce, Marjorie** (1296–1316). Daughter of **Robert the Bruce** by his first wife Isabella of **Mar**, who died shortly after giving birth to her. Ch. 35 recounts, substantially factually, that following betrayal and capture of the Bruce women at **Kildrummy** in 1306, a cage was prepared for the 10-year-old girl at the Tower of London so that she could be exhibited like an animal. Her aunt Mary Bruce and Isabella, Countess of Buchan (**Isobel of Coull**) faced a similar fate, but Edward I of England apparently relented in Marjorie's case and instead condemned her to solitary confinement in a convent, from which she was released in 1314. She died in childbirth aged 19; her son, as King Robert II, founded the royal house of Stuart.
- Brytha** (Brigta, Bride). Celtic goddess identified with Scandinavian Freya or Frida in *Taran's Wheel*, but this is not universally accepted. She possibly gave her name to Britain and to the Brythonic family of languages that includes Welsh. The Christian 'Saint' Bride or Bridget was probably a reinvention of this pagan deity, as stated in Ch. 25. Her position as mother-goddess to the **Tarachsel (Picts)** is a fictional device.
- Buchan, Earl of** (John Comyn or Cumming, ca. 1259–1308). Leading supporter of John Balliol, cousin of the Red Comyn and enemy of **Robert the Bruce**. His seat was at Ellon, N of Aberdeen, but his power extended over most of NE Scotland and a large part of the Highlands. As the husband of Isabella, Countess of Buchan (**Isobel of Coull**), his treatment in Ch. 35 is in accord with known history.
- Bucket Mill.** (E.) Water-powered mill on the **Feugh** in the **Forest of Birse** where wooden buckets have been made with local pine since 1853. Mentioned in Ch. 61.
- Burn o' Vat.** (S.): stream of the vat. Rises on **Culblean** and flows through the **Muir of Dinnet** to **Loch Kinord**. A gorge (**the Vat**) through which it runs features in Ch. 43 and Ch. 46.
- Cairn o' Mount.** *Carn* (G.) *a' monaidh* (P./G.) cairn of the **Mounth**. Hill crossing (alt. 455 m) over the Mounth S of **Banchory**.
- Caledonii.** According to Ptolemy, a people inhabiting the Great Glen SW of Inverness; name applied by Tacitus to all peoples N of the Forth (the **Picts**). See Ch. 20. Etymology unknown.
- Calgacus** (fl. 84). According to the account by Tacitus, leader of the **Caledonii** against the Romans' auxiliary forces under **Agricola** in the battle of **Mons Graupius**. His name appears to derive from proto-Celtic *kalga*, meaning a sword, alternatively a penis. The words of **Cordelia** he utters in Ch. 20, '*They make a wasteland and they call it peace*', were in fact invented by Tacitus and attributed to Calgacus in a supposed pre-battle speech to his men.
- cambus.** Literally a bend, especially a river-bend (B./G.); in *Taran's Wheel* the word is used metaphorically to mean any of the six historical turning-points that have occurred every 666 years or so since the coming of the **Beaker People** to the **Pleasant Vale** ca. 1850 BCE. First: the **Years With No Summer** (1189–1171 BCE: Ch. 6); second: arrival of the **Celts** (6th century BCE: Ch. 10); third: battle of **Mons Graupius** (84: Ch. 25); fourth: destruction of Pictish culture and imposition of the Gaelic language during conversion to Christianity (6th–8th centuries: Ch. 25); fifth: defeat of Gaelic by Anglo-Saxon (Scots) language and culture (14th century: Ch. 35). The sixth and final *cambus* is therefore imminent.
- Cambus o' May.** Possibly *Cambus mhaigh* (G.): river-bend of the plain (Alexander); the suggestion in Ch. 38 that 'May' refers to the Mayday festival of beltane is fictional. Locality at the SW boundary of **Cromar** where the **Dee** makes a bend.
- Campfield.** Small settlement on the SW flank of the **Hill of Fare**, 18 km E of **Tarland** and 0.5 km N of **Ordie Gordon**. There was a smithy here (see Ch. 40). Macdonald derives the name from *cam choille* (G.): bent wood; the alternative etymology in *Taran's Wheel* relating to George Gordon's (**Earl of Huntly's**) camp field is invented.
- Capel Mounth.** Hill crossing (highest alt. ca. 680 m) on an ancient drove road over the **Mounth** SW of **Ballater**. See Ch. 45. Etymology of *Capel* uncertain.
- Carue** (pronounced 'Karoo'). Etymology unknown, may be B./P. (*caer*: fortress). Locality 1.5 km SE of **Logie Coldstone** mentioned in Ch. 45.
- Ce.** (P.) Pictish province or kingdom north of the **Mounth**, extending from **Mar** to Buchan; meaning unknown (the suggestion in Ch. 9 that it may simply signify 'here' is invented). The *Ce* of *Taran's Wheel* was the original kingdom of the **Tarachsel**, centred on **Taran's Garden**.
- Celts.** Celtic peoples arrived in NE Scotland around 550 BCE, bringing their language, religion and ironworking technology with them (Ch. 10). That they coexisted with, rather than supplanted, the **Beaker People** is evidenced by the survival of Beaker traits in the present-day population.
- circle builders.** Ch. 10. Recumbent stone circles such as the one at **Tomnaverie** are believed to date to neolithic times, perhaps 3000–2500 BCE, well before the Beaker period. Little is known of the circle builders, except that they were smaller in stature than the **Beaker People** who replaced them around 1850 BCE.

- 'cleansing' (of **Cromar**). A brutal destruction by Covenanter forces of homes and farms in Cromar in 1644; the account in Ch. 44 is factual.
- Cloak**. *Cloich* (G.): stony (land). Place on the N edge of **Lumphanan** mentioned in the transcript of **Kate Ferries's** 'trial' for witchcraft (Ch. 41).
- Clochnaben** (Clachnaben). *Clach na beinne* (G.): rock of the mountain. Hill (alt. 589 m) projecting northwards from the **Mounth**, W of **Cairn o' Mount**. Its summit is formed by a conspicuous granite tor.
- Cnoc Dubh**. (G.): black hill. Hill (alt. 342 m) on the SW rim of the **Howe of Cromar**.
- Coatmore**. Long-abandoned settlement on an ancient Pictish road 1.5 km S of **Tarland** (Ch. 45). Etymology uncertain; Macdonald suggests *cot muir* (S.): moor of the cottages.
- Coldhome** (Cauldhame). *Caal hame* (S.): cold home. Place 0.5 km NW of **Migvie** mentioned in Ch. 52.
- Coldstone**. One-time parish in W **Cromar**, which in 1618 merged with **Logiemar** to the S to form the united parish of **Logie Coldstone**. The remains of Coldstone kirk (Ch. 41) are 1 km N of the present day village of Logie Coldstone. Etymology uncertain; Alexander suggests *comhdhail* (G.): meeting + stone (E.) or *toun* (S.). Conceivably but improbably 'Colud's town' from Colud ('Old King Cole'), a medieval British monarch whose realm did not extend into Pictland.
- Commercial Hotel, Tarland**. A long-established inn at the NW corner of the **Square**.
- Cordelia** (Cryddyldad verch Llyr). Legendary British queen, daughter of **Llyr** (Shakespeare's King Lear). Based on the mythology created ca. 1136 by Geoffrey of Monmouth, Cordelia's short reign occurred in the 7th century BCE. However, Ch. 23 of *Taran's Wheel* relies on a different chronology credited to David Hughes, placing her in the 1st century BCE as a contemporary of Julius Caesar. The visit of Cordelia to the **Tarachsel** recounted in Ch. 18 is fictional.
- Corrachree**. *Coire chraobh* (G.): corrie of trees. Place 1 km W of **Tarland** mentioned in Ch. 25.
- Corrichie**. Possibly *coire riabhach* (G.): brindled corrie. Recess in the S flank of the **Hill of Fare** drained by the Corrichie Burn. The battle of Corrichie fought here in 1562 (Ch. 39) was a victory for the forces of James Stewart, Earl of Moray loyal to Mary, Queen of Scots over those of George Gordon, **Earl of Huntly**.
- Corse** (O'Neil Corse). *Corss* (S.): cross or crossing; can refer to a watershed. Locality 9 km NE of **Tarland**. A tollhouse here is a remnant of the Aberdeen–Tarland turnpike completed in 1840 (Ch. 47).
- Corsedarder**. *Corss* (S.): cross or crossing (in this case clearly referring to a watershed) + *darder*, etymology unknown. Hill crossing (alt. ca. 230 m) between the valleys of the **Dee** and **Feugh**, the location of the fictional **Taran's Crossing** of the story (Ch. 18 and Ch. 42). By the roadside is a war memorial and millennium monument, and on the other side a broken and crudely repaired stone reputed (probably incorrectly) to commemorate a Pictish king. On the ridgetop a short distance to the west is a large cairn. The derivation of the name from '**Taran's Crossing**' is invented.
- Coull**. *Cul* (G.): backhill. Former parish in E **Cromar** (pop. ca. 350). Coull kirk and the nearby remains of Coull Castle are 4 km SE of Tarland. The history of Coull Castle as told in Ch. 31 and Ch. 33 is fictionalised but based on historic fact.
- Coutts, John** (fl. 1597). Messenger-at-arms responsible for charging **Kate Ferries** with witchcraft (Ch. 41).
- Craig Dhu**. *Creag dubh* (G.): black hill. One of the range of low hills between **Cromar** and the **Dee** valley, alt. 298 m. The Blue (or Long) Cairn on its S slope (said in *Taran's Wheel* to have been built by Cromar's **Beaker** settlers to mark where they first entered the **Pleasant Vale** ca. 1850 BCE) has not been dated by archaeologists. The great cairn-fields here and on **Craiglich** were believed by **Ogston** to be a 2000-year-old necropolis; but their connection with the battle of **Mons Graupius** in 84 (Ch. 20) is a novel suggestion.
- Craigendarroch**. *Creag an daraich* (G.): oak hill. At the edge of **Ballater**, a steeply sloping hill forming the isolated end of a ridge extending S from **Morven**. Alt. 402 m. A hotel and resort of the same name occupy the gentler western slope.
- Craigievar**. *Creag* (G.): hill + **Mar**. Locality 10 km NE of **Tarland**; site of Craigievar Castle, built 1610–1626 as a stronghold of the **Forbes** clan. Mentioned in Ch. 43.
- Craiglich**. Hill (alt. 476 m) on the NE rim of the **Howe of Cromar**, called **Ladle-lick** by the people of **Cromar**. Macdonald and Alexander both derive the name from *Creag lic* (G.): flagstone hill. The great cairn-fields here and on **Craig Dhu** were believed by **Ogston** to be a 2000-year-old necropolis; but their connection with the battle of **Mons Graupius** in 84 (Ch. 20) is a novel suggestion.
- Crichton**. Fictional family (Ch. 43) of the walk mill (see **Waulkmill**) at **Tarland**. **Annie Crichton** *nee* **Begg**, (fl. 1628) was a **Keeper of Taran's wheel**.
- Cromar** (emphasis on the second syllable). *Cro* (G.): circle (sometimes translated as 'sheepfold') + **Mar**. Part of the ancient province of Mar in Aberdeenshire; location of most of the action in *Taran's Wheel*. It covers the former parishes of **Tarland**, **Coull** and **Logie Coldstone** (total pop. ca. 1,400). Its role in the story as the cradle of **Tarachsel** (Pictish) culture is a fictional device, inspired by its wealth of archaeological remains. The family name Cromar probably originated here, as exemplified by the fictional **Agnes Cromar**.
- Cromar, Agnes** (1805–1874). Fictional **Keeper of Taran's wheel** (Ch. 47). There is no gravestone in **Tarland** kirkyard to **Agnes Cromar** as described in Ch. 23.

- Cromar House.** Country house completed in 1903 for the 7th **Earl of Aberdeen** and **Lady Aberdeen**, 1 km E of **Tarland**. Its history is substantially as given in Ch. 49, except that **Agnes Cromar**'s prophecy of 'debt, death and destruction' is fictional. Now called **Alastrean House**.
- Culblean.** Perhaps *cul bliain* (G.): backhill of the cleft or groin; alternatively its old name Kilblane could refer to a church dedicated to St Blane, a 6th century Irish missionary, though no such church is known in the vicinity. Hill (alt. 604 m) on the SW rim of the **Howe of Cromar**. The battle of Culblean, fought on its lower slopes in 1335, was substantially as described in Ch. 36.
- Culsh.** *Coilltean* (G.): woods or *cuillte* (G.): recess. The Iron Age earth-house (souterrain) here features in Ch. 25 as a harvest store. Other, less well preserved, souterrains are found at **Migvie** and **Braes of Cromar**.
- Daach** (Davoch). *Daach* or *daugh* (S.): an originally Pictish, later Scottish measure of land, sometimes taken to be an area capable of supporting 60 oxen. Farms (East and West Davoch) 3 km NW of **Tarland**. Ch. 41.
- Dalvokie.** *Dail-bhocain* (G.): ghost's meadow. Former croft on the S side of the **Tarland Burn**, opposite the village of **Tarland**; the **Ghost Meadow** of Ch. 4.
- Davan.** In *Taran's Wheel*, a settlement by **Loch Davan** where the fictional **Merefrith** lived; the centre of power of the **Merch Nyr** (Ch. 12). Evidence of ancient settlement is in fact abundant around Loch Davan. There is a present-day farm of Davan about 1 km north of the loch; however the fictional **Davan** corresponds to the Pictish remains at New and Old **Kinord**, on the isthmus between Loch Davan and **Loch Kinord**.
- Dee, River.** At 140 km, the fifth longest river in Scotland, rising in the Cairngorm Mountains and following a mostly eastward course to enter the North Sea at Aberdeen. It cuts across the S edge of **Cromar**. A bend (*cambus*) of the river E of **Dinnet** is, according to Ch. 12, the fictional location of **Aeth**'s finding of the **Drogan Taranish**. The name Dee or a variant, e.g. Don, Doon, Tay, Tyne, Tees, Taw, is applied to rivers throughout Britain and in continental Europe (e.g., Danube, Don, Donets, Tagus) and is believed to be pre-Celtic, referring to a river-goddess.
- Deeside railway.** A now dismantled railway line from Aberdeen to **Ballater**. The first stretch, from Aberdeen to **Banchory**, opened in 1853, and the final stretch, from **Aboyne** to Ballater, in 1866. The line was closed in 1964. Its history as told in Ch. 47 is substantially factual, except that the notion of a proposed route from **Lumphanan** through **Cromar** to Strathspey is fictional.
- Devana.** Settlement noted by Ptolemy in the land of the **Taexali**, often identified with Aberdeen. The suggestion in Ch. 27 that **Devana** corresponds to an Iron Age settlement near **Loch Davan**, is neither original nor widely accepted.
- Dinnet.** Possibly a Pictish name meaning 'of the **Dee**'. Small village at a bridging point on the river, 6 km S of **Tarland**. The name originally applied to the **Mill of Dinnet**, 1 km E of the village.
- Don, River.** Watercourse (length 131 km) flowing eastward from a point near Inchrory on the River Avon (which has captured the Don's original headwaters) to enter the North Sea at Aberdeen, 3.5 km N of the mouth of the **Dee**. 'Don' and 'Dee' probably derive from the same pre-Celtic river-goddess name.
- Donaldson, Francis.** Farmer at **Bog, Tarland** who in 1919 furnished a fountain in the **Square** (Ch. 21).
- Doune of Invernochty.** *Dun* (G.): fortress + *inbhir* (G.) + *Nochty* (etymology unknown): confluence of the Water of Nochty (with the **Don**). A 12th century motte in **Strathdon**, once the site of a castle of the **Mormaers of Mar** (Ch. 31). Invernochty is an old name for Strathdon.
- Douneside.** House and estate 1.5 km N of **Tarland**. Named from the nearby Doune Hill; possibly *dun* (G.): fortress + side (E.), though no fortified remains are known here. Mentioned in Ch. 49 as the home of Sir **Alexander** and **Lady MacRobert**.
- Drogan Taranish.** Ancient talisman of the **Tarachsel**, a glass sphere with kingfisher-blue highlights, said to represent **Taran's wheel**. Entirely fictional.
- Drummy.** *Druim* (G.): ridge + S. diminutive suffix. Low ridge (alt. ca. 200 m) SW of **Tarland**. The Blue Cairn near its highest point (said in *Taran's Wheel* to have been built by **Cromar**'s Beaker settlers to mark the centre of the **Pleasant Vale** ca. 1850 BCE; see Ch. 4) has not been dated by archaeologists. Other prehistoric remains on its slopes include hut circles (referenced in Ch. 20). That **Macbeth**'s body was brought here from **Lumphanan** (Ch. 29) is fiction.
- Durward.** Family, descended from the **Mormaers of Mar**, who built **Coull** Castle. Their name derives from 'door-ward', a hereditary title. The most illustrious member of the family was Alan Durward (ca. 1210–1275), who effectively ruled Scotland as regent for Alexander III before the king attained his majority (Ch. 31).
- Echt.** Possibly from *Aeth* (P.): personal name. Village (pop. ca. 300) 36 km E of **Tarland** and 20 km W of Aberdeen. A tollhouse here is a remnant of the Aberdeen–Tarland turnpike completed in 1840 (Ch. 47).
- Ellen's Burn.** (S.): Ellen's stream. Small stream flowing S from a source on **Molly Watt's Hill** (Ch. 52). The 'Ellen' it commemorates is unknown (**Ellen Walker** is fictional).
- Emslie, Thomas** (fl. 1597) Elder of **Coldstone** church present at **Kate Ferries**'s 'trial' for witchcraft (Ch. 41).
- Essie.** *Easagh* (G.): rapidly flowing (of a stream). Locality 24 km N of **Tarland** where Lulach King of Scots (stepson of **Macbeth**) was reputedly slain by followers of Malcolm Canmore (Ch. 31).
- Ferries, Kate** (Katherine Ferrusche, d. 1597). A real resident of the parish of **Coldstone** who was 'tried' and

burned at the stake during James VI's brutal witch-hunt. The transcript of the 'trial' in Ch. 41 is faithful to the original but Kate's back-story is fictionalised.

**Feugh** (pronounced 'Fyooch'), Water of. *Fiodhach* (G.): wooded. The longest (ca. 25 km) tributary of the **Dee**, rising on the **Mounth S of Aboyne** and joining the Dee near **Banchory**. The upper reaches of its valley form the **Forest of Birse**.

**Fife, Earls and Mormaers of.** The earldom of **Fife** originated in the 10th or 11th century and was held by the MacDuff family; Shakespeare's 'Macduff, Thane of Fife' in *Macbeth* may have been an early Mormaer (G.: grand chieftain). Regarded as the highest ranking nobles in Scotland, the MacDuffs claimed the privilege of crowning Scottish kings. In the 13th century they acquired the lands of **Coull** and **Kincraigie** in **Cromar**; Duncan MacDuff, Earl of Fife ca. 1270–1288 was therefore the landowner here. His wife **Joanna Countess of Fife** bore him two sons including Duncan, who succeeded him to the Earldom as a newborn baby in 1288, and a daughter Isabella (fictionalised in Ch. 33 as **Isobel of Coull**).

**Fir Mounth.** *Fir* (S.): pine + *monadh* (P./G.): mountain range. Hill crossing (highest alt. 723 m) on an ancient drove road (Ch. 45) over the **Mounth S of the Forest of Birse**.

**Forbes.** Family name common in **Cromar**, whose derivation from *Ferbasach* (conqueror; a nickname applied to Kenneth MacAlpin) according to Ch. 29 is fictional but not improbable. Locally the name is pronounced with two syllables. The Forbes family or clan owned much land in **Cromar** in the 17th century and were often in conflict with the **Gordon** and **Irvine** clans.

**Forbes, Alexander** (fl. 1597). Two men of the same name, both elders of **Coldstone** church present at the witchcraft 'trial' of **Kate Ferries** (Ch. 41).

**Forbes, Elspeth** (fl. 1597). Wife of the tenant farmer of **Bog**, said to be an instrument of **Kate Ferries's** 'witchcraft' (Ch. 41).

**Forbes, George, John, Patrick and William** (fl. 1597). Four elders of **Coldstone** church present at the witchcraft 'trial' of **Kate Ferries** (Ch. 41).

**Forbes, William** (fl. 1597). Farmer at **Shiel**, alleged victim of witchcraft according to the transcript of the 'trial' of **Kate Ferries** (Ch. 41).

**Forest of Birse.** Forest (E.) + *birse* (from P.): bush or thicket (cf. G. 'preas'). The upper reaches of the **Feugh** valley, mostly not now forested. Featured in Ch. 61.

**Fyfe, Robert** (fl. ca. 1597). Person mentioned in the transcript of **Kate Ferries's** 'trial' for witchcraft (Ch. 41).

**Gellan** (pronounced with hard 'G') **straight**. A straight stretch of the **Tarland–Aboyne** road near the farms of North and South Gellan; etymology of 'Gellan' unknown. Near the SE end of the straight is a junction, as mentioned in Ch. 63, from where a road leads N past **Coull** to merge with the Tarland–Aberdeen road at the **Slack**.

**Ghost Meadow.** Fictional representation of the land, once marshy, of **Dalvokie**, on the S side of running water (**Tarland Burn**) across from **Taran's Garden (Tarland)**. Said in Ch. 4 to be haunted by the spirits of the 'little people' whom the Beaker incomers replaced.

**glaciation.** The brief account of ice age glaciation in Ch. 1 is in accordance with generally accepted theory. That the **Howe of Cromar** was at one time filled with ice is evidenced by the meltwater ravine at the **Slack**, which features in Chs. 63 and 66.

**Glendavan.** *Gleann* (G.): valley + Davan. House on the N side of **Loch Davan**, once home of Sir **Alexander Ogston** (Ch. 44).

**Glen Gairn.** *Gleann* (G.): valley + (Water of) Gairn (possibly *garbh abhainn* (G.): rough river). Tributary valley of Deeside, W of the **Howe of Cromar** and separated from it by **Culblean**. Remained Gaelic-speaking long after Cromar accepted the Scots language (Ch. 35).

**Glen Nocht.** *Gleann* (G.): valley + (Water of) Nocht (etymology unknown), a tributary of the **Don**. Moonwort (*Botrychium lunaria*) grows in a particular location here as mentioned in Ch. 41.

**Gordon.** Family or clan owning land in **Cromar** from the 17th century; frequently in conflict with the rival **Forbes** clan. A Royalist force of Gordons defeated Covenanters at the battle of **Alford** in 1645 (Ch. 43).

**Gordon, Sir Robert** (1791–1847). Diplomat who leased **Balmoral** Castle from 1830 until his death from choking on a fish bone. Shortly before he died, he entertained Queen Victoria and Prince Albert there (Ch. 47). He was a younger brother of the 4th **Earl of Aberdeen** and of **William Gordon**.

**Gordon, William** (1785–1858). MP for Aberdeenshire 1820–1854 for the Tory party; brother of the 4th **Earl of Aberdeen** and of **Robert Gordon**. His treatment in Ch. 47, particularly with reference to his interactions with **Agnes Cromar**, is fictionalised.

**Gow Steen** (Gow Stane). *Gobha* (G.): blacksmith + *steen* (S.): stone. A boulder near the road over the **Birk Hill**, associated with the tale of **Reid the blacksmith**. As told by Gavin Astor: *Tapestry of Tillypronie* (1971, Waterlow, London) the king involved was James IV, but the tale has all the hallmarks of 'the Gudeman of Ballengeich', the *alter ego* of **James V** as recounted by Sir Walter Scott: *Tales of a Grandfather* (1828, Cadell & Co., Edinburgh) and others; and is so treated in Ch. 37.

**Gruoch.** Queen consort of **Macbeth**. Dates of her birth and death are not known. She was a granddaughter

- of Kenneth III (a cousin of Malcolm II). Her first marriage was to Macbeth's cousin Gille Coemgain, to whom she bore a son, Lulach. On Gille Coemgain's death she married Macbeth, who adopted Lulach as his son and named him heir. Gruoch's depiction by Shakespeare as 'Lady Macbeth' bears little resemblance to fact. Her identification in Ch. 30 as a **Keeper of Taran's Wheel** is likewise fictional.
- Harlaw.** *Hare law* (S.): hare hill. Locality near Inverurie; the battle of Harlaw in 1411 (Ch. 35) was a famously bloody encounter between lowland and highland clans that cemented the dominance of lowland ways, including the Scots language, in and around Aberdeen.
- Hawthorn Cottage.** Fictional dwelling (Ch. 61) in the **Forest of Birse**.
- Hillhead** (E.) Place near the **Lang Ley** on the NE rim of the **Howe of Cromar**. Remains of a stone circle were recently excavated here (Ch. 36).
- Hill of Fare.** Hill (E.) + (possibly) *faire* (G.): horizon or skyline, or *faer* (N.): sheep. Upland area with several summits (highest alt. 471 m), 19 km E of **Tarland**.
- Howe of Cromar.** *Howe* (S.): hollow or vale + **Cromar**. Natural more or less circular basin about 10 km in diameter, coinciding approximately with the district of Cromar. It is drained by the **Tarland Burn**, which empties into the **Dee** near **Aboyne**, and by the Dinnet Burn, which collects the outflow from **Lochs Davan** and **Kinord** (themselves fed by the **Logie Burn** and **Burn o' Vat** respectively) and enters the Dee at **Mill of Dinnet**. Its geographic centre lies at or close to the Blue Cairn of **Drummy**. Coextensive with the fictional **Pleasant Vale** of *Taran's Wheel*.
- Huntly, Earl of** (George Gordon, 1514–1562). One of the combatants at the battle of **Corrichie**. His treatment in Ch. 40 is substantially in accord with known history, with the exception of his supposed meeting with 'witches' (a local legend embellished here by a fictional identification of the 'witches' as members of the **Merch Nyr**). That he set up camp near **Campfield** on a site (**Ordie Gordon**) named after him is also fictional.
- imbolc.** Pre-Christian Celtic festival celebrated around 2 February, one of four cardinal dates in the ancient Celtic year (now marked as Candlemas in Britain and Groundhog Day in the US). See Ch. 3.
- Irvine.** Family or clan owning land in **Cromar** in the 17th century.
- Isobel of Coull** (ca. 1284–ca. 1313). Fictional (Ch. 33) name of the real Isabella Countess of Buchan, daughter of Duncan and **Joanna, Earl and Countess of Fife**. Although the Fifes owned the lands of **Coull** and **Kincraigie**, the implication that Isobel's home was Coull Castle is not based on known fact. As a girl of about 16 she was married to John Comyn, **Earl of Buchan**, then in his forties. In 1306 she performed the (second) coronation of **Robert the Bruce** (a sworn enemy of the Comyns) as Robert I King of Scots. The story in Ch. 33 of her imprisonment in a cage at Berwick is fictionalised but based on historic fact.
- James V** (1512–1542). King of Scots from his accession as an infant in 1513 until his death. He succeeded his father, James IV, who was killed at the battle of Flodden, and was succeeded by his daughter Mary, 6 days old when she became Queen of Scots. His promiscuity is a matter of historical fact, but the particular story of his liaison with **Peggy Walker** in Ch. 38 is fictional. The nickname *Jamie the Hoormaister* (S.: whoremaster) is fictional but appropriate.
- Joanna Countess of Fife** (b. 1264). Wife of Duncan MacDuff, **Earl of Fife** and mother of **Isobel of Coull**. Her treatment in Ch. 33 is to some degree fictionalised.
- Keepers of Taran's Wheel.** Fictional women, guardians of the **Drogan Taranish** since its discovery by **Aeth**.
- Kelso, Verity.** Fictional (Ch. 49) **Keeper of Taran's Wheel**.
- Kildrummy.** *Ceann druimin* (G.): ridge-end. Former parish bordering the **Don**. Kildrummy Castle, 12 km N of **Tarland**, dating from the 12th century, was a seat of the **Earls and Mormaers of Mar** and later a royal palace, a stronghold of **Robert the Bruce**. Its siege by **David Strathbogie** in 1335 led to the battle of **Culblean** (Ch. 35). It is not unlikely that **James V** stayed there, as suggested in Ch. 38.
- Kinaldie** (pronounced 'Kinaady'). *Ceann alltain* (G.): stream-end. Farm 1.5 km NW of **Logie Coldstone**. Ch. 41.
- Kincraigie.** *Ceann creage* (G.): hill-end. Estate in **Cromar**, lying in the fertile land between **Tarland** and **Coull**. Present-day farms include **Oldtown of Kincraigie**, believed to occupy the site of an original manor.
- Kinord.** Farms (Old and New Kinord) on the isthmus between **Lochs Davan** and **Kinord**, named after the loch; site of an Iron Age settlement, corresponding to **Davan** of the story and possibly Ptolemy's **Devana**.
- Kinord stone.** Pictish sculptured stone at **Kinord** bearing Christian symbolism (Ch. 27).
- Knockargety.** *Cnoc airgid* (G.): silver hill. Low hill (alt. 267 m) N of **Ordie**, surmounted by remains of an Iron Age earthwork said in Ch. 25 to be a defensive structure built in anticipation of Roman invasion.
- Knockenzie** (formerly Knockhuise). *Cnoc guibhais* (G.): pine hill. Farm in the depression between **Mulloch** and **Tomachallich**, 1.5 km NE of **Dinnet**. There are Pictish remains here, whose identification in Ch. 42 as the home of **Aeth** is invented.
- Kyaar, the.** Fictional; a motte-like defensive structure in **Taran's Garden** (Ch. 10) said to be located where the old kirkyard of **Tarland** now is, at the E end of the **Square**. Ch. 27 relates how a church dedicated to **Moluag** was built on the site after destruction of **the Kyaar**. The site is in fact raised.
- Ladle-lick** (Leadlich). The name by which **Craiglich** is known in **Cromar**. OS applies 'Leadlich' to the W slope of the hill. The etymology of 'Ladle-lick' – (B./P.): hill of graves – suggested in Ch. 34 is invented but

- plausible, especially given the cairn-field 'necropolis' on its S flank. MacDonald and Alexander both derive 'Leadlich' from *Leathad leac* (G.): slope of flagstones.
- Lakies, James** (fl. 1589). Mentioned in the transcript of **Kate Ferries's** 'trial' for witchcraft in 1597 (Ch. 41).
- Lang Ley**. (S.): long lea; *ley* possibly a corruption of *leitir* (G.): slope. Ancient road crossing high ground (alt. ca. 345 m) between **Pittenderich** and **Long Hill** in the NE of the **Howe of Cromar**. It led to the Howe of **Alford** and thence towards **Buchan**, passing close to **Bennachie**.
- Lazy Well**. *Lazy* (E.) + *well* (S.): spring. Spring at the **Ballachbuie** hill crossing, by the old drove road (Ch. 45).
- Little Groddie**. *Little* (E.) + *grodaidh* (G.): stagnant marsh. Place in the vicinity of Groddie, a farm 3 km W of **Logie Coldstone**, at the foot of **Morven**. Ch. 41.
- Loch Davan**. The smaller, more northerly, of a pair of shallow lakes (the other is **Loch Kinord**) in SW **Cromar**, separated by a narrow isthmus. It is fed by the **Logie Burn**. *Taran's Wheel* recounts a derivation from **Devana** (a settlement mentioned by Ptolemy); no more convincing etymology has been proposed.
- Loch Kinord**. The larger, more southerly, of a pair of shallow lakes (the other is **Loch Davan**) in SW **Cromar**, separated by a narrow isthmus. It is fed by the **Burn o' Vat**. Remains of a castle, said to have been built by Malcolm III (Canmore), are on a small island; the name of the loch may be a corruption of 'Canmore'. It is likely that the castle was begun by **Macbeth**, as maintained in Ch. 29. Also in the loch is a crannog, a defensive artificial island probably of Pictish origin.
- Lochnagar** (White Mounth). Craggy mountain (alt. 1155 m) S of **Balmoral** and visible from **Cromar**. The name originally applied to the small loch at the base of the cliffs forming the N face of the mountain, and is believed to derive from *Lochan na gaire* (G.): little loch of wailing, perhaps from the noise made by wind sweeping over the cliffs. Lochnagar forms the highest point of the **Mounth**.
- Logie Burn**. *Logie* (see **Logiemar**) + *burn* (S.): stream. Stream rising on **Morven**, flowing through the village of **Logie Coldstone** and emptying into **Loch Davan**.
- Logie Coldstone**. Small village and former parish created in 1618 by union of the parishes of **Logiemar** and **Coldstone** (Ch. 43). The village, formerly called Newkirk, is 4.5 km W of **Tarland**, near the foot of **Morven**.
- Logiemar** (Logie). One-time parish in SW **Cromar**, in 1618 merged with **Coldstone** to the N to form the united parish of **Logie Coldstone** (Ch. 43). *Logie* is a common place-name throughout Pictland and is probably Pictish in origin but its meaning is not known. Derivation from *lagan* (G.): hollow, as suggested by both MacDonald and Alexander, seems unlikely. *Logie Mar* (Logie in **Mar**) distinguishes this place from other Logies. The old kirk of Logiemar is at Galton, 2 km S of the present day village of **Logie Coldstone**.
- Long Hill**. (E.) Hill (alt. 356 m) on NE rim of the **Howe of Cromar**.
- Luath** (Lugus, Lugh). Celtic god, celebrated at **lunasa** (*lughnasa*) in August. The spelling 'Luath' used in *Taran's Wheel* is not standard.
- Luath's stone**. Large stone near the summit of the Green Hill at Whitehouse in the Howe of **Alford**, variously said to commemorate the missionary **Moluag** (Luoc) or Lulach King of Scots rather than the god **Luath** (Ch. 31).
- Lulach's stone**. Standing stone, perhaps a remnant of a neolithic circle, at **Kildrummy**, named for Lulach, king of Scotland who was killed 8 km to the N at **Essie** in 1058 (Ch. 31).
- Lumphanan**. Possibly *Lan Finan* (P.): St Finan's Church. Village and former parish (pop. 750) in Aberdeenshire, about 12 km E of **Tarland**. No connection with the 7th-century Saint Finan of Lindisfarne is known, but the church is dedicated to him. **Macbeth** supposedly died near here (Ch. 30 and Ch. 46).
- lunasa** (*lughnasa*). Pre-Christian Celtic festival celebrated in early August, one of four cardinal dates in the ancient Celtic year. Its celebration specifically on 9 August according to Ch. 48 is fictional.
- Luoch Fair** (Luag Friday). An annual market honouring Saint **Moluag**, formerly held in **Tarland** on a Friday in July – not on the saint's feast day of 25 June (Ch. 45).
- MacBain, Catriona** (fl. 1681). Fictional daughter of **Babie Crichton**; a **Keeper of Taran's wheel** (Ch. 43).
- MacBain, Hamish** (fl. 1648). Fictional member of **Gilderoy MacGregor's** gang; boyfriend of **Babie Crichton** and father of her child **Catriona MacBain** (Ch. 43).
- Macbeth** (ca. 995–1057). King of Scots from 1040 until his death near **Lumphanan** on 15th August 1057. His treatment in Ch. 30 is largely true to historical records except that the origin of his name from **Aeth** is fictional, as are references to his interactions with the people of **Cromar** and reburial of his body at **Drummy**.
- Macbeth's Cairn**. Supposed location of **Macbeth's** killing, 1 km NW of **Lumphanan** (Ch. 30 and Ch. 46).
- MacGregor, Gilderoy** (Patrick MacGregor, d. 1658). Leader of a band of rustlers and thieves who terrorised **Cromar** and surrounding areas. His treatment in Ch. 44 is in general accord with known fact.
- MacRobert, Sir Alexander** (1854–1922). Owner of **Douneside** estate; purchaser of **Cromar House** and its associated estates in 1918 (Ch. 49). For a definitive biography of the MacRoberts of Douneside see Marion Miller: *Cawnpore to Cromar* (2014: Librario).
- MacRobert, Lady** (Rachel Workman, 1880–1954). Widow of Sir **Alexander MacRobert** who inherited the estates of **Douneside** and **Cromar** in 1922 (Ch. 49). Her three sons, Alasdair, Roderic and Iain inherited their father's baronetcy in turn but all were killed: Alasdair in a flying accident in 1938 and the two younger

sons in active service with the Royal Air Force in 1941. In their memory she funded a Stirling bomber for the RAF known as 'MacRobert's Reply'.

**Mar.** Ancient province covering most of the lands drained by the **Don** and **Dee**, including **Cromar**; the SW half of the ancient Pictish kingdom of **Ce**. It has given its name (with a change in spelling) to Marr, a modern administrative division of Aberdeenshire that includes a large part of the ancient province. Etymology unknown, probably *B./P.*

**Mar, Earls and Mormaers of.** Peerage title (*mormaer* (*G.*): grand chieftain) of a succession of landowners in **Mar**. Their original seats were at **Migvie** Castle and the **Doune of Invernochty**; later they established **Kildrummy** Castle as their principal stronghold (Ch. 31). The 7th Mormaer, Donald (fl. 1276), was the father of Isabella, first wife of **Robert the Bruce** and mother of **Marjorie Bruce**. The 22nd Earl, John Erskine ('Bobbing John', 1675–1732) raised the Jacobite standard at **Braemar** beginning the first Jacobite rebellion in 1715 (Ch. 45).

**Marchnear.** Dwelling and onetime inn by **Loch Davan** on the old road from **Tarland** to **Tullich**. Etymology unknown; derivation from **Merch Nyr** as suggested in Ch. 36 is invented.

**Melgum.** Farm 2 km N of **Tarland**, suggested by Alexander to mean 'round little hill'. Mill of Melgum, mentioned in the transcript of **Kate Ferries's** 'trial' (Ch. 41), was presumably nearby but no longer exists or has been renamed – possibly Millhead.

**Merch Nyr.** Fictional name of the female priesthood of the **Tarachsel** (**Picts**), said in Ch. 34 to mean 'daughter-heroes' or demigoddesses and in Ch. 36 to be the derivation of **Marchnear**.

**Merefrith.** Fictional ceremonial name of high priestesses of the **Tarachsel** (**Picts**), said in Ch. 10 to mean 'daughter of **Brytha**'.

**Michie, John.** Nineteenth-century minister and author of *History of Logie Coldstone and Braes of Cromar* (1896, Wyllie & Son, Aberdeen). See Ch. 41.

**Migvie.** *Miog bhaidh* (*G.*): midway. Small settlement and one-time parish (latterly combined with **Tarland**) in **Cromar**, 5 km NW of **Tarland**. The church here, now beautifully restored as a museum (Ch. 42), was once dedicated to St Finan (*cf.* **Lumphanan**). Migvie Castle was in the 12th century a seat of the **Mormaers of Mar** but later fell into the hands of supporters of the English cause and was destroyed by **Robert the Bruce** around 1308 (Ch. 33).

**Migvie stone.** Pictish sculptured stone at **Migvie** church bearing both Christian and pre-Christian symbolism including the double disc and Z-rod said in Ch. 25 to reference the union of male (**Taran**) and female (**Brytha**).

**Mill of Dinnet.** Place on the N shore of the **Dee**, 1 km E of **Dinnet**, where there once was a mill. Here the river takes a pronounced southward turn, identified in *Taran's Wheel* as the 'cambus' where the fictional legendary **Aeth** found the **Drogan Taranish**. The spot is 5 km precisely due S of the Blue Cairn on **Drummy**.

**Milne, Peter** (1824–1908). Itinerant fiddler who spent his early years in **Tarland**. His playing and composition were highly regarded and, as featured in *Taran's Wheel*, earned him a monument in the **Square**. His life was filled with misfortune and he died in a poorhouse in **Aberdeen**.

**Molly Watt's Hill.** Hill (alt. 458 m) on the N rim of the **Howe of Cromar**. Its derivation according to Ch. 43 from a woman named **Molly Watt** is invented; Macdonald compares the name with *Meall a' bhata* (*G.*): boat hill, and Alexander more plausibly suggests *Meall fhad* (*G.*): long hill.

**Moluag.** Saint (Luag, Luoc, ca. 530–592). Missionary credited with conversion of much of Pictland to Christianity. The church at **Tarland** is dedicated to him. The suggestion in Ch. 25 that he may have taken his name from the Celtic god **Luath** (Lugh) is fictional but possible.

**Mons Graupius,** battle of. Fought in 84 between forces of **Agricola** (for the Romans) and **Calgacus** (for the **Caledonii**) as recorded in Latin by Tacitus. The location of the battle is much debated, favoured sites being **Bennachie** and the eastern **Mounth**. *Taran's Wheel* proposes a location not hitherto suggested, on the slopes of **Craiglich** and **Craig Dhu** on the edge of **Cromar**, inspired by the vast cairn-fields believed by **Alexander Ogston** to be gravesites. The account of the battle and its aftermath in Ch. 25 is entirely fictional.

**moondance.** Fictional name given in Ch. 16 for the approximately 18.5-year period from one minor lunar standstill to the next – one of the measures of time said in *Taran's Wheel* to be used by the **Tarachsel**.

**Morris, Old Tom** (Thomas Mitchell Morris Sr., 1821–1908). Pioneer of professional golf and four-time Open champion. He designed several championship courses, including Carnoustie, Muirfield and Prestwick as well as many local courses, including **Tarland's** (Ch. 49).

**Mortlich.** *Mor tulach* (*G.*): big hill. Hill (alt. 381 m) forming part of the SE rim of the **Howe of Cromar**.

**Morven.** *Mor bheinn* (*G.*): big mountain. The highest point in **Cromar** (alt. 871 m), about 9 km W of **Tarland**, featured in Ch. 54. As mentioned in Ch. 41, the summit is carpeted with alpine lady's mantle (*Alchemilla alpina*), and cloudberry (*Rubus chamaemorus*) grows on its slopes.

**Mounth,** the. *Mynydd* (*B./P.*) through *monadh* (*G.*): mountain, mountain range or high moorland. An eastward finger of the Grampian highlands forming the S watershed of the basin of the **Dee**. Its highest point is **Lochnagar** (alt. 1155 m). Ancient crossings include **Cairn o' Mount**, the **Capel Mounth** and the **Fir Mounth**.

- Mount Keen.** *Monadh* (P. through G.) *caoin* (G.): beautiful mountain. A high point (alt. 939 m) of the **Mounth S of Ballater**.
- Muir of Dinnet.** *Muir* (S.): moor + **Dinnet**. Part of the Cairngorms National Park; a scenic heathland area in the SW of **Cromar** dominated by heather and birch. See Ch. 24.
- Mulloch.** *Mullach* (G.): summit. Low but prominent hill (alt. 281 m) 2 km NE of **Dinnet**. There are remains of a Pictish defensive structure here.
- Murray, Sir Andrew** (1298–1338). Regent (guardian) during the minority of King David II, while Edward III of England was attempting to install Edward Balliol as king in David's place. He defeated and killed **David Strathbogie**, a key supporter of Balliol, at the battle of **Culblean** in 1335 (Ch. 35).
- Murray, (Lady) Christina** (Christina Bruce, 1273–1356). Sister of **Robert the Bruce** and wife of Sir **Andrew Murray** (her third marriage). She commanded the garrison at **Kildrummy Castle** during its siege by **David Strathbogie** in 1335 (Ch. 35).
- Nathalan, Saint** (ca. 620–678). Christian missionary born at **Tullich**, said to have founded the first church at **Coull**. His treatment in Ch. 27 is fictional, though the tale of the key is part of local lore.
- Ogston, Sir Alexander** (1844–1929). Surgeon (discoverer of *Staphylococcus*) and antiquarian; authority on the cairn-fields of **Craiglich** and **Craig Dhu** (the '**Balnagowan** necropolis') and other antiquities of Cromar.
- Oldtown of Kincaigie.** *Aal toun* (S.): old or original settlement or *fermtoun* + **Kincaigie**. Farm 2 km E of **Tarland**, said in Ch. 35 to have been leased in 1314 by **Robert the Bruce** to the fictional **Margaret Baird**.
- Ordie.** *Ord* (S.): low rise, with diminutive suffix. Small settlement near **Loch Davan**, 4 km SW of **Tarland**, mentioned in Ch. 59.
- Ordie Gordon.** *Ord* (S.): low rise, with diminutive suffix + **Gordon**. Eminence (alt. ca. 115 m) above the Beltie Burn close to **Campfield**, 7 km NW of **Banchory**, having a recumbent stone circle. The meeting said to have taken place here between **Agricola** and **Calgacus** after the battle of **Mons Graupius** (Ch. 20) is fictional, as is the location here of **George Gordon's** camp prior to the battle of **Corrichie** (Ch. 39).
- Peel of Lumphanan.** A 12th- or early 13th-century motte at **Lumphanan** (Ch. 10).
- Pett, the.** *Pet* (P.): share of land, farming settlement or *fermtoun*, equivalent to *Bal-* (G.) or *-ton, -toun, -town* (S./E.). Farm 2.5 km NE of **Tarland**, on the lower slopes of **Pittenderich**.
- Picts.** Initially pejorative term (Latin *Picti*, 'painted ones') for the people of Great Britain north of the Firth of Forth (the **Tarachsel** of *Taran's Wheel*). The earliest references are around 300.
- Pitellachie.** *Pet* (P.) + *aileach* (G.): stony town (cf. **Blelack**). Farm 2.5 km NW of **Logie Coldstone**. Ch. 41.
- Pittenderich.** *Pet* (P.) *an daraich* (G.): oak town (Alexander suggests *Pet* (P.) *an t'searraich* (G.): foal's town), presumably a farm name later applied to a hill (alt. 508 m) on the N rim of the **Howe of Cromar**.
- Pleasant Vale.** Fictional ancient name (rendered in English) of the **Howe of Cromar**; an approximate translation from Scots of **Seely Howe**.
- Praisewell.** Fictional dwelling on the **Lang Ley** near the **Pett**, featured in Ch. 30 and Ch. 36.
- Pressendye.** Perhaps *preas an Dai* (P. through G.): David's thicket, a farm name later applied to the hill. At 619 m, the highest point on the N rim of the **Howe of Cromar**.
- Queen's Chair.** (E.) Rocky feature on the slope of the **Hill of Fare** overlooking **Corrichie**. According to legend, Mary Queen of Scots surveyed the Corrichie battlefield from here. Her encounter with **Ellen Walker** in Ch. 40 is fictional.
- Reid the blacksmith** (d. ca. 1535). Sixteenth-century **Migvie** resident. The tale in Ch. 37 of his fateful encounter with King **James V** (some sources say James IV) and his death at the **Gow Steen** is true to local legend.
- Reid, William** (fl. 1597). Elder of **Coldstone** church present at **Kate Ferries's** 'trial' for witchcraft (Ch. 41).
- Richie, George** (fl. ca. 1597). Mentioned in the transcript of **Kate Ferries's** 'trial' for witchcraft (Ch. 41).
- Robert the Bruce** (Robert I, 1274–1329). King of Scots 1306–1329. In 1298 he became Guardian of Scotland, jointly with his sworn enemy the Red Comyn. After a period of subservience to the English king, Bruce (or his supporters) killed Comyn in Greyfriars Church, Dumfries in 1306. Seven weeks later he was crowned king at Scone. Isabella MacDuff (**Isobel of Coull**), who claimed the privilege to perform Scottish coronations, arrived at Scone the following day and crowned him again. The treatment in Ch. 35 of Bruce's harrying of supporters of the English in NE Scotland around 1308 is largely in line with historical fact.
- Saint Woloch's stone** (Ch. 27). Standing stone, possibly a remnant of an ancient stone circle, at the churchyard of **Logiemar**. It has no known connection with **Woloch**.
- samhain** (pronounced 'saawan'). Pre-Christian Celtic festival usually nowadays observed at Hallowe'en (31 October) rather than in early November as in *Taran's Wheel*; one of four cardinal dates in the ancient Celtic year. Its association with **Taran** is a fictional device inspired by 'his' zodiac sign Taurus the bull, where the full moon can be found at *samhain* (Ch. 38).
- Satan's Howe.** (S.): Satan's hollow or vale. Location on the N side of **Molly Watt's Hill**. Its identification in Ch. 43 as a place where women of the **Merch Nyr** met in secret, and as the 'blasted heath' in the witches' scene at the start of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, is fictional.
- Scrapehard.** (E.) Place 1 km S of **Tarland**, close to **Tomnaverie**, mentioned in Ch. 52 and Ch. 65.

- Seely Howe.** (S.): pleasant or enchanted vale. Name used in a folk rhyme; supposedly a hollow at **Carue** but applied in *Taran's Wheel* to the whole **Pleasant Vale** or **Howe of Cromar**.
- Shiel.** (S.): shelter. Almost certainly the place now called Deskryshiel, a dwelling in the valley of the Deskry Water (a tributary of the **Don**) on the N side of **Morven**. Mentioned in the transcript of **Kate Ferries's** 'trial' for witchcraft (Ch. 41).
- Siller Steen** (Siller Stane). (S.): money stone. Large boulder near the shore of **Loch Davan** by **Marchnear**. The tale in Ch. 38 of how it got its name is invented.
- six.** The mystical significance of the number 6 in *Taran's Wheel* is an invention. **Taran's wheel** is frequently but in truth not invariably represented as having 6 spokes. The 6 'cycles' (Ch. 14) of sun, moon, earth, water, life and **vairtach** supposedly recognized by the **Tarachsel** are a fictional device. However, it is true that the 'seven sisters' (the Pleiades) contain only 6 stars visible by the naked eye to most people (Ch. 24).
- Skene, Arthur** (fl. 1597). Elder of **Coldstone** church present at **Kate Ferries's** 'trial' for witchcraft (Ch. 41).
- Slack**, the. *Sloc* (G.): den or dene. Pass (alt. 292 m) between **Long Hill** and **Ladle-lick** in the NE of the **Howe of Cromar**, giving access to the Howe by road from Aberdeen. An ice-age meltwater channel here forms a ravine that features in Ch. 63. The Slack has a famous viewpoint over **Cromar** and the hills beyond, known as the Queen's View after Queen Victoria who is said to have admired it.
- Smiddyhill.** *Smiddy* (S.): smithy + hill (E.). Farm at **Migvie**, occupied by the Reid family until the mid 20th century. Mentioned in Ch. 37.
- Spaldairg.** Woman hanged for witchcraft as mentioned in the transcript of the **Kate Ferries** 'trial' (Ch. 41). The derivation of her name from the Gaelic for 'red blotch' is invented but probable.
- Square**, the, **Tarland.** (E.) The principal commercial centre of **Tarland**. The description in Ch. 21 is factual.
- Strathbogie, David** (Earl of Atholl, ca. 1309–1335). Grandson of the Red Comyn and supporter of Edward Balliol, whom Edward III of England made efforts to install as a puppet king of Scotland. He died at the battle of **Culblean** (Ch. 36).
- Strathdon.** *Srath Dheathain* (G.): valley of the **Don**. Area and former parish in upper Donside, site of the **Doune of Invernochty**, 15 km NW of **Tarland**.
- Sundayswells.** Small settlement 3 km SE of **Lumphanan**, etymology uncertain. A viaduct here, now demolished, once carried the **Deeside railway** (Ch. 47) over the valley of the Beltie Burn.
- Tarachsel.** Fictional name by which the Beaker/Celtic people (**Picts**) of the **Pleasant Vale** (**Howe of Cromar**) called themselves and their language; said to mean 'Taran's kin' (Ch. 10). The word was inspired by the proto-Celtic word-fragment *-axsa*, thought to relate to degree of consanguinity, combined with *Tar-* for **Taran**. Ptolemy's *Geographia* refers to the people of NE Scotland as *Taexali*; Ch. 10 suggests this was a corruption of **Tarachsel**.
- Taran** (Tar, Taranis). Celtic thunder-god, cf. Scandinavian Thor; equated with the Roman god Jupiter by Julius Caesar. The pre-eminence of Taran in the pantheon of the **Tarachsel** (**Picts**) and his association with **samhain** and the number 6 are fictional devices.
- Taran's Crossing.** Fictional name given to the place where **Taran**, according to the creation myth of the **Tarachsel**, stood when he released a thunderbolt to create the **Pleasant Vale** (Ch. 18); equated in Ch. 34 with **Corsedarder**.
- Taran's Garden.** Fictional ancient name (rendered in English) of **Tarland**, from *Tar-lan* (Ch. 22). The *-lan* suffix (B./P., cf. Welsh *llan*) referred to an enclosure, later a church. Suggested etymologies of **Tarland** have not previously invoked the Celtic god Taranis (**Taran**).
- Taran's wheel.** Symbol of **Taran** found in pre-Christian Celtic representations of the god, often but not exclusively having 6 spokes. Only its manifestation as a glass talisman (the **Drogan Taranish**) is fictional.
- Tarland.** Village and former parish (pop. 540) in Aberdeenshire, about 30 miles W of Aberdeen. Throughout history the village, though small, has been the largest settlement in **Cromar**. In the 12th to 14th centuries the name was rendered *Tarvelan*, *Taruelun* or variants thereof, suggesting an etymology (as proposed in *Taran's Wheel*) from *Tarwe-lan* (B./P.): bull-pen. Various other derivations have been suggested by other writers, without explanation: 'the flat plain' (*The Statistical Account of Scotland*, 1793); 'a level tract' (*Third Statistical Account of Scotland*, 1846). Neither MacDonald nor Alexander offers a theory as to the meaning. The original name *Tar-lan* (B./P.): **Taran's Garden** according to Ch. 22 is a fictional device. The final 'd' of 'Tarland' is, to this day, not pronounced by the local inhabitants. In 1683 King Charles II signed a charter creating Tarland a burgh of barony (Ch. 45); only a few days earlier he had escaped assassination in the Rye House Plot.
- Tarland Burn.** **Tarland + burn** (S.): stream. Tributary joining the **Dee** E of **Aboyne**; length ca. 18 km. Rising on the **Birk Hill**, it flows past **Migvie**, **Tarland** and **Coull** to Aboyne, draining the northern portion of the **Howe of Cromar**. Its upper reaches bear a variety of local names. The bridge (on **Bridge Street**) at Tarland was built in 1835 (Ch. 47). The burn's course below Tarland was straightened and deepened in 1840 (Ch. 47).
- Tarland Golf Club.** The origins of Tarland Golf Club mentioned in Ch. 49 are factual.
- Tarland Show.** Agricultural show with concurrent horticultural show, held in **Tarland** on the second Saturday

- of August, and dating from 1866. That its timing was chosen to resurrect the ancient celebration of *lunasa* (Ch. 47) is fictional.
- Ternan**, Saint. Christian missionary who founded a monastery at **Banchory**, probably in the late 5th century (Ch. 25). The suggestion that he took his name from the god **Taran** is fictional but plausible.
- Tillypronie**. *Tulach* + (possibly) *pronnasg* (G.): brimstone hill or, as suggested by Alexander, *tulach* + *proinnt* (G.): hill of broken or crumbly land. Alternatively an extension of older farm name Prony, probably from *pronn* (G.): coarse oatmeal. Country house in NW **Cromar**, on the S slope of **Baderonach Hill**, and its estate, which extends to much of **Morven**.
- Tomachallich**. *Tom a' choilich* (G.): cock hillock. Low hill (alt. 246 m) on the N side of the **Dee**, overlooking the river-bend at **Mill of Dinnet** (Ch. 42). North of it are extensive Pictish remains at **Knockenzie**.
- Tomachar stone**. Pictish sculptured stone bearing pre-Christian symbolism, originally found at Tomachar (*Tom a-chathair* (G.): chair hillock), a farm by **Logie Coldstone**, and moved to **Tillypronie** House. The stone is now displayed in **Migvie** church (Ch. 25).
- Tomnaverie**. Small eminence about 1 km SE of **Tarland**; alt. ca. 180 m. The hill was partly quarried in the 19th century but the recumbent stone circle on the summit was fortunately preserved. The story is true to what is known archaeologically about Tomnaverie; however the meaning of the name given in Ch. 20, 'knoll of truth or justice' – see *vairtach* – differs from that proposed by MacDonald: *tuam an fhamhaire* (G.): grave of the giant, or Alexander: *tom na h-aifrinn* (G.): hillock of the Mass. The celebration of *samhain* here (Ch. 63) is inspired in part by Alexander's mention of Hallowe'en fires.
- Tornaveen**. Possibly *Torran a'bheathachain* (G.): calf hillock. Locality 17 km E of **Tarland**. A tollhouse here is a remnant of the Aberdeen–Tarland turnpike completed in 1840 (Ch. 47).
- Towie**. Probably from *tulach* (G.): small hill. Settlement by the **Don** about 9 km N of **Tarland**. The carved stone ball in the National Museum of Scotland known as the 'Towie ball' (Ch. 14) was found near Fichlie across the Don from Towie.
- Trachak**. Woman accused of witchcraft as mentioned in the transcript of the **Kate Ferries** 'trial' (Ch. 41). The derivation of her name from *Sneachdach* (G.: snowy) is invented but plausible.
- Tulich**. *Tulach* (G.): small hill. One-time parish centred on a church and small settlement 2 km NE of present-day **Ballater**, said to be the birthplace of Saint **Nathalan**, a 7th century Christian holy man. The old road leading from Tulich to the **Howe of Cromar** through a pass between **Culblean** and **Cnoc Dubh** features in Ch. 43.
- Tulloch**. *Tulach* (G.): small hill. Farm on the lower slopes of **Molly Watt's Hill** (Ch. 41).
- Tun, John** (fl. 1597). Elder of **Coldstone** church present at **Kate Ferries**'s 'trial' for witchcraft (Ch. 41).
- vairtach*. Concept of truth or justice as a 'wheel' said to be espoused by the *Tarachsel* (Ch. 14); fictional but common to many cultures, past and present. An invented *Tarachsel* word said to be from the same root as 'fair', 'verity' and 'Tomnaverie'.
- Vat**, the. (E.) Gorge in the **Muir of Dinnet** through which the **Burn o' Vat** flows. The description in Ch. 44 and Ch. 45 is factual. A small cave behind a waterfall there is reputedly a hiding-place of **Gilderoy MacGregor**.
- Walker, Ellen** (b. ca. 1536). Fictional daughter of **Peggy Walker** and stepsister of Mary Queen of Scots (Ch. 39); a **Keeper of Taran's wheel**.
- Walker, Peggy** (fl. ca. 1535). Fictional innkeeper at **Marchnear**; **Keeper of Taran's wheel** (Ch. 37).
- Watt, Molly** (*Mary Watt*, fl. ca. 1650). Fictional (Ch. 43), inspired by **Molly Watt's Hill**.
- Waulkmill**. *Waulk mill* (S.): (cloth) fulling mill. Place 0.5 km NW of **Tarland**, site of an old 'waulk mill' featured in Ch. 43. A standing stone nearby is all that remains of a neolithic stone circle.
- Welsh, Alexander** (d. 1589). Mentioned in the transcript of **Kate Ferries**'s 'trial' for witchcraft in 1597 (Ch. 41).
- Windsee** *Win's ee* (S.): wind's eye. Place 2 km NW of **Tarland** mentioned in Ch. 52.
- Witchock Loch**. (S.): sand martin lake; Alexander associates the name with witches. Small body of water near the top of the **Birk Hill**, featured in Ch. 54.
- Woloch**, Saint. Christian missionary, probably of the 7th century, about whom little is known (Ch. 25). He is said to have founded the first church at **Logiemar**, where a stone (probably unrelated) bears his name.
- Years With No Summer**. Fictional treatment in Ch. 5 of a real historic 18-year cold period, believed attributable to ash from eruption of Hekla, Iceland in 1189 BCE. The tracing of a female-dominated society to unequal survival of the Years With No Summer by women and men (Ch. 7) is a fictional device.