



# CAIRT

Issue 1  
April 2002

*Newsletter of the Scottish Maps Forum*

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*For further information, or to be added to the mailing list, please contact:*

**Scottish Maps Forum  
Map Library  
National Library of  
Scotland  
33 Salisbury Place  
Edinburgh  
EH9 1SL**

**Tel: 0131 466 3813  
Fax: 0131 466 3812  
E-mail: [maps@nls.uk](mailto:maps@nls.uk)**



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## The Scottish Maps Forum

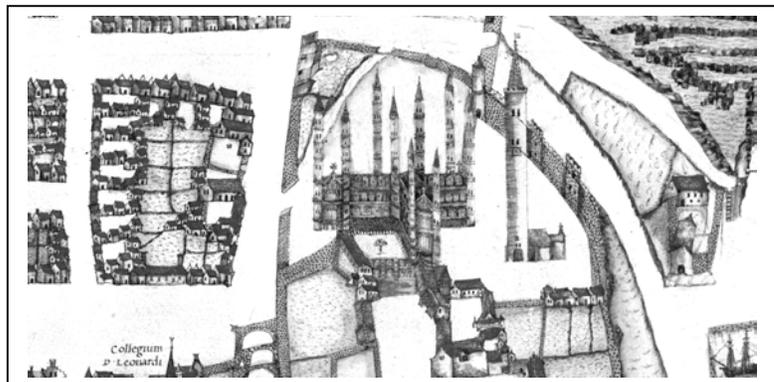
A new Steering Committee, with some familiar and some new faces, convened in January 2002 to discuss Project Pont's successor.

After considerable deliberation the name for this group was agreed as *The Scottish Maps Forum*. It was hoped that this would be an all-embracing term, which could accommodate all aspects of the aims of the Forum. "Group" seemed to imply too much of a closed clique; "Project Cairt" was unsuitable as there were likely to be several projects incorporated under the Scottish Maps banner.

The name *Cairt* was a contentious issue: some felt that the word was not sufficiently widely known, and could be confused with its better known meaning - a cart. Others felt that its Gaelic and Scots origins (it is Gaelic and 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century Scots for a chart or map) summarised neatly the Scottish and early map elements in the Forum's aims, and incorporated both Scottish cultures. It was eventually decided that the newsletter would be called *Cairt: newsletter of the Scottish Maps Forum*. It is planned to appear twice a year.

The main aim of the Forum is to promote the study and use of early maps relating to Scotland, by encouraging research and disseminating information. As well as the newsletter, it is proposed to arrange an annual event, such as a seminar. The questionnaire about Cairt gave some useful guidance about the level of interest and which topics would be particularly relevant.

*Continued on page 2*



*This manuscript plan of St Andrews, c. 1580, attributed to John Geddy, will be our guide for the field excursion to **Timothy Pont's Fife** (see page 2 for details)*

## CAIRT: NEXT EVENTS

### **SATURDAY 15 JUNE 2002**

#### ***Timothy Pont's Fife : field excursion***

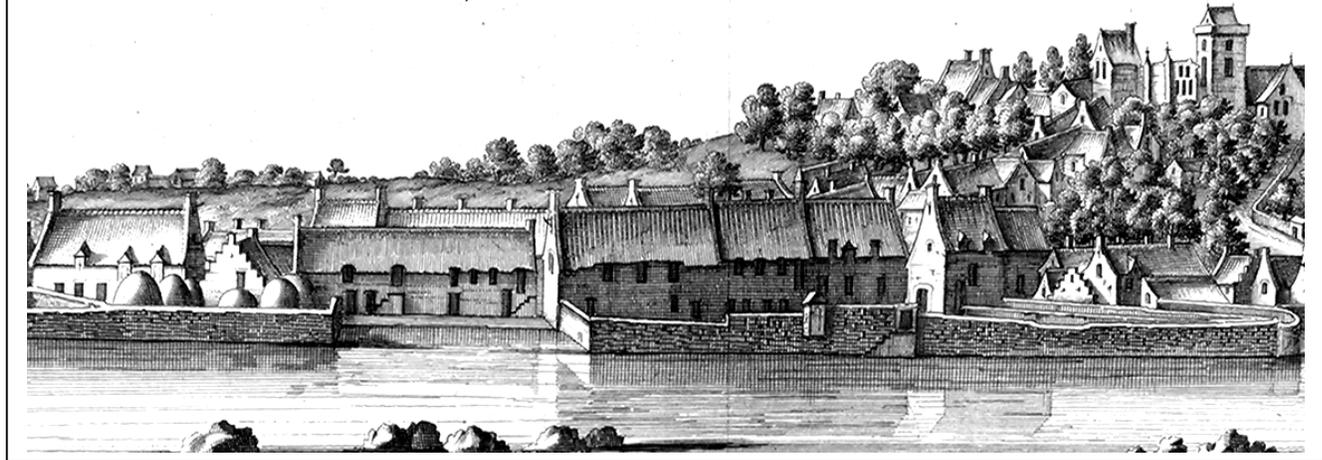
The first event to be organised by the new Scottish Maps Forum is a field excursion by coach to explore parts of Fife with particular relevance to Timothy Pont, his life and work. Starting in Culross, a short distance from Pont's family home at Shiresmill, the morning will be spent exploring the 16th century burgh. Then we go on to St Andrews for the afternoon, armed with John Geddy's plan of St Andrews, c.1580. The plan shows the town at about the time when Pont was an undergraduate in St Andrews, and we shall trace the surviving features. The day will conclude with a short visit to view the exterior of Scotstarvit Tower, the home of Sir John Scot, who was the 'middleman' in sending Pont's manuscripts to Amsterdam for engraving by Blaeu, and contributed so much to the texts.

Edwina and Bruce Proudfoot have volunteered to be our guides for the day and it promises to be a fascinating journey back in time.

The excursion takes place on Saturday 15 June, with pick-up points in Edinburgh and Inverkeithing. Places are limited so do book early - cost £20.00 to include coach travel and morning and afternoon tea or coffee, but not lunch.

**Contact NLS Map Library for further details.**

*Detail from John Slezer's view of Culross, 1693*



### **Scottish Maps Forum (cont. from page 1)**

The newsletter will include material from all periods of mapping, but the initial research focus would be on two fronts:

- a) to continue the work on the maps of Pont, Gordon and Blaeu.
- b) to explore the maps of John Adair and others involved in Sir Robert Sibbald's enterprises in the 1680s-1700s.

### **SATURDAY 5 OCTOBER 2002**

#### ***Seminar on Maps and Local History***

About one third of the respondents to the *Cairt* questionnaire indicated an interest in local history, so a one-day seminar on maps for local history has been organised, in conjunction with the Scottish Local History Forum.

Falkirk has been chosen as a central venue with good transport connections by road and rail.

Speakers will concentrate in particular on the information found in maps, as well as some cartographic history, and it is hoped that the conference will appeal to people with many different interests.

Topics include the Pont, Gordon and Blaeu maps, town plans, military maps and plans, estate plans, county maps, placenames, and the making of the (modern) map of Gartmore.

Application forms will be available in August, but do note the date in your diary now.

***Further information from NLS Map Library or from Mrs Doris Williamson, Scottish Local History Forum, c/o Department of Scottish History, University of Edinburgh, 17 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh EH8 9LN.***

At this stage there will be no charge for membership of the Forum, as staff of the Map Library of the National Library of Scotland will provide secretarial and administrative assistance.

Details of the Steering Committee and other information will be issued in the next newsletter in the autumn.

## JOHN MARR - “an ingenious marriner of Dundee”

When Caleb Cash organised and listed Timothy Pont's manuscript maps about a hundred years ago, he numbered a small map of the Tay estuary as Pont 31. Later work has shown that this is not by Pont but it is a sea chart. **Dr William Laing** postulates that the chart is by John Marr and reveals some of his ongoing research into Marr's chartmaking activities...

### INTRODUCTION

John Marr was a Dundee based navigator and chartmaker, working in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Until recently little was known of Marr, except that in the Greenville Collins 1693 chart of the Firth of Tay (Collins, 1693), there is a separate cartouche stating that the coast from Fifeness to Montrose was “Surveyed by Mr. Mar, an Ingenious marriner of Dundee”. It was also known that Marr had published the first Scottish text on marine navigation (Marr, 1683), and that there existed Dutch charts of the east coast of Scotland attributed to Marr (EMS, 1983a).

Recent work has revealed other examples of these Dutch charts, as well as a group of related charts by English and Irish publishers that are also attributed to Marr. Detailed work on the Pont manuscript maps (Stone, 1989) suggests that a manuscript map of the Firth of Tay, referred to in an earlier study (Cash, 1907) as “Cash 31” or “Pont 31”, is not an “outline map”, but is in fact a marine chart. Stone is clear that this manuscript is not the work of Pont, Gordon, or Adair, but could be by Marr; this note supports that suggestion.

The following account is solely concerned with the work of John Marr as a chartmaker. However, in developing this theme, it has become very clear that Marr was a very well known mariner of Dundee, who traded regularly with the Continent, and was a member of the Fraternity of Seamen and Masters of Dundee. He was also a Burgess of Dundee, and was the author of a pilot book of the east coast of Scotland, which was probably used by Greenville Collins and John Adair in the production of their pilot books of the same area.

### MARR AND “PONT 31”

In an early account of Dundee (Mudie, 1822), John Marr is described as “well known for his accurate chart of the North Sea, and of the mouth of the Tay and passage up the river”. Mudie also reports that this cartographic work was done at a time when magnetic variation was zero. In this short reference, Mudie is not clear if Marr produced two charts, namely one of the North Sea, and one of the entrance to the Tay and the run up to Dundee; or if only one chart covering all of these features was prepared.

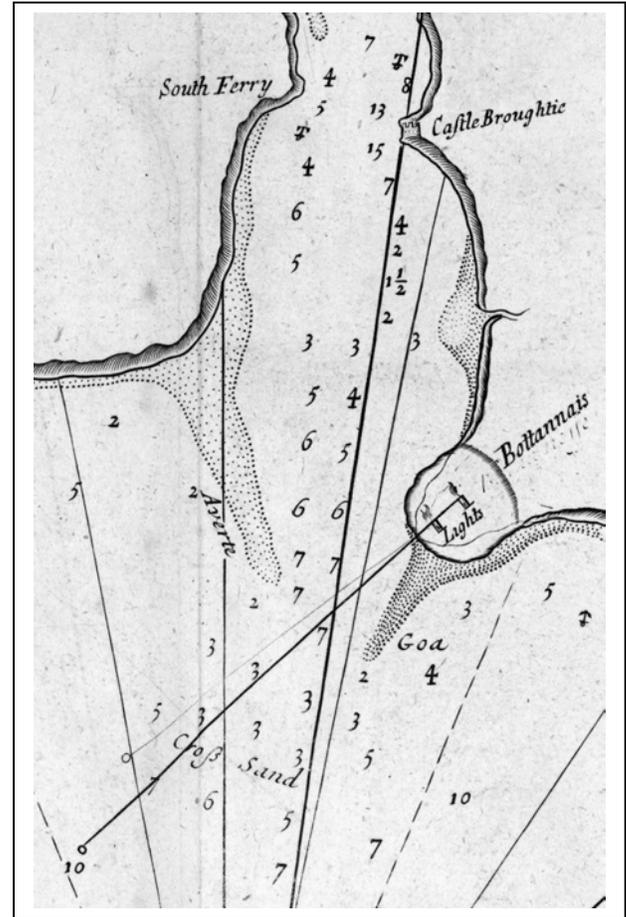
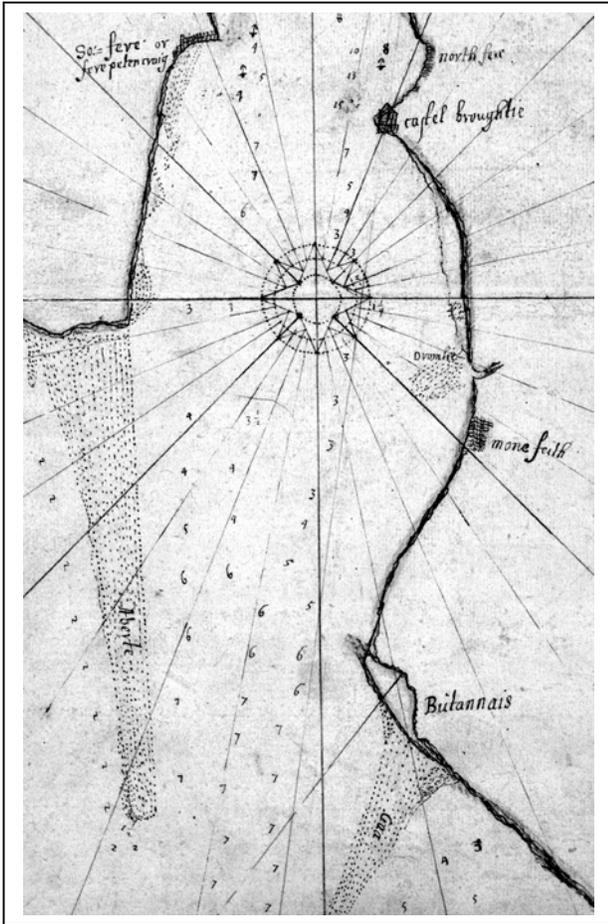


However the magnetic information is very clear, as the records show that zero variation occurred in 1666, thus giving an approximate date for the commencement of Marr's charting activities.

It should also be noted that Mudie reports that the original Marr chart was dedicated to the Magistrates of the City of Aberdeen, but this would seem to be in error as the only dedication of this nature is to be found on the Greenville Collins chart of 1693. A possible explanation for this error would be that there was an early manuscript chart of the North Sea (or of part of the North Sea) that was the precursor of the Collins chart, and that Mudie had confused the MS and finished charts. In this context, the statement on the Collins chart that Marr provided the survey of the sea coast from Fifeness to Montrose implies the existence of an earlier chart.

The deduction by Stone that “Pont 31” was a marine chart was correctly based on the presence of a compass rose and rhumb lines. Further examination of this MS chart shows that there are also two leading lines on the chart to assist the mariner in the crossing of the bar at the mouth of the Tay. The first of these lines leads towards a conspicuous hill, referred to as Butannais (Buddon Ness), before turning into the Tay on a line connecting Broughty Ferry Castle to the north side of Dundee Law. As will be seen below, all later Marr charts show these leading lines, but instead of using Buddon Ness for the initial approach, these charts show two leading lights at the base of Buddon Ness.

*Contd. on page 4*



Left - Detail of the mouth of the Tay Estuary from the manuscript known as Pont 31 (NLS: Adv.MS.70.2.9/31). The leading line to the hill at Buddon Ness (in profile) guides seamen past the sandbars. The voyage to Dundee continues, assisted by the second leading line (faint). This passes through the right of the compass rose, connecting Broughty Castle to Dundee Law (not shown in this extract).

Right - Grenville Collins' chart (1693) shows similar leading lines, plus two leading lights at Buddon Ness.

These lights were erected in the late 17th century, thus supporting the proposition that "Pont 31" must have been prepared much earlier, and so could be compatible with the date of 1666, based on the magnetic information quoted by Mudie.

Stone is clear that the "Pont 31" manuscript is neither by Pont on the basis of place names and handwriting, nor by Adair, lacking the latter's normal "more finished appearance". Stone suggests that there is a close similarity between the soundings given on the manuscript and those given on the Collins chart, and that, as Collins acknowledges the help given by Marr, it would seem likely that Marr is the probable author of the "Pont 31" manuscript.

### THE "DUTCH" MARR CHARTS

The charting activities of John Marr came to the attention of the Dutch chart publishers over the period 1682 to 1720. To date, four versions of a sea chart of the east coast of Scotland have been found; this chart extends from Berwick to Buchan Ness, and shows details of the Firths of Forth and

Tay, and an inset of the entrance to Montrose. These charts differ only in that the 1720 version has more place names both on the coast and inland, and marginally more marine information.

The details of these charts are as follows;

- J. van Keulen: NMM: NAV14: VKE01: map 49: 1682
- H. Doncker: NLS: EMS.s.115a : 1696
- H. Doncker: BL: MAPS.c. 27.g.9 : 1696
- G. van Keulen: NLS: EMS.s.664 : 1720

BL British Library; NLS National Library of Scotland ; NMM National Maritime Museum

Each of these charts has a "double" cartouche, the first part being associated with the Dutch publisher, and the second part, common to all four charts, has the entry "A New and Pertinent Map of the Eastern Sea Coast of Scotland ; Wherein exactly is discovered all the Coastes, Havens, Roads, Bays, Depths and Quik Sands [etc.] from the Coast of Berwick till Bokaness, by John Marr of Dundee".

Two general points can be made about these “Dutch/Marr” charts. Firstly, they display the same two leading lines for entering the Tay estuary as are shown in “Pont 31”, with the important difference that, instead of using Buddon Ness as the shore marker of the first leading line, these charts indicate the presence of two leading lights at the south east base of that conspicuous hill.

These lights were introduced towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which accounts for their appearance in the “Dutch/Marr” charts over the period 1682 to 1720.

The second point relates to the meticulous inclusion, by the Dutch publishers, of the second cartouche, ascribing the charts to John Marr. This is notable at a time when plagiarism was rife, but it can be explained by the fact that Marr was a regular trader to the continent, and the shipping records of the time (see, for example, Dobson, 1992), indicate that, over the period 1681 to 1706, John Marr, or his son, also confusingly called John, made at least eight voyages to Holland, thus allowing Marr or his son, to deal directly with the Dutch publishers, and so ensure that due recognition was given to the Dundee source of the chart. To date, no exact Scottish, English or Irish equivalent of this Dutch group of charts has been uncovered, but there must have been at least a manuscript from which the Dutch publishers created their printing plates. This idea, combined with the enigmatic comment by Mudie, suggests that there may yet be Marr manuscripts to be discovered in the archives.



G. van Keulen, 1720 : cartouche

## MARR CHARTS PUBLISHED IN LONDON AND DUBLIN

The work of John Marr also came to the attention of chart publishers in London and Dublin. A chart by the London publisher Samuel Thornton appeared in 1709 entitled *A Large Chart Describing the Sands Shoales Depth of Water and Anchorage on the East Coast of Scotland at North Britain*. It is clearly dated London, 1709, it has no engraving details, and the cartouche ends with the clear statement “Surveyed by Iohn Adair”. A visual comparison of this chart with those contained in the Adair atlas *Description of the Sea Coast and Islands of Scotland*, published in Edinburgh (Adair, 1703) indicates a very different cartographic style, and raises the possibility that the Thornton 1709 chart was not, in fact, created by Adair. This chart is held in a private collection within the National Library of Scotland, along with a copy of a pilot book of the east coast of Scotland written by John Marr.

The 1709 chart covers a coastal area very similar to that covered by the “Dutch/Marr” group of charts described above, but there are differences:

a) the Dutch charts cover the coast from Berwick to Buchan Ness, while the Thornton chart covers St. Abbs Head to Montrose; this difference is not so significant as it appears, because in the Dutch charts the section from Montrose to Buchan Ness is actually in the form of an inset, and the continuous coastal coverage is actually from Berwick to Montrose, so that the only difference on the continuous coverage is the small section from Berwick to St. Abbs Head.

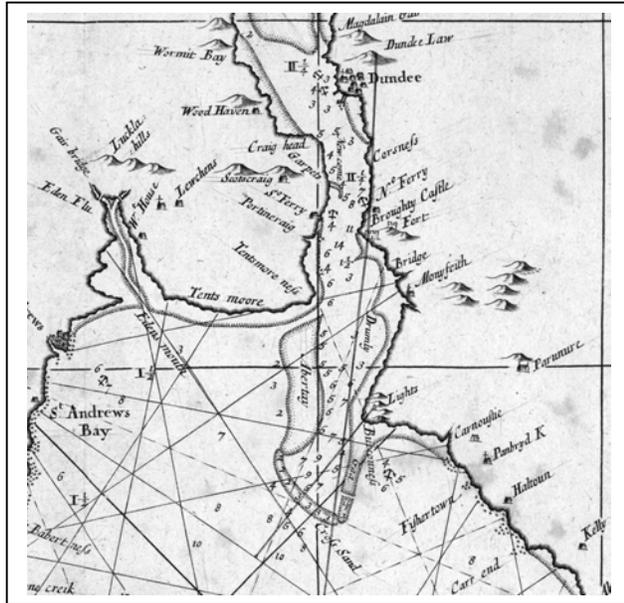
b) the Dutch charts also have insets covering the upper reaches of the Forth, and the detail of the Montrose entrance; these inset areas are not present in the Thornton chart.

However, two other versions of the Thornton 1709 chart have been uncovered, one in the British Library [7.TAB.92], the other at the National Maritime Museum [G218:12/5]. These versions are identical to the 1709 chart with the one vital difference that the cartouche has been “hammered” in an attempt to remove all reference to Thornton, Adair, and the place and date of publication, and has been replaced by the simple entry “by Iohn Marr”. Why and by whom these changes were made is not clear, but a possible explanation could be that Thornton, in an attempt to boost sales, attributed the chart to Adair, who was a well established mapmaker both in Edinburgh and London, whereas Marr was probably only known in Dundee. At some time later, the “true” source of the chart was established, and the original plate was altered.

Samuel Thornton took over the well known chart and map publishing business of his father John Thornton in 1708, and subsequently died in 1715 (Tyacke, 1978).

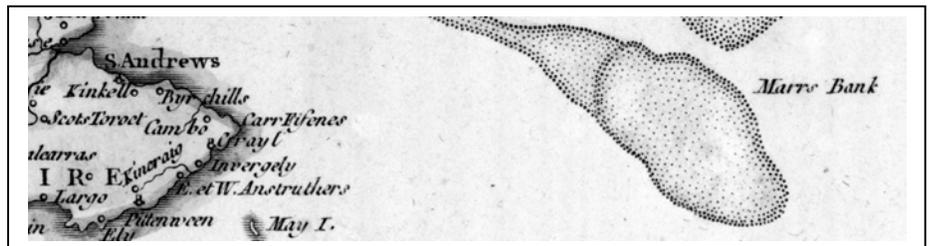
Two further versions of this “disputed” chart have also been found in composite atlases (Glasgow University Library, Spec.Coll.E.195; and National Maritime Museum, SEL 10). These versions are associated with Dublin editions of Seller’s well known publication *The English Pilot*, [Grierson, 1746 and Hay, 1772], and have the precise detail of both the Thornton 1709 chart, and of the two “hammered” versions referred to above. However, the cartouche has been re-formed, using the original chart description, but with the addition of the phrase “by John Marr”. These Irish versions have, at the base of the charts, the entry “Ts.Barton, Sculpt.”, suggesting that a fresh plate had been created for these versions.

There is a report in *The Early Maps of Scotland*, vol. 2 (EMS, 1983b) that there is a version of this Marr chart in a 1772 copy of *The English Pilot*, by John Seller, published by Mount and Page. This copy could not be traced, but it seems very likely that the reference is actually to the 1772 copy published in Dublin by David Hay.



A Large Chart Describing the Sands, Shoales, Depth of Water and Anchorage on the East Coast of Scotland at North Britain...Surveyd by Iohn Adair. London : Samuel Thornton, 1709.

The Marr fishing bank lies some 30 miles east of Fife in the North Sea. The Old Statistical Account for Dundee (1792-3) states: 'By him [ie. Marr]... the bank, which bears his name, was discovered and delineated...'



## SUMMARY

It seems quite likely that the manuscript chart of the Firth of Tay, known as “Pont 31”, is by John Marr of Dundee, and dates from about 1666. A major part of the cartography of the Collins Tay chart of 1693 was provided by Marr. There is a group of Marr charts of the east coast of Scotland which were published in Holland over the period 1682 to 1720, and which are clearly attributed to Marr. Finally, there is a group of charts of the same area, printed in both London and Dublin, that are attributed to Marr, with one possible exception, namely the Thornton 1709 chart, which is attributed to Adair, but, as argued above, this does not seem likely.

There is no evidence that John Marr produced more than two original charts, but it would appear that, in the absence of rival charts of the same area towards the end of the 17th. century, Marr’s work on the East coast of Scotland, including the Firth of Tay, was accepted and exploited by the chart publishers of the day.

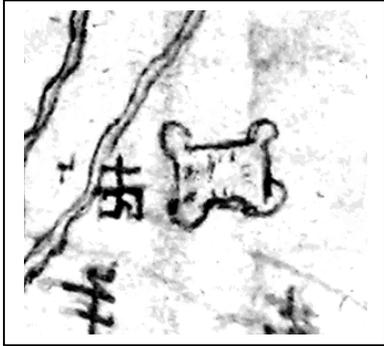
William Laing  
March, 2002

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The author would like to thank John Moore of the University of Glasgow and the staff of the Map Room of the National Library of Scotland for help and guidance in the preparation of this report.

**The Pitlochry Puzzle - is it a castle?**



*Detail from  
Pont  
manuscript  
23*

As can be seen from the illustration, the Pont site, reckoned to be in the Pitlochry area of Highland Perthshire, looks very like a castle plan. However, if this is indeed what it is, it is probably the only building plan (as opposed to elevation) in Pont's surviving maps. This gives rise to the question why Pont chose to make an exception in this one case.

It has been suggested before that the site is the Castle of Moulin, probably already ruinous in Pont's day, since it is in the right place and the plans are very similar (cf. McGibbon and Ross). However in his chapter on Pont's buildings in *The Nation Survey'd* Professor Charles McKean (CMcK) states (page 122) his reasons for thinking that the site is unlikely to be the Black Castle of Moulin. If not at Moulin, or of not a castle, what is it?

CMcK suggests that the site may instead represent the remaining earthwork from a temporary hunting lodge built by the Earl of Atholl for James V in 1531. This was an elaborate structure including a drawbridge over a substantial moat and the building itself "fashioned in four quarters and in each quarter... a great round".

We would like to put forward the reasons why Pont's depiction might be of the Black Castle of Moulin after all.

**1. Reason for the site not being Moulin.**

CMcK says "there is no evidence to show Moulin was ruinous in 1600". This surely is a neutral point since CMcK has no evidence that it was occupied then, whilst the following factors seem to suggest that abandonment was more likely than continued occupation:

a) Histories of the area refer to all occupants of the Castle dying of the plague (*an galar mor*) in 1500 after which it was burnt by the locals and

shunned thereafter. The volume on Perth & Kinross in the Rutland Press Series (Series editor: Charles McKean) restates this tradition. The sobriquet "the Black Castle" derives from this story.

b) Looking at the architecture of the Castle at Moulin, it would surely have been old-fashioned even in 1500. By 1600, if still intact, it would have qualified for one of CMcK's own phrases from *The Scottish Chateaux* that is "grossly anachronistic". A restricted site in a lochan would not be easy to develop (or redevelop) and maybe the political/prestige/strategic reasons for a presence in Moulin had waned by the time the Castle was destroyed, if this is what happened in 1500.

c) The history of land ownership tends to support the tradition of the Castle's destruction. By 1600 the Earldom of Atholl no longer held sway in Moulin. It was as though the Atholl family had withdrawn from Moulin altogether following the "loss" of their Castle. Indeed Moulin and Pitlochry form the only break to this day in an otherwise continuing ownership of Atholl Estates between Bruar and Dunkeld.

d) The three families who took over this vacuum were the Fergussons of Baledmund, the Stewarts of Balnakeilly and the Butters of Faskally. The two Moulin families - Fergusson and Stewart - whilst influential in local terms were relatively minor families in any national context. Neither attempted to replace the Black Castle of Moulin, nor created any other grand or fortified building locally.

**2. The possible 'Hunting Lodge' alternative.**

Bearing in mind all that we have been told about chorographers depicting the character of an area - including the economy, hierarchy, prominent buildings, aspects of history - using both the map and the accompanying text, is it likely Pont would have recorded the earthwork of a temporary hunting lodge? It seems quite a transitory item as against Pont's possible objective to describe "the landscape of power" (to take one of the phrases heard at a recent seminar).

Anyway, Moulin is not and never has been good hunting territory. Such a hunting lodge would have been much more likely in the vicinity of Blair Castle as was the case with Queen Mary's famous hunting trip to Atholl in 1564.

*Continued on page 8*

### 3. Is it a Castle at Moulin after all?

In 1600, although situated at an important crossroads, Moulin was but a small subsistence farming community. It might have seemed a bit like Crianlarich does today - "is this all there is?" No smart tower-house or chateau "with goodlie orchards" at Moulin - just the Church, a scatter of modest dwellings and the gloomy Black Castle of Moulin with its plague legend. The fact that Pont decided only to record the supposed Castle and the Church at this site is in line with this view of Moulin in 1600.

Perhaps Pont decided to record the Castle in the only way he could and write up the story in his corresponding (lost) text. Because its walls were no longer completely intact, he could not represent its elevation, so was perhaps persuaded instead to depict its plan as this was all that was left fully

evident. If he was thereby depicting a ruined Castle, all the more likely that this was at Moulin.

In our view, if Pont had drawn a plan of the Castle at Moulin, it would have been the same as (or very similar to) the existing image and in the same location.

For all these reasons it does seem to us that the balance of probability lies in favour of the Pitlochry site being none other than the Black Castle of Moulin.

**Colin Liddell and Alan Macfarlane**

**The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors. If you wish to contribute to this discussion, or raise other issues, please contact the Editor, Cairt Newsletter at NLS Map Library (address on front page).**

## CAIRT – WEB NEWS



**WEDDERBURN MAP OF DUNDEE** : a drawing in the Protocol Book, 1589 to 1592, of Alexander Wedderburn.

*This unusual image of a map of Dundee in the form of a man, together with explanatory text (below), are copied, by permission of the City Archivist, from Dundee City Archives website:*  
[www.dundee.gov.uk/archives/](http://www.dundee.gov.uk/archives/)

'The drawing represents a figure with The Steeple as the headband, the nose/throat as the town churches, the right arm Argylles Gait, (now the Overgate), the left arm Nethergate, the left breast The Market Cross, the right breast The Tolbooth, the waistband Skinners (for the glover trade), left calf Seagate, right calf Murraygate, scabbard Wellgate, right foot Cowgate. The accompanying poem (see website) compares the beauty of Dundee to London and Edinburgh.'

### NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND DIGITAL LIBRARY [www.nls.uk/maps/](http://www.nls.uk/maps/)

In February around 1000 images of maps and plans from 1750 to 1900 were scanned. These include county maps, Thomson's 1832 atlas and Wood's town plans. They will be added to the existing website over the next few months.

The Map Library has issued a free leaflet which lists a selection of websites relating to Scottish maps - available on request.

### CHARTING THE NATION : maps of Scotland and associated texts 1550-1740

The new web site for this project, which has scanned over 3,500 items, will be launched in May. For an update on progress please see:  
[www.geo.ed.ac.uk/charting/news.html](http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/charting/news.html)

#### DONATION

*The Scottish Maps Forum has been sent off to a flying start with a most generous anonymous donation of £500 in memory of R S Brebner and J S Thoms.*

*The Steering Committee thanks the anonymous donor, and will consider most carefully how the money may best be used.*

#### Contributors:

**Bill Laing** is a retired industrial chemist, whose interest in old Scottish charts arises from sailing on the Clyde in summer, and delving into Scottish maritime history for the rest of the year.

**Colin Liddell** is a solicitor specialising in charities law and the author of a book on the local history of Pitlochry and district.

**Alan Macfarlane** is a retired publisher with an interest in castles.