

LITTORALLY SPEAKING: METAPHOR AND NARRATIVES OF 'WEATHERING' IN  
BERWICKSHIRE'S COASTAL NAMES

LEONIE MHARI

This article investigates the coastal toponymy of Berwickshire, Scotland's most south-easterly county, using qualitative methods and analysis in order to explore the ways in which water influences the structure and function of narratives in this coastal landscape. Berwickshire is a farming county and its coastline, historically known for fishing, has several fishing communities today. Coastal toponyms often do not have the same depth of records as inland names, which are better documented in early records such as medieval charters. However, while the origins of coastal names are often obscure due to lack of evidence, the Ordnance Survey Name Books' (OSNB) 'Descriptive remarks, or other General Observations which may be considered of Interest' are a rich source of folk etymologies and narratives for this region, demonstrating that there is a strong relationship between bodies of water and the narratives which contextualise our surroundings. Moreover, many of the coastal names of Berwickshire are metaphorical,<sup>1</sup> and narratives documented in the OSNB contribute to situating these metaphorical place-names within their landscape context.

The OSNB, as many readers will know through their own use, are a rich source of place-name and landscape material, providing a snapshot of an understanding of the landscape in the nineteenth century. The 'Descriptive remarks' can contain any information the surveyor wished to record about the landscape feature; for coastal Berwickshire, these remarks often encapsulate folk etymologies, notes on language, and snippets of views from inhabitants of the local area. Data from the six-inch first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map and OSNBs were collected for this article with evidence from earlier sources interspersed where relevant. For this article, a coastal feature is defined as any topographical feature which has contact with the sea or is delimited by the sea, or is itself an inlet delimited by coastal topography. Features may be any coastal landform, that is one which is part of the mainland or within close proximity of

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1. Toponyms which have a metaphorical etymology, for which the landscape feature is understood to be another entity through its name, are understood to be metaphorical place-names.

it, and is formed through or delimited by the geological processes of the coast. Therefore, this definition includes features such as cliffs, shores, braes, bays, *heughs*,<sup>2</sup> and coastal rocks. Using this definition there are 273 named Berwickshire coastal features in the six-inch first edition OS map. Of these, 89 (32.6%) might be considered to be metaphorical coinings. This article focuses on metaphorical names which have a recorded folk etymology or narrative in the OSNB 'Descriptive remarks' and literal names which are connected to the narratives recorded in the OSNB for metaphorical names.

The coast cannot be understood to be a neatly delimited region and even to measure the coastline accurately is an impossible task as explicated by the coastline paradox. The coastline paradox describes the impossibility of measuring the coastline because of the varying scales of coastal landscape features. It is also impossible to define the extent to which the influence of the sea encroaches inland and vice versa. As Nicolaisen (2011 [1983], 115) expresses it:

'Coast' does [...] not necessarily end where the water begins but rather, on the one hand, includes natural features which might be understood as encroachments of the sea upon the land while, on the other hand, also comprising features that are like extensions – however unconnected – of the land into the sea.

In trying to quantify the coastline, the coastal landscape becomes less clear. For this reason, a qualitative approach is appropriate to this study.

This article investigates motivation and multiplicity in coastal naming and the extent to which the narratives associated with metaphorical names create toponymic environments whereby the names of features may assimilate into established semantic categories. Moreover, this article analyses the role of metaphor and narrative through the lens of 'weathering' as posited by Neimanis and Hamilton (2018): 'weathering' encompasses people, geological processes, and languages amongst many other entities. This term was coined and discussed by Sharpe (2016) in *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*; this volume explores aspects of the transportation of slaves in the Atlantic slave trade through four themes, one of these themes being 'The Weather'. This term has

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2. SND s.v. *heuch* n., v., 'A crag or precipice, a cliff or steep bank, esp. one overhanging river or sea'.

since been discussed in the environmental humanities in relation to climate change by Neimanis and Walker (2014) and is further developed by Neimanis and Hamilton (2018). The present article aims to demonstrate ways in which toponymic studies can contribute to the environmental humanities and foregrounds Neimanis and Hamilton's (2018, 84) description of 'weathering' as 'a particular way of understanding how bodies, places and the weather are all inter-implicated in our climate-changing world'. For this toponymic study, 'weathering' is adapted to several contexts in order to elucidate the ways in which place-name evidence contributes to our understanding of how inhabitants and their environments are inter-related and implicated in creating landscapes and how this contributes to the continual cycle of reinterpretation of landscape features.

In combination with 'weathering' this article draws on the ecofeminist method of 'storying' to understand water-based narratives in Berwickshire's coastal landscape; this term is used widely in the environmental humanities to describe how the telling and retelling of situated narratives creates places and has a material impact on environments:

It matters what thoughts think thoughts. It matters what knowledges know knowledges. It matters what relations relate relations. It matters what worlds world worlds. It matters what stories tell stories' (Haraway 2016, 35).

As Haraway emphatically summarises, stories are constituted and are a culmination of thoughts, knowledges, relations, and worlds. The stories or narratives of names are considered in this article to be a combination of these elements. As singular topographical features have narratives recorded in the OSNB, this culminates in a landscape which has multiple stories emphasizing certain situated knowledges and highlight particular relations, and it *matters* which stories are foregrounded, how stories are contextualised, and who tells and retells them. This paper focuses on the multiplicity of 'storying' with place-names and the ways in which water impels our continual reinterpretation of our lived landscapes.

This article first discusses evidence of geology and the geological processes of weathering and erosion in the OS and OSNB, then continues to a discussion of narratives and metaphor in coastal naming. This section includes the semantic categorisation of toponyms, OSNB narratives recorded for

anthroponyms, the recording of these narratives in the OSNB and the fishermen's role in these narratives. The final section briefly outlines a contemporary understanding of water within the environmental humanities and proposes that toponymic research could be central to current discussions in this research field.

#### BODIES 'WEATHERING' IN NAMED PLACES

'Weathering [...] is a particular way of understanding how bodies, places and the weather are all inter-implicated in our climate-changing world. Weathering describes socially, culturally, politically and materially differentiated bodies in relation to the materiality of place, across a thickness of historical, geological and climatological time' (Neimanis and Hamilton 2018, 80–81).

Water and weathering have a reciprocal relationship. Water creates the conditions for the physical weathering of geological features and the course of water is influenced by geological formations. Coastal landscapes often demonstrate the most dynamic evidence of weathering through erosion due to oceanic forces, spanning several timescales from geological eras to the ebbing of tides. Our understanding of water's duration and movement is linked to narratives of our named environment.

Weathering is thought of as a slow, rhythmic, persistent process, and is often abstract in the human scale. Siccar Point (NT811709) demonstrates that the deposition of the two rock types – Devonian Old Red Sandstone and Silurian Greywackes – in direct contact which are found along this coast have a 65-million-year interval between their creation (*Edinburgh Geological Society* 2020). This phenomenon was observed by James Hutton in 1788 and has since been named Hutton's Unconformity, leading to our contemporary understanding of deep time. For toponymic study, the landscape at the time of coining a name has often been given precedence over the earlier or later landscape as it reflects the initial motivation for naming. If, however, we take deep time into our toponymic account of an environment and the construction of a landscape, we may find that names demonstrate not only how a feature was understood in that instance, in that moment, but that they may also elucidate how landscapes might be seen in relation to a longer time period.

One sense of *siccar* is 'safe, secure, free from danger, trouble or molestation' (SND s.v. *siccar* adj.). On the Berwickshire coast, notorious for shipwrecks and lost lives, a safe place in the water would be notable. Many shipping disasters and tragedies for local communities have been recorded over several hundred

years, from the distant *fracturae navium* (shipwrecks) of the medieval charters to the four sculptures erected at harbours in commemoration of the lives lost in the 1881 Eyemouth Disaster (*The Berwickshire News* 7/10/2016). It is possible that Siccar Point was known to be a safe haven for fishing boats or smugglers caught out and that either the east-facing bay south of Siccar Point or Siccar Cove, north of the promontory, provided shelter for the duration of a storm. Shelter and ‘weathering’ in the socio-cultural sense go hand-in-hand; a place where a storm can be weathered can be lifesaving.

The second sense of adjectival *siccar* is ‘firm, stable, steady, fixed immovably’ (SND s.v. *siccar* adj.). If this sense motivated the naming of Siccar Point, it could be in respect of the geology and weathering of the rock which are stable as a product of geological process. The Berwickshire coast comprises mostly of Devonian Old Red Sandstone and Silurian Greywackes. The former is much softer and more easily worn down than the latter. The ‘point’ of Siccar Point is ‘steeply inclined Lower Silurian turbidite sandstone beds of the Ettrick Group... uncomfortably overlain by Upper Devonian pebbly sandstone beds of the Stratheden Group’ (Stone 2012, 105); the ‘point’ which juts out is Silurian Greywackes, a firm or stable bedrock to the eroding Devonian Old Red Sandstone resting on top of it. In essence, if it were to be understood to be derived from this sense of *siccar*, it may have a relation to time through physical weathering. The more durable a feature, the longer we perceive its duration to be. Without further evidence, we cannot be sure if the initial coining was motivated by physical weathering or meteorological weather. Paradoxically with either sense, Siccar Point reveals the naming of a feature understood to be in a transitory state.

Other toponyms which remark upon the coastal geology are Agate Point (NT954641), Deils Dander (NT917662), and Maidens Stone – recorded in the OSNB as Maiden’s Stone – (NT966602), all south of Siccar Point. Agate Point (Fig. 1) is described as ‘[a] large mass of rocks (Greywacke) running out a considerable distance into the sea and forming a sort of conspicuous point. Agates have been found among these rocks hence the name’ (OS1/5/3/20) and Deils Dander as ‘[a] mass of calcined rock, on the sea shore at the mouth of Milldown Burn’ (OS1/5/10/63). These features are part of the Eyemouth Volcanic Formation, which consists of ‘a few thin beds of pedogenic nodular limestone (calcrete or ‘cornstone’) [...] overlain by about 600m of Lower Devonian lavas with interbedded volcanoclastic rocks and red sandstones’ (Stone 2012, 106–7). The tip of Agate Point is named Agate Pup (NT955642); *pup* is a variant of Scots

*pap* (SND s.v. *pap* n.1) 'breast'. The nodular limestone of Deils Dander is either perceived as 'the Devil's dandruff' (OED s.v. *dander* n.3) or 'the leftovers of the Devil's smithy' (SND s.v. *dander* n.3 v.3). Either of these metaphorical interpretations could be correct demonstrating that it is not always possible to pinpoint the etymology of a place-name but it can still be apparent that the motivation was metaphorical.



Fig. 1 Close up of Agate Point, showing seams described as agate in OSNB.

Photograph: Leonie Mhari

The OSNB record for Maidens Stone remarks upon the physical weathering which created the feature:

A conspicuous rock on the sea beach, south of 'Ross Point' and visible at high water. It is a portion of sandstone strata, which has withstood the action of the waves, whilst the strata surrounding it has been worn by the sea. (OS1/5/34/9)

The pronounced pillar, the metaphorical maiden, is described in terms of its being created by the action of the littoral landscape. These names demonstrate possible relationships between the landscape-is-a-body metaphor, narratives of domesticity through craftsmanship, domestic service, femininity, and the

physical weathering of the geology of the coastal landscape. In these features, the bare rock is the defining characteristic and its visibility is due to the action of water. The perceived human body in such features shows an appreciation for the human body as an entity that also changes over time and with the influences of external factors which were perhaps part of the motivation for the initial coining and which are suggested in the 'Descriptive remarks' of the OS surveyors, possibly through their own observations or through their discussions with local persons.<sup>3</sup>

Tun Law, named because of the two Roman forts on the peak of the relief feature (a hill situated on the coastline), demonstrates dramatic signs of coastal erosion as the once circular forts are now crescents with sheer cliff faces dropping into the sea. The first element of this toponym may derive from *tun* meaning 'a vat, tub' (SND s.v. *tun* n.), referencing the shape of the summit due to the prominent forts built there. It is not known if the Roman forts were entire when this name was coined, and there is a probability it was known as *Hangindechestres* – *hanging* + *chester* 'a circular fortification sitting precariously atop a cliff edge' – in the early thirteenth century (Dunlop 2016, 146), evidencing the unstable situation of the feature by the 1200s. The coastline, made of large areas of Devonian Old Red Sandstone, continues to weather.

#### NARRATIVES AND METAPHOR IN COASTAL NAMES<sup>4</sup>

Philosopher Ivan Illich (1986, 24–25) notes that 'water has a nearly unlimited ability to carry metaphors'. While this was said in relation to the cultural roles of water in society, this statement is nowhere more applicable than in toponymy. This section investigates the narratives of metaphorical coastal naming recorded in the OSNB 'Descriptive remarks'. In name studies, once an etymology has been found, the toponymist may not continue to investigate motivations for naming. However, it is possible for motivations for naming to be multifarious and for continual reinterpretations of a name to strengthen semantic categories and narratives in a naming environment. Names with an initial coining which is metaphorical appear more likely to be reinterpreted within several categories occurring in this landscape, jumping between

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3. For a thorough account of the range of landscape metaphors in English, including the 'landscape-is-a-body' metaphor see Hough (2016).

4. Parts of the discussion in this section have been published in *Scottish Place-Name News* and are reprinted with permission of the editor.

categories. This creates multiplicity of narratives in the toponymic reinterpretations.

Three possible scenarios are discussed in which the motivation is understood to be metaphorical: the original name givers had multiple motivations in mind; different sections of the local community understood the same name differently; the understanding of a place-name changes through time. With this there is the caveat that it is often not possible to know the origin of a place-name and while name-givers knew their motivation for naming, we as modern interpreters cannot always be certain of these motivations.



Fig. 2 Red Ox. Photograph: Leonie Mhari

Within the names of the Berwickshire coastal landscape, there are three semantic categories which could be considered prevalent: farming terms, animals, and body parts. The categorisation of the coastal names of Cockburnspath and Coldingham parishes have been discussed in my unpublished PhD thesis (Dunlop 2016, chapter six); a selection of these names will be discussed below alongside toponyms in the southerly Berwickshire coastal parishes (Eyemouth, Ayton, and Mordington). The three semantic categories mentioned above are not completely distinct from one another, with



some names possibly being reinterpreted or straddling two categories. In some cases motivations for naming a feature may be either literal or metaphorical, or perhaps a combination of both.

### *Farm animals*

Named for their shape, high withers with sloping haunches, Red Ox (NT812707, Fig. 2), Black Bull (NT847705, Fig. 3) and Hairy Bull (NT940648, Fig. 4) are central to the category of farm animals. These coastal outcroppings are visually like miniature *heughs*, a feature which is characteristic of the Berwickshire coast, creating a bovine outline. The geology of Red Ox<sup>5</sup> and Black Bull<sup>6</sup> is noted in the specific elements, denoting Devonian Old Red Sandstone and Silurian Greywackes respectively, while Hairy Bull has long grass growing on it.



Fig. 3 Black Bull Photograph: Leonie Mhari

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5. 'A large red sandstone at high water mark, and a sea mark for Fishermen' (OS1/5/8/55).

6. 'A large black rock, which when viewed from a certain point, has the appearance of a bull' (OS1/5/9/5).



Fig. 4 Hairy Bull in foreground. Photograph: Leonie Mhari

The names of inlets from the sea which surround these features are less commonly recorded in the OSNB, perhaps revealing the land-centred stimulus of the Ordnance Survey. Shore Goats (NT787717, Fig. 5) derives from Scots *gote* 'narrow inlet', but it appears to have been spurred on in a dynamic naming process in which *gote* is reinterpreted as *goat* due to folk-etymological development. Shore Goats is in close proximity to Red Ox (2.5km) and to Black Bull (5km) and appears was named due to analogical reformation with other features along the coastline which have metaphorical names motivated by their appearance.<sup>7</sup> The initial naming of Shore Goats was stimulated by the geological formation, but the name appears to have become part of the semantic category of animal names which acted as a stimulus for metaphorical animal toponyms alongside literal animal toponyms. The *gote* element, also seen in the place-name Goats in Fife (Taylor with Márkus 2006–2012 vol. 2, 208), may have acted

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7. Coates stresses the importance of people and performance in folk etymology, and, in relation to place-names, the possibility of named features influencing the toponymic development of nearby features: 'the form of one of these names must have influenced the other, with the result that relevant elements in them either rhyme or assonate, to the ear or to the eye' (1987, 330).

as a stimulus for other animal names and evidences a dynamic naming environment.<sup>8</sup>



Fig. 5 Shore Goats. Photograph: Leonie Mhari

In Eyemouth parish, two inlets surrounded by *heughs* are named Ramfauds (NT952644, Fig. 6), from Scots *ram* + *fauld* ‘the part of the outfield which was manured by folding cattle upon it’ (DOST s.v. *fauld* n.2). The OSNBs describe this feature as ‘[two] narrow inlets or guts, running in to the base of the precipice, and are separated by a narrow ledge of rocks. This name is applied because of their ^fancied^ resemblance to the enclosures used for separating Rams from the Ewes’ (OS1/5/3/16).

To the north of Ramfauds is the off-coast rock, Polly (NT952645, Fig. 7) described as a ‘large greywacke rock above high water and is but a short distance from shore. Why it is called by this name I cannot ascertain’ (OS1/5/3/17). This is possibly derived from *palie* ‘an undersized, ailing lamb’ (SND s.v. *palie* n.1). These two names align with the farming and animal categories of coastal names of this region and the OSNB description of Ramfauds adds to the landscape

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8. Taylor (2013) has discussed place-names in the Firth of Forth, which strengthen the argument for analogical reformation motivated by a ‘farmyard’ naming environment.

narrative. Pauly Rock (NT921683), on the Coldingham coast, could be another poorly ovine; by contrast with Polly, it is described as a 'small detached rock east from "Burnmouth Harbour", and visible only at low water (OS1/5/9/86). The rocks do not bear a clear resemblance to sheep or lambs, but are perhaps reminiscent to sheep from further out at sea as they create a lot of white waves as the tide flows or perhaps because they look small and alone against the wider coastal landscape. It is possible that these features were drawn into a metaphorical narrative by features with a stronger metaphorical motivation.



Fig. 6 Ramfauds.

Photograph: Leonie Mhari

In my PhD thesis, I attributed the naming of Pauly Rock to its pallid hue (SND s.v. *palie* adj.1), contrasting with the nearby Black Carrs (Dunlop 2016, 259). This name is one of several possible examples of multiple motivations in coastal naming, a phenomenon discussed in further detail below. Where Nicolaisen notes the 'januslike duality' (Nicolaisen 2011 [1983], 116) of coastal Shetlandic naming, in which the perspective from the land and the perspective from the sea presented two different perspectives of the coastal landscape, it appears that in the Berwickshire coastal landscape, a multiplicity, exchange, and layering of perspectives might explain how the nomenclature developed.

Whereas Nicolaisen is discussing the same coastal feature having two different names, reflecting the views from land and sea, *pauily* would extend that to the possibility of two different understandings of the same name.



Fig. 7 Polly. Photograph: Leonie Mhari

### *Shelters for animals*

There are a further two coastal features which are possibly metaphorical enclosures for farm animals: Goose Craves (NT914694) and Pokie's Stell (NT890695). *Crave* is a variant spelling of *cruive*, 'an enclosure for animals, esp. for poultry or pigs' (SND s.v. *cruive* n. and v.). There are two entries in DOST: *crove* and *cruve*. *Crove*, which only has the sense 'a wicker or wooden enclosure for catching fish', is first attested in DOST in 1342. *Cruve* has this sense and the sense 'a hut or hovel' which is not attested until 1533 (DOST s.v. *cruve*, *cruive* n.). The OED third edition entry for *cruive* has four senses, three of which are possibilities: 'a hovel, cabin. *Scottish*', 'a pen for live stock, esp. a pig-sty. *Scottish*' and 'a coop or enclosure of wickerwork or spars placed in tide-ways and openings in weirs, as a trap for salmon and other fish' (OED s.v. *cruive* n.). The origins and development of present-day English *cruive* are discussed by Dietz (1986), who suggests that its sense can be either 'wicker salmon trap' or 'animal enclosure', but not a conflation of the two.

The rock ledge at Goose Craves forms a narrow inlet at the coast which may have been used for trapping fish; *goose* may refer to the gannet, also known as the soland goose (DOST s.v. *soland(e)-guse* n.), which nest on the rock faces. It is possible that Goose Craves means 'the fishing trap under the rocks where the gannets breed' or 'the sheltered ledge (hut) where the gannets breed'. If it were the second option, the gannets and the *craves* may have become metaphorical in the wider context of the coastal landscape, similar to Shore Goats. Goose Craves might be an extension of the 'landscape-is-a-container' metaphor, which is seen in the more transparent nearby toponym Cauldron Cove (NT915689). This feature is noted in the OSNB as being named for this reason: '[a] cave in the face of a steep rocky brae here. The noise of the waves when breaking against the sides of this cavern is said to resemble in sound that of a boiling cauldron, hence the name' (OS1/5/9/61).

Dietz also discusses the possible materials the enclosure or trap may have been made from. If it were wicker or straw, it might be that the origin of Goose Craves lies in the texture of the rock, which being made of eroded strata has somewhat the appearance of wicker. Another feature which may support the notion of naming due to the texture is Wuddy Rocks (NT920682), an adjective formed from a variant spelling of *wuid* (SND s.v. *wuid* n.v.). *The Berwickshire Place-Name Resource* (2020) suggests the *wuddy* toponyms 'seem to contain an unrecorded adjective from Sc *wuid* (also *wudd*) "wood", perhaps referring to a place where drift wood is prone to collect'. Next to Wuddy Rocks are Rough Carrs<sup>9</sup> (NT920682), which are probably named because of the choppy waters they create in their immediate environment, so although it is possibly an area where driftwood collects, it is unlikely to be a place where it is collected. I have not seen driftwood around the southern part of Burnmouth Harbour (NT919683), where Wuddy Heugh and Wuddy Rocks are most easily accessed on foot. In this explanation, *wuddy* would more likely have primarily applied to Wuddy Heugh; however, there is an alternative possibility in which *wuddy* would have applied primarily to the littoral rocks: due to the geological formation of strata, these off-coast rocks look like timber. This opinion is perhaps strengthened by the nearby Redshanks Rock<sup>10</sup> (NT920681) which also

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9. Carr 'rock ledge, projecting rock' (PNF 5 El. Gloss. s.v. *carr* 322).

10. Alternatively, this feature could be named for the redshank, a seabird which frequents the Berwickshire coast in winter; however it is also possible that the coastal feature's red hue and elongated shape motivated this place-name. The other off-coast

has a long, thin appearance when viewed directly from the coast or the sea and has a red appearance due to the sandstone, in contrast with Wuddy Rocks which are entirely grey. Wuddy Rocks are entirely covered by the sea at high tide but Redshanks Rock is not; the seawater bleaches the distinctive hue created by the iron content of the rock oxide from the Devonian Old Red Sandstone. This may demonstrate that the weathering of coastal features is applied in the names, and not only through the ways in which features are shaped. Without early forms it is not possible to be certain of the etymology of either name.

Pikie's Stell is possibly Scots *pikie* + *stell*; *pikie* is derived from *pike* 'a sharp point' (SND s.v. *pike* n.,v.); *pike* is found in Scottish and northern English place-names meaning 'pointed', however *pikie* is not found elsewhere. *Stell* is 'a place in a river over which nets are drawn to catch salmon (Sc. 1808 Jam.); rarely, an enclosure of salmon nets in a river' and 'an open enclosure made of dry-stone walling and variously shaped but gen. circular with an opening at one side to admit sheep for shelter on a hill-side' (SND s.v. *stell* n.v.). Similarly to the *cruive*, there is a water and a land-based sense. However, salmon is much more likely to be caught in rivers or estuaries than from the coast. Therefore, it is more likely that the shelters refer to a place a boat may shelter, possibly analogous to the metaphorical sheep enclosures of Ramfauds, rather than a place to catch salmon.

Genitival 'pikie's' is uncertain in origin; three features in a grouping have this descriptor – Pikie's Cove (NT889693), Pikie's Rock (NT890694) and Pikie's Stell – and it is not possible to ascertain which was the initial coining. A possibility is that 'pikie' refers to the rocks between these three features, and this name is now lost. Jutting straight out from the coast, this geologically striking feature comprising five strata of rock could be described as '(a) sharp point(s), spiked, jagged, barbed, of wire' (SND s.v. *pike* n.v.). This pronged feature obliquely enters the farming terms and tools, discussed further below. A further possibility is another sense of Scots *pikie* 'a pilferer' (SND s.v. *pike* n.,v.) which could possibly extend to the smuggling activities. If this were the sense, the initial coining could be Pikie's Stell, meaning 'a smuggler's shelter'.

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rocks surrounding Redshanks Rock are grey making it distinct in its immediate context. *Shank* is found in several inland Scottish place-names and the hue of the Devonian Old Red Sandstone has motivated several coastal names in Berwickshire. More pragmatically, the bird may be associated with this feature as it is more elevated than nearby rocks and they could frequent it at high tide.

*Multiple motivations*

Notable within these three semantic categories is the amount of overlap in naming motivations; in some examples these categories overlap with the category of colour names and where relevant colour names will be discussed below. Several of the examples above mention possible multiplicities in motivations, and this will be expanded on in this section. With duplex names, the two elements bring together two categories, for example Red Ox and Black Bull; for other names, one element combines two categories. The Rooks and The Little Rooks have three possible motivating factors.

In close proximity, The Rooks (NT849708) and The Little Rooks (NT851710) are likely to be metaphorical. The OSNB for The Rooks records: '[t]wo small rocks visible at low water, having the appearance of birds of that name. Many herring nets are lost here in stormy weather' (OS1/5/9/6). Metaphorically, this name perhaps focuses on the notably dark hue and the shape of the off-coast rocks, as well as possibly the social attributes of rooks to be part of a group, a rookery. Rooks are also associated with farmland, where rookeries are most likely to be found. Another possibility in which the name is metaphorical is *rook*, dialectal English variant of *ruck* meaning 'a small temporary stack of hay erected in the field to allow the hay to dry before being built into a more permanent stack' (SND s.v. *ruck* n.1). Two small rocks could easily look like small hay stacks in a field. There is also the literal interpretation *rok* 'a rocky eminence; a cliff; a crag; a reef. Also, an insulated sea rock' (DOST s.v. *rok* n.2). Even with this possible etymology, it has been interpreted as a metaphorical bird name, shown in the OSNB for The Rooks, and this interpretation has been furthered in the entry for the derived The Little Rooks:

This name applies to about a a [*sic*] dozen of detached rocks, visible at low water. They are invisible when the tide is full. "Rook" The sound emitted by the Raven. It is probable that the sound of the water when dashing against these Rocks might bear a similarity to that of ^the sound of the ^ Raven; from which the name may have been derived (OS1/5/9/15).

Features with possible sequential multiple interpretations could be understood to create a category in themselves. Several off-coast rocks have names motivated by being understood as stacks of farming produce but could also be understood to be part of another category as is The Rooks. Wheat Stack



(NT882621, Fig. 8) at first appears to be named after its shape. The rock is a prominent feature off the tip of Fast Castle Head. This rock is notably white due to the bird guano and it is possible that the original specific element was *white*, changing at a later date. This does not fully explain why it changed as there are other colour names which have survived nearby: Black Mask (NT859711) is 100m to the west, and Green Stane (NT846707) and Black Bull are approximately 1.2km to the south-west. Both colour and farming terms are productive along the coast so it is possible that this toponym, as with others, was influenced by two semantic categories at different times.



Fig. 8 Wheat Stack. Photograph: Leonie Mhari

A number of coastal features are given literal names due to the bird guano, such as Foul Carr (NT912694), White Dirt Rock (NT806709) and White Heugh. Scout Point (NT955636) might also join this category as Scots *scout* can mean either 'razorbill' or 'an ejection of thin watery excrement, specif. from a bird; diarrhoea' (SND s.v. *scout* v.1, n.1). Midden Rock (NT958618) 'presents to the fishermen the appearance of midden or manure heap' (OS1/5/3/46) and so is a metaphorical name. Midden Craig (NT838702) is recorded as 'about half way or mid way between Fast Castle & Red Heugh hence the name' (OS1/5/9/7), which seems unlikely. It has a heap-like shape and so could be viewed similarly to Midden Rock but could have been named because of the bird guano marking it

out from surrounding rocks, or quite possibly because of both of these characteristics, either simultaneously, or sequentially. This feature might straddle the literal and metaphorical, bringing out the fabulous and the domestic in the coastal landscape.

According to the OSNB, Barleyhole Rocks (NT881699) gained their name due to a ship which spilt its cargo on the off-coast feature: '[a] cluster of rugged rocks on the sea shore on which a vessel loaded with barley was wrecked hence the name' (OS1/5/9/29). The rocks which comprise Barleyhole Rocks also look somewhat like heaps of grain, adding to the overall effectiveness of this naming. Shipwrecks have been a central part of Berwickshire's coastal narrative and a constant concern for fishing communities. These rocks are next to Shilments (NT883699),<sup>11</sup> – a conspicuous rocky point on the sea coast. The 'Shilments' is the wooden frame of a cart used in carrying corn (OS1/5/9/25) – and it is possible that of these two names, one was inspired by the other. The narrative of the spilt barley likely motivated the naming of Shilments. Again, the dual motivation of real life events and imagined domesticity is evident in these toponyms. Other features named after shipwrecks are Biters Craig (NT899692), Cargill Rock (NT818709), and Corn Fort (NT939650). In the 'Descriptive remarks' for Cargill Rock, OSNB records that 'all hands perished' (OS1/5/8/57), a reminder of the 'weathering' of a community. This is prior to the Eyemouth Fishing Disaster of 1881, which is commemorated along the Berwickshire coastline in a series of sculptures. Peck O Meal (NT919685), another off-coast rock, references a Scots measure of grain;<sup>12</sup> it is found near Horse Castle and appears to have no record of a shipwreck.

These categories of names are a continued reminder of domesticity and peril found in tandem in this coastal fishing and farming community. Multiplicity is an important and integral motivation in itself for this community, with the coastal environment creating a landscape in motion. These multiple motivations in coastal naming convey how coastal naming can be a naming environment in itself, and that narratives move through the littoral landscape

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11. SND s.v. *shelvin* n., var. *shilment*, 'the flat upper surface of the side-rails of a box-or tip-cart, but now gen. applied to moveable boards which are fitted into these to increase its depth and allow higher or bulkier loads, esp. of hay, corn or peats, to be carried'.

12. SND s.v. *peck* n.2 'As in Eng., a dry measure, equivalent in Scot. to a quarter of a Firloot, but varying considerably according to district and commodity, that for wheat, meal, pease and salt being less than that for oats, barley and malt'.

features, with shifting narrations over time. In comparison to other naming environments, it differs in the initial motivation not being lost because the semantic categories are concentrated in delineated landscape with many features being discrete because they are surrounded by water. Coastal coinages almost appear to need more than one motivation to give rise to a toponym as strong categories ensure the name's longevity. The evidence for coastal names is very sparse pre-Ordnance Survey and the names which create these semantic categories are only recorded in the six-inch first edition OS map and OSNB. It appears that the oral nature of these names and the necessity of them for fishermen influenced the narratives to intertwine in memorable ways.

### *People in coastal names*

More often, the anthroponyms are now opaque and not even a folk etymology survives for these features. The personal names, however, do add to the idea of an inhabited place and the farming narrative is strengthened by their presence. While not metaphorical, these names are tangentially involved in the 'storying' of the coastline.

Where the literal bird names mingle with, but remain separate from, the metaphorical birds and beasts (Dunlop 2016, 222), the people perhaps add familiarity to the landscape, as do the farmyard animals and tools found in place-names. It is highly probable that naming from the sea was inherently a male perspective as the fishermen were much more likely to be men at the time of the names being coined. To what extent does this affect coastal naming? From the limited evidence of gendered naming that there is along the Berwickshire coastline, narratives relating to men and women differ in some aspects.

Named women as the specific element are found in four toponyms.<sup>13</sup> Either the women are reported to have lived near the feature or no explanation of their relation to the feature is given in the OSNB. Annie's Rock is so named because 'an old woman called Annie [...] lived at one time in the nearest house to it [...]' It is partly visible at High Water' (OS1/5/3/71). Annie is described as old and it is due to her living near this off-coast rock that she is remembered in the landscape. Her duration within this landscape is implied in this explanation.<sup>14</sup>

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13. 1.5% of the total number of coastal names.

14. The other three place-names containing women's personal names are Megs Dub (NT977578), Meg Watson's Craig (NT866710), and Phillis Braes (NT942646). Polly,



Fig. 9 Willie Anderson viewed from Agate Point Photograph: Leonie Mhari

By contrast, Willie Anderson (Fig. 9) is one of four men named in the toponyms of the coastal features.<sup>15</sup> An off-coast rock, the feature is described as ‘[a] large mass of rock within low water mark – partially covered at high water – A fishing boat belonging to a person of this name was lost or broken upon this rock and the occupant drowned. To commemorate this occurrence the rock has been named’ (OS1/5/3/19). The feature is named due to a catastrophic action that happened at a specific moment to the eponymous Willie Anderson.<sup>16</sup> It is possible that this event did occur as there are many attestations of shipwrecks and fishing disasters on this stretch of water. The off-coast rock does not have a generic element and could be viewed as a simplex, commemorated through anthropomorphism. Through these narratives, it is possible that men and

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discussed above, could be understood to be a simplex name referring to a woman or possibly a boat.

15. 1.5% of the total number of coastal names. The others are Jonah’s Rock, discussed below, John’s Road (NT953642), and Kutcher’s Hole (NT772725).

16. Evemalm’s unpublished PhD thesis on the Norse and Gaelic anthroponyms of Lewis shows that drowning narratives were chiefly of women (2017, 97). Willie Anderson possibly reflects a male-centric perspective of being at sea in Berwickshire’s coastal landscape.

women were seen to ‘weather’ differently due to the differences in their roles within the community.

Halterem’s Loup (NT917679), ‘a rocky precipice on the sea shore’, retains ‘a local tradition respecting this cliff which says that a man of the name of Halterem was ploughing on the Bell hill with a yoke of oxen and that the animals became restive and leaped over the heugh with ^the^ plough’ (OS1/5/9/85). Again, a one-off event, in this case very likely to be fantastical, has prompted the naming of the feature. The community is aware that fishermen are more likely to succumb to a sudden death at sea and when at sea, they are in a physically oppositional role to the farmer. Respite can be found at Geddes’ Haven (NT854710), ‘[a] small creek occasionally resorted to by fishing boats, when the wind blows from the east or south east’ (OS1/5/9/16); however this is a surname so the titular person’s gender cannot be presumed.

The place-names with farm animal elements, discussed above, are all static zoomorphised features. The fox, Scots *tod*, is the exception, having been described in the OSNB as either leaping (Tods Loup – two occurrences, in Coldingham and Mordington parishes) or sleeping (Tods Rock – ‘Foxes used to lie on its summit, hence the name’ (OS1/5/9/8)) on off-coast rocks. The fox is the foe of the farmer and so takes on a unique role in the metaphorical naming of the coastline. The animal is literal, inasmuch as it is native and could be seen on the coastline, yet the narrative its actions contribute to is fantastical, and therefore the fox assumes a place alongside the metaphorical beasts of the coastline. Always on the move, the fox cannot be at ease either in the real farmyard or the metaphorical farmyard. The hound appears alongside the fox in both occurrences of Tods Loup. In Mordington parish ‘a fox, being hard pressed by the hounds, leaped, and was killed, as well as some of the hounds which followed him’ (NT975580, OS1-5-34.27).

In Coldingham parish, the fox fares better, and the fate of the hound is told through Mahound Rock (NT884698):

A half tide rock out from Shilments Beach visible at lo[w] water, according to tradition, a fox hotly pressed by the hound[s] took to the water and made for t[he] rock, one of the hounds followed and was

drowned – the huntsma[n] perceiving exclaimed, My hound[, ] hence the name (OS1/5/9/30).<sup>17</sup>

It is the only animal with a drowning story on the coast, and as a literal animal in a metaphorical recounting of the landscape, has not survived. A possible etymology of Mahound Rock is Scots *Mahoun*,<sup>18</sup> a shortened form of *Ma(c)homet(e)*,<sup>19</sup> ‘Mohammed’, a metonymic usage of the prophet’s turban to describe the shape of the off-coast rock. As Hough suggests, clothing in place-names can be understood as an extension of the landscape-is-a-body-metaphor (Hough 2016, 19–20). There is potentially a pertinence in the strand of the story which is not fantastical, and that is the sea as a cause of death. The narrative told in the folk etymology could pertain to the true etymology of the name. To reflect on this point in terms of ‘weathering’, in this region men were perceived as more likely to drown at sea. The prophet Mohammed may too have been another male figure seen to have an ill fate on this coastline. *Mahoun* also has the sense ‘Devil’ and could therefore instead reference Satan, as is seen in Deils Dander discussed above and Deils Elbow (NT916687), another coastal metaphorical body part.

Another prophet, Jonah, is named in Jonah’s Rock (NT919674). In the Old Testament he orders the crew of his ship to throw him overboard when he disobeyed God and was in a storm at sea; in the Quran he boards a ship and during a storm the people on board draw lots for who is to jump ship. The OSNB does not give any information on this toponym, stating only ‘[a]n isolated rock on the sea coast, partly visible at high water. The origin of this name cannot now be ascertained’ (OS1/5/9/128). However the toponym offers a parallel to Mohammed’s occurrence and to the drowning men on the Berwickshire coast.

There are two metaphorical men on the coast, Souter (NT868708) and Naked Man (NT880698). Scots *souter*, a cobbler, is found in several Scottish toponyms and refers to a vertical rocky stack with the shape of a cobbler and his shoe last. The anthropomorphised sea stack has a brow (Souter Brae, NT867708)

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17. Letters and punctuation in square brackets represent those that are cut off in the digitised images due to the curve of the binding edge.

18. DOST s.v. *Mahoun* 1. ‘Mohammed. Prob., as in [Middle English] and [Old French], also conceived of as a false god, pagan idol or devil worshipped by Saracens or heathens.’, 2. ‘As a name for the Devil’.

19. DOST s.v. *Ma(c)homet(e)* n. 1. ‘Mohammed, the founder of the Moslem religion’, 2. ‘A follower of Mohammed, a Mohammedan’; cf. DOST s.v. *Mahoun*.

and tail (Souter Tails, NT869709) on its inland and North Sea sides which evidences the allowance for conglomerations of human and non-human beings within one toponymic narrative sequence. The verticality of the cobbler and the horizontality of the brow and tail of the creature avoids a clash of narratives between the human and non-human. The human form in a recumbent position is seen at Naked Man (NT880698), described as '[a] prominent rock on the sea shore resembling a man in a reclining position and forming a land mark for fishermen' (OS1/5/9/29).

A further land-based profession is exemplified in Thrummiecarr Heugh (NT900688).<sup>20</sup> The OSNB records Thrummiecarr Heugh as '[a] bold rocky precipice on the sea coast said to resemble, when viewed from the sea, the ends of a weaver's warp, hence the name' (OS1/5/9/78). Weavers could be male or female and represent domestic, land-based craftsmanship; similarly to Souter, the feature is prominent when seen directly out at sea.

The domestic persona is further reflected in Wife and Crockie (NT934649).<sup>21</sup> Wife and Crockie is described as '[a] small but conspicuous rock on the sea beach, somewhat resembling an old woman sitting on a rocking chair, or croaky, hence the name (OS1/5/19/1). Both toponyms, along with Annie's Rock, have connotations of a person who has endured their coastal position for a length of time, and is therefore an integral part of the weathering process, as the coastal features weathering through personification. Old women, in the case of Annie's Rock and Wife and Crockie, are pertinent to this personification as specifying their age demonstrates they have endured their situation for a significant period of time. Age is perhaps further personified in Kutcher's Hole (NT772725), described as a Danish pirate who 'committed considerable destruction in the Vicinity' in the OSNB (OS1/5/8/7A) but is perhaps a more benign *gutcher*, Scots 'grandfather';<sup>22</sup> *hole* is 'a small bay'.<sup>23</sup> Annie, the wife, the weaver's loom, and the cobbler are situated facing the tide, the people in sitting positions, constant and

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20. *Thrummie + carr (+ heugh)* SND s.v. *thrum* n.1 v.1 'the end of a warp-thread in a loom, any thread end in a fabric'. Note, *thrummie* can also denote the Devil (SND s.v. *thrum* n.1 v.1) who is also present in Deils Dander.

21. SND s.v. *crackie* n. 'a small, low, three-legged stool having a hole in the middle of the seat'.

22. SND s.v. *gutcher* n.

23. SND s.v. *hole* n.v.

unremitting. The men lost at sea contrast with the images of widows and neighbours looking out to sea.

Elfin Rocks (NT953644), described as a 'large mass of very rugged and high rocks extending for a short distance into the sea and are above high water mark. Owing to the peculiar appearance presented by them wh[en] seen from sea, they are called by the Fishermen Elfin or Fairy rocks' (OS1/5/3/16), the only fictive beings recorded in the coastal names.<sup>24</sup> The geology of the rocks being unfamiliar to the fishermen appears to have motivated this feature being named as otherworldly, rather than the feature being anthropomorphising; the feature's name lies outwith the categories many names sit more comfortably within.

#### *Fishermen, surveyors, and 'weathering'*

This section analyses the relationship between the fishermen's and the Ordnance Surveyor's perspectives in the naming and narrating of the coastal landscape through the OSNB evidence. Two of the three men who are named as the OSNB 'authority for the modes of spelling' for the majority of coastal features in Berwickshire, John Colvin and Robert Thorburn, were inhabitants of Coldingham Shore (NT915673) and both are recorded as fishermen in the 1851 census.<sup>25</sup> This village is described in the OSNB as '[a] small fishing village on the sea coast about 1/2 a mile East from "Northfield", the houses are for the most part ~~are~~ irregularly brick, and of an inferior description. It is the property of Home Drummond Esq., Drummond Castle, ~~Perthshire~~ Stirlingshire' (OS1/5/9/123).<sup>26</sup> Notably, neither Colvin nor Thorburn are named authorities on this village. The men who are named in the entry for Coldingham Shore are inhabitants of Coldingham and Northfield, two settlements near but not on the coast. Inhabitants of the fishing villages and in particular the fishermen could be presumed to be the persons with the most in-depth knowledge of the coastal features. The low social standing of the inhabitants is conveyed by the settlement being described as 'inferior' and it is likely that these men were asked

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24. Letters in square brackets represent those that are cut off in the digitised images due to the curve of the binding edge.

25. Record for John Colven: 1851 Census, Parish of Coldingham, Berwickshire, Enumeration Book 6, Page 14; Record for Robert Thorburn: 1851 Census, Parish of Coldingham, Berwickshire, Enumeration Book 6, Page 13.

26. Perthshire was crossed out in the OSNB.



by the Ordnance Surveyor with some reticence. The surveyor appears to have preferred to ask men of a higher social standing, such as Andrew Wilson, a merchant, to the extent that he preferred to ask men who lived in Coldingham and Northfield about Coldingham Shore, rather than the inhabitants themselves.

One such feature is White Heugh, north of St Abbs harbour and overlooking the harbour, which is described by three inhabitants of Coldingham as:

A high precipitous cliff overhanging the sea. It is frequented during the summer by numerous birds which hatch their young among the crevices, and the face of the rock is very much marked by their dung which gives it a white appearance, hence the name (OS1/5/9/74).

The OS is the first recording of the name White Heugh (NT918680), the feature having been recorded prior to that in various spellings as \**Shittenheugh* (first recorded in ×1203). This process of amelioration alongside standardisation of the place-names of the UK demonstrates the way in which some place-names were 'othered' at this time, due to their being deemed inappropriate for a national project. An incomplete entry for 'Sh—n Heugh' is also recorded in Ayton Parish (OS1/5/3/44), with one of the witnesses the same Andrew Wilson who was a witness for White Heugh, Coldingham. This feature could possibly be Gull Rock (NT956621) or it may have been left unnamed on the six-inch first edition OS map as it noted in the OSNB below the entry in red ink: '[n]ot used in the Plan'. The place-names, in these cases, were discarded from the OS project but the motivations for these names were retained in the accepted 'new' names, showing a desire to retain local knowledge but in doing so reframing the narratives tied to the initial coinings.

Hugh/Heugh Spence, a cotton handloom weaver from Coldingham, is another of the witnesses for White Heugh and is prevalent throughout the records for coastal features.<sup>27</sup> Incidentally, he is also a witness for Thrummiecarr Heugh, the coastal feature discussed above as being named for its resemblance to the ends of a weaver's warp from a seafaring perspective.

It is notable that within the descriptions of coastal features, information that could only have been told from a fisherman's perspective is included. In the entry for Whitestone Heugh, the description reads: '[a] steep rocky heugh or

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27. 1851 Census, Parish of Coldingham, Berwickshire, Enumeration Book 8, Page 5.

precipice on the sea coast. A part of the face of the precipice resembles, when seen from the sea, a clock dial and forms a meathe for fishermen' (OS1/5/9/50).<sup>28</sup>



Fig. 10 Babrick (left, at the back of the rock formation, covered in vegetation and yellow lichen) and Girdle (middle, to the right of Babrick, partially covered in yellow lichen). Photograph: Leonie Mhari

The coastal place-name descriptors with the fishermen as authorities in the OSNBs also give pithy remarks on the language and landscape. For example, Babrick (NT918685, Fig. 10) is noted as '[a] small flat rock of an oblong form resembling a bakeboard, hence the name babrick' (OS1/5/9/84). This is a dialect word local to the Scottish Borders recorded in *The Scottish Journal of Topography, Antiquities, Traditions, Etc, Volumes 1-2* in 1848. It is mentioned in this volume in an inventory taken on 15 February 1746 alongside 'ane brander;<sup>29</sup> ane girdle<sup>30</sup>' which are also found as the names Brander (NT873707) and Girdle (NT918685). Cleaver Rock (NT913693) is noted as '[a]n isolated rock on the sea coast visible at high spring tides. The shape of this rock some what resembles a

28. SND s.v. *meith* n.v. 'A landmark used by fishermen to steer by'.

29. SND s.v. *brander* n. 'A gridiron; "an open girdle for oat-cakes, with ribs, not a disc"'.

30. SND s.v. *girdle* n. 'A met. form of Eng. griddle, a circular iron plate with hooped handle, suspended or placed over the fire and used for baking scones, oat-cakes, etc.'

wedge, hence the name “Cleaver” (OS1/5/9/56). These items are all kitchen utensils and add to the narratives of domestication and feminisation of the coastal landscape.

Domestication is further observed in King’s Garden (NT956619), described as a ‘rock of no great magnitude close to shore, and immediately at the base of a very steep grassy slope. On its sum[mit] a few tufts of wild coarse grass grows and to the last named circumstance it owes its name’ (OS1/5/3/44).<sup>31</sup> The garden is often near to the farmhouse kitchen and so relates to this category.

The fishermen’s descriptions of the landscape features often provide an understanding of the coastal landscape as it changes over time, such as West in Thirle Cove (NT902690) – recorded in the OSNB as West in Thirle Coves: ‘[t]wo natural caverns in the face of Raven’s Heugh, caused by the action of the waves’ (OS1/5/9/80). The effects of erosion by the sea are noted in this entry, the thirling or boring effect of the ocean currents naming the feature which is otherwise unseen from the land perspective. It is through the local inhabitants repeatedly working near to these rocks and the sea currents for their whole working lives and handing down knowledge of the coastal landscape that these actions can be noted in the OSNBs.

Similarly, the description of Hollow Craig (NT878699) demonstrates the seafarers’ recognition of the effects of the sea on the coastline:

A conspicuous rock on the sea shore, perforated through by the action of the waves. These [document illegible] There are two hollows or excavations in this rock, entering from the top. It was used in former times by smugglers for the purpose of concealing their goods (OS1/5/9/27).

In this entry, the fishermen offer a description of the place in relation to the ocean’s actions. These entries contrast with those where inhabitants of Coldingham have solely given their appraisal of a coastal feature. The entries discussed above in this section implicitly discuss Scots words. Where Gaelic is mentioned, the tone of narratives is distinctly different.

West Hurker (NT908694) is described as a ‘conspicuous rock on the sea coast visible at high wate[r]. It is called “West Hurker” to distinguish it from another

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31. Letters in square brackets represent those that are cut off in the digitised images due to the curve of the binding edge.

of the same description on the east side of “St. Abb’s Head” called “East Hurker”. Hurker may be a corruption of the Gaelic “Tharsgeir”, (pronounced Harsker) signifying - a Cross Roc[k]’ (OS1/59/55).<sup>32</sup>

By the 1850s the Gaelic language in Scotland had been extremely eroded but schooling in the language had been the central mechanism in reinvigorating the language and the culture which surrounded it. As Withers, in discussion about the introduction of Gaelic as part of the Scottish schooling system in the nineteenth century, states:

Gaelic Schools, and, by implication, the extension of English they initiated, were supported financially and ideologically not just within the Highlands by persons who paid to be taught English nor alone by a range of concerned individuals from within the structures of Lowland society, but also by elite members of Highland society and Highlanders living in the Lowlands who derived status partly from being members of Highland institutions at work in both Highlands and Lowlands but also from their relative position in the class structures of English-speaking urban Lowland Scotland (Withers 1988, 155).

Gaelic, in the mid-nineteenth century, was seen as the historic language of Scotland and gained prestige in retaining and regaining its national identity. Place-names coined in Gaelic are extremely rare in Berwickshire; recording a Gaelic etymology for an opaque place-name where there is very little evidence of the language demonstrates a wish to uncover a prestigious national heritage throughout rural Scotland, even along the Berwickshire coast. Hurker is more likely to be derived from *hare* + *carr*, Scots ‘boundary marker’ + ‘rock’. The Gaelic derivation itself appears to have no grounding in the landscape or the feature, and the OSNB descriptive remark has the sense of being erratically inserted into the naming environment of the coastline. Gaelicisation by the English surveyor and local middle classes at this time shows a desire to see the Scottish Borders as identifying more strongly with Scotland than with Northern England. This had the effect of juxtaposing Scots and Gaelic narratives, bringing in an aspect of national identity alongside the Scots of local fishermen which have regional identities, and the etymologies are more daily and domestic in narrative.

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32. Letters in square brackets represent those that are cut off in the digitised images due to the curve of the binding edge.

Williamson (2015, 85–6) suggests that ‘John McDiarmid, a civilian assistant, [...] responsible for much of the work on the coastal areas of Berwickshire [...] appears to have made an effort to try to find out the meanings of names [...] and seems to have known some Gaelic noting in the case of Foul Carr – “A large precipitous rock on the sea coast surrounded by the sea at high tides” that “Carr, Carra & Carraig signifies in Gaelic a rock or pillar”’.<sup>33</sup> Yet *carr* is a familiar Scots and English dialect word so it is possible he was overly earnest in his wish to procure a specifically Gaelic etymology.

Likewise, Uily Strand (NT894688) is described as a ‘small stream issuing [out] of Coldingham Loch, flow[ing] in an easterly direction till i[t] falls over the rocky ban[k] on the sea coast. In summer th[ere] is a Kind of Glit or oil gathers on the surface of this water. Uily may be a corruption of the Gaelic adjective Uillidh (pronounced Ūl-ye) signifying Greasy or oily. This is the more probable from the circumstance that a Kind of slime resembling oil gathers on the surface of the stream in warm summer weather. Strand, in the Scottish dialect, signifies a rivulet or gutter’ (OS1/5/9/40).<sup>34</sup>

There is no clear reason to preference a Gaelic derivation for the first element of the name as the Scots *uily* has the same meaning of ‘oily’ (SND s.v. *uilie* n.). The speaker clearly uses Scots in their own speech as they describe the ‘glit’ that ‘gathers on the surface of the water’. *Glit* is a ‘slimy, greasy or sticky matter’ or ‘the slimy vegetation found on ponds or on stones in half-stagnant water’ (SND s.v. *glit* n. v. adj.). Tods Loup, discussed earlier as a metaphorical name with a fantastical narrative, is asserted as ‘Tod is the Scotch name for Fox. *Loup* a leap or Spring’ (OS1/5/9.7). The men who were witnesses for each of these OSNB records were from inland settlements. Narratives in the OSNBs relate to known words, i.e. Scots words, whereas the toponyms which are described as being Gaelic coinings, a language for which there is scant evidence in Berwickshire, do not have these anecdotal narratives attached to them. The place-names and the elements within them show the languages ‘weathering’ differently, with the Gaelic language being inserted by cultural and socio-political processes.

Place-names and orthographies were also standardised through the emergence of the Ordnance Survey as a cartographic authority. ‘The Wick’ and

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33. OS1/5/9/57.

34. Letters in square brackets represent those that are cut off in the digitised images due to the curve of the binding edge.

'Wick Harbour' were scored through in the OSNB and changed to Pettico Wick (NT907690)<sup>35</sup> and Pettico Wick Harbour; at the bottom of the page is written 'Note. This word <sup>^(wick)^</sup> may be a corruption of the Gaelic Uig, an inlet or a bay, also a Nook' (OS1/5/9/54). The witnesses for these names have been altered from being all from Coldingham to being from Coldingham and Coldingham Shore. On the same OSNB page, Thrummie Carr (NT901691) is recorded and little detail is given for this name. Thrummie Carr Heugh (NT900688) and Thrummie Cove (NT901691) are recorded on OS1/5/9/78; the spellings 'Thrumy Carr Heugh' and 'Thrumy Cove' are attested by the witnesses from Coldingham Shore while 'Thrummie Carr Heugh' and 'Thrummie Cove' are attested by the witnesses from Coldingham. The spellings from the Coldingham witnesses are used on the OS maps, with Thrummie Cove becoming Thrummies Cove on the six-inch first edition OS map. The narrative has been attributed to the *heugh* but if the weavers warp or loom, discussed above, were the motivation for the coinage, the *heugh*, *cove*, and *carr* could easily all be part of this visual metaphor. If this were correct, recording has had the effect of standardising the narratives and the perception of landscape features, i.e a narrative was seen as belonging to one feature rather than moving along the coastline.

When the fishermen are not witnesses, there is a more sterile approach to the landscape and towards the relationship of water and erosion to landscape features. The derivations of coastal features given by the inhabitants of inland settlements tend to focus on literal explanations and historicisation whereas those given by the inhabitants of Coldingham Shore are more often metaphorical understandings and consistently discuss motion as part of the motivation behind a name. The coastal features of Berwickshire lend themselves to metaphorical naming, as they are distinctive rocks and relief features, yet also relatively small topographical features located in a fairly linear setting most clearly seen from the sea. The OS Surveyor's desire for standardisation, clarity, and permanence is at odds with the movement, mixing of metaphors, and non-linear narratives in the littoral landscape. Where they could, the surveyors asked for descriptions from the more learned men, but there were a considerable number of coastal features of which they had little knowledge.

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35. Etymology uncertain, see *The Berwickshire Place-Name Resource* 'Pettico Wick' for discussion.

## THE INFLUENCE OF WATER

As Neimanis observes:

If water is what we make it, Linton [2010, 3] argues, then what we've currently made – at this time, in this place that is the Western-dominated globalized world in an era of something we could call late capitalism – is “modern water”. No longer the “culturally impregnated waters of places and times” [Linton 2010, 75] described by water historian Ivan Illich, water was transformed by the eighteenth-century chemistry of Antoine Lavoisier and his followers into stripped down, scienced-up chemical compound known as H<sub>2</sub>O. In the modern era, water becomes a substance that is “colourless transparent tasteless scentless” (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, quoted in Linton 2010: 78) – in other words, an ‘abstract, isomorphic, measurable quantity’ that is reducible to a fundamental unit of matter (Linton 2010: 14). In short, the name ‘modern water’ underlines both ‘the location of that idea within a particular historical moment, but also the imaginative content of that place-time – namely, an Enlightenment scientific positivism of *knowability*’ (Neimanis 2017, 157).

There are parallels in Neimanis' reading of water and Gelling and Cole's (2000, xiii) reading of landscape:

Study of topographical names in relation to the actual landscape has made it clear that groups of words which can be translated by a single modern English word such as ‘hill’ or ‘valley’ do not contain synonyms. Each of the terms is used for a different type of hill, valley or whatever, and many of the words have connotations which are not simply geomorphological.

From Gelling and Cole's extensive study, it has been ascertained that features and contexts of features were described systematically using a wide lexicon. Social contexts and settlements influenced initial naming and, so this article has argued, continue to influence reinterpretations as much as the environmental surroundings.

‘Modern water’ is yet to be examined in toponymic and environmental humanistic terms. Water, whether named or unnamed, changes our perception of place. It allows for there to be many facets to a naming environment and for composite narratives to be created. These composite narratives are non-linear,

do not have beginnings or endings, or proliferate from one focal point. Water holds all the facets of the naming narratives together. Neither is it a story with a central figure or hero. It is sunk ships, drownings, kitchenware, and beings who leapt, stayed put, or people who endured the life of this coast. It is 'not simply geomorphological' and yet these tales are bound to the geomorphology of the Berwickshire coast. Red Ox would not be red without the iron content of the sedimentary rock, Black Bull would not be black without the waves keeping its coat dark and glossy, and Shore Goats may never have zoomorphised from literal inlets without these two first tethered to the cliffs. Water binds these features into a collective composition and is itself the narrator of this landscape.

#### CONCLUSION

Where hydronyms are often the oldest named landscape features, names of coastal features – those surrounded by water – are often unknowns in terms of age. The records for coastal features prior to the Ordnance Survey are limited but there is evidence, such as White Heugh, that names cling as tightly as saxicavous limpets to coastal rocks. However, evidence from the OSNB shows that many names are likely to have been coined and are used by the fishermen in a landscape where nothing is an abstraction and many features have metaphorical names. The names themselves and the surviving records of these names convey 'weathering' and the different scales of time present in this landscape.

These names provide a multiplicity of narratives, and toponyms appear to be able to move between or straddle semantic categories which have become established in Berwickshire's coastal landscape. This reaffirms the categories and allows for reinterpretation of names within the established categories. The central categories of farming terms, animals, and body parts centralise domesticity and land-based activities; place-names with colour terms also mix with these categories, further adding to the strong visual impact of many of the toponyms. In this fore-fronting of narratives of the home and stability, we see an acknowledgement of the unpredictability of seafaring and sometimes the precariousness of fishing communities, and the weathering of coastal features as well as the 'weathering' of people who named the features and beings who are alluded to in the names. The perspectives shown through the OSNB evidence geological processes, people who lived on the coast and those from far across the ocean, familiar beasts and fantastical feats. The coast creates a place of exchange for these beings to be remembered and created, and for the



whereabouts of the rocks on which boats have been wrecked to be recalled through intertwining stories.

Water is a conduit for metaphor, a storyteller, and it creates mixtures of storying as well as an eroding force for the places with which stories are associated. Water is a carrier of narratives, if the coastal names hold to any origin, we could find reasoning for their origin story in Le Guin's *Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction* (2019 [1986]), a jumble of bits of stories, without a hero, and not looking for one.

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