

BALGRAY AND BALGREEN

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The place-names Balgray and Balgreen recur frequently in the lowlands of Scotland, from Morayshire to Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire. In their present incarnations, instances of both might appear to be Gaelic in origin, with *G baile* ‘farm, settlement’ as the first element; but the majority of instances, if not all, are most probably Scots formations. In this article, I consider the evidence based on their original forms. I hope to explore their original meanings or significance and how they came to have a seemingly Gaelic first element.

BALGRAY

This is a common place-name in Scotland, found mainly but not exclusively south of the Highland Boundary Fault.¹ There are particular concentrations in Angus, Ayrshire² and Lanarkshire: in the mid-19th century, there were 14 instances listed in the OSNB and over a dozen are still extant. Listed below are well over two dozen locations where the name existed at some time, along with available early forms.³

A modern formation Balgray might appear to represent *G baile* + *G greigh* ‘(horse) herd farm’, the same specific found in names such as Auchengray NMO and Auchengree CAD (Drummond 2014, 145). The meaning would be appropriate to animal husbandry, perhaps contrasting with the equally ubiquitous name Balfour, which Taylor (*PNF* 2, following Watson 1926) interprets as *baile (a') phùir* ‘the farm of (the) crop-land’. Watson (1926) indexes Balgray as being on p. 399, but the name printed there is Meall Greagh PER, from *G greagh* ‘horse studs’, suggesting that Watson interpreted Balgray as *G baile greigh*. Nicolaisen (2001, 180) states that ‘the three Balgrays in Perthshire⁴ may have had horse studs (Gaelic *greagh*).’

However, Simon Taylor (*PNF* 5, 289) has argued that Balgray may well represent *Sc bag* + *Sc raw*, literally a bag-shaped or crescent-shaped row of cottages. Taylor also suggests that there may have been an unrecorded *Sc *bagge* or **baggere* ‘beggar’ in use, with similar implications for housing quality. Scots

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1. Although there is one each in Aberdeenshire, Banffshire and Morayshire.
 2. There are six within a 15km radius of Stewarton.
 3. I have omitted one possible instance, the lost *Bawgar* NS5288 (1553, *RMS* iv no. 747); and placed question marks (?) before a couple of instances where there may be some doubt as to membership of this type of name.
 4. The list below has only one PER instance: Nicolaisen probably counted two of the ANG ones as in PER.

dictionaries and thesauri suggest, however, that the terms used for 'beggar,' first attested in the 15th century, were Sc *thigger* or *sorner*. Indeed, several Balgray instances lie on good agricultural terrain, two giving their names to a mill (nos. 7 and 22, below), another (no. 9) covering an area extensive enough for the name to be mapped thrice by Roy. The OSNB descriptions of the surviving instances indicate properties – even then – in generally good condition; and the fact that all but three instances survived to be recorded by the OS in the mid-19th century adds to the suggestion of robust properties: four-fifths are still extant on maps or in hodonyms.

Whaley (2006, 13) discusses Baggra Yeat in Cumbria (NY2636), which has the old forms *Bagrawe*, *Bagray*, *Baggeraw*. She suggests three possibilities: *bagge* 'low-lying wet place'; a 'dead-end or bag-shaped' landscape feature (from OE **bagga*); or the disparaging 'beggar's row' (from ME *bagge* 'beggar's bag'). EPNE (1956) lists a term **baggere* 'badger, hawker', which it suggests is the root of Baggrow Cumberland and Bagraw Northumberland, adding that the settlements were perhaps considered fit only for beggars.⁵ Although northern England and southern Scotland are divided by a political border, many linguistic terms are found on both sides; none of the instances in northern England, however, developed an initial *bal*-form.

In Scotland, the evidence of early forms points securely to a Scottish development, with four fifths having an earliest record beginning with *bag*-, *bawg*- or *bog*-: all seven forms recorded in the 14th and 15th century – as well as the first two recorded in the 16th century – consist of *Bagraw* (or *Bograw* or *Bougre*). The first recorded instances commencing *bal*- only occur in the 16th century, mainly after c. 1550. Lanarkshire contains the two earliest *Balgray* forms (nos. 22 and 23: 1521 and 1550), while no. 21 in the same county, first recorded as *Bawgray* in 1513, was recorded as *Balgray* just six years later, perhaps influenced by the nearby Govan instance (no. 22). The fact that three of the five whose earliest record contained *l* were later recorded without it suggests an insecurity about the *bal*- forms. Indeed, not a single instance of the name has been consistently recorded with an *l*. Finally, if they were G formations, the stress would tend to be on the second element, whereas the three farmers⁶ I spoke to all pronounced it /bal gre/ without emphasis on either syllable. It is safe to say, then, that we must reject a Gaelic etymology for the Balgrays.

What might explain the shift, at least in most instances, from a *bag*-, *bawg*-

5. The early date of some of the Scottish forms – 14th/15th century in AYR, 16th century for the four LAN examples – rules out the possibility of ironically humorous names for a beggar (such ironic names were coined in the late 18th and early 19th century – for which see Taylor, in Padel 2008, 274).

6. Balgray CRJ, West Balgray Irvine, and Balgray Mill Beith.

or *bog*- initial element to a later *bal*-form? It might feasibly be the result of generic element substitution, whereby they were influenced by G *baile* (anglicised to *bal*-) forms nearby. However, many of the instances (especially those in Ayrshire) do not have any nearby *bal*-names. The Angus instances (nos. 2–4, 22 and 26) do have authentic G *bal*-names within 2km, so generic element substitution is a possibility there. For the others, it is more likely that the letter *l* was introduced in the written name on the assumption that, as with Falkirk (previously *Fawkirk*), the name was considered to be of the *ba'*, *wa'*, *fa'* family, i.e. containing the Scots pronunciation of words that in SSE are *ball*, *wall* and *fall*;⁷ indeed, the frequent early forms beginning *bog*- or *baw*- suggest that the vowel in the first element was pronounced /a:/, as in *ba'* etc. It is interesting that the three most northerly instances (in ABD, BNF and MOR, e.g. Bagramill) and many of the most southerly instances (in DMF, KCB and ROX, e.g. Bogrie Wood) either never recorded a *bal*-form or had reverted to a non-*bal* form by the time of the OS. This might suggest a Scots dialectal difference, or that the tendency to insert the *l* was confined to the central belt, influenced by the cities and the pressure from the educated to have the 'correct' English spelling, as in *ball* for *ba'*. Of course, neither this anglicising pressure nor the influence of Gaelic existed in northern England, hence the absence of *bal*-forms there.

Accepting that *balgray* is an originally Scots formation **bagraw*, what does it mean? Starting with the second (generic) element, Taylor (*PNF* 2, 218) suggests that it is most likely Scots *raw* 'row [i.e. of houses]'; similarly, Whaley (2006) considers the second element in Baggra, Cumbria, may be from OE *rāw*⁸. Scots *raw* is attested from the 13th century,⁹ almost exclusively in the form *raw*, occasionally *ra/raa* or *rae* (the latter are late 16th and 17th century). In that context, it is noteworthy that five¹⁰ of the first seven recorded instances (14th and 15th century) all end in *-raw*, as do two of the instances first recorded in the early 16th century. That the first three instances first recorded as *-ray* (16th century) are all in Lanarkshire may suggest a dialectal pronunciation there. It is perhaps relevant to note that the earliest attestations of *raw* in *DOST* are to

7. Nicolaisen (2001, 18–20) discusses this in relation to Falkirk. The form *Falkirk* first appeared in 1458 and then in increasing frequency in the 16th century.

8. She defines it as a 'row of houses or trees' (my emphasis): EPNE observes that in early charters (12th, 13th century), OE *rāw* implies a 'row of trees, a hedgerow', although in these cases the type of tree (e.g. hazel) is the first element.

9. The earliest reference in *DOST* to Mukraw in Lennox is, however, probably a reinterpretation of Muckcroft CPS, from G *mucrach* 'place of pigs' (Drummond 2014); thus the first secure attestation is probably late 14th century, in Dunfermline Abbey records.

10. Nos. 7, 8, 16, 24 and 26; nos. 2 and 25 are early 16th century.

place-names referencing their location (*Kirkraw* 1364, *Northt raw* 1408, *Schipraw* 1417, *South Raw* 1423, *Northast raw* 1475, *La Watryraw* 1405, *Bakraw* 1492) or – especially from the 16th century – the people who lived there (*Hukstarraw* 1468, *Burges raw* 1568, *Potter raw* 1568, *Thiefraw* 1575). In either set, the generic appears to pair with a noun or with an adjectival compass point; since *bag* cannot be a compass point, it suggests it may be a noun.

The first (specific) element is more problematic. Taylor (loc. cit.) suggests ‘bag- or crescent-shaped’, while Whaley suggests ‘dead-end or bag-shaped’ for Cumbria. Support for this concept might be found in the name of the Lincolnshire village Bag Enderby: ‘a small U-shaped village enclosing the church and off a lane to the north, and this is no doubt the significance of Bag here from ME *bagge*, “a bag”, used in the transferred topographical sense with reference to the shape of the village’ (Cameron 1998, 41). The name of the area or parish Enderby dates back to 1086 and the Domesday Book, the affix *bag* first appearing in the mid-13th century (*Bag Henderby* 1261), distinguishing it from Wood Enderby and Mavis Enderby (after a family name). While this is plausible, it appears to be unique as an affix. While there are several English places beginning *bag-* (e.g. Bagshot, Bagley), the first elements are usually interpreted as a personal name – *Bacga*, *Baggi*, *Badeca* or similar – although, according to Ekwall’s and Watts’ dictionaries, the common Bagley may represent an OE generic *lēah* ‘meadow’, preceded by an old term (OE from ON) for a bag-shaped animal, like a pig or badger.

Could the ‘bag’ refer to the terrain on which a row stood, either a gentle swell or a dip in the ground? There is a problem of definition here, however, in that very few places in Scotland are not on hilltops or in hollows or on the slopes between them: of the 29 instances recorded whose locations are known, barely a quarter are in or beside stream valleys or hollows, and the remainder are split equally between positions on long slopes or astride ridges or small hillocks. None appear to fit Whaley’s suggestion for Cumbria of a ‘low-lying wet place’ – bar the locationally-imprecise no. 28 (close to the border with England) of a ford near a presumed eponymous settlement. The prevalence of slopes, ridges and hilltops for the sites would also rule out a possibility of the first element being *Sc bog*, cf. OG *bogach* ‘soft’ and G *bog* ‘marsh, bog’.

Could it mean ‘back row’, cf. the 1543 GLW form *Bakraw*, from *Sc back row*, i.e. a ‘row of cottages lying at or to the back?’¹¹ The form *Bakraw*, however, occurs only in GLW and the letter *k* might be the scribe’s interpretation of the pronunciation of the *g* in *Bagraw*. Yet, if this were true, one might expect to find a similar formation in other Balgray records, but none occurs. The adjectival

11. The term ‘back row’ as a lexical item, not a place-name, occurs several times in DOST’s earliest attestations of the word *raw*.

back in place-names is relational, i.e. ‘back’ is used in relation to another place, yet most of the instances are in rural locations, far from anywhere else, even today, and certainly before the modern era: only half a dozen (nos. 3, 8, 20, 21, 22 and 23) lay within 1km of a hamlet or village, and there are no ‘pairing’ affixes, as in Front or Middle Row.

Another fainter possibility for an etymology might be *Sc balk* or *bauk* ‘ridge or unploughed strip lying between two portions of ploughed land’, the word first attested in 1320, with *raw* then referring either to the habitation(s) built at the juncture, or to the ridge itself. The element is noted in *EPNE* under OE *balca*, the root of several meanings, including ‘the strip of ground left unploughed to mark the boundary between adjacent strips of the common field’. This noun, usually appearing in modern English as *baulk*, may be pronounced (even today) with or without the *l*,¹² and the alternative Scots spelling *bauk* indicates this may have been true in late medieval times also; this might account, then, for the appearance of *l* in later forms. The *bauks* or *balks* were important regarding the legalities of land in the 15th and 16th century, as a glance at *DOST*’s attestations will confirm. Many of the Balgray instances lie above 100m, with five above 200m, so in some cases the *bauk* might denote the head-dyke or the limit of arable cultivation. It must be noted, however, that none of the recorded forms has any trace of a medial *k*, apart from the one instance of Balgray (Glasgow), mentioned above.

One final important point about the Balgrays, and indeed regarding some of the Balgreens, is that because they appeared to be instances of G *baile*, they were used in Nicolaisen’s distribution map of *baile* for his *Scottish Place Names* (p. 177, 2001 ed.). If removed, as they should be, not only Cunninghame in Ayrshire, but also southern Lanarkshire (the Clyde headwaters) become *baile*-free zones.¹³

BALGRAY FORMS (arranged in order of county, then parish¹⁴)

1. BAGRAMILL # ABD, Forgue S NJ589402 1 90m

Bagramylne 1666 RMS ix no. 665

Bagramill 1864 OS 1st edn

Site now occupied by Monellie Cottage.

There may be another, lost, instance in ABD: RMS ix no. 734 dated 1637 refers to ‘*Bograxes*, near *Mylnetoun of Auqhorties*’, which lay in Midmar parish.

12. *Collins English Dictionary*.

13. The only viable south-LAN one is Balwaistie near Biggar, which may well be a Scots formation; the three mapped for the upper Clyde reaches are Balgreen, Balgray and one above Daerhead, which I cannot find.

14. For county abbreviations, see this Journal’s Appendix.

2. BALGRAY ANG, Kingoldrum S NO354589 1 200m SEF
Bagraw 1530 RMS iii no. 897 ['Middle Pearsie commonly called Balgray'
 (*Myddil Perse vulgariter dict. Bagraw*)]
Bagro 1541 RMS iii no. 2402
Balgray 1654 RMS x no. 288
Balgray, Nr. 1794 Ainslie
Nether Balgray 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: farm house with offices]
Upper Balgray 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: farm house with offices]
3. BALGRAY ANG, Mains & Strathmartine S NO401326 1 80m
Balgra 1590s Pont 26
East Balgray 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: farmhouse 2 storeys]
West Balgray 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: farm house with offices]
4. BALGRAY ANG, Tealing S NO407384 1 150m SEF
Bagro 1511 RMS ii no. 3586
Bagro 1541 RMS iii no. 2402
Bagraw 1542 RMS iii no. 2621 {Also *Balgray*}
Balgray 1542 RMS iii no. 2621
Bagro 1557 RMS iv no. 1195
Balgrew 1561 RMS iv no. 1391
Balgray 1583 RMS v no. 574
Bagra 1590s Pont 26
Balgray 1611 RMS vii no. 525
Balgray 1630 RMS viii no. 1596
Beigry 1755 Roy
Balgray 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: scattered hamlet, gardens attached,
 occupied by labourers]
5. ? BOGRA # AYR, Barr S NX3290 4
Bogare 1450 RMS ii no. 381 [*dimedietatem baronie de Glenschinschar vocatum
 le Delquharne* (Dalquhairn NX322963), *necnon terras de Dalchangare* (?
 Changue NX288938), *Cragfin et Bogare, in comitatu de Carric*]
 (one merkland of) *Bogre* 1481 RMS ii no. 1486 [listed among following lands:
Girvan (*Garvane*), *Forlung*, *Bogre*, (?) *Glengap BAR* (*Glenkep*) (surviving
 in *Glengap Hill NX337927*), *Knockeen BAR* (*Knokine*) (NX308957),
Carnefoar, *Clashgulloch BAR* (*Claswolach*) (NX317956), *Lochmovane*,
Makbirnystoune, all in the earldom of Carrick]
Bogire 1512 RMS ii no. 3696 [listed with other places in Barr parish]
Bogra 1541 RMS iii no. 2268
Bogra 1623 RMS viii no. 753

6. BALGRAY AYR, Beith S NS372523 1 110m SOF
Bawgray 1505 RMS ii no. 2849 [*viz. Giffin... Heichedis, Hesyhedis et Bawgray*]
Bawgra 1607 RMS vi no. 1835
Bagree 1755 Roy
Balgray 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: farmhouse with extensive outbuildings]
Balgraymuir 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: farmhouse with outbuildings]
7. BALGRAY AYR, Beith S NS458455 1 170m SEF
Bagraw 1392
le Bagraw 1440 RMS ii no. 253
Balgray 1512 RMS ii no. 3713
Balgroy 1630 RMS viii no. 1545
Balgray, mill 1667 RMS xi no. 1034
Bagra 1755 Roy
Balgray Mill 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: corn mill & farmhouse, prop. Earl of
 Glasgow]
8. BALGRAY AYR, Irvine S NS358427 1 50m SOF
Bograw, le 1452 RMS ii no. 583 [... *le Bograw, Achintybir* (Auchentibber
 NS440491), *le Foulewode* (Fullwood NS444502), *Gabrachhil* (Gabroc
 Hill NS452510), *le Bridylandis, le Bordlandis* (? Braidland NS443473,
Broadland 1864), *le Struthir, le Pacokbank, le Spetale* (Spittal NS443484),
et ... terrarum de Quithley (Whitelees, West NS454490) *in dominio de
 Stewartoun*]
Balgra 1489 RMS ii no. 1876
Bawgra 1509 RMS ii no. 3371
Bagray 1541 RMS iii no. 2270
Bagra 1590 x 1654 Pont (Blaeu)
Balgray 1601 RMS, vi no. 1225
Balgrey 1601 x 1602 *Irvine Muniments*, ii, 242
Balgray 1614 RMS vii no. 1130
Bagree 1755 Roy
East Balgray 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: fine farmhouse & steading; W – superior
 farmhouse]
West Balgray 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: superior farmhouse]
 The earlier 15th- and 16th-century records appear to lie in the adjacent
 parish of Stewarton, the land probably later transferred to Irvine parish
 after the Reformation.
9. BALGRAY AYR, Kilbirnie S NS294539 1 150m SOF
Bagra 1755 Roy [Also, another *Bagra*, and a *Bagraw* nearby]

Balgry 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB also gives spelling *Balgray* from Voters' List]

10. BALGRAY AYR, Riccarton S NS444343 1 50m SEF

Balcragy, Wester (sive Balcray) ... Eistir Balgray 1552 RMS iv no. 703

Balgrayes 1649 RMS ix no. 2003

Bagree 1755 Roy

Balgray 1864 OS 1st edn [Also, *Midton of Balgray*] [OSNB: Farmhouse, prop. Duke of Portland]

11. BAGRAE BNF, Alvah S NJ682576 1 70m NOF

Balgray 1625 RMS viii no. 898

Balgray 1634 RMS ix no. 31

Balgray 1648 Land transfer deed, referenced in NSA vol. xiii p. 157

Bagra 1654 Blaeu

Bagrae 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: middle-sized farm steading]

12. BALGRAY DMF, Applegarth S NY146866 1 100m

Bagray 1510 RMS ii no. 3522 [... 5 merc. de terrarum de Bagray]

Balgra 1581 Annandale Papers, referenced by Johnson-Ferguson 1935

Balgray 1638 RMS ix no. 846

Balgraes 1638 RMS ix no. 859

Balgray 1662 RMS xi no. 230 [Also, *Balgraywood*]

Bagry 1755 Roy

Balgray 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: good farmhouse] [Also, *Balgrayhill*, *Balgray House*, *Balgray Cottage*]

The NGR is that of the farm now named Balgray Home Farm.

13. BOGRIE DMF, Canonbie NY329761 1 90m SOF

Bowgra 1621 RMS viii no. 228

Bogry 1755 Roy [Also, *Over & Mid Bogry*]

Nether Bogrie 1864 OS 1st edn

Over Bogrie 1864 OS 1st edn

14. BOGRIE DMF, Dunscore NX812849 1 180m

? *Wogryn* 1335 Referenced Johnson-Ferguson 1935 p. 2615

Bougre 1463 referenced Johnson-Ferguson 1935 p. 26

Balgra 1581 Annandale Papers, referenced Johnson-Ferguson 1935 p. 4

Wogrie 1584 Sheriff Court Book, referenced Johnson-Ferguson 1935 p. 26

Boggry 1654 Blaeu, map 11 (Nithsdale)

15. T. G. Reid (TDGNHAS 3 VII) has cast doubt on this, suggesting it may be Vogrie MLO.

Bagry 1755 Roy

Bogrie, the Kirks [family] of 1845 NSA vol. iv p. 339

Bogrie-hill 1845 NSA vol. iv p. 337

Bogrie 1864 OS 1st edn [Also, *Bogrie Moor & Bogrie Hill*]

15. BOGRA DMF, Half-Morton S NY329758 1 90m

Bewgray 1610 RMS vii no. 262

Bowgra 1621 RMS viii no. 228

Bowgray 1633 RMS viii no. 2168

Bogra 1864 OS 1st edn

This lies just across the River Sark from Bogrie, Canonbie.

16. BOGRIE WOOD DMF, Penpont V NX850986 1 110m

le Bagraw 1451 RMS ii no. 452 [... *et le Bagraw in baronia de Tybris* (now Tibbers Wood)]

Balgrayis 1609 RMS vii no. 53 [Also, *Balgrayhillis*]

Baugray Hill, Upper & Nether 1758 (Fig. 1) 'Plan of the Farms of Tibbers and Newhouse in Penpont parish' RHP 37652 (extract below, courtesy of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry)



Fig. 1 Plan of the Farms of Tibbers and Newhouse in Penpont parish, 1758

Balgray Hill 1820 RHP 37542 [Also, *Balgray Hill Wood*] 16
Bogrie Wood 1864 OS 1st edn

17. BALGRAY # DMF, Westerkirk S NY3587 3
Balgray 1532 RMS iii no. 1199 [... *Eynze* (Enzieholm NY288914), *Lymholm* (Limeholm NY278916), *Erschewod*, *Harparquhat* (Harperwhat NY279910) *et Appilquhat*, *Balgray*, *Hoggislandis*, *le Cruvmentonis* (? Crurie NY251949), *Stabilgortoun* (Stablegordon NY358880), *Megot* (Megget Water?) *et Pegot* ...]
Balgray 1610 RMS vii no. 214
Bagra 1615 RMS vii no. 1284
Balgray 1643 RMS ix no. 1341
Balgray 1621 RMS viii no. 228

18. BALGRIEBANK FIF, Kennoway S NO353044 1 373 175m SOF
Begrabank 1753 Roy sheet 18, 1
Bagriebank 1781 Sasines no. 198
lands of *Bagrie* 1802 Sasines no. 6262
Bagra Bank 1809 [James Forbes farmer of *Bagra Bank*; original document seen in Mr W. Beveridge's Antique Shop, Falkland c.2000]
Bagriebank 1827 Ainslie/East Fife
Bagrie 1828 SGF
Balgriebank 1856 OS 6 inch 1st edn. [OSNB: farmhouse and offices]
See PNF2, s.n.

19. ? BOGGRIE MOSS KCB, Girthon NX582656 1 80m
Bogrie Moss 1856 OS 6 inch 1st edn.

20. BALGRAY LAN, Crawfordjohn S NS886241 1 280m SOF
Bagra 1590s Pont 34
Bagra 1664 Commissariat Records of Lanarkshire
Bagra 1755 Roy
Balgray 1772 Land Tax Rolls Lanarkshire vol. 3
Balgray 1816 Forrest [Also, *Upper Balgray*]
Balgray 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: farmsteading, slated, good repair]
[Over *Balgray* at NS880246 was *Gateside* 1816 Forrest]

16. I am indebted to David Munro for locating and sending me copies of this and the 1758 plans.

21. BALGRAY LAN, Glasgow S NS610677 1 70m SWF
Bawgray 1513 *Glas. Rent.* p. 48
the Balgray 1521 *Glas. Rent.* p. 81
Bagray 1527 *Glas. Rent.* p. 88
the Bagray 1529 *Glas. Rent.* p. 92
the Bakraw 1543 *Glas. Rent.* p. 122
the Balgray 1546 *Glas. Rent.* p. 135
the Balgray 1553 *Glas. Rent.* p. 153
Balgray 1564 *Glas. Rent.* p. 181 *Balgray* 1562 x 1592 RMS v no. 2209
Balgra 1590s Pont 34
Balgray 1592 RMS v no. 2209
Balgra 1624 RMS viii no. 670
Bagra 1664 RMS xi no. 665
Bagra 1755 Roy
Balgray 1795 Richardson
Balgray 1816 Forrest [Also, *Balgraybank*]
Balgray 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: farmsteading] [Also, *Balgraybank* NS610679]
Balgrayhill modern OS

22. BALGRAY # LAN, Govan S NS558684 1 50m SWF
Balgray 1521 *Glas. Rent.* p. 81 [*land off Gartnawyll*]
Balgray 1572 *Glas. Charters* no. 78
Balgray 1587 RMS v no. 1406
Balgray 1592 *Glas. Protocols* no. 3330 [*in parish of Govane*]
Balgray 1598 RMS vi no. 718
Bagrey 1755 Roy [Also, *Little Bagrey & Bagry Mill*. Possibly, *Bogrey*]
Bagray 1785 – 1798 Horse Tax Rolls, vol. 30, for Govan [*John Duncan, Bagray*]
Balgie, H. 1795 Richardson
Balgray 1816 Forrest
Balgray 1864 OS 1st edn [Also, *Balgray Mill* NS5568] [OSNB: farmhouse & steading]

23. BALGRAY # LAN, Lesmahagow S NS8240 2 230m WF
Balgray 1550 Ham. M. (bundle 62) [Charter of liferent]
The Bonegraye 1567 *Kel. Lib.* ii, 492 [Probably for *Bouegraye* or even *Bollegraye*]
The Bawgre c.1575 *Assumption*, 231
Balgray c.1592 Charge of the Temporalitie of Kirk Landis, in. 110 [See Campbell R., JSNS 3, 12]

Balgray 1636 RMS ix no. 530

Bagraw 1755 Roy

Balgray, West & East 1816 Forrest

24. BAGRAW # MLO, Borthwick S NT3069 3 c.200m

'per croftos gresmannorum de *Bagraw*' 14th c. *Dunf. Reg.* no. 384 – somewhere near Woolmet MLO. Referenced in *PNF* 5, p. 289

25. BEGROW MOR, Duffus S NJ164684 1 20m

Bagraw 1541 RMS iii no. 2323

Balgra 1579 RMS iv no. 2932

Balgray 1581 RMS v no. 307

Bagra 1590s Pont 08

Beggery 1830 Thomson (*Map of Nairn and Elgin*)

Begrow 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: small farmhouse, part thatched, part slated]

26. BALGRAY PER, St Martins S NO173301 110m SWF

Bagraw 1406 x 1407 RMS i no. 880 [12 merks annual rent from his lands of *Melgynche*, *Bagraw* et de molendini baronie de *M.* granted by David Lindsay earl of Crawford to God, BVM and a chaplain to say mass 'in parish kirk of the same St Mary's of Dundee' (in ecclesia parochiali ejusdem BVM de *Dunde*)]

Bagr [incomplete] 1590s Pont 26

Balgray 1619 RMS vii no. 2051

Balgrgy 1631 RMS viii no. 1756

Beigry 1755 Roy

Balgray Mill 1864 OS 1st edn. [Also, *Balgray Burn*] [OSNB: corn mill with dwelling house & byre attached]

27. BALGRAY HOUSE RNF, Mearns S NS509565 1 140m

Bagre 1755 Roy

Balgray 1864 OS 1st edn [Also, Mains of *Balgray*] [OSNB: farmhouse]

28. BAGRAW FORD # ROX, Castleton WNY602991 1 250m

Bagraw Ford 1864 OS 1st edn [A ford across the Peel Burn, tributary of the Liddel Water, and on the route of the drove road known as Wheel Causey.]

BALGREEN

This is a common name, spelled with a single or double *l*, found throughout southern Scotland and as far north as Banffshire. Over two dozen instances are listed below. There are three possible explanations: firstly, *G baile* 'farm, steading', with *griain* gen. 'gravel';¹⁷ secondly, *G baile* with *grèine* gen. 'sun'; thirdly, Scots *ball-green*, a green where ball-games like football were played.

The first of these explanations, *G baile* + *griain* gen., was suggested as the etymology of the Mid Calder and Ecclesmachan instances (nos. 16, 25) by W. J. Watson (1926, 143); he indicated that the alternative Gaelic derivation from *grèine* was less likely. It was also the choice of Harris (2002, 74) for the Midlothian instance, as, he says, the farm lay on a 10-acre patch of glacial gravel. The early forms of some instances (nos. 3, 21 and 23 – all *Balgreine*) could support a Gaelic derivation, although *greine* is also an attested spelling of Scots *green*. While only Watson's second choice as an explanation for the Mid Calder and Ecclesmachan instances, *G baile* + *grèine* gen. is Wilkinson's (1992) first, as, he says, the sites are well exposed to the south. Wilkinson also suggests a possible derivation from *G crion* 'withered, small, mean', but that would be an unlikely adjective for a farm; it would also be problematic in terms of explaining the consistent use of *g* rather than *c*. There is certainly a Gaelic place-name Balgrennie ABD (Logie-Coldstone parish NJ410058), with old forms *Balgranny* 1600 RMS vi no. 1050, *Balgreine* 1630 RMS viii no. 1554, *Belgrannie* 1822 Thomson, *Balgrennie* 1864 OS 1st edn; and there was another *Balgrennie* in Scoonie parish in Fife, recorded in the Horse Tax Rolls Vol. 26 (1785–98) with James Balingal as farmer, now Balgrummo in that parish.

The third explanation, that it is a Scots name denoting the 'ball-green' or playing fields, contains a construction first attested in 1611 as *ball-grene* (*DOST*), and then in 1632 as 'the Balgrene of Mousbrigdyke' as part of a boundary outline of Lanark parish.¹⁸ Such an interpretation might be supported by a number of points. The spelling with double *ll* occurs in ten instances – although the OS also recorded a single *l* spelling in three of these – which suggests the first element was *ball*, the round object. The relative lateness of the first records, with over half the instances from the first OS map – and the remainder no earlier than the late 16th century – would tend to cast doubt on a Gaelic origin. The earliest spelling of the second element in nos. 1, 4, 22 and 24 might

17. Early Gaelic *griain* yields Irish Gaelic *grian* and the derivatives Irish Gaelic *grinneall*, *G grinneal*.

18. Extract from Burgh Records of Lanark; the original is actually spelled as in 'passand southeast be ane rod throw the Balgreene of Mousbrigdyke'. A map drawn in 1893 to accompany the text, places Balgreine [*sic*] at c.NS903452, a spot close to the bridge over the ravine of the Mouse Water.

appear to be Gaelic, however *greine* and *grene* are well-attested forms of SSE *green*: *Sc greine* is first attested in the late 16th and early 17th century, precisely when *Balgreine* is first recorded for nos. 3, 21 and 23, suggesting it was the fashionable spelling of the time. The forms of three of the earliest recorded instances (*Bawgreen*, *Bagreen* and *Bogreen* – nos. 4, 11, 15, and also 16 in 1755) may indicate the Scots pronunciation of *ball* ('football' etc.) with /ɑ:/ as *ba*'. The OSNB comments on nos. 7, 8 and 24 support the 'ball green' idea, although of course the surveyor may simply be recording a local folk etymology, as in no. 24, perhaps. Several instances (nos. 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 22 and 24) are close to, certainly within 500m of, population clusters large enough to provide the teams needed for playing football etc. The use of the definite article in nos. 1 and 13 is also suggestive of a feature as a lexical item, on its way to becoming a place-name. And finally, Orkney's example is very unlikely to be Gaelic, unless it was a transferred name.

On the other hand, several instances were in rural, often very remote locations, where assembling teams of players would be problematic, certainly on a basis regular enough to establish a place-name: nos. 3, 4, 5, 11, 16, 17 and 18, in particular, are all 2km or more from their nearest hamlet or village. With the exception of nos. 8 and 24, there is no mention in the OSNB of any other instances having at any time been a games' field, and the vast majority are noted as farm steadings or cottages. Scottish rural life, certainly before the mid-19th century, was relentlessly hard, and opportunities for adults (though not schoolboys) to indulge in ball games was limited. Conceivably though, the term may have referred to a piece of land that looked fit for ball games, even though teams did not regularly assemble there.

Consideration should perhaps be given to the possibility that both etymologies are at work, producing an identical outcome, i.e. that some of the instances are from *G baile griain* (or *grèine*), others from *Sc ball green*. Instances of such a confluence are not unknown in England: Churchill may derive from Celtic **crūg* 'hill', with an epexegetic *hill* added, or from OE *cirice* 'church' + *hill*;¹⁹ while the common name Eaton may derive from OE *ēa* + *tūn* 'farm by the river', or from OE *ēg* + *tūn* 'farm on a spur of (dry) land'.²⁰ It is surely possible that the Balgreens might also represent two linguistic traditions, with two meanings, one from Gaelic, one from Scots.

19. Mills, *Dictionary of English Place-Names*.

20. Watts 2004, *Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names*

BALGREEN FORMS (arranged in order of county, then parish)

1. BALGREEN ABD, Kintore S NJ8011 3
Balgrene, lie 1581 RMS iv no. 175 [... 'with the castle of Kintore, its houses, yards and the Balgreen, in the parishes of Kintore, Kineller and Skene' (... cum castro de *Kyntore*, domibus, hortis et lie *Balgrene* ejusdem, in parochiis de *Kyntor*, *Kyneller*, et *Skene*)]
2. BALLGREEN COTTAGE ABD, Old Machar S NJ915069 1
Ballgreen Cottage 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: V. pretty cottage, rented by shipmaster as summer residence]
3. BALGREEN AYR, Dalrymple S NS385146 1
Balgreine 1615 RMS vii no. 1288
Balgreen 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: farmsteading, outhouses, all thatched, middling repair] [The OS 1st edn NGR was NS387146]
4. BALGREEN BNF, Gamrie S NJ742587 1
Bawgreen 1755 Roy
Balgreen 1864 OS 1st edn [Also, *Law of Balgreen*, mapped as historic site. OSNB: large farmsteading]
5. BALLGREEN BNF, Keith S NJ400499 1
Ballgreen 1864 OS 1st edn [Also, *Bridge of Ballgreen*. OSNB: small farm steading]
Ballgreen, *Bridge of Modern* OS map, at NJ400501
6. BALLGREEN DMF, Middlebie S NY218756 1
Ballgreen 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB also recorded form *Balgreen*. OSNB: small cottages with gardens attached]
7. BALLGREEN KCD, Glenbervie S NO782808 1
Ballgreen 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB noted: 'Several houses about here with a green common to them all which gave rise to the name'] [OSNB: ordinary dwelling house with outhouses etc]
The OS mapped this immediately adjacent to a piece of ground called Michael Fair, which the OSNB noted: 'small enclosure where an Annual Fair is held in October which is called Michael Fair. This fair is of very remote origin and is held for Cattle, grain.'

8. BALL GREEN KNR, Fossoway R NS981976 1

Ball Green 1866 OS 1st edn

The OSNB noted: 'The name applies to a portion of a large field, situated between Cowden Knowe and Palace Brae. The game of Foot Ball used to much practiced [*sic*] here, which gave rise to the name.' Referenced in *Place-names of Kinross-shire*, p. 212.

9. BALLGREEN LAN, Avondale S NS701449 1

Balgreen 1590s Pont 34

Balgreen 1816 Forrest

Balgreen, High & Laigh (roadways) 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: name of street in north Strathaven]

Ball Green 1890 OS 25" map

Ballgreen Hall 2018 Google maps

10. BALGREEN LAN, Biggar S NT0437 3

Balgreen 1773 Land Tax Rolls vol. 4 [Valuation £15, 5/3d; near Boghall. Mr Johnston Minister]

11. BALGREEN LAN, Crawfordjohn S NS867219 1 (Fig. 2)

Bagreen 1755 Roy



Fig. 2 The site where Balgreen (Crawfordjohn) stood (Photograph: the author)

Balgreen 1816 Forrest

Balgreen (ruin) 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: ruins of cothouse, 1 storey, thatched.]

12. BALLGREEN LAN, Hamilton S NS728552 1

Balgreen 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: fine dwelling house & offices, garden attached]

13. BALGREEN LAN, Lanark O NS9045 2

the Balgreene of Mousbrigdyke 1632 Burgh records of Lanark, p. 324

14. BALLGREEN LAN, Symington S NS989357 1

Balgreen 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: Cottage, thatched, 1 storey, good repair]

15. BALLGREEN MLO, Edinburgh S NT221723 1

Bogreen 1755 Roy

Backgreen Laurie (*A plan of Edinburgh and Places adjacent*)

Balgreen 1785 – 1798 Carriage Tax Rolls, West Kirk parish, Edinburgh

Balgreen 1795 Johnston, Plan of Saughtonhall Estate RHP 3705/1 & 2 [Cited Harris]

Ballgreen 1864 OS 1st edn

The OSNB described Ballgreen as: 'A well-constructed house three stories high of the Modern Style of Architecture having Suitable offices. garden and Ornamental ground attached the residence of Doctor Lowe.' The map shows a sizeable set of grounds with drives. Dr Lowe was the superintendent of the lunatic asylum at nearby Saughton Hall.]

16. BALGREEN MLO, Mid Calder S NT055632 1

Balgreen 1669 Kirk Session Records, referenced Dixon (1947, 311)

Bawgreen 1755 Roy

Balgreen 1773 Armstrong (*Map of the Three Lothians*)

Balgreen or Lindron 1801 Sasines (8793), referenced Dixon (1947, 311)

Bog Green 1843 OSNB

Ballgreen 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: farm house, 2 storeys, offices & small arable farm attached. The OSNB also recorded local forms Balgreen, Ballgreen, and Ball Green, and another surveyor recorded *Bog Green*.] John Wilkinson, who lives locally, informs me that he has heard it pronounced both [ba(l) 'grin] and [ba(l) 'grin].

17. BALGREEN MOR, Drainie S NJ 202707 1
Balgreen 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: small farmsteading with outstanding offices, the latter partly in ruins]
18. BALLGREEN ORK, South Ronaldsay S ND453843 1
Ballgreen 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: small farm steading with garden attached]
19. BALGREEN PER, Kinclaven S NO136385 1
Balgreen 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: small farm house & offices]
20. BALGREEN RNF, Lochwinnoch S NS351607 1
Balgreen 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: good farm house & outbuildings]
21. MOUNTGREEN STL, Larbert S NS881842 1
Balgreine 1627 RS58/4f.88
Balgreen 1670 CRS (Commisariot Records of Stirlingshire)
Boggreen 1817 Grassom (*Map of Stirlingshire*)
Boag' Green 1855 SC4/3/2/5333
Mountgreen 1865 OS 1st edn [OSNB: small cothouse, slated, good repair]
22. BALGREEN WIG, Inch S NX070610 1
Balgreen 1782 Ainslie (*A map of the county of Wigton*)
East Balgreen 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: small farmhouse, slated, outhouses]
West Balgreen 1864 OS 1st edn [OSNB: neat & commodious dwelling house & offices, slated and good repair. 3 good parks of land]
23. BALGREEN WIG, Anwoth S NX5756 2
Balgreine 1622 RMS viii no. 330 ['a piece of land called the Hill of Lagneill and Balgreen, with woods ... with the lands of High Ardwell' (NX578556) (*peciam terre the Hill of Lagneill et Balgreine nuncupatam, cum silvis ... terris de Over Ardwell* (High Ardwell NX578556))]
24. BALLGREEN WIG, Kirkcowan S NX328604 1
Ball Green 1865 OS 1st edn [The OSNB also recorded the form *Balgreen*]
 The OSNB stated: 'A thatched & indifferent Cottage situated upon a piece of ground which was formerly allotted for Schoolboys (playground).'
25. BALGREEN WLO, Ecclesmachan S NT034719 1
Balgrein 1683 *Ret.* [cited MacDonald]
Balgreen 1773 Armstrong *Map of the Three Lothians*
Balgreen 1832 Thomson (*Linlithgowshire*)

Balgreen 1865 OS 1st edn [OSNB: row of cottages 1 storey high, occupied by farm labourers]

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