

THE HEART OF THE HARE: A GATHERING OF BRIDIE SITES IN SCOTLAND

In the spirit of the Oystercatcher, whose fluting call accompanies this journey, and in the guardianship of the Hare, whose amber eye sees all, I offer this work to Brighid.

In April 2009, Paul Williment kindly allowed his *Brighid Goddess and Saint* site to be the home of "In the Footprints of Brihde", my gazetteer of sites dedicated to Brighid/St Bride/St Bridget in Scotland. This list in the main, comprised sites recorded from the 80 or so OS maps of Scotland - hills, farms, rivers, ruins etc - which I painstakingly researched grid by grid in February/March of 2009. It was pretty basic: around 128 entries, with some arcane old Bridie Parish and Barony names - eg "Briddeburgh" and "Pitlumbertie" - which I found from my own small library and added to the list.

Over the summer, I began doing structured text and web-site searches, to find new information and to flesh-out the existing entries, during which the project took-off exponentially! It soared! I discovered 19 functioning Churches [a good number!] dedicated to St Bride or St Bridget (noted as 'Live' in the gazetteer) plus Briddeburgh and Pitlumbertie were sourced, along with over 60 new sites, including interesting detail of their history and origins. The current gazetteer now stands at 180+ entries and is much more detailed.

And the work goes on! I received new information in December of 2009, which will go into the next Edition, as there is much cross-referencing to be done, especially with decoding Mediaeval Parish names and deciphering different place names used by different authors. I also have the entire Canmore (The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland) Database to revisit, plus contact with local libraries, museums and history societies; I also need to update the map references. Additionally, many of the Kilbride and Kirkbride Farms and Steadings are now B&Bs, so I aim to add to the list, places where you can stay, while you visit Bridie sites! This is very much work-in-progress!

Over the year, as the list has developed, it has also changed. Although my working-title was originally "In the Footprints of Brihde", this no longer feels appropriate: some of the entries are historical data or sourced from legend and poetry. The title for Edition 2 has progressed to "The Heart of the Hare: a Gathering of Bridie Sites in Scotland". This follows a beautiful encounter I had with a brown hare, when I visited the ruined Chapel of Kilbride, at Lamlash on the Isle of Arran, in June 2009. While the Hare is not necessarily regarded as symbolic of Brighid, nor one of her totem animals, the hare's presence in the Chapel spoke to me with great clarity, of its *guardianship* of Brighid's sacred place.

I have taken this as my inspiration. This gazetteer is not done for myself (although I have derived such pleasure and enlightenment from compiling it), but to bring together in one place, the record of Bridie sites in Scotland: as a resource for those who love Brighid and to preserve the memory of the sites before they disappear from the map and collective consciousness. A *guardianship*, if you will, of Brighid's sacred places, and for this, the Kilbride Hare is most blest and most thanked.

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The Hare Preservation Trust: <http://www.hare-preservation-trust.co.uk> - working for the preservation and welfare of hares

TEXTS AND WEB SITES THAT WERE CONSULTED DURING THIS WORK

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Thank you Paul, for starting me on this journey!

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OS Maps of Scotland used in this Work

Map	Map Title		
		42	Glen Garry & Loch Rannoch
1	Shetland -Yell, Unst & Fetlar	43	Braemar & Blair Atholl
2	Shetland - Sullom Voe and Whalsay	44	Ballater, Glen Clova
3	Shetland - North Mainland	45	Stonehaven & Banchory
4	Shetland - South Mainland	46	Coll & Tiree
5	Orkney - Northern Isles	47	Tobermory & North Mull
6	Orkney - Mainland	48	Iona & West Mull, Ulva
7	Orkney - Southern Isles	49	Oban & East Mull
8	Stornoway and North Lewis	50	Glen Orchy & Loch Etive
9	Cape Wrath, Durness & Scourie	51	Loch Tay & Glen Dochart
10	Strathnaver, Bettyhill and Tongue	52	Pitlochry & Crieff
11	Thurso & Dunbeath	53	Blairgowrie & Forest of Alyth
12	Thurso, Wick & John O'Groats	54	Dundee, Montrose, Forfar & Arbroath
13	West Lewis & North Harris	55	Lochgilphead & Loch Awe
14	Tarbert & Loch Seaforth	56	Loch Lomond & Inverary
15	Loch Assynt, Lochinver & Kylesku	57	Stirling & The Trossachs
16	Lairg, Loch Shin & Loch Naver	58	Perth to Alloa, Auchterarder
17	Helmsdale & Strath of Kildonan	59	St Andrews, Kirkcaldy & Glenrothes
18	Sound of Harris, North Uist, Taransay & St Kilda	60	Islay
19	Gairloch & Ullapool, Loch Maree	61	Jura & Colonsay
20	Beinn Dearg, Loch Broom & Ben Wyvis	62	North Kintyre & Tarbert
21	Dornoch, Alness, Invergordon & Tain	63	Clyde Coast, Greenock & Rothesay
22	Benbecula & South Uist	64	Glasgow, Motherwell & Airdrie
23	North Skye, Dunvegan & Portree	65	Falkirk, Linlithgow & Dunfermline
24	Raasay, Applecross, Loch Torridon & Plockton	66	Edinburgh, Penicuik & North Berwick
25	Glen Carron & Glen Affric	67	Duns, Dunbar & Eyemouth
26	Inverness & Loch Ness, Strathglass	68	South Kintyre & Campbeltown
27	Mairn & Forres, River Findhorn	69	Isle of Arran
28	Elgin, Dufftown, Buckie & Keith	70	Ayr, Kilmarnock & Troon
29	Banff, Huntly, Portsoy & Turriff	71	Lanark & Upper Nithsdale
30	Fraserburgh, Peterhead & Ellon	72	Upper Clyde Valley, Biggar & Lanark
31	Barra, S Uist, Vatersay & Eriskay	73	Peebles, Galashiels & Selkirk, Tweed Valley
32	South Skye & Cuillin Hills	74	Kelso, Coldstream, Jedburgh & Duns
33	Loch Alsh, Glen Shiel & Loch Hourn	76	Girvan, Ballantrae & Barrhill
34	Fort Augustus, Glen Roy & Glen Moriston	77	Dalmellington, New Galloway & Galloway Forest Park
35	Kingussie & Monadhliath Mountains	78	Nithsdale, Annandale, Sanquhar & Moffat
36	Grantown, Aviemore & Cairngorm Mountains	79	Hawick, Eskdale & Langholm
37	Strathdon & Alford	82	Stranraer & Glenluce
38	Aberdeen, Inverurie & Pitmedden	83	Newton Stewart, Kirkcudbright & Gatehouse of Fleet
39	Rum, Eigg & Muck	84	Dumfries & Castle Douglas
40	Mallaig, Glenfinnan & Loch Shiel	85	Carlisle, Solway Firth & Gretna Green
41	Ben Nevis, Fort William & Glen Coe		