

BRUICHLADDICH IS ONE OF THE FIFTY MOST UNPRONOUNCEABLE NAMES IN SCOTLAND (SCOTTISH MISCELLANY).

MOST HEBRIDEAN NAMES DERIVED FROM EITHER THE GAELIC, NORSE OR ANGLICISED EQUIVALENTS DENOTING A PRECISE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION. BRUICHLADDICH IS DERIVED FROM TWO GAELIC WORDS BRUDHACH AND CHLADDICH: BRUDHACH A CHLADDAICH.

IT IS UBIQUITOUSLY TRANSLATED AS MEANING 'BRAE BY THE SHORE', A SOMEWHAT VAGUE TERM. 'BRAE' IS A LOWLAND SCOTS WORD DERIVED FROM THE OLD NORSE, BREIÐR, MEANING A BROAD HILLSIDE, OR 'A GENTLE SLOPE TO THE SEA'. SINCE NAMES WERE ORIGINALLY GIVEN AS SPECIFIC LOCATION MARKERS FOR NAVIGATION, NEITHER MEANING IS PERTINENT TO THIS LOCATION.

THERE IS INDEED A STEEP BANK AT BRUICHLADDICH, A RAISED BEACH OF POST-GLACIAL MARINE DEPOSITS. THE TROUBLE IS THAT IT RUNS FOR 8 MILES ALONG THE NORTH SIDE OF LOCHINDAAL, AND 100 FEET TALL IN PLACES, AND SO IS NOT PRECISE AS A LOCATOR, A BIT LIKE SAYING '1ST AVENUE AND 1ST TO 60TH STREET'.

ACCORDING TO DWELLY'S 1901 DICTIONARY, BRUDHACH OR BRUTHAC, IS A RATHER GENERAL TERM RANGING IN STEEPNESS FROM AN ASCENT, HILL-SIDE, BRAE, TO A STEEP ACCLIVITY, AND PRECIPICE. WHILE NOT A PRECIPICE, I WOULD CLASSIFY THIS BANK AS STEEP, BEING AT 80° FOR MOST OF ITS LENGTH.

CHLADACH OR CLADACH MEANS A SHORE, BEACH, COAST, OR MORE SPECIFICALLY, A STONY BEACH. INTERESTINGLY, THOUGH OBSOLETE BY 1901, IT ALSO MEANS A 'LEE SHORE', INFERRING A DANGEROUS COAST FOR SAILING SHIPS IN A PREVAILING WIND.

THE SPECIFIC PART OF LOCHINDAAL IN FRONT OF THE DISTILLERY, IS SHALLOW AND PEPPERED WITH EXPOSED ROCKS UP TO 50 METRES OFFSHORE, RATHER THAN THE SAND OF THE REST OF THE LOCH. WITH ONLY A METRE OF TIDE TO COVER IT, THIS IS A DECEPTIVE AND DANGEROUS PART OF THE LOCH FOR BOATS EITHER LANDING OR AT ANCHOR - PARTICULARLY WITH THE STRONG PREVAILING WIND.

IN THE DAYS OF SAIL, A LEE SHORE WITH SHARP ROCKS LURKING FOR THE UNSUSPECTING SKIPPER WOULD INDEED BE WORTHY OF SPECIFYING THE LOCATION.

WE CAN BE FAIRLY SURE THAT BRUDHACH REFERS TO THE THE RAISED BEACH, BUT SPECIFICALLY 'A CHLADDAICH', AS THE PLACE OF THE DANGEROUS, ROCKY LEE SHORE: "THE STEEP BANK OF THE ROCKY, LEE SHORE" IS A MORE USEFUL AND ACCURATE, IF NOT SO ROMANTIC, TRANSLATION.

BRUDHACH, PRONOUNCED 'BREW-AC(H)K' - WITH THE 'ACK' HEAVILY ASPIRATED AND CHLADDICH, HERE ON ISLAY, IS A SOFTER 'KLADD-IE'. SO WE GET 'BREW-AHK-AH-KLADD-IE', WHICH WITH THE ENDING OF THE FIRST WORD AND THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND, ELIDING OVER TIME BECAME 'BREW-AH-KLADDIE', OR 'BROOK-LADDIE' AS IT BECAME IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.