

Gaelic in the Landscape

# Place-names of Colonsay and Oronsay

Gàidhlig air Aghaidh na Tìre:

## Ainmean-àite Cholbhasa agus Orasa

Dr Jacob King with Eilidh Scammell

An t-Ollamh Iacob King le Eilidh Sgaimeal



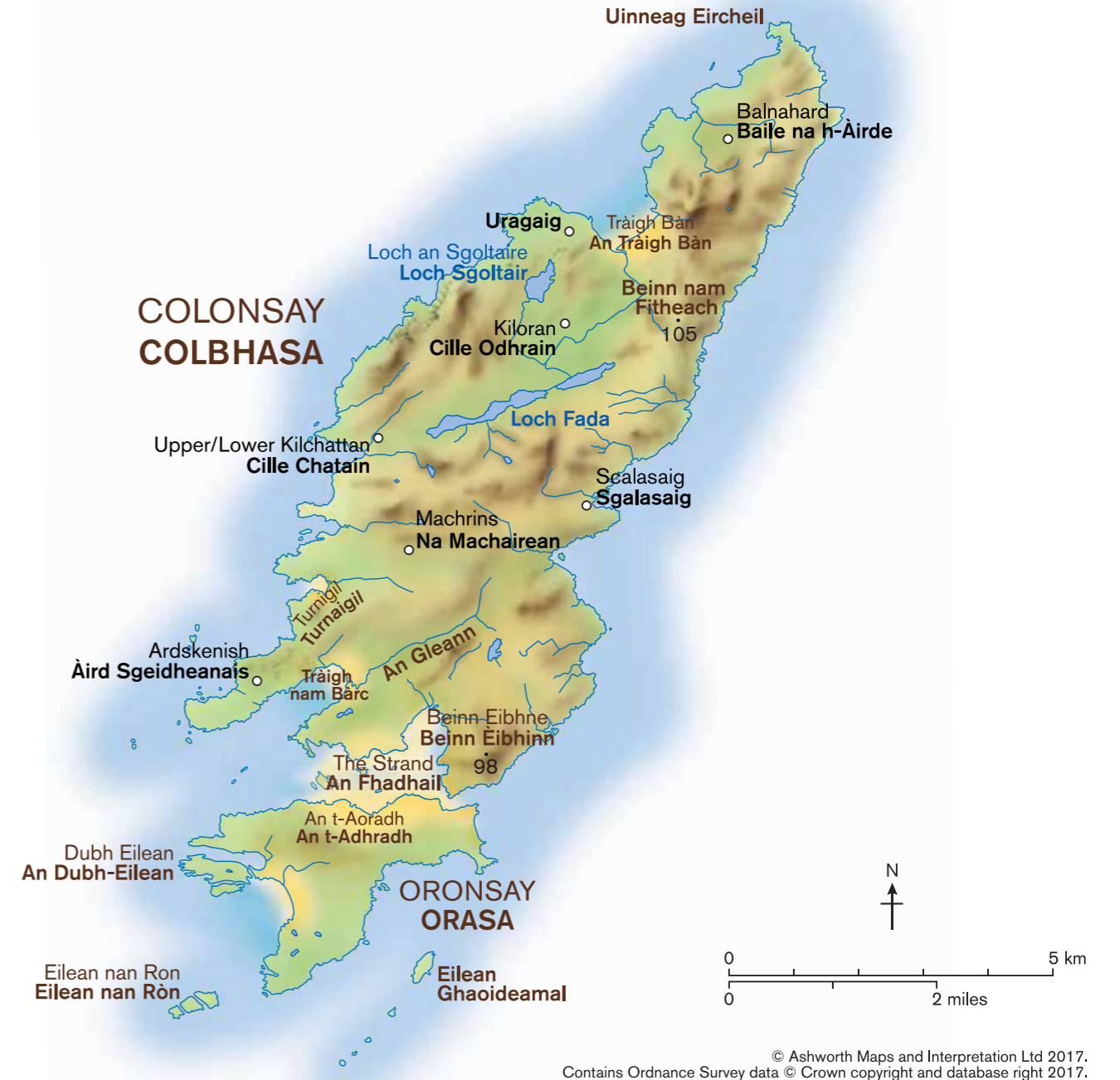
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Gaelic Place-Names of Scotland

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Gaelic Place-Names of Scotland

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Cover photograph: Tràigh Bàn  
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*It has been asserted that the places in Balanahard (sic) had formerly been so well named in detail that the people without difficulty could apportion the land out as they sat on Cnoc-a-Chreagain "yes, even to the breadth of a 'caibe' handle."*  
(McNeill 1910, 21n.)



## Introduction

Colonsay and Oronsay are relatively solitary isles, distinct from Islay to the south, Jura to the east and from Mull to the north. Oronsay is a tidal island which can only be accessed on foot or by motor vehicle at low tide. Although *Vita Sancti Columbæ* or 'The Life of Saint Columba' (written in the late seventh century but relating to Columba's life in the previous century) does not mention Colonsay directly, there was certainly Christian activity in this area during this time. The names of former churches such as Kiloran and Kilchattan, as well as the existence of Oronsay Priory, reflect this.

By the ninth century the Norse had settled in the Hebrides. It was during this Norse period that Colonsay and Oronsay received their current names. Although the name Colbhasa or Colonsay is commonly believed to derive from *Kolbeinnsøy*, 'Kolbeinn's island' (*Kolbeinn* is a personal name), it is more likely to derive from Norse *Koll-vangsøy* 'island of *Koll-vangr*' where *Koll-vangr* would be a place-name meaning 'hill field'. Orasa or Oronsay is also Norse: *Orfirisøy*, 'tidal island' pertaining to the fact that the island is accessible by foot only at low tide. The -n- has crept in into the English form as if it meant 'Oran's isle'. Oran is a saint who gave his name to Kiloran.

Around the twelfth century the islands fell under the dominion of the Lordship of the Isles, a Gaelic polity that operated out of Islay between the 12th and 15th centuries. The Lordship was initially under the rule of Somerled Macgillebride, a king of mixed Gaelic and Norse descent whose ancestral power base appears to have been in Lorne and Mull.





Following his death in 1164 his kingdom was divided between his three sons, with Colonsay falling within the territory of Dugald, from whom Clan MacDougall claims descent. It is around this time that Colonsay is first mentioned in the written record, in a Latin text of 1203 held in the Vatican, where it is referred to as *Coluansei*.

The islands were owned by the MacPhees until the seventeenth century when they passed through the hands of several different clans, finally coming under the control of the MacNeills. Although many of the inhabitants left for America and Canada, the islands did not suffer forced emigration during the Highland Clearances. Since 1905 Colonsay has been in the ownership of the Strathcona family.

Today, the farming on Oronsay is managed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in recognition of its chough and corncrake populations.

From at least the time of the Lordship of the Isles Gaelic was the main language of Colonsay and Oronsay, and remained so until recently. The Census tells us that in 1901 a full third of the people in the districts of Scalasaig, Kiloran and Kilchattan were monoglot Gaelic speakers. An anglophone education system and loss of population led to a steady decline in Gaelic usage during the twentieth century, and the 2011 Census recorded that only 32 of the 129 inhabitants (aged three or more) had Gaelic language skills.

## Ro-ràdh

'S e eileanan iomallach a th' ann an Colbhasa agus Orasa, eadar-dhealaichte bho Ìle san àird a deas, Diùra san àird an ear agus Muile san àird a tuath. 'S e eilean tràghaidh a th' ann an Orasa nach ruigear ach nuair a tha muir-tràigh ann. Ged nach eil iomradh air Colbhasa ann an *Vita Sancti Columbæ* no 'Beatha Chaluim Chille' (a chaidh a sgrìobhadh aig deireadh an t-seachdamh linn agus anns a bheil eachdraidh beatha Chaluim Chille san linn roimhe), bha an creideamh Criostail air a sgaoileadh anns na h-eileanan sna linntean seo. Tha seo ri fhaicinn ann an ainmean nan seann eaglaisean leithid Cille Odhrain agus Cille Chatain agus ann an eachdraidh Manachainn Orasa.

Bha na Lochlannaich air Innse Gall a thuineachadh san naoidheamh linn agus 's ann an linn nan Lochlannach a chaidh na h-ainmean-àite Colbhasa agus Orasa a chur air na h-eileanan. Ged a thathar a' smaoinichadh gur ann air *Kolbeinnsøy* 'eilean Kolbeinn' a tha Colbhasa bonntaichte ('s e ainm duine a th' ann an *Kolbeinn*), tha e nas coltaiche gur ann air na faclan Lochlannach *Koll-vangsey* 'eilean *Koll-vangr*' a tha an t-ainm-àite stèidhichte agus *Koll-vangr* a' ciallachadh 'achadh cruic'. 'S e ainm-àite Lochlannach a th' ann an Orasa cuideachd: *Orfirisøy* 'eilean tràghaidh', a chionn 's nach gabh an t-eilean a ruigsinn de chois ach air an Fhadhail nuair a tha muir-tràigh ann. Tha an litir -n- air a thighinn a-steach don ainm-àite sa Bheurla, *Oronsay*, mar gur e 'eilean Odhrain' a tha e a' ciallachadh. B' e naomh a bha ann an Odhrain air an deach Cille Odhrain ainmeachadh.

Bha na h-eileanan fo smachd Tighearnas nan

Eilean mun 12na linn, flaitheanas Gàidhealach a bha air a riaghladh bho Ìle eadar an 12na agus an 15mh linn. B' e fear de shliochd Gàidhealach agus Lochlannach, Somhairle mac GiollaBrighde, a stèidhich an Tighearnas, agus bha neart a' chinnidh suidhichte ann an Latharna agus Muile. Chaidh an rioghachd a roinn eadar a thriùir mhac an dèidh a bhàis ann an 1164 agus chaidh Colbhasa fo smachd Dhùghaill, sinnsear Chloinn Dùghaill. 'S ann mun àm seo a nochd Colbhasa air clàr sgrìobhte airson a' chiad uair, ann an sgrìobhainn Laidinn ann an 1203 a tha glèidhte anns a' Bhatacain agus anns a bheil e sgrìobhte mar *Coluansei*.

B' ann le Clann Mhic a' Phì a bha na h-eileanan gu ruige an t-seachdamh linn deug nuair a chaidh iad fo sheilbh iomadh cinneadh eadar-dhealaichte mus tàinig iad fo smachd Clann MhicNèill. Cha do dh'fhuiling Colbhasa is Orasa buaidh nam Fuadaichean mar a dh'fhairich ceàrnaidhean eile den Ghàidhealtachd ged a rinn mòran imrich a dh'Ameireaga is a Chanada. Tha Colbhasa air a bhith fo sheilbh teaghlach Strathcona bho 1905. Tha obair àiteachais ann an Orasa anns an latha an-diugh ga stiùireadh le Comann Rìoghail Dìon nan Eun is iad an sàs ann an obair glèidhidh nan cathag agus nan traon.

B' i a' Ghàidhlig prìomh chànan Cholbhasa is Orasa bho linn Tighearnas nan Eilean co-dhiù gus o chionn ghoirid. A rèir a' Chunntais-sluaigh ann an 1901, cha robh ach a' Ghàidhlig aig an treas cuid de mhuinntir Sgalasaig, Chille Odhrain agus Chille Chatain. Thàinig crìonadh mòr air a' Ghàidhlig anns an 20mh linn air sgàth siostam foghlaim na



Oronsay-born bard Donald A. MacNeill (1924-1995) expresses his sadness in the poem 'S Fhada Thall tha Mise 'Far Away am I' (MacNeill, 15):

*Sad am I today in the land of strangers,  
All alone in the land of strangers,  
Kindly people all around,  
But English is on every tongue.  
Sad am I today in the land of strangers.*

The linguistic mix of place-names in Colonsay and Oronsay is typical of islands in the Inner Hebrides. The names of the larger islands and promontories tend to be Norse in origin, whilst the majority of the names relating to agriculture and natural features are in Gaelic. In recent times several English names have been introduced, either denoting new features, such as roads and houses, or as translations of existing names. The place-names given in the well-known publication 'Colonsay and Oronsay' by John de Vere Loder (1935) have persisted, most likely because of their inclusion in that book.

This booklet is the result of a research project into some of the lesser-known place-names of Oronsay and Colonsay. Many were gathered by field workers during 2016 from Gaelic speakers native to the islands. A number of maps were also consulted, including Ordnance Survey (OS) publications, and these are occasionally referred to in the text. Most of the place-names in this booklet can be located on a map using the grid references in the index. The index includes a rough pronunciation guide. Special note is taken of names that either differ from published maps or do not appear on maps at all.



Beurla agus lùghdachaidh san àireimh-sluaigh. A rèir a' Chunntais-sluaigh ann an 2011, cha robh a' Ghàidhlig ach aig 32 de na 129 eileanaich (tri bliadhna a dh'aois is nas sine).

Chuir am bàrd Orasach Dòmhnall A. MacNèill no Dòmhnall a' Gharbh-àird (1924-1995) a chuid bròin an cèill anns an dàn 'S Fhada Thall tha Mise (MacNeill, 15):

*'S truagh an-diugh an tìr nan Gall mi,  
Tìr nan Gall is mi nam aonar;  
Daoine coibhneil air gach taobh,  
Ach 's e Beurla th' air gach beul.  
'S truagh an-diugh an tìr nan Gall mi.*

Tha am measgachadh de chànanan a chithear anns na h-ainmean-àite ann an Colbhasa agus Orasa coltach ri eileanan eile Innse Gall. Am bitheantas, 's e ainmean Lochlannach a th' air na h-eileanan is rubhannan mòra agus ainmean Gàidhlig a th' air a' mhòr-chuid de dh'ainmean a tha ceangailte ri àiteachas is cruth na tìre. Tha ainmean Beurla air tighinn a-steach o chionn ghoirid, mar a

chithear air feartan ùra, leithid rathaidean is taighean, no mar thionndadh Beurla air ainm Gàidhlig. Tha na h-ainmean-àite a nochd anns an leabhar ainmeil, 'Colonsay and Oronsay' le John de Vere Loder (1935) air maireachdainn, ma dh'fhaoidte air sgàth 's gun do nochd iad anns an leabhar sin.

Tha an leabhran seo stèidhichte air pròiseact rannsachaidh air cuid de na h-ainmean-àite ann an Orasa agus Colbhasa nach eil cho aithnichte. Chaidh cuid dhiubh a chruinneachadh ann an 2016 aig Gàidheil a bhuineas do na h-eileanan. Rinneadh sgrùdadh cuideachd air grunn mhapaichean, leithid foillseachain na Suirbhìdh Òrdanais (OS), air a bheil iomradh san teacsa. Lorgar a' mhòr-chuid de na h-ainmean-àite san leabhran seo leis na comharran-griod anns a' chlàr-amais. Tha stiùireadh air fuaimneachadh ri fhaighinn anns a' chlàr-amais cuideachd. Tha iomradh sònraichte ga thoirt air na h-ainmean a tha eadar-dhealaichte bho na mapaichean foillsichte no nach eil a' nochdadh air mapaichean sam bith.

## Man-made areas

Eilean nan Ròn off the south coast of Oronsay contains a ruined house called **Taigh nan Ceilpearan** 'the house of the kelpers'; it was last used in the 19th-century when kelp was gathered there. Mills were an important feature on Colonsay; **An Seann Mhuileann** 'the old mill' was fed by water from Loch Sgoltair and produced flour. The last miller (John McNeill) used a nearby shed to make coffins as he was also the island joiner.

*Cille* 'church' on Colonsay can denote the physical substance of a church, rather than a settlement built up around it (as can be the case in other locations). These names are likely to date from the earliest Christian settlement in the area, although the inclusion of a saint's name does not necessarily mean that he or she actually visited Colonsay. On Machrins farm, to the east of the farm buildings, is an area known as **Cille Brìghde** 'Bridget's chapel' where locals can recall ploughing up grave stones when tilling the ground. Kilchattan or **Cille Chatain** 'Cattan's chapel' – the birthplace of the esteemed Gaelic scholar Prof. Donald MacKinnon – is now a settlement, but the ruins of the original church can still be seen at the top of the current graveyard. Other chapels include **Cille Chatriona** 'Catherine's chapel' in Balnahard, **Cille Mhoire** 'Mary's chapel' on Oronsay and **Cille Choinnich** 'Kenneth's chapel' by Tràigh nam Bàrc. The settlement Kiloran or **Cille Odhrain** 'Oran's chapel' has no trace of the original chapel.



## Àitean togte

Tha tobhta ann an Eilean nan Ròn deas air Orasa air a bheil **Taigh nan Ceilpearan**; cha deach ùisneachadh bhon 19mh linn nuair a bhite a' buain ceilp anns an àite. 'S e togalaichean cudromach a bh' anns na muilnean ann an Colbhasa: bha uisge ga thoirt à Loch Sgoltair a-nuas don àite far a bheil **An Seann Mhuileann** agus far an robhar a' dèanamh min. Bhiodh am muillear mu dheireadh, Iain MacNeill, a' dèanamh feum den t-seada an seo airson cistean-laighe a dhèanamh a chionn 's gum b' esan saor an eilein cuideachd.

'S urrainn don eileamaid 'cille' làrach eaglais a chomharrachadh, seach am baile a chaidh a thogail mun cuairt oirre (mar a chithear an àitean eile). Tha e coltach gum buin na h-ainmean seo don linn as sine den tuineachadh Chrìostail anns an sgìre, ach chan eil ainm naoimh san ainm-àite a' ciallachadh gun robh e no i ann an Colbhasa a-riamh. Tha àite



Avenue Cottage  
Gob a' Chlacharain



ann an tuathanachas nam Machairean, air taobh sear nan togalaichean, air a bheil **Cille Brighde** agus a rèir muinntir an eilein, chaidh leacan uaigh a lorg ann nuair a bhathar a' treabhadh air an tuathanas. Rugadh an sgoilear Gàidhlig iomraiteach Dòmhnall MacFhionghain ann an **Cille Chatain** – 's e baile a th' ann ach chithear fhathast làrach na seann eaglais aig ceann a' chladha. Tha caibealan eile ann leithid **Cille Chatriona** ann am Baile na h-Àirde, **Cille Mhoire** ann an Orasa agus **Cille Choinnich** làimh ri Tràigh nam Bàrc. Chan eil lorg air an t-seann eaglais ann an **Cille Odhrain**.

'S e **Taigh Alasdair Ruaidh** agus **Taigh Ghilleasbaig Ruaidh** a th' aig muinntir Cholbhasa air dà thobhta anns a' Gharbh-àird an ceann a deas an eilein ged nach eil fios aig duine a-nis cò bh' anns an dithis seo. Tha mòran thaighean air an ainmeachadh air cnuic agus feartan eile a tha dlùth. B' e **Gob a' Chlacharain** a bh' air Avenue Cottage ann an Cille Odhrain agus **Cnoc Calanda** air Keeper's Cottage is e air ainmeachadh air a' chnoc air a chùlaibh. Chan eil fios dè as ciall don ainm 'Calanda'.

Tha iomadh dùn ri lorg ann an Colbhasa. 'S ma dh'fhaoidte gur e àitean faire a bh' ann an cuid dhiubh leis gum faicear na dùin bho chàch a chèile. Chithear **Dùn na Mara** air **Beinn Èibhinn** no Beinn Èibhne (mar a tha sgrìobhte air mapa OS) aig **Dùn Èibhinn** faisg air Sgalasaig, bhom faicear **Dùn Dòmhnail**. 'S ma dh'fhaoidte gur e ainm pearsanta Lochlannach a th' anns an eileamaid *Èibhinn*, agus tha e inntinneach gu bheil i a' nochdadh ann an ainm beinne agus dùin a tha ann am fianais a chèile. Thathas a' smaoinneachadh gur e ainm pearsanta a tha a' nochdadh anns an làraich àrc-eòlaich, chudromaich, **Dùn Cholla**. Chithear an eileamaid 'dùnan' ann an **Dùnan nan Con** an ear-thuath air a' Gharbh-àird.

In Garvard, in the south of Colonsay, two adjacent ruined houses are remembered as **Taigh Alasdair Ruaidh** 'Red Alexander's house' and **Taigh Ghilleasbaig Ruaidh** 'Red Archie's house' although the identity of these people is not known. Many houses are named after nearby hills and other features. In Kiloran, Avenue Cottage was known as **Gob a' Chlacharain** 'the point of the wheatear', whilst the Keeper's Cottage was also known as **Cnoc Calanda** 'Calanda hill' after the hill behind it. The meaning of *Calanda* is unknown.

Colonsay boasts several examples of a *dùn* or fort, many of which were probably lookout points, having line of sight communication between each other. **Dùn na Mara** 'the fort of the sea' on **Beinn Èibhinn** or Beinn Èibhne (as it is on the OS map) is visible from **Dùn Èibhinn** near Scalasaig, whilst that fort is visible from **Dùn Dòmhnail** 'Donald's fort'. The element *Èibhinn* is possibly a Norse personal name, and it is of note that it is applied to both a mountain and a fort within sight of each other. **Dùn Cholla**, a prominent archaeological site, is also thought to be a personal name 'Coll's fort'. The diminutive form of Dùn is Dùnan, as in **Dùnan nan Con** 'the little fort of the dogs', north east of Garvard.



Taigh nan Ceilpearan



## Coasts and islands

As with all islands in the Hebrides, the coastline was an extremely important element of daily life. In Colonsay shellfish were foraged on the shore and fish were caught from rocks or at sea. Seaweeds known as 'kelp' were gathered on the shore and turned to ash which was then used in industrial processes such as the production of soap. These activities, as well as traditional crofting, were a primary means of income for local people and are reflected in the place-names.

**Comharra nam Muirsgeanan** 'the marker of the razor fish (plural)' stands on **Tràigh Orasa** (now known commonly as Oronsay Bay although this does not appear on maps). When the rock is exposed, the tide is far enough out to successfully gather razor fish.

At the top end of Eilean Ghaoideamal there is a little skerry which dries out at low tide called **An Comharra** 'the marker'. Because Oronsay is a tidal island these markers allowed the people to know when the tide was out far enough to allow them to walk across. Some of the markers were not on the Strand itself but were indicators for those who could not see the Strand.

In 1822 a ship called 'The Waterloo', which had sailed out of Cumbria heading for America, was wrecked off **Eilean nan Ròn** 'the island of the seals'. Everyone was saved except the captain. The ship's cargo was china and to this day porcelain can still be found from time to time on the beach. **Eilean nan Corp** 'the island of the corpses' in Kilchattan (at Am Port Mòr) relates to where a boat was wrecked; presumably bodies were found on the island.



## Oirthirean is eileanan

Bha an cladach air aon de na h-àitean a bu chudromaiche ann am beatha nan eileanach. Bhite a' buain maoraich air cladaichean Cholbhasa agus a' glacadh èisg air na creagan no anns an fhairge. Rachadh ceilp a bhuaibh is a losgadh air a' chladach agus rachadh an luath ùisneachadh airson bathair leithid siabainn a dhèanamh. Bhiodh teachd an tìr nan eileanach an eisimeil air na h-obraichean seo agus air toradh nan croitean agus chithear sin anns na h-ainmean-àite.

'S ann air **Tràigh Orasa** a tha **Comharra nam Muirsgeanan**. 'S urrainnear muirsgeanan a bhuaibh nuair a bhios tràigh mhòr ann agus an fhairge air a' chreag seo fhàgail.

Tha sgeir bheag aig ceann Eilean Ghaoideamal air a bheil **An Comharra**, a thiormaicheas aig àm muir-tràigh. A chionn 's gur e eilean tràghaidh a th' ann an Orasa, bhiodh fios aig daoine le bhith ag amharc air na comharran seo an leigeadh an làn leotha a dhol tarsainn na Fadhla. Bha cuid de na comharran nach robh air an Fhadhail fhèin a' cumail fios ris na daoine nach fhaiceadh an Fhadhail.

Ann an 1822, chaidh long air an robh 'The Waterloo', a bha air Cumbria fhàgail is a bha a' dèanamh air Ameireaga, às an rathad air **Eilean nan Ròn**. Chaidh a h-uile duine ach an caiptean a shàbhaladh. Bha luchd de phòrsalain air bòrd an t-soithich agus lorgar bloighean pòrsalain air an tràigh fhathast bho àm gu àm. Tha **Eilean nan Corp** ann an Cille Chatain (aig a' Phort Mhòr) a' comharrachadh àite far an deach bàta a sgrìos; feumaidh gun deach cuirp a lorg anns an eilean. Agus 's e ainm iomchaidh a th' ann an **Eilean nan**

Likewise, **Eilean nan Giomach** 'the island of the lobsters' is aptly named; lobsters can still be found there.

**Eilean Ghaoideamal**, on the east coast of Oronsay, is the largest of the coastal islands. Its name is of Norse derivation, but folk etymology has created a Gaelic explanation – 'the island of the stolen rent' based on *goid* 'steal' and *màl* 'rent'.

*Carraig* on Colonsay denotes, as it does in other places, a rock for fishing. These rocks typically have perpendicular rock faces going deep into the sea with flat summits on which one can stand to fish. Many of them bear cup-shaped holes in which people ground limpets for bait. Fishing rocks pepper the coastlines of Oronsay and Colonsay, but many of them are not marked on maps. **Carraig a' Chait** is 'the cat's fishing rock' but the reason for the name is unknown. In Colonsay Gaelic *chait* is pronounced *chuit*. Nearby is **A' Charraig Gharbh** 'the rough fishing rock' and in **Port na Cuilce** 'the harbour of the reeds' there is **Carraig Cruimein** 'MacCrimmon's fishing rock.'

Surrounding Oronsay are a number of smaller islands, skerries and rocks, some of whose names carry echoes of emigration: **Bogha nan Eilthireach** or **Bogha an Eilthirich**, is 'the sunken rock of the emigrant(s)'. The danger surrounding a *bogha*, a sunken reef, is recalled in two names that commemorate ships which foundered on such features: **Bogha Dale** relates to a boat called 'The Dale' which came to grief there, and **Bogha Chùbaig** is believed to relate to a 19th-century boat called 'The Cubaig'.

**Cailleach Uragaig** 'the old woman of Uragaig' is a rock which, when viewed from the sea, is said to resemble an old woman with a bag of fish on her back. **Uinneag Eircheil** 'Hercules' window' is an





**Giomach** cuideachd; tha giomaich rin lorg ann fhathast.

'S e **Eilean Ghaoideamal**, air taobh siar Orasa, am fear as motha de na h-eileanan beaga. 'S e ainm Lochlannach a th' ann an Gaoideamal ged a chaidh mineachadh Gàidhlig a chur air stèidhichte air na faclan 'goid' agus 'màl'.

Tha am facal 'carraig', coltach ri àitean eile, a' comharrachadh creag iasgaich. Am bitheantas, tha aghaidh dhìreach air na creagan seo a' dol sìos a-steach don mhuir agus mullach rèidh orra far an urrainnear seasamh ma tha duine ri creagach. Tha tuill chuachanach air mòran dhiubh anns am bleitheadh daoine an cuid biathaidh. Tha carraigean pailt air cladach Orasa is Cholbhasa ach tha mòran dhiubh nach eil comharraichte air mapaichean. Chan eil fhios dè as adhbhar don ainm **Carraig a' Chait**. Ann an Gàidhlig Cholbhasa theirear 'chuit' ris an fhacal 'chait'. Tha **A' Charraig Gharbh** dlùth do Charraig a' Chait agus 's ann ann am **Port na Cuilce** a tha **Carraig Cruimein**.

Tha neart eileanan beaga, sgeirean is chreagan mu thimcheall Orasa, agus ainmean ceangailte ri eilthireachd air cuid dhiubh: **Bogha nan Eilthireach** no **Bogha an Eilthirich**. Tha an cunnart an lùib bhoghachan ri fhaicinn ann an dà ainm a tha a' comharrachadh shoithichean a chaidh às an rathad air na creagan seo fon mhuir: tha **Bogha Dale** a' comharrachadh na luinge 'The Dale' a chaidh a sgrios an sin, agus **Bogha Chùbaig** air ainmeachadh air long anns an 19mh linn air an robh 'The Cubaig'.

Thathar ag ràdh gur e cumadh seann chaillich agus poca èisg air a druim a th' air a' chreig **Cailleach Uragaig**. 'S e creag bhoghaichte a th' ann an **Uinneag Eircheil** aig ceann a tuath Cholbhasa ach chan eil fhios carson a tha ainm a' ghaisgich chlasaigich 'Hercules' oirre. Tha **Uamh**





arched rock at the north end of Colonsay, but the story behind the name is not known. Next to it on the shore is **Uamh a' Chorpaich** 'the cave of the corpse place' inside which are stone slabs where bodies would be laid out while waiting to be taken to Iona for burial.

On Oronsay there are several shell middens – hillocks made by humans discarding seashells over a long period. A midden is referred to locally as a *sithean*, a word more usually meaning 'fairy hill'. There is **Sithean Phort Chrag** 'the crag harbour midden', **Sithean Cnoc Riabhaich** 'the speckled hill midden' and **Sithean Bhùraich Bharraich** which is of unclear meaning. Another is known as **Caisteal nan Gillean** 'the castle of the boys'.

The English name 'The Strand' relates to a large bay facing Oronsay, and is known in Gaelic as **An Fhadhail** 'the tidal ford'.

Between the Strand and Ardskenish is **Tràigh nam Bàrc** 'the beach of the barks (boats)'. According to tradition there was a battle in this location between the islanders and Viking raiders, and burial sites have apparently been found here. On the other side of Ardskenish is **A' Phlaide Mhòr** 'the big blanket' a vast expanse of flat rock which is revealed at low tide. At such times rocks four hundred metres off the shore, which are submerged at high tide, become clearly visible. With the parallel lines of the flat rocks, this particular expanse of rock is said to resemble the folds of a plaid.

**An Tràigh Bàn** 'the fair beach' (also known as Kiloran Bay) shows an interesting feature of Colonsay and Jura Gaelic. Many words appear to have a different gender to that in the rest of the Gàidhealtachd and in this instance *tràigh* 'beach' is masculine rather than the usual feminine.

*Port* is the main term for a small bay or harbour on Colonsay and Oronsay, and there are many of



**a' Chorpaich** làimh rithe air a' chladach anns a bheil leacan far am biodh cuirp gan càradh mus tugadh iad a dh'Ì Chalum Chille far an rachadh an tiodhlacadh.

Tha grunn dhùnan shligean ann an Orasa - dùnain a rinneadh le mac an duine far am faigheadh iad cuidhteas an cuid shligean thar linn-tean mòra. 'S e 'sithean' a th' air 'òtrach' ann an Gàidhlig nan eileanan seo, a tha a' ciallachadh 'cnoc nan sithichean' ann an sgìrean eile. Tha **Sithean Phort Chrag** agus **Sithean Cnoc Riabhaich** ann agus **Sithean Bhùraich Bharraich** air nach eil ciall shoilleir. 'S e **Caisteal nan Gillean** a th' air dùnan eile.

'S e **An Fhadhail** a th' air a' bhàgh mhòr eadar Colbhasa agus Orasa no '*The Strand*' anns a' Bheurla.

Tha **Tràigh nam Bàrc** (seòrsa bàta) suidhichte eadar an Fhadhail agus Àird Sgeidheanais. A rèir beul-aithris nan eileanan, chaidh cath a chur anns an àite seo eadar na h-eileanaich agus na Lochlannaich, agus chaidh uaignean a lorg an seo. Tha **A' Phlaide Mhòr**, farsaingeachd mhòr de chreig rèidh a chithear aig àm muir-tràigh, air taobh eile Àird Sgeidheanais. Aig an àm seo, chithear creagan a tha ceithir ceud meatair far a' chladaich is a tha fon t-sàl aig àm muir-làn. Thathar ag ràdh gur ann coltach ri fillidhean fèilidh a tha sreath loidhnichean na creige seo.

Tha feart intinneach ann an Gàidhlig Cholbhasa is Dhiùra ri faicinn anns an ainm **An Tràigh Bàn**. Tha grunn fhaclan ann aig a bheil gnè eadar-dhealaichte an coimeas ris a' chòrr den Ghàidhealtachd agus tha am facal 'tràigh' fireannta ann an Colbhasa agus Diùra seach boireannta mar a bhite.

'S e 'port' am facal as cumanta ann an Colbhasa is Orasa air bàgh no cala beag agus tha grunnan dhiubh rim faicinn. Tha **Port a' Chrochaire** suidhichte ann an ceann an ear-dheas Cholbhasa.

them around the coast. **Port a' Chrochaire**, on the south-east coast of Colonsay, is 'the harbour of the hangman' or 'hanged man'. On the map, however, the location of the bay is given incorrectly. It is actually a little to the south, where the map gives Port na Bèiste. The neighbouring beach is now commonly known as **Cable Bay**, being the place where the telephone cable used to come in from the mainland.

**Port nam Fliuchan** 'the harbour of the wet spots' is understood locally as 'the wet port'. The ground around it is prone to large clumps of spindrift, a sort of foam, which may be the meaning of *fliuchan* in this context. **Port na h-Àthaig** 'the harbour of the little kiln' on the eastern side of Oronsay, refers to a kelp kiln, the remains of which can still be seen. *Àthaig* is pronounced on Oronsay, and in other islands in the Inner Hebrides, as *ètheig*. **Port an Taisge Mhòir** 'the harbour of the big house' is thought to refer



to Colonsay House which was supplied from this harbour. There is also the remains of a substantial building by the shore.

**An Garbh-Chladach**, between **Am Port Mòr** 'the big port' and Tràigh an Tobair Fhuair on the west of Colonsay, is understood locally as 'the rough shoreline'. It is unusable and dangerous to small boats because of the rocky outcrops.

On the coastline from Garvard to An Dùnan is **Rubha nan Deamhas** 'the promontory of the shears' where a cliff overhangs the sea; shipbuilders used to put masts on vessels here because it was possible to get to the top of the cliff and lower a mast into a boat.

**Am Poll Gorm** 'the green pool' is at the narrowest point between Colonsay and Oronsay and does not drain even at low tide when the islands are connected by dry land. The point on Colonsay nearest to Oronsay is called **Port Iain Hart** 'John Hart's harbour'. The story goes that John used to swim across the Strand at this point, when the tide was in, to visit his sweetheart on Oronsay. Unfortunately, he got tangled up in a type of seaweed called eelgrass, or *bilearach*, and drowned.

On the mainland *sloc* can represent a hollow but on Colonsay it seems to mean only a coastal gully. **Sloc na Sgùineir** in Balnahard is 'the gully of the schooner'; the story explaining the name, however, has been lost. West of An Tràigh Bàn there is a gully above the shore called **Sloc Dubh Mhic-a-Phì**, 'MacPhee's dark gully'. This is said to be the place where the MacPhee chief of the time hid from a raiding party of MacLeans from Mull. He was eventually killed when his attackers made an opening in the roof of the cave, which can still be seen.





Tha suidheachadh an àite seo sgrìobhte gu ceàrr air a' mhapa. Bu chòir gun nochd e beagan don àird a deas far a bheil Port na Bèiste sgrìobhte. 'S e **Cable Bay** a th' air an tràigh làimh ris far an tàinig càball an fhòn bho thir-mòr air tir.

Tha **Port nam Fliuchan** buailteach do chnapan mòra siabain, nàdar de chop, agus 's ma dh'fhaoidte gur e sin as ciall don fhacal 'fliuchan' an seo. Tha **Port na h-Àthaig** a' toirt iomradh air àth ceilp a chithear fhathast ann an ceann an ear Orasa. Bidh muinntir Orasa a' fuaimneachadh 'àthaig' mar 'ètheig' coltach ri eileanan eile ann an Earra Ghàidheal. Thathas a' smaoinneachadh gu bheil an t-ainm **Port an Taighe Mhòir** a' toirt iomradh air Taigh Cholbhasa agus thigeadh bathar an taighe mhòir taobh a' bhàigh seo. Tha làrach togalaich mhòir ri fhaicinn làimh ris a' chladach an seo cuideachd.

'S ann eadar **Am Port Mòr** agus Tràigh an Tobair Fhuair air taobh siar Cholbhasa a tha **An Garbh-Chladach**. Tha e cunnartach is cha ghabh ùisneachadh le bàtaichean beaga air sgàth nan creagan.

Tha **Rubha nan Deamhas** an cois na fairge eadar a' Gharbh-àird agus An Dùnan far a bheil bearradh crochte os cionn na mara; chuireadh saoir-luinge crainn air soithichean an seo leis gum b' urrainnear crann a thoirt gu oir a' bhearraidh is a leigeil sìos chun a' bhàta.

'S ann aig an àite as caoile eadar Colbhasa is Orasa a tha **Am Poll Gorm** agus far nach bi e a' tràghadh fiù 's aig àm muir-tràigh agus talamh tioram a' ceangal nan eileanan ri chèile. 'S e **Port Iain Hart** a th' air an àite ann an Colbhasa as fhaisge air Orasa. A rèir muinntir an eilein, bhiodh Iain a' snàmh thar na Fadhlà nuair a bhiodh an làn àrd ann is e a' cèilidh air a leannan Orasach. Chaidh a ghlacadh am measg na feamadh air a bheil 'bilearach' agus chaidh a bhàthadh.

'S e 'Iagan' as ciall don fhacal 'sloc' air tir-mòr ach ann an Colbhasa tha e a' ciallachadh 'gil an cois a' chladaich'. Tha an sgeul air an sgùinear anns an ainm **Sloc na Sgùineir** ann am Baile na h-Àirde air a dhol air dhiochuidhne. Tha sloc os cionn a' chladaich siar air an Tràigh Bhàn air a bheil **Sloc Dubh Mhic-a-Phi**. Thathar ag ràdh gur e seo an t-àite far an do dh'fhalaich ceann-cinnidh Chloinn Mhic-a-Phi e fhèin air creachadairean Leathanach à Muile. Chaidh a lorg is a mharbhadh aig a' cheann thall nuair a rinn na Leathanaich toll, a chithear fhathast, ann am mullach na h-uamha.



## Fields and hills

Like many places in the Highlands and Islands, Colonsay has several terms for low-lying land, especially where it has agricultural significance.

**An Dèabhadh** 'the seepage' is the narrow strip of land where the road crosses between Mid Loch Fada and East Loch Fada. It is often flooded in winter and is understood locally as 'the low hollow'. MacLennan's dictionary describes the meaning of *dèabhadh* as 'a soft place between two lochs'. **Blàr an Dèabhaidh** 'the field of (a place called) the seepage' is on the maps as a field north of An Dèabhadh. On the other side from Blàr an Dèabhaidh is **Druim an Dèabhaidh** 'the ridge of (a place called) the seepage' a slope running down to An Dèabhadh.

Place-names are never static, and as old names are lost, new ones are coined. An example of a relatively new name is a field now occupied by the airport, which is known as **The Dardanelles**. The name was coined by a soldier returning from the First World War who had been in a naval convoy trying to penetrate the Dardanelles, a heavily defended strait between the Asian and European parts of Turkey. The returned soldier was trying to plough the field which was full of nettles and other tough weeds. He said it was 'worse than trying to get through the Dardanelles' and the name stuck.

Likewise, the name **Burma Road** was coined for the 100 metre section of road between Kiloran Farm and the triangular road junction where the B8086 and B8087 meet, because it took many men to build it, as did the original Burma Road, constructed by prisoners of war during the Second World War





## Pàircean is cnuic

Tha grunn ainmean ann an Colbhasa, mar a tha ann an iomadh àite air feadh na Gàidhealtachd is nan eileanan, airson talamh iosal, gu h-àraid nuair a tha luach àiteachais anns an talamh.

'S e **An Dèabhadh**, a tha a' ciallachadh 'àite drùdhaidh', a tha air an talamh chumhang far a bheil an rathad a' dol tarsainn eadar Loch Fada Meadhanach agus Loch Fada an Ear. Bidh tuiltean an seo gu bitheanta sa gheamhradh agus thathas ga thuigsinn ann an Colbhasa mar 'an lag iosal'. A rèir faclair MhicGilleFhinnein, tha 'dèabhadh' a' ciallachadh 'àite bog eadar dà loch'. Chithear **Blàr an Dèabhaidh** air na mapaichean mar phàirc gu tuath air An Dèabhadh. Air an taobh thall mu choinneimh Blàr an Dèabhaidh tha **Druim an Dèabhaidh** agus tha An Dèabhaidh fhèin aig bonn an leathaid seo.

Bidh ainmean-àite daonna ag atharrachadh. Caillear seann ainmean fhad 's nithear ainmean ùra. Chithear ainm-àite caran ùr air pàirc far a bheil am port-adhair air a bheil **The Dardanelles**. B' e saighdear a bha air tilleadh on Chogadh Mhòr a rinn an t-ainm agus a bha air a bhith ann an conbhoidh a dh'fheuch ri briseadh tro na Dardanelles, caolas dìonta eadar cladaichean Àisianach is Eòrpach na Tuirce. Bha an saighdear a' feuchainn ri pàirc a bha làn deanntagan is luibhean eile a threabhadh. Thuir e gun robh an obair sin 'na bu mhiosa na briseadh tro na Dardanelles' agus dh'fhan an t-ainm.

Coltach ris an sgeul sin, chaidh **Burma Road** a chur air 100 meatair den rathad eadar tuathanas Chill Odhrain agus an ceann-rathaid far an tig na rathaidean B8086 agus B8087 còmhla, a chionn 's

to link Burma with China. It is thought that the construction team was led by Dougie MacGillvary who had spent some time in Burma.

A reminder of an earlier conflict is the name **Spion Kop** for the steep section of road behind Glassard. Some of the men involved in its construction had served in the Boer War, and said the amount of explosives used reminded them of the battle of Spion Kop.

Adjacent to Cille Brighde on Machrins farm is a field – the one furthest east on the road towards Scalasaig – called **Sguit Brideag**. *Sguit* is a variant of *sgot* ‘a piece of land cut off from another’. *Sguit* on Colonsay can also refer to a slightly overhanging rock face where sheep in particular like to take shelter, but that is not the case here. Its earlier name, however, was **Sguit Bridean**. Because of its proximity to Cille Brighde, the reference is most likely to Saint Bridget rather than the oystercatcher which is *Bridean* ‘Saint Bridget’s bird’ in Colonsay Gaelic.

The term *pàirc* is the most common term for a field on Colonsay. **Pàirc an Iodhlainn** ‘the field of the stack yard’ is where the corn was brought in for storage after the harvest. The stackyard or *iodhlann* was used within living memory. Nearby this is **A’ Phàirc Bheag** ‘the small field’. **Pàirc na h-Eaglaise** ‘the field of the church’ contains an old church, and is where unbaptised children were traditionally buried.

**Pàirc Dharach**, between Colonsay House and Kiloran Bay, might be ‘oak field’ (oak trees do grow in this area); alternatively, it may relate to the surname whose English form is Darroch, and which, until recently, was well-known on Colonsay. In Garvard on the main road near the well is **A’ Phàirc Bhàn** ‘the fair field’. North of Colonsay House is an area now called The Meadow, part of which is **Pàirc nan Capall** ‘the field of the horses’.



gun robh mòran daoine an sàs san obair togail, mar a bha an sàs anns an rathad fhèin ann am Burma, a chaidh a thogail anns an Dàrna Cogadh airson Burma agus Sìona a cheangal ri chèile. Thathas a’ smaoinneachadh gum b’ e Dùghlas MacGilleBhràith, a bha air a bhith ann am Burma, a bha os cionn an sgioba rathaid.

Tha cuimhne air stri na bu shine ri fhaicinn anns an ainm **Spion Kop** a th’ air an rathad chas air cùlaibh na Glas-àird. Bha cuid de na daoine a thog e air a bhith ann an Cogadh nam Boer, agus thuirt iad gun do chuir an uiread de stuth-spreadhaidh a dh’ùisnich iad cath Spion Kop nan cuimhne.

Tha achadh dlùth ri Cille Brighde ann an tuathanas nam Machairean – a’ phàirc as fhaide sear air rathad Scalasaig – air a bheil **Sguit Brideag**. Tha ‘sguit’ co-ionnann ri ‘sgot’ a tha a’ ciallachadh ‘earrainn talmhainn a tha dealaichte bho earrainn eile’. Tha ciall eile air ‘sguit’ ann an Colbhasa agus ’s e sin creag le nàdar de mhullach oirre far am faigh caoraich fasnadh, ach chan e sin as ciall don ainm seo. ’S e **Sguit Bridean** a bh’ air an àite bho thùs. Tha e coltach, a chionn ’s gu bheil i dlùth ri Cille Brighde, gu bheil an t-ainm a’ toirt iomradh air Naomh Brighde seach an t-eun, an ‘gille-Bride’, no am ‘Bridean’ mar a tha aca ann an Gàidhlig Cholbhasa.

’S e ‘pàirc’ am facal as coitcheanta ann an Colbhasa airson achaidh. Rachadh an t-arbhar a thoirt a-steach gu **Pàirc an Iodhlainn** aig àm an fhoghair. Tha cuimhne anns an eilean fhathast air na daoine a bhith ag ùisneachadh an iodhlainn. Tha **A’ Phàirc Bheag** dlùth rithe. Tha seann eaglais ann am **Pàirc na h-Eaglaise**, agus bhiodh pàistean nach deach a bhaisteadh gan tiodhlacadh an seo.

’S ma dh’fhaoidte gur e ‘pàirc nan darach’ as ciall don ainm **Pàirc Dharach**, eadar Taigh mòr Cholbhasa agus Bàgh Chille Odhrain (bidh craobhan daraich a’ cinntinn an seo); air neo

With the decline of Gaelic on Colonsay, the meanings of names have often been forgotten. On the promontory between the Strand and Tràigh nam Bàrc is a place remembered as **Crò Ghoirtinn**. Loder has this as Crua' Ghoirtean 'hard field', although Crò a' Ghoirtein 'the pen of the field' is also quite possible.

**An Lèana Mhòr** 'the big wet meadow' is another example of local gender difference; while *lèana* is normally masculine, the lenited adjective, *mhòr* rather than *mòr*, shows it to be feminine on Colonsay. Another example is **An Lèana Ghlas** 'the green wet meadow' between Kiloran and Kilchattan. Given now in English as 'The Fidean', pronounced 'feetch-un' in the Gaelic manner, Loder records a patch of land by the sea at the Strand as **Na Fidean** 'the links'.

Amongst the sand dunes at An Tràigh Bàn is a patch of land called **Mealbhan Bhàrnaidh** 'Barney's dune'. This is remembered by the older generation as the place where the first rabbit warren was set up on the island. Rabbits were taken there to provide a food supply, most probably in the late 18th century by the MacNeill Lairds.

**Learga Mhòr** and **Learga Bheag** are by Kiloran. *Learga* is the Colonsay Gaelic pronunciation of *leargaidh* 'slope'; thus, they are 'the big slope' and 'the small slope' respectively.

Heading out of Kiloran, towards Kilchattan, the field on the left was called **Ceann a' Chrithidh** 'the headland of the shaking'. This was however previously recorded as **Geadhail na Crithe** 'the field of the quaking'. Next to that is **Còmhlairidh**, of unknown meaning.

Cille Brìghde mentioned earlier was in a field called **Achadh MhacGhairbh**. This name is not understood now but probably means 'the MacGarrows' field'. In Machrins is **An Claigneann**, which is understood locally as 'the headland area' by



's ma dh'fhaoidte gu bheil ceangal ann leis an t-sloinneadh, MacGilleRiabhaich, no *Darroch*, mar a th' aca air sa Bheurla, ainm a bha pailt ann an Colbhasa gus o chionn ghoirid. Tha **A' Phàirc Bhàn** ri lorg air a' phrìomh rathad anns a' Gharbh-àird. Tha àite ann gu tuath air Taigh Cholbhasa air a bheil *The Meadow*, anns a bheil **Pàirc nan Capall**.

Tha ciall ainmean air a dhol air dhìochuimhne mar thoradh air crìonadh na Gàidhlig ann an Colbhasa. Tha àite air an rubha eadar An Fhadhail agus Tràigh nam Bàrc air a bheil **Crò Ghoirtinn**. Tha seo sgriobhte aig Loder mar 'Crua' Ghoirtean' ach 's ma dh'fhaoidte gur e 'Crò a' Ghoirtein' as ciall dha.

Tha an diofar a thaobh gnè fhaclan eadar Gàidhlig Cholbhasa agus a' Ghàidhlig ann an sgìrean eile ri fhaicinn anns an ainm **An Lèana Mhòr**; 's e facal fireannta a th' ann an 'lèana' anns a' mhòr-chuid a sgìrean ach chithear, leis gu bheil 'mòr' air a shèimheachadh, gur e facal boireannta a th' ann ann an Colbhasa. Tha eisimpleir eile ri lorg eadar Cille Odhran agus Cille Chatain, **An Lèana Ghlas**. Tha an t-àite ri taobh na mara air a bheil 'The Fidean' air a chlàradh le Loder mar **Na Fidean**.

Tha àite am measg nan dùn gainmhich air an Tràigh Bhàn air a bheil **Mealbhan Bhàrnaidh**. Tha cuimhne aig na daoine as sine air mar an t-àite far an deach a' chiad saobhaidh choineanach a stèidheachadh san eilean. Chaidh na coineanaich a chur ann, 's dòcha le cinn-cinnidh Chloinn MhicNèill, airson an cuid feòla.

'S e 'learga' a their Gàidheil Cholbhasa ris an fhacal 'leargaidh'. Tha **Learga Mhòr** and **Learga Bheag** suidhichte dlùth ri Cille Odhrain.

'S e **Ceann a' Chrithidh** a bh' air a' phàirc air an làimh chli a' fàgail Chille Odhrain air an rathad gu Cille Chatain ach bha seo air a chlàradh roimhe mar **Geadhail na Crithe**. Tha **Còmhlairidh** làimh ris ach chan eil ciall an ainm sin soilleir.

an extension of *claigeann* 'skull'. *Claigeann* can also mean a bare rounded knoll or the best arable land in a farm, and Loder favours the latter as the origin of the name.

On either side of the road from Kiloran to Uragaig are two fields called **An Crosan Mòr** and **An Crosan Beag** 'the big crosslet' and 'the small crosslet' respectively. What these precisely relate to is not entirely clear, although field names are often coined from a specific object within the field.

Despite all these different terms for field it is perhaps surprising that none of our informants offered any with the element *geadhail* 'field' which was once a very common term on the island.

The prominent hill at Garvard - given on early maps as Cnoc Eidrigean - was later corrected on OS maps to Cnoc Eibriginn; it is known locally as **Cnoc Eibrigin**. The meaning of this element is unknown but is likely of Norse origin. **Cnoc Ormasdail** is 'the hill of Ormasdal', with Ormasdal being a Norse place-name. It is sometimes pronounced Cnoc Gormasdail, as if from *gorm* 'blue or green'. **Cnoc an Àrd-Rìgh** 'the hill of the high king' east of Machrins, possibly relates to Somerled, mentioned in the introduction. This may have originally been Cnoc an Àrd-Ruighe 'the hill of the high sheiling'.







Cnoc an Ardrioh  
Cnoc an Àrd-Rìgh

'S ann ann am pàirc air an robh **Achadh MhacGhairbh** a bha Cille Bhrìghde air an tugar iomradh cheana. Chan eil ciall an ainm seo buileach soilleir ach thathar a' smaoinichadh gur e 'achadh le Clann MhicGhairbh' as ciall dha. Tha **An Claiqeann** ri lorg anns Na Machairean agus thathar ga thuigsinn mar 'an t-àite aig ceann an rubha' agus ceangal ga dhèanamh eadar 'ceann' agus 'claiqeann'. Ach uaireannan 's e 'cnoc cruinn maol' as ciall don fhacal 'claiqeann' ann an ainmean-àite no 'an talamh àitich as fheàrr air tuathanas' mar as fheàrr le Loder.

Tha dà phàirc air gach taobh den rathad eadar Cille Odhrain agus Uragaig air a bheil **An Crosan Mòr** agus **An Crosan Beag**. Chan eil e buileach soilleir dè as ciall don chrosan anns na h-àitean seo ach bidh pàircean gu bitheanta air an ainmeachadh air nithean a lorgar annta.

A dh'aindeoin nan iomadh facal Gàidhlig airson 'achadh' 's ma dh'fhaidte gu bheil e na iongnadh

nach deach ainm sam bith a thoirt seachad anns an robh am facal 'geadhail' a bha uair uabhasach cumanta ann an Gàidhlig Cholbhasa.

Chaidh ainm a' chnuic nochdte aig a' Gharbh-àird - a bha sgrìobhte air seann mhapaichean mar 'Cnoc Eidrigean' - atharrachadh air mapaichean OS agus Cnoc Eibriginn air a-nis; 's e **Cnoc Eibrigin** a their muinntir Colbhasa ris. Chan eil a chiall ro shoilleir ach thathar a' smaoinichadh gur e ainm Lochlannach a th' ann. 'S e ainm Lochlannach, Ormasdal, a tha a' nochdadh san ainm, **Cnoc Ormasdail**. Uaireannan bidh muinntir an àite ga fhuaimneachadh mar 'Cnoc Gormasdail', mar gur ann air an dath gorm a tha e stèidhichte. 'S ma dh'fhaidte gu bheil **Cnoc an Àrd-Rìgh**, a tha sear air na Machairean, co-cheangailte ri Somhairle, a chaidh ainmeachadh san ro-ràdh. Ach 's ma dh'fhaidte gur e Cnoc an Àrd-Ruighe a bha air a' chnoc bho thùs.



Crò Ghoirtinn



An Lèana Mhòr

## Birds

Colonsay and Oronsay are famous for their rich bird life, now supported by the RSPB's strong presence on the islands. It is therefore of no surprise that birds appear in the names of several hills. Overlooking the south side of East Loch Fada (marked on OS's online mapping as Creag Mhòr) are **Creag nan Druideag** 'the crag of the starlings' and **Creag nan Speireag** 'the crag of the sparrow-hawks'. **Beinn nam Fitheach**, east of Colonsay House, is 'the mountain of the ravens'.



Birds also appear in coastal names; **Lag nan Eala** 'the hollow of the swans' is situated on The Strand, and **Leac nan Gàadh** 'the slab of the geese' at Port na h-Àthaig. Sea-birds unsurprisingly make an appearance too; **Sgeir nam Faileann** 'the skerry of the (common) gulls' is at Tràigh nam Bàrc and **Sloc nan Sgarbh** 'the gully of the cormorants' is on the north-east coast of Colonsay.

Lag nan Eala

## Eòin

Tha Colbhasa agus Orasa aithnichte airson an cuid eunlaith, agus na h-eòin a-nis gan dìon anns na h-Eileanan le Comann Rìoghail Dion nan Eun. Chan eil e na iongnadh mar sin gu bheil eòin a' nochdadh ann an ainmean cuid de na cruic. Tha **Creag nan Druideag** agus **Creag nan Speireag** (comharraichte air mapaichean OS air-loidhne mar 'Creag Mhòr') a' coimhead a-nuas air ceann a deas Loch Fada an Ear. Tha **Beinn nam Fitheach** ann, air taobh siar Taigh Cholbhasa.

Tha eòin ri fhaicinn cuideachd ann an ainmean an cois a' chladaich; tha **Lag nan Eala** ri lorg air An Fhadhail, agus **Leac nan Gàadh** ann am Port na h-Àthaig. Tha eòin-mhara a' nochdadh ann cuideachd; tha **Sgeir nam Faileann** air Tràigh nam Bàrc agus **Sloc nan Sgarbh** air cladach an ear-thuath Cholbhasa.



Creag nan Druideag

## Rivers, lochs and glens

**Abhainn a' Mhuilinn Duibh** is a small burn which flows into the Strand. It is on the map as Sruthan a' Mhuilinn Duibh; both names mean 'the river of the black mill'. The mill was a horizontal mill, built to a traditional design thought to have been introduced by Norse settlers. Its remains are still visible. Further

up the burn is a dam which was used to increase the water flow for the mill.

Loch an Sgoltair, one of the larger lochs on the island, is referred to locally as **Loch Sgoltair** 'cleaver loch'. **Lochan Chille Mhoire** 'the little loch of Cille Mhoire' is also known as **Lochan na Cealltrach** 'the



Loch Breac  
An Loch Breac

## Aibhnichean, lochan is glinn

'S e allt beag a th' ann an **Abhainn a' Mhuilinn Duibh** a tha a' sruthadh a-nuas don Fhadhail. Tha e comharraichte air a' mhapa mar Sruthan a' Mhuilinn Duibh. 'S e muileann 'tarsainn' a bh' ann, a bh' air a thogail a rèir nòis, thathar a' smaoineachadh, a thug na Lochlannaich leotha. Tha dama nas fhaide shuas air an allt a chaidh ùisneachadh leis a' mhuileann airson smachd a chumail air sruth an uisge.

Tha **Loch Sgoltair** air aon de na lochan as motha anns an eilean. Tha ainm eile air **Lochan Chille Mhoire**, 's e sin **Lochan na Cealltrach**. Tha am facal 'cealltrach' a tha a' ciallachadh 'àite tiodhlacaidh' cumanta gu leòr ann an Èirinn ach chan eil e a' nochdadh gu bitheanta an Alba. Tha **Raonabuilg** (raon na builg) ri lorg tuath air Na Machairean agus tha cumadh builg no бага air a' ghleann seo; tha an t-ainm ri fhaicinn a-rithist ann an **Lochan Raonabuilg**. Tha loch beag air a bheil **An Loch Breac** ('s dòcha gur e an talamh mu thimcheall an loch as ciall don fhacal 'breac') làimh ri Tràigh nam Bàrc far am b' àbhaist corran-gritheach neadachadh.

Tha **Sruthan na h-Ulaidhe** air aon den iomadh ainm ann an Colbhasa co-cheangailte ri ionmhas tiodhlaichte leithid **Glac an Airgid** agus **Aoineadh na h-Ulaidhe**. Chan eil iomradh anns a' bheul-aithris air eachdraidh nan ainmean ach 's ma dh'fhaoidte gu bheil ulaidhean rin lorg fhathast anns na h-àitean seo.

B' urrainn do dhaoine fantail aig **Teampall a' Ghlinne** gus an leigeadh an làn leotha coiseachd a-null a dh'Orasa. A rèir mìneachadh eile an ainm seo, bhiodh eucoirich a' sireadh àite dìon an seo mus dèanadh iad air tèarmann na Croise air taobh

Loch Breac  
An Loch Breac

Sruthan a' Mhuilinn Duibh  
Abhainn a' Mhuilinn Duibh



little loch of the burial ground'. The word *cealltrach*, while known in Ireland, hardly occurs in Scotland. North of Machrins is **Raonabuilg** 'the flat area of the bag' is an enclosed bag like valley; this lends its name to **Lochan Raonabuilg** 'the little loch of Raonabuilg'. **An Loch Breac** 'the speckled loch' (presumably relating to the ground around the loch) is a small loch by Tràigh nam Bàrc where herons used to nest.

**Sruthan na h-Ulaidhe** 'the stream of the treasure' is one of a number of names on Colonsay relating to buried treasure. Other names are **Glac an Airgid** 'the glade of the silver' and **Aoineadh na h-Ulaidhe** 'the steep hillside of the treasure'. Tradition however is silent on the details and these names might relate to undiscovered archaeological remains.

**Teampall a' Ghlinne** 'the temple (or sanctuary) of the glen' is a spot where people could wait until the state of the tide allowed them to walk to Oronsay. Another interpretation is that sanctuary was sought here by fugitive law breakers who could then run across the Strand to the Sanctuary Cross, where they would find refuge. The glen to the west is known simply as **An Gleann** 'the glen', and through it runs **Abhainn a' Ghlinne** 'the river of the glen'.

**Bealach nan Sac** 'the pass of the loads' is a point where men carrying coffins from Scalasaig to Kilchattan cemetery would rest, eat cheese and drink whisky, before continuing. The pass called **Bealach Turnaigil** on OS maps is known locally simply as **Am Bealach** 'the pass' or **Bealach na Gaoithe** 'the pass of the wind'. The delightful **Lagan Soilleir Doilleir** 'the little hollow of light and shade' sits on **An Dubh-Eilean** 'the black island' on the west side of Oronsay.



Bealach na Gaoithe  
Caption

thall Na Fadhla. Chan eil ach **An Gleann** ga chur air a' ghleann air an taobh siar agus 's i **Abhainn a' Ghlinne** a tha a' sruthadh troimhe.

Ghabhadh na fir a bha a' giùlan nan cisteachan-laighe eadar Scalasaig agus cladh Chill Chatain fois aig **Bealach nan Sac** agus ghabhadh iad greim càise is drama mus leanadh iad orra. 'S e **Am Bealach** no **Bealach na Gaoithe** a th' aig muinntir an eilein air an àite a tha sgrìobhte mar **Bealach Turnaigil** air mapaichean OS. Tha an **Lagan Soilleir Doilleir** ri lorg anns An Dubh-Eilean air taobh siar Orasa.



## Minor features

Nearby Dùnan nan Con (mentioned earlier) is, or rather was, **Geata Dùnan nan Con** 'the gate of Dùnan nan Con' situated beyond the parking place, where there are two old walls. **A' Chachaileith Mhòr** 'the big gate' likewise is no longer there, but used to be on the boundary between two crofts. The junction where the road to The Strand (B8085) joins the circular road (B8086) round Colonsay is still known as **An Geata Dubh** 'the black gate' although the gate itself has long since disappeared.

On the top of Ben Oronsay or **Beinn Orasa**, Oronsay's highest point, is **Càrn Cùl ri Èirinn** 'the hill with a back to Ireland'. According to tradition, when St Columba left Ireland he landed in a little harbour south of Tràigh nam Bàrc called **Port na**



Clach a' Pheanais

**h-lùbhraich** 'the harbour of the barge', and crossed the Strand to Oronsay with a view to setting up his church there. The mountains of Donegal were still visible from this hilltop, however, and Columba had vowed to turn his back on his homeland and to devote his life to the spreading of the Gospel. Thus, he continued northwards and settled on Iona. The great man is remembered in a well on Colonsay near Kiloran Bay – **Tobar Chaluum Chille** 'Columba's well'.

An island just off Oronsay is called **Eilean a' Chraoibh Chaorainn** 'the island of the rowan tree'. Nearby stands a natural arch called **A' Chlach Thuill** 'the hole stone'; in English this is known as 'The Elephant's Trunk' because of its shape. The local



Tobar Fuar  
An Tobar Fuar

## Feartan beaga

'S e **Geata Dùnan nan Con** a bha air Dùnan nan Con (a chithear gu h-àrd) a tha suidhichte ri taobh an àite-pharcaidh, far a bheil dà sheann bhalla. A-rithist, chan eil a' chachaleith anns an ainm **A' Chachaileith Mhòr** ann tuilleadh ach 's ann air a' chrich eadar dà chroit a bha i. 'S e **An Geata Dubh** a th' air an àite far a bheil rathad na Fadhla (B8085) agus an rathad cuairteach (B8086) mu thimcheall Cholbhasa ged a tha iomadh bliadhna ann on a bha an geata fhèin ann.

Tha **Càrn Cùl ri Èirinn** ri fhaicinn air mullach an àite as àirde ann an Orasa, **Beinn Orasa**. An dèidh do Chalum Cille Èirinn fhàgail, chuir e air tìr, a rèir beul-aithris, ann an acarsaid bheag deas air Tràigh nam Bàrc air a bheil **Port na h-lùbhraich**, agus chaidh e thar na Fadhla a dh'Orasa agus e am beachd eaglais a chur air chois an sin. Ach chitheadh e beanntan Dhùn nan Gall fhathast bhon mhullach agus bha e mionnaichte gun cuireadh e a chùl ri Èirinn agus gun cuireadh e an còrr dhe a bheatha seachad a' sgaoileadh an t-Soisgeil. Mar sin, chùm e air don àird a tuath gus an do ràinig e Ì Chaluum Chille. Tha cuimhne air an duine mhòr ann an ainm tobair ann an Colbhasa, làimh ris An Tràigh Bhàn - **Tobar Chaluum Chille**.

'S e **Eilean a' Chraoibh Chaorainn** a tha air eilean far cladach Orasa. Tha bogha cloiche nàdarra dlùth air a bheil **A' Chlach Thuill**; 's e '*The Elephant's Trunk*' a th' oirre sa Bheurla air sgàth a cumaidh. Tha e na chleachdadh gum beannaichear an t-aillbhean nuair a thathar a' dol a-nunn a dh'Orasa no a' tilleadh.

The Elephant's Trunk  
A' Chlach Thuill





'S ann air an ainm **An Tobar Fuar** far am faighte uisge math, glan a tha **Allt an Tobair Fhuair** agus **Tràigh an Tobair Fhuair** stèidhichte. Chaidh an t-ainm **An t-Adhradh** a chur air a' chnoc sin a chionn 's gur e tèarmann a bh' ann, agus an t-àite seo a' comharrachadh crìoch an tèarmainn sin air An Fhadhail. Rachadh leannain a bha a' suirghe a dhà àite sònraichte, **Bruthach a' Ghaoil**, a tha an iar-dheas air An Adhradh, agus an rubha ann am Baile na h-Àirde air a bheil **Meall na Suirghe**.

Tha clach shnaighte air taobh siar togalaichean tuathanais nam Machairean air a bheil **Ballan-Stiallach**. Tha i nas lugha na meatair a dh'àirde a-nis ach b' àbhaist dhi a bhith dà uiread na b' àirde. Tha an t-ainm a' sealltainn dhuinn gun rachadh daoine a cheangal an seo mar pheanas. A rèir beul-aithris, chaidh boireannach a cheangal an seo gus am marbhadh na meanbh-chuileagan i. Nochd a leannan agus bhris e a' chlach ann an dà leth agus shad e an leth uachdarach anns a' bhoglaich. Tha e air innse cuideachd gum biodh cailleachan-dubha Chille Chatriona ag ùisneachadh **Clach a' Pheanais**, far an rachadh an sgiùrsadh mar dleastanas moralta.

Tha clach ann am Baile na h-Àirde air a bheil **Clach na Gruagaich**. Tha 'gruagach' a' ciallachadh 'caileag' no 'maighdeann' ann an Gàidhlig an latha an-diugh ach o chionn fhada b' e creutairean molach, os-nàdarra a bh' annta. Tha clachan a leithid seo rin lorg air feadh na Gàidhealtachd is nan eileanan. Tha cumaidhean cuaich annta, 's ma dh'fhaidte air am bleith tro phròiseasan nàdarra, anns an rachadh bainne a dhòrtadh airson a' Ghruagach a shàsachadh agus gus nach gabhadh i gnothach ri breith nan uan, bleoghan nam bò no na h-obraichean eile a bha ri dhèanamh anns a' bhaile.

tradition is to salute the elephant when going to and from Oronsay.

**An Tobar Fuar** 'the cold well', which provided excellent water, gave its name to **Allt an Tobair Fhuair** and **Tràigh an Tobair Fhuair** 'the burn' and 'the beach' 'of the cold well' respectively. **An t-Adhradh** 'the worshipping' is a hill so called because it was a sanctuary, marking the limits of the sanctuary area on the Strand. **Bruthach a' Ghaoil** 'the bank of the loving' just south-west of An t-Adhradh, and **Meall na Suirghe** 'the hill of the wooing', a headland in Balnahard, were both places where couples would go courting.

On the west side of Machrins farm buildings stands a sculpted stone referred to as a **Ballan-Stiallach**, a pillory stone. It is now less than a metre high, but was once twice that height. As its name shows, it was a pillory stone, to which people would be tied as punishment. According to tradition, a woman was once tied there to be killed by midges. Her sweetheart came and broke the stone in half and threw the top section into the nearby bog. Similarly, **Clach a' Pheanais** 'the penance stone' was allegedly used by the nuns of Cille Chatriona. They were said to be flagellated here for their moral good.

In Balnahard there is a stone called **Clach na Gruagaich** 'the stone of the Gruagach'. In modern Gaelic a *gruagach* simply means a 'girl' or 'maiden', but historically it was a kind of hairy supernatural creature. Such stones are to be found throughout the Highlands and Islands. Each one has a cup-shaped depression in it, possibly formed by natural processes, into which milk would be poured so that the Gruagach would be satisfied and not interfere with the lambing, milking or any of the other important activities of the township.



## Place-name gazetteer / Clàr ainmean-àite

Many of the names mentioned in the text are small features not recorded on maps. Local dialect has been taken into consideration in the pronunciation guide, which is meant as a rough guide only. ch represents 'ch' as in Scots 'loch', tch represents 'ch' as in English 'church'. The digraphs 'gh' and 'dh' in the pronunciation make a voiced guttural sound which does not exist in standard English and are indicated as gh and dh. Likewise 'ao' is a sound which does not exist in standard English, the closest approximation is in the French oeuf 'egg', and is thus indicated as oeu. The pronunciation of the other vowels are as follows: 'aw' as in 'law', 'u' as in 'rug', 'ay' as in 'day', 'ie' as in 'lie', 'au' as in 'auld'. Letters in bold indicate the placing of stress in a place-name. The letters in brackets after the meaning denote the language of origin. Where none is stated, the name is Gaelic. (N = Norse, EN = English, ? = uncertain meaning)

'S e feartan beaga a th' ann am mòran de na h-ainmean san teacsa agus nach eil clàraichte air mapaichean. Thugadh fa-near do dhualchainnt Cholbhasa anns an stiùireadh air fuaimneachadh, ged nach urrainnear ach blasad a thoirt seachad an sin. Tha na litrichean anns na camagan a' riochdachadh a' chàin thùsail. Far nach eil sion comharraichte, 's e ainm Gàidhlig a th' ann.

Name Ainm	Map name Ainm mapa	Meaning if known Ciall far a bheil i againn	Approximate pronunciation Stiùireadh fuaimneachaidh	Coordinate Clàr-stiùiridh	Page Duilleag
Abhainn a' Ghlinne	same	the river of the glen	ah-veen uh <b>ghleen</b> yu	NR367919	44
Abhainn a' Mhuilinn Duibh	Sruthan a' Mhuilinn Duibh	the river of the black mill	ah-veen uh voo-lin <b>doo</b>	NR375908	42
Achadh MhacGhairbh	none	the MacGarrows' field	ah <u>ch</u> -uh vachk- <b>ghu</b> -riv	NR373933	34
An t-Adhradh	An t-Aoradh	the worshipping	un <b>toeu</b> -rugh	NR361894	50
Àird Sgeidheanais	Ardskenish	the headland of the war ship	arsht <b>skin</b> -ish	NR345914	23
Allt an Tobair Fhuair	none	the burn of the cold well	aull un tow-pur <b>oor</b>	NR358937	50
Aoineadh na h-Ulaidhe	none	the steep hillside of the treasure	<u>oeun</u> -yugh nuh <b>hoo</b> -leech-uh	unknown	44
Baile a' Mhaide	none	the farm of the stick	bahl uh <b>vetch</b> -uh	NR401973	–

Name Ainm	Map name Ainm mapa	Meaning if known Ciall far a bheil i againn	Approximate pronunciation Stiùireadh fuaimneachaidh	Coordinate Clàr-stiùiridh	Page Duilleag
Baile na h-Àirde	Balnahard	the homestead of the headland	bahl nuh <b>harsht</b>	NR415994	27
Ballan-Stiallach	none	pillory stone	bah-lun <b>sjee</b> -luch	NR366932	50
Am Bealach	none	the pass	um <b>bell</b> -och	NR351922	44
Bealach na Gaoithe	none	the pass of the wind	bell-och nuh <b>goeu</b> -ich	NR351922	44
Bealach nan Sac	none	the pass of the loads	bell-och nuh <b>sachk</b>	NR357942	44
Bealach Turnaigil	Turnigil	the pass of Turnigil	bell-och <b>toor</b> -nuh-gull	NR353925	44
Beinn Èibhinn	Beinn Eibhne	Èibhinn's (N) mountain	ben <b>ay</b> -veen	NR379904	14
Beinn nam Fitheach	same	the mountain of the ravens	ben nuh <b>fee</b> -och	NR407967	40
Beinn Orasa	Beinn Oronsay	the mountain of Oronsay	ben <b>or</b> -as-ah	NR350891	46
Blàr an Dèabhaidh	Blar an Deabhaidh	the field of (a place called) the seepage	blahr un <b>jay</b> -veech	NR387960	28
Bogha an Eilthirich	none	the sunken rock of the emigrant	bow un <b>eh</b> -lir-eech	NR332896	18
Bogha Chùbaig	none	the sunken rock of (a boat called) Cubaig	bow <b>choo</b> -bik	NR324863	18
Bogha Dale	none	the sunken rock of (a boat called) Dale	bow <b>dale</b>	NR323883	18
Bogha nan Eilthireach	none	the sunken rock of the emigrants	bow nun <b>eh</b> -lir-och	NR332896	18
Bruthach a' Ghaoil	none	the bank of the loving	broo-och uh <b>ghoeu</b> -il	NR355891	50
Burma Road	none	(EN)	–	NR390967	28
Cable Bay	Port na Beiste	(EN)	–	NR390907	24



Name Ainm	Map name Ainm mapa	Meaning if known Ciall far a bheil i againn	Approximate pronunciation Stiùireadh fuaimneachaidh	Coordinate Clàr-stiùiridh	Page Duilleag
Cailleach Uragaig	same	the old woman of Uragaig	kal-yoch <b>oo</b> -rah-gig	NR381982	18
Caisteal nan Gillean	none	the castle of the boys	cash-jull nuh <b>geel</b> -yin	unknown	22
Càrn Cùl ri Èirinn	none	the hill with a back to Ireland	carn cool ree <b>ay</b> -reen	NR350892	46
Carraig a' Chait	none	the cat's fishing rock	cah-rik uh <b>chootch</b>	NR403991	18
Carraig Cruimein	none	MacCrimmon's fishing rock	cah-rik <b>croo</b> -min	NM415003	18
Ceann a' Chrithidh	none	the headland of the shaking	kyen uh <b>chree</b> -ee	NR389965	34
A' Chachaileith Mhòr	none	the big gate	uh <b>chah</b> - <b>chill</b> -eh <b>vore</b>	NR383961	46
A' Charraig Gharbh	none	the rough fishing rock	uh <b>chah</b> -rik <b>ghah</b> -riv	unknown	18
A' Chlach Thuill	none	the hole stone	uh <b>chlach</b> <b>hoo</b> -eel	NR364896	46
Cille Brighde	none	Bridget's chapel	keel-uh <b>breetch</b>	NR373933	10
Cille Chatain	Upper/Lower Kilchattan	Cattan's chapel	keel <b>chat</b> -un	NR363950	10
Cille Chatriona	none	Catherine's chapel	keel <b>cha</b> - <b>tree</b> -nuh	NR421998	10
Cille Choinnich	none	Kenneth's chapel	keel <b>chaw</b> -nyeech	NR355918	10
Cille Mhoire	none	Mary's chapel	keel-uh <b>vaw</b> -ruh	NR359888	10
Cille Odhrain	Kiloran	Oran's chapel	keel <b>oh</b> -ran	NR399967	10
Clach a' Pheanais	none	the penance stone	klach uh <b>fen</b> -ish	NR421999	50
Clach na Gruagaich	none	the stone of the Gruagach	klach nuh <b>groo</b> -ak-eech	NR417998	50

Name Ainm	Map name Ainm mapa	Meaning if known Ciall far a bheil i againn	Approximate pronunciation Stiùireadh fuaimneachaidh	Coordinate Clàr-stiùiridh	Page Duilleag
An Claigeann	none	the headland area ('the skull')	un <b>klak</b> -un	NR365934	34
Cnoc an Àrd-Rìgh	Cnoc an Ardrìgh	the hill of the high king	kraw- <b>chk</b> un <b>ahrsht</b> -ree	NR378935	36
Cnoc Calanda	Keepers Cottage	Calanda hill (unknown meaning)	kraw- <b>chk</b> <b>cah</b> -lin-tuh	NR392963	14
Cnoc Eibrìgin	Cnoc Eibrìgin	the hill of Eibrìgin (N)	kraw- <b>chk</b> <b>ay</b> -prik-in	NR364912	36
Cnoc Ormasdail	Cnoc Ormadail	the hill of Ormasdal (N)	kraw- <b>chk</b> <b>or</b> -uh-mus-dull	NR414992	36
Colbhasa	Colonsay	island of Koll-vangr (hill field) (N)	<b>coll</b> -us-ah	NR377942	7
An Comharra	none	the marker	un <b>caw</b> -huh-ruh	NR372875 & NR346879	16
Comharra nam Muirsgeanan	none	the marker of the razorfish (plural)	caw-ruh nuh <b>moor</b> -sken-un	NR346879	16
Còmhlaireidh	none	unknown	<b>caw</b> -la-ree	NR389964	34
Creag nan Druideag	none	the crag of the starlings	krayk nuh <b>droo</b> -jak	NR394955	40
Creag nan Speireag	none	the crag of the sparrow-hawks	krayk nuh <b>spee</b> -rak	NR395956	40
Crò a' Ghoirtein	none	the pen of the field	crow uh <b>ghorsh</b> -jen	NR364908	34
An Crosan Beag	none	the small crosslet	un cross-un <b>bek</b>	NR398972 approx	36
An Crosan Mòr	none	the big crosslet	un cross-un <b>more</b>	NR398974	36
The Dardanelles	none	(EN)	–	NR362931	28
An Dèabhadh	none	the seepage	un <b>jay</b> -vugh	NR389958	28
Druim an Dèabhaidh	none	the ridge of (a place called) the seepage	drim un <b>jay</b> -veech	NR390957	28

Name Ainm	Map name Ainm mapa	Meaning if known Ciall far a bheil i againn	Approximate pronunciation Stiùireadh fuaimneachaidh	Coordinate Clàr-stiùiridh	Page Duilleag
An Dubh-Eilean	Dubh Eilean	the black island	un <b>doo</b> ay-lun	NR340886	45
Dùn Cholla	same	Coll's fort	doon <b>chow</b> -luh	NR377915	14
Dùn Dòmhnail	Dùn Domhnuill	Donald's fort	doon <b>daw</b> -il	NR355890	14
Dùn Èibhinn	Dun	Èibhinn's (N) fort	doon <b>ay</b> -veen	NR389934	14
Dùn na Mara	none	the fort of the sea	doon nuh <b>mah</b> -ruh	NR379901	14
Dùnan nan Con	Dunan nan Con	the little fort of the dogs	doo-nun nuh <b>con</b>	NR376919	14
Eilean a' Chraoibh Chaorainn	Eilean a' Chro-caorainn	the island of the rowan tree	ay-lun uh <b>chroeu</b> <b>choeu</b> -reen	NR366897	46
Eilean Ghaoideamal	same	the island of Gaoideamal (N)	ay-lun <b>ghootch</b> -uh-mull	NR370872	18
Eilean nan Corp	none	the island of the corpses	ay-lun nuh <b>cawrp</b>	NR355947 approx	16
Eilean nan Giomach	same	the island of the lobsters	ay-lun nuh <b>gim-och</b>	NR340896	18
Eilean nan Ròn	Eilean nan Ron	the island of the seals	ay-lun nuh <b>rawn</b>	NR335866	16
An Fhadhail	The Strand	the tidal ford	un <b>oeu</b> -ill	NR369904	22
Na Fidean	none	the links	nuh <b>feetch</b> -un	NR370912	34
An Garbh-Chladach	none	the rough shoreline	un <b>gar</b> -uh <b>chlah-toch</b>	NR351940	24
Gadhail na Crithe	none	the field of the quaking	geh-awl nuh cree-huh	NR389965	34
An Geata Dubh	none	the black gate	un gayhta doo	NR381937	46
Geata Dùnan nan Con	none	the gate of Dùnan nan Con	gayhta doo-nun nuh <b>con</b>	NR376919 approx	46

Name Ainm	Map name Ainm mapa	Meaning if known Ciall far a bheil i againn	Approximate pronunciation Stiùireadh fuaimneachaidh	Coordinate Clàr-stiùiridh	Page Duilleag
Glac an Airgid	none	the glade of the silver	glachk un <b>eh</b> -ri-kit	NR350892	44
An Gleann	same	the glen	un <b>gleh</b> -own	NR367918	44
Gob a' Chlacharain	Avenue Cottage	the point of the wheatear	gope uh <b>chlach</b> -ur-un	NR396966	14
Lag nan Eala	none	the hollow of the swans	lak nun <b>eh</b> -luh	NR368909	40
Lagan Soilleir Doilleir	none	the little hollow of light and shade	lak-un <b>sull</b> -yer <b>dull</b> -yer	NR344886	44
Leac nan Gèadh	Leac nan Geadh	the slab of the geese	lyachk nuh <b>geh</b>	NR365883	40
An Làana Ghlas	none	the green wet meadow	un len-uh <b>ghlass</b>	NR378958	34
An Làana Mhòr	none	the big wet meadow	un len-uh <b>vore</b>	NR397973	34
Learga Bheag	none	the small slope	lerrick-uh <b>vek</b>	NR392968	34
Learga Mhòr	none	the big slope	lerrick-uh <b>vore</b>	NR390967	34
An Loch Breac	Loch Breac	the speckled loch	an <b>loch</b> <b>breh</b> -uchk	NR358909	44
Loch Fada	Loch Fada	long loch	<b>loch</b> <b>fat</b> -uh	NR383955	31
Lochan na Cealltrach	Lochan Chille-moire	little loch of of the burial ground	<b>loch</b> -un nuh <b>keh</b> -al-trawch	NR360889	42
Lochan Raonabuilg	none	the little loch of Raonabuilg	<b>Loch</b> -un <b>roeu</b> n-uh-boo-lik	NR369938	44
Loch Sgoltair	Loch an Sgoltaire	cleaver loch	<b>loch</b> <b>skole</b> -tir	NR386972	42
Lochan Chille Mhoire	Lochan Chille-moire	the little loch of Cille Mhoire	<b>loch</b> -un <b>cheel</b> -yuh <b>voe</b> -ruh	NR360889	42
Na Machairean	Machrins	the Machairs (costal plain)	nuh <b>meh</b> -chur-un	NR366933	33

Name Ainm	Map name Ainm mapa	Meaning if known Ciall far a bheil i againn	Approximate pronunciation Stiùireadh fuaimneachaidh	Coordinate Clàr-stiùiridh	Page Duilleag
Mealbhan Bhàrnaidh	none	Barney's dune	mel-un <b>vahr</b> -nee	NR404980	34
Meall na Suirghe	Meall na Suiridhe	the hill of the wooing	mel nuh <b>soo</b> -reech	NR403993	50
Orasa	Oronsay	tidal island (N)	<b>or</b> -us-uh	NR355885	7
Pàirc an Iodhlainn	none	the field of the stack yard	park un <b>yew</b> -ling	NR369933	32
Pàirc Dharach	none	oak field/field of (a person called) Darroch	park <b>dhah</b> -roch	NR393970	32
Pàirc na h-Eaglaise	none	the field of the church	park nuh <b>hay</b> -glish	NR383914	32
Pàirc nan Capall	none	the field of the horses	park nuh <b>cah</b> -pul	NR399972	32
A' Phàirc Bhàn	none	the fair field	uh fark <b>vaan</b>	NR373913	32
A' Phàirc Bheag	none	the small field	uh fark <b>vek</b>	NR371934	32
A' Phlaide Mhòr	Plaide Mhòr	the big blanket	uh flatch-uh <b>vore</b>	NR348922	22
Am Poll Gorm	Poll Gorm	the green pool	um pawl <b>gaw</b> -rum	NR373896	24
Port a' Chrochaire	Port na Beiste	the harbour of the hangman or hanged man	pawrt uh <b>chraw</b> -chur-uh	NR390907	24
Port an Taighe Mhòir	Port an Tighe Mhoir	the harbour of the big house	pawrt un tie-uh <b>vore</b>	NR391984	24
Port Iain Hart	none	John Hart's harbour	pawrt iain <b>heh</b> -art	NR373898	24
Am Port Mòr	Port Mòr	the big harbour	um pawrt <b>more</b>	NR355947	24
Port na Cuilce	same	the harbour of the reeds	pawrt nuh <b>kool</b> -kyuh	NM414002	18
Port na h-Àthaig	Port na h-Atha	the harbour of the little kiln	pawrt na <b>heh</b> -ik	NR362881	24

Name Ainm	Map name Ainm mapa	Meaning if known Ciall far a bheil i againn	Approximate pronunciation Stiùireadh fuaimneachaidh	Coordinate Clàr-stiùiridh	Page Duilleag
Port na h-lùbhraich	none	the harbour of the barge	pawrt nuh <b>hew</b> -reech	NR350907	46
Port nam Fliuchan	same	the harbour of the wet spots	pawrt nuh <b>flew</b> -chun	NR383980	24
Raonabuilg	none	the flat area of the bag	<b>roeun</b> -uh-boo-lik	NR369938	44
Rubha nan Deamhas	none	the promontory of the shears	rooa nuh <b>jeh</b> -uhs	NR361903 approx	24
An Seann Mhuileann	Mill House	the old mill	un sheh-on <b>voo</b> -lun	NR385962	10
Sgalasaig	Scalasaig	Skalli's bay (N)	<b>skah</b> -lass-ayk	NR393940	33
Sgeir nam Faileann	same	the skerry of the (common) gulls	skehr nuh <b>foeu</b> -lun	NR353911	40
Sguit Brideag	none	Bridget's piece of land	skoos <b>bree</b> -jak	NR375934	32
Sithean Bhùraich Bharraich	none	unknown	shee-un <b>voo</b> -reech <b>vah</b> -reech	unknown	22
Sithean Cnoc Riabhaich	none	the speckled hill midden	shee-un kraw- <b>chk</b> <b>ree</b> -ah-eech	unknown	22
Sithean Phort Chrag	none	the crag harbour midden	shee-un pawrt <b>chrahk</b>	NR358 28798	22
Sloc Dubh Mhic-a-Phi	none	MacPhee's dark gully	slaw- <b>chk</b> doo vee <b>chk</b> -uh- <b>fee</b>	NR404986	24
Sloc na Sgùineir	none	the gully of the schooner	slaw- <b>chk</b> nuh <b>skoo</b> -ner	NR425990	24
Sloc nan Sgarbh	same	the gully of the cormorants	slaw- <b>chk</b> nuh <b>ska</b> -riv	NR414969	40
Spion Kop	none	Spioenkop (Afrikaans)	–	NR387960	32
Sruthan na h-Ulaidhe	same	the stream of the treasure	sroo-an nuh <b>hoo</b> -lich-uh	NR416996	44
Taigh Alasdair Ruaidh	none	Red Alexander's house	tie alasdair <b>roo</b> -eye	NR367912	14

Name Ainm	Map name Ainm mapa	Meaning if known Ciall far a bheil i againn	Approximate pronunciation Stiùireadh fuaimneachaidh	Coordinate Clàr-stiùiridh	Page Duilleag
Taigh Ghilleasbaig Ruaidh	none	Red Archie's house	tie <u>g</u> heel- <b>as</b> -pik <b>roo</b> -eye	NR367912	14
Taigh nan Ceilpearan	none	the house of the kelpers	tie nuh <b>kyell</b> -pur-un	NR338867	10
Teampall a' Ghlinne	Chapel	the temple (or sanctuary) of the glen	jem-pul uh <b>ghleen</b> yu	NR374917	44
Tobar Chalum Chille	none	Columba's well	tow-purr chah-lum <b>cheel</b> -yuh	NR404986	46
An Tobar Fuar	Tobar Fuar	the cold well	un tow-purr <b>foor</b>	NR359937	50
Tràigh an Tobair Fhuair	Traigh an Tobair Fhuair	the beach of the cold well	try un tow-pur <b>oor</b>	NR355937	50
An Tràigh Bàn	Tràigh Bàn	the fair beach	un try <b>baan</b>	NR401980	22
Tràigh nam Bàrc	same	the beach of the barks (boats)	try nuh <b>bark</b>	NR355914	22
Traigh Orasa	none	the beach of Oronsay (Oronsay Bay)	try <b>or</b> -us-uh	NR349882	16
Turnaigil	Turnigil	twisting gully (N)	<b>toor</b> -nuh-gull	NR352924	–
Uamh a' Chorpaich	none	the cave of the corpse place	oo-av ah <b>chawr</b> -pee <u>ch</u>	NM424009	22
Uinneag Eircheil	none	Hercules' window	oo-nyahk <b>ehr</b> - <u>ich</u> -il	NM420011	22
Uragaig	same	bay with rock-strewn beach (N)	<b>oo</b> -rah-gik	NR391981	36

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The place-names of Colonsay and Oronsay in the Southern Hebrides are intimately connected with the landscape, and the lives of the people who have lived here for centuries. Man-made areas, coasts, islands, rivers and minor features such as standing stones have been collected to reflect stories, past-times, and daily routines; by exploring their meaning and history, many details of past lives are revealed.

In this, the fourth in our series of place-name booklets, Scottish Natural Heritage and Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba have again collaborated to present a picture of how place-names relate to the landscape. By drawing on the knowledge of local people, a wealth of place-names - including many that have not been recorded in print before - are identified and their meaning discussed.

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Gaelic Place-Names of Scotland

  
**SOILLSE**

Tha ainmean-àite Cholbhasa agus Orasa dlùth-cheangailte ri aghaidh na tire, agus ri beatha nan daoine a th' air a bhith a' fuireach an seo fad linntean. Tha feartan oirthire, cnuic agus àitichean togte air an ainmeachadh gus sgeulachdan, cur-seachadan, agus beatha làitheil a chomharrachadh; tro bhith a' rannsachadh an cuid brìghean agus eachdraidh, thig mion-fhiosrachadh mu bheatha nan daoine a dh'fhuirich ann am follais.

An seo, an ceathramh leabhran anns an t-sreath againn air ainmean-àite, tha Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba agus Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba a-rithist air obrachadh còmhla gus dealbh a dhèanamh air mar a bhuineas ainmean-àite ri aghaidh na tire. Le bhith a' cleachdadh eòlas nan daoine às an sgìre, tha beartas de dh'ainmean-àite – mòran dhiubh nach do nochd ann an clò riamh roimhe – gan lorg 's an cuid brìghean gan deasbad.