

An Litir Bheag

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 986 (which corresponds to Litir 1,290). Ruairidh can be contacted at fios@learngaelic.scot.

Is it true that Glaschu – Glasgow means 'dear green place'? Well, the evidence tells us it is not. It's more likely that it comes from two elements in [the] Northern Brittonic [language]. It means 'green hollow'. That hollow is near Glasgow Cathedral.

I got this information from a valuable book that was published last year. Its name is Glasgow's Gaelic Place-Names. It was written by Alasdair [C.] Whyte.

The old Brittonic language did not survive. Gaelic and Scots replaced it. There are Gaelic place-names in the old records as far back as the twelfth century.

For example – Polmadie. That appeared in the twelfth century as Polmacde. Alasdair Whyte tells us that Poll Mac Dè means 'stream of the sons of God'.

The original forms are important. If we look at the place-name Ruchazie, it's not obvious what it means. But it appears in the sixteenth century as Auchinhasie. That represents Achadh an Fhasaidh 'field or farm of the stopping place'. Barlinnie first appears as Blairlenny.

A bheil e fìor gu bheil Glaschu – Glasgow – a' ciallachadh 'dear green place'? Uill, tha an fhianais ag innse dhuinn nach eil. Tha e nas coltaiche gu bheil e a' tighinn bho dhà eileamaid ann an Seann Bhreatannais a' Chinn a Tuath. Tha e a' ciallachadh 'lag uaine'. Tha an lag sin faisg air Cathair-eaglais Ghlaschu.

Fhuair mi am fios seo bho leabhar luachmhor a chaidh fhoillseachadh an-uiridh. 'S e an t-ainm a tha air Glasgow's Gaelic Place-Names. Tha e air a sgrìobhadh le Alasdair MacIlleBhàin.

Cha do mhair an t-Seann Bhreatannais. Thàinig a' Ghàidhlig agus Albais na àite. Tha ainmean-àite Gàidhlig anns na seann chlàraidhean cho fada air ais ris an dàrna linn deug.

Mar eisimpleir – Polmadie. Nochd sin anns an dàrna linn deug mar Polmacde. Tha Alasdair MacIlleBhàin ag innse dhuinn gu bheil Poll Mac Dè a' ciallachadh 'stream of the sons of God'.

Tha na riochdan tùsail cudromach. Ma choimheadas sinn air an ainm-àite Ruchazie, chan eil e follaiseach dè tha e a' ciallachadh. Ach tha e a' nochdadh anns an t-siathamh linn deug mar Auchinhasie. Tha sin a' riochdachadh Achadh an Fhasaidh 'field or farm of the stopping place'. Tha Barlinnie a' nochdadh an toiseach mar

<p>That represents Blàr Lèanach ‘marshy plain’.</p> <p><i>Many of Glasgow’s place-names belong to a time when people were involved in agricultural work. For example – Gartnavel. That comes from the old Gaelic Gart an Abhail ‘enclosure of the apple tree or orchard’. Cathkin comes from the Gaelic Coitcheann, meaning ‘common grazing’. And the famous name Auchenshuggle was recorded before trams were going there! It comes from Achadh an t-Seagail ‘field or farm of the rye’.</i></p> <p><i>Tha author doesn’t have an answer to all of my questions about Glasgow’s place-names. For example, he is not sure about Bellahouston. But he has done great work in highlighting and explaining the Gaelic heritage in Glasgow. I’d warmly recommend the book to you.</i></p>	<p><i>Blairlenny. Tha sin a’ riochdachadh Blàr Lèanach ‘marshy plain’.</i></p> <p><i>Buinidh gu leòr de dh’ainmean-àite Ghlaschu do linn nuair a bha daoine an sàs ann an obair-fearainn. Mar eisimpleir – Gartnavel. Tha sin a’ tighinn bhon t-seann Ghàidhlig Gart an Abhail ‘enclosure of the apple tree or orchard’. Tha Cathkin a’ tighinn bhon Ghàidhlig Coitcheann, a’ ciallachadh ‘common grazing’. Agus bha an t-ainm ainmeil Auchenshuggle clàraichte mus robh tramaichean a’ dol ann! Tha e a’ tighinn bho Achadh an t-Seagail ‘field or farm of the rye’.</i></p> <p><i>Chan eil freagairt aig an ùghdar airson a h-uile ceist agam mu ainmean-àite Ghlaschu. Mar eisimpleir, chan eil e cinnteach mu Bellahouston. Ach tha e air obair mhòr a dhèanamh airson dualchas na Gàidhlig ann an Glaschu a shoilleireachadh agus a mhìneachadh. Mholainn an leabhar gu mòr dhuibh.</i></p>
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