

LITERARY LANDSCAPES

Place Names of Scotland's National Parks





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INTRODUCTION



Scotland is covered in place names from several different languages: Gaelic, Scots, Doric and Norse. The Cairngorms National Park and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park have a particularly rich natural and cultural heritage, and unlocking the language of the land gives a new way to see these landscapes. Place names can tell us the history of particular areas: the way that people used to live and work; the ecology of a place; culture of songs, stories, poetry.

The **sharing of experiences** is important to Gaelic and Scots culture. Both have a strong oral tradition, sharing knowledge and connecting places through stories, poetry, song and music. Within this resource there are a number of prompts for different ways to share your experiences and new knowledge with others.

In the traditional Gaelic view of land, people belong to places. The question, 'where are you from?' in Gaelic is 'cò as a tha thu?', which literally translates as 'who are you from'. This is because, historically, groups of people (or clans) have been so strongly associated with certain areas of Scotland, that asking 'who' you are from can also tell people 'where' you are from. Identity was, and often remains, rooted in the landscape around you – the fields, rocks, hills, forests, rivers and lochs within your local area.

This resource offers opportunities for learners to gain different **perspectives** on places in the Cairngorms National Park and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. Through different activities you are encouraged to see the landscape through new eyes.

Using this Resource

This resource provides a guide to common place names in Scotland. There are suggested activities for schools, groups, and individuals.

The resource can be used to support a class project.

An online map accompanies this resource. You are encouraged to discover a place name, find its meaning, explore the place, and share your investigations on the map. This will build up a rich, interactive map, showing where different types of place names can be found.

“outdoor learning offers many opportunities for learners to deepen and contextualise their understanding within curriculum areas, and for linking learning across the curriculum in different contexts and at all levels.”

Education Scotland

Curriculum for Excellence

The activities within this resource have been developed to support the Curriculum for Excellence, offering learning experiences at a range of levels.

The resource is designed to support outdoor learning. You are encouraged to take the activities outside and learn in the landscape. This will deepen learners' understanding of Scotland's nature, built heritage, culture and society.

The resource provides many opportunities for interdisciplinary learning:

- The activities primarily support **Literacy across Learning**
- The resource supports a number of language curriculum areas, including **Scots Language, Gaelic Learner Education and Gaelic Medium Education**.
- The suggested activities make links with a wide range of curriculum areas, including **Expressive Arts, Technologies, Science and Social Studies, Health and Wellbeing and Numeracy**.

National Parks in Scotland

In Scotland, National Parks are extensive areas of the very highest value to the nation for their scenery, wildlife, and cultural heritage. They provide an integrated approach to management and sustainable development to safeguard the special qualities of these areas for the long-term. They also provide opportunities for the public to enjoy the special natural and cultural heritage. There are two National Parks: Cairngorms and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs.



Black Grouse Lek



Twinflower

© Mark Hamblin



Summit of Ben A'an, overlooking Loch Katrine and the Trossachs

© Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority

Cairngorms National Park

The Cairngorms National Park is Britain's largest National Park (4,582km²) and contains a unique range of landscapes, wildlife, habitats and people.

Nearly 50% of the Park is designated as important for its nature and landscapes and one quarter has a European conservation designation (Natura 2000).

It has five of Scotland's six highest mountains and impressive landscapes and landforms sculpted by ice age glaciers. The central mountain area supports a unique collection of plants and animals including golden eagle and dotterel, while the interaction between people and nature has produced the rich diversity found in the heather moorlands. The Park also contains the largest continuous area of natural and semi-natural woodlands in the UK.

Capercaillie, Scottish wildcat and twinflower are found in the pinewoods. The clean waters of the Spey, Dee and Don support wildlife like salmon, rare lampreys and endangered freshwater pearl mussels. These straths (river valleys) also provide livelihoods for local communities.

The National Park is home to around 18,000 people and tourism is an important part of the economy with at least 1.8 million people visiting the Cairngorms each year.

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park encompasses around 720 sq miles (1,865 sq km) of some of the finest scenery in Scotland. The National Park is also home to over 15,000 people and attracts around 4million visitors each year.

It is a place of contrasts, from rolling lowland landscapes in the south to high mountains in the north, and has many lochs and rivers, forests and woodlands. It is also a living, working landscape which has been influenced by people for generations and is visited and enjoyed by many for its recreational value.

The National Park includes Loch Lomond, the largest freshwater loch in Scotland, as well as nearly 40 miles of coastline around three sea lochs – Loch Long, Loch Goil and the Holy Loch. It also contains The Great Trossachs Forest National Nature Reserve (NNR) which will be the largest area of native broadleaved woodland in the UK.

The National Park is home to a rich variety of important wildlife including red squirrels, black grouse, otters, deer, eagles and powan – a rare freshwater fish native to only Loch Lomond and Loch Eck.

For more information visit their websites:

www.cairngorms.co.uk

www.lochlomond-trossachs.org

PLACE NAMES MAP

Accompanying this resource is an online mapping application. Accessed via the National Park websites, the map helps you to explore and record the rich heritage of Scotland's place names.

Explore

Take the time to explore the map. Click on the icons to see place name entries. Read the stories, study the images, listen to pronunciations and learn about place name heritage.

The information on the map is provided by users of the Literary Landscapes resource. Each place name entry is logged by school groups and individuals.

Record

Once you have familiarised yourself with the map, we need you to log a place name!

You are encouraged to go out in the field to research a place name. Go to the place, explore the landscape and environment. Try to find out how the place got its name.

When you get back to the classroom, log your findings on our map!

To make a report, you will need to click a button that will take you to a simple data entry form.

Here you will need to select one theme for your place name:

- Folklore, songs and stories
- Traditional routes
- Castles and ruins
- Battlefields
- Elrigs
- Towns and villages
- Shielings
- Animals and birds
- Plants
- Woodland and forests
- Hills
- Water, rivers and lochs
- Cateran

Tell us the place name in Scots, Gaelic or Doric.

Then tell us the name in English.

Drop a pin on the map to show where your place name is. You can use the 'Search' box to find the site. Zoom in to make sure your pin is precise!

Add a photograph or a drawing to illustrate that place.

Add a sound file to demonstrate how the place name is pronounced.

Tell us a story about the place name. This might be some factual history about how the place got its name, or you might use your imagination to produce something more creative!

Welcome 

What would you like to tell us about?

Complete

What would you like to tell us about?

Please answer the questions below

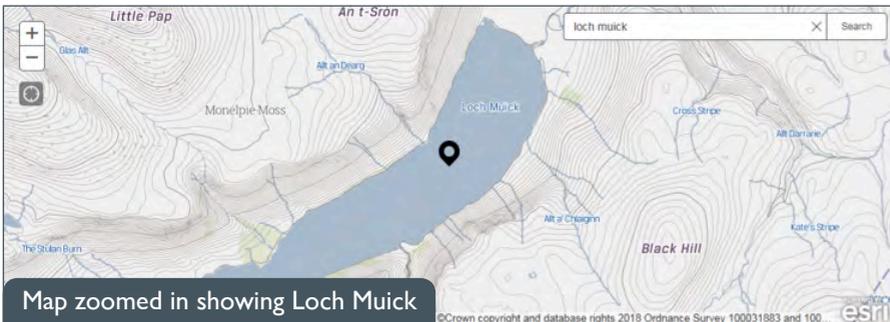
*** What is the main theme of your report?**

- Folklore, songs and stories
- Traditional routes
- Castles and ruins
- Battlefields
- Elrigs
- Towns and villages
- Shielings
- Animals and birds
- Plants
- Woodland and forests
- Hills
- Water, rivers and lochs
- CATERAN

*** What is the place name in Gaelic, Scots or Doric?**

*** ...and the place name in English?**

*** Please explain the meaning, origin or a story of the place name (500 characters maximum)**



Linguistic Heritage

Some of the earliest place names derive from the language spoken by the Picts, who once ruled large areas of land north of the Forth. The principal language of the Picts seems to have been distantly related to Welsh, Cornish and Breton (P-Celtic). Naming elements that are probably Pictish in origin include Pit – a portion of land; Càrdainn or Cardine – copse; Aber – mouth of a river (as seen in Aberystwyth and Aberdeen); Monadh or Mounth – a mountain range (related to Welsh Myndd); Easg or Esk – a bog stream; Dobhar or Dour – water.

In the **Cairngorms**, Gaelic became the dominant language over 1000 years ago. This is why the majority of the current place names in the National Park are Gaelic in origin. Examples include Allt – a large stream; Coille – a forest; Beinn or Ben – a mountain; Druim – a small ridge; Meall – a conical hill; Tom – a small hillock.

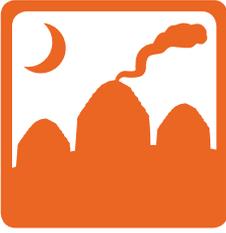
However, by the 18th and 19th centuries many people could speak both Scots and Gaelic, resulting in the appearance of some Scots place names. For example, Shank – a long ridge; Birk – a birch tree; Bigging – a building; Brig – a bridge; Haugh –

a river-meadow; Straucht – a straight stretch of road; Kirk – a church; Burn – a stream; Meikle – big.

The Gaelic dialects of Badenoch and Strathspey survived into the 21st Century, while in Aberdeenshire the last native Gaelic speaker died as recently as 1984. Today, rich dialects of Scots are still spoken in the eastern and southern areas of the National Park (often called Doric in the east), and there is a revival of Gaelic in the north and west.

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs

is at the southern edge of the Gàidhealtachd (or 'Highlands'), the largely mountainous part of Scotland in which Gaelic was the dominant tongue following its forced retreat from the Lowland regions of the south and east. For hundreds of years, up until the 19th Century, Gaelic was the language of most of the inhabitants of the Park area. We are told, for example, that in around 1724, Gaelic was the sole language in Balquhider, Callander, Aberfoyle, Luss and Arrochar, and the majority tongue in Buchanan and Port of Menteith. As late as the 1950s, native Gaelic speakers were still to be found in places like Balquhider, Brig O'Turk and Killin. Because of this, Gaelic names for villages, mountains and lochs can still be seen today.



Theme 1 Cultural Heritage and History

Past ways of life are written into the landscape through place names and features on the ground. Before the Clearances in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Highlands were inhabited in a very different way. People lived as clans, based in particular areas. They lived in townships in glens all over the Highlands. They were subsistence farmers, and kept cattle, goats, sheep, chickens and geese.

TOPICS

Shielings

Old Townships

Cattle Raiding / Cateran

Deer Trapping / Elrigs



Highland cattle

Shielings



© Vlad Turculeț

Ruins of a shieling

In the summer months, people moved their sheep and cattle higher up the glens to graze on mountain pastures (upland common grazing) and keep livestock away from the crops growing around the village. In the winter, the people and livestock returned lower down the valley. This was a system of transhumance farming, also known as a 'cattle-run'.

Townships would have a small summer village higher up the valley, made up of shielings. Shielings were temporary huts, built of stone and turf, thatched with rushes and heather. Shielings were built near freshwater for making cheese.

Peats were burnt for fuel. There also might be stone slabs where a butter churn could rest.

Not everyone stayed in the shielings in the summer. Women and children often went up to work in the shielings as a large part of the work was processing milk to make cheese and butter.

For many people, the movement up to the shielings was the highlight of the year. The summer months spent in the shielings was a time of freedom and pleasure. Young people courted and marriages started here.

The shieling huts grouped in the hills belonged to the houses in the farming villages sited on the low ground by the coast or in the straths or valleys. So tightly were the units bound together that the shieling huts could be called the 'summertown' and the parent village 'wintertown', as if they were elements of one and the same village. The use of hill grazings was so much part of a long-perfected subsistence economy, little if at all based on money, that the separation of the two was almost unthinkable.'

Alexander Fenton, *Country Life in Scotland*,
In Gaelic Landscape, p. 136

Shielings



Look
out for

'Shielings' or 'Old Shielings' on OS maps. The sites are often far up a glen, and can be identified by a cluster of stone mounds.

Mountain bothies – common in remote areas across the Highlands – may be built on sites where there was once a shieling. Ryvoan Bothy is a good example of this.



Activities

Draw a map with pictures showing the different activities that people might be engaged in during summer at the shielings or back in the village.

Discuss how you would prepare for living at the shieling for the summer – what would you take with you, what would you miss the most from the 'wintertown'?

Wild camp at a shieling.

Make butter using a jam jar and milk. While you work, sing a butter churning song such as 'Thig, a' Chuinneag, Thig' ('Come, Butter, Come') www.gaolnaofa.org/library/music/thig-a-chuinneag-thig-come-butter-come/

Research and create your own shieling songs and poems
How does this form of 'entertainment' differ from today?

Make small scale models of shielings from twigs, stones and other natural materials.

Rush dip candles

Children gathered rushes to use as wicks for rush dip candles or cruise lamps. The rushes were soaked in water to soften the outer green skin. The skin was then peeled back to reveal the white pith. After drying, the 'wicks' were dipped in animal fat, or fish oil on the coast, dried again and could then be lit to provide light in the sheiling. They burned best when held at 45 degrees.

Have a go stripping back the skin to reveal the pith. It was a very fiddly job so best done with little fingers!

Shielings

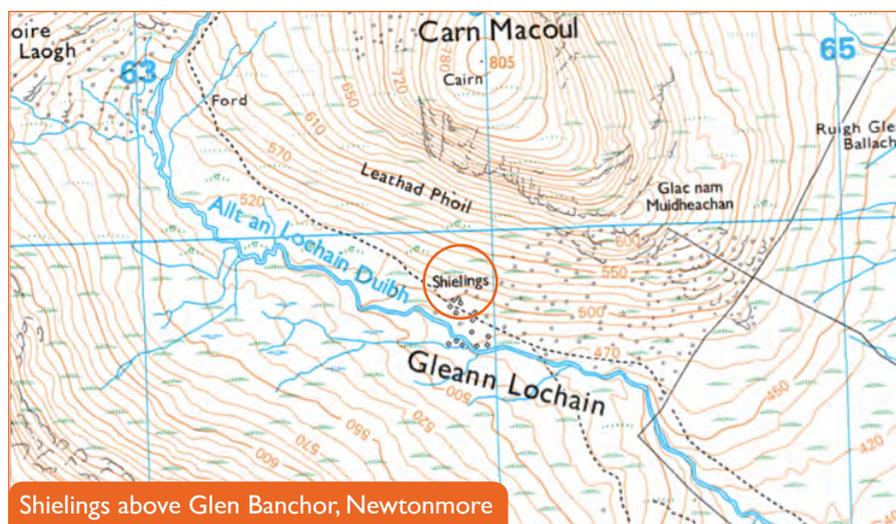


Visit The Shieling Project, Beauly
www.theshielingproject.org/

Further Reading

Visit Am Baile website, search for 'Shielings' and look at old photographs. www.ambaile.org.uk

àirigh (AH-ree)	shieling
bainne (BUN-yeh)	milk
buachaille (BOO-ach-ull-yeh)	herdsman/shepherd
buaille (BOO-ull-uh)	fold for sheep or cattle
càise (CASH-eh)	cheese
cluain (CLUE-eye-n)	meadow
dròbhair (DROH-ver)	drover
ìm (EEM)	butter
imrich (IM-uh-reeh)	flitting (to and from the sheiling)
ruighe (RUY-uh)	shieling



Old Townships



© Sebastian Rurif

Highland Folk Museum, Cairngorms

Before the Clearances, the Highland glens were much more populated than they are today. People lived in bailtean or townships of communal farms which had common grazing and shared arable fields. These were worked using the run-rig (roinn-ruithe) open field system of land allocation. Where the soil was thin,

it was heaped up to grow crops in lazy-beds (feannagan). These communal farms were cleared by landlords and divided into crofts or more profitable sheep pastures. Homes were built using local materials, including stone, wood, turf, reeds and heather.



**Look
out for**

Township on OS maps

Ruined houses and old stone walls. A pattern of raised ridges (lazy beds) where potatoes were grown.



Activities

Visit Highland Folk Museum to see a reconstruction of a seventeenth century township.

Place name detectives: Choose a town or village in the National Park and try to work out how it got its name. For help, look at old maps and a Gaelic dictionary!

Cattle Raiding / Cateran

Warriors were important figures within Scottish Highland clans. Caterans were bands of armed men who stole cattle. Cattle raiding was part of inter-tribal activity for centuries. Raiding another clan's cattle was a way for young men to prove their valour.

Raids often took place on distant clans. This was so as to avoid retribution and being in a constant feud with your neighbours.

Cattle were important because they were the main form of moveable wealth in Scotland for centuries.

The general plan and procedure of the raid or creach was to come into your victim's land stealthily before dawn and gather up the livestock with as little noise as possible, leading them off on the chosen path before the locals were awake. [...] An extensive survey was required in order that the cateran might know both the whereabouts of the cattle and the route by which they intended moving them. A great deal of skill in dealing with the animals was essential, and the most successful creach would be one where the cattle were gathered, taken away and brought back home with no interference from the clan that had been raided. Fighting was an expected part of the raiding process but it does not seem to have been the reason for it. The underlying idea seems to have been to show the skill and bravery of the cateran involved. [...] such cattle-raiding was generally undertaken a good distance away from the clan's homelands. Raiding nearby clans would make little sense as it would probably lead to continuing warfare, and though there were [...] established rules of combat amongst Highland clans, there was always the possibility of a blood feud when one act of revenge would provoke another in an ongoing cycle of killing. Because the raids were undertaken at a distance, this meant that the raiders had to cross the territory of other clans between their home and that of their victims. It was standard practice for raiders to give up some of their booty to the clan whose lands they crossed, and this was known as 'a road-collop'.

Stuart McHardy

School of the Moon: The Highland Cattle-Raiding Tradition, p. 8

Cattle Raiding / Cateran



Activities

Find or create a Cateran trail.

Use maps to identify a route for cattle droving. Think about the route. What land would be easy to drive hundreds of cattle through? Where might you struggle? Where could you hide a hundred cattle? What would you eat? Where would you sleep? You can do this activity in a National Park or using more familiar land near to you at home.

Watch videos of cattle droving on Youtube.

What skills are needed to drive cattle? Why does cattle droving no longer take place in Scotland? Why do people still drive in America and Australia?



Rob Roy – the most famous of the Clan Gregor

Rob Roy Macgregor was born in 1671 in Glengyle, on the western shores of Loch Katrine. This was a drove route allowing the movement of cattle from Loch Lomond. He is best known as a cattle raider but was also a soldier. He looked after other people's cattle in return for a payment, but ended up an outlaw. In 1693, he married Mary Helen MacGregor of Comar. She came from a farm that is still marked on OS maps today, between Ben Lomond and Loch Arklet. Rob Roy's gravestone is in the burial ground of Balquidder Church.

Can you find all the map references to Rob Roy's life?

Walk along the Rob Roy Way

www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/things-to-do/walking/long-distance-routes/rob-roy-way/

Deer Trapping / Elrigs

Hunting was another important aspect of the Highland way of life. Deer were often hunted using traps called an elrig. These were v-shaped structures that were wide at one end and narrow at the other. Deer were driven into the V and shot with arrows when they came out of the narrow end.

To drive the deer into the elrig, men and dogs would gather deer and drive them up the glens and over the hills towards the destined trap. In 1563, a big drive took place near Blair Atholl. Mary Queen of Scots was apparently present. Two thousand men worked the drive, and altogether they caught 360 red and roe deer as well as five wolves.

the natives hunted them [...] by making large inclosures of such a height as the deer could not overleap, fenced with stakes and entwined with brushwood. Vast multitudes of men were collected on hunting days, who forming a ring around the deer, drove them into these inclosures, which were open on one side. From some eminence, which overlooked the inclosure, the principle personages and others, who did not choose to engage in the chase, were spectators of the whole diversion [...] One of the farms in Glenlochay of Bredalbane is called Cragan an Elerig, a small rock which overhangs a beautiful field resembling an amphitheatre [...] and admirably adapted for this purpose, by the natural situation of the adjacent ground.

James Robertson, minister of Callander in late 18th century,
John Murray, Literature of the Gaelic Landscape, pp. 42-3

There are many places of this name [Elrig] amongst our hills. Their situation is, rising ground, an open and pretty, plain hill around it. On this rising ground, the king, the chieftain, or principal person, with his friends, arms, and hounds, took his station; while his people, also armed, gathering the deer, into his sight, and the men, who formed the circle, around them. Then the hounds were let loose, the arrows let fly, and the man, who formed the circle, wounded and killed many of the deer, with their swords, when attempting to make their escape.

Late 18th century, Reverend James Maclagan of Blair Atholl
John Murray, Literature of the Gaelic Landscape, pp. 42-3

Deer Trapping / Elrigs



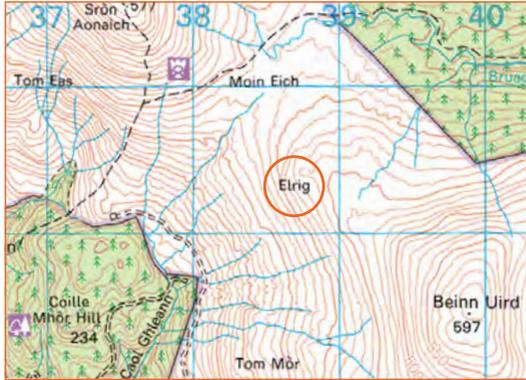
Activities

Make an elrig and re-enact a hunt.

How will you organise yourselves as a group?
How can you stop the deer escaping?

Look out for Elrig on OS maps.

Sometimes also spelt Elrick, Eileirig or Iolairig.



Red Deer stag

© CNPA

Cultural heritage and history

Notes



Theme 2 Wildlife and Biodiversity

As subsistence farmers and crofters, people lived in a very close relationship with the land. This informs how language is learned: each letter of the Gaelic alphabet relates to a tree name and this system was used to teach children the alphabet. For subsistence farmers, it is important to know where you might find certain species of plant or animal. Place names provide a useful indication of where these creatures could be found.

In Abernethy there is a hill called Carn Bheadhair and a burn named Allt Bheadhair. This means hill and burn of the serpents. To this day, there are still many adder sightings in that area, suggesting it has been a home for adders for many centuries.

In other places, there are names that signal the former presence of species that are now extinct, such as the wolf. For example, 'Clais Mhadaidh' (found in Glen Dee and Glen Lui) means the hollow of the wolf or dog.



Scottish wildcat

© lauriecampbell.com

Wildlife and Biodiversity

White-tailed eagle



© Mark Hamblin

An ecologist's perspective

“Centuries-old place names can be a very useful window into the landscape’s past. There are clues as to how people would have used the land, eg through place names referring to livestock such as sheep, goats and cattle in areas where farming no longer takes place. Some place names tell us that the land would also have been used for hunting deer, as it still is today in many areas, although the methods would have been different. In some cases there are clues to how the vegetation differs from today, with tree and shrubs being used to name now-treeless streams, hills, and glens. Wildlife was also often used to name geographical features, with eagle, wildcat, fox and deer names being quite widespread. We can even find old names relating to species that we have not had to share the landscape with for centuries, such as the wild boar and wolf. I’ve found old tree place names particularly useful for demonstrating that trees used to grow much higher up our mountainsides than they currently do – just like in south west Norway today where the climate and geology is very similar to ours. I think it also helps give new woodland a sense of legitimacy in a currently-treeless landscape if you can show trees were previously part of that landscape and that our ancestors not only observed them but used them to describe the world around them.”

David Hetherington, Woodland Advisor,
Cairngorms National Park Authority

Wildlife and Biodiversity

Wild animals

broc (BRUH-ck) brock (Scots)	badger
capall-coille (meaning forest-pony) (CAH-pull COY-yuh)	capercaillie
cat (CAH-t)	cat, wildcat
coileach-dubh (male) (COY-luch DOO) liath-chearc (female) (LEE-yuh HYUR-ck)	black grouse
coileach-fraoich (male) (COY-luch FROO-yich) cearc-fhraoich (female) (CYAR-ck ROO-yich)	red grouse
damh (DAF)	stag
earb (UH-rub)	roe deer
eilid (EH-lidge)	red deer hind
fiadh (FEE-yug)	deer
iolair (YO-lur) fior-eun (FEE-yur EE-yun)	eagle
iolair-iasgaich (fisher-eagle) (YO-lur EE-yusg-eech) iolair-uisge (water-eagle) (YO-lur OOSH-guh)	osprey
madadh-allaidh (MAH-dug AH-lee)	wolf
nathair (NAH-hur)	snake, adder
seabhag (SHEH-vack)	hawk/falcon
sionnach (SHUN-nach), madadh-ruadh (MAH-dug ROO-uh)	fox
tàrmachan (TAAR-mach-an)	ptarmigan
tod (Scots)	fox
torc (TORCK)	boar
yearn (Scots)	eagle

Wildlife and Biodiversity

Domestic animals

bò (BOW) bow (Scots)	cow
caora (COO-ruh)	sheep
crodh (CROH), sprèidh (SPRAAY)	oxen / cattle
cù (COO)	dog
each (E-ach)	horse
gobhar (GO-wur)	goat
muc (MOO-ck)	pig
tarbh (TAR-iv)	bull

Plants

giuthas (GYOO-us)	Scots pine
aiteann (AH-ch-yun)	juniper
bad (BUD)	clump of trees or shrubs
beithe (BAE-huh) birk (Scots)	birch
calltainn (CAUL-tuyn)	hazel
caorann (COO-run)	rowan
coille (COY-yuh) frith (Scots)	wood
craobh (CROOV)	tree
critheann (CREE-yun)	aspen
darach (DAR-uch)	oak
doire (DOR-uh)	grove / copse
feàrna (FYAR-nuh)	alder
fraoch (FROOCH)	heather
seileach (SHAY-luch)	willow

Wildlife and Biodiversity



Activities

Endangered animals

Find a place name for an animal that is endangered or extinct, eg wolf, eagle, capercaillie, crane, Scottish wildcat.

Write a poem or story about that animal and the place where its name is found.

Think about the habitats around the place name: are there rocks, mountains, rivers, forests or towns? Why might the animal have been found there? How has the place has changed over the past hundred or thousand years? Why might the animal have become rare, endangered, or extinct?

Map your playground

Walk around your playground paying very close attention to all the plants and animals you find there.

Focus on particular species. How many Scots pines, oak, ash, or other trees do you have? What types of bird visit your playground? Are there any nests? What flower species do you have? Where do they grow? Where are you most likely to find woodlice, centipedes, ladybirds or other wee beasties?

Draw a map of your playground and label it to show where you find these plants and animals.

Make place names for your playground. For example: *'the picnic bench of the wasps'*; *'the telegraph wire of the rooks'*; *'centipede stone'*.

Explore Scotland's Celtic rainforests

The Atlantic oakwoods of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park are magical places. High rainfall and warm climates provide perfect conditions for plants such as mosses, lichens and liverworts to grow and thrive. Go for a woodland walk and imagine living among the mosses and lichen. Take a hand lens and explore this magical microscopic world!

To find out more about our Celtic rainforests and where to find them, visit: www.plantlife.org.uk/scotland/our-work-scotland/projects-scotland/celtic-rainforests

Wildlife and Biodiversity

Notes



Theme 3 Landscape Features and Habitats

The Scottish landscape is covered with names.

In Gaelic, there are over 100 words for different types of hill, and over 40 words in Scots. Some words identify the particular shape of a hill, for example whether it is rounded (Maol), steep (sgùrr), or rocky (creag).

Hills often have two parts to their name: a generic and a specific word. For example, Cairngorm (Gaelic: An Càrn Gorm) is càrn (hill) + gorm (blue), meaning blue mountain. Or Monadh Ruadh is monadh (mountain range) + ruadh (red, russet), meaning russet mountain range. Ben More is the largest mountain in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. Ben More comes from the Gaelic A' Bheinn Mhòr, which means big mountain!

The accompanying descriptive element can refer to a colour, body-parts, people, plants or animals.



Lochan Uaine, the Green Lochan, Cairngorms

Landscape Features and Habitats

Common generic words for hill

beinn, ben (BEN)	mountain, hill, pinnacle, high place
binnean (BEEN-yun)	pinnacle, high conical hill, apex of hill
bin, binn (Scots)	hill, mountain
brae (Scots) bràigh (BRUY)	brow of a hill
caisteal (CASH-ch-yule)	castle, fort, tower, garrison
cairn (Scots) càrn (CAARN)	heap of stones
cnoc (CROCK)	hill, knoll, hillock, eminence
creag (CRAIG)	rock, crag, cliff, precipice
dùn (DOON)	heap, hill, fortress, castle
maol (MOOL)	brow of rock, great bare rounded hill (literally: a bald head)
meall (MYAL)	lump, mass, great shapeless hill
monadh (MON-uh)	moor, mountain range, heath
sgòrr (SGOH-r)	sharp steep hill, rising by itself, peak, pinnacle
sìthean (SHEE-yun)	little hill, knoll, fairy hill
sròn (SRON)	nose, promontory, ridge of a hill
stac (STAH-ck)	high cliff, precipice, projecting rock
stob (STOP)	stake, pointed stick, prickle, thorn
tom (TOH-m)	round hillock or knoll, rising ground, swell, green eminence
tòrr (TOH-r)	hill, conical mountain, mound, tower

Landscape Features and Habitats

Water

aber (Pictish) (AH-bur)	river mouth
abhainn (AH-wain), uisge (OOSH-guh)	river
allt, uillt (AHL-t)	stream or burn
run (Scots)	ford
àth (AAH)	boggy or underground
caochan (COO-hun)	streamlet
eas (EH-s)	waterfall
eilean (AY-lan)	island
inbhir (IN-uh-ver)	confluence, meeting place
inver (Scots)	of rivers
linn (LEE-n)	pool, pond
loch	lake
lochan	small lake

Habitats, woods

achadh (ACH-ug)	field
bogach (BOG-ach), boglach (BOG-loch), lair (Scots)	marsh, bog
coille (COY-yuh), frith (Scots)	wood
dail (DAL)	river meadow
doire (DOR-uh)	grove, thicket, clump of oak trees
fèith (FAY)	bog, bog channel
flow (Scots)	morass, peat bog
glen	valley
haugh (Scots)	river meadow
Strath	broad flat river valley

Landscape Features and Habitats

Gaelic colours

bàn (BAH-n)	white: pale, light, wan, fair
buidhe (BOO-yeh)	yellow
dearg (JAH-rug)	red: bright, crimson
donn (DOWN)	brown
dubh (DOOH)	black, dark
fionn (FYOO-n)	white: pale, lilac, bright, cold
geal (GYAHL)	white: clear, radiant, glistening
glas (GLAH-s)	grey-green, grey, wan
gorm (GUH-rum)	blue: azure
liath (LEE-yuh)	light grey
odhar (OH-are)	khaki
ruadh (ROO-uh)	ruddy
uaine (OOAH-nye)	green



Puck's Glen, Loch Lomond & the Trossachs

© Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority

Landscape Features and Habitats



Activities

Name your landscape

Study a hilly landscape from a viewpoint or a photograph. Look at the shapes of the hills. Are they round, rocky, steep, short, or very tall? Select the best fitting generic hill word from the table. Then look at the character of the hill: what colour is it? Add this to your new hill name.

For example: *"I see a small rounded hill that is covered in dull yellow-green grass. I name it Tom (round hillock) Odhar (khaki): Tom Odhar."*

Landscape sketching

You don't need to be a good artist to try landscape sketching! Make a frame out of cardboard and insert a piece of acetate so it looks like a picture frame. Hold the frame up to a landscape view. Sketch the landscape features onto the laminate with pens. Annotate your sketch to show features such as mountains, woods or trees. Give these features Gaelic or Scots names.

Create your own National Park

A good classroom activity is to create your own mini National Park. Draw a National Park boundary onto a large piece of paper, then create your own landscape using recycled objects and materials. Let your imagination run wild – make mountains, glens, rivers, lochs, farmland and woodland. You could even go back to the times when there were townships and shielings. Give your National Park a Gaelic name, and name settlements in your Park using the descriptive words above. Introduce your National Park to friends using your Gaelic names and see if they can work out what they mean.



Landscape Features and Habitats

Notes

Theme 3 – Landscape Features and Habitats



Theme 4 Folklore, Songs and Stories

Folklore, songs and stories are central to Highland culture. The oral tradition was very strong: songs and tales would be memorised and recounted in the cèilidh house, at the fireside and anywhere that people met and congregated. If you went to visit people far away, you would make sure to bring back a story or song to share with your community. A visitor from another part of the country would be asked “A bheil dad agad air an Fhèinn?” *Have you got any stories about the Fianna?*



Folklore, Songs and Stories

Introduction continued

Events, fiction and myth were written into the landscape. In folk tales, the plot of the story is what matters, not dates or historical accuracy. Therefore, many epic tales have both Irish and Scottish locations, as people relocated the story to belong within their local landscape.

Bardism was a formal aspect of clan society. Each clan had a bard, a professional who composed and told stories about the clan. The clan chief paid the bard to record significant things that happened within the clan and to provide entertainment by reciting poetry to the clan and visitors. The poems would mostly be in long ballad form, using a strict structure and a repeated refrain where listeners could join in. The ballads were narratives, telling the story of a place, person, event or battle. After Culloden, and the collapse of the clan system, each village had a bard. They were no longer sponsored by the clan chief, yet they continued to compose and tell the narratives of their place.

Storytelling was more informal in style than bardism. The stories would often retell significant local events, such as particularly memorable weddings or a drowning. Whereas the bard was an individual, storytelling was a communal tradition. Stories would be shaped, shared and developed by many people.

The cèilidh house was a gathering place where clans or villagers of all ages got together to exchange ideas and stories. The sharing of stories was an important means for educating people about the local area, making sure everyone was up-to-date with current events and tuned in with their past.

‘Common’ songs of the people, such as rowing, harvest and waulking (fulling tweed cloth) songs were popular in Scots and Gaelic in the twentieth century. These were often sung while people were out working in the fields.

Fionn mac Cumhaill and the Fianna

Fionn mac Cumhaill (or Finn MacCool) was a mythical Irish and Scottish hero. He was a hunter and warrior who roved Ireland and Scotland with his band of warriors, the Fianna. They were conceived as legendary ancestors, role models who protected the people of Ireland and Scotland.

When telling the legends of the Fianna, place names were used to help listeners to imaginatively place themselves within the setting of the tale. 'Recognisable landmarks acted as placeholders for character and plot.' (Literature of the Gaelic Landscape, p. 4). Places were also named after Fionn and the Fianna. They were often associated with large landscape features (such as mountains and rivers), emphasising their heroic, superhuman status.

In the 1760s, James Macpherson (a Scottish poet from Badenoch) published epic poems narrated by Ossian, the son of Fionn mac Cumhaill. Macpherson collected the poems from old Gaelic stories that he translated into English. The poems were hugely popular across Europe, with fans such as Napoleon. Some people were critical about their authenticity, as Macpherson presented the poems as though they had been written by Ossian himself.



Fionn mac Cumhaill by Beatrice Elvery (1914)

The Lay of Diarmaid – *Laoidh Dhiarmaid* – A story of love, betrayal, and regret

The tale is set in Glenshee – Gleann Sith, or the Fairy Glen. The story, *Laoidh Dhiarmaid*, the Lay of Diarmaid, was once a ballad – and its action takes place on Beinn Ghulbain or Snout Mountain. The ballad was so popular throughout the Highlands that multiple versions of it exist – indeed, multiple locations around Scotland, and even Ireland, contest among themselves for being the true location of Diarmaid's adventure... (see p34)

A long time ago, the legendary Fianna were still hunting around Scotland. Two among them were the bravest: Fionn mac Cumhaill and his nephew, Diarmaid Ó Duibhne, most popular among the ladies. Fionn mac Cumhaill had a beautiful wife, Gràinne, but she did not love him much. One day, Gràinne eloped with young Diarmaid. Although they returned soon after, Fionn's rage burned deep, so deep that he feigned forgiveness and reconciliation with his kinsman and long-time friend. He sent Diarmaid out on a hunt he knew his nephew wouldn't return from. "See that mountain yonder, o Diarmaid? That is Beinn Ghulbainn where a magical boar dwells." Fionn didn't tell Diarmaid that the magical boar of Snout Mountain was immortal.

The young and fearless Diarmaid set off to kill the magical boar and in the fight his spear shaft broke three times. After the third snap of the spear shaft, Diarmaid managed to slay the boar with his broken spear. Shocked that Diarmaid had survived the fight and managed to kill the immortal boar, Fionn mac Cumhaill didn't give up on his plan to kill Diarmaid. He knew Diarmaid had a single weak spot – a mole on the sole of his foot. Fionn said, "Well, Diarmaid, won't you measure the size of the giant boar you have just killed? Pace across the boar's spine, from snout to tail, and tell me how big the beast is." Diarmaid walked across the spine, counting... one, two, three... "Sixteen feet long," he remarked. "Now, Diarmaid, pace it out again from tail to snout to make sure you counted it correctly." Diarmaid did so – but as he walked against the grain of the magical boar's spine a sharp, poisoned boar bristle struck him in the mole on his sole and Diarmaid fell, poisoned.

"Uncle, only a drink brought to me by your own hands can help me now", Diarmaid said. A lifetime of hunting together, carousing, and fighting side by side flashed before Fionn mac Cumhaill's eyes and he was stricken by guilt. He rushed to the nearest spring, cupped his hands together and hurried back to Diarmaid. Yet on the way back, jealous thoughts about Gràinne return to Fionn's mind and he quivered with rage, spilling all the water out of his hands. He returned to the spring, but on his way to Diarmaid his jealousy made him spill the water again. On the third trip, Fionn controlled his anger and brought the water to Diarmaid. However, he was too late. Diarmaid was dead.

Folklore, Songs and Stories

Within Glenshee there are a number of place names associated with this legend. From the slopes of Beinn Ghulbhain flows a little spring called Tobar nam Fiann – the Well of the Fianna. Perhaps this is the spring where Fionn drew water to save Diarmaid? On the other side of the burn there was a small lochan, Loch an Tuirc (still shown on 19th century maps) – loch of

the boar, where “Fionn flung his cup in shame after Diarmaid’s death”. To the east of the lochan is Tulach Dhiarmaid or Diarmaid’s Hillock – and atop the hillock, four small standing stones may still be found. The stones commemorate Uaigh Dhiarmaid – or Diarmaid’s grave, where Fionn mac Cumhaill’s brave kinsman is said to have been buried.



Look out for

Fhinn or Fiann on OS maps

For example:

Ath nam Fiann (Glen Avon) – Ford of the Fianna
Allt Chill Fhinn – Burn of Fionn’s Church



Activities

Traditional songs

Listen to traditional Scottish folk songs and ballads. There are examples in Gaelic, Scots and Doric available online. Learn to play or sing the tunes. What are common themes in the songs? What sorts of places are sung about?

Websites with audio recordings

Digital Archive for Scottish Gaelic
www.dasg.ac.uk/audio/about/crc/en

Tobar an Dualchais/Kist o Riches
www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/ and search for ‘ballad’

Scots Language
www.scotslanguage.com/pages/view/id/23

Continued on page 36



Activities

Cognitive maps

Cognitive maps are mental representations of physical locations, used by people and animals to help us to find our way by recalling important environment features. A cognitive map can be very different from the actual place it represents, because the individual who makes the map focuses on the features that are important to them.

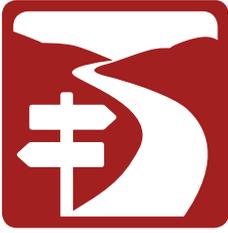
The poem 'Hallaig' by Sorley Maclean is an interesting example of a cognitive map. Read the poem and explore, how does he capture the spirit of Hallaig? What landscape features does he describe? How does he link these features? Which people and animals does he describe journeying between the sites?

Your turn

Think of a place you know well. This might be a small area like your home, school or playground. Or you might choose a larger area like a forest, town, or National Park.

List important features in the place you have chosen. Make sure each feature has a distinctive name. For example, if you are writing about a tree, try 'the wee Scots pine in the bog'.

Once you have a list of important features in your place, describe a journey between them. You might write from your own perspective, or imagine that you are an animal, a bird, or a historical person. You could write a story, a poem or an essay.



Theme 5 Traditional Routes

Nowadays, mountain ranges like the Cairngorms are often regarded as a barrier between communities yet this was once far from the case. The Cairngorms are criss-crossed with passes and routes which connected communities with each other as well as places farther afield. People often used these passes to visit relatives, attend social events and transport goods and wares.



The Thieves' Road, Nethy Bridge to Glen More, Cairngorms

Traditional Routes

Introduction continued

Some routes follow medieval roads, such as Comyn's Road, which the Red Comyn, Lord of Badenoch is said to have commissioned so that he could transport his favourite beer more easily from Atholl to Badenoch. Others were used by drovers to take cattle from the Highlands to markets in the Lowlands. There are also remnants of routes which the cateran (cattle thieves) would have used, giving rise to names such as Rathad nam Mèirleach, The Thieves Road. Some remnants of the military roads built by General Wade following the failed Jacobite Rising of 1715 also survive.

In Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park there are many examples of these routes. Glen Ogle in the north east of the National Park has had many traditional routes pass through it and still does to this day, being a main A road to the north of Scotland. It was a drove route to the Crieff Tryst which was a meeting point for drovers to sell their cattle. The cattle would be 'driven' from the west coast through Tyndrum, Crianlarich and down through Glen Ogle to the Crieff Tryst, and more recently the Falkirk Tryst. A military road from Stirling to Fort William built by General Caulfield in 1750-52 also passes through the glen. The Glen Ogle viaduct is also a reminder of the railway heritage of the area. The viaduct carried the line between Callander and Oban. It carried the first train in 1870 and closed in 1965. The line is now a popular cycle route, part of the Sustrans National Cycle Network, so the legacy of these routes are still strong.

For more info visit: www.heritagepaths.co.uk



Activities

Create a trade route

Use your playground / local green space to set up a trade route. What goods (real or imaginary) will you be transporting? In planning your route, what needs to be considered? For example, modes of transport, landscape, potential hazards.

Further Resources

Websites

Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba: a searchable database and integrated map full of information on the Gaelic place names of Scotland.
www.ainmean-aite.scot

Dictionary of the Scots Language: a comprehensive research tool bringing together the two major historical dictionaries of Scots language.
www.dsl.ac.uk

TRACScotland: Scotland's national network for traditional arts and culture and has lots of resources including an archive of traditional stories from across the country. Check out their 'People's Parish' project for lots of tips on how to build stories about your own places.
www.tracscotland.org/our-resources/

Stories in the land (2013): a project by Royal Scottish Geographical Society and University of Stirling exploring droving and travelling tales. The website features information and audio stories.
www.storiesintheland.blogspot.co.uk/

John Muir Trust and the Lost Words: education resources and activities for exploring nature through language and poetry
www.johnmuirtrust.org/initiatives/the-lost-words

Place names in the Cairngorms: a leaflet providing information on place names around the Cairngorms National Park
www.cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/publications/16092010/CNPA.Paper.276.Place-Names%20Map.pdf

Gaelic in the Landscape: Place names in the North West Highlands a guide to adjectives, landscape features, plants, people and animals in place names.
www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/gaelic/Gaelic%20in%20the%20landscape.pdf

Gaelic dictionary
www.faclair.com/

Further resources

Ordnance Survey: Guide to Gaelic place names

www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/resources/historical-map-resources/gaelic-placenames.html

Ordnance Survey: Guide to Scots place names

www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/resources/historical-map-resources/scots-placenames.html

Am Baile: Highlife Highland's cultural archive is full of images, recordings and stories. www.ambaile.org.uk

National Library for Scotland: Online archive featuring detailed maps from different times. The OS 6 inch map from 1843-1882 is full of Gaelic names.

www.maps.nls.uk/geo/find/#zoom=5&lat=56.0000&lon=-4.0000&layers=7&b=1&point=0,0

Applecross Place Names Project: An online map of Applecross

with place names and translations. www.applecrossplacenames.org.uk/

Loch Torridon Place Names

www.torridonplacenames.org.uk/index.html

Walk Highlands: A resource of walks all over Scotland, with pronunciation recordings for many shorter walks listed by area and all of the Munros.

www.walkhighlands.co.uk/munros/pronunciation

Dictionary of Gaelic nature words: Scottish Natural Heritage have compiled a searchable database of words for plants, animals and birds – how could you use these in your creative place-making? SNH also have a series of 'Gaelic in the Landscape' pamphlets which you can download from their website. www.nature.scot/about-snh/access-information-and-services/gaelic/dictionary-gaelic-nature-words

Fèisean nan Gàidheal: The national organisation representing local Gaelic arts festivals. Is there a Fèis in your local area that might be able to support your learning through music or drama?

www.feisean.org

Further resources

Books

Peter Drummond:

Scottish Hills Names: Their Origin and Meaning (SMC, 2010)

John Murray:

Literature of the Gaelic Landscape: Song, Poem and Tale
(Whittles: Caithness, 2017)

Reading the Gaelic Landscape (Whittles: Caithness, 2014)

Adam Watson:

Place Names of Upper Deeside (Paragon: 2014)

Place Names in Much of North-East Scotland (Paragon: 2013)

Place Name Discoveries on Upper Deeside and the Far Highlands
(Paragon: 2015)

Places to Visit

In addition to exploring the National Parks and your own community, you might find it useful to visit these places:

Highland Folk Museum – a free museum in Newtonmore with a number of historical buildings showing how Highland people lived and worked from 1700s until the 1950s.

www.highlifehighland.com/highlandfolkmuseum/

Moilanich Longhouse – Beautifully conserved cottage giving a unique insight into rural life in the 19th century. 1 mile north west of Killin just outside Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park boundary.

www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/moirlanich-longhouse

The Shieling Project – a learning centre in Glenstrathfarrar, near Beauly, providing school residentials and training courses on traditional Scottish outdoor living.

www.theshielingproject.org/

Scottish Storytelling Centre –

Scotland's national venue for storytelling in all of its forms.

www.scottishstorytellingcentre.com



National Parks of Scotland

-  Cairngorms National Park
-  Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park



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