



List of Spellings

(For use alongside our Gaelic Place-Names Policy)

Last updated: September 2024

Executive Summary

These are recommendations for spelling common words used in place-names and signage.

1. List of Spellings

1.1 Elements

Form	Notes
Àird	when meaning ‘height’ or ‘headland’
Annaid	not Annait
Bac	not Bachd (from Norse <i>bakkr</i> or Old Irish <i>bacc</i>)
Bodha	not Bogha (in sense of submerged rock)
Cair	not Cathair ¹
Geàrraidh	not Gearraidh
Geodha	when as a discrete word (but <i>-geo</i> when as part of a name of Norse origin)
Giuthas	not Giubhas (from Old Irish <i>giús</i> , with ‘inorganic hiatus’)
Leac, Leacainn	not Leachd, Leachdain(n) (from Old Irish <i>lecc</i>)
Sithean	not Sidhean or Sidhean
Sloc	not Slochd
Srath	not Strath
Rubha	not Rudha or Rugha (from Old Irish <i>ruba</i>)

¹ *Cathair* and **cair* are in fact two distinct Scottish Gaelic words which have been confused over a long period in ways not yet fully understood. *Cathair* is most common in Wester Ross and denotes a perceived ‘fairy seat’ or some other naturally occurring seat. (E.g. A’ Chathair Dhubh (NC826626)) **Cair* is a separate term generally used to denote ‘an enclosed, defensible site’ (E.g. Kirkcaldy ~ Cair Chaladain (NT277913)). Cf. Taylor with Márkus, Place-names of Fife vol. 5, p. 316-318 and James 2011, 63

1.2 Variant Spellings

The following variant spellings are to be used according to local practice or dominance:

Acairseid or Acarsaid
Laimhrig or Laimrig ²
Siadar or Seadar
Uamh or Uaimh

2. Spelling of Individual Place-names

The following place-names occur multiple times and should be spelled accordingly:

Aineort	not Ainort
Grianamul	not Greanamul

3. Spelling of Individual surnames

Macfee	Mac-a-phì
MacInroy	Mac-an-Ruaidh

²“There are several variant forms of this word. *Laimrig* seems to have a north-westerly distribution and occurs in Lewis, Skye and South Uist. A closely related form, *lamraig*, with non-palatal -r-, is found in Wester Ross... it is also recorded in dictionaries along with *laimrig*” Cox 1997, 53-4.