

Gaelic Place-Names: 'Rathad'

The Gaelic word *rathad* (pronounced /H- t) means road, route, way, and is derived from Old Irish *rath*. It occurs as the initial element in names such as

Other Gaelic words for types of road include street, with examples including *Eil* church street, *-/l* Scotland Street and James Street. *B* terrace is found in *B* Seaview Terrace and *B* Ross Terrace whilst *l* drive is reflected in *l* Churchill Drive and *l t t* Stewart Drive, all of which are located in Stornoway.

In some parts of the Highlands and Islands, these forms reflect the original names which had been coined by the native Gaelic speakers, but with the increasing demand for bilingual English and Gaelic signage on road and railway signs, in some cases these names are simply translations of existing Scots or English names. For example, the name Dumbarton Road in Glasgow has been translated into Gaelic as *t B t*, and Queen Street (also in Glasgow) is

B (literally street of the female king). For some names it is even necessary to synthesize new Gaelic words to translate existing names, such as *l*, which was coined to represent parade in names such as Alexandra Parade in Glasgow. This demonstrates that as well as being a historic language, Gaelic is also a modern one, growing and evolving in response to the demands of

(the) 21st century. The Gaelic word *t* (pronounced */H-t/*) means road, route, way, and is derived from Old Irish *t*. It occurs as the initial element in names such as *t* - road of the shieling (Isle of Skye), *t* *T* road of the tower (Isle of Tiree) and */ t l* the white road (Upper Deeside) and also as a qualifying element in names including *L t* loch by the road (Isle of Scalpay), *B l t* pass of the road (Inverness-shire) and *T - - t* house by the road (Argyll).

In O O e O road, in i q e e s i o n s and a o u t e, a n c o u s a h e O i n

the drovers on Islay refers to an old route for the legitimate transportation of cattle on the island. Transportation of a different sort is reflected in the name *t M* high road of the bodies. This was a coffin road in Lochaber, which was the route taken to transport the dead from the remoter parts of the district to the burial grounds of Gairlochy.

Other instances of *t* are relatively modern, and many are simply street names. For example, *t U* on the isle of Lewis is new road and *t /* *B* (also on Lewis) is brae road. *t M l* on the Isle of Raasay is mill road, */ t* in Gairloch is the old road, and *t F* on the Isle of Skye is road of the hay. In the town of Stornoway on Lewis, *t ll* is MacDonald Road, *t* is memorial road, in reference to the nearby war memorial, is island road and *t N* is goathill road.

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