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THE GAELIC DIALECT OF COLONSAW

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a description of the Scottish Gaelic dialect spoken on the Inner Hebridean island of Colonsay. This dialect has not previously been the subject of any serious academic research. Gaelic was the dominant language on Colonsay until the 1970s, but the local dialect is now in terminal decline, with only a handful of fluent speakers still living on the island. The study focusses mainly on the phonology of the dialect, but other aspects such as morphology, syntax and lexis are also covered.

Following a brief introduction, Chapter 1 seeks to situate the dialect in its wider geographical, historical and sociolinguistic context, highlighting the major changes that have taken place in the past forty years, and have led to its present endangered situation.

Chapter 2, which comprises approximately half the thesis, examines the phonological structure of the dialect in detail, based on the results of the Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland (SGDS). Issues of phonetic and phonemic transcription are discussed. The phonemes identified are then listed, with their respective allophones and non-allophonic variants.

Chapter 3 deals with prosodic and other non-segmental features which are of significance for the phonology of the dialect.

Chapter 4 highlights those aspects of morphology and syntax where Colonsay usage differs from other varieties of Gaelic.

Chapter 5 discusses lexical features which are particular to this dialect, or shared with neighbouring dialects in Argyll. An annotated Glossary lists words which are of particular interest in the study of this dialect, some of which are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.
This thesis will provide future students of Gaelic dialectology with an account of the Colonsay dialect, to complement the numerous monographs that have been written about other varieties of Gaelic. Because of the precarious position of this dialect, the timing of this study is critical: it represents the last opportunity to 'preserve by record' a distinctive variety of Gaelic which, sadly, is on the verge of extinction.
DECLARATION

I hereby declare:

(a) that the thesis has been composed by me, and

(b) that the work is my own, and

(c) that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signed,
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis could not have been produced without the willing co-operation of many people.

In the first instance I should like to thank my academic supervisors, Professor William Gillies, Professor Wilson McLeod, and Dr William Lamb, for their sustained interest in the progress of my project, and for constructive criticism and useful suggestions at all stages of the work.

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Professor Emeritus John Sheets, of the University of Central Missouri, an expert on the social history of Colonsay in the 19th century, was able to supply a wealth of background information, and has encouraged me at every stage.

Dr George Jones, of Aberystwyth, helpfully supplied me with electronic copies of his own PhD thesis on the Gaelic of Jura, and provided additional information on the Jura dialect.

Dr Cathlin Macaulay, of the School of Scottish Studies Archives, kindly allowed me access to the Scottish Studies Library during the period of its relocation. Her colleague Caroline Milligan has been of enormous help over the years in supplying me with recording equipment, and locating and copying archive recordings.
Most of all I would like to express sincere thanks to those speakers of Colonsay Gaelic who allowed me to record them, and in some cases had to put up with some fairly rigorous questioning. Their names are listed below. The fact that so many of them are being thanked posthumously merely serves to underline the precarious nature of this dialect. In particular I would like to pay tribute to Flora Macneill, Mary Ann MacAllister and Jessie McNeill, all sadly gone from us in the space of just two years, who took a close interest in my project, and were always on hand to answer questions.

My cousin Niall Brown was kind enough to read through drafts of some chapters, and make helpful observations. I would especially like to thank him and Netta Titterton for several hours spent patiently answering my questions, particularly about expressions they remembered being used by a previous generation of Colonsay Gaelic speakers. Dion Alexander was also able to share with me his ‘remembrance of things past’, including a number of typically Colonsay expressions that I had forgotten about.

At the same time, I should like to thank the many other Colonsay people who, although not Gaelic speakers themselves, have encouraged me in my research into this vital aspect of the island’s heritage. Kevin Byrne in particular has provided a wealth of stimulating suggestions and theories, which have occasionally enabled me to see things from a different angle. The late Angela Skrimshire also provided useful and, at times, challenging insights from an ‘incomer’s’ perspective.

Of the many other personal friends who have supported me throughout the course of this project I would mention in particular Sheila Knowles and Shiona Mackay.

Finally, I wish to express sincere thanks to Mr Zahid Mahmood, Cardiac Surgeon, whose professional skills ensured that I was able to complete this thesis with only the briefest of interruptions, despite having to undergo major heart surgery during its latter stages.
List of informants

Mrs Kate Bowman

Mr Niall Brown

Mr John Clark (died 1 August 2016)

Mrs Mary Ann MacAllister (died 1 February 2013)

Mr Donald J. MacArthur

Mr John MacFadyen

Mr Donald ‘Gibbie’ McNeill (died 18 August 2017) and Mrs Margaret McNeill

Mrs Eleanor McNeill (died 7 November 2013)

Mrs Flora Macneill (died 29 December 2013)

Miss Flora Margaret (‘Folalie’) McNeill (died 2 November 2012)

Miss Jessie McNeill (died 12 December 2014)

Mrs Mary O’Mahoney

Mrs Janet (‘Netta’) Titterton

Gu robh math agaibh uile.
**List of abbreviations**

CUP  Cambridge University Press

DIAS  Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies

*GOC*  Gaelic Orthographic Conventions

IPA  International Phonetic Alphabet

LSS  Linguistic Survey of Scotland

MIT  Massachusetts Institute of Technology

OUP  Oxford University Press

*SGDS*  Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland

*SGS*  Scottish Gaelic Studies

URL  Uniform Resource Locator
INTRODUCTION

This thesis provides a description of the Gaelic dialect spoken on the Inner Hebridean island of Colonsay, which has not previously been the subject of any specific academic research. As with other studies of Gaelic dialects, the main focus is on the phonology, based in this instance on the phonetic data contained in the Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland (SGDS) (Ó Dochartaigh 1997). Other aspects such as morphology, syntax and lexis are also covered. Gaelic was the dominant language on Colonsay until the 1970s, but the local dialect is now in terminal decline, with English replacing it as the language of everyday conversation.

Genesis of the project

This thesis is the fruit of a lifetime’s exposure to Colonsay Gaelic. My paternal grandmother was from Colonsay, and the local dialect of Gaelic was her first language; like many Gaels of her generation, she spoke no English until she went to school at the age of six. Although my father was not taught the language, he grew up hearing it spoken, especially during long summer holidays spent on the family croft at Uragaig in the 1920s and 1930s. My own experience of Gaelic as a child was limited, although I was certainly aware of it, in particular during family holidays on Colonsay, which in the 1950s was still overwhelmingly Gaelic-speaking, and in Wester Ross.

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1 Edith Clark, ‘Colonsay Isle’, tr. Duncan Johnston.
Having begun teaching myself Gaelic as a teenager, and after obtaining some knowledge of linguistics while studying French and German at the University of Glasgow, in 1973 I made what was to be the first of many visits to Colonsay with the specific purpose of improving my spoken Gaelic, and acquiring a knowledge of the local dialect. In 1989 I acquired a home on the island, and have since spent around a quarter of my time on Colonsay, conversing regularly in Gaelic with the diminishing cohort of fluent native speakers.

From studying a number of monographs on Gaelic dialects – beginning with Holmer’s *Studies on Argyllshire Gaelic* (1938) – I became aware that no serious study of Colonsay Gaelic had been undertaken. I also realised that the number of people speaking the dialect as their normal everyday language was rapidly declining. A frequently expressed opinion that ‘someone’ ought to undertake such a study, while there was still time, gradually matured into a realisation that I might be the person to do it. In 2008, I approached first Professor Donald Meek, and then Professor William Gillies, with the idea of a PhD. Nine years later, having in the meantime completed an MSc dissertation on ‘Glottalisation in the Gaelic Dialect of Colonsay’ (Scouller 2010), and with the number of Gaelic speakers on Colonsay now down to single figures, I am able to submit the results of my research.

**Structure of the thesis**

Chapter 1 provides background information about the island, including details of written sources, a brief summary of its history, and an account of the present socio-economic situation, highlighting the major changes that have taken place in the past forty years. A final section addresses the issue of language shift, and the factors that have led to the present critical state of the local dialect.

Chapter 2, entitled ‘The Phonemic Analysis of Colonsay Gaelic’, in tribute to the seminal work of Elmar Ternes (2006), forms the main core of the thesis, making up approximately half of the total word count. The analysis is based on the results of the *Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland* (SGDS) (Ó Dochartaigh 1997), supplemented as appropriate by the results of further primary research (see below).
An introductory section examines the different categories of speech sounds in turn, identifying phonemes in each case, and in particular addressing the issue of how Gaelic speech sounds can best be represented in both phonetic and phonemic transcription. A sub-section is devoted to new primary research on vibrants (r sounds), about which the SGDS results showed some ambiguity. The rest of the chapter then gives a detailed account of each phoneme, examining the evidence of the SGDS, and concluding in each case with a ‘phonemic definition’ indicating how the phoneme is articulated, and which variants are to be considered as allophones.

Chapter 3 examines Non-segmental (Prosodic) Features, i.e. those phonological elements which operate on the segmental string, but do not form part of it. In addition to the standard suprasegmental features – stress, duration and tone – these include more typically Gaelic elements: preaspiration, epenthesis and, importantly for the Colonsay dialect, glottalisation. Nasalisation and voicing/devoicing are also included. Where appropriate, illustrations are given based on spectrographic analysis, using Praat software (Boersma and Weenink 2010), and the ToBI system3 for the analysis of tone patterns.

Chapter 4 deals with issues of Morphology and Syntax. No attempt is made to cover the whole of the morphosyntax of Colonsay Gaelic; rather the aim is to identify features which are handled differently in this dialect from most other varieties of Gaelic.

Chapter 5, similarly, identifies Lexical Features which are of interest in this dialect because they differ from forms found elsewhere. A brief Comparative Table sets out some parallels with forms found in the neighbouring dialects of Jura, Islay and Tiree. This chapter is supplemented by an annotated Glossary.

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2 On glottalisation, see my MSc dissertation (Scouller 2010).
The Linguistic Survey of Scotland

In considering the phonological structure of the Colonsay dialect, and to some extent its morphology, I have had the great advantage of being able to base my analysis on the results of the Linguistic Survey of Scotland (Gaelic), published as the Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland (SGDS) (Ó Dochartaigh 1997). This monumental, five-volume work represents the fruits of a long period of research involving many distinguished scholars, beginning in the 1950s when the original fieldwork was conducted. As a result, we now have an immensely valuable and detailed phonetic record of the different dialects of Scottish Gaelic, many of which are no longer spoken. The Survey provides a narrow phonetic transcription of the pronunciation of 895 individual headwords in 207 geographic locations, spread across almost the whole of the historical Gàidhealtachd, from the Butt of Lewis in the north to the Mull of Kintyre in the south, and from Upper Deeside in the east to Barra and even St Kilda in the west. It is remarkable that, as recently as the 1950s, native speakers meeting the very strict criteria of the Survey could be found in virtually all the locations where Gaelic had been traditionally spoken.

We pick our informants with very great care, making sure that they were themselves born and brought up in the immediate neighbourhood whose dialect we are studying, and that both their father and mother were likewise. [...] We try if possible also to avoid those who are married to speakers of other dialects, or have themselves lived for a very long time in another dialect area.


Half a century on, such an exercise would have been impossible in the majority of mainland districts, and extremely difficult even in many of the islands.
Colonsay appears in the *SGDS* as Point 57. The informant, in July 1958, was Miss Annabella MacNeill, of No.7 Glassard.\(^4\) She is described as follows:

> Aged 82, born Lower Kilchattan [...], brought up Lower Kilchattan, father Machrins [...], mother Screatan [...]; father was literate in Gaelic. (Vol. I: 86)

‘Bella Ann’, as she was known, was born in 1876 to Donald ‘Gilbert’ MacNeill and his wife Margaret MacNeill (*Peigi Bhàin*); she died in 1962, and is buried with her parents and siblings in Kilchattan cemetery, next to her kinsman Professor Donald MacKinnon.\(^5\) She had previously been recorded on tape by Calum Maclean for the School of Scottish Studies Archives, and these recordings (SA 1953.120-124) are now available via the *Tobar an Dualchais* website (www.tobarandualchais.co.uk). It is therefore possible to compare her spoken pronunciation with the phonetic record.

The fieldworker who interviewed Annabella MacNeill for the *Survey* was Eric Hamp, who went on to become a much-respected phonetician and linguist, based in Chicago. His essay ‘On the representation of Scottish Gaelic dialect phonetics’ (Hamp 1988) has become something of a *locus classicus* for any study of Gaelic phonetics. However, since Hamp’s original field notes were post-edited by Professor Kenneth Jackson, and further edited and standardised for eventual publication in 1997, the essay is less helpful than might appear in interpreting Hamp’s extremely fine-toothed account of Colonsay Gaelic, and has to be read in conjunction with the extensive explanation of symbols in Vol. I of the *SGDS*.

Jackson’s ‘fair copy’ of Hamp’s field notes, copiously annotated in his own handwriting, is preserved, along with other materials from the *Survey*, in the School of Scottish Studies Archives, and provides a valuable insight into the process of eliciting and editing the raw data. It also preserves a number of forms which did not make it into the published volumes. Because the *Survey* was at that time known as the Linguistic Survey of Scotland (Gaelic), this unpublished material is cited here as LSS. As well as the phonetic data, a certain amount of morphological and

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\(^4\) ‘Tigh na Mara, 7 Glas Aird’, according to the *SGDS*. The current anglicised spelling is Glassard.

\(^5\) Graveyard inscription, Kilchattan cemetery. Further information from Professor John Sheets (conversation, 28 August 2017). Annabella MacNeill’s grandmother and Professor MacKinnon’s mother were sisters. Her nephew Donald ‘Gibbie’ McNeill was one of my informants.
morphophonological data is also provided; this content has yet to appear in published form. The latter data will be examined in Chapter 4 (Morphology and Syntax), where it will be shown that the informant’s responses reveal a ‘fairly conservative’ usage, perhaps influenced by her knowledge of the rules of Gaelic grammar (p. 301).

The practice of the LSS, in selecting a representative native speaker for each locality, does carry with it the danger that individual features of the informant’s speech (idiolect) may be recorded as definitive for this particular dialect, whereas other speakers may show some degree of variation. It is noteworthy that, where the same headword is recorded more than once in the SGDS for the same locality, some slight variation is usually evident. Nancy Dorian’s recent work on variation within a dialect, and within the phonetic repertoire of individual speakers, is highly relevant here (Dorian 2010). It is important to bear this in mind, in light of Hamp’s very detailed treatment of vowel sounds in particular. In some cases, his exceedingly narrow transcription of Annabella MacNeill’s pronunciation over-specifies the degree of variation encountered, beyond what is actually relevant to the characterisation of the dialect. This level of detail in the LSS as a whole is remarked upon by Bosch and Scobbie (2009), although they add a plea in mitigation: ‘To their credit, the fieldworkers on this project were making a genuine effort to record the minute details which might, under comparison with the whole, provide evidence of regional variation, either phonetic or phonological’ (2009: 357-358). In the days before digital recording, they may have felt that it fell to others to assess the phonological significance of the data they were faithfully transcribing.

In the present study I have relied on the findings of the Survey wherever possible; these are supplemented, as appropriate, with the results of my own primary fieldwork. Where I was uncertain about particular items in the SGDS results, based on my own acquired knowledge of Colonsay Gaelic, I was able to check these with native speakers, and in the overwhelming majority of cases, to verify that the phonetic forms recorded in the SGDS were correct. Any areas of divergence between the SGDS results and my own findings are noted as and when they occur. In the case of the (unpublished) morphological data, differences between the forms recorded in the LSS and present-day usage proved much greater, especially in the area of noun and adjective agreement. These discrepancies are addressed more fully in Chapter 4.
This thesis will provide future students of Gaelic dialectology with an account of the Colonsay dialect which, it is hoped, will complement the numerous monographs that have been written about other varieties of Gaelic. Because of the precarious position of the dialect, the timing of this study is critical: it represents the last opportunity to ‘preserve by record’ a distinctive variety of Gaelic which, sadly, is on the verge of extinction.
1. THE BACKGROUND: AN ISLAND AND ITS LANGUAGE

The island

The island of Colonsay is one of the smaller islands of the Inner Hebrides, and one of the least known. Lying between 56º 01ʹ N and 56º 08ʹ N, and between 6º 08ʹ W and 6º 17ʹ W, it measures approximately eight miles end-to-end, and almost three miles at its widest point. To the south, across an area of tidal mudflats known as The Strand (An Fhadhail) is the smaller island of Oronsay, roughly three miles by two, known principally for its ruined Priory, as a bird reserve, and for its grey seal colony.

Although Oronsay is cut off by the tide twice a day, and the two islands are now separately owned, they effectively form a single community: all the essential services – shop, post office, school, doctor’s surgery, churches, etc. – are to be found on Colonsay, which has a regular ferry service and limited air service to the mainland.

In Gaelic, the islands are known as Colbhasa and Orasa. Although folk etymology derives these forms from the names of the two saints most commonly associated with the locality, Columba and Oran, more learned opinion has held that they are of Norse origin, representing *Kolbeins-ey (Kolbeit’s island) and *Orfiris-ey (ebb-tide island) (Loder 1935: xxx, citing W. J. Watson 1922: xviii; 1926: 84). A recent study conducted by Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba suggests that a more probable derivation of the name Colonsay is from *Koll-vangs-øy (hill field island), which in the absence of any positive identification of ‘Kolbein’, seems a plausible alternative (King and Scammell 2017: 4). Oronsay, in various spellings, is a common name for a tidal island all the way up the western seaboard of Scotland, so ‘ebb-tide island’ seems a likely derivation in this case.

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6 Also spelt Oransay.
7 The spelling Colasa is popularly used on the island, and alternative forms such as Colbansaigh, Oransaigh are also attested.
The population of both islands was recorded as 132 in the 2011 Census. After a long period of relentless decline, the population has shown a slight increase at each of the last two Censuses. This is discussed in more detail below.

Colonsay’s nearest neighbours are Islay to the south, Jura to the east, and Mull and Iona to the north. To the west the open Atlantic stretches to the horizon, punctuated only by the slender tower of the Dubh Hirteach lighthouse, some 18 miles distant.\(^8\)

The ferry crossing to Oban, 38 miles to the north-east, takes 2 hours and 20 minutes; it operates daily in summer, and four times a week in winter. On Saturdays throughout the year, and on Wednesdays in summer, the Islay service from Kennacraig, on the west coast of Kintyre, is extended to Colonsay and Oban (and back again), meaning that round-trip visits are possible on those days.

Since 2007 there has also been an air service from Oban up to four days a week, using the upgraded airstrip at Machrins. The advent of regular flights at weekends means that, for the first time, secondary pupils who have to board at Oban High School can come home at weekends; previously this was only possible about every six weeks in the winter months, because of the timing of ferries.

**Written sources**

The book *Colonsay and Oronsay in the Isles of Argyll*, by John de Vere Loder (later Lord Wakehurst), first published in 1935, remains the standard work of reference on Colonsay and Oronsay to this day. A new edition was published in 1995, with an introduction by the present Lord Strathcona bringing the history of the islands up to date. Along with a wealth of historical and geographical information, it gives local Gaelic names of plants and birds where these are known, and contains a comprehensive list of Gaelic placenames (pp. 406-448).

\(^8\) The official spelling, as used by the Northern Lighthouse Board (www.nlb.org.uk), is *Dubh Artach*. However, the pronunciation on Colonsay (and on Iona) is \([\text{d}u \, \text{ˈhɪrˈtʃə}x]\). Donald MacKinnon, in an 1874 essay describing a visit to the newly-constructed lighthouse (Mackinnon 1956: 270-276), spelt it as one word: *An Dubhhirteach*. 
Loder’s work is a painstaking study, based mainly on primary sources. Slightly over half of it (pp. 191-448) consists of voluminous appendices. Two of these, Appendix II (pp. 193-260) and Appendix III (pp. 194-313) deal respectively with early documentary sources in which Colonsay is mentioned, and with more recent descriptions of the island, beginning with Martin Martin in 1703. The earliest recorded mention of ‘Coluansei’ and ‘Oruansei’ occurs in a ‘Constitution’ granted by Pope Innocent III to the Abbey of Iona in 1203, in which the two islands are listed as ‘pertinents’ of the Abbey (p. 193). Over a century later, Colonsay (in various orthographic guises) is listed in various charters granted by the ruling Kings of Scotland (including Edward Balliol) to the Lords of the Isles in the middle years of the 14th century (pp. 194-196). Numerous references to Oronsay Priory in correspondence with the Holy See between 1353 and 1558 (on the eve of the Reformation) are faithfully reproduced (pp. 206-211). From the 16th century onwards, official documentation becomes more established (pp. 213-236), largely detailing the changing fortunes of the Macfies/MacDuffies and Clan Donald, who vied for supremacy over the island, most notably in the time of Colkitto Macdonald (Colla Ciotach) (see below). Post-Reformation Church records are reproduced, dating from 1655 onwards (pp. 241-260).

Loder, who was not a Gaelic speaker, relied for much of his information on the expertise of Murdoch McNeill, who wrote Colonsay, One of the Hebrides in 1910. Born on Colonsay in 1873, McNeill trained as a botanist and horticulturalist at Kew Gardens before returning to his native island, where he became the Head Gardener. As well as an account of the island flora and fauna, McNeill’s book includes many examples of oral tradition, some of which is rendered in the original Gaelic. His list of placenames in Loder’s book is supplemented by footnotes citing Donald MacKinnon, the first Professor of Celtic at the University of Edinburgh, who was born on Colonsay (see below), and his successor W. J. Watson.

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9 Dean Monro’s description of his visit in 1549 is included among the ‘Documents’ in Appendix II (pp. 211-212).
10 Balliol’s ‘indenture’ was confirmed by Edward III of England in 1336, reflecting his vassal status (Loder 1935: 194-195).
11 This period in Colonsay’s history is fully documented by Byrne (1997).
12 He was the brother-in-law of the 3rd Lord Strathcona, who owned the two islands.
A rather more idiosyncratic account of the islands’ early history and prehistory was published by Symington Grieve in his two-volume work *The Book of Colonsay and Oronsay* (1923). Grieve was an enthusiastic amateur archaeologist, who was clearly fascinated by the oral tradition of the islands. His book is still regarded as something of a classic by Colonsay aficionados, but his findings lack academic rigour, and his account, while entertaining to read, is largely informed by folk history, and his own speculative theories.

Frances Murray, who spent summer holidays on Oronsay with her family in the 1880s, wrote about her experiences in her memoir *Summer in the Hebrides* (1887). Although essentially anecdotal, her book gives a fascinating first-hand account of Colonsay and Oronsay in the late nineteenth century, including some examples of Colonsay Gaelic; a few of these are transcribed as heard, thus preserving an early attempt at a phonetic record of the Colonsay dialect.

A similarly anecdotal account of life on Colonsay in the late 1960s is provided by the American journalist John McPhee in *The Crofter and the Laird* (1972). The book remains controversial on the island, thanks to McPhee’s practice of making liberal use of island gossip, which is quoted verbatim (though unattributed), with names mentioned. It nevertheless gives an endearing portrait of the Colonsay community as it was in an earlier generation.

More recently, Dion Alexander has produced *The Potter’s Tale: A Colonsay Life* (2017) recounting his experiences while trying to make a living as a potter on Colonsay in the 1970s. ‘Di the Potter’ (*Am Potter* [m̥ʰɔˈd̥aɾ̥]), as he is known locally, became a central player in the island community during that time, and an enthusiastic recorder of all aspects of Colonsay life and tradition, including most importantly its language, which he took the trouble to learn (pp. 24-42). Although his reminiscences were not published until 40 years later, his book provides an affectionate and hugely entertaining account of day-to-day life on Colonsay in the 1970s, only a few years after the period described by McPhee.
Kevin Byrne, a former owner of the Colonsay Hotel, has written *Lonely Colonsay* (2010). Although essentially a walking guide, it includes a wealth of fairly random information about archaeological sites and oral traditions, presented in an idiosyncratic and humorous style. Byrne has also produced a biography of Colkitto (1997), and a list of Colonsay and Oronsay placenames (1993).

Until recently, Colonsay had produced little in the way of literary output in Gaelic, the one great exception being the work of Donald MacKinnon (1839-1914). MacKinnon was born on a croft in Lower Kilchattan, and became an eminent member of the Edinburgh academic establishment. He was appointed as the first occupant of the Celtic Chair at Edinburgh University, which was established in 1882 following a widespread public campaign, and in 1883-84 served as a member of the Napier Commission into the living conditions of crofters (Cameron 1986: 3, 120). He wrote prolifically, in both English and Gaelic, for publications such as *An Gàidheal*, the *Celtic Review* and *The Scotsman*, on topics ranging from placenames to Gaelic proverbs, as well as more academic subjects (for a full bibliography, see Sheets 2009). A collection of his Gaelic prose writings, including some essays relating directly to Colonsay, was published by the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society (Mackinnon 1956). MacKinnon cultivated a good, if somewhat ponderous, Gaelic prose style, and although some Argyll influences may occasionally be detected (Mackinnon 1956: xxiv), there is little specific evidence of his native Colonsay dialect in his writing.

The celebrated collection *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, by John Francis Campbell, originally published in 1860-62, includes the tale ‘The Knight of the Red Shield’ (*Ridire na Sgiatha Deirge*), which Campbell received from ‘John McGilvray, labourer, Baile Raomainn, Colonsay, aged 72 years’ (Campbell 1994, Vol. 2: 177-210). The tale itself is rambling and grotesque, and represents, in Campbell’s estimation, ‘the fragments of some old romance traditionally preserved, and rapidly fading away before the light of modern times’ (p. 206). What is interesting from our

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13 The title refers to a phrase first coined by Sir Walter Scott in his poem *The Lord of the Isles* (1857); it was also used as the title of an essay (in English) by Donald MacKinnon, published in *The Scotsman* on 23 August 1887. (Sheets, forthcoming – page numbers not available).

14 The collection was edited by Lachlan Mackinnon (no relation), whose surname is spelt slightly differently.
point of view is that the Gaelic version as published appears to preserve some features of McGilvray’s native Colonsay idiom: dh’fholbh for dh’fhalbh, an sean for an sin, ’neis for a-nis, bu mheasa for bu mhiosa, ad fhé’ for iad fhéin, etc. Campbell himself explains in his Introduction that ‘falbh is spelt folbh when a story comes from some of the Western Islands, because it is so pronounced there’ (Vol. I: 81, italics added). While his purpose is not to reproduce all the features of his informant’s native dialect, enough is included to give a flavour of the original, making this the earliest known record of Colonsay speech.

The Gaelic oral tradition remained strong on Colonsay within living memory. People would compose verses to and about their neighbours, often in satirical vein, and these would be recited at ceilidhs and other gatherings, such as weddings. In the 1980s, Alasdair McAllister (1925-1987) began collecting some of the surviving material, both oral and manuscript, but this work was cut short by his untimely death; his unpublished collection, which I have in my possession, includes some original poems by the Rev. Kenneth MacLeod, famous for his collaboration with Marjory Kennedy-Fraser on Songs of the Hebrides, who served as the Church of Scotland minister in Colonsay from 1917 to 1925. There is also some material by Archibald McNeill, known to posterity simply as ‘the Bard’, from the now abandoned settlement of Riasg Buidhe on the east coast of Colonsay, who was active around the same time.

The generation of Colbhasachs born in the years following the First World War learned to recite many of the Bard’s verses from memory, and a rapidly diminishing number of them can still do so (Alexander 2017: 36-40).

Perhaps the last exponent of the Colonsay bardic tradition was Donald A. MacNeill (Dòmhnall a’ Gharbhaird, 1924-1995). A small selection of his poems, together with some items from the wider Colonsay tradition, was compiled by myself following his death, and published in 1998 under the title Moch is Anmoch (Scouller 1998). More recently, Morag Law has published Dileab Cholbhasach, a collection of articles written by her mother, Barbara Satchel (Barbra Cholla, 1917-1997), which were originally published in the Gaelic periodical Gairm (Law 2013). Satchel’s Gaelic in part reflects her Colonsay origins, and her essays, some of which describe her childhood on the island in the 1920s, are the only significant examples of recognisably Colonsay Gaelic prose to have been published.
Little attempt has been made until now to record the distinctive characteristics of the Colonsay dialect. In addition to the fragmentary evidence of Frances Murray and John Francis Campbell (see above), the Rev. George Henderson published a series of articles on ‘The Gaelic Dialects’ in 1903 and 1905, in the *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* (Henderson 1903, 1905). These make sporadic use of Colonsay examples, both phonetic and lexical. Although the system of phonetic notation used is archaic by today’s standards, the representation of the Colonsay dialect is clearly recognisable, and remarkably accurate. Henderson is not known to have visited Colonsay, but he studied under Donald MacKinnon in Edinburgh, and it is likely that the pronunciation he recorded is MacKinnon’s own.

As will be abundantly demonstrated in Chapter 2, Colonsay was one of the points chosen for the *Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland* (Ó Dochartaigh 1997) The results, based on fieldwork conducted on Colonsay in 1958, are the only systematic record to date of the phonetics of this dialect, and as such form the basis of my own detailed analysis.

Sound recordings of interviews with Colonsay people are held in the School of Scottish Studies Archives. These were conducted in Gaelic by Calum Maclean in 1953 (tapes SA1953.120-125), and by Alan Bruford, Donald Archie MacDonald and Ian Fraser in 1969 (tapes SA1969.001-007); and in English by Mary Carmichael in 1979 (tapes SA1979.41-44). Most, though not all, of these recordings are now available online on the Tobar an Dualchais website (www.tobarandualchais.co.uk), and constitute a valuable record of a time when Gaelic was much more widely spoken on the island than it is today. My own recordings made in the course of this project have been deposited with the SSS Archives (SA2009.027, SA2009.035, SA2009.036, SA2010.054, SA2010.055, SA2011.007).
History

The history of Colonsay from the earliest times is well documented by Loder (1935). Archaeological finds from caves around Kiloran Bay, and from shell middens on Oronsay, suggest that the two islands were occupied from a very early date, possibly around 7000 BC (Loder 1935: 6). More recent excavations have been carried out on Oronsay by (Sir) Paul Mellars in the 1970s (Mellars 1987), and since 1987 by Steven Mithen at various sites, including an important settlement at Tràigh Staosnaig.15 The earliest settlers are thought to have been seasonal shellfish-gatherers, rather than permanent residents, although Mithen’s more recent work has challenged this assumption (Mithen 2010: 218-221).

Local tradition has it that St Columba (Calum Cille) landed at Garvard, in the south of Colonsay, on his way from Ireland to Iona in 563 AD, and founded the original monastic settlement on Oronsay (Loder 1935: 20-24). Tobar Chaluim Chille, on the north side of Kiloran Bay, bears his name, but may reflect a later dedication (Loder 1935: 15; Byrne 2010: 112-113). Colonsay has also been mooted as a possible location for the island of Hinba, which is mentioned frequently in Adomnán’s Life of St Columba (Adomnán of Iona 1995: 18-19); the identity of Hinba has not been definitively established, although Jura is generally thought to be a more likely contender (Watson 1993: 81-84; cf. Clancy and Márkus 1995: 132).

From around 800 AD onwards, Vikings began raiding, and later settling, on the west coast of Scotland, leaving a legacy of Norse placenames in all the islands. In Colonsay they also left physical remains in the form of at least three boat burials, one of which, found in the sand dunes at Kiloran Bay in 1882, is now prominently displayed in the National Museum of Scotland (Loder 1935: 29-31).

15 Also known as Queen’s Bay.
In the late Middle Ages, Colonsay became the homeland of the Clan MacDuffie or MacPhee (Mac Dhuibhshithe), who built a fortification at Dùn Èibhinn, above Scalasaig. The MacPhees became Keepers of the Records to the Lords of the Isles, whose main centre of activity was nearby, at Finlaggan on Islay. The existing ruins of Oronsay Priory date from this period, and are thought to have housed an Augustinian community founded by ‘Good’ John, Lord of the Isles (d.1380) (Loder 1935: 47). Like other religious houses, the Priory was dissolved around the time of the Reformation (Loder 1935: 79-80).

The MacPhee hegemony was brought to an end in 1623 at the instigation of Colkitto Macdonald (Colla Ciotach), who had seized control of the island. The last chief of the MacPhees is said to have been captured while hiding among seaweed on Eilean nan Ròn, at the south-western tip of Oronsay and, depending on which version of the story is to be believed, was either summarily despatched where he lay, ‘gun tuilleadh dàlach’ (Mackinnon 1956: 301), or more formally executed by being tied to a standing stone at Baile Raomainn Mór, and shot (Loder 1935: 131-132; see also McNeill 1910: 8; Byrne 1997: 98).17

Although the population became nominally Protestant from the time of the Reformation (1560), Colonsay was poorly served by the post-Reformation church, doubtless on account of its remote location, and was administered as part of the parish of Jura until 1862. (Loder 1935: 163-167, 172-173).

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16 ‘MacPhee’ or ‘McPhee’ is the spelling found on Colonsay. The present-day clan organisation uses the form ‘Macfie’, as favoured by the Macfie family of Langhouse, who matriculated a coat of arms under this name in the 19th century. ‘MacPhee’ and ‘MacDuffie’ were used interchangeably in the 19th century on Colonsay, as attested by Census returns and parish records.

17 Loder quotes McNeill’s version verbatim (in Gaelic); the wording is identical to MacKinnon’s slightly earlier account (originally published 1904), and presumably reflects the oral tradition. Both McNeill and MacKinnon state that MacPhee was shot where he was found. It is not clear where the tradition of the Baile Raomainn Mór execution came from, but the standing stone was solemnly re-erected by members of Clan Macfie in 1977, and is the focus of clan commemorations on their four-yearly visits to Colonsay.
From 1701 onwards, the islands passed into the ownership of a branch of a mainland family, the McNeills of Taynish, who owned estates in Kintyre and elsewhere in Argyll. Styling themselves McNeills of Colonsay,\(^{18}\) they set about re-organising farming practices on the island,\(^{19}\) especially under John McNeill (1767-1846), long remembered after his death as the ‘Old Laird’, and his son Duncan McNeill (1793-1874), a distinguished lawyer who served as Lord President of the Court of Session from 1852 to 1867, taking the title Lord Colonsay. Their agricultural reforms resulted in the division of farms that lasted well into the twentieth century, and which is still visible today.

Agricultural reform came at a price: although Colonsay may have been spared the worst excesses of the Clearances, people were still encouraged to emigrate, and many did so voluntarily in the hope of a better life. Major emigrations to Canada took place in 1806, aboard the Spencer, and again in 1852. Colonsay emigrants settled first in Prince Edward Island, and later in Bruce County, Ontario (Sheets 2005: 266-268). As a result, the island population declined rapidly from a peak of 979 at the 1841 Census to 408 in 1871 (Loder 1935: 180).

The turn of the 20th century brought a change of ownership. Donald Smith, the first Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal (1820-1914), was a Scots-born Canadian businessman and politician, who had made a substantial loan to the last of the McNeill lairds, Sir John Carstairs McNeill (1831-1904). On McNeill’s death, Smith accepted title to the islands of Colonsay and Oronsay in settlement of his claim. ‘Labrador’ Smith was a self-made man in the Victorian model, who had made his fortune working for the Hudson’s Bay Company, before investing much of it in the Canadian Pacific Railway. Although he only became the Laird of Colonsay in old age, and rarely visited the island, his family (whose surname changed to Howard after he was succeeded by his daughter) were to dominate the economic life of Colonsay throughout the twentieth century, and still do.

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\(^{18}\) Although McNeill (in a variety of spellings) is a very common surname on Colonsay, and at one time comprised about half the population, the majority of indigenous McNeills on the island claim descent from the MacNeils of Barra, not the landowning family, and wear the Barra tartan. The McNeills ‘of Colonsay’ also owned the Ardlussa estate, in the north of Jura.

\(^{19}\) ‘Islay and Colonsay were the first islands [in the Hebrides] on which agricultural improvements were carried out’ (Storrie 1961: 91).
Recent economic/demographic developments

As recently as the 1970s, agriculture – both small-scale farming and crofting – formed the basis of the island economy, and a majority of the population was still Gaelic-speaking. In the space of just 40 years, this state of affairs has changed radically in both respects: agriculture has been replaced by tourism as the mainstay of the island economy, and English has replaced Gaelic as the day-to-day language of the population.

Shift in employment and population patterns

The division of farms established by the McNeill lairds in the mid-19th century persisted throughout the 20th century, although some mergers of the original ten holdings took place. In the mid-1970s, six farms were operating as independent units:

- Kiloran (incorporating Balavetchy and Balnahard)
- Scalasaig
- Machrins (incorporating Ardskenish)
- Baleromindubh
- Garvard (incorporating Balerominmore)
- Oronsay

Kiloran, traditionally the ‘home farm’ of Colonsay Estate, was run by a partnership involving the Estate and a largely absentee tenant. The other farms were let to tenants, all local people and all Gaelic speakers, who generally ran them as single-family operations, with additional casual labour employed as required.

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20 Oronsay Farm was tenanted by a descendant of a Colonsay family, whose first language was English, but who also knew Gaelic. His wife (my informant, the late Flora Macneill) was born and brought up on Oronsay, and was a fluent Gaelic speaker. Her brother, the bard Donald A. MacNeill (mentioned above), was the tenant of Garvard Farm at the same time.
In 2017, Kiloran is still run by the Estate, with a resident manager, but its territory has greatly expanded to include all the other farms except Balnahard and Oronsay. None of the former native-born tenants are still involved in farming; only Balnahard, which is now independent of Kiloran, continues to be worked by a member of the same (non-native, but no longer absentee) family as in the 1970s. The island of Oronsay was sold by Colonsay Estate in 1978, and the farm is now let by the American owner to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, who operate it on environmental principles to provide suitable habitats for species including chough and corncrake.

In the two crofting districts of Uragaig and Kilchattan, mergers between holdings have also taken place; the remaining crofters all took advantage of legislation introduced in 1976, enabling them to buy their land from the Estate on favourable terms. By 2017, although some crofters continue to maintain small flocks of sheep, and in some cases a few cattle, very little agricultural activity is taking place on most of the crofts, and the crofters derive their income largely from other sources, including in some cases the sale of building plots on de-crofted land. In an attempt to attract working families to the island, a number of new crofts were created by the Colonsay Development Company in 2008, although most of these holdings have yet to become agriculturally productive.

The eight smallholdings at Glassard, established in 1922, but never officially designated as crofts, were progressively abandoned from the 1980s onwards, and the houses sold off one by one, in some cases to sitting tenants.²¹ Five new houses have been built since 2000, all of them second homes, and the former ‘inbye’ land at Glassard has been re-appropriated as grazing for Kiloran Farm.

²¹ One house continues to be owned by the Estate, and let to a longstanding tenant.
As agriculture gradually ceased to provide a major source of employment on the island, so catering for tourists became the dominant form of economic activity. At one time the Hotel (owned by the Estate) represented the only commercial tourist operation, although individual islanders might let out rooms to ‘boarders’. From the 1960s onwards, under increasing economic pressure, the Estate began to rent out vacant cottages, and later, redundant farmhouses, to holidaymakers. A number of crofters, especially those whose holdings had been merged to form larger units, leaving them with more than one house, began to follow suit. In 2017, approximately half the houses on the island are let as holiday cottages. Only one operator now offers bed and breakfast accommodation; apart from the Hotel, the overwhelming majority of the accommodation on offer to tourists is self-catering.

The Colonsay Hotel itself was sold by the Estate in 1978 to an independent operator, who ran it as a successful business for over 20 years. The next owner was less successful, and the Hotel, which had been placed in administration, was re-purchased by the Estate in 2004. It is now run in conjunction with the holiday lettings business. The Hotel is closed during the winter months, although the bar, which until 2010 was the only licensed premises on the island, is open at certain times. Seasonal staff are employed, but whereas in the past these would be at least partially drawn from the resident population (including Colonsay-based students seeking employment at home during the summer vacation), most of the hotel staff are now recruited from outside on short-term contracts.

Apart from tourism, the shop and post office provide a handful of jobs, mainly part-time. The primary school, which has a roll of six pupils in 2017, has a full-time Head Teacher, and employs four ancillary staff in part-time roles. The Estate employs a small maintenance team, and recruits additional domestic staff during the summer. The Pantry, a popular café, provides full-time employment for the owner, and a number of part-time jobs. There is work for a jobbing builder, a painter, a plumber, and other trades as required. The ferry operator Caledonian MacBrayne employs a part-time piermaster (known officially as a Port Supervisor) and two to three

22 During the winter of 2012-13, the bar was run as a community venture, with volunteer staff.
23 Conversation with Mrs Gillian Ashcroft, Head Teacher, 13 August 2017.
additional pier staff, who are required to work only at ‘ferry times’. A small-scale publishing company, House of Lochar, and the associated bookshop, also provide some part-time employment. Colonsay Brewery, established by a locally-based partnership in 2007, is a successful venture, selling its products to mainland outlets, and providing part-time employment to around six people. Both the Brewery and a new independent operator began gin production in 2017; for the time being, distilling takes place off-island using ‘botanicals’ harvested locally.

Apart from occasional lobster fishing, there is now no locally-based fishery on Colonsay, although boats from Islay and the mainland continue to fish around its shores. One man has for many years run a successful business combining oyster farming on The Strand (the tidal mudflats between Colonsay and Oronsay) with beekeeping. In 2015 a commercial company, Marine Harvest, began a fish farming operation off the east coast of the island; this has created up to half a dozen jobs, some of which have been taken up by local workers, while others are brought in from outside on a fortnightly rotation.

The island has a resident doctor (currently a husband/wife partnership) and a part-time district nurse; the practice also employs a part-time secretary. The local authority maintains a manned service point, and also employs 2-3 women as home helps, and two men to carry out road maintenance and refuse collection. Scottish Water employs two people part-time to manage the water supply. The island’s tiny airport provides three part-time jobs, and some additional income for members of the local volunteer fire crew, who are required to be on duty whenever a flight is scheduled.

Apart from this, the working-age population gets by as best it can on casual employment – minor repairs, cutting grass, cleaning, etc. – while others live on benefits. A small number of people have tried ‘teleworking’ from home on Colonsay, with mixed results. All in all, there is very little full-time employment on Colonsay, and whereas in the 1970s many people were able to make some sort of living from casual labour on the farms, this source of income has all but dried up in the 21st century, as contractors from outside are usually brought in to do jobs such as sheep-shearing, fencing and silage-making.
Alongside the decline in agricultural activity, there has been a steady growth in the numbers of retired people coming to live on the island. While some of these people have close connections with Colonsay, in some cases going back several generations, others are simply attracted by the prospect of living in a beautiful and remote location. Their purchasing power undoubtedly benefits the island businesses, but they do little to boost the numbers in the local primary school, and none of them, currently, are Gaelic speakers. Not all stay the course: for some, living the island dream is tempered by the inconvenience of growing old in a remote spot, far from family and friends, with unreliable communications, and limited access to health facilities and other services.

As a result of these changes, the proportion of ‘incomers’ in the local population has increased markedly in the last 50 years, to around three-quarters.\(^{24}\) Around half of these are retired; the rest have mostly come to the island to take up employment, or in some cases to be with local spouses or partners.

The influx of comparatively wealthy incomers and second-home owners has also inflated property prices beyond the reach of most islanders who might want to buy their own homes. Since around 2000 there has been a spate of new houses being constructed, but although some of these were initially built by local people keen to own their own homes, the overwhelming majority are now owned either by retired incomers, or by non-residents as holiday homes. Provision of affordable housing, including sheltered accommodation, is recognised as an urgent necessity: a small housing association development of eight homes was built in the 1990s at Scalasaig, and a further five are planned for a site in Lower Kilchattan.

Until the end of 2016, there were two churches on the island, one Church of Scotland and one Baptist. The Baptist congregation traced its origins to a revival movement among the Argyll islands in the early 19\(^{th}\) century, and at one time was a significant institution on the island (McNeill and McNeill 2013). Neither Church has had a

\(^{24}\) Own computation, July 2017 (84 out of 112 permanent residents). For this purpose, ‘incomer’ means someone who has moved to the island from elsewhere, and who has no family connection (parents or grandparents) to the settled community. It includes those who have married members of the settled community. The term is used in this sense within the Colonsay community.
resident minister for many years; services are conducted by a succession of visiting preachers, and by a lay Reader who has a second home on the island. Gaelic services have not been held on the island since before 1950, although some preachers like to include a few words of Gaelic in their services. As the number of worshippers declined in the early 21st century, services began to be held jointly, alternating between the two churches, but in 2016 the few remaining Baptist members decided to close their church, and worship now takes place only in the Parish Church in Scalasaig. The former Baptist Church building has been made available to the Colonsay and Oronsay Heritage Trust, to house a museum of island life.
Language shift

Numbers of Gaelic speakers have declined steadily since the mid-19th century, and in recent years the influx of monoglot English speakers has further accelerated the process of language shift. Although many of the incomers have expressed an interest in learning the language, few have yet acquired any degree of conversational fluency.

Numbers of Gaelic speakers on Colonsay 1881-2011, based on Census returns. (Source: Duwe 2006; Scotland’s Census data for 2011 added – for details, see footnote 26).

The Census of 1881 was the first to include a question about respondents’ ability to speak Gaelic. In that year, 347 persons were recorded as Gaelic-speaking on Colonsay and Oronsay, out of a total population of 397 (87.4%). There followed a steady pattern of decline in the numbers of Gaelic speakers, even as a proportion of a decreasing overall population. In 1971, there were still 80 Gaelic speakers out of a total population of 140 (57.1%). By 1981, the proportion had dropped to 40%, and Gaelic speakers formed a minority of the Colonsay population for the first time in recorded history.

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25 Because the 1971 figures are rounded to the nearest 5, these data must be regarded as approximate.
The Census of 2011 showed a total of 26 people in the categories ‘Speaks, reads and writes Gaelic’ (10), ‘Speaks but does not read or write Gaelic’ (10) and ‘Speaks and reads but does not write Gaelic’ (6).

Due to the ‘self-certifying’ nature of individual Census returns, such figures give no indication of people’s level of language skills, and must therefore be treated with caution. From my own knowledge of the Colonsay population, I estimate that there were at that point 14 fluent speakers out of a total population of 132 (10.6%).

None of these speakers are now under the age of 65; eight have died since 2011, and one has left the island. So although the overall decline in the island’s population appears to have ‘bottomed out’, with modest increases recorded in 2001 and 2011, the decline in the number of Gaelic speakers looks set to continue to the point of extinction. Although there have from time to time been speakers of other Gaelic dialects among the Colonsay population, all the remaining speakers in 2017 grew up on Colonsay, and speak the local dialect. There are, in addition, a number of people (perhaps around 20) who grew up on Colonsay speaking the local dialect, but now live elsewhere; some of these are included amongst my informants.

The bare statistics do not tell the whole story.

Language shift has primarily occurred between generations. As an illustration of this, two sisters who arrived on the island with their parents in 1947, speaking no Gaelic, discovered that they were the only non-Gaelic speaking pupils in the school, and quickly learned the local dialect to a high degree of fluency from their peers. From the 1950s onwards, however, children brought up on the island speaking only English at home were less likely to acquire a knowledge of Gaelic from their classmates, more and more of whom would themselves be from English-speaking families.

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26 A further 2 persons are listed as ‘Reads but does not speak or write Gaelic’, and 4 under ‘Other combination of skills in Gaelic’. (Source: Scotland’s Census 2011 – National Records of Scotland, Inhabited islands report: Table A17 - Gaelic language skills, 2001 and 2011, all people aged 3 and over. Available via URL: http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/analytical-reports).

27 Colonsay 124, Oronsay 8. Table A17 (Gaelic language skills) lists those aged 3 and over, giving a figure of 129.

28 Interviews with Eleanor McNeill, 28 June 2010, and Netta Titterton, 20 June 2011. Eleanor McNeill commented, ‘Cha mhòr gun tèid a’um air seo a chreidsinn, ach [...] cha chuala mi Gàidhlig air a bhruaidhinn riabh gus an dàna sinn do Cholbhasa’ (I can hardly believe this, but I never heard Gaelic spoken until we came to Colonsay).
households. The reasons for this shift are complex, and reflect the situation of individual families. In some cases, English-speaking families came to live on the island, usually to take up employment; in other cases, a local Gaelic speaker may have brought an English-speaking spouse to the island. Some parents appear to have thought that speaking English at home would help further their children’s education. Whatever the reasons, the result was that English replaced Gaelic as the language of the playground, as well as being the language of instruction in the classroom. Even children brought up in Gaelic-speaking households would spend the day at school speaking only English, and would often find it difficult to switch back to Gaelic when they went home, knowing that their parents could understand English perfectly well. This led to a situation in which parents might well speak to their children in Gaelic, but the children would respond in English. Eventually this proved unsustainable, and English as the home language became the norm. In some families, brought up in the 1950s and 60s, the older children grew up fluent in Gaelic, while their younger siblings had at best a passive understanding of the language. The result is that there are now no fluent native speakers of Colonsay Gaelic, on or off the island, under the age of 55, although some younger island residents have made efforts to learn the language, with varying degrees of success.29

Fewer Gaelic speakers in the community means fewer opportunities for those remaining speakers to use their language. As a result, people who can speak Gaelic do not in fact do so on a regular basis. The advent of regular Gaelic television programmes in recent years has helped raise the profile of the language, and has provided an opportunity to hear different varieties of Gaelic.30 This, however, does not compensate for the absence of opportunities to engage actively with other speakers in their own language.31

30 Gaelic radio broadcasts, which lack visual clues, have never been as popular with Colonsay Gaelic speakers as television programmes.
31 My informant Mary Ann MacAllister was able to list the people (10) to whom she still spoke Gaelic (interview, 27 August 2009).
Few of the elderly Gaelic speakers who have lived on Colonsay in recent years have been comfortable reading and writing their language; although some Gaelic was taught in the local school while they were growing up, and some were taught Gaelic at Oban High School, their education was otherwise conducted entirely through the medium of English, with the result that most of them would struggle to read and write in their own mother tongue, although perfectly able to do so in English. This has meant, for example, that in my own primary research, I have been unable to set reading tasks in order to elicit Colonsay forms, and have had to rely mainly on oral translation exercises, using English prompts. Translation, however, does not always come naturally to people who are quite accustomed to speaking one language or the other in different situations, code-switching as required, but not to the conscious process of semantic transfer between languages.

From time to time attempts have been made to teach Gaelic to both schoolchildren and adults on the island. Gaelic was taught in the local primary school until the 1950s, and Gaelic classes again formed part of the curriculum for a while in the 2000s, with active participation by some of the remaining native speakers. These, however, were heavily dependent on the teachers’ ability to learn the language themselves, and on the continuing good health of the elderly ‘language assistants’. I myself ran a series of workshops for adults at the Colonsay Hotel in the 1990s, and more recently classes for adults have been organised, initially involving local people as tutors, and later taught remotely, via a video link, by tutors from the Gaelic centre on Islay, Ionad Chaluim Chille. Some individuals have taken distance-learning courses run by Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. But results have been limited: numbers of local speakers are now too few to provide would-be learners with anything resembling an ‘immersion’ environment in which to practise their skills. It is all too little, too late, to promote any realistic local revival of the language.

32 Until the 1960s, many Colonsay pupils opted to receive at least part of their secondary education on the island, using correspondence materials sent out by Dunoon Grammar School. Whatever its educational merits, this arrangement had the advantage of keeping them in a Gaelic-speaking environment while they were growing up.
33 The last Gaelic-speaking teacher left before 1960 (Niall Brown, e-mail, 4 September 2017).
The present study is a last-ditch attempt to document the Colonsay dialect while there are still a handful of speakers living on the island, and thus to preserve a record of its distinctive features for the benefit of future scholars, and all those with an interest in this vital aspect of the island’s heritage.
2. THE PHONEMIC ANALYSIS OF COLONSAY GAELIC

In this chapter I have been guided in part by the principles formulated by Elmar Ternes in *The Phonemic Analysis of Scottish Gaelic* (2006), where he describes the process of eliciting the phonemic structure of Applecross Gaelic. Ternes sets out the principles underlying his analysis rather briefly in the opening pages of his account (pp. 1-3); their detailed application has to be deduced largely from his treatment of individual cases. Although he does provide a full phonemic inventory of Applecross Gaelic (pp.123-124), his analysis concentrates mainly on sounds and features which raise particular problems of interpretation.

A phonemic analysis involves a process of detachment from the raw phonetic data, as presented, in this case, in the *SGDS* results. The aim must be to see how the various sounds, faithfully represented in terms of their actual realisation by a scheme of phonetic symbols, function in relation to one another. Not all differences, by any means, will be phonologically significant. A particular sound may be pronounced by different speakers, or by the same speaker on different occasions, with a greater or lesser degree of openness, laxness, rounding, etc., without these variations having any significant impact on the meaning of what is said. In most cases, both speaker and listener will be unaware of any difference in articulation. The job of the phonologist is to identify which variations are significant, and where, on the map of possible sounds that the human vocal apparatus can produce, lines can be drawn to separate clusters of similar sounds into discrete entities, which we call phonemes. Unlike the minor variations that pass unnoticed, phonemes are recognised by speakers of a particular language or dialect (albeit unconsciously) as separate sounds.

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34 Subject to revision of the category ‘half-long’ [ˑ] in the light of Chapter 5, which did not form part of the original (1973) publication.
It is a little like dividing up the visible spectrum: ‘blue’ and ‘green’ are recognised as different colours, although in fact they merge imperceptibly into one another.\(^{35}\)

Some variations occur regularly in a particular phonetic environment. An [n] before a labial consonant [b, p, f, m] may be consistently realised as [m] (thus in English, we say *indefinite*, but *impossible*). These regular variations are termed *allophones*.

The *SGDS* results for Colonsay use no fewer than 64 primary phonetic symbols (16 vowels, 48 consonants), most of which are further modified by the use of diacritics. It must not be assumed that each of these sounds represents a distinct phoneme. Experience of other languages, and of Scottish Gaelic as a whole, suggests that this would constitute an extremely large phonemic inventory. Some are likely to be allophones, or in many cases simply articulatory variants with no phonological significance.

The present chapter deals essentially with segmental phonemes and their respective allophones. Features such as duration, glottalisation and epenthesis, which may appear to have ‘phonemic’ value in some instances, are referred to here as appropriate, but these, along with the classic ‘suprasegmental’ features, are analysed in more detail in the next chapter.

\(^{35}\) In Gaelic, the division of the spectrum into colours is notoriously different from English. *Glas* can be translated ‘green’ or ‘grey’; *dearg* or *ruadh* may both be translated ‘red’, etc.
Transcription practice

Forms cited directly from the SGDS are reproduced as published, with the number of the headword given in round brackets (…), and the phonetic transcription enclosed in square brackets […], according to the usual convention. Where no headword number is indicated, the form given is based on my own research; this is usually because the word in question does not appear in the SGDS. In the interests of consistency, I have based my own phonetic transcription on the system adopted in the published SGDS results, although since I have been less rigorously schooled than Eric Hamp in the art of distinguishing subtle variations, especially of vowel sounds, my transcription is less narrow, making much more sparing use of diacritics. In a few instances, where my phonological interpretation is at odds with that suggested by the SGDS results, I have given an alternative reading. In phonemic transcription, which appears between slash marks /…/ according to convention, I have adopted a somewhat different approach, based more closely on current IPA practice. This is explained in detail in the following phonemic analysis.

36 I have also retained the SGDS spelling of Gaelic words when citing entries. In some cases this does not conform to current norms, as prescribed in GOC (Gaelic Orthographic Conventions).
37 International Phonetic Association.
VOWEL PHONEMES

Gillies (2009: 236) presents the phonemic structure of Scottish Gaelic vowels in a 3x3 formation, as follows:

```
i ɯ u
 e ə o
ɛ a ɔ
```

Ternes (2006: 121-124) considers a similar scheme, but eventually discards it in favour of a triangular pattern:

```
i ɨ u
 e ə o
ɛ ɔ
a
```

I agree with Ternes in recognising four degrees of openness. My own preference would be for a slightly modified presentation, as follows:

```
i ɯ u
 e ə ɤ o
ɛ ɔ
a
```
My version differs from both Ternes and Gillies in showing /ɯ/ (for which Ternes uses the symbol /ɨ/) as an unrounded back vowel, rather than central, and in differentiating between /ɨ/ and /ə/. Although /ɯ/ and /ə/ may be regarded phonologically as ‘central’ vowels, to distinguish them from the rounded ‘cardinal’ back vowels, they actually denote unrounded forms of [u] and [o] respectively, and are therefore defined in phonetic terms as back vowels. To complicate matters, I shall show that, in the Colonsay dialect with which we are concerned here, the corresponding sounds are in fact rounded front vowels, and are realisations of a single phoneme (see below). The only truly central vowel in the above tables is /ə/, which I prefer to treat as a phoneme in its own right, although a case can be made for regarding it as an unstressed allophone of /ə/.

Given that the Colonsay dialect is mutually intelligible with other varieties of Gaelic (to a greater or lesser extent), it is not surprising to find that much of its phonemic structure is shared with other dialects. The primary phonetic symbols used in the SGDS to record the Colonsay vowels, as they occur in stressed syllables, are as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
i & y & (u) \\
(ɨ) & ɨ & (o) \\
e & ṥ & ɔ \\
ɛ & ɔ \\
a
\end{array}
\]

The symbols shown in brackets are rare (though not entirely absent) in stressed syllables.
It will be immediately apparent that the main differences between the Colonsay paradigm and the table of Scottish Gaelic phonemes are the following:

1) the presence of the rounded front vowels [y ñ õ];
2) the virtual absence, in stressed syllables, of the unrounded back vowels [ɯ ɤ];
3) the inclusion of a layer representing ‘lax’ forms of the high vowels: [ɨ ɨ̞ ʊ̞].

A preliminary conclusion would suggest that the forms [y ñ õ] are the phonetic realisation, in this dialect, of the ‘missing’ vowels [ɯ ɤ]. Although this hypothesis is essentially correct, in practice the situation is not quite so simple, as will be demonstrated (pp. 52-55).

All these vowels, except those in brackets, may be shown either long or short when they occur in stressed syllables. In the SGDS results for Colonsay, length is consistently indicated with the half-length marker [ ]. This is presumably intended to reflect the fact that, in Colonsay, ‘long’ vowels are not as long as in some other dialects, where the full-length marker [:] is used. In a wide-ranging comparative exercise such as the Survey, where the aim is to show the whole scope of dialectal variation across the Gaelic-speaking area, such a distinction is clearly of considerable relevance. However, in a single-dialect study such as this, contrastive indications of actual vowel length are less important. In any case, the absolute duration of vowels in natural speech is highly variable, depending on a number of prosodic constraints, which will be examined in more detail in the next chapter. For the purposes of phonetic analysis, which by definition involves a degree of abstraction from the raw phonetic data, what is important is whether a given vowel is articulated long or short, not the precise measurement of its length. In the interests of consistency, I shall follow the SGDS protocols in phonetic transcription; when it comes to phonemic transcription, however, I intend to use the full-length marker [:], which is more immediately recognisable to those familiar with the IPA system. This should not be taken as implying any judgment as to the actual duration of the vowels so marked.
When unstressed syllables are included, the picture becomes more complicated. The following range of primary symbols is encountered:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
  i & y & u & u \\
  i & y & ə & u \\
  e & ə & ʊ & o \\
  ɛ & ʌ & ɔ & a
\end{array}
\]

The addition of three primary symbols [ə ɤ ʌ], which are found only in unstressed position, means that, in addition to the central vowel [ə], we now also have a set of back unrounded vowels existing alongside front rounded forms. These forms must clearly be accommodated in any hypothesis about the phonemic structure of the dialect.

**Modified forms**

In addition to their primary representations, all of these vowel symbols are found in modified forms in the *SGDS* results, using the following diacritics:\(^{38}\)

- [ə] – raised
- [x̣] – lowered
- [x̜] – retracted
- [ẍ] – centralised
- [x̫] – rounded

Diacritics may in some cases be combined on a single vowel, e.g. [ɣ o].

Nasalisation, which is marked by the *tilde* [x̃], will be considered separately, as a non-segmental feature (pp. 281-283).

In some cases, modified forms of vowels are more frequently encountered than the primary symbols themselves.

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\(^{38}\) For further explanation, see Vol. I: 111-117. Not all of these diacritics, as used by the *SGDS*, correspond to current IPA practice (see IPA 2015).
It must be emphasised that not all of these modifications are phonologically significant. We have already noted that, in those instances where the SGDS lists the same word more than once, the exact forms recorded are often different. This suggests that, in the mind of the informant, no significance attached to this variation – she was probably unaware of having offered different forms. As previously discussed, a phoneme is merely an interpretative construct in the study of a language, and its actual realisation may vary within set limits, without affecting the perception of the word in which it occurs.

A variation may count as an allophone of the phoneme in question only if it can be shown to occur as part of a pattern, i.e. if it consistently occurs in a particular phonetic environment. On this basis, it is difficult to classify as an allophone a variation which is found in only a few instances, without any obvious common factor, or if counter-examples can be found showing a different variant, or the primary phoneme, in the same phonetic environment. In some cases, a variation which consistently occurs in a particular environment may also occur sporadically in other environments too: it thus appears to be an allophone in the first case, but a random variation in other instances. This raises theoretical questions about whether the same sound can be both an allophone and a variation in different environments, but it is important to reserve the term ‘allophone’ for those cases where the phonetic realisation of the phoneme necessarily alters in a particular environment.
Cardinal vowels

What are often called the ‘cardinal’ phonetic vowels, occurring in the above tables, represent phonemes in Scottish Gaelic:

\[
\begin{array}{cc}
\text{i} & \text{u} \\
\text{e} & \text{o} \\
\text{ɛ} & \text{ɔ} \\
\text{a} \\
\end{array}
\]

While nothing in the Colonsay results suggests that this dialect differs greatly from other varieties of Gaelic in recognising cardinal vowels as phonemes, there are two possible areas where problems may arise:

1. One of the more obvious distinguishing features of Colonsay Gaelic, as of other Argyll dialects, is the appearance of [ɛ] in the presence of a nasal consonant where other varieties have [a], e.g. *a-mach* (34) [mɛx], *cam* (144) [kɛm'], *naidheachd* (647) [nɛʔɛxq]. It is tempting to interpret this as meaning that [ɛ] is an allophone of /a/ in a nasal environment. However, [ɛ] also occurs independently, in other phonetic environments, and can therefore be regarded as a phoneme in its own right. Moreover, the pronunciation of orthographic *a* as [ɛ] is not automatic in a nasal environment, as evidenced by the fact that unaltered [a] is found adjacent to a nasal in words such as *marbh* (600) [maɾiɣ], *mharbhadh* (602) [ varaɣ], *màirnealach* (596) [maʔnaɬɛx], *bainne* (68) [baɲ],*bàn* (not in *SGDS*) [baɲ], and the gen. pl. form *ban* [baɲ], which is distinguished phonetically from the nom. sg. *bean* (88) [beɲ]. This suggests that /ɛ/ and /a/ are indeed separate phonemes, and that

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39 Forms with [ɛ] are found in Barra (Points 27-30) and West Perthshire (Points 100-107).
40 Not even the gen. sg. form *bhàin* shows raising: cf. *Tràigh a’ Mhill Bhàin* [traˑ i̯ vɪˈaˑɲ] on Oronsay.
41 This form is not actively used in the dialect, but is found in placenames (see p. 324).
what we have here is a significant difference in the distribution of phonemes, i.e. which phoneme is used in particular words, rather than a difference in the phonemic structure as such. (On distribution, see Petyt 1980: 19-22).

2. Lowered forms of /e/ and /o/ (shown as [ɛ] and [ɔ]) are better regarded as variant realisations of the phonemes /ɛ/ and /ɔ/ respectively. This is more easily understood if the range of variation in vowel sounds is seen as a continuum, across which lines distinguishing different phonemes can be drawn at any point, irrespective of the actual symbols used. The table on p. 127 may help to make this clearer.

[ɛ] is found only in faiceadh (384) [fɛ̃ʃə̅’i̞y̞], sàmhach (733) [sɛ̅ vax], and one version of sgamhan (757) [sqe’vən̥] (758 has [sqe’vən̥]). Both the latter words illustrate the characteristic ‘raising’ of orthographic a before a nasal consonant, referred to above. Other instances of this feature in the Colonsay results show the ‘raised’ vowel as [ɛ] or one of its modified forms. This suggests that, phonologically, [ɛ] should be considered as a variant (hyper-raised) form of the phoneme /ɛ/ rather than a lowered variant of /e/.

Similarly, [ɔ] is found in bòidheach (118) [bọ i̯əx], Di-dòmhnach (327) [d̨’z̨’i̞ ɔ̣ν̥c], one version of olc (673) [ɔl̥’ɡ̥] (674 has [ɔl̥’ɡ̥]), and seo (753) [ʃo], as well as in the characteristic Colonsay pronunciation of Calluinn (143) [ko’l’ɪɲ̥]. In all these cases, [ɔ] appears to function as a variant of /ɔ/ rather than /o/. The form [ɔ] (lowered and retracted) is found in broilleach (124) [bɾo’ɔ̇ɛ̆x], one version of gorm (497) [ɡɔ̣ɾ̥ɪm̥] (498 has [ɡɔ̣ɾ̥ɪm̥]), and as the ‘echoing’ vowel in bogha (117) [bɔ̣ʔo]. Again, this form is best regarded as a variant of /ɔ/ rather than /o/.

42 Headword is Dòmhnach. This form (without Di-) is found in expressions such as an Dòmhnach seo ‘this Sunday’, Dòmhnach eile ‘another Sunday’, etc.
Non-cardinal vowels

Non-cardinal vowels occurring in the SGDS results for Colonsay are as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{y} & \text{ɯ} \\
\text{i} & \text{ɪ} & \text{ə} & \text{ʊ} \\
\text{ø} & \text{ɤ} & \text{ʌ} \\
\end{array}
\]

These present more serious problems of phonemic interpretation in the specific context of this dialect, and will now be considered in more detail.

*Rounded front vowels: y ɯ ø*

Analysis of the Colonsay results shows that these three symbols, usually in their modified forms, occur in the same words as the phonemes which appear as /ɯ/ and /ʌ/ in other varieties of Scottish Gaelic.

Examples: *craobh* (247) [kr\text{ɨ}ɣ\text{ɟ}], *saoghal* (738) [s\text{ɵ}ˈ\text{l}ˈ], *taobh* (828) [t\text{ɵ}ɣ] (829 has [t\text{ɨ}ɣ]), *lagh* (545) [lˈɣ\text{ɟ}], *coille* (225) [k\text{ɨ}ˈɣɪ], *aghaidh* (9) [ɣ?ɣ\text{ɟ}].

It is, however, difficult to establish any criteria for relating any of these symbols, or their modified forms, to one or other of these two phonemes. Rather it appears that in Colonsay Gaelic the /ɯ/ and /ʌ/ phonemes have coalesced into a single (front rounded) phoneme, which I propose to label as /ʏ/ (see below). The actual realisation of this phoneme may range quite widely over the area represented by the symbols [y ɯ ø].

Any other conclusion would require evidence that the phonemes are actually distinct, preferably on the basis of minimal pairs. The only possible example of a significant distinction in the SGDS results is the pair *cat/cait*, where the singular appears as [k\text{ɨ}f\text{ɸt}] (158) or [k\text{ɤ}f\text{ɸt}] (159) and the plural/gen. sg. as [k\text{ɤ}f\text{t}ˈ] (160). In other varieties of Gaelic, e.g. Harris, the pronunciation is [kaht : k\text{ɨ}htˈ],\footnote{Point 12 (Scadabay).} with a clear
phonemic difference (/ø/ vs. /ɛ/) affecting the vowel. In the Colonsay version, the difference in articulation of the vowel is very slight: the vowel in [kɔ̞fᵊ] is lowered, bringing it very close to [ɛ], and the main burden of indicating the grammatical form is borne by the final consonant. On the basis of this example, one could even make a case for [ɛ] being an allophone of /ɛ/ before a palatalised consonant, were it not for the fact that [ɛ] also occurs in this environment in other examples: aois (48) [ɔ̞ɟʃ], coille (223, 224) [kɔ̞g`a] (225 has [kɔ̞jɹ]), coinneal (229,230) [kɔ̞p`a].

The case for separate phonemes in this dialect is therefore ‘not proven’. On the contrary, the existence of variations such as tairbh (823) [tɔ́rɪʃ (823) ~ tɔ́rɪʃ (824)] and taobh [tɔ́ ɣ (828) ~ tɔ́ ɣ (829)] suggests a certain fluidity in the phonetic forms actually found. The conclusion that these rounded front vowel sounds constitute a single phoneme in Colonsay Gaelic is thus compelling. In the LSS material, Hamp, as reported by Jackson, comes to the same conclusion, writing the phoneme in all cases as /ø/ (LSS: 7).

Pace Hamp, I would argue that the most appropriate symbol to represent this phoneme is /ɛ/; which lies in the middle of the rather wide phonetic range it covers. Either /ø/ or /ɛ/ would serve equally well, but could be potentially misleading as to the typical quality of the vowel in question.

Unrounded back vowels: ɯ ɤ ʌ

I have argued that */u/ does not occur as a phoneme in this dialect, its functions being taken over by /ɛ/.

The symbol [w] is found only a few times in the SGDS results, and always in a modified form. Centralised and rounded [u] is the form most commonly encountered.

The use of this symbol, in only seven entries in the SGDS, poses serious problems of interpretation. In the first place, the transcription [u] appears to mean, confusingly, that a vowel which is defined as being unrounded is then shown as rounded. It is
found in the words *annam* (42) [ǔ’nəm], *ruith* (696, 697, 724) [rũç], *righinn* (706) [rũʔũŋ] (with ‘echoing’),44 *ruigidh* (723) [rũg’ʧ]. Other modified forms are found in *snaim* (779) [sn’ũɾm], *rud* (720-722) [ũ失望], and unstressed in *carbad* (153) [karĩᵓũd].

In most of these instances, the orthographic representation is *u*. In addition, the majority of instances show [u] following [r] or [ʃ]. In fact, all words in the *SGDS* results beginning with orthographic *r* followed by short *u* have a version of this symbol. On the other hand, combinations involving another consonant plus *r*, or a long vowel or diphthong, show varieties of [u] and [y] as the following vowel. There is therefore a *prima facie* case for regarding [ũ] (short) as an allophone of /u/, following initial /ɾ/. This is, however, contra-indicated by words such as *rugadh* [ruɡadv], *rubha* [ruʔʊ], where short [u] follows initial /ɾ/. In addition, this definition does not cover the cases of *annam, snaim* or *carbad*.

These anomalies lead Hamp, in his original field notes (LSS: 5), to posit a separate phoneme /u/,45 which is found only in this small selection of words. While agreeing that this offers a solution to the problem, I would argue that, acoustically, there appears to be little difference between the sound represented by [ũ] and the range of sounds covered by the /u/ phoneme (see above). I therefore propose to re-analyse the transcription [ũ] as [û] (high, centralised, rounded, but not a back vowel). Adjusting the data to fit the interpretation is not generally considered good practice, but in this case I believe it is justified by the obvious difficulty in interpreting the transcription as published.

I further suggest that pronominal compounds of *ann* (see p. 331) should be interpreted in this dialect as *aonnam, aonnad*, etc. (reflecting historical *ionn-* rather than *ann-*), and phonemically as /vəʊml/, /vəʊdl/, etc.

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44 A footnote suggests that the pronunciation may be [rũʔũŋ]. This is a fine level of distinction indeed.
45 Following the conventions of the time, Hamp labels it /ɻ/. This symbol appears as /u/ in the printed results.
Unmodified [ɤ] is not found anywhere in the SGDS results for Colonsay, although modified forms appear in diphthongs, which will be considered separately (pp. 205-227). The only occurrence of a form of [ɤ], other than in a diphthong, is [ɣ] (raised and retracted), which is found only once, unstressed, in iongantach (528) [iʔɪnˈdɔx]. A superscript [ɣ] (raised and centralised) is also found in criochnach (257) [kɾi¹x]. This extremely scanty evidence suggests that forms of [ɤ] are being used as variants of [ə].

The symbol [ʌ] is found with great regularity in unstressed -ach endings: cladach (192) [klˈaðax], sàmhach (733) [sɛˈvʌx], teaghlach (832) [ˈtʃʊˈlʌx]. It also occurs in cases where a verb with a base form ending in -aich or -ich has a grammatical ending added: cuartachaidh (from cuairtich) (268) [kʰuˈaʃˈdʌxɪç], chuartachadh (269) [xʰuˈaʃˈdʌxʌx], eireachaidh (from éirich) (375) [ɛˈɾʌxɪç]. The use of a ‘broad’ vowel (and hence non-palatalised consonants) in such cases is a salient feature of Argyll dialects (see pp. 303-304). From this evidence, it appears that [ʌ] is functioning as an allophone within the /a/ phoneme, in this very specific phonetic environment.

Not all -ach endings, however, are shown with [ʌ]. Where -ach follows a palatalised consonant, the vowel is shown as [ə] or one of its modified forms: cinnteach (184, 185) [kʰɪɲˈdəzəx], mèirleach (613) [mɛɾˈʌx]. An apparent exception is beairteach (739) [bɛʃˈtʃʌx], where the Colonsay pronunciation reflects an earlier form beirteach.51

On this basis, [ʌ] may be defined as an allophone of /a/, occurring before [x] in unstressed syllables following a non-palatalised consonant.

---

46 Headword is iongnaidh.
47 Headword is cuairtich: cuairtichidh.
48 Headword is cuairtich: chuairticheadh.
49 Headword is éirich: éiridh.
50 Headword is saibhir.
51 I am indebted to Professor William Gillies for this historical information.
**Lax forms: ɪʊ**

The vowels [ɪ ʊ] are generally described by phoneticians as ‘lax’ forms of [i u] respectively. [ʏ], the lax form of [y], has been discussed in the previous section.

In the SGDS results, unmodified [ɪ] occurs in stressed position in only four words: *cia mar* (180) [dɪˈzɬ̥mɛɾ̥], one version of *cinnteach* (184) [kɪˈnɛ dɪˈzɬ̥ax] (185 has [kɪˈnɛ dɪˈzɬ̥ax]), *na’s fliche* (435) [nɪs fɪˈɬɪɬɪ], *iuchair* (537) [ɪʃəɹ]. The raised form [ɪ ̣] appears in stressed position only once, in one version of *mise* (622) [mɪʃə]. All these examples raise problems of interpretation: three lend themselves to alternative readings, and the other two occur in conjunction with a semi-vowel, in a combination similar to a diphthong. The status of [ɪ] or [ɪ ̣] in stressed syllables must therefore be considered questionable.

On the other hand, unmodified [ɪ] does occur very frequently in unstressed syllables, particularly in conjunction with a palatal consonant, e.g. *drochaid* (349, 350) [dɾɔɬ̥ˈʃʔɪd̥], *éirich* (374) [ɛrɪˈtʃɪ], *fichead* (420) [fiɬɪd̥]. It is found in two plural formations in -an: *aingealan* (16) [ɛˈɛɬɪɟmɛn] and *peathraichean* (680) [pɛɬɪɹɪɟn]; and in future endings: *creididh* (254) [kɾɪˈdɪɬɪtʃ], *cuartachaidh* (268) [kɪɬɪɬɪɬɪd̥], *labhraidh* (538) [lɪˈvɪɹɪɬ], etc. The form [ɪ] is also found in future endings, with no obvious phonological basis for distinguishing between the two. Unmodified [ɪ] may also occur as an epenthetic vowel in a palatalised environment: *cuirm* (283) [kɪɬɪɬɪm], *thilgeadh* (843) [hiɬɪɟɜɪɟ ɪɬɪɬɪɬɪ], although other forms are also encountered.

Unmodified [ɪ], on the other hand, is rare in unstressed position (see below under i).

Given this distribution, I suggest that unmodified [ɪ] should be regarded as an allophone of the /i/ phoneme, occurring in unstressed position, that its articulation covers a fairly wide range [i iɬɪ iɪ i], meaning that in some cases, such as *bithidh* (102) [biɬɪɬɪ], *tapaidh* (830) [tahbi], its actual articulation may be [i] (see p. 95).

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52 My own perception of this word, as pronounced in Colonsay, is [tɪɹˈmɛɾ].
53 Note that this is not a diphthong, since [ɪ] as a semi-vowel, is classed as a consonant.
54 Headword is cuairtich : cuairtichidh. For the form of this word in the Colonsay data, see pp. 303-304.
55 In one single instance in the SGDS results, *earball* (371) [ɪɬɪɹˈbɬ], it occurs epenthetically in a non-palatalised environment; this should be regarded as an anomaly or inconsistency in transcription.
There is a large number of modified forms of [i]: ɪ ɻ i ɿ ɿ i ɿ ɿ ɿ. Of these, only [ɪ] (raised) [ɿ] (lowered) and [ɿ] (raised and centralised) occur in lexical contexts where they can be regarded as falling within the /ɨ/ phoneme.

[ɪ] is found in unstressed position in only a few words: b’àbhaist (5) [bə vɿ jʃʃ], Calluinn (143) [kɔ’tʃi n], peathraichean (680) [pəʃʃiʃ], and as an epenthetic vowel in mairbh (601) [mərʃv], tairbh (824) [təɾʃ]. All these instances are in palatalised contexts, and three occur following [r], although this latter observation is probably not significant, given that airgiod (see below) has [ɪ] or [ɿ] as the epenthetic vowel following [r].

[ɿ] is found as an epenthetic vowel in one version of airgiod (22) [arɡˈid] (21 has [arɡˈid]), and in the future form òlaidh (512) [əˈlʃ].56

[ɿ] is found only in one version of idir (514) [iɿˈzʃʃ] (513 has [iɿˈzʃʃ]).

The raised and lowered forms [ɿ ɿ ɿ] are thus seen to occur in unstressed position in similar contexts to unmodified [i]. I suggest that they should therefore be regarded as variants of the unstressed allophone [ɪ] within the /ɨ/ phoneme.

On the other hand, the remaining retracted or centralised forms of [i] are found in contexts which suggest a different phonemic interpretation. The forms encountered are: ɿ i ɿ ɿ i ɿ . Of these, only [ɪ] and [ɿ] are at all common.

[ɪ] (centralised) appears regularly in an unstressed, palatalised environment, in words such as àite (25, 26) [aɿtʃʃ], bainne (68) [bəˈnɪ], litir (578, 579) [ɿʃtər]. It is the usual realisation of orthographic final -e in words of more than one syllable, although [ɪ] (retracted) is also found in such contexts.

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56 Headword is ibh: ibhidh, although almost all dialects show some form of òlaidh (SGDS, Vol. IV: 120-121).
The most significant occurrences of [i] are in the plural ending -ean in bailtean (67) [bǎlt'ʃiŋ], cārdean (152) [kα'ʃiŋ], coïllethean (226) [k¿iːl'ʃiŋ], leabhraichean (569) [lo ɾiːɾiŋ]. It is tempting to see this as the ‘default’ pronunciation for plural endings in -ean – of which there are not many in the SGDS results – but we must also note abhainnean (4) [a'ʃiŋ], peathraichean (680) [pɛ ɾiŋ] and sléibhteain (773) [sɛ ɾiŋ].

Other modified forms of [i] occur only sporadically:

[i] (raised and retracted) is found only in the word goile (493) [ɡˈli'], where it represents orthographic final -e.

[i] (lowered and centralised) is found for orthographic final -e in only two headwords: coire (cauldron) (237) [kə'rɪ] (see pp. 361-362) and nàire (644) [nɛ:ɾi]. In both cases alternative forms are given, showing [i] without lowering. It is also found as the epenthetic vowel in geamhradh (469) [ɡ'evɪɾɪɾ] and samhradh (736) [səvɪɾɪɾ].

Finally, [i] (centralised and rounded) is met with only once, in faobhar (396) [fy̞ vɨɾ]. It is likely that in this single example, the vowel quality is influenced by the rounded [ɨ] in the previous syllable.

All these occurrences are in unstressed syllables, and most are in a palatalised context. This suggests that, rather than being seen as variants of the /i/ phoneme, these retracted and centralised forms of [i] should be regarded as variants of /ə/ in a palatalised environment (see below, under Central vowel: ə).

The symbol for the ‘lax’ form of [u], namely [ʊ], only occurs short in the Colonsay dataset, and is rare in stressed position. It is found stressed in a series of entries based on the verb cuir: cuiridh tu (279) [ku'ɾi̞ ɻu] (277, 278 have [ku'ɾiʃ]), chuireas tu (280) [xʊ'ɾis ɻu], chuireadh (281) [xʊ'ɾaʃ], chuireadh tu (282) [xʊ'ɾɻu], and in a

57 Headword is aibhnichean.
handful of other words. It is more frequently encountered in diphthongs, especially [ao], [eu]; these will be treated separately. [ʊ] also occurs as the ‘echoing’ vowel in hiatus following glottalisation of [u] and [o]. The modified form [ʊ] (raised) is found in only one word: cluich (206) [klʊ̞ɔ̞tʃ].\(^{58}\)

A case might possibly be made for treating [ʊ] as a separate phoneme, although since it occurs independently in only a few words, it appears preferable to consider it as an allophone of /u/, occurring regularly in hiatus following glottalisation of /u/ or /o/, and as a possible variant of short /u/ in other positions.

**Central vowel: ə**

This symbol is commonly referred to as the schwa, a term which originates in Hebrew pointing. It represents a completely neutral, central vowel, with no obvious phonetic characteristics other than voicing. This vowel is unique in this dialect in that it only occurs short, and in the IPA system is generally found only in unstressed syllables.\(^{59}\) For this reason, it might be regarded as an allophone of several other vowel phonemes in unstressed position, rather than being a phoneme in its own right. However, it is unsatisfactory for a single phone to serve as an allophone of several different phonemes, and it would be difficult and arbitrary to try and allocate the phone [ə] to a particular phoneme in each individual case, relying perhaps on the conventional orthography, which often reflects a historical pronunciation. For these reasons it will be treated here as a separate phoneme.

As discussed above (p. 58), in addition to modified forms of [ə], the following modified forms of [ɪ] are to be seen as falling within the /ə/ phoneme: ì i ì̇ ì̆. Most occurrences are in conjunction with a palatalised consonant. The centralised form [ɪ] occurs with sufficient regularity in this phonetic environment for it to be considered an allophone of /ə/, while [i ì̇ ì̆] may be regarded as its variant realisations.

\(^{58}\) Headword is cluich: cluiche.

\(^{59}\) In some languages (e.g. Afrikaans) it is used to represent stressed vowels. In Gaelic, both Gillies (2009: 236) and Ternes (2006: 119-121) use it in phonemic analysis to denote the vowel otherwise transcribed as [x].
The scheme of vowel phonemes in the Colonsay dialect is therefore as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
  & i & u \\
  e & y & ə & o \\
  ε & ɔ & a \\
\end{array}
\]

**Diphthongs**

A diphthong is a succession of two vowel sounds. Logically, diphthongs should be considered at this point, before moving on to the consonants. However, since my analysis of diphthongs in this dialect depends in part on my interpretation of sonorant phonemes, a detailed study of diphthongs will be presented after the examination of consonants. (See pp. 205-227).
CONSONANT PHONEMES

Stops

There is no real consensus among scholars on the way in which Scottish Gaelic stop consonants should be represented in phonetic, let alone in phonemic transcription. The problem lies in the fact that the IPA system normally distinguishes between voiced and unvoiced consonants. This distinction is relevant for most European languages, including English and modern Irish. Scottish Gaelic, however, presents a more complex picture, and scholars have struggled to accommodate its subtler distinctions within the confines of standard IPA transcription.

In its conventional orthography, Gaelic appears to make a straightforward distinction between voiced stops (b d g) and unvoiced stops (p t c). On closer examination, however, it becomes clear that all stop consonants in Scottish Gaelic are usually voiceless; the essential distinction, in most varieties of the language, is between unaspirated stops [b̥ d̥ ɡ̥] and aspirated stops [p t k]. In phonological terms, the difference can also be expressed as being between lenis and fortis stops, based on the degree of tension involved in articulating these consonants. Although the latter terminology may be regarded as old-fashioned, it appears to fit the facts of Gaelic phonology very well. A similar distinction is found in southern dialects of German (Keller 1961: 45-47). It should be emphasised that the lenis/fortis distinction is based on phonological, not phonetic considerations. In stressed syllables, it may be accompanied by various non-segmental features, such as pre- and post-aspiration, voicing and, in the case of Colonsay and other neighbouring dialects, glottalisation. These, however, serve to emphasise the distinction, rather than being essential to it. In unstressed syllables, such enhancements are usually absent, and the lenis/fortis distinction may be neutralised. Non-segmental features are examined in Chapter 3.
The situation is further complicated by the occurrence of genuinely voiced forms of these consonants, usually in proximity to a nasal. A segmental system of transcription must therefore be capable of accommodating these voiced stops, in addition to showing the lenis/fortis distinction. Precisely how this is done, using standard IPA symbols, raises serious problems. Historically, a variety of solutions have been adopted.

Writing in the days before IPA notation became the norm, Borgstrøm uses $p' t' k'$ for post-aspirated stops, and $b d g$ for ‘voiceless (occasionally half-voiced) lenes’. On the rare occasions when voicing has to be shown, he uses the unmarked forms $b d g$ (Borgstrøm 1940: 154-156, and elsewhere). Oftedal deliberately adopts Borgstrøm’s notation for his phonetic transcription, which he uses sparingly. In phonemic transcription he writes $p t k$ for the aspirated series (post-aspirated in initial position and pre-aspirated elsewhere) and $b d g$ for the unaspirated stops, where he introduces a distinction between the ‘weaker degree’ in initial position, and ‘the stronger degree’ medially and finally. This distinction is reflected in phonetic transcription by his use of Borgstrøm’s $b d g$ versus $p t k$, but is not relevant in phonemic transcription because it is positionally determined, and therefore allophonic (Oftedal 1956: 98-99). Oftedal does not recognise a separate voiced series, but it should be borne in mind that in Lewis dialects, the effect of the nasal mutation is different from that obtaining elsewhere, with the nasal effectively eclipsing a following stop, rather than causing it to become voiced.

Several authors (Ternes, Dorian, Grannd, among others) use [p t k] to represent the lenis or ‘unaspirated’ stops, and [pʰ tʰ kʰ] for the fortis or ‘aspirated’ varieties, at least in initial position. This then leaves the series [b d ɡ] free to represent the voiced forms, in accordance with normal IPA usage. This solution has the merit of highlighting the distinction between aspirated and unaspirated stops, and of making clear, to readers who may be unfamiliar with Gaelic, what kinds of sounds are being represented. There is, on the face of it, very little difference, in strictly phonetic terms, between the onset of Gaelic words such as bainne (68) [b̥a’ɲɪ], dubh (355)

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60 Confusingly, Borgstrøm’s diacritic [ ] for ‘voiceless’ (also adopted by Oftedal) is used in the IPA system to indicate voicing (IPA 2015).
[du] and French panier [panje], tout [tu], where aspiration and voicing are both absent. From a phonological point of view, however, the French sounds are fortes rather than lenes, and contrast with the voiced series [b d ɡ].

Such an approach raises few problems, at least when the stops in question appear in initial position. Admittedly, the visual dissimilarity to the conventional orthography may be confusing at first sight (e.g. [pala pek] for baile beag), but this can hardly be a valid objection if the result is closer to the phonetic reality of the spoken language. However, further difficulties arise when it comes to phonemic transcription: in non-initial position, the fortes stops are pre-aspirated in Scottish Gaelic, and a transcription which shows them (even as a matter of convention) as post-aspirated may be seen as confusing. In a phonemic transcription there can be no justification for adopting different ways of representing positional variants of the same phoneme (*/ʰp ʰt ʰk/ alongside /pʰ tʰ kʰ/); a phonetic transcription, by contrast, would require to make precisely this differentiation.

To make matters worse, the way in which preaspiration is actually realised differs subtly between dialects. Lewis and some other northern varieties have a ‘weak’ form of preaspiration, which can be represented phonetically as [ʰp ʰt ʰk], whereas most central and southern dialects have a more pronounced [h] sound before [p] and [t], and a fricative [x] before [k]: the pre-aspirated stops in these varieties of Gaelic are therefore better represented as [hp ht xk]. In some central dialects the use of the velar fricative has become the norm in all places of articulation, and the forms actually heard are [xp xt xk]. Other permutations are encountered in individual dialects, including that of Colonsay (Ó Maolalaigh 2010).

None of these solutions is adopted by the SGDS. In its narrow phonetic transcription of the Colonsay dialect, the SGDS uses [b d ɡ] for the lenis stops in all positions, [p t k] in initial position for the fortes, and [hp hd xɡ] (with variations) for fortes in non-initial position following a short vowel. This gives a fairly accurate phonetic rendering of the acoustic reality in this dialect, save that as a matter of editorial policy, the SGDS deliberately does not mark post-aspiration of initial fortes, on the grounds that it is a near-universal feature of Scottish Gaelic pronunciation (SGDS,
Vol. I: 134). The symbols [p t k] must therefore be read, in initial position, as [pʰ tʰ kʰ]. Economy in the use of symbols is thus achieved at the expense of strict phonetic accuracy, a result which may cause confusion for researchers who are not familiar with the sounds of the language.

With these reservations, however, the SGDS system does offer an elegant way of highlighting distinctions between the different categories of stops, while in most cases retaining a close correspondence with the standard Gaelic orthography (the exception being its treatment of fortis stops in non-initial position).

My own proposed solution is the result of grappling with these issues over a period of time, during which I successively favoured several different schemes. In the end I decided that, since the present study is essentially an analysis of the Colonsay dialect as recorded in the SGDS results, I would simply use the SGDS system for phonetic transcription. Entries are thus transcribed exactly as printed, except in those few cases where further specification is required, and words not included in the SGDS are transcribed according to the same principles.

In the interests of consistency, I have also retained the original orthographic transcription of SGDS entries, even where this no longer corresponds to approved (GOC) practice. The two main manifestations of this are the use of the acute accent, and the spelling na’s for comparative forms of adjectives (cf. pp. 326-327).

Using the SGDS principles as the basis for a phonemic transcription, lenis stops could be transcribed as /b̥ d̥ ɡ̥/, and fortis stops as /p t k/, with the corresponding phonetic transcription showing either pre- or post-aspiration as appropriate (allophonic variation). Alternatively, since the individual components are all phonemes in their own right, the pre-aspirated forms could be analysed as sequences of discrete phonemes: /h b̥ h d̥ x q̥/, just as in phonetic transcription;\(^61\) this, however, would be to ignore the functional value of the lenis/fortis opposition in the

\(^61\) Ternes (2006) adopts just such a ‘biphonemic’ analysis in the case of Applecross, reserving the ‘monophonemic’ transcription /pʰ tʰ kʰ/ for initial fortis stops.
phonology of this dialect. The unmodified symbols /b d ɡ/ could then be used, as in conventional IPA practice, to represent the voiced forms, assuming that these needed to be interpreted as separate phonemes.

In this dialect, however, voiced forms occur only in a limited number of specific environments: word-internally, after a homorganic nasal, as in *teampull* (834, 835) [ˈtʰe̞mˈbɔɔ], *sunndach* (817) [sun̥ˈdax], *pongail* (683) [poŋˈɡaːl]; and also as a result of morphophonemic changes resulting from the nasal mutation: *am baile* [əmˈbaˈt̞i], *an-de̞* (41) [ˈn̥dʼzɬ̩e], *gun gabh* [ɡuŋˈɡaː]. On this basis, voiced [b d ɡ] may be seen as allophones of /b̥ d̥ ɡ̥/ occurring in these specific phonetic and morphophonemic environments. Ternes would no doubt object that such an approach risks confusing phonemic and morphophonemic data:

> Phonemics and morphophonemetics operate on different levels of the grammatical hierarchy [...]. Phonemic and morphophonemic levels must strictly be kept apart, and different bracketing symbols must be used to distinguish between them.

*(Ternes 2006: 13)*

Following Ternes’s strictures to the letter would preclude an allophonic interpretation, and lead inevitably to /b d ɡ/ being posited as a separate series of voiced phonemes. On the other hand, it may be difficult in practice to keep the two levels completely separate, and Ternes’s view may be regarded as excessively rigid.

Whatever solution is adopted, the fact remains that the voiced forms fit awkwardly, in a segmental transcription, alongside the lenis/fortis distinction (expressed phonetically as unaspirated v. aspirated stops). The voiced series could conceivably be represented using a different series of symbols, for example capitalised forms */B D G/*, although such forms are not recognised in the IPA system. Such a solution also violates the generally recognised IPA convention whereby voiced stops are represented by the symbols /b d ɡ/, and it introduces unfamiliar symbols, which would then require explanation.
If, however, voicing were to be interpreted as a non-segmental feature, or process, operating on the segmental string in specific phonetic or morphophonemic environments, there would be no need to posit a separate series of voiced segmental phonemes. Voiced stops that occur medially, after a nasal, could indeed be analysed as allophones of the respective lenis stops, while the results of the nasal mutation could be accommodated in an account of non-segmental processes. The opposite process, devoicing, which is also a feature of this dialect, could be accounted for in a similar way.

In the phonemic description of this dialect, I have therefore decided to distinguish only between lenis (unaspirated) and fortis (aspirated) stops. In the interests of economy, plain symbols will be used in phonemic transcription. The fortis phonemes will be labelled /p t k/; these will normally be articulated as [pʰ tʰ kʰ] in initial position, and as [hｂ hḍ xɡ] in medial or final position. The corresponding lenis stop phonemes will be labelled /b d ɡ/, and normally articulated as [b̥ d̥ ɡ̥]. Allophonic variations, including voiced forms of the lenis stops (where appropriate), will be listed for each phoneme. Voiced forms arising from the nasal mutation will be dealt with in Chapter 3.

As a rider to what has just been stated, it must be recognised that the surface form [xɡ] may arise from two quite different phonological processes, corresponding to the orthographies c or chd respectively: cnoc (213, 214) [krɔxɡ], naidheachd (647) [nɛ̂ɛ̂kxɡ]. Although the synchronic surface forms are phonetically identical, these representations have different historical antecedents. As we have just seen, [xɡ] is the normal pre-aspirated form of [k], and in such cases should be interpreted phonemically as an allophone of /k/ in non-initial position. In other circumstances, where [xɡ] corresponds to the orthographic representation chd, /x/ functions as a phoneme in its own right, and words such as ochd, naidheachd should be transcribed phonemically as /oxɡ/, /neɛxɡ/, rather than */ok/, */ neɛk/, which would be counter-intuitive in the minds of most Gaelic speakers, suggesting as it does the spellings *oc, *naidheac.
**Palatalised stops**

To add further complication to this already complex structure, there are also *palatalised* forms of some of these stops. Palatalisation is an inherent feature of Gaelic phonology, and plays an important part in the morphology of the language; for example, the nominative plural or genitive singular form of many masculine nouns is formed by ‘palatalising’ the final consonant: *cat/cait, balach/balaich, dàn/dàin*, etc.62 Although this process is termed ‘palatalisation’, it should be made clear that this is a phonological, and not necessarily a phonetic description. It provides a convenient shorthand for the mutation whereby consonants are ‘fronted’ in various ways, to produce what, in orthographical terms, are traditionally known as ‘slender’ consonants. This ‘fronting’ is expressed phonetically in different ways, according to the place of articulation of the relevant stop.

In the case of dentals, the phonologically ‘palatalised’ forms are actually *affricates*: palatalised *d* is usually transcribed as [d'z'] in the SGDS results, and palatalised *t* as [t'ʃ]. In phonemic transcription, the forms /dʒ tʃ/ will be used.

In the case of labials, it is generally accepted that these are not palatalised in Scottish Gaelic, as they are in Irish (Jackson 1967: 187-189; Oftedal 1963). However, this view has been challenged by MacAulay (1966), among others. In strictly phonetic terms, *palatalisation* of labials would imply that the release of the stop would be followed immediately by a palatal fricative; the tongue is not involved in the production of the stop, and cannot physically ‘slide’ from stop to fricative, as it can with other categories of palatalised stops. That said, many Scottish dialects, from Lewis in the north to Islay in the south, show some kind of transition or ‘j-glide’, in the form of a semi-vowel, after labials (cf. Ternes 2006: 27-43).

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62 In the category of nouns being considered, the genitive singular and nominative plural usually have identical forms.
In Colonsay, on the other hand, there is no trace of any such transition:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>beanntan (91)</th>
<th>piuthar (679)</th>
<th>feòil (413)</th>
<th>meall (609)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lewis:</td>
<td>b̥aʊ̯n̥d̥n̥</td>
<td>p̥i̯-r̥</td>
<td>f̥i̯j̥-l̥</td>
<td>m̥u̯(aʊ̯)l̥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islay:</td>
<td>biɛ̅n̥d̥n̥</td>
<td>p̥ju̯n̥</td>
<td>f̥i̯o̯l̥</td>
<td>m̥jal̥</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonsay:</td>
<td>b̥e̅d̥n̥d̥n̥</td>
<td>p̥i̯n̥</td>
<td>f̥i̯ɛ̜l̥</td>
<td>m̥e̅l̥</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

True phonetic palatalisation therefore occurs in this dialect only with the velars [g k], which have the palatalised forms [ɡ̥ k̥] in the SGDS transcription. In Colonsay pronunciation, these sounds are often articulated as retro-palatal, rather than palatalised velar, stops; thus ceàrr may be pronounced [t̥ɛ r̥], and aig as [ɛd̥], i.e. closer to the sounds in English tune, due than in queue, regular. In phonemic transcription, I initially used the symbols /c ɥ/ to reflect this pronunciation; however, after reading Keating and Lahiri’s (1993) account of varying degrees of ‘fronting’/palatalisation of velar consonants, it became apparent that this transcription would suggest too great a degree of palatalisation, and that /k̥ ɡ̥/ would be a more accurate representation. I retain the SGDS notation [k̥ ɡ̥] for phonetic transcription.

It is worth noting, finally, that some of these stops show a further refinement in the Colonsay dialect. When preceded by [i], preaspiration of a palatalised stop is realised as [ç]: suipeir (815) [siç̥r̥], litir (578, 579) [liç̥z̥r̥], bric (122) [briç̥]. Preaspiration with [ç] is the norm in Scottish Gaelic before [ɡ̥], but it is particularly interesting to find it also before [b̥] when, as has just been demonstrated, labials are not normally palatalised in this dialect. The influence of the preceding [i] appears to be dominant in this instance, rather than the quality of the following consonant.

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63 Point 4: Carloway.
64 Point 55: Bowmore.
65 Headword is breac: bric.
A further point regarding my phonemic transcription of stop consonants relates to the way in which the characteristically Colonsay phenomenon of *glottalisation* is represented. As already stated, for purposes of phonetic transcription, I have retained the *SGDS* notation, which uses the glottal stop [ʔ] in hiatus, whereas glottalisation of consonants is indicated with an apostrophe [’]; this is sometimes placed above the consonant symbol, e.g. [d]. This form of transcription is no longer in line with standard IPA practice, where the symbol [’] is reserved for ‘ejectives’. In the phonemic transcription, therefore, I have chosen to represent glottalisation of consonants, and glottalisation of vowels where the vowel is ‘echoed’ (see p. 258) with the superscript symbol /ʔ/, even though this is also not explicitly sanctioned in IPA practice. Like the *SGDS*, I have retained the symbol /ʔ/ for glottalisation in hiatus, where there is a change of vowel.
Fricative [ç]

The use of [ç] for orthographic final -dh/-gh is a notable feature of this dialect. In fact [ç] is found in future endings in nearly all the islands of Argyll, from Islay to Coll and Tiree, and also in St Kilda (Points 14-16). Before a vowel, or in phrase-final position, future endings are recorded in the SGDS results as [iç] or [ç]: bithidh (103) [biʔiç], cuiridh (277) [kuˈɾiç]; creididh (254) [kɾo̞d̥ˈz̥iç], leanaidh (572) [ˈxeˈniç]. In the case of falbhaidh (390) [foˈl̥aç], the velarised [lˈ] may have influenced the quality of the vowel.

When the future ending is followed by a consonant, [ç] is not pronounced. The only instance of this in the SGDS results is cuiridh tu (279) [koˈɾi̞du].

Other words with final [ç] in this dialect are aghaidh (9) [ˈɣʔiç], céilidh (178) [kˈe̞iç], iarraidh (509) [i̞ɾiç], ionnsaidh (530) [i̞ɾiç]. A particularly prominent example, because of its frequency of occurrence, is chaidh (687) [xaç : xaʔiç]. The SGDS results show that, in most other dialects, [ç] occurs much less frequently in these words.

By no means all words with final -idh are shown with [ç] in the Colonsay results. Following a stressed vowel or diphthong, the phonetic realisation is usually indicated with the semi-vowel [i]: buaidh (130) [b̥u̞i], cruaidh (262) [kɾu̞i] (cf. the comparative form cruaidhe (263) [kɾu̞i], déidh (305) [d̥ˈz̥i̞], suidh (811) [s̥i̞]). In three words – cùbhraidh (270) [ku̞ɾi̞], réidh (698, 699) [ɾi̞ ɛ̞ ː], tapaidh (830) [tahbi] – no form of consonantal ending is indicated, while in the case of leabaidh (565, 566) [ˈxeˈba], the form recorded represents orthographic leaba.67

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66 Not Gigha (Point 40) or Easdale (point 59).
67 The Colonsay form here retains the old nominative leaba. Leabaidh derives from an earlier dative form.
A similar situation obtains in the case of final -igh. [ç] is found in unstressed position in *contraigh* (242) [kɔnˈdraç], *ürnaigh* (518) [uˈɾpiç], *iomhaigh* (525) [iˈvaç], but a semi-vowel in stressed position in the monosyllables *laigh* (547) [lˈaɪ], *laoigh* (561, 562) [lˈɤj], *taigh* (820, 821) [tɻj], *tràigh* (861) [tra ɪ] and *troigh* (870) [troɪ].

For a much more detailed account of final unstressed -igh/-ich and -idh in Scottish Gaelic, especially in Argyll dialects, see Ó Maolalaigh (2000).

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68 I have heard [tra ç] in sandhi: *mar a tha an tràigh iséal* [marə ha nˈ tra ç ɪʃəl̥].
### Sonorants

**Laterals and nasals**

The question of the phonemic classification of sonorants, especially of laterals and nasals, is one of the thorniest issues in Scottish Gaelic phonology. In the case of nasals, a distinction can be made between ‘coronal/dental’ nasals [n n’ (n’) n’] on the one hand, and bilabial [m] and velar nasals [ŋ (ŋ’)] on the other. In this dialect, velar nasals occur only as allophones.

As explained by Ternes (2006: 19-23), the essential phonemic distinction observed in the case of laterals and ‘coronal/dental’ nasals is generally held to be threefold: plain, palatalised and velarised. This ternary patterning is also reflected in the SGDS results. On the basis of my own observations, however, I intend in the case of the laterals to split Ternes’s ‘velarised’ category (SGDS [l’]) into two separate phonemes (/lˠ/ and /lʷ/), thus giving four lateral phonemes in the Colonsay dialect.

Sonorant consonants, as the name implies, are normally voiced, but devoiced forms are frequently found in this dialect, either word-finally or when followed by an unvoiced or devoiced consonant. Devoicing is not consistently observed in these environments, and should therefore be seen as an optional variation, rather than evidence of allophonic variation. Devoicing as an expression of preaspiration will be dealt with separately (pp. 278-279).

Glottalisation is found where a sonorant occurs in intervocalic position following a stressed short syllable, except when it forms part of an epenthetic cluster. Because the presence of epenthesis cannot be identified on the basis of the segmental phonetic data alone, *glottalisation of sonorants cannot be considered to be allophonic*, unlike what happens in the case of stops. The whole issue of glottalisation and epenthesis, and how they relate to one another, will be examined under **Non-segmental Features** (pp. 228-296).

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69 Though phonetically palatal, not dental, [n] functions as the ‘palatalised’ form of [n], and for this reason is included here.

70 In his contribution to *Bile ós Chrannaíbh* (2010: 191), Hamp refers to a ‘greater numerical outcome’ of laterals and nasals in the Colonsay results, although the extreme terseness of Hamp’s description makes it difficult to be sure what is meant. In the unpublished LSSS material, he identifies four n-phonemes, but only three l-phonemes, in this dialect – the opposite of what I claim here.
**Comparison of the phonemic status of laterals and nasals**

At first sight, there appears to be a wide measure of parallelism in the way laterals and ‘coronal/dental’ nasals are treated in this dialect. On closer examination, however, it becomes clear that the distribution of the ‘plain’, ‘palatalised’ and ‘velarised’ phonemes, and the way in which the different phonemes are represented orthographically, are not the same in the case of laterals and nasals. This analysis also raises questions of phonemic distribution. The case to be made for a ‘rounded and velarised’ lateral phoneme (labelled /lʷ/) further complicates the picture, especially given the existence of a similarly ‘rounded and velarised’ nasal [nʷ], which I shall argue is not a separate phoneme.

In both cases, the ‘plain’ form, [l] or [n] respectively, serves as the lenited form of the corresponding ‘palatalised’ phoneme; in the nature of things, this will normally be in initial position:

- **nighean** (664) \[n^iʔiŋ\] \> \*dò niʔiŋ \>
- **leum** (575) \[ʎeˑm̥\] \> \*xa ɬə ɬeˑm̥\>

In the case of nasals, the ‘plain’ form also serves as the lenited form of the ‘velarised’ phoneme, although the only examples given in the SGDS results are:

- **nàdur** (646) \[n`e ɬəɾ\] \> \*droch nàdur (643) \> \*drɔx ne ɬəɾ\> 71
- **nàire** (648) \[n`eɬ`ɾi\] \> \*mo nàire (645, 648) \> \*mó neɬ`ɾi\> 72

This is in contrast to the situation with laterals, where /l/ appears, admittedly on the basis of only one example in the SGDS data, to have no separate lenited form:

- **làmh** (550) \[l`eˑv\] \> \*dò l`eˑv\>

My own research suggests that this is indeed the case: **anns an loch** [as ə `lɔx], **deireadh an latha** [dɬ`eɾəvə ə `ləʔə].

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71 Headword is *do nàbadh*. This word is not used in Colonsay, and the fieldworker presumably substituted *droch nàdur* as an alternative to illustrate lenition of ‘broad’ *n*.
72 Headword is *mo nàbadh / mo nàire*. 
In medial and final position, [n] (plain) is the usual realisation of orthographic broad single \(n\) (with accompanying glottalisation or devoicing, as appropriate), whereas broad single \(l\) is shown as [\(l^{\prime}\)] (velarised) in such cases:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{leanaidh (572)} & \quad \check{\kappa}^{	ext{e}} \text{’n} \check{\eta} \quad \text{moladh (627)} & \quad \text{m} \check{o} \text{’l} \check{\varepsilon} \\
\text{bean (88)} & \quad \check{\eta} \check{\varepsilon} \check{\eta} & \quad \text{beul (97)} & \quad \check{\eta} \check{\varepsilon} \text{’l} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Again in medial and final position, [\(n\)] (palatalised), not [n] (plain), is the usual articulation of slender single \(n\), whereas single \(l\) in these positions indicates the ‘plain’ phoneme:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{duine (360, 361)} & \quad \check{\eta} \check{u} \check{j} \check{i} & \quad \text{baile (65, 66)} & \quad \check{\eta} \check{a} \text{’l} \check{i} \\
\text{min (617)} & \quad \check{m} \check{i} \check{p} & \quad \text{fuil (445, 446)} & \quad \check{f} \check{u} \check{l} \check{\varepsilon} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Palatalisation occurs, in both medial and final position, in cases where slender \(n\) or \(l\) is doubled in the standard orthography:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{bainne (68)} & \quad \check{\eta} \check{a} \check{j} \check{\eta} & \quad \text{coille (223-225)} & \quad \check{k} \check{y} \check{’} \check{\eta} \check{i} \\
\text{seinn (752)} & \quad \check{\j} \check{\varepsilon} \check{j} \check{\eta} & \quad \text{chaill (140)} & \quad \check{x} \check{[aɪ]} \check{\check{\eta}} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Palatalisation is also the norm for slender \(n\) or \(l\) in initial position, except when lenited:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nighean (664)} & \quad \check{n} \check{\varepsilon} \check{’} \check{\eta} \check{\eta} & \quad \text{litir (578, 579)} & \quad \check{\lambda} \check{i} \check{c} \check{d} \check{’} \check{z} \check{’} \check{\eta} \\
\text{nead (653)} & \quad \check{\eta} \check{e} \check{\check{d}} & \quad \text{leum (575)} & \quad \check{\lambda} \check{e} \check{’} \check{\eta} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Velarised [\(n^{\prime}\)] is found initially where the standard orthography has a broad, unlenited \(n\), and velarised [\(l^{\prime}\)] in all cases where broad \(l\) occurs initially:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nàmhaid (649)} & \quad \check{n} \check{’} \check{\varepsilon} \check{’} \check{v} \check{d} \check{’} \check{\check{f}} & \quad \text{latha (564)} & \quad \check{l} \check{’} \check{a} \check{\check{a}} \\
\text{naomh (651)} & \quad \check{n} \check{’} \check{\check{y}} \check{’} \check{\gamma} & \quad \text{long (585)} & \quad \check{l} \check{’} \check{o} \check{\check{n} \check{o}} \check{’} \\
\end{align*}
\]
In medial and final position, velarised [n´] corresponds to orthographic broad double \textit{nn}. Velarised [l´], on the other hand, corresponds to broad \textit{single l}:

\begin{verbatim}
In medial and final position, velarised [n´] corresponds to orthographic broad double \textit{nn}. Velarised [l´], on the other hand, corresponds to broad \textit{single l}:
\end{verbatim}

\begin{verbatim}
Rounded and velarised laterals and nasals
\end{verbatim}

It is my contention that a separate, rounded and velarised phoneme /lʷ/ occurs, alongside the velarised phoneme /lˠ/, in word-final or syllable-final position following a stressed short ‘broad’ vowel. The [lʷ] sound is also \textit{lengthened} in this position [lʷˑ]. This sound is represented as \textit{ll} in the standard orthography.

In the \textit{SGDS} transcription, this sound is represented in final position as [l`] following a diphthong: \textit{ball} (75) [bəuɔl`], \textit{toll} (857) [təuɔl`], or in some cases as [l´w]: \textit{ubhall} (877) [uʔol`w]. I am suggesting that these can equally well be interpreted as [baɬʷ : toɬʷ : uʔolʷ], and analysed phonemically as /baɬʷ : toɬʷ : uʔulʷ/. The only true minimal pair I have been able to identify from the \textit{SGDS} results to illustrate this hypothesis is \textit{geall} (464, 466) /gaɬ` : ɡʲal`], which I analyse phonemically as /gaɬ` : ɡʲalʷ/. The pair \textit{meal} /meall} (609) /mɛɬ` : mɛɬ`/ is only half-exemplified in the \textit{SGDS}; a near-minimal pair is provided by \textit{falt} (392) /fal` : al`d/.

In medial position the corresponding sound is shown simply as [l´] (with glottalisation following a stressed short vowel): \textit{gealladh} (468) [ɡ´aɬ`], \textit{sealladh} (744) [ʃɛl`]. Although my own findings suggest some degree of rounding in such instances, the evidence is not sufficient to conclude that the lateral in this position is systematically rounded as well as velarised. This means that in morphophonological alternations, a phonemic change takes place: \textit{geall/gealladh} /ɡaɬ` : ɡaɬəɣ/, \textit{meall/meallaidh} (fut.) /mɛɬ` : mɛɬəɣ/, etc. This is, of course, not unusual in Scottish

\begin{verbatim}
\begin{verbatim}
73 In the IPA system, superscript [ʷ] indicates ‘labialised’ (IPA 2015). Rounding, as described here, can be regarded as a form of labialisation.
74 In the \textit{SGDS} results, the tie bar [_] extends under the whole of the sequence [l´w], and the devoicing mark [ˌ] (where present) is under the tie bar.
75 The lenited form \textit{fhalt} [al`d] ‘his hair’ would provide a true minimal pair.
\end{verbatim}
\end{verbatim}
Gaelic, as will be seen from a comparison of headwords *geall* (466, 467) and *gealladh* (468); although most varieties show some form of diphthong in closed syllables in the base form (466), and in the preterite (467), almost none do so in the verbal noun, except where the form offered is *gealltainn* (*SGDS*, Vol. III: 28-29, 32-33).

This may be an unconventional interpretation in Scottish Gaelic phonology, but I believe that it fits the phonetic facts of this dialect better than one based on the analysis: diphthong + [l`]. In the case of [aʊ eʊ] diphthongs, I am therefore departing from the *SGDS* transcription, and proposing an alternative interpretation of the phonetic data. (See further under Diphthongs, pp. 205-209).

A case might plausibly be made for a similar distinction in the case of nasals, with a phoneme */nʷ/ representing rounded and velarised *n*. As with the corresponding lateral, I maintain that the [nʷ] in such cases is also lengthened, and appears in word-final or syllable-final position, following a short vowel in a stressed syllable: [nʷˑ]. In the *SGDS* transcription, this sound appears as velar *n* in final position following a diphthong: *ceann* (163-165) [kʰɛ̃ðəɲˑ], *donna* (329) [dʰoʊənˑ]. I propose re-analysing these as [kʰɛ̃nˑ : dɒnˑ], which might then be expected to be rendered phonemically as */kʰɛnˑ : dɒnˑ/.

Closer analysis reveals, however, that in final position, the ‘unrounded’ sound [nˑ] (with no preceding diphthong in *SGDS* transcription) occurs only when unstressed, as in *caorann* (150) [kʰrənˑ], *olann* (203) [o’lənˑ], whereas rounded [nʷˑ] is found exclusively in syllable-final position in a stressed syllable. The two are therefore seen to be in complementary distribution, and can be analysed as a single phoneme /nˠ/, with [nʷˑ] functioning as an allophone in stressed final position. The minimal pair *lean*/*leann* would therefore be transcribed phonetically as [ʎɛn̥ˑ : ʎɛ̃nˠˑ], and phonemically as /ʎɛn : ʎɛnˠ/. As in the case of laterals, this means that changes are seen in morphophonological alternations: *tonn*/*tonnan* (pl.) [tɔnˠˑ : tɔ’nən], *teann*/*teannaidh* (fut.) [ʃɛnˠˑ : ʃɛ’nɪc]; unlike /lˠ : lʷ/, however, the phoneme in all cases is /nˠ/.

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76 Headword is *clòimh*. A footnote indicates that the latter word means ‘down’ in Colonsay.
Despite the attraction of establishing a parallelism with the fourfold division of lateral phonemes, therefore, it appears that in fact only three ‘coronal/dental’ nasal phonemes can be safely identified in this dialect: /n ɲ nˠ/. The sound [nʷ] does, however, exist as an allophone, in parallel with the sound [lʷ], and in my view provides a more satisfactory phonetic representation of final stressed /nˠ/ than the SGDS transcription involving a diphthong.

Phonetic transcriptions are, nevertheless, left unaltered when they are copied directly from the SGDS.

*Comparison with Islay forms*

A characteristic feature of the neighbouring dialect of Islay is the occurrence of short monophthongs followed by lengthened (but unrounded) sonorants, in the phonetic environments described. In Islay, the words *ball* (75), *toll* (857), *alt* (32) are shown in the SGDS results with the transcriptions [b̥al`ˑ : t̥ol`ˑ : a]̥l`ˑt], while *ceann* (163-165), *donn* (329) are shown as [k`en`ˑ : d̥on`ˑ]. The resulting pronunciation, which is quite distinctive, differs from that in other varieties, where diphthongs [əʊ : eʊ : ou], followed by an unlengthened sonorant, are the norm. If my interpretation is accepted, Colonsay, with rounded and lengthened sonorants, can be seen as forming a ‘transition zone’ between typically Islay monophthongs and the diphthongs found further north, where the rounding is seen to affect the vowel component rather than the following sonorant.

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77 Forms shown are for Point 55 (Bowmore).
78 Similar results (without diphthongs) are found in Jura (Points 51-52) and in a clutch of locations in Mid-Argyll and Cowal (Points 41-49). Arran dialects (Points 31-35) show lengthening of the vowel in such cases.
Bilabial nasal phoneme /m/

The bilabial nasal phoneme /m/ does not exhibit the plain/palatalised/velarised distinction just discussed in the context of the ‘coronal/dental’ nasals. As has been shown (p. 67), palatalisation of labials is not a feature of this dialect, while velarisation and lip-rounding are not applicable in the case of a bilabial closure.

On the other hand, the **lengthening** of final [m] in certain words is a feature of Colonsay Gaelic, and according to the SGDS results is shared with Islay, Gigha, the south of Jura, and a scattering of dialects in mainland Argyll and central Perthshire. Lengthening only occurs following a short, stressed vowel, either word-finally, or syllable-finally before the voiced homorganic stop [b]. Like the corresponding rounded lateral and nasal forms, it occurs in words which in other dialects are often pronounced with a diphthong:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>åm (33)</th>
<th>trom (871)</th>
<th>teampull (834)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harris:</td>
<td>[aʊ̃m]</td>
<td>t[œ̃ʊ̃m]</td>
<td>t[œ̃̈ɪmbəl̥]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skye:</td>
<td>[aʊ̃m]</td>
<td>t[œ̃ʊ̃m]</td>
<td>t[œ̃̈ɪmbjɪ̯l̥]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonsay</td>
<td>ɛmˑ</td>
<td>trömˑ</td>
<td>t[ʃɛ̃m̥bəl̥]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In phonemic terms, however, [m] functions as an allophone of /m/, occurring in the phonetic environments just described.

Lengthening is not found in intervocalic position: *amais* [e’mɪʃ], *lomairt* (584) [l’o’moʃṭ’].

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79 Point 11 (Ardhasaig).  
80 Point 104 (Lower Breakish)
Vibrants – a re-assessment

Like Ternes (2006: 25-26) I have chosen to use the term ‘vibrant’, rather than ‘rhotic’ or ‘trill’, to refer to the various realisations of orthographic r. The introduction to the SGDS refers to them simply as ‘r-sounds’. These include trills, flaps, fricatives and approximants, involving the tongue tip and the alveolar ridge. The uvular trill, familiar from French and German pronunciation (and as a ‘burr’ in some Scottish and Northumbrian varieties of English) is not present in the Colonsay dialect; in the IPA system, this sound is shown as [ʁ], but in the SGDS this symbol is used for a ‘voiced alveolar trill (three or more taps)’ (Vol. I: 132).

The vibrants present an altogether different set of problems, in terms of their phonological analysis, from those encountered in the case of laterals and nasals. In particular, they are the one area in which the SGDS results for Colonsay must be treated with some caution, because of the acknowledged difficulty of interpreting the transcription practice of the fieldworker, Eric Hamp (EH). In the introduction to the Survey (Vol. I: 131) it is stated that Hamp’s distinction between a single tap and a trill is retained, and shown in the published results as [r] and [ʁ] respectively. In fact this statement is of little value in interpreting the findings for Colonsay: [ʁ] is used sparingly in the Colonsay results, while [r] is found (with devoicing) in only one headword. More to the point, it is stated that ‘EH also uses simple [r] without any indication of the number of flaps’ (ibid.), and it is this symbol that dominates in the Colonsay results. This may reflect Hamp’s finding that there is only one ‘r-phoneme’ in this dialect, labelled /r/,[81] meaning that the number of ‘flaps’ is phonemically insignificant. At any rate, it is impossible, in the overwhelming majority of cases, to determine from the Survey results alone what the precise quality of the ‘r-sound’ is. Further primary research has been required (see below) before any definitive statement can be made.

[81] Note by Jackson on LSS questionnaire: ‘EH says r-phoneme only /r/’. 
The other symbol found in the *SGDS* results is \[ɹ\]. This is used in the IPA system for an alveolar approximant, corresponding to the usual English (i.e. non-Scottish) pronunciation of *r* in *round*, *carry*, etc. In the *SGDS*, however, it is defined as a voiced alveolar *fricative*, which suggests a closer articulation, with more audible friction.

I shall now examine each of the *SGDS* symbols in turn:

As already stated, the symbol \[r\] is found in only one headword, appearing (with devoicing) as an alternative to \[ʁ\] in *air: oirre* (20) \[uʁə : uɾə\]; a footnote helpfully gives the same pair of alternatives for the plural form *orra* \[oʁə : oɾə\].\(^{82}\) This would appear to indicate that the essential phonetic difference between the singular and plural forms of this prepositional pronoun in the Colonsay dialect is the quality of the vowel, rather than the number of flaps. The fact that the vibrants are here shown devoiced, in an intervocalic environment, is unusual, and may imply the presence of (historical) aspiration.

\[r\] is found in initial position in only four words: *radan* (690) \[ʁaɾən\], one version of *réidh* (699) \[ʁɛ] (\[ʁɛ\] is given as an alternative here, and as the only form at 698), *ribeag* (703) \[ɾiɓaq\]\(^{83}\) and *rìgh* (705) \[ɾiˑ\]. It is also found medially, with glottalisation, in *barrannan* (80) \[baɾənˈæŋ\],\(^{84}\) and in final position in one version of the corresponding singular form *bàrr* (78) \[ba r\] (79 has \[ba r\]). In addition, it is found in combination with \[ŋ\] in *ùrnaigh* (518) \[uɾɲi̞ç\]. A devoiced form is found in *muc throm* (634) \[muxɡ ɾəmˑ\], where it represents orthographic *thr*, and as already noted, in one version of *oirre* (20) \[uɾə\] (and, in a footnote, *orra* \[oɾə\]).

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\(^{82}\) Headword is *air: oirre*. The absence of glottalisation probably indicates that the words were elicited in an unstressed environment.

\(^{83}\) Headword is *rib*.

\(^{84}\) Headword is *barran*. 
The symbol [ı] is likewise used in only a handful of words in the Colonsay data set, and in some cases alternatives are given. In its full-sized form it occurs only in initial position, and is found in the following words: a-riamh (58) [ıᵢ́um̩] (57 has [rˈiᵢ́um̩]), ràmh (693) [aˈr̥] (694 has [rə̚ : r̥eɪ], 85 695 has do ràmh [də̚ rə̚]), réidh (698, 699) [aˈr̥] (699 also has [r̥e]], reusanta (700) [aᵢ́u̯s̥ənd̥], roimhe (714) [zə́ři], rud (720, 721) [aʊ̯d̥] (cf. dà rud (722) [də́ rʊ̯d̥]). In addition, a superscript form of [ı] is found in a few words where orthographic r occurs following a long vowel, and before a homorganic (dental or alveolar) consonant. In all cases, these forms are shown as alternatives to forms with no vibrant element at all: àrd (55, 56) [aˈs̥d̥], càirdean (152) [kə́̚s̥ˈd̥z̥ˈi̯n̥] : kə́̚s̥ˈd̥z̥ˈi̯n̥], 86 càrn (154) [kə́̚n̥ : kə́̚n̥], dorn (339, 340) [də̚n̥ : də̚n̥] (the plural/gen. sg. duirn (341) appears as [də́ r̥n̥]).

By far the commonest symbol used to represent these sounds in the Colonsay results, then, is [r], which is used in all positions (initial, medial, final) and in various combinations with other consonants. In the majority of cases it corresponds to orthographic r, but as is well-known, it is also the articulation of orthographic n in the combinations cn, gn, mn (and, by extension, chn, ghn and mhn); this is also the case for the combination t-sn in anns an t-sneachda (783) [ɛ̚ns an tɾ xe̚] and, more unusually, for mn before s in ionnsachadh (529) [iᵢ́n̥ˈs̥ˈə̚n̥] and ionnsaigh (530) [iᵢ́n̥ˈs̥ˈə̚n̥]. 87 In the latter two instances, where the presence of [r] is a typically Colonsay feature, it is shown superscript in the SGDS transcription.

Many other varieties of Gaelic make a phonological distinction between palatalised and non-palatalised /r/, with /r/ often realised as [ʊ] – e.g. Lewis (Point 1 – Ness) has beir air (94) [ɾə̚ bə̚ ə̚ ɾ̥],. This distinction appears not to operate in the same way in the Colonsay dialect: [bə́ r̥ e̚]. 88 The form [r] does occur sporadically in the SGDS results, in the words a-riamh (57) [rˈiᵢ́um̩] (58 has [rˈiᵢ́um̩]), éirich (374) [e̚-r̥t̥i̯Ê] (but note future form éireachaidh (375) [e̚ r̥a̚xi̯Ê]), 89 and with devoicing in bior (107) [bɪr̥], one version of cearc (171) [kˈe̚r̥ˈq̊] (170, 172 have [kˈe̚r̥k̊], [kˈe̚r̥q̊] respectively) and fior (431) [fi̯ˈɾ̥]. The palatalisation mark [r̥] is shown superscript and in round

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85 [rə̚i̯] is presumably a gen. sg. form (ràmh).
86 Headword is caraid: càirdean.
87 The more ‘standard’ form [ɪ̯n̥s̥ə̚q̊] is said (in a footnote) to have been ‘prompted’.
88 Headword is beir.
89 Headword is éirich: éiridh.
brackets in *tuirce* (285) [tuᵊr̥q̥’i],  
*āir* (887) [uᵊr̥] and the identically-transcribed *ār* (893, 894) [uᵊr̥].  
It is obvious that the use of this symbol does not correspond to phonological palatalisation, or to the orthographic distinction between ‘broad’ and ‘slender’. With the exception of *ūr/lāir*, the examples given do all occur in conjunction with a phonetically front vowel (whatever the conventional spelling may be), but there are also plenty of examples where unpalatalised [r] (or in some cases [ɾ] or [ɾ]) is shown in similar environments.

There is some limited evidence to suggest that [r] may function as the lenited form of [ɪ]: *do ràmh* (695) [dɔːr̥ɣ], *dà rud* (722) [dɑːru̯d]. These exist alongside the forms *do rallas* (686) [dɔ̀r̥l̥w̥s̥], *mo riodh* (711) [mɔ̀ɾ̥x̥], where the base form is shown with [r]. It should be borne in mind, however, that the use of [r] is ambiguous in the *SGDS* results, and therefore no firm conclusion can be drawn.

Like other sonorants, [r] is generally shown as devoiced in final position, although devoicing is by no means universal. In some instances, parallel forms are given: *aimsir* (13, 14) [ɛm̩ʃɪr : ɛm̩ʃɪr], *fær* (406, 407) [fɛ̀r : fɛ̀r].

[r] is also devoiced before an unvoiced velar or labial stop, in either medial or final combinations: *adharc* (7) [ʔyʔr̥ɡ], *cearc* (171, 172) [k’eɾ̥ɡ], *coirce* (233, 234) [kɔr̥t̥i]; *corp* (243) [kɔɾ̥b̥], *oidheirp* (671) [yʔɪɾ̥b̥]. In these instances, it appears to represent a form of preaspiration, here expressed as devoicing of the vibrant rather than a prefixed [h], [x] or [ç]. Preaspiration is further examined under Non-segmental features (pp. 277-280).

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90 Headword is *cullach: cullaich*. *Tuirce* is presumably the gen. sg. of *torc*; the placename *Tòrr an Tuirc*, which omits the final syllable, may be regarded as a more regular form.
91 In the case of 887 and 894, a footnote reads ‘sic [ʃʰ]’.
92 Headword is *do rócan*.
93 170 is written as [k’eɾ̥k], 441 has *cearc fhraoich* [k’eɾ̥k ɾ̥ç]
[r] is also shown devoiced in *peathraichean* (680) [pəɾɪɾi̯n̥], as well as in the lenited forms *a shrian* (799) [ə ɾʰiːɾi̯i̯n̥], *mo shrôn* (801) [mo ɾʰɾ̥i̯n̥], thràigheadh (862) [hɾʰaɾ̥i̯ŋ̥], *ga theabhadh* (866) [qɑ ɾʰeɾ̥oɣ̥]. On the other hand, *theabh e* (864) is shown as [hɾʰɐ̯i̯a]. In all these instances, it is the influence of the associated (or implied) [h] that causes the devoicing (cf. *'s aithne* (27) [sɛp̥i̯n̥], *froithneach* (692) [fɾɒn̥æx]).

Before an unvoiced dental stop, fricative (mainly retroflex) forms are found for orthographic *r*: [s'ɾ], [ɾ̥d̥] or [ɾ̥d̥]. Examples include *mart* (113) [mɛɾ̥d̥], *ceart* (174, 175) [k'asɾ̥d̥], *àrd* (55, 56) [aɾ̥d̥ : a'ɾ̥d̥]. In a palatalised environment, the combinations [ɾ̥d̥ɾ̥] or [ɾ̥d̥ɾ̥] are also found: *man cuairt* (267) [mɑɾ̥g̥uɾ̥ɾ̥ɾ̥'ɾ̥ɾ̥], *càirdean* (152) [kɑɾ̥'ɾ̥d̥'ɾ̥ɪ̯n̥ : kɑɾ̥'ɾ̥d̥'ɾ̥ɪ̯n̥]. The form [ɾ̥] occurs independently, in medial position only, in the words *dorsan* (344) [dɔɾ̥ʃ'ɾ̥n̥] and *ursainn* (895) [ʊs'ɾ̥'ɾ̥n̥], and without palatalisation in *farsuing* (399) [faɾ̥i̯n̥ : faɾ̥i̯n̥], where it appears that [ɾ̥] has combined with a following [s].

On the evidence of the *SGDS* results, [ɾ̥] functions as an allophone of /r/ before an unvoiced dental stop (but see below for a re-assessment of the evidence).

[r] appears with rounding [ɾ] only once, in the word *ruith* (696, 697) [ɾʊɾ̥ç]. It is impossible to generalise from a single example, but it is worth noting that the transcription of the vowel [ɾɪ̯] in this instance is also unusual (see pp. 53-54).

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94 Headword is *piuthar: peathraichean*. My informants offered the form *piutharan*.
95 Headword is *dà shrian*.
96 Headword is *tràigh: tràigheadh*.
97 Headwords are *aithne, raithneach*.
98 A note by Hamp (*LSS*) states that the retroflexion in all cases is ‘very slight’.
99 Headword is *bó*.
100 Headword is *cuairt*.
101 Headword in both cases is *reic / ruith*. 
Results of fresh fieldwork on Colonsay

Faced with this complicated and partly ambiguous picture, it was necessary to re-examine the SGDS findings in the light of new evidence. I was able to obtain fresh recordings of a number of the words used in the SGDS from the late Mary Ann MacAllister, and to examine these spectrographically using Praat software (Boersma and Weenink 2010). In the spectrogram, each ‘tap’ appears as a strong vertical line. It is therefore possible to determine, in each instance, whether the vibrant is strongly trilled (3 or more taps), weakly trilled (2 taps), flapped (1 tap) or not trilled at all (no taps).

For purposes of comparison with the SGDS, I have used the SGDS notation in my analysis, using [ɾ] for a strong trill (three taps or more), [ɾ] for a single tap, and [ɾ̥] where no taps were detected. This means that, unlike the SGDS, I have been able to use the symbol [r] exclusively for instances of two taps, which I call a ‘weak trill’. Where there is simultaneous trilling and friction (similar to the Czech ř sound, as in Dvořák)102 this has been indicated as [ɾʲ] or [ɾ̥], depending on the number of taps, with devoicing indicated where appropriate using the customary diacritic [ˀ]. In the case of dorsan (344), where there appears to be strong aspiration, rather than friction, accompanying the trill, this has been shown as [ɾɔr̥ən].

The results are somewhat surprising. As expected, the SGDS ‘catch-all’ [ɾ] category includes instances of the following:

- **Single tap**: caraid [kəɾɪd], dorus [dɔɾ̥ iɕd], and with devoicing, coirce [kɔɾ̥ɛɕt];
- **Weak trill**: rallsa [ɾal̥wsə], cuiridh mi [kur̥ mi], and with devoicing, làidir [l`a d̥zir];
- **Strong trill**: righinn [ɾɪɡ̊ɲ̊];
- **Fricative**: ruith mi [ɾuɪç mi], dh’èirich [i̯eˑɾɪç], and with devoicing, cearc [k’ɛɾ̥ə].

102 In the IPA system the symbol used for the Czech sound is [ɾ̝], with an ‘up-tack’ below the [r] to indicate ‘raising’. Although the effect of raising [ɾ] is to place it closer to the palate, thereby producing audible friction, I believe my notation better reflects the sound heard in Gaelic, where trilling is combined with fricative action.
In those instances where the *SGDS* does indicate the quality of the vibrant, some measure of consistency is observed between the *SGDS* entries and the new recordings, although there are also discrepancies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>SGDS No.</th>
<th>SGDS</th>
<th>MAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>r radan</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>ṭaːdən</td>
<td>ṭaːdən (emphasised: ṭaːdən)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reidh</td>
<td>698, 699</td>
<td>ṭɛ̃ː : ṭɛ̃</td>
<td>ṭɛ́ (emphasised: ṭɛ́)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>riobag</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>ṭiːbaː</td>
<td>ṭiːbaː</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>righ</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>ṭiː</td>
<td>ṭiː</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ùrmaigh</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>uɾญิç</td>
<td>uɲิç (no audible r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r̥/ɾ orirre</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>uɾə : uɾə</td>
<td>uɾə (emphasised)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orrasan</td>
<td>20fn</td>
<td>ɾəɾə : ɾəɾə</td>
<td>ɾəɾəɾəɾə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j râmh</td>
<td>693, 694</td>
<td>ɾɛ̃ːỹ , ɾɛ́ỹ</td>
<td>ɾɛ́ỹ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>riamh</td>
<td>57, 58</td>
<td>ɾɪᵣɪɪv̥ , ɾɪᵣɪɪv̥ , ɾɪᵣɪɪv̥ ; (emphasised) ɾɪᵣɪɪv̥</td>
<td>ɾɪᵣɪɪv̥ ; (emphasised) ɾɛ́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reidh</td>
<td>698, 699</td>
<td>ṭɛ̃ː : ṭɛ̃</td>
<td>ṭɛ́ ; (emphasised) ɾɛ́</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rudeigin</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>ɾuːd̥'ɪɡ̊ɪɲ̊</td>
<td>ɾuːd̥'ɪɡ̊ɪɲ̊</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was noted that, in cases where the informant was asked to repeat a word, it was repeated with greater emphasis, and a corresponding increase in the number of taps: [ṭaːdən : ṭaːdən ; ṭɛ̃ː : ṭɛ̃ ; ṭɪᵣɪɪv̥ : ɾɪᵣɪɪv̥].

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103 Mary Ann MacAllister.
104 The absence of glottalisation in the *SGDS* results is probably due to the forms being elicited in an unstressed context. My informant was asked to contrast *orm, oirre, orra*, and therefore emphasised those words.
In those instances where the SGDS indicates palatalisation [r’], the new findings are less clear-cut, although the predominant sound heard is [ɹ]:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>SGDS No.</th>
<th>SGDS</th>
<th>MAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>r’</td>
<td>dh’éirich</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>e·r′iç</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bior</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>b̥i̯r’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cearc</td>
<td>170-172</td>
<td>k′ɛr’ɡ̥ , etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fior</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>fɪ́r’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tòrr an Tuirc&lt;sup&gt;105&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>[285]</td>
<td>[tu̯(o)ɡ̥̑i̯]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>̀ùr</td>
<td>893, 894</td>
<td>u̯ɹ(r)</td>
<td>u̯ɹ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an ̀ùir</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>u̯ɹ(r)</td>
<td>nu̯ɹ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(N.B.: vowel following)

The variation observed (i.e. the number of taps) thus appears to correlate more closely to the degree of prominence given to the word in question than to any phonemic or allophonic distinction. In particular, the different forms of vibrants encountered cannot be easily correlated to any of the standard distinctions found in Gaelic phonology (palatalised/non-palatalised, lenited/non-lenited, aspirated/non-aspirated, voiced/unvoiced). I therefore conclude, with Hamp, that in this dialect there is only one vibrant phoneme /r/, with a wide range of variant forms, greater emphasis (and hence increased prominence) being marked by an increase in the number of taps [r], while lesser emphasis results in an approximant [ɹ], or in some cases a single tap [ɾ].

<sup>105</sup> The name of a house on Colonsay, also known in English as Mill Cottage.
It is also interesting that in Mary Ann’s pronunciation, there is little evidence of the retroflex fricative forms noted in the SGDS results before a homorganic stop or affricate: $[\mathrm{s}’\ddot{d} : \mathrm{s}’\ddot{d}’z’ : \mathrm{s}’t’\ddot{s}’]$. Rather she produces a trill (usually devoiced) with simultaneous friction:

\begin{verbatim}
Word   SGDS No.  SGDS        MAM
ceart  174      k’aśḍ $[k’a^{s}śḍ]$ , k’aśd’ $k’\ddot{aśd}’$
àrd    55, 56   a’śḍ : a’śḍ , a’śḍ : a’śḍ    a’ $\ddot{aśd}$
càirdean 152    k̀’ś’d’z’iŋ $: kàn’ś’d’z’iŋ$  kàn’ $\ddot{r}d’z’iŋ$
man cuairt 267   maŋ $\ddot{q}h(u)\ddot{y}ʃ’t’ş’$ maŋ $q(\ddot{u})r$’$r$’$ş’
\end{verbatim}

Where a vibrant is followed by phonemic /s/, assimilation takes place. Thus ursaǐn (895), which appears as $[u\ddot{ṣ}’a^{r}’]$ in the SGDS results, is pronounced $[u\ddot{r}n]$ by Mary Ann, with $[j]$ and $[\mathrm{f}]$ showing only a partial overlap in the spectrogram. In the case of dorsan (344), Mary Ann’s version sounds like $[\ddot{d}ɔr\ddot{ə}n\ddot{a}]$, with strong simultaneous aspiration rather than a sibilant, although this may partly reflect the laminal pronunciation of $[s]$ in this dialect (see under $s$).

Before a homorganic nasal, where the SGDS indicates an absence of any vibrant, or at most a superscript $[j]$, Mary Ann produces the full range of variations, depending on the degree of emphasis placed on the word:

\begin{verbatim}
Word   SGDS No.  SGDS       MAM
càrn   154      kàn’ $: kàn’$    kàrn
Càrn an Eoin$^{106}$ —        —        ,ka $\ddot{u}n\ddot{ə}’n$e=jn
nam dhòrn 339, 340 $\ddot{d}ɔ’n : \ddot{d}ɔ’’n$ nam yɔ $\ddot{r}n : nam yɔ $\ddot{r}n$
\end{verbatim}

Only in the word ùrnaǐgh $[u\ddot{ɲ}iç]$ was there no audible vibrant in Mary Ann’s version, whereas the SGDS in this instance gives the form $[u\ddot{r}ɲiç]$, with a clearly marked trill. Again, this suggests free variation in the realisation of /l/, rather than any allophonic distinction.

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$^{106}$ The name of the highest hill on Colonsay (143 m). Note that càrn receives secondary stress.
Combinations with other consonants also throw up some interesting results. Before a velar stop, the SGDS shows a range of forms [k'ɛɾk : k'ɛɾɡ : k'ɛɾɡ] for cearc (170-172); Mary Ann’s version has a devoiced approximant [k'ɛɾɡ]. The expected preaspiration is expressed as devoicing of the vibrant in all cases. But before a *palatalised* velar, Mary Ann consistently uses a fricative [ç] (with a devoiced flap or an approximant), where the SGDS merely indicates devoicing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>SGDS No.</th>
<th>SGDS</th>
<th>MAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>coirce</td>
<td>233, 234</td>
<td>kɔɛr̥ɡ'ɪ , kɔɛr̥ɡ'ɪ</td>
<td>kɔɛçɡ'ɪ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adhaircean</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>ɣʔɡɛr̥ɡ</td>
<td>ɣ'ɛçɡ'ɪ̯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tòrr an Tuirc(^{108})</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>tʊɾ'ɡ'ɪ</td>
<td>tœɾɛn'ɻʊɰçɡ'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{107}\) Phonetically a palatal stop [ɟ], but shown here as [ɡ'] to maintain consistency with the SGDS.

\(^{108}\) See footnote 105 for an explanation.
A notable feature of Colonsay pronunciation, which also occurs elsewhere, is the insertion of a very brief epenthetic vowel in combinations where a stop is followed by [r]. This might be thought to be merely a reflection of the need for the tongue to move from the stop to the trill or flap, but spectrographic evidence shows a very short vocalic segment in such cases. Thus we find, in Mary Ann’s pronunciation, the words creic [kəɾəçq], gruag [ɡəɾəʊɡ], tràth [təɾə], treabhadh [təɾəʔoɣ]. This feature is not reflected in the SGDS results as printed.\[^{109}\]

![Waveform, spectrogram and pitch contour for Dh’èirich mi tràth an-diugh sa mhaidinn](image)

(Mary Ann MacAllister)

The short vocalic segment at the beginning of tràth [təɾə] can be clearly seen.

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\[^{109}\] Creic, rather than reic, is the usual form of this verb on Colonsay, although the SGDS (696, 697) also gives reic.

\[^{110}\] The same feature is observed in the speech of some native-born Colbhasachs when speaking English: great [ɡɪɾə d], try [təɾə j].
Semi-vowels

Semi-vowels are extremely short vocalic articulations, which in phonological terms function as consonants. Examples in English are the sounds represented by y in yes, yacht, and w in walk, winter. These sounds, as they occur in English, are often transcribed [j w]. These symbols are reserved in the IPA table of consonants for ‘palatal approximant’ and ‘voiced labial-velar approximant’ respectively, which are arguably not the same as semi-vowels (IPA 2015; cf. SGDS, Vol. I: 118-119). In the SGDS results, [w] appears only in the sequence [l`w].

The SGDS favours a transcription with a subscript ‘arch’ or ‘breve’ [_] under the relevant vowel symbol. This diacritic is defined in the IPA system as indicating ‘non-syllabic’, which may in practice mean the same as ‘semi-vowel’. It has the advantage of permitting a wider range of semi-vowels to be recorded, apart from just the high vowels [i] and [u], and by avoiding the term ‘semi’, remains uncommitted as to the relative duration of the segment in question.

The SGDS results take full advantage of the freedom to define the quality of semi-vowels more narrowly. The following symbols are found in the Colonsay data set:

\[i (i) \ U\_\ U\_\ \_\_\ i\_\ i\_\ \_\]

Many of these are written superscript, presumably indicating an even shorter duration than would be implied by transcribing them as ‘semi-vowels’ (Vol. I: 137). That said, it is difficult to see how these semi-vowels differ, in terms of practical phonetics, from the corresponding full vowel sounds written superscript.

The only one of these symbols to be used at all frequently in the Colonsay results is [i], which occurs in initial, medial and final position; it is subject to glottalisation following a stressed short vowel, and to final devoicing in many instances. In this it displays the same features as other consonants, and /i/ may therefore be considered to be the only semi-vowel phoneme to occur with any frequency in this dialect.

[i], which is found only in the word laigh (547) [l`a\_], with devoicing, will be interpreted as a non-allophonic variant of the phoneme /j/.
The form [ũ] is more difficult to account for. In the SGDS results for Colonsay, it occurs only in treabh (863) [treũ], and its preterite form threabh e (864) [hre’ũi a]; both these forms have been attested in recent recordings. The devoicing of [ũ], in the base form at least, suggests that the sound is being treated as a consonant, and hence is subject to final devoicing. Devoicing in the preterite is more difficult to explain, although the presence of glottalisation in the latter form suggests that the word is being treated as disyllabic, perhaps representing an underlying form *threabhaigh e. Even on this interpretation, the transcription with two semi-vowels seems anomalous, since a form such as *[hre’ũiç a] would be expected (bearing in mind that final -igh is normally pronounced [iç]). It is possible that sandhi in the presence of the following [a] may explain the reduction of *[i] to the corresponding semi-vowel.

On this reasoning, the infinitive/verbal noun form treabhadh (865) [treʔʊɣ̥] might be explained in terms of the semi-vowel [ũ] having merged with the ending [əɣ] to produce [ʊɣ̥]; this is, moreover, the only example in the SGDS results where an -adh ending shows final devoicing.

In short, the example of treabh raises a number of tricky issues, not least of which is the precise status of [ũ]. Despite the anomalies surrounding it, [ũ] does appear to be functioning here as a consonant in its own right, which cannot easily be attached to any other phoneme. The conclusion has to be that this dialect has a phoneme /ũ/, which is found in the SGDS results only in the verb treabh and one (arguably two) of its derived forms. Positing a phoneme on the basis of only one instance seems quite unsatisfactory, however, and I therefore propose to treat the identification of this phoneme as provisional, in the absence of any other examples.
The other semi-vowel forms can largely be accounted for as non-phonemic variations reflecting the ‘accommodation’ of the vocal cavity to a following consonant:

\[ [\ddot{\text{i}}] \text{ occurs in } \text{fluch} (434) \ [f\dot{\text{u}}x\dddot{\text{x}}], \text{ and superscript in } \text{iuchair} (537) \ [\text{i}x\dddot{\text{a}}r : \text{i}x\dddot{\text{a}}\dddot{\text{r}}]. \] In both cases it appears to represent a transition from a narrow vowel sound to a velar consonant, although it may also reflect some consciousness of the fact that these words are pronounced \([f\dot{\text{u}}x\dddot{\text{x}}, \text{juxar}]\) in other dialects;\(^{111}\) its occurrence in the comparative form \(\text{na’s fliche} (435) \ [n\dot{\text{s}} f\dot{\text{u}}x\dddot{\text{c}}i] \) is probably influenced by the positive form. In the remaining instance in the SGDS, \(\text{rallas} (685, 686) \ [r\dddot{\text{a}}l’\dddot{\text{w}}\dddot{\text{i}]}, \)\(^{112}\) it appears to be influenced by the following rounded and velarised lateral \([\dddot{\text{w}}].\]

\[ [\ddot{\text{y}}] \text{ appears in the Colonsay data set only in two modified forms: } [\ddot{\text{y}}] \text{ and } [\dddot{\text{y}}]. \] These are found only in the word \(\text{rioichd} , \) which appears as \([\text{ri}\dddot{\text{i}}x\dddot{\text{q}}] \) at 709,\(^{113}\) \([\text{ri}\dddot{\text{i}}x\dddot{\text{q}}] \) at 710, and as \(\text{mo rioichd} \ [m\ddot{\text{o}} x\dddot{\text{i}}x\dddot{\text{q}}] \) at 711. In all three cases, the \([\ddot{\text{y}} : \ddot{\text{y}}]\) is shown superscript. Once again, it is likely that this represents a transition from a high front vowel to a following velar consonant.

\[ [\ddot{\text{a}}] \text{ appears only twice in the Colonsay data set, in both instances superscript. These are one version of } \text{sgreuch} (762) \ [\text{s}g\text{r}x\dddot{\text{s}} : \text{s}g\text{r}x\dddot{\text{s}}] \text{ and the gen. sg. form } \text{taighe} (822) \ [t\dddot{\text{a}}\dddot{\text{i}}]. \] Again, this is likely to represent a transition to a velar consonant in the case of \(\text{sgreuch} \) (especially in light of the parallel form, with no transition indicated) and some degree of phonetic accommodation in the case of \(\text{taighe}.\)

\[ [\ddot{\text{e}}] \text{ is a rhotacised version of the previous symbol, and occurs superscript in two words, in both cases representing orthographic } r: \text{ one version of } \text{farsuing} (399) \ [\text{f}\dddot{\text{a}}\dddot{\text{s}}\dddot{\text{j}} : \text{f}\dddot{\text{a}}\dddot{\text{s}}\dddot{\text{j}}] \text{ and } \text{mairnealach} (596) \ [\text{m}\dddot{\text{a}}\dddot{\text{n}}\dddot{\text{a}}\dddot{\text{x}}]. \] It is not clear to what extent the sound indicated as a superscript semi-vowel differs from the superscript full vowel shown in the alternative versions of \(\text{ceart} (174) \ [k\text{a}\dddot{\text{t}}\dddot{\text{d}}], \text{feart} (411) \ [f\dddot{\text{e}}\dddot{\text{t}}] ; \) probably this reflects some slight variation in transcription.

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111 Cf. Point 55 (Bowmore): \([f\dot{\text{u}}x\dddot{\text{x}}, \text{juxar’}].\)
112 Headword is \(\text{räcan} (685), \text{do räcan} (686).\)
113 Note the grave accent [\dddot{\text{w}}] indicating velarisation of the vowel (not present in the other examples).
In summary, all the recorded instances of semi-vowels, other than [i], its variant [ɨ], and (provisionally) [ʉ], represent vocal transitions or accommodations, as the tongue moves to produce a different sound, rather than having any obvious consonantal function. As such they are not phonologically significant for this dialect.

REVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL PHONEMES

Following this analysis, I shall now look in detail at each of the phonemes identified for this dialect, in each case examining what symbols are used, and which modified forms are found, in the SGDS results for Colonsay. Where appropriate, I shall supplement the SGDS evidence with examples drawn from my own fieldwork.

I shall propose a phonemic definition for each phoneme, stating which variations are to be considered allophones, in what phonetic environments, and which are to be seen merely as variations in articulation, without phonological significance.
VOWEL PHONEMES

Front vowels – unrounded

i

This is a high front vowel. Like other vowels in Colonsay Gaelic, it may occur either long or short in stressed syllables, and short in unstressed position. The long form is sometimes heard as a slight glide ([iː] or [i̯]), although this is not noted in the SGDS results, and should be regarded as a spontaneous variation rather than a consistent feature.

Generally speaking, in the SGDS transcription, long [iˑ] corresponds to orthographic i, and short [i] to orthographic i: chi (381, 382) [çi’], im (515) [iˑm]; briste (123) [b̥riʃ’t’i], fichead (420) [fiçd]. Because i is a marker for palatalisation in the standard orthography, the orthographic forms io, io are regularly found before unpalatalised consonants: fion (429) [fiˑŋ], iobairt (522) [iˑb̥əšt’ʃ’]; crious (258) [kris], fios (432) [fis]. In Colonsay the simple vowel is found even in words where, in other dialects, the orthographic combination io would be pronounced as a diphthong: sios [ʃiˑs], miosa (621) [miˑsə].\(^\text{114}\) Íosa Críosd (531) [iˑsə kɾiˑsə]. In the case of fiodh (425, 426) [fiɣ], the Colonsay form reflects not only the tendency towards a monophthong, but also the absence of any j-glide after a labial consonant. In diallaid (309) [d̥iˑl̥aˑd̥], the digraph ia is used in the SGDS, although diollaid is now the approved spelling. In suipeir (815) [siçbaɾ], short [i] corresponds to the digraph ui, perhaps reflecting the Scots form sipper.

\(^\text{114}\) Headword is mios.
Occurrences of unmodified [i] in unstressed position are rare in the SGDS results, but it is found in one version of *bithidh* (102) [biʔiç] (103 has [biʔiç]), one version of *cuiridh* (278) [kuˈɾiç] (277 has [kuˈɾiç]), *Di-Dòmhnaich* (327) [d'z'i ɬoː nɪç],\(^{115}\) *tapaidh* (830) [tahbi] and in the plural form *ughan* (for *uighean*) (881) [uʔiŋ]. It also appears as the epenthetic vowel in *na’s doirche* (333, 334) [nəs d̥uriç]. For the most part, however, unstressed orthographic *i*, and an epenthetic vowel in a palatalised context, are more likely to show a modified form of [i].

Nasalised forms are found in *nighean* (664) [ɲɪʔiŋ] (but not in *do nighean* (665) [dɔ ñiʔiŋ]), and also in *sniomh* (785, 786) [ʂniˈɣ], and its preterite form *shniomh* (787) [nɨˈɣ] (784 has [ʂn̥iːˈɣ]). Nasalisation of vowels in the presence of a nasal consonant will be considered, as a non-segmental feature, at pp. 281-280.

Apart from nasalisation, the only other modified form of [i] to appear in the SGDS results for Colonsay is [i] (lowered). This is found in stressed position in only a handful of words: one version of the word *cridhe* (256) [kɾiʔi] (255 has [kɾiʔi]), *iompachadh* (560) [i̞mˈbəʃəɣ],\(^{116}\) *ithe* (536) [iːcɪɣ] (*ithidh* (535) is [iːçɪɣ] – see below), one version of *mise* (623) [miʃɪ] (622 has [miʃə]), *ris* (702) [ɾiʃ], and *thill* (844) [hi̞ʎˑ]. Since there is no obvious common feature, and half of these instances offer alternative forms with unmodified [i], such occurrences are best regarded as articulatory variants.

In unstressed syllables, on the other hand, [i] is commonly found, especially in the future ending -*idh*, -*aidh*, which in Colonsay is pronounced with a final [ç] when not followed immediately by a consonant. Thus in the SGDS we find the following: *bithidh* (103) [biʔiç] (102 has [biʔiç]), *buailidh* (131) [bɨuəˈɾiç], *cuiridh* (277) [kuˈɾiç] (278 has [kuˈɾiç]), *éireachaidh* (for *éiridh*) (375) [eˑɾəɾiç],\(^{117}\) *fòghnaidh* (436) [foˑnɪç], *ithidh* (535) [iːçɪ]. Other verbs have unmodified [i] in such endings.

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\(^{115}\) Headword is *Dòmhnaich*.

\(^{116}\) Headword is *iompach*.

\(^{117}\) Headword is *éirich: éiridh*. 

95
As previously discussed (p. 56), the lax vowel [ɪ] and certain of its modified forms also require to be considered in the context of the /i/ phoneme.

Unmodified [ɪ] has been defined as an allophone of /i/, occurring in unstressed position.

Of the large number of modified forms of [ɪ] found in the SGDS results, only [ɪ] (raised), [ɪ] (lowered) and [ɪ] (raised and centralised) can be regarded as falling within the /i/ phoneme. Details of the words concerned have already been given in the course of the phonological discussion on p. 57.

Other retracted and centralised forms [ɪ̰ ɪ̯ ɪ̊ ɪ̅] will be considered in the context of the /ə/ phoneme.

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /i/ occurs both long and short in stressed position, and short in unstressed position.

Long /iː/ may be realised as [ii̯] ~ [iː].

The realisation of short /i/ may vary between [i] and [ɨ] in stressed position.

It has the allophone [ɪ] in unstressed position; the actual realisation of this allophone may vary within the range [i ɨ ɪ i].

Retracted and/or centralised forms of [ɪ] (apart from [ɨ]) fall within the /ə/ phoneme.
This is a high-mid front vowel. Like other vowels in Colonsay Gaelic, it may occur either long or short in stressed syllables, and short in unstressed position.

In the SGDS spelling system, the lengthened form [eˑ] may correspond to orthographic é in final position, as in glé (476) [ɡ̥l̠ˈeˑ]. Before palatalised consonants it appears more commonly as éi, as in céilidh (178) [kˈeˑliç], théid (688) [heˑd̥ˈzˑ]; before an unpalatalised (‘broad’) consonant, the orthographic rendering is eu, as in s fhedh (414) [ʃeˑd̥ər̥], feum (415) [fəˑm], sgeul (761) [sq̥eˑl̥ˈ] (760 has [sq̥eˑl̥ˈ]). In the case of greim (502,503) [ɡ̥ˈr eˑm̥ˈ], the headword is spelt without an accent, reflecting the fact that in most other dialects this word is pronounced with a diphthong: [ɡ̥r̥ˈiˑm̥ˈ], etc.; in Islay and Jura, it is shown with a short vowel and lengthened [m]: [ɡ̥ˈr eˑm̥ˈ] (SGDS, Vol. IV: 100-103).

The short form [e] generally corresponds to orthographic ea, as in beag (84) [beq], seasamh (750) [jesəv]; or with a following palatalised consonant, to orthographic ei, as in reic (696, 697) [reç']. In éibhleag (372) [evɪl̠ˈaɡ̥], éi is written with an accent, to reflect the pronunciation elsewhere, but in Colonsay the vowel is pronounced short, with an epenthetic vowel inserted in the following consonant cluster. In leth (574) [xe], [e] corresponds to the single letter e. The word air, which appears in the SGDS results only in relation to other words, shows [e] corresponding to orthographic ai: beir air (94) [beˈr e接轨], air mo chois (156) [er mə xo接轨].

The following modified forms are found in the SGDS results:

[e] (raised) is found in only three entries: eaglais (368) [ɛg̥ˈl̠ɪʃ] (the gen. sg. form has unmodified [e] in (369) [nə hɛɡ̥ˈl̠ɪʃ]); eile (373) [ɛˈl̠ˈiˑ] (882 has uibhir eile [uʔir eˑl̠ˈiˑ])121; cha do leum (576) [xa ɗə lˈeˑm] (575 gives the base form as leum [kəˑm]). Since in all three instances there appears to be free variation between the modified and unmodified forms, it may be concluded that the use of [e] as opposed to [e] is not phonologically significant.

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118 The form given by the informant is glé mhath [ɡ̥l̠ˈeˑ vɛ].
119 Headword is beir.
120 Headword is cas: cois.
121 Headword is uibhir.
[ĕ] (retracted) is found in *an-dé* (41) [ndz'ẽ̞], *breac* (122) [brɛxᵊ], *ceist* (179) [k'ẽ̞tʃᵊ], *réidh* (698, 699) [ẽ̞], *Seumas* (755) [ẽ̞ əs], one version of *sgeul* (760) [sq'ẽ̞l̊] (as noted above, 761 has [sq'e̞l̊]), *teth* (839) [t'ẽ̞]. These seven words cover the full range of orthographic representations already noted for unmodified [e]. It is difficult to establish any reliable phonological criterion for distinguishing the modified from the unmodified form, and hence [ẽ] should be regarded as a variant of /e/ rather than an allophone.

As previously discussed (p. 51), [ẽ] (lowered) should be considered as a variant of the phoneme /ɛ/ rather than a lowered variant of /e/.

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /e/ occurs both long and short in stressed position, and short in unstressed position.

It has no allophones, but its actual articulation may vary within the range [e ɛ ẽ].

The lowered form [ẽ] is to be considered as a variant within the /e/ phoneme.
This is a low-mid front vowel. Like other vowels in Colonsay Gaelic, it may occur either long or short in stressed syllables, and short in unstressed position. This phoneme has a wider distribution in Colonsay Gaelic than in many other dialects.

In common with much of Argyll, Colonsay participates only to a very limited extent in the ‘breaking of original long ē’, as described by Kenneth Jackson (1968). Of Jackson’s list of eight keywords, only one (a’ cheud (182) [çìəð]) is pronounced on Colonsay with a diphthong; the others having [ɛ] (or one of its modified forms), or [ê] in the case of Seumas. Thus [ɛˑ] is found in sè (741) [fɛˑ]; the SGDS spelling in this instance reflects the Argyll pronunciation, although sia would nowadays be the approved orthographic form.

[ɛˑ] is also found for orthographic eu in beul (97) [bɛˑl], eunlaith (378) [ɛˑiç], feur (416) [fɛˑr], reult (712) [rɛˑd], sgreuch (762) [sqɛˑx : sqɛˑɣ]. In deanadh, (302) [d’zˑən\'], [ɛˑ] corresponds to orthographic ea. In two examples, mèirleach (613) [fɛˑr̥], reult (712) [rɛˑl̥d̥], [sgrɛˑx : sgrɛˑə̯x]. In deanadh, (302) [d̥zˑɛn\'], [ɛˑ] corresponds to orthographic ea.

The short form [ɛ] corresponds to orthographic single e in dheth (300) [iɛ]. More commonly, however, short [ɛ] corresponds to orthographic ea, as in beatha (92) [bhe\'], each (365) [ex], nead (653, 654) [nev], and to orthographic ai in aimsir (13, 14) [emif'ir], ainm (17, 18) [ɛn\']. In a number of words, however, Colonsay has [ɛ] for ea where other dialects have [ja]. These include a number of examples where ea follows a labial consonant: beairteach (739) [bɛs’tʃæx], feannadh (405) [fɛˑnˑəɣ], feart (411) [fɛš'tʃ]; such combinations never show any element of palatalisation or j-glide in Colonsay. But they also include words such as ceannaich (168) [k’eˑnˑiç], sealladh (744) [fɛˑlˑəɣ], where there is no labial.

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122 This variation had been previously identified by Donald MacKinnon, himself a native of Colonsay, in a paper presented to the Gaelic Society of Inverness (MacKinnon 1886: 352-353). I am grateful to Professor John Sheets for drawing this paper to my attention.

123 Headword is cheud.

124 In 99, beul: air beulaibh, the transcription is [bɛˑl\'].

125 Headword is riomag.

126 Headword is dean: deanadh. This is the conditional (‘imperfect’) form, spelt here without an accent. The lengthened form [d’zˑən\'] also serves in Colonsay for the verbal noun deannamh.

127 Headword is saibhir. The forms given are [sai\'ið : ʦɛˑtʃæx].

128 This feature will be more closely examined in the context of labial consonants.
A prominent feature of Colonsay Gaelic, which is also found in other Argyll dialects, notably in Islay, is the appearance of [ɛ : ɛˑ] for orthographic a/à in a large number of words where other varieties have [a] or [ɑ]. This ‘raising’ of [a] appears to happen when the vowel is either preceded or followed by a nasal consonant, including [v] as the lenited form of [m]: a-mach (34) [mɛx], math (603) [mɛ], cam (144) [kɛmˑ], damh (293-295) [dɛv], màthair (606) [mɛ haɾ],129 nàire (644, 645, 648) [n`ɛ:r ᱱ], thàinig (841) [hɛˑnɪ ɡ̊ˈʃ],130 snàmh (781) [sn`ɛˑv̥]. Along with glottalisation, this is the feature of my own Colonsay-influenced pronunciation that is most frequently commented on by other Gaelic speakers.

However, since the pronunciation of orthographic a as [ɛ] does not occur automatically in a nasal environment (see p. 50), [ɛ] cannot be considered an allophone of [a]; rather there is a difference in the distribution of these two phonemes in the Colonsay dialect (and other Argyll dialects) as compared to other varieties (Petyt 1980: 19-22).

In the parallel words geamhradh (469) [ɡ̊ˈɛvɪɾ̥ɪɣ] and samhradh (736) [sɛvɪɾɪɣ], Colonsay has [ɛ], with an epenthetic vowel inserted, where many other varieties of Gaelic would have an [au] type diphthong, e.g. Skye [ɡ̊ˈɑɑɾɪɣ : sɑɑɾɪɣ].131 A similar process operates in the case of Oidhche Shamhna (734) [ˈʃiɾ iɾ̥ɪnə].132 Perhaps by analogy with these words, we find the forms [dɛvʊəɣ] ‘dancing’ and [tɾɛvəɣ] ‘travelling’ (see p. 356).

The nasalised form [ɛ̆] is found in the SGDS results in a number of words where [n`] is followed by a long (or glottalised) [ɛ]: naidheachd (647) [n`ɛʔɛxq], nàmhaid (649) [n`ɛˑvʊɭʃ], snàthlean (780) [sn`ɛˑ : sn`ɛˑçɑŋ], snàmh (781, 782) [sn`ɛˑɣ] – but not in nàire (644,645) [n`ɛ:r ᱱ],133 nàdur (646, cf. 643) [n`ɛ .df]. It also occurs regularly where the diphthong [ɛʊ] is followed by a velarised nasal [n`] in words such as

129 More commonly heard as [mɛɾ].
130 Headword is thig: thàinig.
131 Point 114 (Braes).
132 Headword is Samhainn. The transcription [sɛˈvʊŋ] is also given.
133 Headword 645 is mo nàbaidh/mo nàire. The word nàbaidh is unknown in Colonsay (cf. 642).
beanntan (91) [b̥e̞n̥ːˀd̥aŋ], ceann (163-165) [k̥e̞n̥ːˀ], etc.134 This is the only environment in which nasalisation appears to be a regular feature of Colonsay Gaelic, and even here non-nasalised forms are found in some instances. Therefore, rather than treating [ɛ̃] as an allophone, I prefer to consider nasalisation, to the extent that it does occur in this dialect, as a non-segmental feature. (See pp. 281-283).

Other modified forms of this symbol recorded by the SGDS are as follows:

[ɛ] (raised) is found in the words amh (35) [ɛɣ], bean (88) [b̥ɛŋ], meadhg (607) [mɛ̆ˀɡ], reult (712) [rɛ̆ˀl̥ˈd],135 and one version of sgamhan (758) [sqɛ̆ʼvəŋ] (757 has [sqɛ’vaŋ]). Apart from the fact that some of these illustrate the ‘raising’ of [a] to [ɛ] in the presence of a nasal, it is difficult to find any common phonological denominator among them that would enable us to consider this form an allophone.

[ɛ] (raised and retracted) is found only in deug (308) [d'z'ɛ̆̆ʼɡ]. It is difficult to draw any conclusions on the basis of a single instance, and other forms are found in similar phonetic environments in deanadh (302) [d'z'ɛ̆̆ʼnəɣ], meadhg (607) [mɛ̆̆ʼɡ]. I propose to regard [ɛ] as a spontaneous variation affecting only this word.136

[ɛ] (retracted) is found as a simple vowel only in ràmh (693) [tɛ̆ʼɣ]; it also occurs in diphthongs, which will be treated separately. The existence of the alternative form ràmh (694) [rɛ̆ʼɣ : rɛ̆iɣ],137 and of do ràmh (695) [dɔ rɛ̆ʼɣ],138 both with unmodified [ɛ], suggest that [ɛ] is a spontaneous variation, occurring in only one version of this word.

[ɛ] (lowered) is found only once, in a diphthong (see p. 218).

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134 I propose re-interpreting the phonetic data, in such cases, as [b̥ɛn̥ːˀd̥aŋ : k̥e̞n̥ːˀ]. (See pp. 75-76).
135 Headword is rionmag.
136 Besides which, my own impression is that this word is pronounced [d'z'ɛ̆ʼɡ] by Colonsay speakers.
137 Headword is ràmh / ràcan. The second form given is presumably the plural/gen. sg. form ràimh.
138 Headword is do ràmh / do ràcan.
**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /ɛ/ occurs both long and short in stressed position, and short in unstressed position.

It has no allophones.

Its actual articulation may vary within the range [ɛ ɕ ɕ], and in rare cases [ɻ̠ ɻ̠ ɻ̠].
This low front vowel is very common in Colonsay Gaelic. It is found both long and short in stressed syllables, and short in unstressed syllables. In stressed syllables especially, it is a ‘clear’, front sound, with little tendency to move in the direction of [a], although retracted forms are found in certain specific environments (see below).

Generally speaking, long [aˑ] corresponds to orthographic à, and short [a] to orthographic a. Thus we find bàta (81, 82) [bʰa ɗə], fàg (379) [fa ɬɪ]; aran (52) [a’ɾaŋ], cladach (192) [kl’ aɗʌx], slat (768) [sl’ ahɬ]. With a following palatalised consonant, the spelling is ài, ai: làidir (546) [l’ a’ɗ’z’ɾ], baile (65) [ba’ɬ’ ɬ]. The standard orthography is, however, a very unreliable guide to actual pronunciation. In many instances, as has been shown (see above under ᵉ), orthographic à, a is pronounced [ɛˑ:ɛ ], especially when in contact with a nasal consonant. The word cat (158, 159), exceptionally, is pronounced [kɨɡ̥ɬ], and its plural/gen. sg. form cait (160) [kɬɨɡ̥ɬ’ʃ].

In unstressed syllables, short [a] is found, especially in the masculine singular ending -an: aran (52) [a’ɾaŋ], bradan (120) [braɗaŋ], lag an (544) [l’ aɡaŋ]. The identically spelt plural ending -an, however, is generally pronounced [in] or [ən] (see under i and a for other variants). The corresponding feminine singular ending -ag is also pronounced with short unstressed [a]: duilleag (358) [dɯ’ʃəɡ], uinneag (885) [u’ʃəɡ].

Short [a] is also regularly found in the verbal noun/infinitive ending -ail: fàgail (380) [fa’ɡɛl], fantail (412) [fɛntəl], ᵇ³⁹ gabhail (448) [ɡa’vaɬ], and in the identical adjectival ending: fearail (409) [fɛ’ral], pongail (683) [poŋ’ɡal]. ᵇ⁴⁰

In cuilein (274) [ku’ɬaŋ], ᵇ⁴¹ [a] corresponds to orthographic ei. This is listed as the plural/gen. sg. form of this word; in fact the nom. sg. form cuilean is identical in this dialect, with palatalised coda and no modification of the vowel sound in either nominative or genitive. The same holds true for eilean [ɛ’ɬaŋ].

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¹³⁹ Headword is feith: feitheamh.
¹⁴⁰ Headword is puncail.
¹⁴¹ Headword is cuilean: cuilein.
The SGDS results for Colonsay show a single modified form [à] (retracted). This is found before orthographic $r$ + following dental consonant in one version of àrd (56) [àςd : àςԀ] (55 has [aςd : aςd]), in càirdean (152) [kàςʣ’z’iŋ : kàςςz’z’iŋ], càrn (154) [kàŋ : kàŋ], and one version of ceart (175) [k’àςd] (174 has [k’aςd]). It is noteworthy that all these examples include a variant showing some degree of retroflexion immediately after the [à].

[à] is found in a number of other entries: in hiatus in latha (564) [l’àʔa] (but cf. soillse latha (790) [sʔiʔ] [ʃi’l’aʔa], one version of lag (541) [l’àq] (542 has [l’aq]), in gànnadh (458) [qe’rąγ], and twice (unstressed) in the comparative particle na’s: na’s blàithe (108) [nəς b’l’aγt] and na’s teotha (840) [nəf’ t’jóʔo].

The consistency with which [à] occurs before original $r$ + dental consonant suggests that this constitutes an allophone of /a/ in that specific environment. Although a synchronic study cannot take any account of a historical pronunciation, my own research suggests that many Colonsay speakers do in fact produce an /r/ sound in such cases. Moreover, I define [rᶴ] (shown as [ςʼ] in SGDS) as an allophone of /r/ before a dental or alveolar stop (p. 200). An allophonic definition whereby /a/ is realised as [à] before the phoneme /r/ + coronal/dental stop or nasal (whatever the actual realisation of /r/ in a particular environment) therefore becomes feasible.

It is tempting to suggest that the allophone [à] occurs also in hiatus, and possibly in proximity to the velarised lateral [l’]. This, however, would be to ignore the numerous counter-examples in which unmarked [a] is found in these same environments: chaidh (687) [xaʔiʔ], dathadh (298) [dąʔiʔ]; cladh (192) [kl’a đu], lag (544) [l’aʔan], etc. Rather it appears that [à] occurs as a possible, though infrequent, variant form in these environments. The unstressed instances of [à], for their part, appear to be random variations.

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142 Headword is soillseich.
143 The effect of the [’] symbol is not entirely clear, but may indicate a lesser degree of retraction.
144 Headword is teotha.
145 Headword is rach: chaidh. The alternative forms [xaç : xaʔiʔ] are given; I suggest that [xaç] is used in an unstressed environment: Chaidh an cù a mharbhadh [xaç əŋ ˈghu’ə ˈvaraγ].
As previously discussed (p. 55), the symbol [ʌ] is found before [x] in unstressed -ach endings, where the preceding consonant is not palatalised: cladach (192) [kʌlˈæx], sàmhach (733) [sɛˈʌx], teaghlach (832) [tʃʊˈʌx]. It also occurs in cases where a verb whose base form ends in -aich or -ich has a grammatical ending added to a stem ending in -ach: cuartachaidh (from cuairtich) (268) [kʌɾˈæx], chuartachadh (269) [kəɾˈæxʌx], eireachaidh (from éirich) (375) [eɾˈæx]. [ʌ] is therefore to be regarded as an allophone of the /a/ phoneme in these environments. Where -ach follows a palatalised consonant, however, the vowel is usually shown as [ə] or one of its modified forms (see p. 55).

A modified form [ʌ] (raised) is found in only three words in the SGDS results: one version of balach (69) [bʌlˈæx] (70 has [bʌlˈəx]), iosal (532) [iʃʌ] and froithneach (692) [frʌx]. Since none of these appear to fit any pattern, [ʌ] must be regarded simply as a variant in these three instances.

Finally, we must consider the symbol [æ], which occurs only once in the Colonsay data set, in the entry for (886) uinneag: uinneige, where the form given is [braˈiŋəhuˈŋægi], apparently meaning ‘upper part of the window’. This is anomalous on at least two counts (quality of the vowel and absence of palatalisation of [ŋ]), and is either an error in transcription, or reflects some uncertainty on the part of the informant over the genitive form being sought.

146 Headword is cuairtich: cuairtichidh. For discussion of the morphology, see p.303.
147 Headword is cuairtich: chuairticheadh.
148 Headword is éirich: éiridh.
149 Headword is raithneach. In this one example, the ending [ʌx] occurs following a palatalised consonant.
150 Feminine genitive endings are not generally found in present-day Colonsay usage (see pp. 321-322).
**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /a/ occurs both long and short in stressed position, and short in unstressed position. It has the following allophones:

[ä] when followed by the phoneme /r/ + coronal/dental stop or nasal (whatever the actual realisation of /r/ in these combinations may be); [ä] may also occur as a variant of /a/ in other phonetic environments, particularly in hiatus and in proximity to [l'].

[A] when followed by [x] in unstressed syllables following a non-palatalised consonant.

[A] ~ [A] may also occur elsewhere as a variant of /a/ in an unstressed syllable.
Front vowel – rounded

\( \textit{y} \)

This phoneme is characterised by being fronted and rounded. As previously discussed (pp. 52-53), it is the only rounded front vowel phoneme found in the Colonsay dialect. In the SGDS results, its articulation on the ‘vertical’ scale varies quite widely over the range represented by the phonetic symbols \[ y \, \dot{y} \, \partial \], with several modified forms. The representation \(/y/\) has been chosen because it lies in the middle of this range.

As has been observed, this phoneme covers the same lexical ground as the phonemes \(/u/\) and \(/i/\) in other varieties of Scottish Gaelic.\(^{151}\) These symbols represent unrounded back vowels. The Colonsay articulation, by contrast, is produced much further forward in the mouth, with lip-rounding. In practice, the acoustic difference is not all that great, and is unlikely to hamper communication with speakers of other dialects. It is important to realise that the sound heard on Colonsay, while high and rounded, is never the ‘pure’ \([y]\) of French \textit{lune} \([\text{lyn}]\) or German \textit{M"uhle} \([\text{myːl} \partial]\), but is nearly always retracted or centralised, and often lowered.

Like other vowels, this phoneme may occur long or short in stressed syllables. The minimal pair \textit{lagh} \((545)\) \([l\,\dot{y}\,\gamma]\) and \textit{laogh} \((559)\) \([l\,\dot{y}\,\cdot\gamma]\) (phonemically \(/l\,\dot{y}\,\gamma/\) and \(/l\,\gamma\,\gamma/\)) indicates that the primary distinction is indeed one of quantity and not quality.\(^{152}\) It is rare in unstressed position, except following a stressed form of \(/y/\), e.g. Aonghas \((50)\) \([\dot{y}\,\dot{y}\,\partial]\), \textit{nas lugha} \((85)\) \([\dot{y}\,\dot{y}\,\dot{y}\,\partial]\).\(^{153}\) For this reason, a case could be made for regarding \([\dot{a}]\), which only occurs in unstressed syllables, as an allophone of \(/y/\) in unstressed position, or vice versa, although this is not the approach adopted here (see p. 46).

\(^{151}\) Modified forms of the symbols \([u]\) and \([\dot{y}]\) do occur in the SGDS results for Colonsay. Those involving \([u]\) are discussed below, as variants of this phoneme. Forms of \([\dot{y}]\) are classified as variants of \(/\partial/\) (see p. 55).

\(^{152}\) The indication of final devoicing in the case of \textit{laogh} is not phonemically significant.

\(^{153}\) Headword is \textit{beag: lugha}. 
In standard orthography, a wide variety of different representations are found for this phoneme. Its most characteristic manifestation, particularly when lengthened, is the digraph *ao* (148, 149) [k̪̣y̞ ɣ], *craobh* (247) [kr̪̣y̞], *saoghal* (738) [s̪̣o̞ ɣ]; also short in *Aonghas* (50) [ýn̪̣s]. Where the vowel is short, and the following consonant palatalised, the orthographic representation is usually a digraph containing *i* as its second element: *coille* (225) [k̪̣y̞’ ɣə], *creid* (253) [kr̪̣y̞ ɣ ɪ], *saoghal* (738) [s̪̣ø̞ ɣ ɭ]. Where the vowel is short, and the following consonant palatalised, the orthographic representation is usually a digraph containing *i* as its second element: *coille* (225) [k̪̣y̞’ ɣə], *creid* (253) [kr̪̣y̞ ɣ ɪ], *saoghal* (738) [s̪̣ø̞ ɣ ɭ].

Nasalisation (following [n’:]) is found only in the words *naoi* (650) [n’ ɣi̞], and *naomh* (651) [n’ ɣy̞ ɣ] (diphthong [ɣi̞] in the plural/gen. sg. form *naoimh* (652) [n’ ɣi̞ ɣ]). As previously suggested, nasalisation does not appear to be a regular feature of this dialect, and will be discussed elsewhere (pp. 281-283).

Apart from nasalised forms, the following modified forms of [y] are found in the Colonsay results: ɣ ɣ y ɣ.

The commonest of these is [ɣ] (retracted). This is found long in *aontachadh* (51) [ɣ’n’ ɣdax ɣ], *caol* (147) [k̪̣y̞’ ɣ], *caomh* (148, 149) [k̪̣y̞ ɣ], *déidh* (305) [d̪’z’ ɣ ɪ], and with nasalisation in *aon* (49) [h ɣ ɣ], *naomh* (651) [n’ ɣ ɣ]. It occurs short in *airm* (62) [ɣrm], *bruidhinn* (127) [b ɣ ɣ], *troigh* (870) [tr ɣ], and unstressed following another modified form of [y] in *Aonghas* (50) [y̞n̪̣s], *feadhainn* (404) [f̪’ ɣ ɣ]..

Unmodified [y] is not found, and unmodified [ɣ ɣ] hardly ever occur, in the Colonsay data set. There are three occurrences of [ɣ], in *adhairc* (7) [ɣ ɣ ɣ], one version of *cat* (158) [k̪̣y̞ ɣ], and *goile* (493) [g̪’l̠ ɣ]. As will be seen from the following examples, this list is not exhaustive.

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154 The glottalisation of [d’] is probably due to the word being used in *sandhi* before a vowel, e.g. *creid e*.
155 Again, the glottalisation of [d’] is probably due to the word being used in *sandhi* before a vowel, e.g. *goid e*.
[\ddot{\mathcal{y}}] (lowered and retracted) is found long in *aoradh* (47) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}:\textsc{ra}\mathcal{y}], *lughdaich* (589) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}:\textsc{d}\mathcal{t}\mathcal{c}], and short in *aghaidh* (9) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\dddot{\mathcal{y}}\ddot{\mathcal{c}}], *coille* (225) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}:\textsc{\'a}\mathcal{\ddot{\i}}] (223, 224 have [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}:\textsc{\'a}\mathcal{\ddot{\i}}]), *feadhainn* (404) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\dddot{\mathcal{y}}\ddot{\mathcal{\eta}}].

[\ddot{\mathcal{y}}] (lowered but not retracted) is found short in *cait* (160) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\dddot{\mathcal{f}}\textsc{t}\textsc{'f}] (plural of [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\dddot{\mathcal{f}}\textsc{d}, \ddot{\mathcal{y}}\dddot{\mathcal{f}}\textsc{d}]), and long in *faoin* (398) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\dddot{\mathcal{u}}\textsc{n}].

[\ddot{\mathcal{y}}] (centralised) is found short in *Aonghas* (50) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\dddot{\mathcal{y}}\textsc{s}], *nas lugha* (85) [nas \ddot{\mathcal{y}}\dddot{\mathcal{y}}], *tionndadh* (847) [\textsc{t}\textsc{'n}\textsc{\ddot{\i}}\textsc{\ddot{\n}}\textsc{\ddot{\g}}], and as the ‘echoing’ sound following glottalisation in *aghaidh* (9) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\dddot{\mathcal{y}}\ddot{\mathcal{c}}].

By far the commonest form of [\mathcal{y}] is [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}] (retracted). This is found long in *aois* (48) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\textsc{f}], *craobh* (247) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\textsc{\'a}\textsc{x}], *faobhar* (396) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\dddot{\mathcal{u}}\textsc{r}], *gaoth* (459-461) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\dddot{\mathcal{c}}\textsc{\'e}], and short in *coileach* (220-222) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\textsc{l}\textsc{\'a}\textsc{x}], *coille* (223, 224) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\textsc{\'a}\textsc{i}] (225 has [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\textsc{\'a}\textsc{i}]), *oibrich* (668) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\dddot{\mathcal{r}}\textsc{\i}]. *lagh* (545) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\dddot{\gamma}], *leaghadh* (571) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\dddot{\mathcal{y}}\ddot{\mathcal{y}}]. The long form [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}] is the most frequent realisation of the digraph *ao* in the *SGDS* results, although [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}] is also common.

A further, centralised variant [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}] is found long in one version of *laogh* (560) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\dddot{\mathcal{y}}\textsc{i}] (559 has [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\dddot{\mathcal{y}}]), and short in *leac* (570) [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\textsc{x}\textsc{\'q}], with a footnote suggesting possible confusion with the word *sliochd* [s\ddot{\mathcal{y}}\textsc{x}\textsc{\'q}]. Since both these entries are subject to qualification, no conclusions can be drawn as to the status of [\ddot{\mathcal{y}}] on the basis of the *SGDS* results.

The commonest form of [\emptyset] is the retracted form [\ddot{\emptyset}], which is found long in *fraoch* (440) [\ddot{\mathcal{f}}\textsc{\'o}\textsc{x}], *saoghal* (738) [s\ddot{\mathcal{a}}\textsc{\'l}], *saothair* (740) [\ddot{\mathcal{t}}\textsc{\'r}],\textsuperscript{156} and short in *feadh* (402, 403) [f\ddot{\emptyset}y], *goirid* (495, 496) [\ddot{\mathcal{g}}\textsc{\'o}\textsc{\'r}\textsc{\'d}\textsc{\'f}], *oide* (669) [\ddot{\mathcal{o}}\textsc{\'d}\textsc{\'z}\textsc{\i}], *roghainn* (713) [\ddot{\mathcal{r}}\dddot{\mathcal{o}}\textsc{\'\eta}] (with characteristic ‘echoing’ of the vowel in hiatus).

\textsuperscript{156} A footnote in the *SGDS* results suggests the form offered may actually be the word *saor*. 

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Other modified forms of [ø] are as follows:

[ø] (raised and retracted) occurs long in subh craobh (806) [ˌsu ˈkrɔ ˈv], 247 (7 has craobh [krɔˈv]), taobh (828) [ˈtɔv] (829 has [tɔˈv]), teaghlach (832) [ˈtʃɔlˈv], and short in creid (253) [krɔdˈv]. It is interesting that in at least two instances, alternatives with [ʏ] are offered, reinforcing the argument for a single phoneme.

[œ] (centralised) is found in only three entries, all short: the future form creididh (254) [krɔdˈvɪʃ], the comparative form glaine (475) [ɡlɛn`v], and laigse (543) [lɐgʃ].

Finally, as argued at pp. 53-55, modified forms of the symbol [ui] are to be regarded as falling under this phoneme. These include [uː] in words such as ruith (696, 697, 724) [rʊtʃ], ruigidh (723) [rʊgˈtʃ], but also aonam (for annam) (42) [uːnəm]; and also the rare forms [ʊ] in righinn (706 – footnote) [rʊiŋ], and [ʊ] in rud (720-722) [ɾʊd], and long [uː] in snaim (779) [snəɾm]. For the reasons stated, I am suggesting that these forms should be interpreted as equivalent to [ʏ].

Allophones are difficult to establish: despite the very wide range covered by this phoneme, it is hard to pin down precise phonetic environments in which one form is preferred over another. In fact there seems to be a surprisingly large amount of free variation in the realisation of this phoneme.

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157 Headword is subh.
158 Headword is ann: annam. See p. 331.
159 Perhaps less wide in practice than is suggested by the SGDS transcription, bearing in mind that some of the distinctions noted represent very slight variations in articulation.
Phonemic definition

The phoneme /ʏ/ occurs both long and short in stressed position, but is rarely found in unstressed position, except as the ‘echoing’ vowel following hiatus.

Its realisation occurs most commonly in the range covered by the retracted forms [ỹ ỹ ɔ].

The forms [ỹ ỹ ỹ ɔ ɔ ɔ] (and in the SGDS results, the symbols [ũ ũ ũ ũ]) are found as variants, along with unmodified forms [ỹ ɔ].
Back vowels

This is a high, rounded back vowel. Like other vowels in this dialect, it may occur either long or short in stressed syllables, and (rarely) short in unstressed position. In Colonsay, it is pronounced well back in the mouth, giving a very ‘rounded’ sound (although it is actually the retraction of the tongue that gives it this quality), quite unlike the Central Scottish [u] sound in foot, or the Lewis pronunciation of cù (265) as [kʰʊː].

As in the case of the high front vowel /i/, long /uː/ is sometimes heard as a slight glide ([u̯] or [ʊ̯]); this is not noted in the SGDS results, and is less marked than in the case of /i/. It is best regarded as a variation rather than a consistent feature.

In the SGDS transcription, the long form [u] almost invariably corresponds to orthographic ù, or ùi before a palatalised consonant: cù (265) [ku], dlùth (317) [d̥l̥’u:], dùisg (363) [du̯i̯’g~], sùil (813) [su ɬ]. In the case of duìrn (341) [d̥u̯r̥n], the form recorded, with long [u:], represents the current approved spelling dòrn: duìrn. (The SGDS results as published omit the grave accent).

Short [u] generally corresponds to orthographic u, ui: dubh (354, 355) [d̥u], muc (633, 634) [mux̊], duine (360, 361) [du̯i̯n̥], tuiteam (874) [tu̯i̯t̊e̊m̥]. It occurs frequently with glottalisation in hiatus; in the majority of cases, the ‘echoing’ vowel is [ʊ]: thubhairt (1) [hu̯o̯s̊t̊’t̊’s̊̊], cumhachd (287) [ku̯o̯x̊q̊], cumhang (288) [ku̯ʊ̯ŋ̊’], giuthas (474) [g̊’u̯ʊ̯s̊], uabhall (877) [u̯o̯l̊’ẘ]. Only in dubhach (356) [d̥u̯ux̊] and the somewhat unusual form cnò (212) [kru̯u] does [u] appear as the ‘echoing’ vowel. In the headwords buidhe (135) [bu̯i̯n̥], luibeann (590) [l̊’u̯i̯n̥], ughan (881) [u̯i̯n̥], uibhir (882) [u̯i̯r̊], there is a distinct change of vowel after the hiatus, indicating a new syllable.

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160 Point 7 (Lower Bayble, Point).
161 Headword is abair: thubhailt.
162 The devoicing mark [̊] is shown under the tie bar [ ̊] in the SGDS transcription, but it is not possible to reproduce this using the present software.
163 Headword is luibh.
164 The form given is [u̯i̯r̊ ɬ’t̊] ‘as much again’.
[u] hardly ever occurs in unstressed position in the SGDS results for Colonsay; apart from the two examples noted (dubhach and cnò), it is found only in a phrasally unstressed context in cia mar a tha thu? (180) [dʰ'zʰ mar sʰ ha' u], and with secondary stress in subh craobh (806) [su 'krʰɣ].

[u] also corresponds to orthographic oi in oirre (20) [uɣ : uʃ], in this case reflecting the form airthi, which is standard in Irish. In the case of earball (371) [uribɔ'], the Colonsay form would be better spelt urball; this pronunciation is in any case fairly widespread in Scottish Gaelic (SGDS, Vol. III: 290-291).

The following modified forms of [u] are found:

[ʊ] (retracted) is found in the following words: a-muigh (38) [mʊ̝] (39 has [mʊ̝ : mʊ̝i]), bruith (128) (bɾuç), cnuic (215) [kɾuçq'], a' chruidh (261) [ə xrʊ̝], 'ga muing (636)[.ga 'mʊ̝i], mailichinn (637) [mʊ̝iç], muir (639) [mʊ̝r] (640 has anns a’ mhuir [sə vʊ̝ɾ]), uile (883) [ʊ̝'l̠ɪ], uisge (888) [ʊ̝ʃɪ] (889, 890 have [ʊ̝ʃɪ]).

It should be noted that, in the case of back vowels, ‘retracted’ means ‘slightly centralised’, i.e. retracted with respect to the trapezium of cardinal vowels. All of the examples found are short, and occur in a palatalised context, corresponding to orthographic ui. The ‘retraction’ may therefore result from forward movement of the tongue in anticipation of the palatalised consonant. However, not all instances of ui are indicated as being ‘retracted’: duine (360, 361) [dʊ̝'nɪ], tuiteam (874) [tʊ̝d̥'zəŋ]. The most one can say is that short [ʊ̝] is generally found before [ç] and [ɾ], and may occur before other palatalised consonants. The number of instances is, however, small, and not conclusive. [ʊ̝] therefore appears to be a variant of [u] in a palatalised environment, rather than an allophonic modification.

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165 Headword is cia mar.
166 Headword is subh.
167 A footnote indicates, correctly, ‘word rarely used’; a-mach is used in Colonsay for position as well as motion.
168 Headword is crodh: cruidh.
169 Headword is muing.
170 Headword is muinichill.
171 The [ɾ] in muir is not phonetically palatalised in Colonsay pronunciation, although it is written with a preceding i, and is palatalised in other dialects. Fairge is the word more commonly used for ‘sea’.
[u] (lowered) is found in cluinnidh (207) [kl`u`ɲu̯ç], sundach (817) [su̯`dʌx]. In the case of cluinnidh and sundach, the adjoining velarised consonants may have a lowering effect on the vowel. However, counter-examples such as glùn (482) [ɡ̥l`uˑn̥], cunntas (289) [kʊn`dɔs], and indeed cluinntinn (208) [kɬ`ui̯ɲd˙z˙i̯ɹ], argue against this form being allophonic. Once again, therefore, it is to be seen as a variant.

As discussed earlier (pp. 58-59), the symbol [ʊ], representing the ‘lax’ form of [u], only occurs short in the Colonsay dataset, and is rare in stressed position. Apart from inflected forms of the verb cuir, unmodified [ʊ] is found in stressed position only in the words cuirm (283) [kʊrm], chum (286) [kʊm̩], smuilceach (778) [sʊ̯ʎ̥ɡ̥əx] and ursainn (895) [ʊ̯ʊs`əv̩].

As well as supplying the ‘echoing’ vowel in hiatus following [u], [ʊ] also occurs as the echo of [o], when followed by a consonant: seabhag (195) [ʃoʔʊk], gobhar (488, 489) [ɡoʔʊr], leabhar (568) [ʃoʔʊr], lobhar (580) [l`ʊʔr]. It is also found in hiatus following other vowels, usually where some element of ‘rounding’ is present in other varieties of Gaelic, although not always reflected in the spelling: bleoghan (109) [bl`eʔʊŋ], feabhas (401) [fɛʔʊs], treabhadh (865, 866) [tɛʔʊɣ̥] (cf. treabh (863) [tɾeʔʊ]).

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172 [u] is shown with a following grave accent [‘], indicating velarisation, in this word and in one version of luibh (591) [l`u`j] (590 has [l`u]). The effect of this notation is not clear, and for the purposes of this analysis I propose to disregard it. Vol. I of the SGDS offers the following, rather tentative explanation: ‘In these cases, one may assume that the vowel articulation is accompanied by a setting of the back of the tongue somewhat raised, and possibly tensed, to a degree greater than that found with a normal vowel articulation’ (p.125, emphasis added).

173 Note that muime breaks the rule just stated, whereby /u/ is generally expressed as [ʊ] before the semi-vowel [i].

174 Past tense of cum.

175 Headword is clámhan.

176 In open syllables the echoing vowel is [o]: gobhar (488) [ɡoʔʊr], but gobha (487) [ɡoʔo] (See under o).

177 Headword is bleagh: bleaghan.
A less reliable instance in the SGDS results is *ionnsaidh* (530), where the pronunciation is indicated as [iˑũ̯ˑs̩ˑɪ̯̬ːɾ̩ˑs̩ˑɪ̯̬ːɾ̩]. A footnote makes it clear that the second form was prompted, and the ‘word not used’ (Vol. IV: 157).¹⁷⁸ I have found [iˑũ̯ˑs̩ˑɪ̯̬ːɾ̩] to be the form commonly used on Colonsay, including in the compound preposition *a dhʼionnsaidh*, and the homophonous verb *ionnsaich* (cf. *ionnsachadh* (529) [iˑũ̯ˑs̩ˑə̯ día]). The example involving [ʊ] is therefore not to be regarded as an indigenous Colonsay pronunciation.

The only modified form of [ʊ] encountered in the data set is [ʊ̠] (raised), which is found only in the word *cluich* (206) [kl`ʊ̠ˑɔ́ ç].¹⁷⁹ Like [ũ], this is probably influenced by the following palatal consonant, but there is insufficient evidence to regard it as an allophone.

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /u/ occurs both long and short in stressed position, and occasionally short in unstressed position. Long /uː/ may be realised as the variant [u̯ʊ] ~ [ʊʊ] in this dialect.

In its short form, it has the allophone [ʊ] in hiatus following glottalisation of /u/ or /o/. The realisation [ʊ] may also occur as a variant in other environments.

The variant [ũ] may be found before palatalised consonants, notably [ɬ] and [ɨ].

The variant [ʊ] may also occur, especially in a velarised environment.

¹⁷⁸ A note in LSS quotes the informant as saying that [iˑũ̯ˑs̩ˑɪ̯̬ːɾ̩] is the form ‘used here’.
¹⁷⁹ For the velarisation symbol [´] after the vowel, see footnote 172 above.
This is a high-mid, rounded back vowel. Like other vowels, it may occur either long or short in stressed syllables, and short in unstressed position. Similarly to /iː/ and /uː/, the long form /oː/ is sometimes pronounced with a slight u-glide, especially before [r]: mór [moʊr̥]. This is not reflected in the SGDS results.

In the orthographic system used by the SGDS, long unmodified [oˑ] generally corresponds to ő: bó (113) [boˑ], cóig (219) [koˑq̥], mór (628) [moˑr̥]. In a couple of instances it corresponds to ő: dòbhran (321) [d̥oˑr̥], fòghnaidh (436) [foˑnicç]. This usage predates the more recent spelling reform, which abolished the use of the acute accent. An anomalous transcription is found in donn (328, 329) [d̥oˑŋ̥],180 where [oˑ], followed by the superscript raised form [ŋ̥], appears to correspond to unmarked o; the lengthening is probably influenced by the following double consonant mn, but there are no other examples of this form of transcription in the Colonsay data. Headword 329 gives the more conventional alternative reading [ŋ̥oʊ̯n̥]. (See p. 226 for an alternative interpretation of the phonetic data in this instance.)

In leabhraichean (569) [ʎɔˑriçicç], long [oˑ] corresponds to orthographic ea followed by bh (and a following consonant); the presence of an [o] sound in this word is normal in Scottish Gaelic.

Short unmodified [o] generally corresponds to orthographic o, or oi before a palatalised consonant: bog (116) [b̥o], lomairt (584) [l`o’məʃt’],181 ochd (666) [oxq̥]; air mo chois (156) [eɾ mə xo],182 toiseach (856) [toʃəx].183 In three instances the SGDS results show the Colonsay form with [o] where the orthographic version has u: cupan (290) [ko̞b̥aŋ],184 duilich (357) [d̥oˑl̠icç] and puncail (683) [poŋˑal̠]. These reflect differences in the distribution of the phonemes /o/ and /u/, and could be spelt copan, doilich, pongail.

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180 The devoicing mark [ˌ] under the initial [d] appears in brackets in the SGDS transcription.

181 Headword is lom: lomadh.

182 Headword is cas/cots.

183 The alternative [tɔˑʃəx] is also listed.

184 The form [kuhbaŋ] is given as an alternative, but a footnote suggests ‘literary’. 
Short [o] is also found in the future form *gheibh* (385) [jo].\(^{185}\) This pronunciation is widespread throughout the Gaelic-speaking area (*SGDS*, Vol. III: 318-321), and again reflects a difference in phonemic distribution; the word is occasionally spelt *gheobh*. Likewise, in *leabhar* (568) [ₕoʔor] and *seabhag* (195) [joʔok],\(^{186}\) the use of [o] reflects common usage in Scottish Gaelic, enhanced in the Colonsay version by glottalisation and an ‘echoing’ vowel. As has been shown, the ‘echoing’ vowel in such circumstances is generally [o] after [o], when followed by a consonant; in word-final position it is [o]. Contrast *gobhar* (488) [qoʔor] and *gobha* (487) [qoʔo].

The *SGDS* results use a whole range of modified forms of [o]: Ṡ o Ṡ o̜ o̜̜ o̜̜̜̜.

Of these, only [o] (retracted) occurs with any frequency. It is found particularly in the possessive adjectives *mo*, *do*: *mo nàire* (645, 648) [mó nεr̥ɨ], *mo sheannmhair* (749) [mó hənɨr̥ɭ],\(^{187}\) *do làmh* (551) [dò l`εγ], *do nighean* (665) [dò niʔɨŋ]. Often, however, *mo* is reduced to [mə]: *mo bhàta* (83) [mó vaʔə], *mo shròn* (801) [mə ʃən]. In a single example, it appears as [mo]: *mo shlat* (769) [mo l`wəh]. It appears that [o] in these instances is a prosodically weakened variant of /o/ in an unstressed context, which may be further weakened to [ə].

[o] also appears unstressed in the vocative form *a dhuine* (362) [o ɣuɲ], although one suspects that in this case the informant may have interpreted the prompt ‘O man’ more literally than was intended.

In stressed position, [o] is found, with glottalisation and ‘echoing’ vowel in *clobha* (202) [kl`oʔo], as well as in one version of *coire* (235) [kòr̥ɪ] (236, 237 have [kər̥ɪ : kər̥ɪ]),\(^{188}\) *cosnadh* (238) [kɔnɭɛɣ], *deoch* (307) [dζ`ɔx], one version of *Donnchadh* (330) [dɔn`əxɤ] (331 has [dɔn`əxɤ]), *lobhar* (580) [l`oʔur], *tom* (859) [tɔm], *trom* (871) [trɔm] (but note *muc trom* (634) [muxq ɡəm]), *tromb* (872) [trɔm] (but note *trombaid* (873) [trom bəd]). It is difficult to find a common phonological feature at

\(^{185}\) Headword is *faigh*: *gheibh*. The pronunciation in Colonsay, and elsewhere, could be written *gheobh*.

\(^{186}\) Headword is *clamhan*. *Seabhag* in Colonsay means ‘hawk’.

\(^{187}\) Headword is *do sheannmhair*.

\(^{188}\) All three headwords illustrate *coire* with the meaning ‘kettle’. *Coire* meaning ‘fault’ is pronounced [kər̥ɪ].
work in these instances. In three of them, [ó] occurs before lengthened [mˑ], and in two cases before a hiatus (marked by [ʔ]), but other examples show unmodified [o] in these environments. It is therefore difficult to justify regarding [ó] in stressed position as an allophone of /o/.

The other modified forms of [o] occur only sporadically:

[ó] (raised) is found in bodhar (114) [bɔʔɔr], crodh (259, 260) [krɔ], and long in fòïd (625) [fɔˈːdˈz̪ʰ]. As reported above, it also appears superscript in donn (328, 329) [dɔ̯ ɲ] (but see above for an alternative reading in 329). There appears to be no common phonological feature operating in these few examples.

[ô] (raised and retracted) is found only in the words bogha (117) [bɔʔɔ], loisg (582) [l` ɔ̝ ʃ ɡ̊] (with the derived form losgdh-braghad (121) [l` ɔ̝ ɡ̊ hra d]) and dol (689) [dɔļ]. Again, there is no obvious common factor, and I propose to treat the two forms [o] and [ô] as variants within the /o/ phoneme, rather than allophones.

The forms [o̝] (lowered) and [ô̝] (lowered and retracted) will be treated phonemically as variants of /ɔ/ rather than /o/, in the same way as the form [ɛ̝] was classified within the /ɛ/ phoneme (see p. 51).

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /o/ occurs both long and short in stressed position, and short in unstressed position.

It has no allophones, but its realisation may vary within the range [o ʊ ɔ ə]. In particular, it may be realised as [o̞] when unstressed, especially in the possessive pronouns mo, do.

The forms [o] and [ʊ] are to be considered as variants of the /ɔ/ phoneme.

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189 Headword is mòin: mòine, and the form given is fòïd mòine [fɔˈːd mɔˈɲ]. It is unlikely that the fòïd element would be fully lengthened when under secondary stress, unless the two words were being enunciated separately for the benefit of the interviewer. No indication of stress is given.

190 Headword is braghad.
This is a low-mid, rounded back vowel. It may occur either long or short in stressed syllables, and short in unstressed position.

In the SGDS results, long unmodified [ɔ̃] corresponds to orthographic ɔ or ɔi in words such as ceòl (181) [kʰɔl̥], pòca (681) [pʰɔxa], sròn (800, 801) [sɾɔn̥]; clòimh (203) [klʰɔj], còir (232) [kɔr̥]. In two instances, it corresponds to unmarked o: combanach (240) [kʰɔmˈɔn̥ax],\(^{191}\) dorn (339, 340) [dʰɔn̥ : dɔˑn̥]. Both of these are subject to qualification: in combanach, my findings suggest that the lengthening affects the [m], but not the [ɔ], giving [kɔmˈɔn̥ax]; while in the case of dorn, the accepted spelling nowadays is dòrn.

It also appears in an alternative version of toiseach (856) [tɔʃəx : tɔʃəx], although here it is clear that the second form given is the verbal noun tòiseachd.

Short unmodified [ɔ] is found in a large number of words, almost always corresponding to orthographic o, or occasionally oi before a palatalised consonant: cnoc (213-215) [krɔx], moladh (626, 627) [moɾˈləɣ], coirce (233, 234) [kɔr̥ɡ̥ʼɪ], soirbheas (791) [sɔrəs].

In a handful of words, short [ɔ] corresponds to orthographic a. This tends to be the case where a is followed by a ‘broad’ l in an epenthetic combination: balg (74) [bɔl̥ˈaɡ], falbhaidh (390) [fɔl̥ˈaç], dh’fhalbhadh (391) [ɣɔl̥ˈaɣ]. These are characteristically Argyll pronunciations, reflecting a difference in distribution of phonemes. Short [ɔ] is also found in famhair (393) [fɔhəɾ], and in froithneach (692) [frɔ̝n̥ʌx], where the SGDS orthography is raithneach.

In situations involving hiatus, the ‘echoing’ vowel is almost invariably [ɔ]: domhain (325) [dɔʔɔn̥], gnothach (484) [ɡɾɔʔɔx], nas motha (630) [nas mɔʔɔ],\(^{192}\) tomhas (860) [tɔʔɔs]. In roimhe (741) [rɔʔi]\(^{193}\) and coimhearsnach (642) [kɔʔiʃˈnʌx],\(^{194}\) the vowel following the hiatus forms a separate syllable.

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\(^{191}\) Headword is combach.

\(^{192}\) Headword is mó: motha.

\(^{193}\) Headword is roimh: roimhe.

\(^{194}\) Headword is nàbaidh; this word is never used on Colonsay.
The only modified forms of [ɔ] found in the SGDS data for Colonsay are [ɔ] and [ɔ̣].

[ɔ] (raised) is found long in bròn (125) [bɾɔ̣ɲ] and mòine (625) [mɔ̣ɲi],195 and short in dorchas (335) [dɔ̣ɾɔ̣xɔ̣dɔ̣s] (332 gives the underlying adjective as dorcha [dɔ̣ɾɔ̣xɔ̣]), drochaid (349, 350) [dɾɔ̣xɯ̣d̥ʃ], one version of gorm (498) [ɡ̥ɔ̣ɾɪm̥] (497 has [ɡ̥ɔ̣ɾɪm̥]), and morair (631) [mɔ̣ɾaɾ̥]. All but one of these instances has [ɔ] occurring before or after [r], although it is not clear that this indicates allophonic variation; two offer alternative forms with unmodified [ɔ], and several other instances show unmodified [ɔ] in contact with [r]: cnoc (213, 214) [krɔ̣xɡ̥], sròn (800) [srɔ̣ɲ], soirbheas (791) [sɔ̣ras].

[ɔ̣] (raised) is found long in brò́n (125) [b̥rɔ̣ˑɲ], brọ̀n (125) [b̥rɔ̣ˑɲ], and as the epenthetic vowel in comharradh (241) [kɔ̣hrə]. Again there is involvement of [r] in all these examples, but the same observations apply as in the case of [ɔ].

For reasons already discussed (p. 51), [o] (lowered) and [ɔ̜] (lowered and retracted) should be regarded phonemically as variants of /ɔ/ rather than /o/.

[o] is found in bòidheach (118) [bɔ̣ˑɪ̯ɔ̣x], Di-dòmhnaich (327) [d̥z̥ˑɪ̯ɔ̣ˑn̥],197 one version of olc (673) [ọl̥`ɡ̥] (674 has [ɔl̥`ɡ̥]), and seo (753) [ʃọ], as well as in the characteristic Colonsay pronunciation of Calluinn (143) [kɔ̣l̥`ɪ̯ɲ̥].

[ɔ̜] (lowered and retracted) is found in broilleach (124) [bɾɔ̣ˑɭə ɲ̥], one version of gorm (497) [ɡ̥ɔ̣ɾɪm̥] (498 has [ɡ̥ɔ̣ɾɪm̥]), and as the ‘echoing’ vowel in bogha (117) [bɔ̣ˈɡ̥ə].

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195 Headword is mòin: mòine. The form offered is fòid mòine [fɔ̣ˑd̥ˈz̥ ɲ̥i̯].
196 Headword is cnùimh.
197 Headword is Dòmhnaich.
Phonemic definition

The phoneme /ɔ/ occurs both long and short in stressed position, and short in unstressed position.

It has no allophones, but its realisation may vary within the range [ɔ ɔ̣ ɔ̝̇ ɔ̝ ȯ̝̜].

The forms [ɔ ɔ̣] are found especially, though not invariably, in conjunction with [r].
Central vowel

Although ‘centralised’ forms of many vowels are indicated in the SGDS results, and the vowels represented in Colonsay Gaelic by the phoneme /i/ are often regarded phonologically as ‘central’ vowels in Scottish Gaelic, there is only one truly central vowel phoneme in this dialect: /ə/. Its actual realisation covers a wide range of central and centralised vowel sounds, although the distinctions involved are generally quite subtle.

This symbol represents a neutral, central vowel. It is found only in unstressed position, and only short.

Although any vowel may be used to represent this phoneme orthographically, the choice being based for the most part on historical considerations, by far the most frequent orthographical representation in Gaelic is a in a non-palatalised (‘broad’) context, and e when palatalised (‘slender’).

Because of its frequency in unstressed syllables, this phoneme occurs in a huge number of words in the SGDS results. Examples include buachaille (129) [ˈb̥u̠xa̠xl̥ː], caorann (150) [k̥̆y̆ːr̥̆n̥], dorchasdas (335) [d̥̆ɾ̥̆xa̠ɾ̥̆s̥], fòghluim (437) [f̥̆ɾ̥̆l̥̆im̥], teampull (834, 835) [t̥̆ʃ̥̆ɛ̠m̥ˈb̥əl̥̆].

A number of particular situations in which /ə/ occurs are worth highlighting. These include the plural ending -an /ən/ (unlike the masc.sg. diminutive ending -an, which is /ən/), verbal noun/infinitive endings in -adh /əɣ/, most adjective endings in -ach /əx/, and nouns ending in -ach following a palatalised consonant. As indicated under o above, unstressed possessive adjectives mo, do [mə : ɗə] are also frequently reduced to [mə : ɗə].

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198 Headword is buachaill: buachaille.
199 Mary Ann MacAllister (interview, 20 August 2012) even produced stressed citation forms with [ə] when emphasising the possessive adjective mo: [ˈmə ɾ̥̆l̥̆ˈs̥ə : ˈmə ɾ̥̆c̥̆ˈɣ̥].
/ə/ is also found as the epenthetic vowel in the ‘weak’ pattern of epenthesis typical of Argyll and other southern and eastern dialects of Gaelic, but only following a ‘broad’ vowel: balg (74) [b̥al’ə̣], dorcha (332) [dɔrəxə], gorm (497) [görtəm].200 In a palatalised environment, the epenthetic vowel is phonemically /i/: nas doirche (333,334) [nəs d̥əriçɪ], cuirm (283) [kərɪm]. Epenthesis is examined in more detail in the next chapter (see pp. 262-276).

Despite its lack of distinctiveness, no fewer than four modified forms of [ə] are listed in the SGDS results: ə ə̣ ə̜ ə̫. Apart from [ə], none of these occur in more than a few words.

[ə] (raised) is found mainly in final unstressed syllables: bàta (81, 82) [bətə], coille (223, 224) [kville], tuiteam (874) [tuيف’zəm]. It also occurs in the ending -adh in Donnchadh (330) [doŋ’əxəɣ] (331 has Donnchadh [doŋ’əɤɣ]), paisceanadh (677) [paʃənəɣ], sgriobhadh (764) [sgrəvəɣ]. However, most instances of -adh have unmodified [ə] (but see [i] below).

[ə] also appears in Alasdair (29) [əl’əsd̥ir], and a shiùil (754) [ə hɨui’es], and as the epenthetic vowel in balbh (73) [bəl’əɤ], dealg (301) [de’ləq], and one version of gorm (497) [görtəm] (498 has [ɡəɾɨm]). These examples suggest that instances of [ə] are cases of free variation, rather than an allophone.

[ə] (lowered) is found in bliadhnachan (110 fn) [b̥i’iənəxə], bòidheach (118) [b̥əiʃə], combanach (240) [kəm’bənəx]202 and mèirleach (613) [mər’kəx]. All these examples involve the consonant [x], although in the case of combanach, the [ə] is not the form in direct contact with [x]. However, given that there are plenty of examples of unmodified [ə], and indeed [ʌ], being used in conjunction with [x], it is difficult to make a case for an allophone *[ə] on the basis of these four instances.

200 The allophone [ɪ] is also found, in geamhradh (469) [ɡəvərɪx], samhradh (736) [səvərɪx].
201 Headword is bliadhna.
202 Headword is combach.
[ə] (rounded) is found in one version of bliadhna (111) [bliûiûnə] (110 has [bliûiûn̪ɻ]), mo nead (655) [mən̪d̥] and soitheach (792) [ʂɨh̪ax]. It is difficult to see any obvious phonological reason for the rounding in these three examples, unless it reflects some degree of vowel harmonisation involving the underlying vowel [ō] in mo, and the preceding [y̬] in soitheach.

[ə̫] is technically a phonetic symbol in its own right, representing a rhotacised form of [ə], or alternatively, a vocalised form of [r]. It is found in tighearna (845) [tʰiʔənə], and superscript in alternative versions of ceart (174) [kʰaʰʃd̥] and feart (411) [feʰʃtʃ], in similar circumstances to superscript [ɹ] (see p. 199).

As discussed in the introductory section (p. 58), the following modified forms of [i] are also to be seen as falling within the /ə/ phoneme: ĭ ĭ ĭ ĭ. These are all retracted or centralised forms of [i]: raised and lowered forms of [i], on the other hand, are variants within the /i/ phoneme. For the reasons stated there, [i] (centralised) functions as an allophone of /ə/ in a palatalised environment, and is the usual realisation of orthographic final -e in words of more than one syllable.

[ɪ] also occurs before [ɣ] in some infinitive or conditional endings, following a palatalised consonant: bhuaileadh (132) [vũĩl̪ɪ̯], faiceadh (384) [fɛçɡ̥ɪ̯], and (more surprisingly) following a non-palatalised consonant in bualadh (133) [bũũl̪ɪ̯], which is no doubt influenced by bhuaileadh. [ɪ̯] is also found in geamhradh (469) [ɡ'ɛviɾɪ̯], samhradh (736) [sɛviɾɪ̯], and in the proper name Murchadh (641) [murəxɪ̯]; Donnchadh (330, 331), on the other hand, is transcribed [dɔn̪'əxəɣ : ɗon̪'əxəɣ]. The transcription [əɣ] is in fact the most frequent representation of the ending -adh/-eadh, irrespective of whether the preceding consonant is palatalised or not. It is difficult to find any criteria governing the use of

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203 Headword is dà nead. The glottalisation of [d] suggests the example was used in sandhi, with a following vowel.

204 In these two examples, the forms actually listed are [kʰaʃd̥], [feʃtʃ], with footnotes suggesting ‘perhaps [kʰaʰʃd̥] / [feʰʃtʃ]’. Headword 175 gives the form [kʰaʃd̥].

205 Headword is faic: faiceadh.

206 Headword is ith: ithe.
one or other form in such cases; it appears that in practice, [ɪɣ : əɣ] are used interchangeably.

On these grounds, it appears that [ɪ] occurs regularly as an allophone of /ə/ in a palatalised environment, but may also occur as a variant of /ə/ in other contexts, notably before final [ɣ].

[i] (retracted) is found in the plural ending -ean in bailtean (67) [β̥a'ʃt'ʃən], càirdean (152) [k̥a'ʃd'ʃən], coilltean (226) [k̥i'ʃd'ʃən], leabhraichean (569) [λο ɾirən]. It is also found for orthographic final -e in the comparative forms na’s buidhre (115) [nas β̥uɾi], na’s doirche (333) [nas d̥uriçi], also in oidhche (670) [yiɾi], slige (774) [s̥iɾi], uisge (888, 889, 890) [uʃ'ɾi]. It also occurs in the conditional form chuireadh tu (282) [xɾiɾu], where final [ɣ] is not sounded before a following consonant. [i] is also found as the epenthetic vowel in aimsir (13, 14) [ɛɾiɾi], fairrge (388) [fariɾi], iomradh (527) [imri], and in a superscript form in labhraidh (538) [l̥a'ɾiɾi]. The last two examples are in non-palatalised contexts. Because it appears to be interchangeable with [i], and no criteria for distinguishing the two can be deduced, [i] is best seen as a variant of the allophone [ɪ].

The remaining forms of [ɪ] may be briefly summarised:

[i] (raised and retracted) is found only in goile (493) [ɡ'vɾi].

[i] (lowered and centralised) is found in one version of coire (cauldron) (237) [kɔɾi] (235, 236 have [kɔɾi : koɾi]), and in one version of nàire (644) [nɛɾi] (645 has mo nàire [mɔ nɛɾi]; 648 has [nɛɾi : mɔ nɛɾi]). It is also found as the epenthetic vowel in geamhradh (469) [ɡ'evɾi], samhradh (736) [sevɾi]. All these examples show it preceding or following [ɾ].

Finally, [ɪ] (centralised and rounded) is found only in faobhar (396) [fɾ$vɾɾ].

All these occurrences may be regarded as variants of the allophone [ɪ].
Finally, in addition to [ə] and [ɪ], forms of [ɤ] are also to be classified as falling within the /ə/ phoneme (p. 55). Such forms are rare, and none can be regarded as an allophone.

[ɤ̣] (raised and retracted) is found only once, in unstressed position following glottalisation in iongantach (528) [iʔɪnˈdəx].

[ɤ̞] (raised and centralised) is found superscript in crioch (257) [kriˑɤ̞x], and in diphthongs.

[ɤ̞] (retracted), [ɤ̞] (centralised) and [ɤ̞] (raised, centralised and rounded) are found only in diphthongs.

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /ə/ occurs only short, and only in unstressed position. Its articulation may vary within the range [ə ə ə̜], and in rare instances may appear as [ə̫ ɤ̣ ɤ̞].

It has the allophone [ɪ] in a palatalised environment. The actual realisation of this allophone may vary within the range [ɪ ɪ ɪ ʃ ɪ], although only the forms [ɪ] and [ɪ] are common.

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207 Headword is iongnadh.
The system of vowel phonemes and their allophones, as they occur in the Colonsay dialect, may be schematically represented as follows:

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Solid lines indicate phoneme boundaries; dotted lines indicate allophone boundaries. Base forms of phonemes are shown large and bold; base forms of allophones are shown bold. Other symbols in boxes are attested variants of the phoneme or allophone concerned.
The front rounded vowels, constituting the /ʏ/ phoneme, have been deliberately shown lower in the table than their phonetic articulation would require, in order to accommodate retracted and centralised forms of [i] within the /ə/ phoneme, which is shown higher. For similar reasons, forms of [ɣ] have been placed higher, to bring them within the /ə/ phoneme.

Forms of [uu] are included because they appear in the SGDS results, but these have been re-analysed as equivalent to [y] (p. 54).

The following symbols are found in *stressed* syllables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i</th>
<th>[ʊʊ ʊ]</th>
<th>ū</th>
<th>u</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ī</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ē</td>
<td>ŭ  ŭ</td>
<td>ū</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ē</td>
<td>ŭ  ŭ</td>
<td>ū</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɛ</td>
<td>ŭ  ŭ</td>
<td>ū</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɛ</td>
<td>ŭ  ŭ</td>
<td>ū</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɛ</td>
<td>ŭ  ŭ</td>
<td>ū</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>ŭ  ŭ</td>
<td>ū</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɛ</td>
<td>ŭ  ŭ</td>
<td>ū</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>ŭ  ŭ</td>
<td>ū</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ē</td>
<td>ŭ  ŭ</td>
<td>ū</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>ŭ  ŭ</td>
<td>ū</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ē</td>
<td>ŭ  ŭ</td>
<td>ū</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>ā</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following symbols are found in *unstressed* syllables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>[ɯ ɯ̭]</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>[ɯ ɯ]</td>
<td>u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɯ</td>
<td>ɯ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɪ</td>
<td>ɪ̜</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʊ</td>
<td>ʊ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɤ</td>
<td>ɤ̜̇</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɔ</td>
<td>ɔ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʌ</td>
<td>ʌ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɐ</td>
<td>ɐ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any symbols not included in either of these two tables occur only in diphthongs or are shown superscript.
STOP PHONEMES

Lenis stops

\( b \)

This is an unvoiced, lenis, bilabial stop. It normally corresponds to orthographic \( b \).

In the SGDS results for Colonsay, the symbol \( [b] \) is used to represent this sound in initial, medial and final position: \( baile \) (65, 66) \([\text{b}a\prime \text{i}']\), \( iobairt \) (522) \([\text{i}’\text{b}a\text{s}’\text{t}'\text{s}']\), \( gob \) (485, 486) \([\text{g}o\text{b}]\).

As already noted, there is in Colonsay Gaelic no sign of palatalisation or j-glide following /bl/, as occurs in other Scottish Gaelic dialects (and in Irish): \( Bealtuinn \) (86, 87) \([\text{b}e\text{al}\text{t’j}’\text{m}’\text{d}’\text{h}’\text{n}]\), \( beamntan \) (91) \([\text{b}e\text{am\’n’d}’\text{n}]\), \( bead’ \) (95, 96) \([\text{b}e\text{d’j}’\text{m}]\) (cf. Islay\(^{208}\) \([\text{b}\text{al’j}’\text{m}’: \text{b}\text{en’d’\’n}’: \text{b}’\text{o}]\)). In this respect, Colonsay seems to go further than most other dialects in avoiding all trace of palatalisation in the case of labials. When asked about the differences between Colonsay and Islay Gaelic, Colonsay speakers will often cite the word \( bealach \) as a shibboleth (\([\text{b}e\text{’l’\’x}]\) in Colonsay, \([\text{b}\text{ja’l’\’x}]\) in Islay).

This phoneme is followed by a sonorant in the initial combinations \([\text{b}’\text{l’\’r}]\): \( na’ s \) \( blàithe \) (108) \([\text{n}’\text{a’s}\text{b}’\text{l’a’\’c}’\text{i}]\),\(^{209}\) \( bliadhna \) (110, 111) \([\text{b}’\text{l’i’\’n’\’c}’\text{]}\), \( bradan \) (120) \([\text{b}’\text{r’d’\’n}]\).

The orthographic combination \( sp \) is shown in the SGDS as \([s\text{b}]\): \( speal \) (793) \([s\text{b}e’\text{l’}]\), \( spéis \) (794) \([s\text{b’e’f}]\), \( spion \) (795) \([s\text{b’i’n}]\). The SGDS examples all show this combination in initial position, but the same phonetic rendering is also found in other positions, e.g. in \( cuspair \) \([\text{kus}’\text{b’ir}]\). The stop in these instances is \( lenis \), and is articulated without post-aspiration. Phonemically, therefore, this combination should be analysed as \( /sb/ \), although it could also be claimed that the lenis/fortis opposition is neutralised in this environment.

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\(^{208}\) Point 55 (Bowmore).

\(^{209}\) Headword is \( blàth: \) \( na’s \) \( blàithe \). The spelling \( na’s \), as used in the SGDS, has been retained here.
When it occurs intervocically following a stressed short vowel, [ʰ] is glottalised. In SGDS transcription, this is shown as [ʰ]: leabaidh (565, 566) [ˈleʰə], riobag (703) [ˈriʰəɡ]. Because of the regularity with which this occurs, it may be regarded as an allophone of the /b/ phoneme in this phonetic environment. Glottalisation as it occurs more widely in this dialect will be considered under Non-segmental features (pp. 255-261).

The voiced form [b] is shown in only four words in the SGDS results: for orthographic b in combanach (240) [ˈkɔɾməˈbɒnax], trombaid (873) [ˈtɾɔmˈbaʃ]; and for orthographic p in iompaiddh (526) [ˈi̯̊mˈɒpɔg], teampull (834, 835) [tʰəmˈbɒl̥]. In all cases this occurs following a long [mˑ]. This is discussed under Word-internal voicing (pp. 287-288). Voiced [b] may be regarded in this context as an allophone of either /b/ or /p/, occurring only after a homorganic nasal.212

Voicing of an otherwise devoiced stop is also found following a nasal in initial position, as a result of the nasal mutation. As argued in the introductory section, it is preferable to regard the voicing in this instance as a non-segmental feature rather than an allophone (see pp. 284-286).

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /b/ is normally articulated as [ʰ].

It has the following allophones:

[ʰ] when it occurs intervocically following a stressed short vowel;

[b] when it occurs after the homorganic nasal [m].

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210 Headword is rib (ensnare).
211 Headword is combach. The juxtaposition of long vowel [ɔ] and lengthened sonorant [mˑ] is unique to this example, and may be a mistake in transcription.
212 Etymologically, three of the four entries in the SGDS results derive from English p: companion, trumpet, temple (all derived ultimately from Old French). The synchronic forms have, however, been thoroughly assimilated to the Gaelic phonetic system.
This is an unvoiced, lenis, dental stop. It normally corresponds to orthographic d, although in some few cases (see below) it is represented orthographically as t. As in other varieties of Scottish Gaelic, the articulation is clearly dental, with the tongue touching the upper teeth, rather than the alveolar ridge as in English.

In the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, the symbol [d] is used to represent this sound in initial, medial and final position: *dubh* (354, 355) [ðu], *bruadar* (24) [bɾuˈiðɾ],213 *nead* (653-654) [neð].

In the unlenited form of the pronoun tu, following inflected forms of the verb *cuir*, we find *cuiridh tu* (279) [kɔˈriðu], *chuireas tu* (280) [xoˈɾis du], *chuireadh tu* (282) [xoˈɾi du], with [d] for orthographic initial t. Although these are the only examples of such inflected forms in the *SGDS*, the same pattern applies to the corresponding forms of other verbs. On the strength of this, tu should be analysed phonemically as /du/ rather than /tu/.

The orthographic combinations *sd, st* are shown as [sd] in all positions: ’s dòcha (322) [s̪d̪ɔxə],214 *staid* (802) [s̪daʃ], *Alasdair* (29) [aˈl̪əsd̪ɾ], *fasdadh* (400) [fasdəɣ], *Ìosa Criosd* (531) [i̞sə kɾi sd̪].215 There is no example with non-palatalised final -st in the *SGDS* results, but *fhathast* [haʔasd̪] illustrates the point. This combination should therefore be analysed phonemically as /sd/ in all cases.

When it occurs intervocally following a stressed short vowel, [d] is shown with glottalisation, as [d̥]: *cladach* (192) [kl̪̯aɗaʃ], *radan* (690) [ɾaɗən]. As has already been shown in the case of /b/, the glottalised form may be regarded as an allophone of /d/ in this phonetic environment.

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213 Headword is *aisling*.
214 Headword is *dòcha*.
215 Headword is *Ìosa*. 

As in the case of /b/, the voiced form [d] is found word-internally following a homorganic nasal, as seen in the words *tionndadh* (847) [tˈʃ̪ənˈd̪aɡ], *sunndach* (817) [sʊnˈdɔx]. Voiced [d] also appears as an allophone of the /t/ phoneme in the same phonetic environment: *aontachadh* (51) [yˈʃ̪ənˈdɔɻɡ], *beanntan* (91) [b̥ɛ̃ʊnˈdɔɻɡ], *iongantach* (528) [iʔɤ̜nˈdɔx], etc. This is discussed fully under *Word-internal voicing* (see p. 287-288). The voiced form [d] is therefore to be regarded (where appropriate) as an allophone of either the /d/ or the /t/ phoneme, following a homorganic nasal. Only the spelling (or in some cases the etymology) will enable the underlying phoneme to be identified from the synchronic surface form.

As in the case of /b/, voicing of an otherwise devoiced stop is also found following a nasal in initial position, as a result of the nasal mutation (see pp. 284-286).

In the *SGDS* results, [d] is also consistently shown as voiced in the possessive pronoun *do*: *do ghobhar* (489) [dɔ̞ɡ̊oʔʊɹ], *do làmh* (551) [dɔ̞ɻˈɛɣ], *do nighean* (665) [dɔ̞ niʔi̊n̥]. By contrast, the verbal particle *do* is shown with devoicing in *cha do leum* (576) [xa də lˈɛɳ]. To avoid having to make a phonemic distinction between /d/ and */d̥/, the apparent difference in treatment (which may not always be maintained in practice) must be interpreted as a variation, without phonological significance.

A further complication is that in words involving the initial orthographic combinations *dl-, dr-,* we find variation between unvoiced and voiced forms: thus we have *dleasdanas* (314) [dɭˈʃ̪ənˈdɔsə], *dlùth* (317) [dɭˈʃ̪əuˈθ̪], but also *dligheach* (315) [dɭɨʔəx : dɭɨʔəx];\(^{216}\) *dreas* (347) [ʃ̪ərɛ],\(^{217}\) *droch* (348) [ʃ̪əɾɤʃ], but also *drochaid* (350) [ʃ̪əɾɤʃəd̪]. Confusion also arises with the word *damh*, where we find the forms [dɛv] (293), [dɛɣ] (294), and [dɛɣ] (295), while the plural/gen. sg. form is shown as *daimh* (296) [dɛɪv]. This suggests that before a sonorant, the opposition between [d] and [d] is neutralised.

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\(^{216}\) Headword is *dlighe*. Note the insertion of superscript \( ^{1} \) in the *dl-* examples, indicating ‘lateral plosion’.

\(^{217}\) Headword is *dreim / dreas*. 

133
**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /d/ is normally articulated as [d].

It has the following allophones:

-[d̥] when it occurs intervocally following a stressed short vowel;

-[d] when it occurs after a homorganic nasal.

It has the variant [d] ~ [d̥] when it occurs before a sonorant.
This is an unvoiced, lenis, velar stop. It normally corresponds to orthographic \( g \).

In the SGDS results for Colonsay, the symbol [\( \tilde{g} \)] is used to represent this sound in initial, medial and final position: \( \text{gaoth} \) (460) [\( \tilde{g}ˈ\gamma \)], \( \text{fàgail} \) (380) [\( \tilde{g}ˈ\gamma\tilde{a} \)], \( \text{beag} \) (84) [\( \tilde{b}ˈ\gamma \)].

The initial orthographic sequence \( gl- \) may represent either [\( \tilde{g}lˈ \)] or [\( \tilde{g}l\tilde{a} \)], depending on the quality of the following vowel: \( \text{glòir} \) (480) [\( \tilde{g}lˈ\gamma\tilde{a} \)], \( \text{glùn} \) (482) [\( \tilde{g}lˈ\gamma\tilde{a} \)].

218 Headword is \( \text{glùn} \): \( \text{glùin} \) (dat.sg.). The dative singular is not in common use in Colonsay Gaelic.

219 Headword is \( \text{glé} \).

220 A footnote indicates that this word is rarely used in Colonsay.

The orthographic combination \( sg- \) is transcribed as [\( sg\)] when it occurs in a non-palatalised environment: \( \text{sgaoil} \) (759) [\( s\tilde{g}ˈ\gamma\tilde{a} \)], \( \text{sgiobhadh} \) (764) [\( s\tilde{g}ˈ\gamma\tilde{a} \)], \( \text{iasgach} \) (510) [\( i\tilde{g}ˈ\tilde{a}\tilde{c} \)], \( \text{rùsgadh} \) (725) [\( r\tilde{u}ˈ\tilde{a} \)]. Rather surprisingly, there are no recorded instances of final unpalatalised [\( sg\)] in the SGDS results for Colonsay, although words such as \( \text{iasg} \) [\( i\tilde{g}ˈ\tilde{a}\tilde{c} \]], \( \text{a-measg} \) [\( e\tilde{a}\tilde{c}\tilde{a} \)] are commonplace. It is worth noting that the name of the island’s principal settlement, \( \text{Scalasaig} \) [\( s\tilde{g}ˈ\tilde{a}\tilde{c}ˈ\gamma \)], is normally spelt with initial \( sc- \) rather than \( sg- \).

When it occurs intervocally following a stressed short vowel, [\( g\)] is accompanied by glottalisation, written [\( \tilde{g}\)] in the SGDS transcription: \( \text{cogadh} \) (218) [\( \tilde{ko}ˈ\gamma\tilde{a} \)], \( \text{lagan} \) (544) [\( \tilde{l}ˈ\tilde{a}\tilde{c}\tilde{a} \)]. As has already been shown in relation to other lenis stops, this may be
regarded as an allophone of the /ɡ/ phoneme in this phonetic environment. In the case of teanga (836) [ˈtɛŋə], [ɡ] represents orthographic ng, with no trace of [n] or [ŋ] (cf. ceangail (162) [kɛʔəl̠], where even the [ɡ] is absent).\textsuperscript{221} Glottalisation is also indicated by the SGDS in the word easglais (368, 369) [əgl̠ˈɪʃ], although it is not clear why this should be the case.\textsuperscript{222}

The voiced form [ɡ] occurs only twice in the Colonsay data set, in both cases corresponding to orthographic g:

It is found in one version of gainmheach (449) [ɡɛɲax]. This is an isolated occurrence in initial position; as such, it may simply be an error in transcription, or there may have been some feature in the preceding context (e.g. a nasalising particle) which led the informant to voice the initial consonant. In any case, the following entry (450) shows [ɡ̥ɛɲax], with devoiced [ɡ].

The other occurrence is in pongail (683) [poŋˑɡal̠′],\textsuperscript{223} where it follows a (lengthened) homorganic nasal consonant. This seems to follow the same pattern as has already been observed in the case of /b/ and /d/, although this is the only example involving /ɡ/ in the SGDS results. The preceding consonant, of course, is only homorganic (as an allophone of /ŋv/) by assimilation with the following [ɡ], producing a somewhat circular relationship.\textsuperscript{224} The circularity is avoided if it is accepted that the assimilation of /n/ or /ŋv/ to [ŋ] before a velar stop (of any kind) is phonologically prior to the voicing of /ɡ/ following a homorganic nasal.

The words fang (394) [fɛŋˈɡ] and long (585) [lˈon̥ˈɡ] are shown with devoiced [ɡ] in a similar context, but this is almost certainly due to final devoicing; they should be written phonemically as /fɛn̥ɡ : lˈonːɡ/.

Voicing of an otherwise devoiced stop is also found initially as a result of the nasal mutation. For the reasons previously stated, it is preferable to regard the voicing in this instance as a non-segmental feature rather than an allophone (see pp. 284-286).

\textsuperscript{221} In the SGDS results this transcription is preceded by the symbol ‘=’ (equivalent to sic), to indicate that it is considered surprising (Vol. I: 107).
\textsuperscript{222} William Gillies suggests there may be an unconscious association with the word eagal ‘fear’.
\textsuperscript{223} Headword is puncail. The meaning in Colonsay is ‘neat, tidy’.
\textsuperscript{224} [ŋ] is defined as an allophone of /n/ or /ŋv/ when it occurs before /ɡ/ (pp. 187, 194).
**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /ɡ/ is normally articulated as [ɡ].

It has the following allophones:

[ɡ̥] when it occurs intervocally following a stressed short vowel;

[ɡ] when it occurs after a homorganic nasal.
Fortis stops

$p$

This is an unvoiced, fortis, bilabial stop. It normally corresponds to orthographic $p$, and like the other fortis stops, is generally accompanied by distinctive patterns of aspiration: post-aspiration in initial position and preaspiration elsewhere.\textsuperscript{225}

In the \textit{SGDS} results, the symbol [p] is used in initial position to represent this sound in just eight words: \textit{paca} (676) [paxɣə],\textsuperscript{226} \textit{paiseanadh} (677) [paʃənɣəj], \textit{pàp} (678) [pa p],\textsuperscript{227} \textit{piuthar} (679) [piʔor] and its plural \textit{peathraichean} (680) [pɛɾiɾiŋɛʃ], \textit{pòca} (681) [põeχəɣə], \textit{pongail} (683) [pɔŋ γəɡ̥]\textsuperscript{228} and \textit{purgadair} (684) [puriɡəɾəɾ]. As previously noted (p. 63-64), this form of transcription implies, but does not explicitly indicate, post-aspiration: these words should be read as [pʰaxɣə : pʰaʃənɣəj], etc.\textsuperscript{229}

The transcription of \textit{piuthar} (679) as [piʔor] illustrates the fact that in Colonsay Gaelic, labial consonants are not normally palatalised, or followed by any form of j-glide. In other dialects, this word is pronounced quite differently (cf. Islay [piuʔur], Barra [puɾəɾ]).\textsuperscript{230} There are no instances in the \textit{SGDS} results involving the initial combinations [pl`], [pl`] or [pr], although these certainly occur, in words such as \textit{plaosg} [pl`əɾsq], \textit{plèan} [pl`eɾn], \textit{preas} [prɛs].

There are, in addition, two words in the Colonsay data set where [p] is used in final position. These are the English loan-word \textit{lamp} (556,557) [lɛɾm̥ p : lɛɾmp],\textsuperscript{231} where preaspiration is evident in the devoicing of [m] (see below); and \textit{pàp} (678) [pa p], which originally is a Latin borrowing, although it is not perceived as such by present-day speakers. Since both are loan-words, perhaps not too much attention should be paid to any apparent inconsistencies. The word \textit{papa}, which is commonly used in Scotland to mean ‘grandfather’, is pronounced [paʔa] by Colonsay speakers.

\textsuperscript{225} Preaspiration as a phonological process is examined elsewhere (p. 277-280); here we are concerned only with its phonemic interpretation.
\textsuperscript{226} Headword is \textit{pac}.
\textsuperscript{227} Headword is \textit{pàpa}.
\textsuperscript{228} Headword is \textit{puncail}.
\textsuperscript{229} \textit{SGDS}, Vol. I, 134.
\textsuperscript{230} Points 55 (Bowmore), 29-30 (Castlebay).
\textsuperscript{231} Headword is \textit{lampa}.
Otherwise, in the SGDS results, orthographic p in non-initial position usually corresponds to [b̥] in phonetic transcription. The examples given in the SGDS results all follow a stressed short vowel: copan (290) [kɔʰbən], tapaidh (830) [tahbi]; siop (139) [ʃɔhbi]. Following [i], the preaspiration takes the form [çb̥]: cipean (188) [kʼiçbən], suipeir (815) [siçbəɾ]. In the combination rp there is no [h] in the transcription, but the [r] is shown as devoiced, producing a similar acoustic impression: corp (243) [kɔɾb̥], oidheirp (671) [ʔɪɾb̥]. The regularity with which these variations occur implies that they are allophones of the /p/ phoneme.

An interesting case is leabaidh (565, 566) where the form generally used in Scottish Gaelic derives from an original dative; here, the Colonsay version retains the original nominative form leaba [ʎɛbə] in the singular, with glottalisation, while the plural form leabaidhean (567) [ʎɛbənən], with preaspiration, is best spelt as leapannan. This clearly indicates a phonemic difference between singular and plural: /ʎɛbə/ versus /ʎɛpənən/.

There are no examples of [p] following a long vowel in the SGDS results. Results using the words pàipear and rùp (both English/Scots loanwords) proved inconclusive, although some degree of preaspiration was sometimes heard.

The post-aspirated combination [b̥h] is not exemplified in the SGDS results, but is recorded in Hamp’s field notes as the form resulting from the nasal mutation: am poll [m b̥lɔʊ] (LSS: 36).

As discussed above under b, [b] appears as the voiced form of /p/ in word-internal position, following the homorganic nasal [m]: iompachadh (526) [im ɓɔxay], teampil (834, 835). Although these are the only two examples in the SGDS results, this fits the pattern of other stops in this phonetic environment, and may therefore be regarded as allophonic.

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232 The rounding of [h] is due to lip-rounding for [o], followed by the bilabial stop.
233 Headword is bùth. Siop, which is more commonly used, is readily acknowledged to be an English borrowing, but still shows preaspiration, as evidence of its having been ‘naturalised’ in Gaelic (see p. 361).
234 Headword is leabaidh: leabaidhean.
Phonemic definition

The phoneme /p/ has the following allophones:

[pʰ] when it occurs alone in word-initial position

[hb̥] following a stressed short vowel, except [i]

[çb̥] following [i]

[b] following the homorganic nasal [m]

The combination /r/ + /p/ is realised as [ɾb̥].
This is an unvoiced, fortis, dental stop. Like /d/ it has a distinctly dental articulation, unlike the alveolar articulation in English. It normally corresponds to orthographic t, and like other fortis stops is generally accompanied by distinctive patterns of aspiration: post-aspiration in initial position and preaspiration elsewhere.

In the SGDS results, the symbol [t] is systematically used, in initial position, to represent this phoneme in around 40 headwords in the SGDS data set. These include taigh (820, 821) [tvi̯̥], tobar (851, 852) [to̞ɾ̥], tuiteam (874) [tu̞ʃd’z’m̥]. It should be borne in mind that [t] in this instance represents the articulation [tʰ], for the reasons explained above in relation to /p/.

No fewer than 13 of these instances involve the initial combination [tr] (861-873): trom (871) [trɔ̞mˑ], tric (868) [triç’ɡ̥’], etc. Post-aspiration is not really present in these cases, the tongue moving immediately from dental closure into alveolar trill; nevertheless, the fortis/lenis distinction is evident in minimal (or near-minimal) pairs such as treas/dreas (347) [tres : ɡ̥res] or truime/druim (351) [tr̥i̯̥ ̂mi : ɡ̥i̯̥m̥]. This reinforces the point that fortis and lenis articulations are not differentiated solely by aspiration. Despite the absence of post-aspiration, therefore, this combination should be transcribed /tr/ rather than /dr/ in phonemic notation.

The initial combination tl is not well represented in the SGDS results; the only headword included in the questionnaire, tlīgeachd (849), elicited a nil response from the Colonsay informant. The words tlachd and tlachdmhor are known, although not regularly used; here too there is no audible post-aspiration, the stop in this instance being released laterally: [tl’ax̣̥̆ɡ̥]. A true minimal pair cannot be found, but again there is a clear difference in articulation between tlachd and dlùth, dleasdanas. The phonemic transcription therefore has to be /tlˠ/, reflecting the fortis/lenis distinction, despite the absence of post-aspiration.

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In non-initial position, following a short, stressed vowel, this phoneme generally appears with preaspiration, as [h]: *brat* (273) [brah], *slat* (768, 769) [sˈlˈah], *Cille Chatan* [kˈiːʃiˈxahd̥aŋ]. There are no instances in the SGDS results of unpalatalised *t* following [i]. Examples obtained involving *dhiot* tended to be phrasally unstressed, and therefore inconclusive, but such evidence as was obtained suggested the articulation [i̯i̯d̥], rather than *[i̯i̯çd̥]. Preaspiration with [ç] is also found with palatalised orthographic *t* (see under *dj/*f*).

In one single instance, the word *cat* (158, 159) [kˈyɸd̥], preaspiration is indicated using the bilabial fricative [ɸ]. The same symbol is found before [tʃ] in the pl./gen. sg. form *cait* (160) [kˈyʃtʃ], and before [dʒ] in *tuiteam* (874) [tuˈʃe̞d̥ə̣m̥]. It seems, on this slender evidence, to occur following a rounded vowel, pre-aspirating a dental stop; [ɸ], after all, is merely a rounded form of [h], often heard as the *wh* sound in English which, while.

Following a lateral, preaspiration takes the form of devoicing of the preceding consonant: *allt* (32) [(aɔi]ˈd], *falt* (392) [fa]ˈd], *reult* (712) [ra]ˈd]. With /rl/, the preceding consonant is modified to become [š]: *mart* [mesˈd]. This will be further studied in relation to the /rl/ phoneme.

In the forms *cuartachaidh* (268) [kˈuʌʃˈðaxiç] and *chuartachadh* (269) [xˈuʌʃˈðaxaːɣ], [d] is shown with a dot below [d] to indicate retroflex pronunciation, following the retroflex [ʃ]. The modified form [d] is not found anywhere else in the Colonsay results.

Following a long vowel, preaspiration is less marked, though still audible; the SGDS ignores this, transcribing *bàta* (81, 82) as [ˈbaˈdə], although [ˈbaˈbədə] would be a more accurate rendering.

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236 Headword is *cuibhrig*.
237 The Colonsay placename anglicised as *Kilchattan*.
238 In the case of *allt* and *falt*, alternative transcriptions are given: [(aɔi]ˈt] (30, 31), [fa]ˈt] (392). The word *falt* is not commonly used in Colonsay (see p. 355).
239 Headword is *rionnag*.
240 Headword is *bó*, which is the more commonly used word for ‘cow’ in Colonsay.
241 Headwords are *cuairtich: cuairtichidh*; *cuairtich*: *chuairticheadh* respectively.
The post-aspirated combination [dh] occurs only once in the Colonsay results, following the definite article in the phrase an t-uisge (890) [ən ðuʃəɡ'ɪ]. This is an example of the nasal mutation (see pp. 284-286).

The voiced form [d] is found word-internally following the homorganic nasal [n̥̈] in aontachadh (51) [ənˈðəxə], beanntan (91) [bənˈdən], contraigh (242) [kənˈdrəç], cumntas (289) [kuˈn̥dəs], iongantach (528) [iənˈdəx]. This is discussed under Word-internal voicing (pp. 287-288). Voicing does not occur after ‘plain’ [n] in ciontach (187) [kˈʃəntəx], fantail (412) [fəntæl']. In this respect, reusanta (700) [ɾiˈxəndə] appears to be an exception.

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /t/ has the following allophones:

[tʰ] when it occurs alone in word-initial position

[h d̥] following a stressed short vowel, except when rounded

[ɸ d̥] following a rounded stressed short vowel

[t d̥] following a long vowel

[d] following the homorganic nasal [n̥̈] (but not following [n])

The combination [ɾ] + /t/ is realised as [ɾ d̥].

For the combination /t/ + /t/, see under r.

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242 Headword is cionta.
243 Headword is feith: feitheamh.
This is an unvoiced, fortis, velar stop, and corresponds to orthographic \( c \). In the SGDS results, the symbol \([k]\) is systematically used to represent this sound. It should be borne in mind that \([k]\) in this instance represents the articulation \([kʰ]\), for the reasons explained above in relation to /pʰ/.

The symbol \([k]\) occurs in initial position in a very large number of words in the Colonsay data set, including: *cailleach* (141) \([ka’ʃax]\), *caorann* (150) \([kɨ’ɾan’]\), *cogadh* (218) \([kʊ̆ʃy]\), *cù* (265) \([ku’]\), *cuirdh* (277, 278) \([ku’ɾiʃ’]\).

It is also found in the initial combination \([kl’]\), or less commonly \([kl’]\): *cladach* (192) \([kl’aʃax]\), *cluas* (205) \([kl’ʊiʃs]\); *cliabh* (199, 200) \([kl’iɪɨy]\), *cliù* (201) \([kl’iʊt]\); as well as the initial combination \([kr]\), which may represent orthographic *cr* or *cn*: *craobh* (247) \([krvɨy]\), *cridhe* (255, 256) \([kriʔi]\); *cnàimh* (209, 210) \([krɛiɨy]\), *cnoc* (213, 214) \([krɔx]\). As in the case of other fortis stops, the \([k]\) element is not post-aspirated in such combinations. True minimal pairs are hard to find, but there is clearly a difference in articulation between the onset of words such as *cluas* (205) \([kl’ʊiʃs]\) and *glùn* (482) \([gɬ’u’ɲ]\), or *cnoc* (213-215) \([krɔx]\) and *gnothach* (484) \([gɾɔʔɔx]\).

In non-initial position following a stressed vowel, this phoneme generally appears with preaspiration, realised as \([xɬ]\): *socair* (788) \([sɔxqɨɾ]\); *cnoc* (213-215) \([krɔx]\), *muc* (633, 634) \([muxɬ]\). In the case of /k/ this form of preaspiration is also found following a long vowel, in *pdca* (681) \([pɔxqə]\). This differs from the SGDS treatment of other fortis stops, although as previously noted (p. 142), some preaspiration of /t/ has been found to occur following a long vowel also.

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\(^{244}\) SGDS, Vol. I: 134.
In a very few cases, [g̥] corresponds to orthographic c following r or l. In all these instances, the preceding sonorant is shown as devoiced: cearc (171, 172) [kʼɛrg̥] (170 has [kʼerk]), torc (285) [tɔrg̥], adharc (7) [ɔʔvr̥q̥], olec (673, 674) [ɔ̞ʼg̥]. Such devoicing of the sonorant is an indicator of preaspiration, as has already been seen in the case of other fortis stops: corp (243) [kɔrb̥], falt (392) [faɬ̥d̥], etc. These words should therefore be interpreted phonemically as /kʼɛrk : tɔrk/, etc.247

The post-aspirated combination [g̥h] occurs only once in the Colonsay data set, in the compound preposition man cuairt (267) [maŋ qaʊiʂʼtʼʃʼ].248 As in the case of [b̥h] (see above), this illustrates the effect of the nasal mutation, which is discussed elsewhere (pp. 284-286).

There are no recorded instances of [k] occurring after a homorganic nasal in the Colonsay data set. The one potential contender, puncair (683), has the form pongail in this dialect, probably as a result of historical word-internal voicing.

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /k/ has has the following allophones:

[kʰ] when it occurs alone in word-initial position

[x̃g̊] following a short or long vowel.

The combinations /t/ + /k/, /l̥/ + /k/ are realised as [r̥g : ˈg̊] respectively.

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245 Headword is cullach: cullaich.
246 Headword is given as adhairc: adhaire, implying that the form sought is the gen. sg. adhaire. However, it would appear that the form offered is in fact adharc; adhairec would be pronounced [v̥̑vr̥q̥].
247 In the version given in the SGDS results, the progressive form ag amharc (36) [gɛr̥v̥q̥] also illustrates this feature. In fact this word is generally pronounced [gɛr̥axq̥] in Colonsay, with metathesis of a and r, producing a more ‘standard’ form of preaspiration. Cf. SGDS results for Islay (points 53-56).
248 Headword is cuairt.
Palatalised stops: lenis

\(d_3\)

This phoneme is included here because of its phonological function as the palatalised form of /\(d/\). Phonetically, it is an unvoiced, lenis, alveolar or post-alveolar affricate, a combination of [\(d\)] and [\(z\)] in which the stop element (which in this instance is realised as palato-alveolar, rather than dental) is released as a homorganic fricative, conveying the impression of a single sound. The voiced combination [\(d_3\)] is commonly used in IPA transcription for other languages, including English *judge* [\(d_3\)\(d_3\)], Italian *giorno* [\(d_3\)\(o\)\(n\)\(o\)].

The phonemic transcription /\(d_3/\) corresponds to orthographic *d* in contact with *i* or *e*, and also to orthographic *t* in certain circumstances. Like other lenis stops, such as /\(d/\), it is normally unvoiced.

By far the commonest representation in the *SGDS* results, both initially and medially, is the sequence [\(d'z'\)], which is found in initial and medial position: *deanadh* (302) [\(d'z'e\)\(n\)\(a\)\(v\)], *deoch* (307) [\(d'z'o\)\(x\)]; *làidir* (546) [\(l'a\)\(d'z't\)\(r\)], *saighdear* (730) [\(s\)\(i\)\(d'z'a\)\(r\)].

It should be noted that the symbol for a voiced postalveolar fricative [\(z\)] is used only in this combination in the Colonsay results; the fricative usually transcribed [\(z\)] does not occur independently in this dialect, or in Scottish Gaelic generally.\(^{249}\)

The transcription [\(d'z'\)] also occurs finally in *creid* (253) [\(kr'\)\(d'z'\)] and *théid* (688) [\(h'e\)\(d'z'\)]. Final palatalised *d* is, however, more frequently shown as [\(d'f\)]: *goid* (491) [\(g\)\(o\)\(d'f\)], *goirid* (495, 496) [\(g'\)\(o\)\(r\)\(d'f\)],\(^{250}\) showing the effect of final devoicing. The [\(d'f\)] sequence is only found in final position, and may be regarded as an allophone, with the variant [\(d'z'\)]. The example of *diallaid* (309) [\(d'z'i\)l'\(d'f\)] illustrates both sequences.

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\(^{249}\) The use of the symbol [\(z'\)], without devoicing, in this combination seems somewhat anomalous, but appears to indicate a lenis, rather than a voiced, fricative.

\(^{250}\) The glottalisation in *creid* and *goid* is presumably due to *sandhi* forms being given in the original utterance.
Intervocally, following a stressed short vowel, the [$d'z'$] sequence is glottalised: *creididh* (254) [kr̥d'z'ʃ], *maide* (593) [mɛd'z'ʃ], *idir* (513, 514) [i̯d'z'ʃ]. It thus behaves in the same way as other lenis stops in intervocalic position: glottalised [$d'z'$] may therefore likewise be regarded as an allophone of /dʒ/.

A number of *SGDS* entries show [$d'z'$] for orthographic *t*. In almost all cases this is best interpreted as an allophonic realisation of the /tʃ/ phoneme (see below), occurring in certain specific phonological environments (see under *tʃ*). However, in *aimhreit* (12) [ɛv̥ɾa[d'z']] and, arguably, *coilltean* (226) [k̥i̯i̯a[d'z'iŋ]], *sléibhtean* (773) [s̥eːyd'z'iŋ], there is no obvious phonological reason, and these words should be phonemically analysed as /ɛvrədʒ/, /kvi̯dʒən/, /s̥eːvdʒən/.

Past participles in -te also show this transcription: *fillte* (423) [fɪl̠ʹd̥'z'i], *saillte* (731, 732) [s̥i̯a[l̠d'z'ə]; note that in the case of *ceannaichte* (169) [k'ɛ̃'n̥i̯d'z'i], there is no [ç] preceding the [d'z’]. Given the absence of preaspiration (or devoicing of a sonorant) in this very limited sample, the evidence of the *SGDS* points to the phonemic interpretation being /dʒə/ rather than /tʃə/ in most cases. In the case of *briste* (123) [bɾi̯ʃiʃ], the preceding palatalised *s* results in the form [ʃiʃ] (see below under *tʃ*). It is worth bearing in mind that, in an unstressed context such as this, the difference in articulation between /dʒə/ and /tʃə/ is actually very slight.

In one instance only in the *SGDS* results, the voiced form [$d'z'$] is found for orthographic *d*: *an-dé* (41) [ɲd'z'ɛ']. The same form occurs in the parallel form *an-diugh* [ɲd'z'ʊ], which is not included in the *SGDS* results. This is clearly an effect of the nasal mutation (pp. 284-286). Other occurrences of [$d'z'$], corresponding to orthographic *t*, have been analysed as allophones of the /tʃ/ phoneme (see below).

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251 Headword is *coille*: *coilltean.*

252 Headword is *sliabh*: *sléibhtean.* Note the devoicing of [v] before a following devoiced lenis.
**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /dʒ/ is normally realised as [d'ʒ'], and has the following allophones:

- [d'ʃ'] when it occurs intervocally following a stressed short vowel;
- [d'ʃ'] ~ [d'z'] in final position.
\(g^j\)

This is an unvoiced, lenis, retro-palatal (or palatalised velar) stop. It normally corresponds to orthographic \(g\) in contact with \(i\) or \(e\).

In the SGDS results, the symbol [\(g^j\)] is used to represent this sound in initial, medial and final position in a number of words, including \(geal\) (464, 465) [\(g^j\’al\’\)], \(gil\) (472, 473) [\(g^j\’i\’\)], \(airgiod\) (21, 22) [\(arq^j\’d\)], \(c\ddot{\text{o}}\ddot{\text{i}}\) (219) [\(ko\ 9\’\]], \(th\ddot{\text{a}}\ddot{\text{m}}\ddot{\text{i}}\) (841) [\(he\’m9\’\)]. In Colonsay pronunciation, the sound heard is often closer to a devoiced form of the palatal stop [\(j\)] (similar to the English \(d\ in\ due\)), especially in final position.\(^{253}\)

Following the practice adopted with other lenis stops, the symbol \(/g^j/\) has been chosen to denote this phoneme.

There are no instances in the SGDS results where an initial combination involving orthographic \(g\) plus another consonant is shown with [\(g^j\)], even when the following vowel is ‘slender’. Where such combinations do occur, the first element is invariably [\(g\): \(gleann\) (477, 478) [\(g^j\l[\tilde{c}\tilde{o}\\text{n}\]), genitive \(glinne\) (479) [\(g^j\l[i\’\n]\]; \(g\ddot{\text{r}}\)ian (504, 505) [\(g^j\text{r}\ian\])].

However, [\(g^j\)] does occur before a palatalised consonant in medial position: \(laig\)se (543) [\(\Gamma\’\ddot{\text{g}}\’\ddot{i}\’\]), \(u\ddot{a}\ddot{g\ddot{\text{n}}\ddot{\text{e}}\ddot{\text{c}}\] (875) [\(u\ddot{a}q\’\ddot{\text{n}}\ddot{\text{a}}\x]\]; and also following a palatalised consonant (especially [\(j\)]) in medial or final position: \(u\ddot{\text{i}}\ddot{\text{g}}\)se (888-890) [\(\ddot{u}\ddot{\text{g}}\’\ddot{i}\)], \(d\ddot{\text{a}}\ddot{\text{isg}}\) (363) [\(\ddot{d}\ddot{u}\ddot{\text{g}}\’\ ’\)],\(^{254}\) \(lo\ddot{\text{isg}}\) (582) [\(\ddot{l}\ddot{e}\ddot{g}\’\’\]); \(fa\ddot{\text{i}}\ddot{\text{ng}}\) (395) [\(f\ddot{i}\ddot{e}\ddot{\text{i}}\’\’\’\’\’\]/].

On the other hand, the initial orthographic combination \(sg\)-, when followed by a ‘slender’ vowel, is pronounced [\(sq^j\)], without palatalisation of the [\(s\)] element. The only example given in the SGDS results is \(s\ddot{\text{g}}\)eul (760, 761) [\(sq\’e\’\’\’\)], but from my own observation, words such as \(sgi\ddot{\text{r}}\), \(sg\ddot{\text{i}}\), \(sg\ddot{\text{e}}\ddot{\text{i}}\), \(sg\ddot{\text{i}}\’\) are all pronounced with [\(sq^j\)] in Colonsay.

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\(^{253}\) This is particularly noticeable in the local pronunciation of the placenames \(Scalasaig\) [\(sg\l[\ddot{a}\ddot{s}\ddot{i}\’\)], and \(Uragaig\) [\(u\ddot{r}\ddot{g}\’\’\’\’\)], which are often mispronounced as [\(sk\ddot{a}\ddot{l}\ddot{a}\ddot{s}\ddot{a}\ddot{i}\)] and [\(j\ddot{u}\ddot{r}\ddot{a}\ddot{g}\ddot{e}\ddot{a}\ddot{g}\)] by non-natives.

\(^{254}\) A footnote indicates ‘sic [\(g^j\’\’\’\]’, presumably drawing attention to the ‘fronting’ of [\(g^j\’\)], referred to above (SGDS, Vol. I: 136).
Like [ɡ], [ɡ’] in intervocalic position following a stressed short vowel is accompanied by glottalisation, and written [ɡ’] in the SGDS transcription: ruigidh (723) [rʊ𝑔̥ˈtɕ], slige (774) [s̥ai̯g̥’i]. As with other lenis stops, this may be considered an allophone in this phonetic environment. Glottalisation is also indicated in cha tig (842) [xa ɗ’si̯’ɡ’]; here the context is clearly not intervocalic, but it may be that in the original utterance [ɡ’] was produced in sandhi, with a following vowel, e.g. cha tig e [xa ɗ’si̯’ɡ’a].

There are no recorded instances of voiced *[ɡ’] in the Colonsay data set, even following a homorganic nasal as in [fɛ̞ɲ̥ɡ̥’ɡ’], although it is likely that final devoicing would in any case occur in this example. In medial position, the SGDS results do not show any stop element at all in words such as aingeal (15) [ɛ’ɲa]’ and luinge (585) [l’u’ɲi]. However, my informant Flora Macneill, who lived near the head of Port na Luinge, on Oronsay, for most of her life, pronounced it [l’uɲɡ̥’ɪ].

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /ɡ/) may be realised as [ɟ] ~ [ɡ’] (consistently shown as [ɡ’] in the SGDS results).

It has the following allophone:

[ɡ’] when it occurs intervocally following a stressed short vowel.

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255 Headword is long. The form [l’u’ɲi] appears to have been offered spontaneously by the informant.
256 The same placename was rendered ‘phonetically’ as Port-na-lutcha by Frances Murray, in her account of holidays spent on Oronsay in the 1880s (see p. 24); this presumably reflects her perception of the sound as a palatal [ɟ] (devoiced) rather than palatalised velar [ɡ’] (Murray 1887: 23).
Palatalised stops: fortis

\[ tʃ \]

Like /dʒ/ this phoneme is included here because of its phonological function as the palatalised form of /t/. Phonetically, it is an unvoiced, fortis, alveolar or post-alveolar affricate, a combination of [t] and [ʃ] in which the stop element (again, realised as palato-alveolar, rather than dental) is released as a homorganic fricative, thus conveying the impression of a single sound. It normally corresponds to orthographic \( t \) in contact with \( i \) or \( e \).

In the SGDS results this sound is transcribed as \([tʃ]\) in initial position: teaghlach (832) [tʃʰˈlˈəχ], tinn (846) [tʃʰˈiɲ], tiugh (848) [tʃʰˈuŋ̥].

Like other fortis stops, when used medially or finally after a stressed short vowel, \( tʃt \) is accompanied by preaspiration, which takes a variety of forms. The form \([h´dʒ´]\) (or \([h´dʃ´]\) in final position) is not actually found at any point in the SGDS results, but is heard in words such as dathte [dahdʒ´tɪ], toit [tʊh´dʃ] and the personal name Ceit [kʰeʃt]. As has been seen in the case of other stops, preaspiration is realised as \([ç]\) when it occurs after \( i \), as in litir (578, 579) [liçdʒ´tɪr]; in ite (534) [ih´dʒ´tɪ], the symbol \([h´]\) is used, rather than \([ç]\), although the acoustic difference is not great, and \([h´]\) should probably be regarded as a variant of \([ç]\). Following a rounded vowel, the form encountered is the bilabial fricative \([ɸ]\): cait (160) [kʰʃt´f], tuiteam (874) [tuʃʃ´z´ən̥].

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257 The one headword where it might have been expected to occur, cleit: cleite (198), elicited a nil response from the Colonsay informant.

258 Headword is cat: cait.
Devoicing of a preceding sonorant, which has been observed as a form of preaspiration in relation to other fortis stops, does not seem to occur in the case of /tʃ/. In most instances, the SGDS uses the phonetic transcription [d'ʃ'] – indicating a lenis –where devoicing might be expected. The form bailtean (67) [baːltʃiə], with [ʈʃ], is attested, but otherwise we find coilltean (226) [kʰʃiəd'ʃiə], and the past participle forms fillte (423) [fiːʃtʃiə], saillte (731, 732) [saiʃtʃiə] (already discussed under dʒ). In none of these instances is there devoicing of the sonorant.

After a long vowel, the SGDS transcription once again ignores the lenis/fortis distinction, using the sequence [d'ʃ'] in àite (25, 26) [aːd'ʃiə], which as it happens is the only entry to exemplify this feature. Although not as distinct as in the case of /t/ and /k/ (see above), it appears that there is some degree of preaspiration present, so that the phonetic transcription would be better shown as [aːʰd'ʃiə], and the phonemic as /aːtʃə/.

The effect of the nasal mutation on initial /tʃ/ can be seen in the form seann té (747) [ʃiən d'ʃ'e], where the base form /tʃe:/ is given a lenis onset. In the placename Cinn Tire (166) [k'ʃiəd'ʃiəɾ], the sequence [d'ʃ'ɾ], with post-aspirated lenis, appears in sandhi following the homorganic nasal [ɾ]; this is in line with what has already been noted in the case of an t-uisge (890) [an dʰuʃiəɾ] (p. 143) and man cuairt (267) [maŋ ʃiəɾʃiɾʃiɾʃiɾ] (p. 145). The nasal mutation, as a morphophonemic process, is discussed elsewhere (pp. 284-286).

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259 Headword is baile: bailtean.
260 Headword is coille: coilltean.
261 ‘Lenited’ would be a good word to use here, but this term is used in Gaelic morphophonology to describe a different process altogether. The vowel [e] is shortened because, in this particular instance, it is not stressed.
262 Headword is ceann tire [sic]. This placename (Kintyre) is stressed on the second element: [k'ʃiə d'ʃ'ɾ] (p. o).
The sequence [d’z’] (voiced) is regularly found for orthographic t following the homorganic (palatalised) nasal [n]: *cinnteach* (184) [k’in d’z’əx],\(^{263}\) *cluinninn* (208) [kl’uin d’z’iŋ], *muinntir* (638) [miu’iŋ d’z’τr]. This shows the effect of word-internal voicing (see pp. 287-288). In this case, [d’z’] can be analysed as an allophone of /tʃ/ following the homorganic nasal [n].

The orthographic combination *st*, in a palatalised context, is transcribed as [ʃtʃ] in initial, medial and final position: *stìùir* (805) [ʃtʃuˑr], *briste* (123) [bɾiʃtʃi], *ceist* (179) [kɛʃtʃ]. Phonemically, it should be rendered as /ʃʃ/.

The orthographic combination *rt*, when palatalised, is transcribed as the retroflex sequence [ʂ’tʂ] in words such as *thubhairt* (1) [hʊʃtʂ’tʂ],\(^{264}\) *man cuairt* (267) [mæŋ ɡuʃtʂ’tʂ].\(^{265}\) The occurrence of [ʂ] as an allophone of /θ/ will be discussed under that phoneme (p. 200); what is of interest here is that the retroflex articulation is carried through into the following affricate. Variants do occur: in *lomairt* (584) [l’o’məʃtʃ]\(^{266}\) and *beairteach* (739) [bəʃtʃax],\(^{267}\) the [tʃ] element is shown without retroflexion, while in *labhairt* (539) [l’a’veʃtʃəx]\(^{268}\) there appears to be no final palatalisation – although this may simply be a transcription error. In the case of *sagart* (727) [saʃəʃtʃ], the form recorded appears to be the gen. sg. form *sagairt*.

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\(^{263}\) Headword (185) has the unvoiced variant form [k’iŋ ɡ’z’əx], which appears to be an exception, along with *bainntreach* (77) [bəŋtɬ’rəax].

\(^{264}\) Headword is *abair*: *thubhairt*.

\(^{265}\) Headword is *cuairt*.

\(^{266}\) Headword is *lom*: *lomadh*. *Lomairt* is the form of the verbal noun used in Colonsay.

\(^{267}\) Headword is *saibhir*.

\(^{268}\) Headword is *labhair*: *labhairt*. 
Phonemic definition

The phoneme /tʃ/ is realised in initial position as [tʃ], and in other positions has the following allophones:

[ʰd̥'zʹ] following a long vowel;

[çd'zʹ] following a stressed short [i] (transcribed in one instance as [h'd'zʹ]);

[φtʃʹ] following a stressed short rounded vowel;

[h’d’zʹ] ([h’dʃʹ] in final position) following any other stressed short vowel;\(^\text{269}\)

[d’zʹ] ~ [d’zʹ] following the homorganic nasal [n];

[t’sʹ] ~ [t’ʃ] following [sʹ].

\(^{269}\) Not attested in the published SGDS results.
This is an unvoiced, fortis, retro-palatal (or palatalised velar) stop. It normally corresponds to orthographic c in contact with i or e.

In the SGDS results the transcription used is [k’]. As in the case of /ɡ/) (see above), I have found that in Colonsay pronunciation, the root of the tongue is often held much further forward than for [k], against the back part of the palate, and closer to the palatal stop [c]. The effect can sound more like the English i in tube than c in cube.

In the SGDS results for Colonsay the transcription [k’] is found only in initial position: ceann (163-165) [k’ɛ̃d̥n̥], ceist (179) [k’ɛt’ʃ], cinnteach (184, 185) [k’iɲ ʃ’ɔx], ciùin (189) [k’uɲ]. The lenis/fortis distinction is reflected in (near) minimal pairs such as cille/gille (472, 473) [k’i’ʎi]: [ɡ̥i’ʎi], ceàrr/geàrr (470) [k’ɛ’r]: [ɡ̥a’r].

Medial or final c when palatalised is shown as [çɡ’]: faiceadh (384) [feçɡ’ɪ],271 bric (122) [briç’ɡ], cnuíc (215) [kruç’ɡ], creic (252) [kreç’ɡ].272 Once again, this is the result of preaspiration, and represents the palatalised form of [xɡ]. The relationship between [xɡ] and [çɡ’] is neatly illustrated in the SGDS results by the pair breac: bric (122) [bɾɛxɡ : bɾiç’ɡ].273 These can be analysed phonemically as /brek : brik/.

Preaspiration is also evident in words such as coirce (233, 234) [kɔrɡ’ɪ], smuileach (778) [smoʃɡ’ɔx], where it results in devoicing of the preceding sonorant. This is entirely in line with what has already been seen in the case of /k/.

270 The word gille is little used in Colonsay, although it is known from literary sources, including songs. The usual word for ‘boy’ is balach.
271 A footnote suggests ‘perhaps [ɾɛh’ɡ’ɪ]?’ This is one of only two instances of the form [h’] in the Colonsay results. The difference in articulation between [ç] and [h’] is not great, and is best regarded here as a variation in transcription, without significance. This is the only instance of palatalised orthographic c in intervocalic position to be found in the SGDS results.
272 As already noted, chunnaic (383) is shown as [xu’n’ɪq’ / h’ɪnq’]. Phonemically, the final consonant in this instance is /ɡ’/.
273 The two forms are actually reversed in the phonetic version as printed in the SGDS.
There are no instances of nasalisation involving /kʲ/ in the published SGDS results, but the LSS notes include the form *an ceòl [ŋ' qʰhɔˑ l’]* (LSS: 36), where the nasal mutation produces post-aspiration following the corresponding unvoiced lenis, as has been seen in the case of other fortis stops.

There are no instances of word-internal voicing of /kʲ/ in any of the Colonsay data.

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /kʲ/ may be realised as [c] ~ [k’] (shown as [k’] in the SGDS results).

It has the following allophone:

[çɡ’] in non-initial position.

The combination /r/ + /kʲ/ is realised as [r̥ çɡ’] (shown as [r̥ ɡ’] in the SGDS)

The combination /ʎ/ + /kʲ/ is realised as [ʎ̥ ɡ’].
FRICATIVES

Unvoiced fricatives

This is an unvoiced labio-dental fricative. It generally corresponds to orthographic f.

In the SGDS results for Colonsay, the symbol [f] is used to represent this sound in initial position in some 60 headwords, including fòg (379) [fˈəɡ], fear (406, 407) [fər], fìchead (420) [fiɾəd], fuil (445, 446) [fuɬ].

As with other labial consonants, there is in Colonsay Gaelic no trace of palatalisation or j-glide in any words beginning with fe-, fi-, as is found in other varieties of Gaelic. Thus we find: feadhainn (404) [fɨˈd̥ən], feannadh (405) [feˈnəj], feòil (413) [fiɾəɪl], fiodh (425, 426) [fiɾ]. (See p. 67). When f is lenited, however, it becomes silent, and palatalisation is found: an fheadhainn [(ə)ɲɨʔɲ], an fheòil [(ə)ɲəl̠] (Cf. Ternes 2006: 28-29).

Initial [f] is also found in combination with a sonorant in fliuch (434) [fɨɾɨʃ], fraoch (440) [frəˈx].

In non-initial position, [f] is found in the SGDS results only medially, in three words where the orthographic representation is f or bh: cuibhrig (‘coverlet’) (273) [kɨɾɪɲ], ifreann (684) [ɨɾən], and siobhag (765) [ʃɨɾəɡ]. A further example would be cabhag [kəɡ]. In other words, e.g. abhainn (2-3) [aˈvɪɲ], medial bh is pronounced [v] (with glottalisation after a short vowel), indicating a phonemic difference: /kəɡ/ v. /avɪɲ/.

Although there are no instances to be found in the SGDS results, it is important to note that [f] is also the lenited form of [p], corresponding to orthographic ph, as in phòs [fɔs], a phiuthar [ə fɨʔʃ] and the traditional Colonsay surname Mac a Phì [mɛɾə ˈfiɾ].

No modified forms are found.

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274 Probably a gaelicised form of English ‘covering’. Brat [bɾəh] is given as an alternative.
275 Headword is purgadair – not a common word on a traditionally Protestant island like Colonsay.
Phonemic definition

The phoneme /f/ has no allophones.
This symbol is generally used for an alveolar fricative. Although not reflected in the SGDS transcription, it should be noted that in Colonsay Gaelic it is usually articulated with the front part of the tongue held against the lower teeth, and the blade against the alveolar ridge, producing more of a ‘lisped’ sound than the English s. In phonetic terms this makes it a lamino-alveolar, rather than an apico-alveolar, fricative: [s̻] rather than [s̺].

This phoneme corresponds to orthographic s in a non-palatalised environment. In a palatalised environment, orthographic s is generally pronounced [ʃ] (see below).

In the SGDS results for Colonsay, the symbol [s] is used to represent this sound in initial, medial and final position.

Initial [s] is found, for example, in sabhal (726) [sa’və’], samhradh (736) [sevəɾiɣ], socair (788) [səxɣɪɾ], siul (813) [suˑl̥’].

Initial [s] also combines frequently with other consonants, either lenis stops [b̥ d̥ ɡ̥] or sonorants [l` n` p` r m]. In the case of the palatalised consonants [ɡ̥` ɲ], the initial consonant remains unpalatalised [s], whether the second element is palatised or not: sgeul (760, 761) [sq’ɛ’l̥’], slige (774) [sʌxq’ɪ], sniomh (784-786) [sɲɪɣ].

Before the affricate combination [tʃ], however, it becomes [ʃ]: steall (803) [ʃtʃ’ai̯əl̥’], stiùir (805) [ʃtʃ’uˑr].

The initial orthographic combination sr- is consistently realised as [sr] in Colonsay Gaelic, with no sign of the ‘intrusive’ [t] or [d̥] found in more northerly dialects: srath (796) [sra], srian (797, 798) [srɪən], sron (800) [srɔˑn]. Cf. North Uist (Points 20, 21) [straʰ : strˈiən : strɔˑn].

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276 I was schooled in this pronunciation by the late Katie Brown (Ceitidh Cholla), who maintained that an apico-alveolar articulation was evidence of blas na Beurla.

277 The tie mark should extend under the whole sequence [l`w], with the devoicing symbol [ , ] under the tie mark.

278 The [sr] pronunciation is found in all Argyll and Perthshire dialects, except for Tiree and Coll (Points 84, 85). Forms with ‘intrusive’ [t : ɬ] are found in all other dialects (SGDS, Vol. V: 242-250).
In medial position, [s] is found in Íosa (531) [i’sə], 279 reusanta (700) [aɪɨsəndə], seasamh (750) [ʃəsəv]. In the SGDS results, it also occurs medially in the combinations [sð sɡ sɲ]; Alasdair (29) [aɭa’ɾəʃɭɬɨɾ], iasgach (510) [iɨʃɭəɾə], cosnadh (238) [kəsən’əʃɭ]. To these might be added [sƅ] in cuspair [kusɭɬɭ], [sl’] in masladh [masl’əɾə], [sr] in fiosrach [ʃisɾəx].

Final [s] is found in many words, including cluas (205) [kɭəɾˈəsə], deas (304) [d’z’es], dorchadas (335) [dɔɾəʃədəs]. It is found in the particle nas (spelt na’s in the SGDS) in a number of comparative forms: nas lugha (85) [nas l’ɨʔɭə], 280 nas blàithe (108) [nəs bɭa’ɾəʃɭ], 281 etc. It also occurs in the relative future ending -as /-eas, of which the only instance in the SGDS results is chuireas tu (280) [ʃu’ɾəɾədɪʃ].

In a few instances an intrusive [d] is found after final [s] in Colonsay Gaelic. The only example of this in the SGDS results is dorus (342) [dəɾəʃɭ], but solas [so’ɭəɾəs] also exhibits this feature. There is some individual variation in the use of this pronunciation.

A retroflex form [ʂ] is found in ceart (174) [k’əɾəʃɭ], 282 farsuing (399) [faʃɭɪ’əʃɭ] and feart (411) [feʃɭtɭ]; 283 the form [ʂ’] is more common, particularly in the sequence [ʂ’tʃ’]. For reasons stated above (p. 153), these forms are treated as allophones of /r/, and will be considered further in the section on that phoneme.

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /s/ has no allophones.

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279 Form offered is [iəɾəθɭə].
280 Headword is beag: lugha.
281 Headword is blàth: na’s blàithe.
282 A footnote suggests ‘perhaps [k’əɾəʃɭ]?’
283 A footnote suggests ‘perhaps [feʃɭtɭ]’.
ʃ

This is an unvoiced post-alveolar fricative, with some degree of lip-rounding, and is the normal palatalised congener of /s/. It corresponds to orthographic s in a palatalised environment.

In the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, the symbol [ʃ] is used to represent this sound in initial, medial and final position.

Initially, [ʃ] is found in a large number of words, including sè (= sia) (741) [ʃɛˑ], sealladh (744) [ʃɛˑl̥əɣ], siop (139) [ʃɔ̈əɣ], siop (767) [ʃiˑl̥əɣ].

It is also found for the copula is (‘s) in a palatalised environment: ’sè (= is e) (364) [ʃɛˑ], seadh (366, 367) [ʃɛˑr̥əɣ], s fheudar (414) [ʃɛˑd̥əɣ], is fhèarr (605) [ʃɛˑr].

Medially, it is found in iseal (532) [iˑʃəl̥əɣ], mise (622, 623) [miˑʃɪ], toiseach (856) [tɔʃæx : tɔˑʃæx], and following an epenthetic vowel in aimsir (13, 14) [ɛmɪʃɪ]. In some words, mostly either fem. sg. nouns or comparative forms of adjectives exhibiting syncope, a contiguous sonorant is ‘absorbed’ into the [ʃ]: banais: bainse (76) [b̥ɛˑʃɪ], iosal: nas isle (533) [nas iˑʃɪ], milis: milse (616) [miˑʃɪ]. In the case of soillse (789, 790), alternative forms are given: [ʃiˑʃiˑʃiˑʃiˑʃiˑ].

The word làimhsich (555) [l`ɛɪʃɪç] also appears to follow this pattern.

In final position, [ʃ] is found in aois (48) [ʃiˑʃiˑʃiˑ], eaglais (368, 369) [eɡ̊lˑʃiˑ], spéis (794) [ʃɛˑʃiˑ].

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284 Headword is bùth.
285 Headword is è: ’sè.
286 Headword is eadh: seadh.
287 Headword is math: is fhèarr.
288 Headword is iosal.
289 Headword is soillsic.
As has already been noted under tf, the orthographic combination st, when palatalised, is consistently articulated as [ʃt’ʃ], no matter what the position in the word: stiùir (805) [ʃtʃˈuːr], briste (123) [bɾiʃtʃi], ceist (179) [kʃetʃ]. In the comparative form nas teotha (840) [nɑʃ tʃoʔo], the final [s] of [náš] is assimilated to the following affricate to form, in effect, the sequence [ʃtʃ].

The form [ʃq’], corresponding to orthographic sg in a palatalised environment, is found both medially, in uisge (888-890) [uʃq’i] and finally, in dùisg (363) [duʃq’ɪ], loisg (582) [lɔʃq’]. In initial position, however, this orthographic combination is shown as [sq’] (see above, under s).

No modified forms of [ʃ] are found in the SGDS results.

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /ʃ/ has no allophones.

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290 Headword is bris: briste.
291 Headword is teth: teotha.
This is an unvoiced palatal fricative. In Scottish Gaelic generally, it functions as the lenited form of \([k']\), and corresponds to orthographic \(ch\), or occasionally \(th\), in a palatalised environment. In this dialect, it also corresponds to orthographic \(dh\) in final position.

The only examples of initial \([ç]\) in the Colonsay data set are \(a’ cheud\) (182) \([çiəd]\)\(^{292}\) and the future form \(chì\) (381, 382) \([çi]\).\(^{293}\)

In medial position this symbol corresponds to orthographic \(ch\) in \(fìchead\) (420) \([fìcg]\), \(oidhche\) (670) \([yiçi]\); it is also found in the genitive form \(cloiche\) (190, 191) \([kl’oçi]\), the comparative forms \(na’s doirche\) (333, 334) \([nas əuriçi]\) and \(na’s fìche\) (435) \([nas f’uçi]\), and the plurals \(leabhraichean\) (569) \([xo’rçi]\) and \(peathraichean\) (680) \([pərçi]\).\(^{294}\)

In a handful of entries, \([ç]\) corresponds to orthographic \(th\) in medial position: the comparative form \(na’s blàithe\) (108) \([nas b’l’a çi]\); the future form \(ithidh\) (535) \([içi]\) and verbal noun \(ithe\) (536) \([içi]\) (from \(ith\ [içi]\)); \(ràithe\) (691) \([ra çi]\) and \(snàithlean\) (780) \([sn’e çan]\), where an expected \([Â]\) has apparently been ‘swallowed’ by the preceding \([ç]\).

By far the greatest number of headwords in the \(SGDS\) results showing this symbol have it in final position. These include the plural/gen. sg. forms \(bàlaich\) (71, 72) \([bal’ci]\), \(coilich\) (222) \([kyl’ci]\), \(Di-dòmhnaich\) (327) \([d’z’i ði niç]\),\(^{295}\) \(cearc-fhraich\) (441) \([k’erk r’ç]\).\(^{296}\) It is also found in verbs with the same endings: \(ceannaich\) (168)

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\(^{292}\) Headword is \(ceud\).

\(^{293}\) Headword is \(faic\: chì\).

\(^{294}\) This is a less productive plural ending in Colonsay than in many other varieties of Gaelic. (See p. 323).

\(^{295}\) Headword is \(Dòmhnach\).

\(^{296}\) Headword is \(fraoch\: fraoich\).
[k’ɛ’n’ɪç] (but note ceannaichte (169) [k’ɛ’n’ɪd’z’ɪ]), éirich (374) [ɛˑr’ɪç], oibrich (668) [ɤ’ɪç]; and in the words cluich (206) [kl’ɤ’ç],297 d’uilich (357) [do’l’ɪç] and fiadhaidh (419) [fɪ’util’ɪç], the last of which is commonly used on Colonsay as an intensifier (= ‘very’).

[ç] is also found for orthographic final th in bruith (128) [bɾuç], eunlaith (378) [ɛˑl’ɪç], rui (696, 697, cf. 724) [ɾʊç].298 In the case of gaoth (459, 460) [ɡ’ɤ’ç], the dative form gaoi has become generalised as the base form (but note gallan-gaioth (461) [ɡa’l’aɲ ɡ’ɤ’]).299

The use of [ç] for orthographic final -dh/-gh in this dialect has already been commented on (p. 70). This is most frequently found in future forms: bithidh (103) [biʔiç], cuirdh (277) [ku’ɪç], but also in agaidh (9) [ɟ’ʔɪç], céaidh (178) [k’e’l’ɪç]; contraigh (242) [kɔn’draç], ʻurnaigh (518) [uˑrniç], etc.

As already mentioned (p. 68), a notable feature of Colonsay Gaelic, which is shared with neighbouring dialects, is the occurrence of [ç] as the phonetic realisation of preaspiration after [i] across the full range of fortis stops, and not just before [ɡ’] and [k’] as occurs in Scottish Gaelic generally. These occurrences of [ç] have already been dealt with as realisations of the phonemes /p t k/ tj/. They are not to be interpreted as instances of the phoneme /ç/.

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /ç/ has no allophones.

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297 Headword is cluich: cluiche. The verbal noun has the form cluich in Colonsay Gaelic. (Interview with Niall Brown, 7 December 2016). The word most commonly used is playadh [p’ɛˑəɣ].

298 Headword is reic / ruith.

299 Headword is gaoth: gaoithe. Forms ending in [ç] are also recorded in Islay (Points 53-56) and Gigha (Point 40).
This is an unvoiced velar fricative. It corresponds to orthographic \( ch \) in a non-palatalised environment, and represents the lenited form of \([k]\). It is a very common sound in Scottish Gaelic, especially in final position.

In the SGDS results, initial \([x]\) is found in the negative particle \( cha: cha do leum \) (576) [\( xa \ ɗa \ ['ıɛ m] \), \( cha tig \) (842) [\( xa \ ɗ'z'i̞ç' \)]. It is also found in the preterite forms \( chaill \) (140) [\( xaŋi \)], \( chum \) (286) [\( xum \)], and in the irregular preterites \( chunnaic \) (383) [\( xu'n'iŋ' \)]\(^{300}\) and \( chaidh \) (687) [\( xaç : xa2iç \)]. It also occurs in conditional forms: \( chuireadh tu \) (282) [\( xa'd̥ζ'i̞ɡ̥̓ \)], and in the relative future: \( chuireas tu \) (280) [\( xo'ris ðu \)].

In nouns, it is found wherever initial \( c \) is lenited: \( air mo chois \) (156) [\( er mə xoʃ \)], \( a's a' chraoibh \) (250) [\( es ø x̞i̞[ɨi̞]γ \)], \( a's a' chruidh \) (261) [\( ø x̞i̞ʔ \)].

In medial position, \([x]\) is found in \( buachaille \) (129) [\( b̥u αx̞ɪ \)], \( drochaid \) (349, 350) [\( d̥r̥x̞id' \)], \( thachair \) (818) [\( h̥ax̞ɪr \)]. When preceded by a sonorant, an epenthetic vowel [\( ø \)] is inserted: \( Donnchadh \) (330, 331) [\( d̥o̞n' āx̞γ \)], \( dorcha \) (332) [\( d̥ɾ̥a̞x̞ə \)], \( Murchadh \) (641) [\( m̥ɾ̥a̞x̞i̞γ \)].

The issue of epenthesis will be dealt with separately (pp. 262-276).

By far the majority of occurrences of \([x]\) in the Colonsay data set are found in final position. Thus we find: \( a-mach \) (34) [\( m̥x̞ \)], \( crioich \) (257) [\( kɾi̞x̞ \)], \( fraoch \) (440) [\( fr̥x̞ \)], \( sgreuch \) (762) [\( s̥ɡɾ̥ɛ:x : s̥ɡɾ̥ɛ'x̞ \)], and a large number of words ending in unstressed -\( ach \), both nouns and adjectives: \( balach \) (69, 70) [\( b̥al'x̞ \)], \( teaghlach \) (832) [\( tʃ̥əˈlx̞ \)], \( cinnteach \) (184, 185) [\( k'ɲ d'z'x̞ \)], \( sàmhach \) (733) [\( s̥ɛ x̞ \)].

\(^{300}\) A footnote suggests that this form is ‘literary’. The form more frequently heard on Colonsay is [\( h̥e'niŋ' \)]. (See p. 307).

\(^{301}\) Headword is \( cas/cois \).

\(^{302}\) Headword is \( craobh: craoibh \).

\(^{303}\) Headword is \( crodh: cruidh \).

\(^{304}\) Headword is \( cuairtich: cuairtichidh \).

\(^{305}\) Headword is \( cuairtich: chaairticheadh \).

\(^{306}\) Headword is \( éirich: éiridh \).

165
As previously noted (p. 144), [x] can combine with [ɣ] to form the combination [xg]. This transcription may correspond to orthographic c or chd: cnoc (213, 214) [krɔxɣ], naidheachd (647) [nɛʔɛxɣ]. The former represents the pre-aspirated form of /k/, and is to be interpreted phonemically as an allophone of /k/ in non-initial position. Where it corresponds to the orthographic representation chd, on the other hand, /xl/ operates as a phoneme in its own right (see p. 66).

The modified form [x̫] (rounded) is shown in only two headwords in the SGDS results: fliuch (434) [fˈiux̫] and iuchair (537) [ɪxʊəɾ : ɪxʊəɾ], in both cases accompanying the rounded semi-vowel [ʊ]. This is insufficient evidence on which to regard [x̫] as an allophone of /xl/ in this very limited environment. Besides, it should be noted that other instances of /xl/ in a rounded environment show it simply as [x]: luchd (588) [lˈuxɣ], muc (633) [muxɣ], and the various forms of cuir noted above. At best, therefore, [x̫] should be regarded as a variant occurring in proximity to the semi-vowel [ʊ].

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /xl/ has no allophones.

It may have the variant [x] when preceded or followed by the semi-vowel [ʊ].
This is an unvoiced glottal fricative. Initial orthographic $h$ is a rarity in Gaelic, and there are no words in the SGDS results beginning with this letter. It occurs mainly as the lenited form of $[ʃ t tʃ]$ (orthographic $sh$, $th$) and in certain other circumstances, as detailed below.

Initial $[h]$ is regularly indicated for orthographic $h$-, in cases where $a$ or $na$ is followed by a vowel; it is not an integral part of the word. Examples in the SGDS results are $a\ h$-aon (49) $[h\dot{y}n]$, $na\ h$-eaglaise (369) $[nə\ hɛ\dot{ɡ}l'\dot{i}ʃ]$, $na\ h$-uamha (876) $[nə\ huaʃ]$, $bràigh\ na\ h$-uinneige (886) $[bra\ ɨ\ nə\ hu'\næɡi]$. As previously noted, the symbol $[h]$ is also found as the normal form of preaspiration before $[b]$ and $[d]$. According to the analysis adopted here, such occurrences are to be seen as allophones of $/p/ \text{ and } /t/$ respectively, rather than instances of the phoneme $/h/$.

Apart from its use in the context of preaspiration, the symbol $[h]$ is found in the Colonsay data set either initially or medially. It is not found in final position.

Given the nature of Gaelic morphology, instances of initial $[h]$ recorded in the SGDS tend to be either verbal forms, or inflected forms of nouns and adjectives. Since the SGDS questionnaire mainly elicited citation forms, examples of the latter are few in number.

$[h]$ is found for orthographic $th$- in regular verbs such as $thachair$ (818) $[haxir]$, $thilgeadh$ (843) $[hɪlɡ'ɛy]$, $thogainn$ (853) $[ho'ɡɛn]$, and in the irregular forms $thubhairt$ (1) $[huəʊʃ'tʃ']$, $théid$ (688) $[he'ɛdʒ']$ and $thàinig$ (841) $[he'ɛnj]$.

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307 Headword is aon.
308 Headword is eaglais: na $h$-eaglaise.
309 Headword is uaimh: uamha.
310 Headword is uinneag: uinneige.
311 Headword is abair: thubhairt.
312 Headword is rach: théid.
313 Headword is thig: thàinig.
as well as the Colonsay form of *chunnaic (383) (see p. 307).\textsuperscript{314} It also occurs very frequently in the present tense of the verb ‘to be’, *tha – although in the SGDS results this word appears only once, in the phrase *cia mar a tha thu (180) [d’hz’t màr ə ha’ ú].\textsuperscript{315} Initial [h] corresponds to orthographic *sh in the lenited forms *oidhche Shamhna (734) [jyjçi hevǐna],\textsuperscript{316} mo sheanmhair (749) [mò heñivar].\textsuperscript{317} It is noteworthy that, as with the labials, there is no palatalisation of [h] when it occurs as the lenited form of [ʃ] or [tʃ]: a shiùil (754) [ə hǐʊnl’] (singular: a sheòl [ə hǐɛol’]), thionndaidh e [hɪ̋dɔn’dìc a].

Initial [h] is also found in combination with sonorants, especially [r] or [l̠’. The phonetic representation in the SGDS results varies: in most cases the [h] is shown superscript, and after the sonorant, suggesting metathesis, but a full [h] appears before the [r] in thràigheadh (862) [hɾahoy].\textsuperscript{318} It is shown superscript before the [r] in threadbh e (864) [ʰɾe’hj a],\textsuperscript{319} but after the sonorant in ’ga threadbhadh (866) [ɡa ʰʃeʔɔy], a shrian (799) [ə ʰʃiain],\textsuperscript{320} mo shròn (801) [mə ʰʃɔn], mo shliasaid (772) [mə ʰʃǐʃₘd’ʃ].\textsuperscript{321} Note the devoicing of the sonorant in most of these instances. In mo shlat (769) [mo ʰl’wahd],\textsuperscript{322} we find the voiced glottal fricative [ɾ], and no devoicing; this is the only instance of this symbol in the Colonsay results, and for lack of further evidence will be regarded as a free variant. Phonemically, these combinations are best analysed as /hr hl hɬ/ etc., normally realised as [ɾʰ lʰɬʰ] etc., with the variants [hr], [ʰr], [l’w] attested in the SGDS results.

In the case of nasals, no [h] element is present, but [ɲ] is lenited to [n]: *shnàmh (782) [n’ɛ’h], *shnìomh (787) [nɪ’h]. There is no need to indicate anything other than /n/ in phonemic transcription.

\textsuperscript{314} Headword is *faic: *chunnaic. The SGDS transcription is [xu’n’iɡ’ / hɛ’nɪɡ’].

\textsuperscript{315} Headword is *cia mar.

\textsuperscript{316} Headword is *Samhainn.

\textsuperscript{317} Headword is *do sheanmhair.

\textsuperscript{318} Headword is *tràigh: *tràigheadh. This is indicated as the conditional form, rather than the verbal noun.

\textsuperscript{319} Possibly representing the form *thræbhaigh e.

\textsuperscript{320} Headword is *dà shrian.

\textsuperscript{321} Headword is mo shliabh / mo shliasaid.

\textsuperscript{322} The tie mark [’] extends under the sequence [l’w].
Medially, [h] is found in *athaır* (63, 64) [ahəɾ], *beatha* (92, 93) [bɛhɛ], *soitheach* (792) [səhəx]. It is also found for orthographic *mh* in *comharradh* (241) [kɔhɔɾə] and *famhair* (393) [fɔhəɾ], while in *thràigheadh* (862) [ʰɾahəɣ] it represents orthographic *gh.*\(^{323}\) My own research suggests that in many of these instances, [ʔ] is substituted for [h].

In the words ‘s aithne (27, 28) [sɛɲî],\(^{324}\) *froithneach* (692) [frɔɲəx],\(^{325}\) the devoicing of [ɲ] implies an underlying phonemic reading /sɛhɲə/, /frɔɲəx/, with /ʰŋ/ realised phonetically as [ɲ], even although no [h] is shown in the phonetic transcription. This interpretation is reinforced by the spelling, and the absence of glottalisation.

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /h/ has no allophones.

The combination /hr/ is generally realised as [ɾʰ], with variants [hr] ~ [ʰɾ].

The combinations /hl hɬ/ are generally realised as [ɬʰ lʰ], with variant [ɬʰwʰ] attested.

The combination /ʰŋ/ is realised as [ɲ].

\(^{323}\) My impression is that in medial position, [h] tends to be replaced by [ʔ]. Flora Macneill, when asked if there was ‘an h sound’ in *beatha*, replied ‘Yes’, but then pronounced it [bɛʔɛ]. Islay entries show [ʔ] in such cases, e.g. Point 55 (Bowmore) [bɛʔɛ].

\(^{324}\) Headword is *aithne*.

\(^{325}\) Headword is *raithneach*. 

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Voiced fricatives

Only two voiced fricative phonemes are found in this dialect, /v/ and /ɣ/.

\[v\]

This is a voiced labio-dental fricative, the voiced counterpart of [f].

In word-initial position, /v/ is always a lenited form of /b/ or /m/: mo bhàta (83) [mə vaˑdɔ], bhuaileadh (132) [vʊiˑlɪɭ]; glé mhath (476) [ɣɭeˑ ve],[326] a mhic (592) [ə viç̥'], mholadh (626) [vɔˑl̠əɣ]. It is also found in the initial combination [vl̠'] in bhleith (610) [vl̠'e].[327]

Contrary to what is stated in my MSc dissertation (Scouller 2010: 10, 54-55), [v] in medial position is accompanied by glottalisation in intervocalic position after a short, stressed vowel: abhainn (2, 3) [a'vɪɲ̥], ghabhadh (447) [ɣa'vəɣ],[329] sabhal (726) [sa'vəl'], steamhuinn (770) [sə̣ɛvɪŋ]. After a long vowel or a diphthong, there is no glottalisation: sgriobhadh (764) [sə̣ɪvɪɲ], làmhan (554) [lɛˑvɪŋ]; craoibhe (248) [krɪˑvɪ], saibhir (739) [səiəvɪr].

Where [v] occurs in conjunction with a sonorant consonant, an epenthetic vowel is inserted: éibhleag (372) [evɪl̠əɡ], geamhradh (469) [g'ɛvɪrɪɣ], samhradh (736) [sevɪrɪɣ]. This is also the case where the sonorant precedes the [v]: balbh (73) [bəl̠'əɣ], mo sheanmhair (749) [mə hənɪvəɾ].[330] No glottalisation is found with epenthetic combinations, as is illustrated by the pair Samhainn/Oidhche Shamhna (734) [se'vɪŋ : ɣɪiɭɪ həvɪnə]. An apparent exception is labhraidh (538), which is shown as [lə'vəɾɪɾəɣ], with glottalisation, and weak epenthesis; the informant may in this case have been influenced by the base form labhair. Epenthesis as a phonological process will be considered at pp. 262-276.

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[326] Headword is glé. This intensifier has the meaning ‘quite’ in Colonsay Gaelic, rather than ‘very’.
[327] Headword is meil: mheil.
[328] Represented in the SGDS results as [ˈv] rather than [v̥].
[329] Headword is gabh: ghabhadh.
[330] Headword is do sheanmhair.
In final position, [v] is often shown with devoicing: [ɣ]. Final devoicing of voiced consonants is a feature of Colonsay Gaelic, but does not seem to be observed consistently (see p. 290). Thus we find parallel forms in the SGDS results: sàibh is transcribed as [səi:v] at (728), but [saiy] at (729);\(^{331}\) a-riamh as [tɭi:ιɣy] (57), but [ɭi:ɣv] (58); damh appears as [dəv] (293), [dəɣv] (294), [dəɣv] (295), and in the pl./gen. sg. form as daimh (296) [də già:n]. It should be noted that in sléibhtean (773) [səeˑɣd’z’ɪŋ], devoicing occurs at the end of a syllable, before a devoiced consonant. Since the acoustic difference between devoiced [ɣ] (lenis) and [f] (fortis) is fairly slight, it should be noted that [f] is not found in final position anywhere in the Colonsay results (see above).

When it occurs as the lenited form of /m/ in any position, /v/ is generally associated with the same raising of [a] to [ɛ] as occurs in proximity to nasals. This is not the case where /v/ is the lenited form of /b/. At first sight, this may appear to present a problem of phonemic interpretation, since there are no auditory criteria for differentiating /v/ as the reflex of /m/ from /v/ as the reflex of /b/. While it may be easy to understand how forms such as mo mhàthair [mə vɛˑr], mo bhàta (83) [mə vaˑdə] would follow the pattern of their respective base forms màthair [mɛˑr],\(^{332}\) and bàta (81, 82) [ARGIN 332] 332 [bə də], the difference in treatment between làmh (550-551) [lɛˑv] and sàbh (729) [səˑv] is not easily explicable in allophonic terms.

It will be recalled, however, that the [a : ɛ] alternation has been defined as a difference in distribution of separate phonemes rather than any form of allophonic variation (see under ɛ). If, therefore, the words are analysed phonemically as /mo vɛˑr : mo vaˑtə : lɛˑv : saˑv/, the apparent difficulty does not arise.

\(^{331}\) Headword 729 in fact offers the pair sàbh: sàibh [saˑiy / saˑv]. (N.B. forms reversed in the transcription). The absence of dropped brackets around the diphthong [ai] is a transcription error, but is irrelevant to the point being discussed here.

\(^{332}\) Shown as [mɛˑhɑ] in the SGDS results, but [mɛˑr] is the form commonly heard.
**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /v/ has the following allophones:

[ʼv] when it occurs intervocally following a stressed short vowel;

[y] ~ [v] when it occurs word-finally or before an unvoiced consonant.
Y

This is a voiced velar fricative, the voiced equivalent of [x]. It generally represents the lenited form of either /ɡ/ or /d/, and corresponds to orthographic gh or dh in a non-palatalised context. It may occur in initial, medial or final position.

Occurrences in initial position are under-represented in the SGDS results, because the entries listed are mainly citation forms. The only examples of initial [ɣ] are the following:

- two pronominal forms of the preposition do: dhomh (318) [ɣɔ] and dhaibh (319) [ɣaið];
- a vocative form: a dhuīne (362) [ðɔ ɣu’ɲí];
- a construction involving a possessive adjective: do ghobhar (489) [dɔ ɣɔoɾ];
- three conditional forms of verbs: dh’fhalbhad (391) [ɣɔl’alogy], ‘s math dh’fhaoídt (397) [smeʔe ‘ɣɔ’dʒit̚] and ghabhadh (447) [ɣa’vɔy].

Medial occurrences of [ɣ] are even scarcer, the only instances being fiodhan (427) [fi’ɣaŋ] and iodhal (523) [i ɣa’l], neither of which is a particularly common word. The former word shows glottalisation following a stressed, short vowel, which on the basis of this one example (and by analogy with other consonants in such an environment) may be regarded, however tentatively, as allophonic – again contradicting what is stated in my MSc dissertation (Scouller 2010: 10, 54-55). The dearth of examples may reflect the fact that, in this dialect, medial gh and dh are much more likely to be realised as a glottalised interval (shown in the SGDS results as [ʔ]), rather than a fricative: leaghadh (571) [ɻiʔyiŋ], ughan (881) [uʔiŋ], aghaidh (9) [ɣiʔzione], feadhainn (404) [fəʔiŋ].

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333 Headword is do: domh. A footnote suggests the pronunciation is ‘almost [ɡɔ]’.
334 Headword, somewhat surprisingly, is do: dóibh.
335 Headword is faod: math dh’fhaoídt. The more usual expression in Colonsay is cha lugaide.
The overwhelming majority of occurrences of [ɣ] in the SGDS show it in final position, most commonly in the ending -adh, indicating either a verbal noun or a conditional form. These are too frequent to list in full, but include bualadh (133) [bʊəl`ɪ̯ɣ], gealladh (468) [ɡa`ːl`əɣ]; chuireadh (281) [xʊ`ːr`əɣ], faiceadh (384) [fəəɣ]. The verbal nouns fighe (421) [fi̯ɪɣ], ithe (536) [i̯ɪɣ], which do not end in -adh in conventional spelling, are also shown with final [ɣ], as is [ɡyl`əɣ] for goil (492); suggesting that, in this dialect, use of the -adh ending has spread by analogy.

Instances of final [ɣ] in nouns (other than verbal nouns) include biadh (104) [bi̯i̯i̯ɣ], cladh (193) [kl`y̯ɣ]; lagh (545) [l`ɣ], laogh (560) [l`ɣ], and the personal names Donnchadh (330, 331) [d̥ənxəɣ] and Murchadh (641) [murəxɪɣ].

In a small number of cases, [ɣ] is shown with final devoicing: seadh (366) [ʃ œɣ], 336 gèadh (463) [ɡe`ɣ], one version of laogh (559) [l`ɣ] (560 has [l`ɣ]), tiugh (848) [tʃuɣ] and treabhadh (865, 866) [treʔoɣ]. Since final devoicing of voiced consonants is a common feature of Colonsay Gaelic, although not occurring consistently, it is noteworthy that in the majority of instances, final [ɣ] remains voiced.

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /ɣ/ has the following allophone:

[ɣ] when it occurs intervocally following a stressed short vowel;

The devoiced form [ɣ] occurs as an occasional variant in word-final position.

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336 Headword is eadh: seadh. The form [ʃ] is given as an alternative in 366, and as the only form in 367.
SONORANTS

Laterals

This is a post-alveolar (i.e. slightly palatalised) lateral approximant, and is shown in the SGDS results as [ɬ']. Because this is a rather cumbersome notation, for a frequently occurring sound, the form /l/ has been chosen to represent the phoneme. It corresponds to orthographic single l in a ‘slender’ environment, but only under certain circumstances.

In word-initial position, this phone occurs independently in the SGDS data only in the English loan-word lampa (556, 557) [ɬ'ɛ̃mp], where it is presumably intended to reflect the English [l] sound. It is also heard in the preposition le [ɬ'e], and its derived pronominal forms leam, leat, etc. [ɬ'em : ɬ'ɛhə]. These are not listed in the SGDS.

Otherwise the SGDS results show this phone word-initially either as the lenited form of [ʎ], as in cha do leum (576) [xa dq̆ ɬ'ɛm] (cf. leum (575) [ɬɛm]), or in conjunction with another consonant, as in bliadhna (110, 111) [bl̠i̠i̠i̠n̥ o̥], cliabh (199, 200) [kl̠i̠i̠i̠ɛ̃], fliuch (434) [fl̠i̠ʊ̯], gleann (477, 478) [ql̠i̠ɛ̃ń̥]. Words beginning with sl, however, have [sʎ], unless the initial cluster is lenited: sliasaid (771) [sʎi̠i̠i̠s̥d̥f̥], but mo sliasaid (772) [mə l̠i̠i̠i̠is̥d̥f̥].

In the combination dl, the situation is complicated in the SGDS results by the insertion of a superscript [l.] in aleasdanas (314) [d̠i̠l̠e̥s̥n̥], and an alternative version of dilgeach (315) [d̠i̠i̠θ̥ax̥ : d̠i̠i̠θ̥ax̥]. This symbol is intended to indicate ‘lateral plosion’, which presumably means that the stop is released simultaneously with the accompanying lateral. In any case, this very limited use of superscript [l.] in the SGDS results for Colonsay is not to be confused with the small capital [Ł] sometimes used in traditional Celtic linguistics for velarised l, and in the IPA system to denote a ‘velar lateral approximant’.

337 Headword is dilighe.
338 SGDS, Vol. I:137. Apparently the symbol is used in this way only by Eric Hamp, who was the fieldworker in Colonsay.
In medial position, [l'] is shown with glottalisation when it occurs intervocally following a stressed short vowel: baile (65) [baˈlɛ], coileach (221) [kỹˈlɛx],\(^{339}\) duilich (357) [ˈdɔlɪc], uile (883) [ˈuɬi],\(^{340}\) No glottalisation is found after a long vowel or diphthong, e.g. Ìleach (iˈlɛx), bhuaileadh (132) [vũilˈiʃ]; or where [l'] forms part of an epenthetic cluster: ëibhleag (372) [eˈiləq], seilg (743) [ˈeɬɨɡ],\(^{341}\) thilgeadh (843) [hiɬɨɡˈəɬ].\(^{342}\) The presence of [l'] before orthographic a in Beurla (100) [beˈrlə] is surprising (and attracts a footnote: ‘sic [l’]’), but I have been able to verify this form with informants. The truncated form [beˈdəl] is frequently heard also.

In a few instances, [l’] also occurs medially in combination with other consonants, corresponding to orthographic ll. This is the case in soilse (789, 790), where we find the forms [s̩iəlˈiʃ]: [s̩iəlˈjʃ] (alongside the form [s̩iəlˈʃ], without [l’]),\(^{343}\) it is also found in the past participles fillte (423) [filˈtʃ],\(^{344}\) saillte (731, 732) [s̩aitɬˈtʃ]. On the other hand, coilltean (226) is shown as [kəiɬˈtʃə].\(^{345}\) This suggests that forms showing [l’] are to be regarded as occurrences of the /l/ phoneme, rather than [l’] being an allophone of /ʃ/ before a following consonant.

In final position, [l’] is shown in most cases with devoicing: anail (40) [əˈn̥əl], fàgail (380) [faˈɡəl], fuil (445, 446) [fuɬ], sùil (813) [suɬ]. Some words are, however, shown without final devoicing: fantail (412) [fəntəl],\(^{346}\) ceangail (162) [kəˈʃəl], sgaoil (759) [sɡəˈl], thadhail (819) [haˈtəl].\(^{347}\) There is likewise no devoicing shown before the devoiced final combination [dʃ] in miorbhailt (620) [miɬərˈdʃ]. As has already been observed, final devoicing appears to be an optional feature in Colonsay Gaelic.

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339 220 has coileach [kỹˈlɛx], without glottalisation, but this appears to be an isolated example. It may have been used in an unstressed context by the informant.
340 The form muilichinn (637) [mǔiɬiʃə] (for headword muinichill, with complex metathesis) is shown without glottalisation. This may reflect an unconscious alignment, by present-day speakers, with words showing historical epenthesis.
341 Headword is sealg.
342 The quality of the [l] in thilgeadh is ambiguous as transcribed, but has been verified as [l’].
343 Headword in both instances is soillseh.
344 For the lengthening of [l’] in fillte, see below under ʎ.
345 Headword is coille: coilltean.
346 Headword is feith: feitheamh.
347 Headword is tadhail: tadhal.
Phonemic definition

The phoneme /l/ is normally recorded as [l] in the SGDS transcription, and has no allophones.

It has the variant [l] ~ [l] when it occurs word-finally or before an unvoiced or devoiced consonant.

When it occurs after initial /d/, the resulting combination may be shown in the SGDS results as [d̥l].

The glottalised form [l̠] occurs only intervocally following a stressed short vowel. Because unglottalised [l] is also found in this environment, in situations involving epenthesis, [l̠] cannot be defined as an allophone.
This is a palatal lateral approximant. It corresponds to orthographic \( l \) or \( ll \) in a palatalised environment, but only under certain circumstances.

The symbol \([\mathring{\alpha}]\) is found in initial position in all words in the \textit{SGDS} results where unlenited \( l \) is followed by \( e \) or \( i \). These include: \textit{leabaidh} (565, 566) \([\mathring{\alpha}e̞\mathring{\alpha}]\), \textit{leabhar} (568) \([\mathring{\alpha}o^\prime\mathring{\alpha}r]\); \textit{lion} (577) \([\mathring{\alpha}i̞\mathring{\alpha}]\), \textit{litir} (578, 579) \([\mathring{\alpha}i̞\mathring{\alpha}z^\prime\mathring{\alpha}]\). It also occurs in the initial combination \( sl \) before \( e \) or \( i \): \textit{sleamhuinn} (770) \([s\mathring{\alpha}e̞\mathring{\alpha}ṿn̥]\), \textit{sliasaid} (771) \([s\mathring{\alpha}i̞\mathring{\alpha}ḍi̞ẓi̞]\). It also occurs in the initial combination \( sl \) before \( e \) or \( i \): \textit{sleamhuinn} (770) \([s\mathring{\alpha}e̞\mathring{\alpha}ṿn̥]\), \textit{sliasaid} (771) \([s\mathring{\alpha}i̞\mathring{\alpha}ḍi̞ẓi̞]\).

In medial and final position, \([\mathring{\alpha}]\) corresponds to orthographic \( ll \) in contact with a slender vowel. It is found medially in \textit{broilleach} (124) \([bh:\mathring{\alpha}x]\), \textit{cailleach} (141) \([ka'\mathring{\alpha}x]\), \textit{coille} (223-225) \([k\mathring{v}e̞\mathring{\alpha}]\), \textit{duilleag} (358) \([du̞\mathring{\alpha}q]\), \textit{gille} (472, 473) \([g\mathring{i}i\mathring{\alpha}]\). In all these instances, glottalisation is indicated, following a stressed short vowel.\footnote{In many of these words, there is a tendency for the \( l \)-colouring to be lost, so that the words are pronounced \([k\mathring{a}j\mathring{a}x]\), \([k\mathring{v}\mathring{\alpha}]\), etc.}

Glottalisation does not occur, for example, in \textit{buachaille} (129) \([bh:u\mathring{\alpha}x\mathring{\alpha}i̞\mathring{\alpha}]\), where the immediately preceding vowel is not stressed, or in the plural form \textit{coilltean} (226) \([k\mathring{v}i̞\mathring{\alpha}ḍ'ẓi̞\mathring{\alpha}n̥]\), where \([\mathring{\alpha}]\) is not in intervocalic position (and in any case follows a diphthong). There are no instances of epenthetic combinations involving \([\mathring{\alpha}]\). For this reason, ['\(\mathring{\alpha}\)], unlike other glottalised sonorants, may be defined as allophonic.

\([\mathring{\alpha}]\) is also found for orthographic single \( l \) in medial position in \textit{aingealan} (16) \([e\mathring{\epsilon}i\mathring{\alpha}n]\), \textit{annlan} (43) \([ë\mathring{\epsilon}i\mathring{\alpha}n']\). It also occurs syllable-initially following \( r \) in \textit{mèirleach} (613) \([me\mathring{r}\mathring{\alpha}x]\).

In final position, it is found in \textit{chaill} (140) \([x\mathring{a}i\mathring{\alpha}]\), \textit{foill} (438) \([f\mathring{v}i\mathring{\alpha}]\) and \textit{tuill} (858) \([t\mathring{u}\mathring{a}i\mathring{\alpha}]\). Final devoicing is shown in \textit{foill} and \textit{tuill}; devoicing also appears before a voiceless stop in \textit{smuileach} (778) \([s\mathring{u}g\mathring{\alpha}x]\).
Lengthening of [ʎ] occurs in fill (422) [fiʎˈ] and thill (844) [hiʎˈ], in both cases following a short vowel. This suggests an allophone [ʎˈ], occurring in word-final position following a stressed short vowel. On the other hand, the past participles fillte (423) [filˈdˈzɪ], saillte (731, 732) [sɪəlˈdˈzɪ] have the phoneme /l/. In the case of fillte, the lengthening of [ʎ] in [fiʎˈ] is carried over to the [lˈ]; saillte, having a diphthong, does not have a lengthened sonorant.

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /ʎ/ has the following allophones:

[ʎˈ] in word-final position following a stressed short vowel;

[ˈʎ] when it occurs intervocally following a stressed short vowel.

It has the variant [ʎ̥] ~ [ʎ] when it occurs word-finally or before an unvoiced or devoiced consonant.
This is a velarised dental lateral approximant, corresponding to orthographic $l$ in a non-palatalised environment. The term ‘dental’ is used to highlight the fact that this sound is realised with the tongue placed either behind or between the teeth, rather than on or behind the alveolar ridge as in the case of /l/. It is this dental quality, as much as the accompanying velarisation, that gives this phoneme its ‘thick’ character.

The superscript gamma $\gamma$, rather than the grave accent $`$, is now the accepted IPA diacritic for ‘velarised’, and is so used in the phonemic transcription. A transcription using the bar or tilde $[\text{l} \tilde{\text{l}}]$ would also be possible, but may be difficult to read. For phonetic transcription the form $[\text{l}']$, as used in the SGDS, will be retained.

Traditionally, Celticists have favoured the use of small upper-case $[\text{l}]$ to denote this sound; this symbol, which is also sanctioned by the IPA system for ‘velar lateral approximant’, is used only very occasionally in the Survey, for an exceptional degree of velarisation (Vol. I: 124-125);\textsuperscript{349} in the Colonsay data it appears only as a superscript symbol in some words beginning with the combination $dl$ (see above).

The symbol $[\text{l}']$ appears in the SGDS results in initial position in all cases where the standard orthography has $l$ followed by $a$, $o$ or $u$: labhaint $[\text{l}^\prime \text{v} \text{a} \text{\v} \text{\i} \text{\t} \text{\i} \text{\t}]$, lagh $[\text{l}^\prime \text{\y} \text{\y}]$, long $[\text{l}^\prime \text{o} \text{n} \text{\i} \text{\g}]$, luchd $[\text{l}^\prime \text{\u} \text{x} \text{\g}]$. There is no separate lenited form: lámh $[\text{l}^\prime \text{\e} \text{\v} \text{\a} \text{\y} \text{\a} \text{\y}]$ sits alongside do lámh $[\text{d} \text{o} \text{l}^\prime \text{\e} \text{\v} \text{\a} \text{\y}]$. This means that a lámh (his hand) and a lámh (her hand) are homophones in this dialect.

$[\text{l}']$ also appears as the second element in a large number of initial consonant combinations: na’s blàithe $[\text{n} \text{\a} \text{\s} \text{\b} \text{l} ^\prime \text{a} \text{\c} \text{\i} \text{\t}]$, cluas $[\text{kl}^\prime \text{\u} \text{i} \text{\s}]$, glòir $[\text{gl}^\prime \text{o} \text{\i} \text{\r} \text{\i} \text{\r}]$, sluagh $[\text{s} \text{l} \text{\u} \text{\i} \text{\y} \text{\a} \text{\g} \text{\y}]$. The combinations $[\text{fl}^\prime \text{\y} \text{l} \text{\p} \text{l}^\prime \text{\t} \text{\l}^\prime \text{\x} \text{\l}]$ also occur, e.g. in flùr, ghuais e, plangaid, tlachd, a’ chlann, but are not instantiated in the SGDS results. As already discussed, in the case of $[dl']$, superscript $[\text{l}^\prime]$ is inserted: dliùth $[\text{d} \text{l}^\prime \text{l}^\prime \text{u} \text{\a} \text{\r} \text{\a}]$.\textsuperscript{351}

\textsuperscript{349} This symbol is stated to have been used in this way only by Kenneth Jackson (KHJ) in his fieldwork notes.
\textsuperscript{350} Headword is blàth: na’s blàithe.
\textsuperscript{351} The devoicing mark $[\text{\u}]$ under the [l] appears in brackets: (o). This cannot be reproduced using the present software. Devoicing is unusual in such a context.
In medial position, [l`] is found in *diallaid* (309) [d’z’iˑlˑd’f’], *eòlas* (376) [eələs], *teaghlach* (832) [t’ʃəlˑəx]. Following a short, stressed vowel, glottalisation is found: *galar* (454) [ɡəl’ar], *moladh* (627) [məlˑəɣ], *talamh* (826) [təlˑəɣ]. On the other hand, glottalisation does not occur in cases of epenthesis: *balbh* (73) [bəl’əɣ], *dealg* (301) [dəlˑəɣ], *balg* (74) [bəlˑəɣ]. This is in line with the pattern of glottalisation already noted in the case of /l/. The form recorded for *uileann* (884) [uˑlˑənˑ] is surprising, since the orthography would suggest medial [l`] rather than [l’].

In *balach* (69-70) [bəlˑəx] and its plural/gen. sg. form *balaich* (71-72) [bəlˑəç], the [l`] is shown lengthened in the SGDS results, and a footnote describes it as ‘slightly fricative [sic] and lenis’. Given that this is the only word in the Colonsay data set to show lengthened [l`], I would take issue with this transcription, which does not fit any established pattern for this dialect. I have found the usual pronunciation of these words on Colonsay to be [bəlˑəx : bəlˑəç], with glottalisation, rather than lengthening, of the [l`], as would be normal after a stressed short vowel. The spectrogram shows a disturbed pattern of voicing, typical of glottalisation (see p. 257):

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Waveform, spectrogram and glottalisation tier for *balaich*

(Jessie McNeill)

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352 Niall Brown pronounced this word [uˑlˑənˑ]. (Conversation, 17 October 2017).
In final position, [lˈ] is generally shown with devoicing: *beul* (97) [beˈl̥], *geal* (464, 465) [ɡˈaˈl̥], *sabhal* (726) [saˈvəl̥]. In a handful of words, however, final devoicing is not shown: *caol* [nəˈkoise] (46) [k̈ˈl̥ nə kəˈsə] (perhaps influenced by the following nasal),

Devoicing is also found before a fortis stop, where it reflects preaspiration: *diúltadh* (312, 313) [d̥zˈuˑl̥d̥], *falt* (392) [faˈl̥d̥], *olc* (673, 674) [ɔl̥ˈg], *reult* (712) [rɛˑl̥d̥]. This is sufficiently regular to be defined as an allophone in this environment.

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /lɣ/ is normally recorded as [lˈ] in the *SGDS* transcription.

It has the allophone [lˈ] before a fortis stop.

It has the variant [lˈ] ~ [lˈ] when it occurs word-finally.

When it occurs after initial /d/, the resulting combination may be shown in the *SGDS* results as [d̥l̥].

The glottalised form ['lˈ] occurs only intervocally following a stressed short vowel. Because unglottalised [lˈ] is also found in this environment, in situations involving epenthesis, ['lˈ] cannot be defined as an allophone.

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353 Headword is *aobrann*.
354 Headword is *ibh*, although all recorded entries show forms of *òl*.
355 The devoicing mark [ˌ] under the second [d] is shown in brackets: (o).
356 Headword is *rionnag*.
This is a rounded and velarised dental lateral approximant. In the SGDS results for Colonsay, it is represented either as [l`w], with or without devoicing, or in some cases simply as [l`], especially following the diphthongs [ao eo]. It occurs only in non-initial position, and generally corresponds to orthographic ll in a non-palatalised environment.

As explained in Vol. I of the Survey (p.133), the transcription [l`w] was adopted ‘for typographical reasons’, and the ‘precise phonetic difference’ in realisation between [l`w] and [l`] is not clear. It appears that Hamp, in his field notes for Colonsay, used a ‘superimposed’ [w], which was re-interpreted typographically as [l`w], and was intended to convey the same meaning as the subscript [], which it closely resembles. (In the SGDS transcription, the tie bar extends under the whole [l`w] combination, and the devoicing symbol [], where present, appears below the tie bar. I have not been able to reproduce this exactly, and have placed the devoicing symbol under the [w].)

As argued above (pp. 75-77), I have found that in Colonsay Gaelic this sound, however it is transcribed, represents a separate phoneme from /l/. I am suggesting that the transcription ‘diphthong + [l’]’ is better represented as ‘short vowel + lengthened [l”]’. For the sake of consistency, I have given the SGDS transcription in the following examples, but have added a phonemic interpretation, using slash marks /…/, to indicate my alternative interpretation.

In the SGDS results, this phoneme is found medially in ùbhlan (878) [u:l`wəŋ] /u:l`wən/. It also occurs syllable-finally (with devoicing) in Bealtuinn (86, 87) [bəl`wəŋ] /bəl`wəŋ/, gallda (456) [gəl`wəŋ] /gəl`wəŋ/, rallsa (685, 686) [ra:l`wsəŋ] /ra:l`səŋ/. There are no instances of epenthetic combinations involving this phoneme.

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357 Headword is ràcan.
This phoneme is found most frequently in final position following a short, stressed vowel (shown as a diphthong in the SGDS results). In such instances I have consistently found it to be lengthened: ball [b̥aːl], dall [d̥aːl], meall [mɛːl], toll [tolː] (SGDS: 75) [b̥æo], (292) [d̥əo], (609) [mɛə], (857) [tɔ̞o]). All these examples, moreover, show final devoicing. Lengthening and devoicing after a short, stressed vowel, either word-finally or syllable-finally, therefore appear to be allophonic.

It is found without lengthening, following a glottalised vowel, in ubhall (877) [uʔəl̥w] /uʔul̥/. It is also found in unstressed position (without devoicing) in teampull (834, 835) [tʃəm bɔl] /tʃəmːbɔl/. The same phoneme is found in a final consonant combination in allt (30-32) [aʊl̥t] /aːl̥t/, which as we have seen (p. 75), forms a minimal pair with fhalt ‘his hair’ /aːl̥t/. In this example, devoicing occurs before an unvoiced or devoiced (but not necessarily fortis) consonant. This suggests that devoicing here is probably a manifestation of preaspiration, as seen with other sonorant phonemes. However, the evidence in this instance is not sufficient to define this variation as allophonic.

**Phonemic definition**

N.B. In this definition I have given my own phonetic interpretation. The transcription found in the SGDS results is shown in brackets.

The rounded and velarised phoneme /lʷ/ (SGDS: [l̥w] or [l̥]) occurs only in non-initial position.

It has the allophone [lː] (SGDS: diphthong + [l̥], or [l̥w]) in word-final or syllable-final position, following a short, stressed (but not glottalised) vowel.

It has the variant [l̥] ~ [lː] (SGDS: [l̥] ~ [lː]) before an unvoiced or devoiced consonant.

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358 In this instance the SGDS spelling is a better representation of Colonsay pronunciation than the GOC-approved ubhal.
359 The word more generally used for ‘hair’ in this dialect is gruag (see p. 355).
Nasals

n

This is a postdental or alveolar nasal. It corresponds to certain occurrences of orthographic n in a non-palatalised environment. In Ternes’s classification, it represents the ‘plain’ nasal phoneme.

In initial position it is found principally as the lenited form of both /ɲ/ and /n̩/: mo nead (655) [mə n̩ɛd],\(^\text{360}\) do nighean (665) [də ni̯̊ʔən̩]; droch nàdur (643) [drəx nɛ ɾəɾ̥];\(^\text{361}\) mo nàire (645, 648) [mə nɛ r̥].\(^\text{362}\) In the case of the initial combination shn, the lenition extends to the whole initial combination, with no *(h) as might be suggested by the spelling: shniomh (787) [n̩ɨ ɣ].

In the SGDS results, initial [n] is also found in the comparative particle nas (spelt na’s in the SGDS) in forms such as na’s lugha (85) [nas l`y̞ʔy̞];\(^\text{363}\) na’s blàithe (108) [nás b̥l’a çi], and in the feminine genitive singular form of the definite article na in caol na coise (46) [k’yl’ na kəʃə],\(^\text{364}\) na h-eaglaise (369) [nə heg̊l’ iʃ], etc. Its occurrence in a-nuas (44) [n̩uəs], a-nunn (45) [nũn̩] probably implies the presence of lenition.

Medial [n] corresponds to orthographic single n in a non-palatalised environment. After a long vowel, a diphthong, or in (historically) epenthetic combinations, it is shown without modification: drùnadh (359) [d̥ruˑnəɣ],\(^\text{366}\) föghnaidh (436) [foˑn i̜ç]; grianach [ɡ̊rianax], Aonghas (50) [yü̞s]. Where it follows a short, stressed vowel, it is normally glottalised: anail (40) [ɛ’naɪ̞], leanaidh (572) [kɛ’niç]. In an epenthetic cluster, however, there is no glottalisation: mo sheanmhair (749) [mə hənɪvɑɾ];\(^\text{367}\) this follows the pattern already observed in the case of laterals.

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\(^{360}\) Headword is dà nead.
\(^{361}\) Headword is do nàbaidh. This word is not used in Colonsay, and the fieldworker presumably substituted droch nàdur as an alternative which would illustrate lenition of ‘broad’ n.
\(^{362}\) Headword is mo nàbaidh / mo nàire.
\(^{363}\) Headword is beag: lughə.
\(^{364}\) Headword is aobrann, which is not known on Colonsay. The usual word for ‘ankle’ is mughairne.
\(^{365}\) Headword is a-null, a-nunn.
\(^{366}\) Headword is dùin: dùnadh. The form drùin: drùnadh is found in Colonsay, Islay and Jura (cf. Grannd 2000: 34 and Map 41).
\(^{367}\) Headword is do sheanmhair.
Where \( n \) is doubled in the standard orthography, the transcription generally used in the SGDS results is \([n\text{’}]\), analysed here as representing the phoneme /\( n noodles /\), with the allophone \([n\text{”}]\) in the coda of a stressed syllable (see below). In the case of aonnam (42) [\( ù\text{’}nən\)], however, the transcription is \([’n]\), with a footnote indicating that the use of \([n\text{’}]\) (rather than \([n\text{”}]\)) was queried.

Unmodified \([n]\) is found occasionally in medial position in combination with other consonants: ciontach (187) [k’\( ù\text{’}ntəx\)], dleasdanas (314) [d\( ì\text{’}ləsəns\)] (with syncope of original d), coimhearsnach (642) [k\( ò\text{’}hs’nəx\)]. Devoicing is found medially before a fortis stop in fantail (412) [feh\( ë\text{’}l\)]. Unlike other nasals, /\( n /\) does not appear to cause word-internal voicing of a following stop, although it can trigger the nasal mutation (see p. 288).

In final position, \([n]\) is particularly prevalent. It is usually shown with final devoicing, but in some words it is shown voiced, e.g. leapanan (567) [\( ±\text{’}hən\text{’}n\)], radan (690) [\( ra\text{’}dən\)], spion (795) [\( s\bhi\text{’}n\)]. Voiced \([n]\) is also found in the definite article an, which appears only twice in the SGDS results: anns an t-sneachd (783) [\( e\text{’}ns an trəxə\)], and an t-uisge (890) [\( ënə̃θu\text{’}ʃ\text{’}i\)]. As might be expected, a number of the words with final [\( ñ\text{”} ~ [n]\) are plural forms in -an or -ean: làmhan (554) [\( l\text{’}e\text{’}n\text{’}n\)], übhlán (878) [\( ù\text{’}bən\text{’n\text{”}\text{’}n\text{”}\text{’}n\text{”}\text{’n\text{”}\text{’n\text{”}\text{’n\text{”}\text{’n\text{”}}}n\)]]. Others have the singular masculine suffix -an: amadan (29) [\( ë\text{’}mədən\)], bradan (120) [\( ë\text{’}rədən\)]. Other words include aran (52) [\( a\text{’}rən\)], bean (88) [\( b\text{’}e\text{’}n\text{’}n\)], duan (353) [\( d\text{’}uə\text{’n\text{”}\text{’n\text{”}}}n\)], sean (745) [\( f\text{’}n\)] and sròn (800, 801) [\( sr\text{’}n\text{’}n\text{’}n\text{”}\text{’n\text{”}}}n\text{”}].

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368 Headword is ann: annam.
369 Headword is cionta.
370 Headword is nàbaidh.
371 Headword is feith: feitheamh, and the form [fehu] is also given. This means ‘waiting’, while fantail is used for ‘staying’, or ‘living’ (in the sense of ‘dwelling’).
372 Headword is leabaidh: leabaidhean.
373 Headword is sneachda: anns an t-sneachda.
374 Headword is Alasdair.
Before /ɡ/, /n/ appears as [ŋ]:  man cuairt (267) [maŋ ɡuɻiʃ’t’ʃ’]. The form [ŋ] (lengthened) is found in fang (394) [fɛŋ ɡ], long (585) [l’oŋ ɡ], pongail (683) [poŋ gal'], but I shall argue that this is to be interpreted as an allophone of the /nˠ/ phoneme (see below).

It should be noted that [ŋ] never occurs independently in the Colonsay results, but always as an allophone of /n/ or /nˠ/.

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /n/ is normally realised as [n] in the SGDS results, and has the following allophone:

[ŋ] when it occurs before /ɡ/.

It has the variant [ŋ] ~ [n] when it occurs word-finally or before an unvoiced or devoiced consonant.

The glottalised form [’n] occurs only intervocally following a stressed short vowel. Because unglottalised [n] is also found in this environment, in situations involving epenthesis, [’n] cannot be defined as an allophone.

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375 Headword is cuairt.
376 Headword is puncaill. The pronunciation pongail is very widespread (SGDS, Vol. V: 16-17).
\[\text{n}\]

This is a palatal (or palatalised interdental) nasal, and corresponds to orthographic \textit{n} or \textit{nn} in a palatalised, non-lenited context.

In initial position, it is relatively rare in the \textit{SGDS} results, but is found in words beginning in unlenited \textit{n} followed by \textit{e} or \textit{i}. These include: \textit{nead} (653, 654) [ɲeːd, \textit{n}\text{e}̞d], \textit{Niall} (657) [nia\text{ɪ}l\text{ɭ}], \textit{nighean} (664) [n\text{ɪ}̞ɲ\text{i}\text{n}]. \textit{[n]} is also found initially in \textit{an-dé} (41) [nd\text{ɪ}z\text{ɭ}ˈɛ:], representing a palatalised form of [n], assimilated to the following palatalised affricate grouping [d\text{ɭ}z\text{ɭ}ˈ].

It also occurs in the initial combination [\textit{sɲ}] in \textit{sneachd} (581) [ʂɲɛxɡ̥] and \textit{snìomh} (784-786), which has a range of phonetic interpretations [ʂɲ\text{ɪ}ˈiːˈɣ : şɲ\text{ɪ}ˈɪːˈɣ : şɲiːˈɣ].

In \textit{nigheadarachd} (663) [ɲi\text{ɪ}dɜ\text{ɒr}axɡ̥],\textsuperscript{379} the transcription is [ɲˈɛ], not [nˈ]. This is the only instance of [ɲˈ] in the Colonsay results, and should be regarded as equivalent to [n]. The transcription [ɲˈ] (with subscript bar) is probably intended to signify alveolar rather than interdental articulation, but in any case there appears to be some degree of variation in the place of articulation of this phoneme (see \textit{snìomh} above).

Although examples with initial [n] are few, this symbol is frequently found in medial and final position. When it occurs in an intervocalic environment, glottalisation is generally found following a short, stressed vowel: \textit{duine} (360-362) [dʊˈɲɪ], \textit{glaine} (475) [ɡlˈʊɲɪ],\textsuperscript{380} \textit{na’s sine} (746) [na jɪˈɲɪ ɪ]. Glottalisation is absent in \textit{mòine} (625) [mɲɪɲɪ],\textsuperscript{381} where the preceding vowel is long, and in \textit{abhainnean} (4) [aˈvɲɪɲɪ],\textsuperscript{382} where it is unstressed. It is also absent in cases of epenthesis: \textit{ainn} (17, 18) [ɛɲɪ̞], including examples where historical epenthesis, while reflected in the spelling, is no

\textsuperscript{377} Headword is \textit{lòineag}. Form offered is [kl`aˑd̥aˑn̠s\text{ɲɛxɡ̥}] (= \textit{clàdan-sneachd}). Neither was recognised by my informant Flora Macneill.

\textsuperscript{378} The modified form [ɲˈɛ] is intended to represent an \textit{interdental} realisation of [n] (Vol. I: 136); the frequency with which this occurs in initial position (admittedly on a small sample) suggests that this articulation is the ‘default’ Colonsay pronunciation of /ɲ/ in initial position.

\textsuperscript{379} Headword is \textit{nigheadair}.

\textsuperscript{380} Comparative of \textit{glan}. Headword is \textit{glan}: \textit{glaine}.

\textsuperscript{381} Headword is \textit{mòin}: \textit{mòine}. Form offered is [fʊd̥ˈɭz酩ɲɪ] (= \textit{fòid mòine}).

\textsuperscript{382} Headword is \textit{abhainn}: \textit{aibhnichean}.
longer audible: gainmheach (449, 450) [ʝɛɲax], coingheall (228) [kɔɲaˑ] (contrast coinneal (229-230) [kɨɲaˑ]). For this reason, the glottalised form [ɨɲ] cannot be defined as allophonic.

[ɲ] also corresponds to double nn in medial position, again with glottalisation following a short, stressed vowel, as in bainne (68) [bɔɲi], coinneal (229, 230) [kɨɲaˑ], uinneag (885, 886) [uɲaŋ]. There is no glottalisation in fàinne (275) [kɨiɲi], nas doimhne (326) [nas ɹiɲi].

In the case of cluinnidh (207) [kl`uɲiç], it appears that the [′] following the vowel (which would be an unusual feature in the transcription of this dialect) is actually a misprint for [ɻ]. The corresponding entries for Islay (Points 53-56) all show glottalisation, e.g. Point 55 (Bowmore) [kl`uɲiç].

No distinction appears to be made in this dialect between the realisation of single and double orthographic n in a palatalised context. Thus sine and sinne are homophones: [ʃiɲi].

Where [ɲ] occurs medially before the palatalised stop [dꜰ], as in cinnteach (184, 185) [kɨɲ dꜰəx], cluínntinn (208) [kl`uiɲdꜰɜiɲ], word-internal voicing is found (see pp. 287-288).

In final position [ɲ] is usually devoiced. Again, no distinction is made between orthographic single n, as in arain (53) [aɾiɲ], coin (266) [kɔɲ], min (617) [miɲ]; and double n, as in abhainn (2, 3) [aɾiɲ], bruidhinn (127) [briɾiɲ], seinn (752) [ʃiɲi]. Final devoicing is by no means universal: anns a’ bhroinn (126) [ans ə vɾiɲ], buain (134) [bəɾɲiɲ] and the conditional form thogainn (853) [hoɡiɲ] are shown without it.

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383 Headword is domhain: doimhne.
384 Headword is cù: coin.
385 Headword is brù: anns a’ bhroinn.
As discussed under h, devoicing is also found medially in 's aithne (27, 28) [se\-ɲi],\(^{386}\) and froithneach (692) [fr\-ɲax].\(^{387}\) This implies that an original preceding [h] has become fused with the [ɲ] to form [ɲ]: *[se-ɲi], *[fr-ɲax]. This interpretation is further supported by the absence of glottalisation following a stressed short vowel in both cases, implying that the nasal is not perceived as following the vowel directly. Although it may appear a rather clumsy solution, it is probably best to analyse these words phonemically as /seɲə/, /frɲax/, in order to maintain the devoicing.

In a small group of words of one syllable, final [ɲ] is shown lengthened: binn (105, 106) [b\-ɲi], cinn (167) [k\-ɲij] and tinn (846) [t\-ɲin\-]. This is also the case in mion (619) [mɲi\-], where a note by the fieldworker (LSS: 5) suggests that the word actually supplied by the informant was minn, the plural of meann ‘kid’ (young goat).

Lengthening thus appears to be the rule in final position after a short, stressed [i], as is the case with /\-/ (cf. p. 179). However, the example of min (617) [mɲi\-] shows that lengthening in this case is not automatic, and hence cannot be allophonic.

For lengthening of medial [ɲ] in cinnteach (185) [k\-ɲi\-d\-z\-\-x], see Word-internal voicing (pp. 287-288).

In the case of faing (395) [f\-ɛiɲ\-'g'], the dative singular of fang (394) [fɛɲ\-q],\(^{388}\) the palatalised nasal is shown as [ɲ\-] before /\k/., just as unpalatalised /n/ appears as [n\-] before /\k/ in the base form (see p. 187). This is the only instance of [ɲ\-] to occur in the SGDS results for Colonsay, and is probably best regarded as phonetically equivalent to [ɲ].

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\(^{386}\) Headword is aithne.

\(^{387}\) Headword is raithneach.

\(^{388}\) Headword is fang: faing. The existence of a field name Fang Mór on Colonsay suggests that this word may in fact be masculine in this dialect, in which case faing would be the plural/gen. sg. On the other hand, the neighbouring field is recorded as Fang Bheag (Loder 1935: 426). The dative singular feminine form is no longer commonly found in this dialect (see p. 322).
**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /n/ has no allophones.

It has the variant [ɲ] ~ [ɲ] when it occurs word-finally.

The combination /h/ + /n/ is realised as [ɲ̥].

The glottalised form [ˈɲ] occurs only intervocally following a stressed short vowel. Because unglottalised [ɲ] is also found in this environment, in situations involving epenthesis, [ˈɲ] cannot be defined as an allophone.
This is a velarised interdental nasal, corresponding to certain occurrences of orthographic *n* or *nn* in a non-palatalised environment. As explained under *lˠ*, the superscript gamma [ɣ], rather than the grave accent [ˈ] is now the accepted IPA diacritic for ‘velarised’, and will be used in the phonemic transcription.389

This sound is realised with the tongue placed between the teeth, rather than on the alveolar ridge or behind the upper teeth as in the case of /n/. As has been observed in the case of /lˠ/, it is this interdental quality, as much as the accompanying velarisation, that gives this phoneme its ‘thick’ character. There is in practice remarkably little difference acoustically between the sounds [lˠ] and [nˠ] in intervocalic position, especially when glottalised; the placename *Bruach a’ Bheannain* [ˈbruxə’ve’n’ɨn], for example, is easily mistaken for *Bruach a’ Mheallain* [ˈbruxə’ve’l’ɨn].390

All the instances of initial [n’] recorded in the SGDS have orthographic *a* following, although this is usually realised phonetically as [ɛ] in this dialect: *nàire* (644, 648) [n’ɛːr ɪ], *naidheachd* (647) [n’ɛʔɛxɡ], *naomh* (651) [n’ɨɣ ʏ]. It is also found in words such as *Nollaig* [n’ɔ’ləɡ̥ˈ], *nuadh* [n’uaɣ], which are not listed in the SGDS.

[n’] is also found in the initial combination [sn’]: *snaim* (779) [sn’ʊ̂ɣ], *snàithlean* (780) [sn’ɛ’çɐn], *snàmh* (781) [sn’ɛ’ɣ]. The same combination is found in medial position in *cosnadh* (238) [kós’n’ɚɣ].

In non-initial position, the orthographic rendering is always double: *nn*.

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389 The symbol [n], much favoured by Celtic scholars to transcribe this sound, is used in the IPA system for a ‘uvular nasal’; in the Survey it serves (superscript) to indicate ‘nasal plosion’ (Vol. I: 137), but does not, in fact, appear in the Colonsay data.

390 *Bruach a’ Bheannain* is the name of the steep pass behind Scalasaig Farm, which used to carry the road across to Kiloran. Most people nowadays refer to it simply as ‘the Old Road’.
In intervocalic position, the *SGDS* shows [nˠ] in *ceannaich* (168) [k'ɛ̃’nˠiç], *teannaich* (838) [tʃ’ẽ’nˠiç], *chunnnaic* (383) [xu’nˠ’iç], with glottalisation following a stressed short vowel, as has been seen with other sonorants. Although there may be a slight degree of rounding in such instances, the sound concerned is best represented phonetically as [nˠ] rather than [nʷ], and /nˠ/ may thus be seen as the normal correlate of orthographic broad nn in medial position. As has been shown, single orthographic n in a non-palatalised, medial environment represents the phoneme /n/. Following a stressed vowel in final position, a rounded form of this phoneme is found. This is analysed in the *SGDS* results as a diphthong ending in [ʊ], followed by [nˠ]: *ceann* (163-165) [k’ɛ̃’nˠɪn̥], *clann* (196) [kl̥’ɛ̃’nˠɪn̥], *donna* (329) [dɔ’oʊ̃n̥]. Rounding is also found at the end of a syllable: *beanntan* (91) [b̥’ɛ̃’n̥dən̥].

As explained elsewhere (p. 76), I would interpret these words phonetically as [k’ɛ̃’nˠwˑ: kl̥’ɛ̃’wˑ: ʃonˠwˑ: b̥̃’ɛ̃’wˑdən̥], and phonemically as /kɛnˠ/: kl̥ɛnˠ: ʃonˠ: ʃɛnˠdən/. The form [nˠwˑ] is thus defined as an allophone of /nˠ/ in word-final or syllable-final position, following a stressed short vowel. Nasalisation is also found in the case of [ɛ] in this environment, and is also to be considered as allophonic (see p. 282).

Where final [n’] occurs in an unstressed environment, the articulation is simply [nˠ] (*SGDS* [n’]), with no rounding, but a very pronounced interdental articulation. This corresponds to orthographic nn in an unstressed syllable: *caorann* (150) [k’ɔ̃’rən’, *olann* (203) [ɔ’lən’]. *uileann* (884) [u’lən’].

The only word in the *SGDS* results not to be caught by this explanation is *contraigh* (242) [kɔn’draç], where rounding would be expected at the end of a syllable, but is not shown either as a diphthong in the *SGDS* transcription, or by doubling in the standard orthography. It would, however, be disproportionate to postulate a phonemic difference between /nˠ/ and */nˠ/ on the basis of a single example.

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391 The word *sann* (737) [sɪ̃’n̥d], is shown with unmarked [n]. This appears to be a transcription/typographical error.

392 Headword is *clòimh*. A footnote indicates that this word means ‘down’ in Colonsay.

393 In the case of *dorsan* (344) [dɔ̃’ən̥], the final consonant is shown as superscript [n’,] with a dot indicating retroflex articulation, presumably under the influence of the preceding retroflex [ʂ’. This is an unusual form, since other plural forms ending in -an have unmodified [n], and a footnote indicates that it was queried at the time.

394 Flora Macneill confirmed the pronunciation [kɔn’draç]. (Interview, 20 July 2011).
The form [ŋˑ] (lengthened) is found in fang (394) [fɛŋ ɡ], long (585) [l`oŋ ɡ], pongail (683) [poŋ ɡa̞l̠]. Because this form occurs only before the homorganic lenis stop /ɡ/, it may be defined as an allophone of /nˠ/ occurring in this phonetic environment.

Like other nasals, /nˠ/ causes voicing of a homorganic stop within a word: cunntas (289) [kun`dəs], aontachadh (51) [y`n`dəxəɣ], pongail (683) [poŋ gal]. This is discussed at pp. 287-288.

As with other voiced consonants, final devoicing may occur.

Phonemic definition

The phoneme /nˠ/ is normally shown as [n`] in the SGDS transcription.

It has the allophone [nʷˑ] ~ [n̥ʷˑ] (shown as diphthong + [n`] ~ [n`] in SGDS) when it occurs after a stressed short vowel in word-final or syllable-final position.

It has the allophone [ŋ`] when it is followed by /ɡ/.

The glottalised form [‘n`] is found intervocalically following a stressed short vowel.

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395 Headword is puncail.
396 Headword is aontaich: aontachadh.
This is a bilabial nasal. It corresponds to orthographic \textit{m}, and in the \textit{SGDS} results, \textit{[m]} is the only symbol used to represent this sound. As already noted, it presents fewer complexities than the ‘coronal/dental’ nasals. In particular, there is no separate palatalised form, or even any form of j-glide after \textit{[m]}: \textit{meall} (609) [mɛ̃ɬˈɛɬˈʃ] and \textit{meadhg} (607) [mɛɬˈɬ] sit alongside \textit{math} (603) [me] and \textit{moladh} (627) [mɔɬˈlɬˈɣ]. This is in accordance with the pattern already observed for other labial consonants in this dialect.

Initial \textit{[m]} is found in a large number of words, including \textit{maide} (593) [mɛˈɬˈdˈzɪ], \textit{miorbhailt} (620) [mi ɾəɬˈʃ], \textit{moladh} (627) [mɔɬˈɬˈɣ], \textit{muc} (633) [muxɬ], as well as in the possessive adjective \textit{mo: mo bhàta} (83) [mɔ va ɬə], \textit{mo sheanmhair} (749) [mə hɛnˈɣəɾ],\textsuperscript{397} \textit{mo shròn} (801) [mə ɾəɬˈəɫɬ]. It is also found in the initial combination [sm] in \textit{smuilceach} (778) [smʊɬˈʃəɬ].

Medially, \textit{[m]} is found in \textit{amadan} (29) [ɛˈmədən],\textsuperscript{398} \textit{lomairt} (584) [ɪˈo məʃˈtʃ]. As with other sonorants, glottalisation occurs intervocally following a stressed short vowel. Glottalisation is not present following a long vowel in \textit{Seumas} (755) [ʃəməs], nor in epenthetic clusters in \textit{aimsir} (13, 14) [ɛmɨʃˈɪɾ], \textit{farmad} (850) [farɪmɨd].\textsuperscript{399} The contrast between glottalised and unglottalised forms is well illustrated by the pair: \textit{imire} (516)\textsuperscript{400} / \textit{iomradh} (527) [iˈmɪɾɪ : iˈmɪɾə], where the second word has \textit{[m]} in an epenthetic combination with \textit{[r]}.

In common with other nasals, \textit{[m]} in this dialect usually has the effect of ‘raising’ a contiguous [a] sound to [ɛ]: \textit{math} (603) [me], \textit{maide} (593) [mɛˈɬˈdˈzɪ], \textit{amadan} (29) [ɛˈmədən], \textit{cam} (144) [kɛmɬ]. There are, however, exceptions to this rule: the words \textit{marbh} (600) [mariŋ] and \textit{màirnealach} (596) [maɬˈnəlˈəɫəɾ] are shown with unraised [a], reinforcing the view that this change reflects a difference in the distribution of separate phonemes, rather than [ɛ] being an allophone of /a/. There are no recorded instances of the sequence *[am] or *[a’m] in the Colonsay data.

\textsuperscript{397} Headword is \textit{do sheanmhair}.
\textsuperscript{398} Headword is \textit{Alasdair}.
\textsuperscript{399} Headword is \textit{tnùth}.
\textsuperscript{400} Headword is \textit{imir}.
Lengthening of final [m] is found word-finally following a stressed short vowel: àm (33) [ɛmˑ], cam (144) [kɛmˑ], trom (871, cf. 634) [trɔmˑ]. Lengthening is also found, more surprisingly, and with devoicing, before a fortis stop in one version of the English loanword lamp (556) [l̠ɛm̥ˑp] (557 has [l̠ɛm̥p]).401

For lengthening of [m] before a homorganic stop in teampull (834, 835) [tʃɛmˑbə'], trombaid (873) [tromˑba'd̥ʃ], combanach (240) [kɔ m̥bɔnax], tompachadh (526) [ɪmˑbəxəɣ], see Word-internal voicing (pp. 287-288).

In unstressed position, in epenthetic combinations, or following a long vowel or diphthong, final [m] is not lengthened, and may then be shown with devoicing: tuiteam (874) [tuʃd̥zəm], ainm (17, 18) [ɛɲɪm], leum (575,576) [lekəm], druim (351) [dʁyɪm]. In a number of instances, however, [m] appears voiced under these conditions: annam (42) [ʊɲˈnəm], arm (61) [aɾɪm] (the plural/gen. sg. form airm (62) is shown as [yɾɪm]), cuirm (283) [kɔrɪm]. The word gorm is shown voiced in 497 [ɡ̥ʊɾəm], but devoiced in 498 [ɡɔɾɪm]. Once again, final devoicing appears to be a less than universal rule in Colonsay Gaelic, and certainly not allophonic.

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /m/ has the following allophone:

[mˑ] when it occurs word-finally following a stressed, short vowel, or word-internally before a homorganic stop.

It has the variant [m̥] ~ [m] when it occurs word-finally in other conditions, or before a fortis stop.

The glottalised form [ˈm] occurs only intervocalically following a stressed short vowel. Because unglottalised [m] is also found in this environment, in situations involving epenthesis, [ˈm] cannot be defined as an allophone.

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401 Headword is lampa. As an English loan-word, lamp is perhaps more prone to variation in its Gaelicised form.
Vibrant

This phoneme is variously articulated as an alveolar trill or flap, or a voiced alveolar approximant. In the SGDS results it is generally shown as [r], irrespective of its actual articulation, but [ɾ] and, in one instance only, [r'] are also found, indicating a trill, approximant, palatalised trill and single flap respectively. [ɾ] is only shown in initial position, although a superscript form [ɻ] is found in a few words before a homorganic nasal. Further research (see pp. 84-89) has shown that these articulations are variants of the /r/ phoneme, reflecting degrees of emphasis, rather than separate phonemes or allophones.

In the overwhelming majority of cases it corresponds to orthographic r or rr, but in the combinations cn, gn, mn, the corresponding lenited forms chn, ghn, mhn, and the derived form t-sn, it corresponds to the orthographic element n.

In the SGDS it is found initially, in its various realisations, in rallsa (685) [ɾaɻsɐʃ], reic (696, 697) [ɾæ̝kʃ], radan (690) [ɾaɗan], righ (705) [ɾ𝑖̝ʃ], rud (720, 721) [ɾʊd]. In ruith (696, 697) [ɾuθ], it is shown with rounding. It also occurs as the second element in numerous initial combinations: bradan (120) [ɾbaɗan], cnoc (213, 214) [ɾko̝kʃ], grian (504) [ɾgia̝n], sròn (800) [ɾrɔn], tric (868) [ɾɪɾ̥ʃ], and as the final element in the combination [ɾʂ]: sgriobhadh (764) [ɾʂri̝və̝ɾ].

In medial position it is found in caraid (151) [kaɾi̝ɾ]ʃ], cuiridh (277, 278) [kuɾi̝ɾ], barrannan (80) [ɾaɾa̝ɾan], éirich (374) [ɛɾi̝ɾ], and with devoicing in oirre (20) [uɾ̥ə : ur̥ə]. Glottalisation is observed following a stressed short vowel. In epenthetic combinations, glottalisation is absent: urball (371) [ʊɾbəl], dearbh (303) [dəɾ̥vəɾ]a.

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402 The SGDS defines [ɾ] as a voiced alveolar fricative.
403 Headword is ràcan.
404 Headword in both cases is reic / ruith.
405 Headword is barran.
406 Headword is air: oirre. A footnote also gives the plural form as orra [ɾ̥ɜə / ɾ̥ə]. The absence of glottalisation, in both instances, probably indicated that the words were elicited in a phrasally unstressed environment.
407 Headword is earball.
It appears very occasionally as the second element in medial combinations, e.g. oibrich (668) [ɣɪ̞rɪ̞],\textsuperscript{408} contraigh (242) [kənˈdraç].

In final position it is found in a large number of words, including mór (628) [moˈɾ], piathar (679) [piʔɔɾ], athair (63,64) [aɦəɾ], fior (431) [fiɾˈ]. As with other voiced consonants, final devoicing is common, although not universal. The word bàrr (78) [baˈɾ] is the only instance in the SGDS results in which the symbol [ɾ] appears in final position.

Before a homorganic stop, whether palatalised or not, /t/ takes on a fricative quality. This is represented in the SGDS as [ʃ], or occasionally as [ʃ] or simply [s]; in some cases an alternative form is given, with a preceding superscript [r]. The dot under the [s] indicates a retroflex articulation ([ʂ], in current IPA practice). As explained above (p. 84), I prefer to use the transcription [ɾʃ] to indicate that frication is present, as a secondary articulation, in addition to the vibrant (and also to make the point that this is an allophone of /t/, not /s/). Examples from the SGDS include mart (113) [mɛʃˈd'],\textsuperscript{409} ceart (174, 175) [kˈaʃd], cèardach (173) [kˈɛ ʂˈdɔx], man cuairt (267) [maŋ ʐɦuɕtˈʃ'],\textsuperscript{410} càirdean (152) [kəɾˈʃiɲ], I would prefer to transcribe these as [mɛɾˈd : kˈarˈd : kˈɛ ɾˈdɔx : maŋ ʐɦuɾɛɾʃ : kʰaɾ ɾˈdʒiɲ], with [ɾ] functioning as an allophone of /t/ before a homorganic stop.

The same transcription is used by the SGDS in the words ursaimn (895) [ʊʃˈən] and dorsan (344) [dɔʃˈən'], where the orthographic representation is rs. In my own research (see p. 87) I have found the pronunciation to be [urʃɪɲ] and [dɔɾˀən] respectively.\textsuperscript{411} Similarly in farsuing (399), the SGDS transcription is [faʃɪɲ : faˈʃi ɲ], which I would transcribe as [faʃɪɲ].

\textsuperscript{408} The glottalisation in this example is surprising, and perhaps influenced by the verbal noun obair.
\textsuperscript{409} Headword is bó.
\textsuperscript{410} Headword is cuairt.
\textsuperscript{411} Because I have concluded that variations in the articulation of /t/ are due to prosodic, rather than phonemic factors, I have not further specified the quality of [ɾ] at this point.
Preaspiration before a non-homorganic fortis stop is shown in the SGDS results as devoicing of the vibrant: adharc (7) [Ɂɭɮɭ], cearc (171, 172) [kɭɭ],412 coire (233, 234) [kɚtɭ], corp (243) [kɭɭ], oidheirp (671) [Ɂɭɭ]. My own research has shown the presence of [c] in examples involving a palatalised velar stop: adhaircean [Ɂɭɬɭ], coire [kɭɭɭ], Tòrr an Tuirc [təɾəɭɭɭ].

Devoicing and aspiration are also found in the SGDS results where /r/ is combined with a preceding /h/. This takes varying forms: peathraichean (680) [pɛɭɭ],414 mo shròn (801) [məɭɭ], thràigheadh (862) [hɭhɤ],415 ‘ga threadhadh (866) [ɡa ɭɭɭ], threadh e (864) [ɡɛɭɭ] a. Mary Ann MacAllister used a simple, voiced vibrant in all cases, with no trace of an [h] sound: [piuˑɭɭ : məɾəː石化 : ɡəɾəɭɤ : æʔə̯j ə] (cf. pp. 84-89). This may reflect a process of phonetic simplification in the 55 years since the fieldwork for the Survey was carried out, or may just be a feature of this particular informant’s idiolect.

Before a homorganic nasal, the SGDS shows alternative forms with and without a superscript [ɭ]: cårn (154) [kəɭ : kəˈʔ], dorn (339, 340) [ɭɭ : ɭɭ] (the plural/gen. sg. form duirn (341) appears as [ɭɭ]).416 In the case of tighearna (845) [tʃiʔə-nə], the transcription [ə] represents [ə] + [ɭ]. I have found a vibrant to be present in all cases, the precise articulation once again varying with the degree of emphasis.

412 170 is written as [kɭɭ],412 while 441 has cearc fhraoich [kɭɭ rɪ ɭ]
413 See footnote 105.
414 Headword is piuthar: peathraichean. Mary Ann MacAllister insisted that piuthraichean, not peathraichean, is the form used on Colonsay. Other speakers used the form piutharan
415 Headword is tràigh: tràigheadh.
416 The SGDS headwords are given as dorn, duirn respectively, with no indication of length.
**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /r/ is generally transcribed as [r] in the *SGDS* results for Colonsay, although the forms [ɾɹɾʹɾ] are also found, indicating different qualities of articulation. These have been shown to depend on prosodic factors, involving the degree of emphasis placed on the word in question, and are not phonologically significant. In this definition, only the form [r] is used.

It has the following allophone:

[ɾ] (shown in the *SGDS* results as [s’ s]) before a homorganic (dental or alveolar) stop, either plain or palatalised.

It has the variant [ɾ] ~ [r] when it occurs word-finally.

The combination /ɾ/ + /kʲ/ is realised as [ɾçɡ’] (shown as [ɾɡ’] in the *SGDS*).

The glottalised form [’r] occurs only intervocically following a stressed short vowel. Because unglottalised [r] is also found in this environment, in situations involving epenthesis, [’r] cannot be defined as an allophone.
SEMI-VOWELS

\(i\)

This phoneme is a high front, unrounded semi-vowel. In Gaelic it corresponds to orthographic \(dh\), \(gh\) in a palatalised environment, although other orthographic representations also occur (see below). In Colonsay Gaelic it functions as the lenited form of \([q'z']\), \([q'\])

It occurs initially in \(dh\eth\) (299-300) \([i\epsilon]\),\(^{417}\) \(gheibh\) (385) \([i\circ]\),\(^{418}\) and in the preterite forms \(gheall\) (467) \([i\iota\lambda]\), \(dh\ 'iarr\) (508) \([i\iota\iota\iota]\), \(dh\ 'innis\) (521) \([i\iota\iota]\). In some varieties of Gaelic these words are pronounced with a voiced palatal fricative \([j]\), although the \(SGDS\) results are somewhat ambiguous in this regard (Vol. I: 118-119). Jones, writing about Jura, states that ‘the variety under discussion here does not have a voiced palatal fricative’ (Jones 2011: 26); the same holds true for Colonsay.

Medially, \([i\iota]\) occurs in \(b\o\i\acute{o}\h\)ach (118) \([b\o\i\acute{i}\o\acute{\o}\x]\), \(co\i\acute{m}\h\)ech (227) \([k\o\i\acute{i}\i\o\acute{\o}\x]\), \(s\o\i\acute{d}\h\h\)echad\(\i\acute{h}\) (812) \([s\o\i\acute{i}\o\i\acute{\o}\x]\). Note that where it follows a stressed, short vowel, there is accompanying glottalisation, which serves to emphasise the consonantal character of this phoneme.

By far the largest number of instances of \([i\iota]\) show it either in final position (\(c\o\i\acute{m}\h\)h (203) \([k\o\i\acute{l}\o\i\acute{i}\i\o\acute{\o}\i\i\o]\), \(l\o\i\acute{a}\h\)gh (561, 562) \([l\o\i\acute{\i}\i\o\i]\), \(s\o\i\acute{i}\d\h\)h (811) \([s\o\i\acute{\i}\i]\)) or following a vowel and preceding a consonant: \(d\o\i\acute{m}\h\) (296) \([d\o\i\acute{\i}\i]\), \(n\o\i\acute{a}\h\)me (583) \([n\o\i\acute{\i}\i\i]\),\(^{419}\) \(m\o\i\acute{a}\h\)me (635) \([m\o\i\acute{\i}\i\i]\). In these environments it could reasonably be analysed as forming the coda of a diphthong. However, the presence of forms such as \(b\u\i\d\h\)h (130) \([b\u\i\i]\), \(c\u\i\d\h\)h (262) \([k\u\i\i]\),\(^{420}\) \(f\o\i\)am (443) \([f\o\i\i]\), where it follows a marked diphthong, suggests that it is in fact being interpreted as a consonant, and not as the third component of a triphthong. No triphthongs are recorded in the \(SGDS\) results for Colonsay.

\(^{417}\) Headword is \(de: d\o\i\acute{h}\) (299), \(de: dh\eth\) (300).
\(^{418}\) Headword is \(fa\i\acute{h}: g\o\i\h\)
\(^{419}\) Headword is \(l\o\i\acute{m}: l\i\h\)
\(^{420}\) Cf. the comparative form in \(c\u\i\d\h\)h: \(c\u\i\d\h\)h (263) \([k\u\i\i]\), with a full vowel.
This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that, in the majority of cases where [i] occurs finally, it is shown with final devoicing, like other voiced consonants: a’ chruidh (261) [ɔ xrʊŋ],[421] féidh (418) [feː],[422] taigh (820, 821) [tvɪ̞ə].

Unlike other (non-phonemic) semi-vowels, [i] is not normally shown superscript in the SGDS results. The only exception is in a footnote to the headword fiù (433), which references the form fitheach [fi‘iʌx]. The [ɪ̞] in this instance may be explained as a momentary continuation of the [i] sound, in transition, following the glottalised interval.

The form [ɪ], which is presumably intended to indicate a more relaxed pronunciation than [i], is found only in the word laigh (547) [lɛɪə], with final devoicing. This may be regarded as an isolated, non-allophonic variant.

**Phonemic definition**

The phoneme /i/ has no allophones.

The variant [ɪ] is found in one instance only, in the word laigh (547) [lɛɪə].

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[421] Headword is crodh: cruidh.
[422] Headword is fiadh: féidh.
As discussed in the introductory section, the identification of this phoneme must be considered provisional. It is a high, back, rounded semi-vowel, and occurs only in the phonetic realisation [u̯] (with devoicing) in the verb *treabha* (863) [tre̱], and its preterite form *threabh e* (864) [hre̱e̱i̯a]. In the absence of further evidence, it is impossible to offer a phonemic definition.

In the LSS notes (cover page, back), Hamp includes a phoneme /w/ to cover these two occurrences.

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423 Hamp queried the ‘intrusive [j]’ in *threabh e* (LSS), but I obtained the same form.
Summary table

The scheme of consonant phonemes in Colonsay Gaelic is therefore as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STOPS</th>
<th>Palatalised:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lenis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilabial</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Velar</td>
<td>g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRICATIVES</th>
<th>Voiced</th>
<th>Unvoiced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<th>Velarised</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<td>Back</td>
<td>[y]</td>
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We come, finally, to an analysis of diphthongs.

The SGDS results offer a bewildering variety of representations of diphthongs in this dialect, with 57 different combinations of two vowel symbols appearing in the results as published. No fewer than 30 of these occur only once in the data, while 16 appear in only two headwords each. This means that only 11 diphthong combinations occur more than twice in the entire data set.

From the preceding analysis of the vowel system in this dialect, it will be seen that many of the components of these diphthongs have been defined as allophones or variants of vowel phonemes. In a phonemic analysis of diphthongs, therefore, these components should be transcribed using the phonemes of which they are part. The combination [ęọ] appears in one version of beò (95); [ę] has been defined as a variant of /ɛ/ and [ọ] as a variant of /o/ (see pp. 102, 118), meaning that [ęọ] is to be analysed phonemically as /bɛo/.

This approach will lead to a considerable reduction in the number of diphthong combinations to be regarded as ‘phonemic’.

With very few exceptions, diphthongs are shown in the Colonsay results within dropped square brackets: [ ]. According to the explanation given (Vol. I: 117-118), this is intended to signify that ‘the second element is of about equal prominence with the first’. It is difficult to verify this claim spectrographically, since the diphthong will show up on the spectrogram as a gradient between start-point and end-point, making exact measurements difficult to achieve. Since this ‘equal prominence’ of the two elements appears to be such a universal feature of Colonsay Gaelic, there is no need to indicate it in phonemic transcription, where no comparison with other dialects is being made. I shall therefore dispense with dropped square brackets in phonemic transcription, writing diphthongs simply as a succession of vowel phonemes.

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424 The transcription [ęọ] is found at (96).
Diphthongs in Gaelic function in the same way as long vowels. This is particularly relevant in relation to issues of stress, glottalisation and tone (see *Non-segmental features*, pp. 228-296). Among other things, it means that, like long vowels, diphthongs are usually only found in stressed syllables, and are not followed by glottalised segments.
Commonly occurring diphthongs

Five combinations [aʊ, eʊ, ɛɪ, ua, ui] occur with some regularity in the SGDS results (more than five instances). These will be dealt with first, and the remaining pairs will then be grouped according to their onset symbol.

### aʊ

This diphthong occurs (in the SGDS results) only before the velarised lateral [lˑ], in word-final or syllable-final position: ball (75) [b̥aʊ], dall (292) [d̥aʊ]; gallda (456) [ɡ̥aʊ]̊, allt (30-32) [ɬ̥aʊ]̊t].

The word geall (466) [ɡ̥ˈaʊ]̊ and its preterite form gheall (467) [i̯ˈaʊ]̊ are shown with [aʊ] rather than [αʊ]. Since these represent two of only three recorded instances of the symbol [α] in the Colonsay data set, its use may be regarded as an anomaly, and treated as equivalent to [aʊ].

In my treatment of lateral consonants, I argue that Colonsay Gaelic has a rounded form of [lˑ] which functions as a separate phoneme /lʷ/ (pp. 75-77). On this reading, the rounding is seen as a property of the following lateral, rather than the second element of a diphthong. Forms with [aʊ] (or [αʊ]) in the SGDS results are therefore rendered phonemically as /alʷd/, /balʷ/, /dalʷ/, etc. Such an interpretation renders the use of this diphthong in either phonemic or phonetic transcription superfluous. It is worth noting that, in the neighbouring dialects of Islay, neither a diphthong nor rounding is shown in these words. Instead the [lˑ] is shown as lengthened: [ɬ̥aʊ]̊t : b̥aʊ]̊t : d̥aʊ]̊t].

The word rallsa (685, 686) is transcribed [raʊl̥wʊsɪ] in the SGDS results. This transcription implies the presence of a semi-vowel ‘glide’ into the rounded lateral, rather than a diphthong. The word can be written phonemically as /ralʷʊsa/, bringing it into line with the treatment of allt, ball, dall.

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425 The other occurrence is unstressed in snàithlean (780) [sn`ɛ̃çaɲ]. In LSS, Jackson comments: ‘EH here writes with my α’, suggesting this was not Hamp’s usual notation.
426 Point 55 (Bowmore).
427 Headwords are ràcan (685), do ràcan (686).
This diphthong presents certain similarities to [əʊ]. It too occurs in the SGDS results before the velarised lateral [lʲ] in word-final or syllable-final position: meall (609) [mələ̆ʊə], Bealtuinn (86, 87) [b̥ələ̆ʊə\ ə̆d̥n]. More frequently, however, it occurs before the velarised nasal [nʲ] in the same environments, when it is usually shown as nasalised: ceann (163-165) [k'ɛ̃õn̥], gleann (477, 478) [ɡ̥l̥'ɛ̃õn̥], beanntan (91) [b̥ɛ̃õn̥d̥ə̆n̥].

It will be recalled that in Colonsay, as in other Argyll dialects, orthographic a is often ‘raised’ to [ɛ] in the presence of a nasal consonant. Where it occurs before a nasal, [ɛʊ] can therefore be regarded as the ‘raised’ equivalent of [əʊ], and much of what is discussed above in relation to [əʊ] can be applied mutatis mutandis to this diphthong. This also explains why there are no examples of [əʊ] occurring before [nʲ].

It is, however, more difficult to find minimal pairs for this diphthong in the SGDS results, the only true one being sean / seann (745/747) [ʃɛn̥ : ʃɛ̃n̥], which as it happens are positional variants of the same word.

As in the case of [lʲ], I maintain that Colonsay Gaelic has a rounded form of /nˠ/, which I have transcribed as [nʷ]. Unlike /lʷ/, this sound does not form a separate phoneme (see p. 76). As in the case of [əʊ], the rounding is seen, on this interpretation, as a property of the following lateral or nasal, rather than forming the second element of a diphthong. Forms with [ɛu] in the SGDS results can therefore be rendered phonetically as [mɛlʷ : k'ɛnʷ : ɡlɛnʷ : ɬɛnʷdə̆n̥], etc., and phonemically as /mɛlʷ : k'ɛnʷ : ɡlɛnʷ : ɬɛnʷdə̆n/, etc. (Once again, cf. forms for Islay: [mɪʃl̥בוד' : k'ɛn̥בוד' : ɡl̥ɛn̥בוד' : ɬɛn̥בוד´]),. The use of this diphthong thus becomes similarly superfluous in both phonetic and phonemic transcription.\^\^}

\^\^\^Headword in the latter case is seann-té [ʃɛ̃õd̥z'ĕ].

\^\^\^Point 55 (Bowmore).

\^\^\^\^An alternative analysis would be to regard the forms [əʊ ēʊ] as allophones of /a ɛ/ before [lʰ] and [nʰ], although in my opinion this step is not necessary.
In the case of *sannt* (737) [s̥̃̌əñ̥̌t], *seann-té* (747) [ʃ̥̃̌əñ̥̌t̥̃̌'e], *anns an* (783) [ɛʊ̃ən̥], and *teann* (837) [tʃ̥̃̌ɛʊ̃̌], the following [n] is not shown as velarised in the SGDS results, although there is evidence in the LSS notes that the fieldworker attempted to correct this in the case of *sannt* and *teann*. I would maintain that in all these cases the following nasal is both velarised and rounded.

431 Headword is *sneachda: anns an t-sneachda* [ɛʊ̃ən tɾ̥̃̌x̥̃̌]. In this instance, the diphthong is not shown within dropped square brackets. The SGDS entry must have been elicited with some degree of stress on *anns*, since this phrase would normally be pronounced [as anˈtɾ̥̃̌] by Colonsay speakers.
This diphthong is found in the words *bantrach* (77) [b̥ɛɪɲd'zirəx], *cainnt* (142) [kɛɪɲd'z'], one version of *cnàimh* (210) [kɾɛiɲ̥] (209 has [kɾɛiɲ]), *faing* (395) [fɛiɲ]q', *làimhsich* (555) [lɛiɲʃɪ], *seinn* (752) [ʃɛiɲ].

It would be tempting to see this diphthong as a positional variant (possibly an allophone) of [ɛ] before [ɲ] (or [ŋ']) in final position or when followed by a palatalised consonant, were it not for the examples *cnàimh* and *làimhsich*. However, the presence of these two forms without following [ɲ] means that it should be regarded as phonemic. Because [i] has been defined as an allophone of the /i/ phoneme, the diphthong should be transcribed phonemically as /ɛi/.

The modified forms [ɛ̈i] and [ɛ̈i] are discussed below.

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432 Headword is *fang*: *faing* (dat. sg.). The nominative is given at 394 as *fang* [fɛŋ]. The dative singular of feminine nouns is generally not used in Colonsay Gaelic; moreover, the existence of the field name *Fang Mór* would suggest that *fang* is masculine in Colonsay, and that this form is in fact plural/gen. sg. On the other hand, the neighbouring field is given in Loder’s list as *Fang Bheag*, so there is some inconsistency (Loder 1935: 426).
This diphthong is found in the following words: *gruthan* (6) [gr̥uaŋ], *a-nuas* (44) [n̥uaɕ], *buain* (134) [b̥uəŋ], *duan* (353) [d̥uaŋ], *ruamhar* (719) [ɾuaŋ], *uaigneach* (875) [uaŋʰna̞x] and the genitive form *na h-uamha* (876) [nə həuaŋ].

In another set of words it combines with [i], in various phonetic guises, to form what might, on an alternative reading, be considered a triphthong. These include the comparative form *cruaidhe* (263) [kr̥uəj] (262 has the positive *cruaidh* with a subtly different diphthong [kr̥uʔi]), *fuaim* (443) [f̥uəj], *luaidhe* (586) [l¨uaŋ], and the comparative form *nas luaithe* [nas l¨uaŋ]. The diacritic in the last example is the syllabic marker [], which appears nowhere else in the Colonsay results; presumably the transcription [uaŋ] is also intended to signify that [i] belongs to a separate syllable, and hence that this sequence is to be interpreted as diphthong + [i], rather than as a triphthong (see discussion, p. 201).

Both /u/ and /a/ have been defined as phonemes in this dialect, and the diphthong /ua/ may therefore be considered to be phonemic.

The modified forms [uʌ uə uɤ̞ uɤ̞ uɤ] are discussed below.

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433 Headword is àdha, a word which is not known on Colonsay. The pronunciation of *gruthan* with a diphthong is a little surprising, since with the intervening *th* it might be expected to be pronounced *[gروح]*. The spelling *griuan* would be a better representation of the Colonsay pronunciation.

434 Note the absence of dropped square brackets. It appears that their omission is merely an inconsistency in the transcription.

435 Headword is *uaimh: uamha*. 
ui

This diphthong is found in the comparative form *na’s buidhre* (115) [nas ƀuiři], in *cluinntinn* (208) [kl’ui̯nd’z’i̯ɲ], *cruinn* (264) [krui̯ɲ], *muinntir* (638) [m̥ui̯nd’z’ɪ̣r], *suim* (814) [suim], and the plural/gen. sg. form *tuill* (858) [tuill].

Both /u/ and /i/ have been defined as phonemes in this dialect, and the diphthong /ui/ may therefore be considered to be phonemic.

The modified forms [uɬ uɨ uɬ] are discussed below.

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436 Headword is toll: tuill.
Less commonly occurring diphthongs

The remaining diphthongs found in the SGDS results will now be considered.

Diphthongs beginning with [i]

Three diphthong combinations beginning with [i] occur more than twice in the Colonsay data set:

[ia] is found in the following words: grian (504, 505) [gr̥iaŋ], Niall (657) [ɲia̠l̠] (note absence of square brackets round the diphthong), srian (797-799) [sr̥iaŋ].

[iɪ] is found in one version of a-riamh (58) [aɪɪ] (57 has [r̥’ɪɪɝ]), one version of bliadhna (110) [bɭ’ɪɪɲ̥’] and its plural bliadhnachan [bɭ’ɪɪ̠ nsəŋ̥] (111 has [bɭ’ɪɪɲ̥’]), cliabh (199, 200) [kl̠’ɪɪɝ], iasgach (510) [ɪɪ̠̬ şəx], sliasaid (771, 772) [sʎɭɪ̠ sɪd̥ʃ].

[iɪ] is found in ionnsachadh (529) [iɪ̠ʃ’əx̥ɣ] (note absence of square brackets), ionnsaidh (530) [iɪ̠ʃ’ɪç], reusanta (700) [aɪɪʃəndə].

Two pairs occur twice in the data:

[iiu] is found in biadh (104) [bɭ’ɪɪɜ] and fiadhach (419) [fɭ’ɪɪç]

[iɨ] is found in bliadhna (111) [bɭ’ɪɨɲ̥’] (110 has [bɭ’ɪɨɲ̥’] – see above) and fiadh (417) [fɭ’ɪɨɭ]

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437 Headword in 799 is dà shrian, and the form given is [ə r̥iaŋ] (= a shrian).
438 Plural form is recorded in a footnote.
439 Headword is sliabh / sliasaid in 771, and mo shliabh / mo shliasaid, given as [mɭ’ɪɪʃəd̥ʃ], in 772.
440 The form [ɪʊ̠ nsɪç] is given as an alternative, but a footnote states that this form was prompted, and is not used on Colonsay.
441 This word is remarkable in that the usual ‘breaking’ of [eː] to [ia] in northern forms of Gaelic is reversed, with Colonsay showing a ‘broken’ form, while most Outer Hebridean dialects have [eː]. Cf. Jackson (1968).
The following six pairs occur only once:

[iə] is found in *a’ cheud* (182) [ɕiəd][442]

[iɻ] is found in *iarraidh* (509 – verbal noun) [iɻɻɪɾɻ] (preterite *dh ‘iarr* given at 508 as [ɻɪɨɾɻ])

[ivê] is found in *fiach* (433) [fjûx][443]

[iu] is found in *a shiùil* (754) [ɻhɨuɻ][444]

[iûû] is found in one version of *a-riamh* (57) [rɻɨuɻɻ] (as already noted, 58 has [ɻɻɨuɻ])

[iû] is found in *dh ‘iarr* (508) [iɻɻɪɾɻ][445] (509 has *iarraidh* [iɻɻɪɾɻ] – see above)

In addition, [iu] (with lowered [i] in onset) is found in *triùir* (869) [trɻɨuɻ], although a footnote warns (correctly) that this word is rarely used in Colonsay. This is the only instance of a diphthong beginning with [i], and can perhaps be discounted.

**Analysis**

Such a wide range of representations in the *SGDS* results suggests that the fieldworker, Eric Hamp, was trying to catch some very subtle variations in the articulation of these diphthongs. However, for purposes of phonemic description we need to try and derive some degree of abstraction from the raw data, according to the principles already enunciated.

/i/ and /a/ have been defined as phonemes in this dialect. The combination /ia/ may therefore be regarded as phonemic.

/i/ and /u/ have been defined as phonemes in this dialect. The combination /iu/ may therefore be regarded as phonemic.

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442 Headword is *ceud.*
443 Headword is *fiù.*
444 Headword is *seòl: a shiùil.*
445 Headword is *iarr: dh ‘iarr.*
[ɪ] has been defined as an allophone, and [ɨ ɨ̞ ɨ̝] as free variants, of the /ə/ phoneme. The combinations [iɪ iɨ i̞ i̝] may therefore be regarded as variants of the diphthong /iə/.

/i/ and /u/ have been defined as phonemes in this dialect. The combination /iu/ may therefore be regarded as phonemic.

Forms involving [tᵢ uᵢ u̯] as the second element present a problem. These sounds have been defined as variants within the /i/ phoneme (pp. 53-54). Following the approach adopted thus far would lead us to regard the diphthongs [iʊi iʊi i̞ɪ] as variants of /iʊi/. Instinctively, however, it seems a little counter-intuitive to analyse the words in question phonemically as biadh (104) */biɣvɭ/, fiadhaich (419) */fiɣvɭl, a-riamh (57) */riɣvɭl, dh’iarr (508) */iɣvɭl, especially since the parallel forms a-riamh (58) [aɪɭv] and iarraidh (509) [iɭvɪɾɪ̞] would have to be analysed phonemically as /riɣvɭl, liaɾɪɾɪ̞/ respectively. I suggest, therefore, that all these combinations should be regarded as variants of the /iə/ diphthong.

/ʊ/ has been defined as a variant within the /v/ phoneme. The combination [iʊ] should therefore, strictly speaking, be represented phonemically as /iʊv/. For the same reasons as in the previous paragraph, it seems preferable to regard this combination too as a variant of the /iə/ diphthong.

Finally, it should be noted that many words which have a diphthong in other dialects are realised in Colonsay Gaelic with long [iː]. These include: diomhain (311) [dɭˈzɭi:vɛ], fion (429) [fiɭ], losa Criosd (531) [iːʂə kɭi:sɭ], lión (577) [ɭiːn], mìos (621) [miːs], siós [ʃiːs]. In fact, this pronunciation is found throughout most of Argyll, apart from some northern mainland areas (Grannd 2000: 52-53 and Map 69). Boyd notes the same finding for Tiree (2014: 340).

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446 Headword is Losa.
Diphthongs beginning with [ɪ]

Only two diphthongs beginning with [ɪ] are found in the Colonsay data:

[ɪu] is found in *ionnsaidh* (530) [iɔnsiç], as an alternative to [i̯i̯ɨʃˈiç]. However, a footnote makes clear that the [iɔnsiç] form was prompted, and that the ‘word [is] not used’. This must mean that this particular form is not used in Colonsay. My own findings confirm this to be the case; however, the word *ionnsaidh*, and the compound preposition *a dhˈionnsaidh*, certainly are found, and they are pronounced [i̯i̯ɨʃˈiç : i̯i̯ɨʃˈiç]. In any case, since the diphthong [ɪu] is not attested anywhere else in the data, it can be discounted as part of the repertoire of native Colonsay sounds.

[ɪu] is found in *cliù* (201) [kliˈu]. Note that the [ɪ] here is raised, bringing it closer to [i]. The presence of this sound means that the Colonsay pronunciation of this word sounds quite different from other varieties of Gaelic (e.g. Islay: [kliˈu˚], Barra: [kliˈu˚]). Since [ɪ] has been defined as a (rare) variant of [i] within the /i/ phoneme, the combination [ɪu] may be regarded as a variant of the phonemic diphthong /iu/ (see above).

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447 Point 55 (Bowmore).
448 Points 28-30.
Diphthongs beginning with [ɛ]

The pairs [ɛʊ] and [ɛɪ] have already been discussed, as two of the more common diphthong combinations in Colonsay Gaelic. This section will cover modified forms of [ɛ] as well as the unmodified symbol. It will also include [ɛọ], since lowered [e] has been defined as a variant within the /ɛ/ phoneme; there are no other instances of a diphthong beginning with [e] or any of its modified forms in the Colonsay data.

Apart from [ɛɪ], already considered, the only pair in [ɛ] to occur more than twice in the SGDS results is [ɛɪ], in annlan (43) [ɛɪə̞], the genitive form bainnse (76) [b̥ɛɪiː], and one version of the dative làimh (553) [l`ɛɪiː] (552 has the subtly different form [l`ɛiː]).

Two pairs are found twice:

[ɛɪ] is found in one version of cnàimh (209) [krɛiː] (210 has [kɛiː]) and, as has just been seen, in làimh (552) [l`ɛiː] (also làmh (549), where we find the forms [l`ɛiː : l`ɛ]).

[ɛi] is found in beinn (106) [bɛiɲ] and anns a` bhroinn (126) [ans vɛiːn].

The following seven pairs occur only once:

[ɛi] is found in ràmh (694) [rɛiː] .

[ɛe] is found in aingealan (16) [ɛeɭʊŋ].

[ɛo] is found in one version of beò (96) [hɛo].

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449 Headword is banais: bainnse.
450 Headword in both cases is làmh: làimh.
451 A footnote indicates that the first form is ‘rarely used’. Dative forms of feminine nouns are unusual on Colonsay, except in set phrases. Note that 550 has làmh [Γɛɤ], and 551 do làmh [dò Γɛɤ].
452 The headword is binn, and the forms given are [bɛiɲ / ɛɭʊŋ]. From my knowledge of Colonsay Gaelic, I am sure that the second word elicited is in fact beinn. The informant may have misunderstood which word she was being asked to pronounce.
453 Headword is brù: anns a` bhroinn.
454 Headword is ràmh / ràcan, and the forms given are [rɛɭɤ / rɛiː]. The second form must be the plural/gen. sg. (ràimh).
[ɛo] (both elements raised) is found in the parallel version of beò (95) [b̥ɛo].

[ɛo] is found in the pl./gen. sg. form eòin (377) [ɛoŋ].

[ɛo] is found in eòlas (376) [ɛoŋ]əs].

[ɛo] is found in feòil (413) [fɛoŋ]ə.

It is clear from this analysis that diphthongs beginning in [ɛ] fall broadly into two categories: those ending in a high front vowel ([ɛi], etc.) and those ending in a rounded back vowel ([ɛo], etc.)

The forms [ɛ e ë ɛ] have all been defined as variants within the phoneme /ɛl/. The first element of diphthong combinations beginning with all these symbols can therefore be regarded phonemically as /ɛl/.

The form [i] has been defined as an allophone within the /i/ phoneme, and [i] as a variant within this allophone. The second element in combinations involving these symbols can therefore be regarded phonemically as /i/.

This means that all diphthongs in the first category [ɛi ëi ëi ëi] may be regarded phonemically as variants of the phonemic diphthong /ɛi/.

The raised form [ọ] has been defined as a variant within the /o/ phoneme. The second element in combinations involving this symbol can therefore be regarded phonemically as /o/.

This means that all diphthongs in the second category [ɛo ọo ọo ọo] may be regarded phonemically as variants of the phonemic diphthong /ɛo/.

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455 Headword is eun: eòin.
It is worth pointing out, in relation to the latter diphthong, that orthographic eo or eò, after a palatalised consonant, is pronounced as a monophthong [o] or [ɔ'] (sometimes modified): deoch (307) [d̥'z̥`ɔx], seo (753) [ʃo], leabhar (568) [ʃoʃor], ceòl (181) [k'ɔl']. The /eol/ diphthong is found only where there is no palatalisation: this may be initially, as in eòlas (376) [ɛoʃas], eòin (377) [ɛoʃ], following the ‘plain’ lateral [l'], as in leotha [l'ɛoʃxə], or following any of the labial consonants, which in Colonsay are not palatalised or followed by a j-glide: beò (95, 96) [b̥ʃo], feòil (413) [fɪɛʃl̥ˈ], (Cf. Islay: [b̥ɪɔː : fɪɔː l̥ˈ]).

The only diphthong beginning with [ɛ] not to be caught by this analysis is [ɛɛ], which occurs only in the plural form aingealan (16) [ɛɛʃl̥ˈn]. This is a rather surprising form; the singular is shown as aingeal (15) [ɛnˈlə]. Flora Macneill pronounced the plural as [ɛnˈlən], which accords much more closely with the singular. It may be that in Annabella McNeill’s version for the SGDS, the palatalisation of [n] was transferred to the [l'] (or heard as such), leaving the two vowels to glide into one another in a diphthong. Since this is the only instance of [ɛɛ] in the Colonsay results, and I have been unable to reproduce the form [ɛɛʃl̥ˈn] from my own research, it can be ignored as a significant diphthong in this dialect.

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456 Headword is eun: eòin.

457 Point 54 (Port Ellen). In the case of meòirean (614, 615) [mɛɹən], there is no diphthong, but the form given corresponds to meuran ‘thimble’ (confirmed by LSS); the word for ‘finger’ in this dialect is corrag, pl. corragan, as indicated at (614).
Diphthongs beginning with [a]

The combination [aʊ] and its variant [αʊ] have already been discussed.

The only other pairs with [a] as the first element are the following:

[ai] is found in dhaibh (319) [ɣαιβ],\textsuperscript{458} sàibh (728, 729) [sαιβ],\textsuperscript{459} saibhir (739) [sαιβир].

[ar] is found in chaill (140) [xαιʎ]\textsuperscript{460} and saillte (731, 732) [sαιl̠d̥ˈz̥ɪ].

Since [i] has been defined as an allophone of the /i/ phoneme, both may be regarded phonemically as /ai/.

\textsuperscript{458} Headword is do: dóibh.

\textsuperscript{459} This is the plural/gen. sg. form. 729 has [saιʏ / sa ʋ], where the second form is clearly the nominative. Note the absence of brackets in this entry. Headword in both cases is sàibh: sàibh.

\textsuperscript{460} A footnote indicates ‘perhaps [xαιʎ]?’ This notation is used in the SGDS results for ‘a series of very short diphthongs which may express themselves as super-short equal-prominence ones’ (Vol. I: 118). This, however, appears to be the only occurrence of this form of notation in the Colonsay results.
Diphthongs beginning with [y]

There are four combinations involving a form of [y] as the first element:

[yi] is found in *druim* (351) [dr[yi]m] and *oidhche* (670) [yi[ci]l] (but *oidhche Shamhna* (734) [yi[i] ĵevînɑ]).

[yi] is found with nasalisation in *naoi* (650) [n`[y]i] and *náoinh* (652) [n`[y]i], and without nasalisation in *oidhche Shamhna* (734) [yi[i] ĵevînɑ], as just noted.

[yi] is found only in the dative form *mhnâoi* (90) [v[r[y]i]], with a footnote explaining, correctly, that this form is not used in Colonsay Gaelic. It can therefore be discounted as a significant diphthong in this dialect.

[yi] is found only in *maighdean* (594) [m[ jó]̃`dz`ñ], a word which would only normally be encountered in a literary or poetic context. Again, this can probably be disregarded in an analysis of the Colonsay dialect.

Since [y ñ] have been defined as variants within the /y/ phoneme, these combinations may be regarded phonemically as /yil/.

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461 A note of incredulity is expressed in a footnote: ‘sic [yi]’.
462 Headword is *Samhainn*.
463 Headword is *bean: mnaoi*.
464 Flora Macneill professed not to know this word. However, in MacKinnon’s essay ‘Air an Duibhirtich’, one of the boats used for the excursion is named as the *Maighdeann Orasach* (Mackinnon 1956: 270-276).
Diphthongs beginning with [v]

There are five combinations involving a form of [v] as the first element. Two of these occur in more than one headword:

[yi] is found in *foill* (438) [f̃yi] and *oighre* (672) [yi].

[yi] is found in two oblique forms of *craobh*: gen. sg. *craoibhe* (248) [kɾi̇yi] and dat.sg. *craoibh* in *as a’ chraoibh* (250) [ɛs a xɾi] Non-nominative forms of feminine nouns are rarely used in Colonsay Gaelic (see pp. 321-322).

The other combinations are each found only once:

[yi] is found only in one version of *soillse* (789) [s̃yi] (790 has *soillslata* [s̃o̞i̇].

[yi] is found in *coilltean* (226) [k̃yi]['d'z'i̇].

[yi] is found in *coinneir* (231) [k̃yi].

Since [yi] have been defined as variants within the /yi/ phoneme, and [i] as a variant of the allophone [i] within the /il/ phoneme, these combinations, like those beginning with [y], may be regarded phonemically as /yi/.

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465 Headword in the latter instance is *craobh:craoibh.*
466 Headword in both cases is *soillsich.*
Diphthongs beginning with [ø]

Only two diphthongs with [ø] as the first element are found in the Colonsay data:

[øi] is found in croinn (246) [ŋɔi][n]467 and in one version of soillse, in the form soillse-atha (790) [s[øi][ɛ] [ɫa] (as noted above, 789 has [s[ɻi] [ɛ : s[ɻi] [ɫi]).468

[øi] is found only in saighdear [s[ɻi][ɾ'ʃ][ɾ].

Since [ø ø̜̇] have been defined as variants within the /y/ phoneme, these combinations, like those beginning with [y] and [v], may be regarded phonemically as /yi/.

It will be noted that all diphthongs involving a rounded front vowel [y ɣ ø] as the first element have a form of [i] or [ɪ] as the second element, and have been analysed phonemically as /yi/.

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467 Headword is crann: croinn.
468 Headword in both cases is soillse.
Diphthongs beginning with [u]

There are no fewer than 12 diphthongs in the Colonsay data set with [u] as the first element. In all cases, the [u] is given in its unmodified form, without any diacritics. Only three of these diphthong combinations occur more than twice.

The combinations [ua] and [ui] have already been dealt with, as two of the relatively common diphthongs in Colonsay Gaelic. Only one other pair occurs more than twice: [uʌ] is found in buachaill (129) [bʰuʌʃəl̪i̝i̝], in the future form quartachaidh (268) [kʰuʌʃˈdʌʃiʃ], and corresponding conditional chuartachadh (269) [xʰuʌʃˈdʌʃiʃ].

Since [ʌ] has been defined as a variant within the /a/ phoneme, this combination may be regarded phonemically as /ua/ (see above).

The following pairs are each found in two headwords:

[uɪ] is found in bruadar (24) [bɾuɪɾ̥r̥] and the conditional form bhuaileadh (132) [vɾuɪl̪ˈɣ]. The fluidity of these diphthongs is well illustrated by the fact that the two other forms of buail listed (future tense and verbal noun) are given as buailidh (131) [bʰuʌl̪ˈʃ] and bualadh (133) [bʰuʌl̪ˈɣ] respectively.

[uɪ] is found in cluas (205) [kl̩uɪʃ] and fuar (444) [fɨuɪɾ̥].

[uɪ] is found, as already noted, in bualadh (133) [bʰuɪˈɣ] and also in man cuairt (267) [maɐ̃ ˈɡʰuɪʃˈtʃ] (cf. quartachaidh (268) [kʰuʌʃˈdʌʃiʃ], chuartachadh (269) [xʰuʌʃˈdʌʃiʃ]).

[uɪ] is found in cruaiddh (262) [kɾuɪʃ] (cf. comparative form cruaide (263) [kɾuʌɪʃ]) and duais (352) [dɨuɪʃ].

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[^469]: Headword is buachaill: buachaille. There is no separate entry for the nominative buachaill.
[^470]: Headwords are cuairtich: cuairtichidh and cuairtich: chuarticheadh respectively.
[^471]: [ʌ] has also been defined as an allophone of /a/, when it occurs before [x] in unstressed syllables. However, this condition is met by only one of the examples listed here.
[^472]: Headword is cuairt.
[i] has been defined as an allophone of the /ə/ phoneme, and [i] as a variant of this allophone. [ɨ] has been defined as a variant of /ə/; the form [ĭ] does not occur in any other context, but it seems reasonable to include it, too, as a variant of /ə/. All these combinations may therefore be interpreted phonemically as /uə/ (see below).

The remaining pairs each occur in only one headword:

[uı] is found in *cuimhne* (275) [kʰuıɲı]. Since [ı] has been defined as an allophone of /i/, this combination may be regarded phonemically as /ui/ (see above).

[uɨ] is found in *buaidh* (130) [b̥uɨi]. The rounding of [ɨ] is presumably influenced by the preceding [u], although this is not the case with the other diphthongs beginning in [u].

[uɨ] is found in *sluagh* (775, 776) [sl`uɨγ].

[uə] is found in *buailidh* (131) [bɻuəɭi̜c].

Since [ɨ ɨ] have been defined as variants within the /ə/ phoneme, these last three combinations may be regarded phonemically as variants of /uə/.

[uə] is found in *fuaghail* (442) [fɿuəɭ]. Since [á] has been defined as a variant within the /a/ phoneme, this combination may be regarded phonemically as /ual/ (see above).

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473 The final [I"] suggests that the form recorded is in fact the verbal noun *fuaghal*. 
Diphthongs beginning with [o]

The only diphthong beginning with [o] in the Colonsay data set is [ʊ], which is found in the words toll (857) [tʊ] and donn (329). In the case of [ʊ], this form appears as an alternative to [ʊ] (328, 329). Although the latter reading is given precedence in the SGDS results, the form [ʊ] accords better with the general pattern of transcription of this dialect; the sequence [ʊ], with a (half-) long vowel followed by a superscript, raised version of the same vowel, is not replicated anywhere else in the data.

On the other hand, if the existence of the /lʷ/ phoneme, and the rounded allophone [nʷ] within the /n/ phoneme, is accepted (see pp. 75-76), these two words should then be transcribed [tʊː : donʷ] respectively (phonemically /tolʷ : donʷ/). The use of the diphthong [ʊ] thus becomes superfluous, in the same way as [au εʊ] (see above).

Diphthongs beginning with [ɔ]

There are two diphthongs beginning with [ɔ] in the Colonsay results, both of which are attested only once:

[ɔi] is found in the comparative form nas doimhne (326) [nas ɔɪ̯].474

[ɔi] is found in boc goibhre (490) [bɔxɡ ɔɪ̯].475

Since [ɔ] has been defined as a variant of /ɔ/, and [ɪ] as an allophone of /l/, both these combinations may be interpreted phonemically as /ɔɪ/.

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474 Headword is domhain: doimhne.
475 Headword is gobhar: boc goibhre. The genitive form is not used in contemporary spoken Gaelic on Colonsay.
Diphthongs beginning with [ɯ]

The only diphthong with a form of [ɯ] as its first component to appear in the Colonsay data set is [tu], which is found in the comparative form na’s righne (707) [nas rɯɲ̥]. Since [tu] has been defined as a variant of the allophone [ʊ] within the /ʌ/ phoneme, and [ɪ] as an allophone of /i/, this combination may be regarded phonemically as /vɪl/ (see above).

Summary table

On the basis of this analysis, the 57 varieties of diphthongs appearing in the SGDS results for Colonsay have been condensed to give the following 11 ‘phonemic’ combinations:

\[\begin{array}{ccc}
ia & iə & iu \\
ɛi & ɛo & \\
ai & \\
vi & \\
uia & ui & uə \\
ɔi & \\
\end{array}\]

\[\text{476 Headword is righinn: na’s righne. Cf. positive form righinn (706) [rɯŋ̥], with footnote: perhaps [rɯŋ̥]?}\]
3. NON-SEGMENTAL (PROSODIC) FEATURES

No description, however detailed, of the segmental phonemes and their actual realisation in a particular dialect is sufficient in itself to convey a sense of what makes that dialect distinctive. There are, in addition, a number of phonological features which have a bearing on the characteristic pronunciation of the dialect, which cannot be identified as segments in their own right, and whose effects often extend over more than one phonetic segment.

These include the standard ‘suprasegmental’ features – stress, duration and tone – as identified by Lehiste (1970). These operate on the segmental string to give a characteristic rhythm and ‘melody’ to utterances. It is this, as much as lexical choices or the specific realisation of individual segments, that gives ‘local colour’ to the different varieties of a language. Even when the words used are those of the standard language, differences in the way these suprasegmental features are deployed will lead to the perception of a ‘regional accent’. Scottish Standard English, with its characteristic intonation patterns, and generally shorter vowels than Standard Southern English, is a good example of this.

In the case of Gaelic, there are a number of other characteristic features that are also difficult to categorise in purely segmental terms. These include preaspiration, epenthesis and, in many southern dialects, glottalisation. These have already been referred to in the analysis of segmental phonemes, but I shall show that these features are in fact closely linked to factors such as stress, duration and tone, and therefore fall to be described here, along with the more conventional suprasegmental features. For this reason I have chosen to use the term ‘non-segmental’ to describe all these processes operating on the segmental string.

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477 The terms used by different authors vary. Lehiste (1970: 1-2) initially refers to ‘pitch, stress and quantity’ (in that order), but in her own analysis goes on to use the umbrella term ‘tonal features’ to cover the distinct categories of pitch, tone and intonation (1970: 54).
I have also included nasalisation and voicing/devoicing under this heading. These too are features which, at any rate as found in this dialect, are difficult to analyse in purely segmental terms. In other languages they do lend themselves to segmental treatment: French, for example, has its characteristic nasal vowel phonemes, while final devoiced consonants are a regular allophonic feature of standard German.

I intend to demonstrate that most, if not all, of these features fulfil a prosodic function in this dialect, because they serve, in one way or another, to increase the prominence of key elements within a phrase or sentence. In general these will be words or syllables which carry particular semantic significance, and will be the least predictable elements within a given utterance.

Cathair Ó Dochartaigh (1981) brings a number of these features together as examples of what he calls ‘vowel strengthening’, whereby a vowel may be given added prominence within an utterance. Ó Dochartaigh concentrates mainly on vowel lengthening and diphthongisation, which are less significant for the dialect under discussion here, but he also includes epenthesis, and to a limited extent preaspiration. Although he does not consider glottalisation in this connection, I have argued in my MSc dissertation (Scouller 2010: 46) that glottalisation, in those dialects where it occurs, fulfils a similar ‘vowel-strengthening’ function. I have further argued that the concept of ‘vowel strengthening’ can be extended to cover syllables, and not just their core vowels; as a result, a syllable may be ‘strengthened’ – implying, among other things, an increase in its length – while retaining a short vowel at its nucleus.

Or, as MacAulay (1992: 233) puts it, ‘length is a syllable feature rather than one simply of the nucleus.’ In this chapter I also intend to demonstrate that these prosodic features tend to have a bearing on one another, and are therefore to be seen as inter-related.
By adopting a prosodic approach to these features, the number of segmental phonemes identified in this dialect can be kept within manageable limits. I have already discussed the issue of voiced stops, mainly resulting from the nasal mutation; if voicing were to be regarded as an integral feature of the segmental string, a separate series of voiced stop phonemes would have to be posited, and suitable symbols devised to differentiate these from the unvoiced lenis stops represented here as /b d ɡ/. Similarly, unless glottalisation is accepted as a non-segmental feature, a separate series of glottalised phonemes will be required, merely in order to take account of the fact that glottalisation is absent in epenthetic clusters (see pp. 61-66).
Stress

Key to any notion of relative prominence within an utterance is the perception of stress. According to Ladd (2008: 49), ‘probably no topic in the general area of intonation and suprasegmentals has posed such a puzzle as stress’. Despite being a familiar feature of most languages, and essential for the perception of *metre*, stress is difficult to pin down in purely phonetic terms, or to relate to a single acoustic parameter. Peaks in the waveform, and in the intensity contour of the spectrogram, can give an indication of where the stressed syllables are. But other acoustic factors are at work also. Stressed syllables may be pronounced with greater clarity, and will often be lengthened in some way (while in some instances retaining a short vowel). Often it is the intonation pattern of an utterance that provides the best clues to where the stress is being placed, although the position of the pitch accent may not necessarily coincide with a peak or trough in the pitch contour. The combination of all these factors gives a language, or a dialect, its characteristic rhythm.

Stress is most easily described at the level of the individual word. In citation forms, where a word contains more than one syllable, one of those syllables will usually be consistently stressed; this is called *lexical stress*. In Gaelic, lexical stress is normally on the first syllable (except in compound words), whereas in English, the stress may occur on different syllables, in some cases marking different grammatical categories. Thus in English we find the homographs: *perMIT* (verb) v. *PERmit* (noun), *conTENT* (adjective) v. *CONtent* (noun), etc.

Stress also operates at the level of the phrase or sentence, where it is used to highlight particular words or syllables on the basis of their semantic importance. Unlike lexical stress, the way in which phrasal or sentence stress operates is not prescribed, and subtle changes in stress patterns within an utterance, especially when combined with changes in intonation, can signal different shades of meaning. Lexical stress may actually be neutralised within a longer utterance, if the word concerned is not itself phrasally stressed. Phrasal or sentence stress is thus seen to be a feature of the way the utterance as a whole is organised phonologically:
The prominence pattern of an utterance reflects the organisation of the syllables into a hierarchical metrical structure. This structure specifies abstract relations of prominence or strength between syllables, and between larger constituents such as words and phrases.

(Ladd 2008: 61).

The symbols for primary and secondary stress [ˈˌ] are conventionally used in IPA segmental transcription, although they do not themselves represent segments. In practice this usually indicates lexical stress (in citation forms), rather than the stress pattern of the utterance as a whole, which is better represented by a system such as *ToBI* (see p. 244). As a matter of editorial policy, the *SGDS* does not mark lexical stress when it occurs on the first syllable of a word, since this is the normal pattern in Gaelic pronunciation (Vol. I: 119). It should be noted, however, that in compound words, the stress generally falls on the qualifying element in the compound: *bogha-frois* [ˈboˈfrɔʃ], *taigh-seinnse* [təˈʃɛinʃi], but *meanbh-chuileagan* [ˈmənəxulˈaʃin].

Within a phrase or sentence, stress can vary widely according to the speaker’s intention, but will tend to be placed on an element which provides new information, or the answer to a question, or is in some way less predictable. In general, this principle accords with the Smooth Signal Redundancy Hypothesis (Aylett 2000; Aylett and Turk 2004), as discussed in my MSc dissertation (Scouller 2010: 46-51). According to this hypothesis, added prominence is routinely given to less predictable elements within an utterance; this usually means increasing the duration of the syllable concerned, but may also involve greater intensity, more distinct articulation, and a change of pitch. These, as we have seen, are key elements in the marking of stress. The cumulation of several such markers in a single syllable constitutes the *acoustic redundancy* referred to in the title of the hypothesis. As we have seen, however, it is just such a cumulation of elements that results in the perception of stress, so the term *redundancy* in this context is used in a technical sense, and should not be read as implying that some of these elements are superfluous.
These observations are borne out by waveform analysis. In the sentence *Bha sinn ann an sin fad còig bliadhna* (We were there for five years), the peaks in the waveform become progressively higher, while the intensity contour, although fairly level, shows a sustained rise, with increasingly high peaks on *sinn, sin, còig*, and finally a sustained plateau on both syllables of *bliadhna*.

Waveform and intensity contour for

*Bha sinn ann an sin fad còig bliadhna*

(Flora Macneill)
By contrast, where the main stress occurs earlier in the sentence, there is a falling pattern, as seen in the sentence ‘S è,’s e bha mòran obair ann, with the primary stress on the initial ‘S è, followed by a secondary stress on mòran (‘Yes, there was a lot of work’). Here the intensity contour shows a declining series of peaks: on the first ‘s è, mòran, the first syllable of obair, and ann respectively.

Waveform and intensity contour for
‘S è, ’s e bha mòran obair ann
(John Clark)

It will be apparent that the way in which stress operates in the Colonsay dialect does not differ substantially from other varieties of Gaelic (Cf. Gillies 2009: 248-9). Stress is nevertheless significant for the study of this dialect because of the way it interacts with, and conditions, other prosodic features. Glottalisation, for example, usually occurs following a short, stressed vowel, as does preaspiration in its most clearly articulated form (see pp. 277-280). Long vowels, in principle, are found only in stressed syllables. And because stress patterns can be identified in terms of pitch as well as intensity, stress is an important component in the intonation patterns of this dialect.


Duration

Long and short vowels

Duration as a feature of vowel sounds has already been considered in the context of segmental phonemes. Apart from /ə/, all vowels in Colonsay Gaelic may be either long or short in stressed syllables, and length may indicate a semantic difference: bata [baːdə] ‘walking-stick’ v. bàta [baˈʰdə] ‘boat’.478 Vowels in unstressed syllables are generally pronounced short, even in phrasally unstressed contexts where the citation form has a long vowel, e.g. thànaig e dhachaidh [hɛnɪɡˈ a ˈɣa̯ʃɪθ].

Although the symbols [: ·] do not themselves represent segments, they are conventionally used in IPA phonetic and phonemic transcription to indicate lengthening of the preceding segment, in the same way as stress markers. The SGDS results as a whole allow for no fewer than six degrees of vowel length to be indicated, ranging from ‘markedly short’ to ‘markedly long’ (Vol. I: 113), but in practice, the results for Colonsay consistently use only the single length marker [:] (‘half-long’). The fact that the transcription uses this symbol rather than the full length marker [·] is presumably intended to show that in this dialect, vowels are not lengthened as much as in other varieties of Gaelic. The SGDS results, of course, show citation forms; in continuous speech, as we shall see, vowels may be lengthened or shortened at will in response to prosodic constraints.

Although it is possible to measure duration by means of a spectrogram, absolute measurements are of limited value, since much will depend on prosodic factors: emphasis, position in the utterance, speed of delivery, etc. The speaker’s own speech habits, or idiolect, may also play a part: archive recordings suggest that Annabella MacNeill, the informant for Point 57, had a rather rapid, ‘clipped’ way of speaking, and this may well have influenced the fieldworker’s perception, and the decision to show Colonsay vowels as ‘half-long’ rather than ‘long’ (SSS Archives, audio recordings: SA1953.120-124).

478 The SGDS results show [ba də] (81, 82), but as discussed elsewhere (see p. 279), some degree of preaspiration is present with long vowels also.
In my own recording, Mary Ann MacAllister gives high prominence to a long [ɛː] sound in the sentence *Shin a’ad a bha thu dèanadh* [hən əd a va u ˈd̥z’eːnəɣ] ‘That’s just what you did’.

The duration of the vowel segment here is 0.319 seconds, with a marked diminution in intensity in the last third of the segment. The vowel [ə] in *a’ad*, by contrast, with secondary stress in the sentence, has a duration of only 0.130 seconds, i.e. little more than a third.

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In the sentence *Bhiodh mo mhàthair a’ còcaireachd air an teine* [vɪɣ mo və ə ˈkəkəˈɾəkəd ər ən ˈd̥z’eːnɪ], the same speaker has stressed ‘short’ [ɛ] in *teine* lasting 0.231 seconds in all, although the latter half of the vowel segment is progressively affected by glottalisation, again with marked loss of intensity, so that the fully vocalised portion is only about 0.13 seconds. By contrast, the phonologically ‘long’ vowel [ɔˑ] in *còcaireachd*, with secondary stress, has a duration of only 0.124 seconds.

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479 She is talking about having to walk to school as a child in the 1940s.
It is clear, therefore, that in natural speech, vowel length can be extremely variable, and that the listener’s perception of a vowel as ‘long’ or ‘short’ is more important than precise measurement of its duration. Laver (1994: 436) differentiates in this connection between ‘phonetic duration’ and ‘phonological length’, reserving the term ‘duration’ for the quantifiable physical property, while ‘length’ is a phonological abstraction.

Waveform and intensity contour for

_Bhiodh mo mhàthair a’ còcaireachd air [eh...] an teine_480

(Mary Ann MacAllister)

The example of _teine_ illustrates the way in which a long _syllable_ may contain a short _vowel_, the extra duration being achieved either by glottalisation, as in the case of _teine_, or by means of preaspiration, as in _bata_. The difference depends on whether the following consonant is lenis or fortis. The precise mechanism of how this operates will be considered in the following sections on glottalisation and preaspiration respectively, but what is important to note here is that duration may be a property of syllables, and not just individual segments. This means that particular

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480 The speaker introduced a long audible hesitation [ɛː] between _air_ and _an teine_. Note that the peaks of intensity in both these recordings are ‘clipped’ because the recording instrument was incorrectly set, due to my inexperience in working with the equipment.
syllables in an utterance may be lengthened, and thus given added prominence, without obliterating the distinction between long and short vowels, which may be phonemically significant. That distinction is largely obscured in unstressed syllables, where added prominence is not an issue.

**Lengthening of consonants**

In addition to lengthening of vowels, lengthening of sonorant consonants is also found to a limited extent in this dialect. The SGDS results record this in the case of the nasals [m] and [n]: ãm (33) [ɛ̃mˑ], fang (394) [fɛ̃ŋˑ] (see above – pp. 194, 196); and also [n : ŋ] in situations involving word-internal voicing: sunndach (817) [sun`dax], cinnteach (184) [k'ɛ̃d'z'aŋ], and [l : ŋ] in fillte [f̥i̯l̊d̥ɪ] (423), thill (844) [hi̯k̊]. I have suggested (pp. 75-77) that the ‘rounded and velarised’ sonorants which I write as [lʷ nʷ] are also pronounced long in this dialect, when they appear in final position: ball [b̥alʷˑ], ceann [k' ĕnʷˑ]. The SGDS interprets these as diphthongs: [b̥al̊] (75) and [k' ĕn̥] (163-165) respectively.

In all these cases, lengthening of a consonant occurs only following a short vowel. As in the case of vowels, it also occurs only in a stressed syllable, and as such, fulfils a ‘vowel-strengthening’ function, as discussed earlier.
Tone

The phonological property of tone is quantified in terms of acoustic pitch. Just as stress and duration give a language its characteristic rhythm, so tone, expressed as a pattern of rising and falling pitch movements, provides an utterance with a characteristic ‘tune’, which can convey subtle shifts of meaning and emphasis. Differences in the handling of tone are one of the most prominent markers for identifying local accents and dialects: in English, one may think of the characteristic intonation pattern of ‘Geordie’ or Welsh varieties, or the difference between a Glasgow and an Edinburgh accent. These differences can be very localised, and serve to differentiate the speech patterns of neighbouring villages, or islands. At an even more localised level, they are one of the factors that characterise the speech patterns of individuals, enabling us to identify different people’s voices.

In many languages, of which Chinese (in its various forms) is the best-known example, lexical tone is an integral part of the phonemic structure of the language, and the same segmental string, articulated with different tones, may have completely different meanings. European languages generally do not have lexical tone as such, but some, particularly in the northern parts of Europe, exhibit pitch accent, whereby a difference in pitch pattern affecting otherwise identical words may convey a semantic difference. The best-known example of such a language is Swedish.

Elmar Ternes has done valuable work on pitch-accent languages in general (Ternes 1980), and in particular has identified the occurrence of pitch-accent in some varieties of Scottish Gaelic. In the 2006 edition of The Phonemic Analysis of Scottish Gaelic, he includes an additional chapter entitled ‘Scottish Gaelic: a Pitch-Accent Language’ (pp. 129-145). Such a claim goes too far as a classification of Scottish Gaelic as a whole, although it does appear to hold good for Lewis and northern mainland dialects such as Applecross, where differences in pitch patterns clearly do have lexical implications. Thus minimal pairs such as fitheach / fiach or bogha / bò are distinguished by having a falling tone (after an initial rise) on the first word in each pair (Tone 1), while the second (Tone 2) has a rising tone in Lewis, and a ‘wavy contour’ (falling-rising-falling) in Applecross (Ternes 2006: 146).
In the light of these findings, Ternes is led to re-interpret his own earlier work on the Applecross dialect (2006:132, 140; cf. 81-102). Instead of three categories of length, he now identifies tonal differences which correspond to those found on Lewis, although the actual pitch contours are subtly different in the two localities. It should, however, be noted that Oftedal, in his earlier work on the dialect of Leurbost, takes the opposite view, rejecting an interpretation based on tonal distinctions in favour of one based on ‘the extent of the syllable’ (1956: 27).

A recent study by Morag Brown, based on her own original fieldwork conducted in Ness, has further developed the work of Ternes by examining the way in which the two tones (which she calls Accent 1 and Accent 2) are expressed differently in the intonation patterns for different sentence types (Brown 2009). The difference is most marked in the intonation pattern for a question expecting a yes/no answer: *A bheil thu smaimeachadh air an fhitheach/air an fhiach?*
Differing pitch contours for *air an fhitheach* (top) and *air an fhiaich* (bottom), with yes/no question intonation, as recorded from speaker in Ness (Lewis) by Morag Brown. (Source: Brown 2009)
Ternes justifies his assertion that Scottish Gaelic as a whole is ‘a pitch-accent language’ by pointing out that in the more southerly dialects of Gaelic, essentially those of Argyll, the same distinction is achieved by means of glottalisation. In my own recent MSc dissertation, I examine this claim, taking Colonsay as an example of an Argyll dialect, and conclude that there is indeed a close and convincing parallel between the occurrence of Tone 1 and Tone 2 in Applecross, and the presence or absence of glottalisation in Colonsay Gaelic (Scouller 2010: 11-14).

Lehiste (1970: 89-90) had previously identified a similar (possibly identical) feature which she calls ‘laryngealization’ [sic]; this is associated with tonal distinctions in such diverse languages as Danish, Vietnamese and Latvian.

The precise ways in which glottalisation is manifested in this dialect will be dealt with in the next section.

The way in which tone operates across an utterance as a whole, rather than just at the level of the individual word, had until recently not received much scholarly attention in a Gaelic context (Gillies 2009: 250). Despite his rejection of lexical tone as an interpretation of the Leurbost data, Oftedal (1956) does devote a single page (36-37) to a study of ‘Intonation’, but only offers two examples, one a statement and one a question, with a very impressionistic representation of the intonation patterns in each case. MacAulay (1979) offers what he himself calls ‘a preliminary study of tones’, based on his own native dialect of Bernera (Lewis). Again, the representation of the tone contour is essentially impressionistic, is not based on any acoustic measurements, and does not reference any existing work on intonation in other languages, even to the extent that such information was available in 1979.481 He does deserve credit, nonetheless, for recognising and highlighting the importance of tone in the study of Scottish Gaelic. Recent work by Claire Nance (2013) has compared intonation patterns in the speech of young Gaelic speakers in Glasgow with those of two groups (younger/older speakers) in Lewis.

481 The first two chapters of Intonational Phonology (Ladd 2008: 3-84) give a detailed account of the history of research in this field, especially the IPO (Instituut voor Perceptie Onderzoek) approach and the contrasting ‘British tradition’.
Variations of tone (in the narrow sense, excluding glottalisation) do of course play a significant part in the phonology of Colonsay Gaelic, but these operate as intonation patterns at the level of the phrase or sentence, rather than individual words. In this respect this dialect is no different from many other varieties of Gaelic, or indeed from most other European languages. The rest of this section will deal with the way in which these variations can be represented and analysed phonologically.
**Representation of tone**

Pitch movements can be read directly from the spectrogram, producing a curve similar to the intensity curve already used to illustrate stress patterns. The acoustic parameter used is the fundamental frequency ($f_0$). However, the raw data thus obtained may be difficult to read, and will in most cases require interpretation. Phoneticians have therefore developed a system known as ToBI (Tones and Break Indices), based largely on original work by Janet Pierrehumbert (1980), to record significant pitch movements in terms of high (H) and low (L) pitch accents, phrase accents, boundary tones, and also the strength of the breaks between words. Here we are concerned only with pitch accents, phrase accents and boundary tones. By concentrating on those pitch features that are significant in the context of the utterance as a whole, the developers of ToBI have applied a phonological approach to the analysis of intonational data, analogous to the identification of phonemes to mark significant differences in speech sounds.

It will be immediately apparent that in a ToBI context, ‘pitch accent’ is used in a different sense from the way it is used by Ternes, and elsewhere in this thesis. In ToBI, ‘pitch accent’ denotes a dominant high or low tone on a particular syllable within an utterance, whereas, as we have just seen, ‘pitch-accents’ (usually hyphenated) is used by Ternes and others as a classification of the way certain languages use different tones to indicate lexical differences (Ternes 1980; 2006: 129-133).

ToBI was originally designed to be used in analysing spoken English, and was not intended to be immediately transferable to other languages. The relevant web page of Ohio State University (now withdrawn) previously contained a disclaimer, warning against generalisation:

> ToBI is not an International Phonetic Alphabet for prosody. Because intonation and prosodic organization differ from language to language, and often from dialect to dialect within a language, there are many different ToBI systems, each one specific to a language variety and the community of researchers working on that language variety.

(Ohio State University, 1999)
Nonetheless, research has now moved on, and ToBI has proved its value as a means of analysing intonation and prosody across a wide range of languages and dialects. Differing language-specific systems have been devised where appropriate, including one entitled GlaToBI, which is used to analyse Glasgow speech (Mayo et al. 1997). What follows is a modest attempt to apply ToBI principles to the Colonsay variety of Scottish Gaelic.

In the ToBI system, pitch accents are marked with an asterisk, either high (H*) or low (L*) relative to other elements in the utterance, and in relation to the speaker’s natural range. The combinations L*+H and L+H* indicate rising pitch accents, with the low or high element dominating respectively. The combination H*+L, while not commonly found in English ToBI labelling, is used in one of the examples below to indicate a falling pitch accent. Other possible combinations of H and L may be used as appropriate.

Phrase accents (at the end of an intonational phrase) are marked with a hyphen (H-, L-), and boundary tones (at the end of the utterance or sentence) with a percent symbol (H%, L%). Because the end of the utterance normally occurs at a phrase boundary, combinations such as L-L%, H-H%, etc. are usually found at the end of tokens. A high boundary tone (H%) does not necessarily mean that there is any perceptible rise in tone at the end of the utterance, but rather that the phrase tone (be it high or low) is sustained, and not allowed to drop as it does with a L% boundary tone.

In cases where a high pitch accent is ‘downstepped’ relative to the preceding pitch accent, an exclamation mark is used (!H*) to indicate that while it is lower in absolute terms, the pitch accent is still high in relation to what follows.
In Colonsay Gaelic, simple declaratory statements have a high pitch accent followed by a low phrase accent and low boundary tone, much as in English. For example, *Chan eil cuimhn’ a’am* ‘I can’t remember’.

Waveform, pitch contour and ToBI analysis for

*Chan eil cuimhn’ a’am*

(Eleanor McNeill)
More complex utterances may have a succession of pitch accents, each one slightly lower than the one before, giving a falling contour. Following the approach suggested by Ladd (2008: 97-99), I analyse this here as ‘downstepping’, using the representation !H*, although other interpretations are possible.

Waveform, pitch contour and ToBI analysis for

*Bu toigh leam a bhith ag obair leis na h-eich*

(Jessie McNeill)
In a longer example (delivered in one breath), the speaker places strong and equal emphasis on the two elements of her husband’s name (Dòmhnall Ghibi), but then downsteps the subsequent pitch accents:

Waveform, pitch contour and ToBI analysis for

*Choìnnich mi Dòmhnall Ghibi, ’s phòs mi esan, ’s tha mi an Colbhasa fhathast.*[^482]

(Margaret McNeill)

[^482]: The sudden drop in pitch on *an* is a tracking error caused by the way the creaky phonation is recorded in the spectrogram, and should be ignored. The same applies to the apparent rise on *fhathast*, which is due to the speaker’s voice ‘tailing off’ at the end of the sentence.
In other cases, the downstepping pattern may be interrupted to give prominence to an element towards the end of the sentence, as in *Cha mhòr gun tèid a’am air seo a chreidsinn* ‘I can hardly believe this’.

The resulting H* pitch accent on *chreidsinn* is not as high as the initial L+H*, but is still high relative to what immediately precedes it, and this is sufficient to lend prominence to this syllable:

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Waveform, pitch contour and ToBI analysis for

*Cha mhòr gun tèid a’am air seo a chreidsinn.*

(Eleanor McNeill)

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\[483\] That she had not heard a word of Gaelic before coming to Colonsay as a child.
A characteristic intonation pattern in Colonsay speech, conversely, involves a low pitch accent on a prominent syllable, usually the penultimate, followed by a high phrase tone and high (i.e. sustained) boundary tone. In English this pattern is associated with a yes/no question, possibly with an element of surprise, e.g. ‘Did he say that?’, but in Colonsay Gaelic it tends to be used either where the phrase or sentence is in some way preparatory for what follows, or is stating something which may be already known.

In the following example, the speaker is describing how he went to get medical assistance for a workmate, and was given the sack as a result. In this instance the sequence is *Tha sibh toilichte leam ... Dè an cron a rinn mi? ‘You’re pleased with me … What harm have I done?’ Here the first statement forms the premise to the question, implying unfairness.

Waveform, pitch contour and ToBI analysis for

*Tha sibh toilichte leam.*

(Donald MacArthur)
In the example *Tha’n t-uisge still garbh* (the rain is still fierce) the speaker is commenting on something that others will have noticed, and the implication of the tone pattern is: ‘As you know...’:

Waveform, pitch contour and ToBI analysis for

*Tha’n t-uisge still garbh.*

(Mary O’Mahoney)

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484 For the use of *still*, see p. 364.
A Gaelic yes/no question need not have a generally rising tone, as is the case in a number of other languages. The example of *Oh, an seo do bhràthair?* ‘Oh, is this your brother?’ shows a low phrase tone, falling from a high pitch accent on *bhràthair*, which is then sustained to the end of the question. As explained above, this is shown as a high boundary tone:

Waveform, pitch contour and ToBI analysis for

*Oh, an seo do bhràthair?*

(Donald MacArthur)
On the other hand, a question seeking information, *Dè tha Sheila fhè’ ris?* ‘What is Sheila [herself] up to?’, shows a curious downstepping pattern, with deep falls after each downstepped pitch accent, and a high level tone at the end. I have chosen the sequence H*+L to represent this form of pitch accent, with H-H% to represent the sustained high phrase tone and boundary tone:

It will be clear from this summary that, although the Colonsay dialect does not make use of lexical tone in the same way as more northerly dialects such as Lewis and Applecross, pitch movements do play a part in differentiating different types of utterance, and in conveying quite subtle shades of meaning. The difference between a declaratory statement, with low phrase accent and boundary tone, and a question, with sustained phrase accent giving a high boundary tone, is perhaps the most significant distinction, but as we have seen, a number of other permutations are possible, including the phenomenon of downstepping in longer utterances. It would, however, be a mistake to try and read too specific a meaning into the use of different intonational patterns: much depends on the speaker’s facility with language,
customary speech patterns and mood. In some cases, the same kind of intonational pattern can convey a different impression in different languages, or dialects. Failure to understand this may result in misunderstanding if, for example, a tone pattern which in one variety of a language is used to signal annoyance is used in another to imply merely that information is already known.
Glottalisation

Glottalisation, which occurs in hiatus and also accompanying certain consonants, is a distinctive feature of many Argyll dialects. As well as Colonsay, it is found consistently in Islay, Jura and Gigha. According to the SGDS results it is also recorded, in its most developed form, in Easdale, two locations in Arran, and one location in Cowal. It is present to a lesser extent in other mainland dialects of Argyll, as well as in the Small Isles.

Glottalisation in hiatus has a wider geographical distribution than it has in conjunction with consonants; even as far north as Barra (Points 27-30), the SGDS results use the ‘pipe’ symbol [ | ] in hiatus, to indicate what Borgstrøm (1937) refers to as ‘broken tension’: gobha (487) [ɡ̥oː | oː].

My MSc dissertation (Scouller 2010) dealt extensively with the subject of ‘Glottalisation in the Gaelic Dialect of Colonsay’. My conclusion then was that glottalisation, in the form of a glottalised interval affecting the vowel, and usually extending into the following consonant, occurs in the Colonsay dialect in the following phonetic environments:

1. In hiatus, where two vowels follow one another without forming a diphthong, or where two identical short vowels follow one another without coalescing into a single long vowel. Examples: bogha (117) [b̥oʔ], ceidhe [k'ɛʔe].

2. Intervocally before a sonorant consonant, following a short vowel. Examples: baile (65) [b'aːl̪ iː], aran (52) [a'ran̥].

[485] Although the SGDS shows glottalisation to be present only to a limited degree in the south of Jura, and not at all in the north of that island, this is contradicted by the work of Jones (2006, 2009a, 2009b), who shows glottalisation occurring there in essentially the same phonetic environments as in Colonsay.

3. Intervocally accompanying an unaspirated (lenis) stop following a short vowel. Examples: *obair* [o'b̥ɪr], *cadal* [kə'dal'], *nas fhaide* [nas 'a'd̥z̥i̯].

On the other hand, glottalisation does not occur in the following cases:

1. After a long vowel or diphthong. Examples: *An t-Òban* [n doˈⁱban], *chuala* [xuaˈl'a].

2. Before an epenthetic cluster. Examples: *gorm* (497) [ɡ̥ɔrəm], *falbh* [fɔlˈəv].

In unstressed syllables, glottalisation is generally absent. Examples: *bogha-frois* [bɔ'frɔʃ], *obair-làimh* [o'bɪr ˈlɛv]. (Scouller 2010: 54-55)

These findings have been largely borne out by a more detailed study of the SGDS results for Colonsay, and by further fieldwork. The one additional point to be made is that glottalisation has also been found to occur intervocally accompanying the voiced fricatives [v ţ]: *abhainn* (2-3) [aˈvən], *labhairt* (539) [l′aˈvaʃˈkʂ], 487 *fiodhan* (427) [fiˈγan]. In his work on Jura, Jones (2006: 196; 2009a: 73) also reports glottalisation accompanying these fricatives, although he gives no examples in the case of [ŋ].

It will be clear from this summary that glottalisation, as found in Colonsay, is essentially an intervocalic feature, occurring between two short vowels, either where they follow one another directly, as in the case of hiatus; or where they are separated by a single phonetic consonant, which may be a sonorant, a lenis stop, a voiced fricative, or an affricate in the case of /dʒ/ (which as the palatalised form of the lenis stop /d/ is treated as a single consonant).

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487 Headword is *labhair*: *labhairt*. 
Glottalisation, which appears in the spectrogram as a disturbed pattern of voicing, with consequent drops in the intensity and pitch contours, typically begins about halfway through the preceding vowel segment, and continues through any intervening consonant and into the following vowel:

**Waveform, spectrogram and glottalisation tier for**

*Ag obair air a’ bhaile*

(Flora Macneill)

Although in Chapter 2, for the purposes of phonemic analysis, glottalisation was interpreted as allophonic in the case of lenis stops (pp. 130-137), it is clearly seen here to be a suprasegmental feature *par excellence*, affecting a number of consecutive segments. The term *glottal stop* is often used to describe the phenomenon – and is so used by Jones in his description of the same feature in Jura Gaelic – but this is not strictly accurate as a description of how this feature operates in the Colonsay dialect. Spectrographic analysis suggests that in Colonsay there is rarely a complete stop – as found, for example in a Glasgow or Cockney pronunciation of *city* [siʔi : siʔi]. Rather there is what could best be described as a *glottalised interval*, superimposed on the segmental string. Describing the corresponding feature (‘broken tension’) in Skye Gaelic, Borgstrøm observes, ‘I never heard a complete glottal catch’ (1941: 32).
Only in the case of hiatus, where there is no intervening consonant, can a case be made for describing this feature as a glottal stop. Reflecting this distinction, the SGDS results consistently use the symbol [‘] in conjunction with consonants (sometimes superimposed on the consonant symbol), while the full glottal stop symbol [ʔ] is shown in hiatus: *baile* (65) [b̥a’i]; *cladach* (192) [kl’ad̥a]; but *gobha* (487) [ɡ̥oʔo].

Even in hiatus, however, the effect is often more akin to ‘creaky voice’ than to a true glottal stop. This is particularly the case in those instances where the glottalised vowel is ‘echoed’ or ‘copied’: *gobha* (487) [ɡ̥oʔo], *thubhairt* (1) [huʔʊt’s]. The ‘echoing’ of the glottalised vowel by an identical vowel or its ‘lax’ equivalent in such cases is a characteristic feature of Colonsay pronunciation, although also found elsewhere. In certain other dialects, notably those of the Outer Hebrides, such vowel copying is associated with epenthesis rather than glottalisation (see below).

Where glottalisation occurs between different vowels, the effect is to produce an abrupt shift from one vowel to the next, rather than a glide between the two, as occurs in a diphthong. Examples of this in the SGDS results include *bleaghan* (109) [b̥lœw], *buidhe* (135) [buʔi], *piuthar* (679) [piʔor] and *roimhe* (714) [r̥iʔi]. In many cases the resulting pronunciation is quite different from that found in many other varieties of Gaelic. Cf. Point 9 (Gravir, Lewis): [b̥lœːn : ʰboje : pʰjuːr : r̥eː].

A minimal pair is demonstrated, inadvertently, in the SGDS in the entry for *fiù* (433), where the forms [f̥iʔu] (= *fiach*) and [fiʔu] (= *fitheach*) are given, the latter in a footnote. Further minimal pairs could include the base form/verbal noun contrasts *laigh/laighe* (547) [l’aː] and *suidh/suidhe* (811) [s̥iː : s̥iː].

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488 This use of the diacritic [‘] to indicate glottalisation does not correspond to current IPA practice, where it is used for ‘ejectives’. For this reason, I prefer to use the symbol // in my phonemic transcriptions. This is not explicitly sanctioned in IPA usage either, although [‘] is approved for ‘pharyngealised’ (IPA 2015).

489 Headword is *abair*: *thubhairt*.

490 Headword is *bleagh*: *bleaghan*. Approved spelling is now *bleoghan*.

491 Headword is *roimh*: *roimhe*. This pair would be transcribed [r̥iː : r̥iʔi].

492 This minimal pair is examined by Brown (2009: 45-52) and in my own MSc dissertation (Scouller 2010: 20-21; Figs 5 and 6). Ternes uses *fitheach* and *fiadh* to illustrate the same point (2006: 135).

493 In both cases, only the base form is given in the SGDS results. Although I have followed SGDS conventions in transcribing these examples, I would maintain that the use of [ʔ] suggests too strong a degree of glottalisation.
Glottalisation of sonorants

In this dialect, all sonorants are glottalised when they occur intervocalically after a short, stressed vowel: eile (373) [’eɪl̠i], coille (223-225) [k’əl̠ə], talamh (826) [ta’l̠əɣi]; anail (40) [ɛ’nəl̠’], bainne (68) [bə’nɪ], ceannaich (168) [kɛ’n’ɪç]; amadan (29) [ɛ’ma’dəŋ]; dorus (342) [dɔ’rɪs], barrannan (80) [bə’ran’ən].

There is, however, one major exception to this rule. In an epenthetic cluster, involving a sonorant and another consonant, separated by an epenthetic vowel, there is no glottalisation: ainm (17, 18) [ɛɲɪm̥], balbh (73) [bəl̠’ɣi]. This is the case even where the epenthesis is historical, as in the name of the island, Colbhasa [kəl’əsa]; in such cases the historical epenthesis will usually be reflected, anachronistically, in the spelling. The question of epenthesis will be considered in more detail in the next section.

Because this different treatment of glottalisation in epenthetic syllables cannot be reliably predicted from the synchronic phonetic environment, glottalised forms of sonorants cannot simply be regarded as allophones of the corresponding sonorant phonemes. A strictly segmental analysis would therefore require a separate series of glottalised phonemes to be specified, thus doubling the number of sonorant phonemes. That, however, would be like taking a phonological sledgehammer to an epenthetic nut.

If, on the other hand, glottalisation is regarded as a non-segmental or suprasegmental feature, there is no need to account for it as part of the segmental string, or to postulate a parallel series of glottalised phonemes. Economy can be achieved in phonemic transcription by using a prosodic marker // to identify the glottalised forms, while the unmarked forms are defined as non-glottalised. This usage is analogous to the use of the length marker // or stress marker // in segmental transcription, even though neither of them represents a segment as such. Thus, for example, mairidh would be transcribed phonemically as /ma’riç/, and marbhaidh as /marciç/.

494 Headword is Alasdair.
495 Headword is barran.
**Glottalisation of lenis stops**

The lenis stops /b d ɡ/, together with the palatalised forms /dʒ/ and /ɡ/, are also glottalised when they occur intervocally following a short, stressed vowel: *tobar* (851, 852) [tobəɾ], *cladach* (192) [klədəɾx], *cogadh* (218) [koɡəɾ], *idir* (513,514) [idəɾzɭɾ], *slige* (774) [səɾɭɪəɾ]. In such cases the issue of epenthesis does not arise; there is therefore no need even to consider having a separate series of glottalised stop phonemes, and the glottalised forms in this case may conveniently be regarded as allophones of the respective unglottalised phonemes, as they have been, in the respective phonemic definitions in Chapter 2. It should, nevertheless, be emphasised that this allophonic interpretation of the data provided in the *SGDS* is adopted purely for the purposes of phonemic analysis, and is not intended to mask the fact that, as explained here, glottalisation is essentially a *prosodic* feature affecting the immediate phonetic environment of the stop concerned, and not just the stop itself.

**Glottalisation of voiced fricatives**

The voiced fricatives /v ɣ/ are also glottalised when they occur intervocally following a short, stressed vowel: *abhainn* (2, 3) [a’vəɾ], *sabhal* (726) [sa’vəɾ]; *fiodhan* (427) [fi’ɣəɾ]. We have already seen that glottalisation is absent in epenthesis, where a sonorant is followed by a voiced fricative: *balbh* (73) [bələɣ], *dearbh* (303) [dələɣəɾ], *mo sheanmhair* (749) [mə ʰəɾvəɾ];

496 This last word is the only recorded instance of glottalised /ɣ/ in the *SGDS* results.
497 Headword is *do sheanmhair*.
498 Headword is *marbh: mharbhadh*.
499 The combination *bhr* in *labhraidh* (538) [lə’vɭɾəɾ] is shown with a vestigial vowel after a glottalised [v]. The form in this instance is perhaps influenced by the base form *labhair* [lə’vəɾ]. Headword is *labhair: labhraidh*. 499
As in the case of sonorants, a prosodic marker /ɨ/ can be used in phonemic transcription. Thus we would write /aˈvɪn : saˈvɔl̩ : fiˈ yan/ but /baˈvən : varaˈ : səˈvərə : deˈvəɾə/.

This is entirely in line with the practice adopted for other prosodic features, such as stress and duration.

**Glottalisation in sandhi**

In my previous dissertation (Scouller 2010: 25-26) I concluded, somewhat tentatively, that there was no evidence of glottalisation after stressed final vowels in the absence of a following vowel in words such as *math*, but ‘actually something else’, which I suggested might be a form of final devoicing. Although the SGDS results agree with me in not marking glottalisation in such words (*math* (603) [me], *teth* (839) [tʃë], *guth* (506) [ɡu]), the present phonological analysis has led me to accept that glottalisation is at least notionally present in such cases. This is evidenced in sandhi examples: ‘*math* (a) dh’fhaoidte (397) [ˌsmɛʔe ˈɣʊ ˈd̥ ɪ t], 500 *math thu fhèin*! [mɛʔə ˈhe ˈ]), even though glottalisation may not be realised phonetically where there is no following vowel. The reasons for this revised interpretation are explained below, under **Some insights from syllable theory** (pp. 291-296).

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500 Headword is *faod: math dh’fhaoidte*. The more usual Colonsay expression is *cha lughaide* [xa ‘tʃ ˈdɬ ɪ t].
Epenthesis

Epenthesis, or svarabhakti as it has traditionally been known, is a well-known feature of Scottish Gaelic pronunciation. In the spoken language, it involves the regular insertion of an ‘extra’ vowel into certain consonant clusters, although this vowel is rarely, if ever, indicated in the spelling. Thus the word balbh will be pronounced approximately /balˠav/ or /balˠəv/ in most Gaelic dialects.

The phenomenon is by no means restricted to Gaelic. Apart from Sanskrit, which gave us the term svarabhakti, it is a well-known feature of Lowland Scottish speech in words such as film [fɪlˠəm] and girl [ɡɪrəlˠ]. It also occurs in varieties of Dutch, for example in the words elf [ɛlf] ‘eleven’, melk [mɛlˠk] ‘milk’ (Cook 1995: 134).

In Scottish Gaelic, epenthesis occurs only in certain clearly defined phonetic environments. It is found only following a short vowel, when a sonorant consonant is followed by a lenis stop or fricative, or when a non-labial sonorant is followed by [m] or vice versa. In southern Argyll dialects, including Colonsay, it is also found when the voiced fricative [v] is followed by a sonorant: samhradh (736) [sɛvʲɪɾʲiɣ], geamhradh (469) [ɡʲɛvʲɪɾʲiɣ].\(^{501}\) Epenthesis does not generally occur, however, when the following consonant is homorganic, i.e. a dental or alveolar consonant in the case of l, r, n, or a labial in the case of m.\(^{502}\) Nor does it occur before the fortis stops [p t k]; here we find preaspiration, which is generally realised as devoicing of the sonorant. Preaspiration will be discussed separately.

Scholars disagree, however, about the phonological interpretation of the epenthetic vowel. Opinion has in the past been divided over

(a) whether it is to be regarded as forming the nucleus of a separate syllable;
(b) if so, to which syllable the preceding sonorant is to be allocated;
(c) the phonetic quality of the epenthetic vowel.

\(^{501}\) Other dialects have a diphthong in such cases, e.g. Point 13 (Leverburgh) [sɻɑʊɾɪɣ] : qˈɑʊɾɪɣ].
\(^{502}\) Orthographic conventions are used here because of the notoriously complicated phonetic realisation of laterals, nasals and vibrants in Gaelic (see pp. 72-89). A group of dialects in Central Perthshire (Points 191-193, 198-200, 206) show a vocalised form [n] in càrn (154), dorn (339, 340), suggesting a form of epenthesis in a homorganic environment (but see Ó Murchú’s interpretation below).
The answers to these questions depend largely on which dialect is being examined, making it difficult to generalise for Scottish Gaelic as a whole. Irish, by contrast, shows a fairly consistent pattern: there, epenthesis creates an additional unstressed syllable, vocalised phonemically as /ə/, with the allophone [i] occurring in a palatalised environment (Ní Chiosáin 1995: 2-4; cf. 1999: 559-561). This additional syllable is no different, in phonological terms, from any other unstressed syllable. This relatively uncomplicated ‘Irish’ model is similar to the form of epenthesis which predominates in Argyll, where the epenthetic vowel is phonemically /ə/; save that, in those Argyll dialects (including Colonsay) that exhibit glottalisation, the absence of glottalisation in epenthetic environments creates an additional complication.

In the rest of the Gaelic-speaking area, including the more northerly Hebridean dialects spoken by most native speakers today, the situation is somewhat different. There the epenthetic vowel (V₂) is a ‘copy’ or ‘echo’ of the preceding vowel (V₁); the ‘copying’ may in some cases be limited to certain features only, and its specific realisation may be influenced by the surrounding consonants. It will be recalled that this same phenomenon, vowel copying or ‘echoing’, is associated with glottalisation in Argyll dialects, in words such as gobha (487) [goʔo] (see p. 258). More remarkably, the epenthetic vowel is not generally regarded, in these northerly dialects, as forming the nucleus of a separate syllable; this observation is borne out by the fact that, when singing such syllables, almost invariably the V₁CV₂ combination is sung on a single note (Borgstrøm 1937: 77; Oftedal 1956: 29). That this should be done, spontaneously and unconsciously, by native Gaelic singers suggests that the phenomenon is indeed deeply rooted in the structure of the language.

Before moving on to examine the nature of epenthesis in the Colonsay dialect, it will be helpful to review briefly how scholars have, historically, dealt with the question of epenthesis, as it affects different dialects.
Previous studies of epenthesis in Scottish Gaelic dialects

Historically, the issue of epenthesis in Scottish Gaelic has been looked at in terms of syllable structure. The whole question of syllabification in Gaelic has been the subject of a lively debate ever since Borgstrøm appeared to suggest that the syllable pattern VC (vowel-consonant) was predominant in Scottish Gaelic, based on his study of the Barra dialect (1937: 74-78). This caused great excitement among linguists, since until then it had been held as axiomatic that CV was the universal pattern in all languages. The resulting debate is well documented by Anna Bosch (1998), who summarises the positions of the main participants. In fact Borgstrøm’s position is much less categorical than is often assumed: VC, while a possible interpretation of the data in cases of ‘broken tension’ (Borgstrøm’s term) is not the only possible paradigm identified by him in Barra, as subsequent discussion has tended to imply; he himself specifically refers to ‘two types of syllabic division’, depending on whether the words in question exhibit ‘broken’ or ‘unbroken tension’ (1937: 77; 148-150). Borgstrøm himself admits, however, that ‘the phonological interpretation of these facts is still doubtful’.

Borgstrøm, in his study of the Barra dialect, provides the first systematic account of epenthesis as it occurs in Scottish Gaelic (1937: 126-130). He asserts that ‘svarabhakti vowels’ occur where sonorants (which he lists) are followed by ‘certain consonants’, which he defines as follows:

The second part of the original consonant group can be an originally voiced occlusive (b, d, g), voiced or voiceless spirants (lenited b, m, ch [sic], g), the sibilant s and m (non-lenited), l, r (lenited in all my examples). A svarabhakti vowel is never developed in groups of homorganic consonants (rd, rn, etc.) and never when the second part of the original group was a voiceless occlusive (p, t, c). (p. 127)

Allowing for differences in the terms used, this is essentially the same definition as set out above.
Borgstrøm goes on to observe:

Words with svarabhakti are characterized by the syllabic division with unbroken tension ... and are thus as a rule clearly distinguished from other words, which have broken tension. Only after a long vowel in the first syllable no such distinction is seen, since all words with long vowels have unbroken tension. (ibid.)

As we have seen, ‘broken tension’ is Borgstrøm’s expression for the Barra manifestation of what in other dialects appears as glottalisation (Argyll) or falling tone (Lewis). He is thus the first to identify a complementary relationship between epenthesis and glottalisation. For Borgstrøm, the question of syllable division is of fundamental importance: in epenthetic syllables, he maintains that the division is V.CV as in *orm* (*a*-ram), whereas in non-epenthetic examples it is VC.V as in *aran* (*ar*-an). 503

On the quality of the epenthetic vowel, Borgstrøm states that in Barra ‘the svarabhakti vowels are usually full, clear vowels; mostly the vowel of the first syllable is repeated in the svarabhakti syllable. Only between *m* and *l*’ or *r* does the reduced vowel *ə* occur as svarabhakti’ (ibid.). This is clearly very different from the situation in Argyll, where /ə/ is the norm.

Borgstrøm’s account of epenthesis in the Barra dialect has come to be widely accepted among linguists (especially those with no first-hand knowledge of Gaelic) as the definitive paradigm of how epenthesis operates in Scottish Gaelic as a whole. G.N. Clements, for example, in his article on ‘Syllabification and epenthesis in the Barra dialect of Scottish Gaelic’ (1986), relies entirely on Borgstrøm’s data. Clements’ purpose is to show that the surface representation of epenthesis (more specifically, the quality of the epenthetic vowel) is subject to definable rules, and hence entirely predictable, but in the process, Borgstrøm’s data is submitted to a rigorous autosegmental analysis (Clements 1986: 328).

503 Borgstrom further states that ‘in Ireland the syllable division is *a-rán*’. This view of syllable division has been questioned by more recent scholarship (see below).
Further work on epenthesis as found in Barra was carried out more recently by Bosch and de Jong (1997). Unlike Clements, Bosch conducted her own fieldwork in Barra, and does not rely on Borgstrøm’s findings. Her study uses instrumental techniques to measure the duration and fundamental frequency ($F_0$) of vowels, and to compare the length of $V_1$ and $V_2$ for both epenthetic and non-epenthetic vowels. The results show clearly that in Barra, epenthetic vowels are systematically longer than their non-epenthetic counterparts. They also display the full range of vowel phonemes for this dialect, whereas unstressed syllables contain a reduced inventory of vowels. Taken together, these measurements show that in Barra Gaelic the epenthetic vowel $V_2$, where it occurs, is stressed at least as much as the preceding $V_1$. Again, this is very different from the pattern found in Argyll.

The ‘Barra’ model, as found on the West Coast and throughout the Hebrides from Mull northwards, has continued to exercise the minds of linguists, including the distinguished phonetician Peter Ladefoged, who includes a section on ‘Gaelic syllable structure’ in a collaborative paper on ‘Phonetic Structures of Scottish Gaelic’ (Ladefoged et al. 1998: 29-33). Once again, the authors rely heavily on Borgstrøm’s findings. On the question of epenthesis, they state the problem succinctly: ‘It is often hard to say how many syllables there are in a word’. Recalling that ‘syllabicity is a phonological property, an organizing principle, and may not be a phonetically observable feature’, Ladefoged and his collaborators prefer to regard epenthetic words such as balg as monosyllables, with ‘something akin to a consonantal interlude’ (p. 29) rather than a syllable division. In other words, the VCV combination is treated in phonological terms as a single vocalic unit, rather like a diphthong.

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504 The contributors include Alice Turk, Kevin Hind and St John Skilton, all of Edinburgh University.

505 This is in apparent contradiction to Oftedal’s statement that ‘the syllable is not in itself a phonemic or prosodic entity’ (Oftedal 1956: 25). However, Oftedal may simply have meant that the syllable is not ‘a phonetically observable feature’, and can only be deduced from prosodic features of an utterance, and from a mental interpretation of the speech sounds heard. He goes on to define what he terms the phonemic syllable.
By thus identifying syllabicity, and hence epenthesis, as ‘an organising principle’ which may not be observable in strictly phonetic terms, Ladefoged et al. open the door to an approach whereby epenthesis is seen as a non-segmental feature, which cannot be accommodated comfortably in a strictly phonetic (i.e. segmental) account of how a language or dialect is spoken. A similar approach forms the basis of the present analysis.

A similar pattern of epenthesis to that in Barra was observed by other scholars in north-western Gaelic dialects. Oftedal (1956: 140-143) notes that in Leurbost, the epenthetic vowel \( V_2 \) is ‘regularly a repetition’ of the preceding vowel \( V_1 \) (with some allophonic variation), and hence the complicated mechanism of surface representations as described by Clements does not occur.\(^{506}\) Ternes in Applecross (2006: 83-84) and Wentworth in Gairloch (2005: 595-598) report similar findings.

The situation on the east coast is (or was) apparently quite different. In Easter Ross, Watson (1974: 43) observes:

> In this dialect of N.E. Ross-shire, svarabhakti is not the phonological phenomenon it is in Wester Ross and Skye. [...] I have, moreover, discovered no awareness amongst the native speakers that, for example, any apparently disyllabic words are felt to contain only a single syllable.

According to Dorian (1978: 57), the same holds true for East Sutherland Gaelic (ESG):

> Svarabhakti can be said to exist in ESG only from the historical point of view, not from the synchronic. There are no length or intonation differences between vowels which are historically svarabhakti vowels and other unstressed vowels.

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\(^{506}\) Norval Smith, based on Oftedal’s data, interprets this as meaning that the epenthetic vowel is always ‘an exact copy’ of the preceding vowel, which is not quite what Oftedal found (Smith 1999: 584, emphasis original).
It appears that these East Coast dialects, now largely extinct, show closer affinities in this regard with the situation in Argyll (and in Ireland) than do the surviving dialects in the North and West.

Finally, in East Perthshire, Ó Murchú identifies what he terms ‘a half-long voiced consonantal glide’, which he represents as [nˑ lˑ rˑ]: gainmheach [ɡ’enˑx], dealg [jɑˑɡ], tilg [čilˑg’], dorcha [dɔˑx]. This does not appear to result in an additional syllable, although ‘a brief voiced release may intervene between the consonantal glide and following consonant coda’ (Ó Murchú 1989: 92-96). This model is different again from that found in the North and West, or in Argyll.
The ‘Argyll’ model

Scholarly comment on the ‘Argyll’ model of epenthesis is comparatively scarce, and tends to be ancillary to the consideration of other features, such as glottalisation.

Holmer, in his pioneering work Studies in Argyllshire Gaelic (1938), based mainly on the dialect of Islay, has a section entitled ‘Svarabhakti’ in which he contrasts the situation in Argyll with that found in Skye. He notes that ‘in Argyllshire Gaelic the phenomenon of svarabhakti is a little different’, in that the epenthetic vowel is [ə] or [i], and behaves like other unstressed vowels, whereas in Skye it generally involves a repetition of the preceding vowel, with the stress appearing to fall on the epenthetic vowel – the same pattern as has been already observed in respect of Barra and Lewis. More significantly for the present discussion, he notes that ‘the distinction between an original monosyllabic and disyllabic pronunciation is often determined by the absence of the [glottal] stop’.

George Jones, writing specifically about glottalisation in the Jura dialect, refers in passing to the issue of ‘svarabhakti’, noting significantly that absence of glottalisation is the only audible way of recognising historical epenthesis in present-day pronunciation (Jones 2009b: 6). In his PhD thesis he deals at greater length with the occurrence of ‘svarabhakti’ (2009a: 79-80; 83). In both cases he cites mairidh [maʔriç] and marbhaidh [mɑɾiç] as a rare example of a minimal pair in which absence of glottalisation is a pointer to ‘historical’ epenthesis. This minimal pair has also been tested on Colonsay, with the same result: mairidh is pronounced with glottalisation [ma’riç], marbhaidh without [mariç].

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507 Holmer places the Sanskrit word in quotation marks in his section heading.
508 It is questionable whether ‘historical’ is the right word to use in this instance, since the base form marbh is very much in use – anything but marbh, in fact – and what we have here is a derived grammatical form.
509 Interview with Jessie McNeill, April 2014.
Anna Bosch, in an abstract of an unpublished paper found on the internet, also points out the importance of glottalisation as a marker for epenthesis in Argyll dialects:

Interestingly, the dialects of Gigha and Islay do not share the prosodic or featural patterns of svarabhakti that the [northern] Hebridean dialects demonstrate; if we ignore the glottalization facts, it would appear that these dialects of Gaelic do not distinguish svarabhakti words at all. However, I argue that it is precisely the presence or absence of glottalization which now takes on this distinguishing role. (undated:1)

The comparative lack of scholarly interest may simply reflect the fact that epenthesis, as found in Argyll, is seen as a relatively straightforward, and hence rather uninteresting phonological feature, compared with the complexity of its manifestations further north. Nonetheless, the relationship between epenthesis and glottalisation, in particular, is deserving of further attention, particularly as it relates to other prosodic features such as preaspiration.

Before turning to the handling of epenthesis in the Colonsay dialect, it should be noted that Elmar Ternes, in the 2006 addition to his Phonemic Analysis (Ternes 2006: 129-145), adopts a fundamentally different approach. He concludes that Scottish Gaelic is a pitch-accent language, and that both epenthesis and glottalisation (where it occurs) are manifestations of contrasting tones. On this analysis, arguments about syllabification, and possibly historical epenthesis, are superseded by a recognition that these surface phenomena are simply the outworking of tonal contrasts, as they affect individual words.
**Epenthesis in Colonsay Gaelic**

As might be expected, epenthesis in Colonsay Gaelic follows the ‘Argyll’ model, and in particular illustrates the complementary relationship with glottalisation. The epenthetic vowel is phonemically /ə/. The allophonic realisation of this phoneme in different phonetic environments is described at pp. 122-126.

We have already seen that sonorants in the Colonsay dialect are regularly glottalised when they occur intervocically after a short, stressed vowel, but that in an epenthetic cluster, involving a sonorant and another consonant, glottalisation does not occur: *ainm* (17,18) [ɕɛɲm], *balbh* (73) [b̥al’ɤɣ], *dealg* (301) [d̥’z’al’ɤɡ], *thilgeadh* (843) [hiil’ɤɣ], *garbh* (462) [ɡar’ɣ]. This is the case even where the epenthesis is ‘historical’, and the absence of glottalisation is the only evidence for it in present-day pronunciation; this is seen in the name of the island (as traditionally spelt) *Colbhasa* [kɔl’asa],510 in words such as *arbhar* (54) [aɾar], *soirbheas* (791) [sɔɾas]. It is also found in derived forms of verbs which show epenthesis in the base form: *falbhaidh* (390) [fɔl’aç] from *falbh* [fɔl’ɤɣ]; *mharbhadh* (602) [v araɣ] from *marbh* (600) [mar’ɣ]. In all these instances the ‘historical’ epenthesis is reflected in the present-day spelling; this, however, is not the case for the local placenames *Orasa* [ɔɾasa], *Scalasaig* [sqal’asɡ’], *Uragaig* [uræɡ’], which are all pronounced without glottalisation, although spelt with a single consonant.511

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510 Many islanders favour the spelling *Colasa*, which is used (against my own advice) in the name of the annual music festival *Ceòl Cholasa*. This spelling would, however, suggest the pronunciation *[kə’T’asa]*, with glottalisation of *[I’]*, which is not the case.

511 All three names are of Norse origin, from *Orfiris-ey*, *Skál-hús-vík* and *Urða-vík* respectively (Loder 1935: xxx, 441 fn 2, 448 fn 2). In each case, it appears that a medial consonant cluster in Old Norse has become assimilated in Gaelic to an epenthetic combination, and thence to a non-glottalised sonorant.

An alternative hypothesis would be that glottalisation was already established in this dialect before the Norsemen arrived, and was not applied to new Norse names, any more than it is to English borrowings in our own time. This is, however, counter-indicated by the placename *Sgibinis* [ski’ʃɪnɪʃ], from Norse *Skipa-nes*, where intervocalic [b] is glottalised.
In examining the phonetic environments in which epenthesis occurs in this dialect, and to supplement the evidence of the SGDS, I was able to record one of my informants, the late Mary Ann MacAllister (see pp. 84-89), saying a number of words where epenthesis might be expected. Where no SGDS headword reference is given in the following paragraphs, the word was supplied by Mary Ann.

**Sonorant + lenis stop**

An epenthetic vowel is found in cases where a lateral or vibrant (orthographic l or r) following a short vowel is followed by a non-homorganic lenis stop: *Albainn* [alʼəb̥ɪ̃n], *thilgeadh* (843) [hɪl̥q̥ʼəɣ̥], *urball* (371) [urɪ̃b̥əl̥], *lorg* [lʼər̥əq̥], *airgead* (21, 22) [ar̥q̥ʼid̥]. I have been unable to find an example of /kl/ followed by a lenis stop. In none of these examples was glottalisation noted.

No examples of epenthesis involving homorganic clusters were detected in any of the material. Where [r] occurs before a dental stop, we find the insertion of a fricative: *àrd* [ər̥d̥], *bòrd* [b̥ɔ̃d̥].

**Sonorant + fortis stop**

In the case of fortis stops, there is no epenthetic vowel. Instead, we find preaspiration of the stop. This will be dealt with in the next section.

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*512* Unfortunately the original recording was lost when my computer was stolen in March 2010; my transcript, however, survived in hard copy.

*513* Spontaneously given in this form by Mary Ann.

*514* Headword is *tilg*: *thilgeadh*.

*515* Headword is *earball*.

*516* According to Mary Ann, used only with the meaning ‘footprint, trace’ in Colonsay (see p. 353).

*517* Headword is spelt *airgiod*.

*518* Forms transcribed from Mary Ann’s pronunciation. See discussion at pp. 84-89. The SGDS gives *àrd* (55, 56) [ər̥d̥ / əʼr̥d̥ : əʼsd̥l̥ / əʼs̥d̥]; *bòrd* does not appear as a headword in the SGDS.
**Sonorant + sonorant**

Epenthesis is found where two non-homorganic sonorants follow one another. In practice, since other sonorants are all treated as dentals, these combinations will always contain the phone [m]: *calman* [kal’əmən], *gorm* (497, 498) [ɡ̊ɔɾm : ɡ̊ər̥m], *ainm* (17, 18) [ɛm̥], *anmoch* [ɛməkəx], *imleachadh* (517) [ɪmɪl̠əɣəɣ]. Once again, there is no glottalisation in any of these examples; the words *iomradh* (527) [ɪ̜̇r̥a] and *imi*re (516) [i’mɪᵲɪ] provide a near-minimal pair in which the first contains an epenthetic vowel, while the second consists of three non-epenthetic syllables, with resulting glottalisation.

When the sonorants are homorganic, there is compensatory lengthening: *càrn* [ka’ɾn], *dòrn* [dəɾn].\(^{520}\) (Cf. Ó Dochartaigh 1981: 219-231; Gillies 2009: 243). The preposition/pronoun combination *oirnn* [ɔɾɲ], shows lengthening when stressed.

**Sonorant + fricative**

When a sonorant is followed by a fricative, epenthesis occurs in the same circumstances as with sonorant + lenis stop: *falbh* [fɔɾəv], *garbh* (462) [ɡar̥iɣ], *Donnchadh* (330, 331) [dən’əxəɣ], *dorcha* (332) [dəɾəxə], and with palatalisation, *nas doirche* (333, 334) [nəs ˈɾɪɾɪt], *aimsir* (14) [ɪmɪˈɾɪ]. The near-minimal pair *falbh*/*falamh* illustrates the difference between an epenthetic vowel in the case of *falbh* [fɔl’əv], and a full syllable (with corresponding glottalisation) in the case of *falamh* (389) [fa’ɾəɣ].\(^{521}\)

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\(^{519}\) Headword is *imlich*.

\(^{520}\) Forms transcribed from Mary Ann’s pronunciation. *SGDS* forms are: *càrn* (154) [kə η / kə’η], *dorn* (339, 340) [dəɾ η / dəɾ’ η]. Note that in the latter case, the *SGDS* headword is spelt without a grave accent.

\(^{521}\) Exceptionally, the quality of the [l] in *falamh* is not specified in the *SGDS* results. It should be [l’]: [fa’ləɣ].
Once again, no epenthesis is found in homorganic examples; indeed, the sonorant tends to become assimilated to the following fricative, particularly when palatalised: 

\[ \text{bainnse} \] \( b̥ \vtil'\ ili \),\(^{522}\) \[ \text{soillse} \] \( s̥i\vtil'\ ili : s̥i\vtil'\ ili \),\(^{523}\) but note \[ \text{rallsa} \] \( ra\vtil'\ 'ispil \).\(^{524}\) An interesting case is \[ \text{ionnsaidh} \] \( \text{i̥i̥̇s̥i̥̇ċ̥} \) and its homophone \[ \text{ionnsaich} \] \( i̥i̥̇s̥i̥̇ċ̥ \), in which the ‘nasal’ sonorant \( nn \) is articulated as \( r \), as in \[ \text{cnoc} \]. No epenthesis occurs, because the cluster is homorganic, and in any case the preceding vocalic segment is a diphthong.

**Fricative + sonorant**

As has already been noted, a particular feature of Colonsay Gaelic, which it shares with Islay, Gigha and southern Jura (\( \text{SGDS}, \text{Vol. V: 122-123, Vol. IV: 34-35;} \) Grannd 2000: 56-57; Jones 2009a: 100; 2009b: 8), is the pronunciation of the words \[ \text{samhradh} \] \( sev̥i̥̇ẏ̥i̥̇ \), \[ \text{geamhradh} \] \( q̥e̥v̥i̥̇ẏ̥i̥̇ \) with an epenthetic vowel, where other dialects have a diphthong. In Arran and Kintyre these words are recorded with \([v]\), but without the epenthetic vowel (Holmer 1957: 25, 36, 43-44; 1981: 17, 19, 25, 37). A further example of epenthesis occurring between a fricative and a sonorant occurs in the genitive form \[ \text{oidhche Shamhna} \] \( y̥i̥ç̥i̥̇e̥v̥i̥̇n̥ə \).\(^{525}\) Even more remarkable is the Colonsay pronunciation of \[ \text{dannsadh} \] \( d̥e̥v̥əs̥ər̥əg \) (also found in Islay and Jura), which appears to show epenthesis occurring between two fricatives. This may be a case of assimilation (of a longstanding loanword) by analogy with \[ \text{samhradh}, \text{geamhradh}. \] (See Grannd 2000: 56-57.) This suggests that the underlying lexical form is \[ \text{damhsadh}. \] The verbal form \[ \text{damhais} \] \( d̥e̥v̥i̥̇ʃ̥i̥̇ \) is also used, without glottalisation of \([v]\), as would normally be expected. This suggests that \[ \text{damhais} \] is a back-formation from \[ \text{damhsadh}. \] Grannd reports forms with \([v]\) occurring not only in Islay, but also in southern Jura and (citing the work of Holmer) in Arran, Kintyre, Rathlin and the Glens of Antrim (Grannd 2000: 56-57).

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\(^{522}\) Headword is \[ \text{banais: bainnse}. \]

\(^{523}\) Headword is \[ \text{soiltsich}. \]

\(^{524}\) Headword is \[ \text{rácan}. \]

\(^{525}\) Headword is \[ \text{Samhainn}. \]
**Phonological assessment of epenthesis**

The phonetic facts regarding epenthesis, and its manifestation in different dialects, are not in dispute. Scholars differ on the question of how these facts can be accommodated within a phonemic framework – if indeed they can be.

Essentially, two models have been proposed to deal with the problem of epenthesis within a segmental approach:

1. Marking syllable divisions, as practised by Borgstrøm in his early work on Barra.

2. Putting epenthetic sequences between dropped square brackets: *[ɡ̥oro]*m, etc.

This is the solution adopted by the SGDS for narrow phonetic transcriptions of certain dialects, but is not applicable to the phonetic reality as found in more southerly dialects.

A further possibility is hinted at by Gillies (2009: 244-245), who highlights the importance of tone in the phonemic interpretation of epenthesis:

> Although this type of syllable is clearly disyllabic in phonetic terms, it is associated with the same held or rising tone as is found in monosyllables with long vowels. This, together with the perception of native speakers that svarabhakti words are monosyllabic, has led to its interpretation as phonemically monosyllabic. … Note, however, that this treatment is not universal in Scottish Gaelic: epenthesis of a fixed *[ə]* with normal tone is found in some of the southerly dialects.

Gillies appears to rule out any account of epenthesis which embraces all varieties of Scottish Gaelic. However, if one accepts Ternes’s definition, whereby the notion of ‘tone’ encompasses the form of glottalisation found in southerly dialects (2006: 137-139), and where ‘held or rising tone’ (Tone 2, in Ternes's classification) corresponds to ‘absence of glottalisation’ in those dialects, it will be seen that Gillies’s statement holds true despite the apparent difference in treatment between north and south, and hence by extension highlights the complementary relationship between epenthesis and glottalisation.
Considerations of ‘tone’ (in this broad sense, including glottalisation) lead us away from a strictly phonetic approach, and into the realm of suprasegmental or non-segmental features. I would argue that, as in the case of glottalisation, adopting a non-segmental approach to the question of epenthesis offers a more workable solution than trying to force this problematic feature of Gaelic phonology into the ill-fitting straitjacket of a segmental representation. In practice, this reinforces the view that in this dialect, glottalisation of consonants, where it occurs, should be marked in phonemic transcription with the non-segmental marker /ˀ/.\footnote{\textit{[']}} while epenthetic combinations appear as a straightforward succession of segmental phonemes. This adequately reflects the audible facts, without attempting to explain complex phonological processes in a phonemic transcription.

In the final part of this chapter (see below) I refer to other ways in which current work in theoretical linguistics, and in particular Syllable Theory, has sought to cast light on the issue of epenthesis as it occurs in Scottish Gaelic, and as it relates to other prosodic features.

\footnote{\textit{[']} in the phonetic transcription adopted by the \textit{SGDS}.}
Preaspiration

Preaspiration is a well-known feature of Scottish Gaelic pronunciation, and is also found in Icelandic and Faroese, as well as some varieties of Norwegian and Swedish. This has led to speculation that it might have been brought into Gaelic as a result of Norse influence (Borgstrøm 1974; Oftedal 1994), although this has recently been disputed by Pavel Iosad (2015: 48-49), among others. It occurs only before the fortis stops /p t k/, the fortis affricate /tʃ/ and the fortis palatal stop /kʲ/, and essentially involves the insertion of a devoiced segment or glottal fricative [h] between a preceding short vowel and the stop. The precise phonetic form it takes differs from one dialect to another. In Lewis, it involves a fairly brief devoicing of the last part of the preceding vowel, usually transcribed as [ʰp ʰt ʰk]; in other dialects there is a more pronounced glottal fricative [h], which is usually realised as [x] before a velar stop. In some dialects, particularly in the central mainland and northern Argyll, [x] is also found before dental and labial stops (Iosad, Ramsammy and Honeybone 2015).

Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh has written an impressively detailed account of the variations that exist between different dialects in the way in which preaspiration is realised, based on the SGDS results (Ó Maolalaigh 2010). He identifies seven types of preaspiration patterns, labelled A to G, each of which is subject to minor variations in specific localities. Colonsay (along with all the other islands from Harris to Islay, plus part of the west coast of the mainland facing Skye) fits into Type C, where the basic pattern is [hp ht xk], i.e. a glottal fricative before dental and labial stops, but a velar fricative before a velar stop. Because there is a slight variation to this definition in the case of palatalised stops following the high front vowel [i] (see below), Colonsay is categorised as C[\text{var}].

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527 Cf. Ó Baoill (1980: 81) for an account of the earlier debate on this subject.
In the Colonsay results, the SGDS consistently uses the transcription [h$b\, h$d\, x$g] following a ‘broad’ vowel. Preaspiration thus becomes the essential marker distinguishing a fortis stop from a lenis one in medial or final position, following a stressed short vowel. After the high front vowel [i], where a following stop is palatalised, the transcription is [ç$b\, ç$d\, 'ç$g']: *suibeir* (815) [si$ch$ar], *litir* (578) [çiç'd'$z''i], *tric* (868) [triç'g']; this indicates a very strong form of preaspiration, involving the palatal fricative [ç], before orthographic p and t, in addition to c where it would be expected.

The palatal fricative is also found before [ɡ'] following other phonetic vowels: *creic* (252) [krec'g'], *cnuic* (215) [kruc'g'].528 (see p. 155). Although it is not clear from the SGDS results, [ç] does not appear to be found with orthographic p or t following vowels other than [i]. In cases where a dental stop (or affricate) follows a rounded vowel, the symbol for a rounded labial fricative [ɸ] is found: *cat* (158, 159) [k$v$f[d : k$v$f[d] and its plural *cait* (160) [k$v$f'[f]],529 and also *tuiteam* (874) [tu$fd'$z''em].530 This reflects the fact that preaspiration involves devoicing part of the preceding vowel segment, with lip-rounding retained.

Where a fortis stop is preceded by a sonorant, preaspiration takes different forms. In the case of laterals and vibrants (l and r, in orthographic terms), the sonorant is *devoiced* before a labial or velar stop: *corp* (243) [k$or$b], *oidheirp* (671) [y$or$b]; *olc* (673, 674) [a'l$g], *smuilceach* (778) [smu$sg''ax]; *adharc* (7) [y$or$g], *coirce* (233, 234) [k$or$g'T]. Note, however, that *amharc* (36), which is the normal word for ‘looking’ in this dialect, is usually metathesised as [ɛ''r̥əx$g] by Colonsay speakers, and not pronounced *[ɛ''vər̥x$g] as shown in the SGDS.531

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528 Headword is *cnoc*: *cnuic*.
529 Headword is *cat*: *cait*.
530 Headword is *tuit*: *tuiteam*.
531 The form [ge''rax$g], with some variation in vowels, is recorded in Islay (Points 53-56). See also Ó Maolalaigh (2010: 370).
In the case of dental stops, a more complicated picture is seen. Laterals are devoiced: *allt* (30-32) [aʊl̥t̥] : [aʊl̥t̥t̥], while vibrants are not only devoiced, but acquire a fricative articulation, as has already been seen: *mart* (113) [mɛs'd̥], *ceart* (174, 175) [k'aśd̥], etc.

When the sonorant in question is a nasal, the reverse process takes place: the sonorant is lengthened, and the following stop is voiced. Voicing/devoicing will be considered in the next section.

In other environments, i.e. in unstressed medial or final position, or after a long vowel or diphthong, the *SGDS* analysis implies that the lenis/fortis distinction is neutralised. Thus *bàta* (81, 82) [b̥aˑd̥ə] could equally well be spelt *bàda*. I have found that in some cases a weak form of preaspiration is also heard following a long vowel: [b̥aˑʰd̥ə]. This analysis is borne out by Dónall Ó Baoill, who observes:

> Preaspiration after long vowels has developed along similar lines as those described above in the case of short vowels. However, in general it can be said that preaspiration is ‘lighter’ after long vowels. (1980: 84)

The evidence, however, is not strong enough to conclude that this is a regular feature of this dialect.

Like glottalisation (see above), preaspiration was analysed in Chapter 2, for the purposes of phonemic analysis, as *allophonic* in the case of fortis stops (pp. 138-145). A segmental transcription, as adopted by the *SGDS*, would also lend itself to a bisegmental interpretation, with /h/ functioning as a phoneme in its own right, with allophones [ç ɸ] as appropriate. The latter interpretation, while perfectly viable, is not the approach adopted here.

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532 For reasons stated (pp. 75-77), I would prefer the transcription [a]̬́d̥.
533 Headword is bό.
There is, however, a strong case to be made for regarding preaspiration, like glottalisation and epenthesis, as a non-segmental feature operating on the segmental string. Just as glottalisation of lenis consonants has the effect of lengthening the syllable – hence giving it added prominence – while retaining a short vowel, the same effect is achieved in the case of fortis consonants by means of preaspiration. The process is not, strictly speaking, *suprasegmental*, since in most instances it occurs between two discrete segments (and may itself be legitimately interpreted as a segment), but in terms of its phonological function it fits the pattern of ‘vowel strengthening’, identified by Ó Dochartaigh (1981), in the same way as glottalisation, lengthening and, arguably, epenthesis. The effect in all cases is to increase the prominence of particular syllables within an utterance.\(^{534}\)

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\(^{534}\) For a quantitative approach to preaspiration, examining its occurrence in Irish and Icelandic, as well as Scottish Gaelic, see Ní Chasaide and Ó Dochartaigh (1984).
Nasalisation

Nasalisation in Gaelic may affect vowels or consonants. In both cases, the inherent nasality of the consonants [m n ṇ n̥ ɲ ŋ] is extended to adjacent segments, resulting in nasalised vowels and voiced consonants. It is thus seen to be a suprasegmental feature.

In a note on the LSS questionnaire, Jackson observes: ‘E[r]ic H[amp] notes there seems to be no phonemic nasalisation, and that it is allophonic in contact with nasals’ (LSS: 1). I agree with Hamp that nasalisation is not phonemic in this dialect, but while it may be allophonic in the case of consonants, where its realisation is predictable, I would question whether this is true for nasalisation of vowels, in view of the large number of examples where a vowel in contact with a nasal consonant is not nasalised. Rather I would maintain that it is prosodic in such cases.

Nasalisation of vowels

Nasalisation of vowels is not a common feature of Colonsay Gaelic. Only 23 headwords out of 895 in the SGDS results for Colonsay show this feature. Four of these are duplicates of other headwords, sometimes with a slightly different phonetic transcription, while others are morphological variants (inflected forms) of the same word. Ignoring duplicates, but including morphological variants, gives 19 entries in the SGDS results with nasalised vowels.

In every case, the vowel concerned is found in immediate proximity to a ‘coronal/dental’ nasal consonant [n` n ɲ]; in the overwhelming majority of cases (14 out of 19), the adjacent consonant is [n`]. Just over half the instances recorded (11) involve the vowel [ɛ]; and in 7 of these cases [ɛ] is found in the diphthong combination [ɛʊ], as transcribed in the SGDS system. These include the following monosyllabic words ending in the orthographic sequence -ann: ceann (163-165) [kʰɛʊn], clann (196) [kʰɛʊn], crann (245) [kɾɛʊn], gleann (477, 478) [ɡlɛʊn], sannt (737) [sɛʊn]; as well as the disyllabic plural form beanntan (91)
and the compound form \textit{seann-té} (747) \([ji\ddot{e}\ddot{o}\ddot{n}\ 4\ddot{z}\ddot{e}]\), both of which have \(\ddot{e}\ddot{o}\ddot{n}\) in the stressed syllable. It will be recalled that I have chosen to interpret these sequences phonetically as \([\ddot{e}\ddot{n}^m]\), i.e. with a lengthened ‘rounded and velarised’ sonorant rather than a diphthong, and phonemically as \(/\ddot{e}n^v/\). (See p. 76). Nasalisation is universally found in such cases, and may be regarded as allophonic. It is noteworthy that Colonsay speakers, when giving added emphasis to such words (e.g. when repeating them for the sake of clarity), will often emphasise the nasality of the vowel segment: \textit{cha robh e idir ann} [xa ro a id’z’ir ‘\ddot{e}\ddot{o}\ddot{n}\] ‘he wasn’t even there’.

It will be recalled that orthographic \textit{a} is normally realised as \([e]\) in the presence of a nasal consonant in this dialect, as in other Argyll dialects, notably Islay. This explains the absence of any forms in \(*[\ddot{a}]\), and helps to explain the preponderance of examples with nasalised \(\ddot{e}\). It is likely that the synchronic forms in \([e]\) reflect a historical process of ‘nasalisation’, which has affected the quality of the vowel, but has not resulted in phonetically nasalised vowels in the present-day dialect.

The other nasalised vowels attested are:

\([\ddot{u}]\) in \textit{a-nunn} (45) [n\textsuperscript{\textalpha}n’]\)

\([\ddot{y}]\) in \textit{naoi} (650) [n’n\textsuperscript{\textalpha}i\textsuperscript{\textgamma}], \textit{naomh} (651) [n’n\textsuperscript{\textgamma}y], \textit{naoimh} (652) [n’n\textsuperscript{\textgamma}\textgamma y]\)

\([\ddot{i}]\) in the diphthongs above; also in \textit{nighean} (664) [n’n\textsuperscript{\textalpha}i\textsuperscript{\textgamma}n]; \textit{snìomh} (785, 786) [n’n\textsuperscript{\textgamma}i\textsuperscript{\textgamma}n], \textit{shnìomh} (787) [n’n\textsuperscript{\textgamma}i\textsuperscript{\textgamma}n]. But note the parallel forms \textit{do nighean} (665) [d\textalpha n\textsuperscript{\textgamma}\textsuperscript{\textalpha}i\textsuperscript{\textgamma}n], \textit{snìomh} (784) [n’n\textsuperscript{\textgamma}\textsuperscript{\textalpha}i\textsuperscript{\textgamma}n], without nasalisation.

With the exception of the ‘echoing’ vowel \([\ddot{u}]\) in the glottalised form [n’n\textsuperscript{\textalpha}i\textsuperscript{\textgamma}n], where the nasalisation is carried forward from the principal vowel, all other instances of nasalised vowels occur in stressed syllables.

\[\textsuperscript{535}\] Headword is \textit{beann}: \textit{beanntan}.

\[\textsuperscript{536}\] Headword is \textit{sean}: \textit{seann-té}.

\[\textsuperscript{537}\] Headword is \textit{a-null}, \textit{a-nunn}.

\[\textsuperscript{538}\] Headword is \textit{naomh}: \textit{naoimh}.

\[\textsuperscript{539}\] Headword is \textit{snìomh}: \textit{shnìomh i}.
There are, however, numerous examples in the SGDS results where a vowel in a stressed syllable, in proximity to a nasal consonant, is not shown as nasalised: nàdur (646) [n’ɛ̄ d̥r], nead (653) [nɛ̄d], bainne (68) [bɑ’ɲɪ], cainnt (142) [kɛiɲd̥z’], to mention but a few. Apart from the ‘rounded and velarised’ context, therefore, nasalisation of vowels appears to be an optional variant, rather than a universal feature of the phonology of this dialect, and can be used prosodically to reinforce the perception of stress in syllables containing a nasal consonant.

Nasalisation of vowels in the Colonsay dialect is therefore defined as allophonic in the case of [ɛ] in a stressed syllable before the ‘rounded and velarised’ nasal [nʷ] (in SGDS, diphthong + n’), and is otherwise to be regarded as yet another non-segmental feature (nasality spreading from the consonant segment to an adjacent vowel) which serves to give added prominence to certain syllables in an utterance.
Voicing of consonants

Voicing of otherwise unvoiced consonants occurs in this dialect in two contexts:

1. As a result of the nasal mutation, after ‘nasalising particles’ (see below), including notably the definite article in the form an or am;

2. Word-internally, following a homorganic nasal consonant in the coda of the previous syllable, in words such as teampull (834, 835) [t'ʃem bəl'], cinnteach (184, 185) [k'ɲ d'z'əx], sunndach (817) [sun'dəx].

The nasal mutation

This mutation is commonly referred to as ‘eclipsis’ in Irish, and in historical Celtic (Goidelic) linguistics. In more recent studies referring specifically to Scottish Gaelic, it has come to be called ‘nasalisation’ (Ó Maolalaigh 1996; Clement 1994: 98; Gillies 2009: 251-252). However, as we have just seen, this term is used in the present study to include the occurrence of nasalised vowels in the presence of a nasal consonant. Since this seems a perfectly legitimate use of the term, when seen in a wider phonetic context, I have chosen to use it in that broader sense, and to refer to initial nasalisation of consonants (specifically stops) as ‘the nasal mutation’.

The nasal mutation in Scottish Gaelic, although realised differently in different dialects (see below), differs significantly from ‘eclipsis’ as found in Irish. (See Gillies 2009: 251-252). Clement observes: ‘Nowhere is the phonetic manifestation of nasalization [sic] of stops quite like the Irish eclipsis, yet there seems to be no dialect that is completely unaffected by it’ (1994: 98). Ó Maolalaigh (1996) gives a cogent (although, in his own estimation, still ‘embryonic’) account of how the historical development of this mutation from its origins in Old Irish may have come to follow a different course in Scottish Gaelic, compared with Modern Irish.

540 Clement (1994: 98) notes that in some mainland dialects (now extinct) nasalisation of fricatives [f s ŋ] was also found.
541 See p.168, fn. 1.
In Scottish Gaelic this mutation occurs in a limited set of morphophonemic contexts, always following a nasal consonant in a preceding word which is a ‘nasalising particle’ (Clement 1994: 98; Ó Maolalaigh 1996). This category includes, most significantly, the definite article in the form *an/am, nan/nam*, or combined with a preceding preposition in forms such as *don, mun*. The word *an/am* when used as a possessive adjective (= ‘their’), an interrogative particle, a relative particle/pronoun, or as an abbreviated form of *ann an*, likewise produces this mutation, as does *nan/nam* when used with the meaning ‘if’. *An* as a prefix in words such as *an-diugh, am-bliadhna* similarly results in voicing. The prepositions *ann an* and *gun* also function as ‘nasalising particles’.

An alternative reading of the situation in Scottish Gaelic would be that the nasal mutation occurs after all particles (clitics) ending in a nasal consonant, and can be seen as an allophonic feature of the phonetic word in such cases. This hypothesis, which is broadly that advanced by Ó Maolalaigh (1996), has the double advantage of divorcing the development of the nasal mutation in Scottish Gaelic from that of eclipsis in Irish, and of eliminating the apparent arbitrariness of the set of ‘nasalising particles’. It also brings the nasal mutation into line with other instances where voicing occurs after a nasal consonant, e.g. ‘word-internal voicing’ (see below).

Broadly speaking, the mutation takes two forms, in different areas: in the ‘Lewis’ variety (also found in north-western districts of the mainland), a lenis stop /b d ɡ/ is ‘eclipsed’ to become the corresponding homorganic nasal /m n ŋ/, while a fortis stop /p t k/ retains its aspiration, giving the forms [mh nh ŋh], which are such a characteristic feature of Lewis pronunciation. Elsewhere, the lenis stops are voiced, while the fortis either merge with the lenes to become [b d ɡ], or retain their aspiration to give the forms [bʰ dʰ ɡʰ] or [bh dh ɡh].542 A much more nuanced geographical analysis of the nasal mutation in all its forms, as evidenced by the LSS data, is provided by Bosch and Scobbie (2009).

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542 Clement (1994: 98) identifies three forms of nasal mutation, treating the realisation of fortis as [b d ɡ] (in Sutherland) and [bh dh ɡh] as separate categories.
In Colonsay, the effects of the nasal mutation are somewhat different. Examples in the SGDS are scarce, but the LSS notes have proved helpful. Lenis stops, which are normally marked as unvoiced [ʰ d ɡ] in this dialect are voiced: *am bòrd* [m ʰbʰ r̥d̥], *an duine* [n du’ɲiː], *an gobhar* [ŋ goʔoɾ̥]. Fortis stops, on the other hand, are realised as the corresponding lenis stop, but are unvoiced, and retain their post-aspiration, giving the forms [ʰbʰ d̥h ɡ̥h]: *am poll* [m ʰbʰ ʊ jʰ ɟ], *an t-uiisge* (890) [ən ɡhuʔq̥ɪ ɪ], *man cuairt* (267) [maŋ ɡʰuɪʃ t̥ʃˈtɪ̞]. Contrary to what might be thought, an aspirated lenis is not the same sound as the corresponding fortis – justifying the use of ‘fortis/lenis’ terminology, rather than ‘aspirated/unaspirated’.

Although not examined by either Ó Maolalaigh or Clement, the nasal mutation also affects the palatalised stops /dʒ ɡʲ tʃ kʃ/. In Colonsay, the pattern is similar to that seen with non-palatalised stops. Lenes are simply voiced: *an-dé* (41) [n’dz’ɛː], *an geamhradh* [ŋ’ g’ɛvɪɾɪɣ]. In the case of the fortes, it appears that the corresponding lenis is used, possibly with post-aspiration, although the LSS notes suggest some degree of free variation in the forms actually used: *an ceòl* is shown as [ŋ’ ɡʰɔˑl’], whereas *an teine* appears as [n t’ɛ’ɲiː], with no mutation (LSS: 36).

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543 For partial voicing in initial position, see p. 289-290.
544 This example found in LSS.
545 Grannd [Grant] (1987: 61) reports the same situation in Islay.
546 Ó Maolalaigh himself admits this deficiency (p. 169, fn. 3).
547 My own informant Mary Ann MacAllister very clearly says air an teine [ər ən d’z’e’ɲiː].
Word-internal voicing

Voicing of stops is also found within words of more than one syllable, when the stop is preceded by a homorganic nasal. Like the nasal mutation, this is an example of how a particular feature – in this case voicing – may spread to more than one segment. In general, the distinction between lenis and fortis stops is neutralised, both becoming voiced lenes. Sometimes only the spelling or the etymology will determine whether the stop was originally lenis or fortis. Thus we find the following:

Labials:  
-teampull (834, 835) [t’em bɔl’], iompachadh (526) [im bɔxəy]548  
trombaid (873) [trom bɔd’ʃ], combanach (240) [kɔ m bɔnax]549

Dentals:  
cunntas (289) [kun dəs], aontachadh (51) [y n’dəxəy]550  
sunndach (817) [sun dəx], beanntan (91) [bɛn dəŋ]551

Velars:  
pongail (683) [pɔn gal’]552

Palatalised:  
cinnteach (184) [k’in d’zəx]553, cluinntinn (208) [kl’un nd’z’iŋ]554  
muinntir (638) [m’un nd’z’ı’r]

There are no instances of word-internal voicing involving the palatal stops /k’ ɡ/ (phonetic [k’ ɡ’]) in the Colonsay data set.

548 Headword is iompaich.
549 Headword is combach.
550 Headword is aontaich: aontachadh.
551 Headword is beann: beanntan.
552 Headword is puncail.
553 Headword 185 has [k’in d’z’əx], without voicing.
554 Headword is cluinn: cluinntinn.
An interesting anomaly is that ‘plain’ [n], unlike velarised [n`] and the other nasals, is not followed by a voiced stop. Thus we find ciontach (187) [k'ũntɔx].\(^{555}\) fantail (412) [fẽtal'].\(^{556}\) Only reusanta (700) [ɾiʃɔndɔ], in the SGDS results, has [d] following plain [n]. Conversely, bainntreach (77) [bɐ̃z'irɔx] and an alternative version of cinnteach (185) [k'ĩn̥qd'ɔx] have unvoiced [d'z'] following the nasal [n]

In nearly all instances, the sonorant is found to be lengthened after a short vowel, but not after a long vowel or a diphthong: teampull (834, 835) [tʃɛm bó`, sunndach (817) [sun`dɔx], but aontachadh (51) [y n'dɔx], muinntir (638) [mũiŋd'z'ı̞]. Exceptions are tionndadh (847) [tʃ ynd`ax],\(^{558}\) contraigh (242) [kɔn`draç], both of which could very well be re-analysed with long [n`],\(^{559}\) and iongantach (528) [iʔyn`dɔx],\(^{560}\) where short [n`] follows a long syllable (with a glottalised interval at its core).

This is a further illustration of the ‘vowel-strengthening’ tendency observed in this dialect, whereby prominence is given to a syllable by lengthening it, without necessarily lengthening the vowel at its core. This feature, like the others discussed in this chapter, is thus seen to fulfil a prosodic function.

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\(^{555}\) Headword is cionta.

\(^{556}\) Headword is feith: feitheamh.

\(^{557}\) Headword is banntrach.

\(^{558}\) Headword is tionndaidh: tionndadh.

\(^{559}\) The approved spelling for the latter word is now conntraigh, suggesting lengthening.

\(^{560}\) Headword is iongnaidh.
Devoicing

Devoicing of otherwise voiced consonants occurs in three contexts:

1. Lenis stops /b d ɡ/ are consistently shown as devoiced [b̥ d̥ ɡ̥];
2. Voiced consonants in word-final position are frequently shown as devoiced;
3. Preaspiration of a sonorant before a fortis stop is expressed as devoicing.

Lenis stops

As has been made clear in the previous chapter, the lenis stops /b d ɡ/ are consistently realised as the unvoiced stops [b̥ d̥ ɡ̥] in this dialect. This is in line with the treatment of these stops in the overwhelming majority of Scottish Gaelic dialects. Gillies notes a difference in treatment in initial position: ‘The devoicing of historical /b d ɡ/ is positionally determined; generally it is partial in initial position and complete in internal and final positions.’ (2009: 234)

This statement appears to be borne out by spectrographic evidence. Although it is not very apparent, careful analysis of the voicing bar (and waveform) in Flora Macneill’s rendering of baile shows momentary partial voicing of [b] (two cycles), following the period of labial closure, before the full voicing of the vowel [a]:

Waveform and spectrogram for baile.

(Flora Macneill)
Since it is difficult to indicate ‘partial devoicing’ using the system of transcription adopted, or to quantify the degree of voicing heard, it may be sufficient to state that in Colonsay, as in many other varieties of Gaelic, lenis stops in initial position are partially devoiced, and are fully devoiced in medial and final position.

**Final devoicing**

Devoicing of a final consonant is a feature of many languages, including German, Dutch, Russian and Czech. There is a natural tendency for articulation to weaken towards the end of an utterance, as the strength of the airflow diminishes, but not all languages make a distinct phonological feature of this. Some varieties of English (not the majority of Scottish varieties) show devoicing before a following unvoiced consonant, as in *head cold* [hɛd koʊld], *job-seeker* [ʤɒb̥ siːkə], but devoicing at the end of a word is not normally a feature of English pronunciation – except sometimes when it is spoken by native speakers of Gaelic (or German).

Since the lenis stops [b̥ d̥ g̥] are normally devoiced in this dialect, final devoicing is seen mainly in the case of sonorants and voiced fricatives. As noted in the review of phonemes, it is by no means a universal feature, but a highly volatile variant which may be partly influenced by the nature of the following sound (in sandhi).

**Preaspiration of sonorants**

This form of devoicing has been discussed under *Preaspiration* (see p. 278).
Some insights from syllable theory

It has been pointed out throughout this chapter that many, if not all, of these non-segmental features are inter-related, and in the case of glottalisation, epenthesis and preaspiration, are found in complementary distribution. It is worth considering why this should be so, and how any underlying phonological explanation operates. Such a ‘holistic’ approach to non-segmental features would serve to emphasise the unity and consistency of the prosodic structure in a particular dialect, rather than merely offering a list of seemingly disparate items. I have already alluded to Ó Dochartaigh’s idea of ‘vowel strengthening’ (Ó Dochartaigh 1981), and to the way in which, in the light of more recent research, this concept can be extended to syllables. In this final section, I examine some of the ways in which recent studies of Gaelic based on syllable theory may shed light on this move towards a unifying principle in Gaelic prosody.

Norval Smith (1999) carried out a study of Gaelic syllable structure, based mainly on a re-examination of Ofedal’s Leurbost data, although he also refers to Holmer’s findings in Islay (Holmer 1938). In particular, Smith makes a link between epenthesis and the occurrence of glottalisation (marked as a glottal stop [ʔ]) in the latter dialect. Since Holmer’s Islay examples are paralleled in the Colonsay data, Smith’s findings are of great relevance to the present study. Smith points out that in Holmer’s transcription the glottal stop functions as a distinguishing marker between ‘svarabhakti’ and ‘non-svarabhakti’ words, e.g.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Svarabhakti</th>
<th>Non-svarabhakti</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>arəm</td>
<td>arm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bɔlagəm</td>
<td>bolgam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>donaxəɣ</td>
<td>Donnachadh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aʔran</td>
<td>aran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baʔlax</td>
<td>balach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>duʔniə</td>
<td>duine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Smith 1999: 588)
More than this, in Holmer’s examples [ʔ] supplies a coda to monosyllables such as as *teth* [t'ɛʔ], *math* [maʔ], and to the first (stressed) syllable in disyllabic words characterised by hiatus: *gobhair* [goʔur], *bodha* [boʔu], *buidhe* [buʔi], thus producing closed syllables containing a short vowel. As has already been observed, the corresponding feature in Colonsay pronunciation is more akin to a ‘glottalised interval’ than a glottal stop, and in my MSc dissertation I rejected the idea that monosyllables ending in a short vowel, and not followed by another vowel in the next word, clearly exhibit glottalisation, preferring to regard this as an example of final devoicing (Scouller 2010: 25-26). If Smith’s analysis of Holmer’s data is to be accepted, this assessment will have to be revised, in the sense that glottalisation must be held to be present at least *phonologically* in such cases, even if it is not always detectable as a surface feature.

In an interesting choice of words, Smith goes on to observe that ‘the svarabhakti cases do not require this therapy’ (p.589), and concludes that they must therefore be considered as already involving closed syllables. The closure, in Smith’s rather ingenious analysis, is provided by a ‘recursive’ syllable, i.e. a syllable within a syllable. Although nearly all his examples are drawn from the Leurbost data, he does cite the case of *tioram/tiorma* (positive v. comparative) from Holmer’s data, analysing these as [tʰjuʔ] [rə] and [t'ju [rə]] [mA] respectively. The first syllable in *tioram* is thus ‘closed’ by the glottal stop [ʔ], and in *tiorma* by the recursive syllable [rə], which being unstressed, does not itself require to be closed (nor does the final syllable [mə]) (Smith 1999: 603).

Smith’s analysis is taken up in a recent paper by Pavel Iosad (2015), which further strengthens the case for adopting what I have called a ‘holistic’ approach to prosodic features; in particular, he recognises epenthesis and glottalisation as complementary processes. Iosad’s main purpose is to show that these features, and in particular the ‘pitch-accent’ suggested by Ternes, are the result of autonomous processes operating within the language, and not, as has been suggested (Borgstrøm 1974; Ofstedal 1994; Ternes 1980; 2006: 141-143), the result of prolonged contact with Norse. Against this it may be argued that some present-day Scandinavian languages do exhibit pitch-
accent and, in the case of Danish, glottalisation. (Any further consideration of Scandinavian languages would, however, be beyond the scope of the present study.) In pursuit of this aim, Iosad submits Smith’s findings to a fairly rigorous re-appraisal, rejecting Smith’s ‘recursive’ solution to the problem of epenthesis on the grounds that ‘this elaborate structure is not needed, because the svarabhakti vowel is simply not manipulated by the phonology’ (p. 33). Without going any further into the details of that argument, what is of more interest for our purposes is that Iosad includes a section on ‘Glottal stop insertion’ (pp. 34-38), based on Smith’s observations and on Holmer’s findings from Islay.\(^{561}\)

Iosad’s analysis is based on attributing a number of morae to syllables, depending on their ‘weight’. Although this approach is not adopted generally in the present study, his findings are not incompatible with what has been described here in terms of ‘prominence’ of stressed syllables. A stressed or ‘heavy’ syllable, in Iosad’s scheme, will normally contain two morae (indicated in transcription as \(\mu\)). In cases involving a diphthong or long vowel, there is no glottal stop insertion:\(^{562}\)

\[
\begin{align*}
[ˈthr_{\mathrm{a},\mu}i]\mu & \quad \text{tràigh} \\
[ˈk\ell\u:_{\mu}\mu] & \quad \text{cliù} \\
[ˈpjɔ:_\mu\mu] & \quad \text{beò}^{563}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{561}\) It is gratifying to see Holmer – ‘that much-maligned student of Gaelic dialects’ (Smith 1999: 588) – being taken seriously by present-day theoretical linguists. Ternes (2006: 3) describes his findings as ‘well-nigh worthless’.

\(^{562}\) Iosad’s transcription is retained throughout this section.

\(^{563}\) It should be noted that in the SGDS results for Colonsay, these three examples are analysed somewhat differently: \(\text{tràigh}^{(861)}\) is shown with a long vowel, and a semi-vowel in coda \([\text{tra}]\), while the other two are shown with diphthongs \([k\ell′[\mu]\mu]\) (201), \([p\mu\mu]\) (96). This variation in treatment does not invalidate Iosad’s point.
Glottal stop insertion is found in what Iosad terms ‘subminimal monosyllables’:

\[
\text{[ˈtʰʲeɪʔ] teth}
\]
\[
\text{[ˈmɛɪʔ] math}
\]
\[
\text{[ˈkruɪʔ] gruth}^{564}
\]

Glottal stop insertion is also found in polysyllables:

\[
\text{[ˈpɑɪɭax] balach (not *[ˈpaɭax])}
\]
\[
\text{[ˈkoɪr] gobhar}
\]

Crucially, however, glottal stop insertion is not found before sonorants when these are followed by svarabhakti vowels:

\[
\text{[ˈmarəv] marbh (not *[ˈmaʔəv])}
\]

According to Iosad,

This is explained if the correct surface representation in [this instance] is [ˈmaɪrəv], with a moraic coda consonant obviating the need for glottal stop insertion. Thus, glottal stop insertion can be viewed as a device to provide a light stressed syllable with a mora.

He goes on to suggest that the pair bogha / bó, for which Ternes gives the Tiree forms [ˈpoʔɔ : ˈpoː] (Colonsay [boʔɔ : boː]), can be explained by assuming the former to be ‘lexically disyllabic’. However, as Iosad graciously adds, ‘alternative analyses of these data are possible’.

---

564 As discussed above (p. 261), the actual realisation of these words in Colonsay does not show final glottalisation, except in sandhi before a following vowel. SGDS transcribes the first two as [tʰɛ] (839), [mɛ] (603), with no indication of a glottal coda. Gruth is not included in the SGDS, but would be transcribed as [ɡʔru].
Iosad emphasises that ‘glottal stop insertion’ is phonological, and that the glottal stop forms a coda, and supplies an extra mora, to a syllable which would otherwise be ‘light’. This corresponds to my own findings that glottalisation occurs after a short vowel in a stressed syllable, and is a phonological process operating on the segmental string, and giving added prominence to syllables containing a short vowel.565

**Complementarity of prosodic features**

The main conclusion to be drawn from this study of the non-segmental features of Colonsay Gaelic is that (with the exception of devoicing, and possibly nasalisation) they all serve the same phonological purpose.566

The classic suprasegmental features of stress, duration and tone are supplemented in this dialect (among others) by the processes of glottalisation, epenthesis and preaspiration. These occur in complementary distribution, in different phonetic environments, in each case giving added prominence to certain syllables within an utterance, while retaining a short vowel segment at the nucleus of the syllable. Increased *duration* of the syllable as a result contributes to the perception of *stress*, while glottalisation and epenthesis, in particular, have been interpreted as manifestations of the broader concept of *tone*.

Glottalisation, as has been shown, gives added weight to an otherwise ‘light’ syllable containing a short vowel. Preaspiration fulfils a similar function, in cases where the following consonant is fortis. In the case of epenthesis, whether one accepts Smith’s idea of ‘recursiveness’ or not, it is the epenthetic ‘syllable’, or vocalised segment,567

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565 William Gillies has pointed out (in comments on a previous draft of this chapter) that loanwords from English/Scots into Gaelic often acquire an extra syllable. Thus we find disyllabic forms of English monosyllables, either with internal modification, as in *paidhir* ‘pair’ (cf. Scots pronunciation [peˑər]) or with an added final [ə], as in *drama* ‘dram’. This is a further illustration of a strategy for adding weight to a short syllable.

566 This ‘inter-relatedness’ of prosodic features was the theme of a presentation I made at Teangeolaíocht na Gaeilge XV, Maynooth University, 10-11 April 2015 (Scouller 2015).

567 As discussed above, epenthetic combinations are not necessarily to be treated as forming a separate syllable.
that bolsters the preceding short vowel. The result is perceived as a stress pattern, which in turn is characterised by particular tone contours. In this way the different non-segmental features are seen to interact with one another in a unified prosodic system.

Devoicing and nasalisation (particularly the nasal mutation of consonants) do not really fit into this unified pattern, but are included here as non-segmental features of this dialect. Yet, as we have seen, nasalisation of vowel segments is also used to give added prominence to syllables, in those limited environments in which it occurs.

Ó Dochartaigh’s 1981 paper on ‘vowel strengthening’ was limited to certain features of Gaelic vowels, but can be seen as having sown the seed for a more wide-ranging analysis of Gaelic prosody, involving the strengthening of syllables rather than just their core vowels.
Scottish Gaelic dialect studies tend to concentrate on phonological and lexical features. Differences in pronunciation, and the use of unusual words, are the features that are likely to strike even the most casual observer, when listening to an unfamiliar dialect. The phonological characteristics of the Colonsay dialect have been systematically examined in the preceding two chapters, and Chapter 5 will examine some of the lexical features that characterise this dialect.

But there may also be morphological and syntactical elements, where usage in the dialect differs from that of the standard language. In the case of Gaelic, where there is no single generally accepted ‘standard’ variety, this may be taken to mean the norms of the more frequently-used varieties, such as Lewis and Skye, which have been well described by scholars such as Oftedal (1956) and Borgstrøm (1940, 1941). Or the reference baseline may be sought in the forms and paradigms set out in formal grammars of the language. Calder’s groundbreaking work in the 1920s (Calder 1972) has long been regarded as a classic in this field, but is now very dated. For a more up-to-date account, we now have the recently published (and amusingly titled) *Geàrr-ghràmar na Gàidhlig*, by Richard Cox (2017), as well as the concise summary contained in the appendices to Mark’s *Gaelic-English Dictionary* (Mark 2004: 623-736), and textbooks for the use of learners, e.g. *Teach Yourself Gaelic* (Robertson and Taylor 1993), *Scottish Gaelic in Twelve Weeks* (Ó Maolalaigh and MacAonghuis 2010). A more analytical study is provided by Gillies (2009). Many of these works of reference are highly conservative in the forms they use, being largely based upon the written language as it has become established over the last 150 years or so, rather than the reality of contemporary spoken Gaelic. The result is that native speakers often find learners’ Gaelic excessively formal, and can sometimes be made to feel embarrassed at their own lack of education in the finer points of Gaelic grammar.

When attempting to learn Gaelic on Colonsay in the 1970s, I was frequently told that my own ‘textbook’ Gaelic forms would be ‘the right way’ to say things, even though they clearly did not correspond to many of the forms I was hearing in everyday Colonsay speech.
William Lamb (2008) has done Scottish Gaelic a great service, not only by exploring the issue of how different registers are used in various types of spoken and written Gaelic, but also by including a voluminous appendix (pp. 197-298), containing a *descriptive* rather than *prescriptive* grammar of contemporary Gaelic as it is currently spoken by native speakers.\(^6\)

A dialect study such as this must, by its very nature, adopt a descriptive approach. Since the aim is to provide a record of how Gaelic has actually been spoken by Colonsay people in the early years of the 21\(^{st}\) century, there is very little point in stating what the ‘correct’ form should be, although forms found in other varieties may be cited for purposes of comparison.

It is also worth noting that, of Lamb’s eight categories of spoken and written discourse (2008: 21), only one (conversation) is really relevant to the present study. None of the remaining Gaelic speakers on Colonsay habitually read in Gaelic. Nor would any of them normally think of writing in Gaelic, since their education was conducted almost entirely in English, and even basic spelling rules can be something of a mystery to them. Traditional narrative is no longer practised. Nevertheless, it is clear from the work of Donald MacNeill (Scouller 1998) and Barbara Satchel (Law 2013), as well as older works collected by Alasdair MacAllister, and as yet unpublished (see Chapter 1, p. 26), that previous generations of Gaelic speakers, including some who were still alive within the last twenty-five years, were not only literate in their own language, but able to write creatively in it. This was presumably due to their having been taught some Gaelic in the course of their education, and the fact that Gaelic was still widely spoken within the community. But for practical purposes, English has long since supplanted the use of Gaelic as the language of written communication and of ‘official’ discourse, and has, in effect, supplied the formal and written registers for Colonsay Gaelic speakers over the last hundred years.

\(^6\) Based mainly on the dialect of North Uist.
This chapter has proved difficult to research. Many of my primary informants, sadly, were no longer alive by the time I came to investigate this aspect of the dialect, and while I had made recordings, the opportunity to go back and ask more focussed questions about forms used, in order to elicit complete paradigms, was no longer available. Moreover, those informants I was still able to rely on were often unsure about precise forms, with the result that I was sometimes given conflicting information by different people, and in some cases by the same people at different times. Frustrating though this may be for the academic researcher, it reflects the reality of spoken language, especially in an environment of language shift. Few people, unless they are natural linguists, have much idea of the grammar of their own mother tongue; they know what ‘sounds right’, and may well criticise other speakers’ use of language, but would be hard put to identify what rules of morphology or syntax are being infringed.\textsuperscript{570} This is particularly true of people who have never been taught the grammar of their own language, or if they have, were taught ‘textbook’ forms, which may not correspond to actual usage in their own locality. When put on the spot about whether a particular form is ‘right’ or not, they are likely to become confused, and retreat into vagueness, or at best half-remembered notions of grammatical correctness, perhaps influenced by the questioner’s own usage, which may be perceived as ‘superior’. At the same time, strongly divergent dialectal forms, although of immense interest to a researcher, may strike them as uncouth, and ‘not the way we say it’.\textsuperscript{571}

\textsuperscript{570} Comment by Netta Titterton: ‘It’s something you don’t think about, and if you’re made to think about it, it disappears’. Conversation recorded 19 September 2016.

\textsuperscript{571} Based on conversations with Niall Brown, 10 July 2017; Netta Titterton (various dates).
There is, therefore, a degree of fluidity in the morphological and syntactical protocols identified for this dialect, with significant variation among individual speakers. Nancy Dorian (2010) has written at length on the subject of variation between speakers, and in the speech of individual speakers, in the fishing villages of East Sutherland:

Not only did fluent elderly Gaelic speakers not necessarily agree among themselves about grammatical structures, even within the bounds of a single village, but they also showed a good deal of variation on various other items, grammatical or lexical, within their own individual usage. In all of the villages intra-speaker variation was as conspicuous as inter-speaker variation.

(Dorian 2010: 16-17)

At the same time, it should be borne in mind that Colonsay Gaelic, for all its distinctive qualities, forms part of the broad continuum of Scottish Gaelic dialects, and in its morphology and syntax shares a wide area of common ground with forms found elsewhere in the Gàidhealtachd. This chapter will concentrate on identifying those features where, on the whole, Colonsay usage has been found to differ from accepted norms, as found in other, more widely-used varieties of Gaelic. This is different from the approach adopted in the phonological chapters of this study, where the published results of the Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland, although reflecting the speech of only one Colonsay informant, at a particular point in time, were taken as representative of the speech community as a whole, and an attempt made to identify broad general characteristics of Colonsay pronunciation (either particular phonemes or cross-cutting prosodic features such as glottalisation).
Findings of the Linguistic Survey of Scotland

The Linguistic Survey of Scotland (Gaelic), of which the SGDS is at present the tangible result (Vol. I: 25-47), also contained questions designed to elicit details of morphophonological and morphological usage in the various localities. The same informant, Annabella MacNeill (see p. 18), was also interrogated about morphological forms. In a note on the data supplied by the fieldworker, Eric Hamp (EH), Jackson observes: ‘EH notes that [MacNeill] is fairly conservative’, citing in particular the form na bó duinne (LSS: 38). This conservatism is most apparent in the declension of nouns and adjectives, where she produces what is almost (but not quite) a ‘textbook’ paradigm of agreement for case, gender and number. The notable exception is the dative case, where she consistently uses (lenited) nominative forms: leis a’ chas bheag, don bhean, leis an t-sùil ghlas. This suggests that when Annabella MacNeill was learning Gaelic grammar, in the 1880s, dative forms had already fallen out of use in Colonsay speech. A delightful note records that the informant ‘remembers [mhnaoi] once used by an old man to her grandmother’.

Genitive forms are generally given in full: taigh an duine bhig, ceann na circe bige; although there are some exceptions: na cathair bhige, an t-sùil ghlas (for na sùla glaise). In the paradigm of bò, where the form na bà is marked ‘not used’, and the form na boine added, Jackson comments: ‘I take it this means that [MacNeill] knew of but did not use na bà, and that she remembered na boine, rather than actually gave it as a natural response to “of the cow”’ (LSS: 39).

In other areas of morphology, notably prepositional pronouns and irregular verbs (see below) the forms elicited are much more closely in line with my own more recent findings.
Two points need to be made in the light of this evidence. The first is that there has, in all Gaelic dialects, been a gradual erosion of morphological forms, as will be illustrated below. My informant Niall Brown (b. 1953) expressed the view that some of the old people he had known in his youth, who were born around 1900 and before, spoke a ‘richer’ form of Gaelic, with a wider vocabulary and more differentiated morphological forms. Annabella MacNeill (b. 1876) falls into that category.

The second point is that Annabella MacNeill knew she was being interviewed for the Linguistic Survey of Scotland, and may well have been careful to use what she knew to be correct grammatical forms when answering questions. Her occasional lapses, particularly in the use of genitive forms, tend to reinforce this impression. Whether she would have used the same conservative morphological structures ‘as a natural response’ in everyday speech is open to question. The ‘observer effect’ is less marked in her responses to the phonology section; despite the occasional ‘literary’ form being offered, I have been able to check the entries in the SGDS results with present-day native speakers, and in nearly all cases, to verify that the pronunciation recorded is the same as theirs. One may conclude that Annabella MacNeill spoke with a Colonsay accent, but was familiar with the rules of Gaelic grammar.

572 Conversation, 29 August 2017. He particularly mentioned Neil Darroch, who was the informant in Colonsay for Grannd (2000).
573 Some recently deceased. See List of Informants.
MORPHOLOGY

Verbs

Regular verbs

For the most part, regular verbs in this dialect use the same forms, and observe the same rules, as in other varieties of Gaelic. In the future tense, endings in -aidh/-idh are pronounced [iç] when used in isolation (e.g. in answer to a question) or before a vowel, and may be pronounced [iç], [i] or [ə] before a consonant: togaidh [tɔjic]; togaidh e [tɔjic a]; togaidh mi [tɔjic mi : tɔji mi : tɔjo mi]. The relative form of the future, ending in -(e)as, is used in the same way as in the ‘standard’ language: ma thogas mi, a chuireas tu, etc.

In the conditional tense, synthetic 1st person singular forms ending in -ainn-inn (thogainn, shuidhinn) are used more frequently than analytic forms in -adh-eadh + mi (thogadh mi, shuidheadh mi); whereas in the 1st person plural, analytic forms are preferred: thogadh sinn, shuidheadh sinn. Synthetic forms such as thogamaid, shuidheamaid are recognised, and are consistently used (in writing) by Satchel; in one case, she uses both analytic and synthetic forms in the same sentence: Dh’fhàisgeadh sinn an sàl às agus dh’fhàgamaid e a thiormachadh air na creagan (Law 2013: 60). As in most varieties of Gaelic, the synthetic forms are used as the 1st person plural imperative: togamaid ‘let us lift’, suidheamaid ‘let’s sit down’, etc.

A variation from the usual pattern occurs in the case of verbs ending in -ich, e.g. cuidich ‘help’. In most varieties of Gaelic, the future and conditional tenses are formed by adding the endings -idh, -inn, -eadh directly to the base form, whereas in the case of a verbal noun ending in -adh, the ending of the base form is altered to -(e)ach, and pronounced [ʌx] rather than [iç]. This gives the future and conditional

574 This is in accordance with the usual treatment of -idh-igh endings in this dialect (see pp. 70-71).
575 Niall Brown (conversation, 29 August 2017) suggested synthetic forms would have been used more by his father’s generation (i.e. those born c. 1920).
576 She is referring to the children pretending to make butter with green algae.
forms *cuidichidh, chuidichinn, chuidicheadh*, but the verbal noun is *cuideachadh*. In Colonsay Gaelic, by contrast, the ending of the base form is altered to -(e)ach [ʌx] in all cases, and the orthography of the tense ending altered in consequence, giving the forms *cuideachaidh, chuisteachainn, chuisteachadh*, while the verbal noun remains *cuideachadh*.

This feature is illustrated in the *SGDS* results by the headwords *cuairtich*: *cuairtichidh* (268) (future) and *cuairtich: chuairticheadh* (269) (conditional), where the Colonsay forms are given as [k̚ʌẋʃ’ʌxɔ̟ɪ] and [ẋʌẋʃ’ʌxɔ̟ɪ] respectively, suggesting the spellings *cuartachaidh, chuairticheadh*.⁵⁷⁷ According to the *SGDS*, future forms with unpalatalised [x] in the stem are found only in Colonsay, Jura, Islay, Gigha, one location in Arran and two locations in Kintyre,⁵⁷⁸ making this very much a South Argyll feature (cf. Jones 2009a: 164-165, where it is presented as part of a wider phenomenon involving ‘broadening’ of polysyllabic verb stems). Forms with [x] in the conditional (but not the future) are sporadically found in other locations in Argyll,⁵⁷⁹ although the scattered nature of these entries suggests that in some cases, there may have been confusion, in the minds of the informants, with the verbal noun *cuairteachadh* (*SGDS*, Vol. III: 84-87).

The preterite is generally formed in Gaelic by leniting an initial consonant (where possible), or prefixing *dh’* to an initial vowel or (lenited) *f*. This is also the practice in Colonsay. The dependent form inserts a particle *do* before the lenited verb: *cha do ghabh mi* ‘I did not take’, *cha do thill e* ‘he did not return’. In the case of preterite forms in *dh’, the result is reduplication: *cha do dh’öl mi* ‘I did not drink’, *cha do dh’fhalbh iad* ‘they did not leave’. In Islay and Jura, reduplication is avoided, resulting in forms such as *cha d’öl mi, cha d’fhalbh iad* (Grannd 2000: 51-52 and Map 68). Non-reduplicated forms are found in Colonsay, although reduplicated forms are more common. Jones (2009a: 165) suggests that usage in Jura is similarly mixed, but with a preference for non-reduplicated forms.

⁵⁷⁷ Results with unpalatalised [d] or [t] in the stem, suggesting the form *cuartaich*, rather than *cuairtich*, occur quite widely in Gaelic dialects, but this is not the main point under discussion here.⁵⁷⁸ Points 34 (Pirnmill), 36 (Carradale) and 41 (Clachan) respectively.⁵⁷⁹ Points 43 (Achachoish, Knaphal), 82 (Ardtunan, Ross of Mull) and 90 (Kinlochmoidart) respectively. Kinlochmoidart lies just outside the historical county of Argyll.
Irregular verbs

Compared with other Indo-European languages, Gaelic has remarkably few irregular verbs (10 in total, not counting *bi* ‘be’, and the copula *is*), but as is the case in most languages, they include some of the most commonly used verbs. In some cases the irregularity is very striking, with different tenses derived from completely different verbal stems. In the Colonsay dialect, some forms of irregular verbs differ from the standard paradigms. This particularly affects the preterite, and in some cases the conditional.
Cluinn – ‘hear’

Preterite:  chualai/l/chual

(dep.) cualai/cual

A striking feature of Colonsay speech is the occurrence of forms ending in -aig [ɪ̞ɡ̊ʱ] in the preterite of this verb, and also of faic (see below). These forms, which have probably arisen by analogy with thàinig, ràinig, chunnaic, are heard when the verb is used absolutely (e.g. in answer to a question) or when followed by a vowel. Before a consonant, the form used may be either chualai/l or chual, the latter being regarded elsewhere as the standard form of the preterite.

Thus we find the following paradigm:

chualai/l/chual mi  chualai/l/chual sinn
chualai thu/chual tu  chualai/l/chual sibh
chualai e  chualai iad
chualai i

The dependent forms follow the same pattern: an cualai/l/cual mi, an cualai/l e, etc.

It should be noted that, in the 2nd person singular, chualai is followed by the form thu [u], which in phonetic terms is a vowel, while cual takes the form tu, as it does in most varieties. This pattern will be replicated with other verbs (see below).

The answer to the question an cuala tu an naidheachd? ‘did you hear the news?’ will normally be either chual ‘yes’ (I heard it) or cha chual ‘no’ (I didn’t hear it). On the other hand, ‘neither did I’ may be expressed as either cha chualai no mise, or cha chual no mise, because no begins with a consonant.

Other tenses, and the verbal noun, are regular: cluinnidh (207), chluinneadh, cluinntinn (208).

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580 Headword is cluinn: cluinnidh.
581 Headword is cluinn: cluinntinn.
Faic – ‘see’

Preterite: theannaig/theanna

(dep.) feacaig/feaca

It should be noted that, in Colonsay, the preterite of this verb is normally realised as theannaig [he’n’iŋ’] when followed by a vowel, or used in isolation, and either theannaig or theanna [he’n’a] before a consonant. The SGDS results list the headword faic: chunnaic (383) with the entry for Colonsay given as [xu’n’iŋ’: he’n’iŋ’]; the latter form is shown with a ‘plain’ medial [n], whereas my own investigations suggest that it is in fact velarised [n’]. A footnote correctly states that the form chunnaic [xu’n’iŋ’] is considered ‘literary’. It is, nonetheless, readily understood and recognised as the ‘correct’ form, and might be used where the situation was felt to warrant it.

The full paradigm is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>theannaig/theanna mi</td>
<td>theannaig/theanna sinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theannaig thu/theanna tu</td>
<td>theannaig/theanna sibh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theannaig e</td>
<td>theannaig iad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theannaig i</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The corresponding dependent forms feacaig/feaca [fɛxŋiŋ’: fɛxŋa], are acoustically similar to the conditional faiceadh [fɛxŋə]. The paradigm for the interrogative is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(am) feacaig/feaca mi?</td>
<td>(am) feacaig/feaca sinn?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(am) feacaig thu/ (am) feaca tu?</td>
<td>(am) feacaig/feaca sibh?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(am) feacaig e?</td>
<td>(am) feacaig iad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(am) feacaig i?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

582 This spelling is my own attempt at representing the Colonsay pronunciation.
583 As one of my Colonsay informants put it, ‘it sounds like other people’s Gaelic’. Preterite forms with [ɛ] are found only in Colonsay and in Islay (SGDS, Points 53-57).
As in most varieties of Gaelic, the interrogative particle *an/am* is usually omitted in normal speech when the meaning is sufficiently clear. In the 2nd person singular, *(am)* feaca tu? is the form most frequently heard.

In a similar way to *chualaig*, the answer to the question *(am)* feaca tu Alasdair? ‘did you see Alastair?’ will normally be either *theannaig* [he’n‘iɡ’] ‘yes’ (I saw him) or *chan fheacaig* [xa ’nɛxɡɪɡ’] ‘no’ (I didn’t see him). The reply ‘neither did I’ will be expressed in this case as *chan fheaca no mise* or, less commonly, *chan fheacaig no mise*.

Other tenses, and the verbal noun, have standard forms: *chi* (*faic*), *chitheadh* (*faiceadh*), *faicinn*. 
**Thig** – ‘come’

**Preterite:**

\[
\text{thànaig, thàna} \\
\text{(dep.) danàig, dàna}
\]

In terms of pronunciation, it should be noted that in these preterite forms, the quality of the main vowel is [ɛˑ] rather than [aˑ]. Cf. *SGDS* thig: thàinig (841) [hɛˑnɪ̱ɡ̥ˑ].

This is in line with the tendency observed elsewhere in this dialect, whereby [a] is regularly (but not universally) ‘raised’ to [ɛ] in the presence of a nasal consonant (see pp. 50-51).\(^{584}\) Furthermore, as in most varieties of Gaelic, medial n in this case is not palatalised (i.e. it is realised as [n], not *[ɲ]*).\(^{585}\)

As a result, there may be very little difference, acoustically, between thànaig/thàna [hɛˑnɪ̱ɡ̥ˑ : hɛˑnə] ‘came’ and theannaig/theanna [hɛˑn`ɪ̱ɡ̥ˑ : hɛˑn`ə] ‘saw’. The differences lie in (1) the length of the vowel when stressed (with glottalisation occurring after the stressed short vowel in theannaig), and (2) the quality of the medial consonant: plain [n] v. velarised [n`]. In a phrasally unstressed environment, where length and glottalisation are both absent, the distinction between theannaig and thànaig can be almost neutralised, and the sense determined mainly by the semantic context.

The morphological point to be made in relation to this verb is that the preterite forms thànaig/thàna follow the same pattern as has been observed in the case of chualaig/chuala and chunnaic/chunna (theannaig/theana). Like these verbs, thànaig may also lose its final consonant when used before another consonant: [hɛˑnə mi].

This is not unusual in many varieties of Gaelic, but the interesting point is that here it can be seen as part of a pattern involving other irregular verbs.

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\(^{584}\) Because this is such a widespread feature in the dialect, I have not altered the spelling to reflect it. \(^{585}\) This has been reflected in the spelling. The *SGDS* results (Vol. V: 332-335) show that forms with palatalisation are found only in Arran, Gigha and Kintyre (and a few isolated locations elsewhere), which leads one to wonder why thàinig and not thànaig has become the accepted spelling (*GOC*, p. 32).
Thus we find the following paradigm:

- **thànaig/thàna mi**  **thànaig/thàna sinn**
- **thànaig thu/thàna tu**  **thànaig/thàna sibh**
- **thànaig e**  **thànaig iad**
- **thànaig i**

Other tenses, and the verbal noun, have standard forms: *thig (tig), thigeadh (tigeadh), tighinn.*
Ruig – ‘reach, arrive’

Preterite:  rèinig, rèna

(dep.) do rèinig, do rèna

The preterite of ruig follows the same pattern as thig. Once again, the quality of the main vowel is [ɛˑ] rather than [aˑ], and medial n is not palatalised ([n] not *[ɲ]): [rɛn̥iqˑ : rɛnə]. As with the other verbs we have examined, rèinig may also lose its final consonant when used before another consonant: [rɛnə mi]. Again, this is not unusual in Gaelic, but can be seen here as part of an emerging pattern involving other irregular verbs.

Thus we find the following paradigm:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rèinig/rèna mi</td>
<td>rèinig/rèna sinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rèinig thu/rèna tu</td>
<td>rèinig/rèna sibh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rèinig e</td>
<td>rèinig iad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rèinig i</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other tenses of ruig are regular: ruigidh (723), ma ruigeas; ruigin, ruigeadh, etc.

The verbal noun has the unusual form ruigeil [rʊ̞gadoil’].
Rach – ‘go’

Preterite: chaidh

(dep.) daidh

As the SGDS results correctly state, the preterite of rach (chaidh) (687) is pronounced [xaʔɪç : xaç] in Colonsay speech, depending on whether it is stressed or unstressed. This reflects the usual realisation of final -idh/-igh as [ɪç] in this dialect (see p. 70). The dependent form, however, is not deach or deachaidh, as found elsewhere, but daidh [dɑʔɪç : ɣaç]: cha daidh mi ann [xa ˈdɑʔɪç mi ɣo`n] ‘I didn’t go there’, (an) daidh e dhachaigh? [dɑç a ɣaxɪç] ‘did he go home?’

It should be further noted that the conditional form of rach, in this dialect, is normally either rachainn/rachadh or thèidinn/thèideadh. The form dheighinn/dheigheadh, which is prevalent in some varieties, is not found. The dependent form is normally tèidinn/tèideadh. Cf. Satchel: mun tèideadh iad a chadal ‘before they went to bed’ (Law 2013: 52).

Forms of rach are commonly used in this dialect, as in others, to form passive constructions: chaidh a leagail ‘he (it) was knocked down’, and in the expression thèid agam air for ‘I can’: cha tèid agam air tighinn a-màireach ‘I can’t come tomorrow’ (see p. 351).

The future tense, and the verbal noun, have standard forms: thèid (tèid), dol.

The regular verb falbh is often substituted for rach in this dialect, especially in the imperative: falbh dhachaigh! [fɔɛ ɣaxɪç] ‘go home!’

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586 These forms, as pronounced in Colonsay, could equally well be spelt chathaich, dathaich.
587 Accent inserted on tèideadh.
588 A common instruction to a dog, in the days when Colonsay dogs spoke Gaelic.
**Dèan – ‘do, make’**

In terms of pronunciation, this verb is realised in Colonsay as [dʼzʼɛ̃n], rather than *[dʼzʼia̯n]*, as found further north, where original long ē has been ‘broken’ to form a diphthong (Jackson 1968; see p. 99).

The preterite of this verb may be either *rinn* or *dhèan*. No semantic distinction could be observed between the two; it seems to be a matter of personal preference. The form *dhèan* is also found in Islay (Holmer 1938: 102) and in Jura, alongside *rinn* (Jones 2009a: 179).

In the future, the form may be either *ni mi* or *dèanaidh mi*. Again, there appears to be no difference in meaning. The negative in either case is *cha dhèan mi*.

The verbal noun has the form *dèanadh* [dʼzʼɛ̃əɣ], rather than the ‘textbook’ form *dèanamh*. 
Abair – ‘say’

The usual future tense of this verb, in Scottish Gaelic, is their, with abair as the (regular) dependent form. In Colonsay the forms heard are theiridh and abairidh (or abraidh). The dependent form is abair. Thus the question an abair thu sin ann an Colbhasa? ‘do you say that in Colonsay?’ elicited the response abairidh [ aç̃riç].

Theiridh mi is frequently used, e.g. when giving a cautious answer to a question: theiridh mi gu bheil ‘I’d say it is’.

The forms theirinn/theireadh and dh’abairinn/dh’abaireadh are found in the conditional.

The preterite forms of this verb are similar to ‘standard’ Gaelic: thubhairt (1) [ huʔos’t̪] 589 dependent form dubhairt [duʔos’t̪]. As usual, the glottalisation typical of this dialect is lost when the forms are not stressed: thuirt [huʔst̪’], duirt [duʔst̪’].

The verbal noun has the standard form ràdh, but is sometimes heard as gràdh, which is a back-formation from the progressive aspect construction ag ràdh: dè bha mi dol a ghràdh?

589 Headword is abair: thubhairt.
**Faigh** – ‘get’

The base form of this verb, and the dependent form of the future tense, *faigh*, is pronounced [fɛ] in Colonsay. Glottalisation appears in *sandhi* before a following vowel: *gum faigh thu* [gʊm fɛʔ u].

The future tense of this verb, usually written as *gheibh* (385), illustrates a major division between dialects of Scottish Gaelic. A study of the *SGDS* results shows that across a large swathe of the area where Gaelic is still widely spoken (the Outer Hebrides from Harris to Barra, Skye, Tiree and Mull), it is realised as *gheibh* [jev] (with some phonetic variation). In the rest of the *Gàidhealtachd* (including Lewis, the remainder of Argyll, and most mainland dialects), it is realised as *gheobh* [io] (*SGDS*, Vol. III: 318-321). In Colonsay the pronunciation is [io]. Consequently, the conditional forms are *gheobhainn*, *gheobhadh tu*, etc. [ioʔɪɲ : ioʔəɣ tu].

The preterite of this verb has the standard form *fhuair* (*d’fhuair*).

The verbal noun has the form *faotainn* [fyˑd̥ɪɲ], rather than *faighinn*, which is often found elsewhere.

The remaining irregular verbs, *beir* ‘bear’ and *thoir* ‘give’ show no variation from standard Scottish Gaelic forms. The imperative form *thoir* is usually realised as [fər] when unstressed: *thoir dhomh do làmh* [fər ˈɣoˑ ˈd̥ɔˑ ‘ɪˑɛˑv̥] ‘give me your hand’.

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590 Headword is *faigh: gheibh*. Headword 386 covers the same ground, but illustrates a different point.
Definite article

The definite article is key to understanding the opposition between definite and indefinite nouns in Gaelic, and will therefore be discussed first, before moving on to the study of nouns.

There is no indefinite article in Gaelic; indefinite nouns are characterised by the absence of the definite article. Proper names may also lack an article, but are considered definite.

The morphology of the definite article (base form *an*) in Scottish Gaelic is extremely complex, being determined by a number of variables, including number, case, gender and the nature of the sounds preceding and following. Before an unlenited labial consonant (*b, f, m, p*), the form is *am*. In most varieties the definite article in the form *an* or *am* causes voicing of a following consonant (see pp. 284-285). In certain contexts *an* is reduced to *a’*, with lenition of a following consonant. In other (clearly specified) contexts, where the following word begins with a vowel or *s*, a *t-* may be prefixed to the following word, giving the form *an t-*.

In colloquial speech the article is often dropped, especially where its presence is signalled by voicing or lenition: *an duine a bha mi a’ bruidhinn ris* [du’ɲi va mi ʰʁyɹŋ riʃ].

The article *an* may also be attached to a preceding preposition ending in a vowel: *don, ron, mun*, etc. In many varieties of Gaelic, there is either reduplication of the article, or a schwa [*ə*] is heard: *dhan an taigh, on a’ bhaile*. This is not the case in Colonsay Gaelic, where the form *dhan*, in any case, does not occur. The forms used are *don taigh, on bhaile*, etc.

The distinctive feminine singular genitive form of the article, *na* (with *h-* prefixed to a following vowel), is found in this dialect in placenames and set expressions (*Tobar na Caillich, fad na h-oidhche* ‘all night’), but is no longer in active use in ordinary speech, where the form found is the same as the nominative: *dorasd an eaglais* ‘the church door’, *mullach a’ bheinn* ‘the top of the hill’. Jones (2009a: 139) makes the same observation with regard to the Jura dialect.
In the plural, _na_ (with _h_- prefixed to a following vowel) is the form encountered throughout the paradigm. The distinctive genitive plural form _nan_ is found before a vowel in placenames (Creag nan Ubhal, Fang nan Each), and occasionally in normal speech in expressions such as _muinntir nan eileanan_ ‘the people of the islands’, but the nominative form _na h_- is more common, especially in a non-possessive context: _a’ faicinn na h-eileanan, ag ithe na h-ùbhlan_. Before consonants, the form _na_ is used for all cases of the definite article in the plural, including the genitive, and only the position of the noun (and its form, in some instances) indicates that it is to be understood as being in the genitive. _Nam_, which is the regular form found before a labial consonant, is therefore not generally found in Colonsay speech, except possibly in some set expressions such as _Tìr nam Beann_. Nor is there usually any voicing (nasal mutation) of an initial consonant after the genitive plural article, as occurs in many other dialects.

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591 Lamb (2008: 209) reports the same increasing use of nominative forms in all cases, with _na h_- used instead of _nan/nam_ before a vowel.
592 This explains the confusion that attaches to certain Colonsay placenames, notably the house names _Cnoc na Fàd, Cnoc na Ban_, and _Col na Tarrann_ (Colnatarun); the second element, in all three cases, is a genitive plural, although the spelling of the article reflects local pronunciation. Loder (1935: 417, 418, 420) gives _Cnoc nam Fàd, Cnoc nam Ban_ and _Corr na Tarrunn_ [sic] respectively.
593 The forms _nan, nam_ are, however, found with the meaning ‘in their’ (< _ann an, ann am_): _tha iad nan suidhe, bha iad nam bàird._
Nouns

Noun morphology in Gaelic varies according to whether the noun in question is *definite* or *indefinite*. Definite nouns are either proper names, e.g. of persons or places, or are preceded by the definite article. Indefinite nouns, on the whole, do not reference a *specific* object, individual, place, etc.

Noun morphology also takes account of the following variables:

1. *Number*: singular, dual, plural
2. *Gender*: masculine, feminine
3. *Case*: nominative, genitive, dative, vocative

**Genitive and dative case marking**

In traditional Gaelic grammars, strict rules govern the formation of the genitive and dative cases of nouns (and accompanying adjectives). The way in which these rules are deployed is highly complex, with many subtle variations affecting different categories of nouns, and even individual words in some instances. This results in some degree of redundancy, as the same variables may be marked by more than one morphological feature.

In most present-day varieties of Gaelic, this complex set of rules is considerably attenuated in day-to-day speech, a trend which was already noted by Oftedal in Lewis in 1956 (1956: 202). As Lamb observes, ‘A levelling of morphological contrasts is occurring in the language due both to internal trends towards simplification and the pervasive influence of English. The effects can appear erratic at times’ (2008: 205).

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594 The nominative case includes all instances of what, in other languages, would be called the accusative.
595 Attempting to make sense of the somewhat inconsistent data he was receiving, Hamp in his field notes observes: ‘There are either two cases, attributive and non-attributive, or else there are many complex optional allomorphs’ (LSS: 38). It is not clear what he means, in this instance, by ‘attributive’ and ‘non-attributive’.
Whether the influence of English is specifically to blame for this situation is open to question; the same ‘internal trends’ towards morphological simplification are observed in other European languages, and may be a feature of language-contact situations in general. Modern English has largely abandoned any morphological marking for case in nouns, although its direct ancestor Anglo-Saxon (Old English) had inflected forms for four cases: nominative, accusative, genitive and dative (Blakeley 1964: 17-18). The only survivor of this system in nouns is the -s ending in the genitive (using the apostrophe in written English to mark distinctions which are not made in the spoken language). The same four cases are still to be found in modern German, although the system of noun endings is considerably scaled down, compared with the corresponding forms in Old High German, and much more reliance is placed on forms of the definite article and on adjective endings to determine case. Latin, as is well known, has six cases, but most modern languages derived from Latin have abandoned this complex arrangement in favour of using prepositions to indicate semantic relationships – derivatives of Latin de for the genitive and ad for the dative. So although ‘the pervasive influence of English’, and the fact that all Gaelic speakers nowadays spend much of their time communicating in English, is certainly a factor in the way Gaelic morphology is developing, it may in fact only be reinforcing, and perhaps hastening, a process of simplification which would have taken place anyway.

In Gaelic the dative is, in practice, a prepositional case. It is found after most (though not all) simple prepositions, but not on its own with the meaning ‘to, for’, as in some other Indo-European languages (e.g. German, Latin, Russian). Compound prepositions, usually incorporating an original noun element, are normally followed by the genitive.

In Colonsay Gaelic, the use of case markers has been greatly reduced. Differences are observed according to whether the noun is definite or indefinite, and also between masculine and feminine nouns.
Masculine singular nouns

In the case of masculine definite nouns, the genitive singular is maximally marked by initial lenition and final palatalisation, with internal vowel modification (Ablaut) where appropriate. Not all consonants can be lenited and/or palatalised, and words may begin or end in a vowel, so the paradigm is often defective in individual cases. There are also a number of irregular nouns, which do not fit the overall pattern.

In Colonsay Gaelic, initial lenition and final palatalisation are found together in the genitive of proper names, e.g. crodh Sheumais ‘Seumas’s cattle’, bean Choinnich ‘Kenneth’s wife’. In the case of singular nouns preceded by the definite article, a distinction is made between contexts where there is a clear sense of possession or relationship, where English would use the ending -’s (e.g. piuthar a’ bhalaich ‘the boy’s sister’), and those contexts where the use of the genitive is dictated by syntactical considerations, e.g. after a verbal noun or a compound preposition. Thus we find bleoghan a’ chrodh ‘milking the cows’, gearradh an fheur ‘cutting the grass’ (for standard bleoghan a’ chruitidh, gearradh an fhéoír). These examples show a consciousness of the need for a genitive construction (or something of the sort) after the verbal noun (bleoghan, gearradh) but indicate this only by initial lenition, and not final palatalisation.

As in other varieties of Gaelic, the dative singular of masculine nouns is generally unmarked in the case of proper names: tha e ag obair le Seumas ‘he is working with Seumas’. In some cases the choice of preposition dictates that the initial consonant be lenited: bhoineadh i do Cholbhasa ‘she belonged to (i.e. came from) Colonsay’. With the definite article, initial lenition is the rule, but a final consonant is unaffected: leis a’ chò ‘with the dog’, air a’ chladach ‘on the shore’. This is the standard pattern in Scottish Gaelic.

With indefinite nouns, case marking may be entirely absent. The same informant who referred to bleoghan a’ chrodh also spoke of mòran crodh ’s caoraich ‘a lot of cattle and sheep’ and mòran peantadh ‘a lot of painting’, using nominative forms where the genitive would normally be expected, but without any semantic ambiguity resulting from this choice. The marking of semantic relationships has become positional rather than morphological: a noun placed after another noun (or equivalent
expression) is assumed to qualify the first element, irrespective of surface form. In passing, it may be noted that this is the opposite of what typically occurs in English, where the qualifying element in such combinations is placed _first_: ‘house keys’, ‘bus lane’. It appears that, in this instance, what is taking place is an internally generated development (akin to the positioning of adjectives in the respective languages) rather than any obvious influence of English.

In some instances, a prepositional construction may be preferred: _tha gu leòr a Ghàidhlig aige_ ‘he has (i.e. knows) a lot of Gaelic’. The periphrastic genitive using _aig_ is a familiar feature of Scottish Gaelic, and is common in this dialect: _an còr aig Alasdair_ ‘Alastair’s car’, _an duin’ agam_ ‘my husband’.

Compound nouns generally retain genitive marking in the ‘qualifying’ element, e.g. _bàt’-aiseig_ ‘ferry-boat’, _taigh-solaisd_ ‘lighthouse’ (for the form with intrusive _d_, see p. 160).

_Feminine singular nouns_

In ‘textbook’ Gaelic morphology, the genitive singular of feminine nouns is most frequently marked by the endings _-e_ and _-ach_, the latter occurring principally in certain words ending in _-r_ and _-l_. In Colonsay Gaelic these endings are generally absent: _an taigh-sgoil, deireadh an litir_. In answer to a question that had used the form _mòran obrach_, one informant spontaneously responded with _mòran obair._

Barbara Satchel, in her articles originally published in _Gairm_, occasionally uses the ending _-eadh_, as in _bonnach mineadh_ (Law 2013: 54), but this usage does not

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596 Alternative constructions using _of_ are available in English, but often sound stilted.

597 In this instance, _a_ is an abbreviation of _de_. The lenition of _Ghàidhlig_ is due to the influence of this preposition, and is not inherently a marker of the dative case.

598 The ending _-a_ is also found, in so-called ‘third declension’ feminine nouns, e.g. _fuil > fala_ (Calder 1972: 91).

599 Donald ‘Garvard’ MacNeill, in an interview with the BBC (c. 1983) used the form _meadhan na Fadhail_ ‘the middle of The Strand’, but Donald was highly literate in Gaelic, and no doubt conscious that he was being broadcast to a wider audience. _Meadhan an Fhadail_ would be the more usual Colonsay construction.

600 In the collection _Dìleab Cholbhasach_ (Law 2013), Satchel’s use of _-eadh_ for final _-e_ has been largely edited out by her publishers. For example, _chun na sgoileadh_ (Gairm, 167: 269) appears as _chun na sgoile_ in the book (Law 2013: 52). It is possible that other divergent morphological features were similarly ‘standardised’ before the earlier publication in _Gairm._
appear to be replicated in spoken Colonsay Gaelic. The likely explanation is that Satchel’s written Gaelic was influenced by her years of residence in Skye, where genitive forms in -eadh are commonly found.601

Final palatalisation is not generally found with feminine nouns: ceann mo chorrag ‘the end of my finger’. With proper names, initial lenition is the norm in spoken Colonsay Gaelic: taigh Mhòrag. The evidence of placenames is mixed: we find Geodha Mòraig, but Cille Chatriona, Cille Mhoire (Loder 1935: 428, 416).

The distinctive feminine form of the dative, with palatalisation of a final consonant and internal vowel changes, is not actively used in this dialect, and is found only in set expressions such as air chois, air sgèith, ra theinidh.602 Otherwise, the form in use is identical to the nominative: leis a’ bhean,603 ris a’ chlann. In a few instances, an original dative form has become the nominative: this has happened generally in Scottish Gaelic, in words such as beinn (< beann), but gaoth is pronounced [qũç] (gaoith) in this dialect.

**Dual number**

Gaelic retains a vestigial form of the dual number, which in most Indo-European languages has been superseded by the plural, but is found, notably, in Classical Greek and in some Slavonic languages. In Colonsay Gaelic the number dà is followed by a lenited form of the singular: dà chas, dà bhròg, but the internal vowel modifications found elsewhere (dà chois, dà bhròig, etc.) are not found.

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601 Law 2013: 28-33. I am grateful to Dr Will Lamb for the information about -eadh endings.
602 The form r’a theinidh [sic] ‘on fire’ (pronounced theinich) is cited as a Colonsay form by Henderson (1903: 510), along with ãs a leinidh ‘out of his shirt’, i.e. bare-chested.
603 Likewise, the genitive form mnà is not used: bràthair mo bhean.
**Plural nouns**

In Scottish Gaelic, the plural of nouns is formed in several different ways. Final palatalisation, sometimes involving internal vowel modification, is particularly common with masculine nouns. Most feminine (and many masculine) nouns add -an or -ean, depending on the orthographic context; in many cases, these endings will be amplified by the addition of a further syllable: -aichean, -achan, -annan. In some instances, the amplification of the plural ending is compensated by syncope of the noun stem: màthair: màthraichean; fadhail: fadhlaichean. There are also a number of irregular plural forms.

In the overwhelming majority of instances, Colonsay Gaelic uses the same endings in the plural as other varieties of Scottish Gaelic. With disyllabic plural endings, however, there is a tendency to use straightforward monosyllabic endings: bàtan for bàtaichean, àitean for àiteachan, litirean for litrichean, etc. The SGDS results record one instance of this: abhainnean (4) [aˈvɨɲɨɲ] for aibhnichean\(^{604}\) (cf. Jones 2009a: 131).

This tendency may possibly underlie the English form of the placename Machrins. According to some of its recent inhabitants, the name of this farm in Gaelic is Na Machraichean, with a regular plural ending in -aichean.\(^{605}\) Loder’s list of placenames, however, (compiled by Murdoch McNeill) gives the form Machairean (Loder 1935: 434), and this form is used by a number of Colonsay residents. It also appears in the poem ‘Murchadh Ruadh (Am Posta)’ by Folalie McNeill (Scouller 1998: 43). On this basis, it appears that the anglicised form of the name is a reduplicative plural, with the English plural ending -s superimposed on an alternative (local) Gaelic plural Machairean, giving ‘Machrins’.

Masculine nouns ending in -adh (-eadh) generally form their plural in -aidhean (-idhean), which in this dialect is pronounced [içɪɲ], making these endings phonetically identical with those in -(a)ichean: monaidhean [mɔˈniçɪɲ] ‘mountains’, seallaidhean [ʃɛlˈɪçiɲ] ‘views’.

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\(^{604}\) Headword is abhainn: aibhneacha.

\(^{605}\) Interview with Jessie McNeill and her sister Mary O’Mahoney, 3 November 2011.
Words that are recognised as English borrowings generally retain their English plural termination in -s: cars, cottages, tourists, etc. Colonsay speakers often find the habit, common elsewhere, of attaching the plural ending -aichean to English words rather amusing.\footnote{Conversation with Netta Titterton, 19 September 2016. Nevertheless, Donald MacArthur uses the forms vanaichean ‘vans’, pòlaichean ‘poles’ (interview recorded 30 June 2010).}

Indefinite nouns in the genitive plural generally show initial lenition, even where this would normally be blocked following a homorganic consonant: barrachd dhaoine, mòran dhaoine. Monosyllabic genitive plurals are commonly found, and are not restricted to masculine nouns: the area of trees opposite the Hotel, now used as the Hotel car park, is known as Garradh na Craobh (for the form of the definite article, see above). Despite the existence of placenames such as Cnoc na Ban, Eilean na Ban,\footnote{To avoid confusion, the Colonsay form of the definite article is shown (see above). Loder (1935: 417, 424) lists these locations as Cnoc nam Ban, Eilean nam Ban.} the form mnathan is now generally used for all cases of the plural of bean ‘woman, wife’: obair na mnathan.\footnote{Bean tends to mean ‘wife’, rather than ‘woman’ in this dialect; boireannach is the preferred word for ‘woman’.} This suggests that some simplification has taken place in current usage, while the placenames preserve an earlier form.

The historical dative plural in -aibh, found in older Gaelic literature, is uncommon in modern Scottish Gaelic, and occurs only in set phrases in this dialect.

\textit{Vocative case}

The vocative singular in Colonsay follows the same pattern as in other dialects: lenition of an initial consonant, following the vocative particle a, and in the case of masculine nouns, palatalisation of a final consonant. In the plural, however, forms in -a or -aibh (the latter derived from the dative plural) are no longer used. My informant Jessie McNeill told me that she would say a bhalaich in both singular and plural,\footnote{Interview, 14 April 2014.} although Niall Brown remembers a bhalachaibh being used by the older generation in the 1950s and 60s.\footnote{Conversation, 29 August 2017.}
Adjectives

Traditional Gaelic grammars present a complicated paradigm of adjectival forms. Although predicative adjectives are indeclinable (tha an cat dubh, tha a’ chaile bàidheach), the forms of attributive adjectives closely parallel those of the nouns they qualify in number, gender, case and definiteness. While these forms are still prevalent in formal written Gaelic, in the spoken language the degree of complexity has been greatly reduced, in recognition of the considerable redundancy involved in using the same inflections as the accompanying nouns, which in many instances have themselves undergone morphological simplification (see above). Lamb (2008: 211-212) provides useful tables, indicating the forms encountered in contemporary written Gaelic, and the ‘reduced’ forms common in everyday speech. The fact that the same process of simplification is found to be taking place in such an apparently isolated speech community as Colonsay, and in North Uist (where Lamb conducted most of his fieldwork) demonstrates how pervasive these changes are in modern spoken Gaelic.

Plural marking

In common with many contemporary varieties of Gaelic, the Colonsay dialect has largely abandoned the plural ending -a (-e) for monosyllabic adjectives, although initial lenition is still the norm following a palatalised plural ending in the noun: coin mhath, caoraich mharbh. If a plural noun has a non-palatalised ending, any qualifying adjective usually has the same form as the nominative singular: taighean mòr, lèintean geal.
Case marking

Despite the existence of placenames such as Gàradh na Bèiste Duibhe, Geodha na Mnà Mairbhe, Tràigh a’ Mhill Bhàin (Loder 1935: 427, 428, 447; accents added), the only active case marker for adjectives in spoken Colonsay Gaelic is now initial lenition. This is found in the oblique cases of the masculine singular with the definite article, and throughout the feminine singular. Final palatalisation is not found, for example, in the genitive singular or feminine dative singular. The forms generally found, with some degree of individual variation, are as follows:

- fear bochd
- mac fear bochd
- le fear bochd
- bean bochd

- am fear bochd
- mac an fhear bhochd
- leis an fhear bhochd
- a’ bhean bhochd

- mac bean bhochd
- le bean bhochd

Comparative and superlative

Considering the simplification that has taken place in the morphology of the attributive adjective, and in the occurrence of internal modification as it affects noun forms, this dialect has preserved a surprisingly wide range of variation when it comes to the comparative/superlative forms of adjectives. Not including the common (completely irregular) forms nas fheàrr [na´fər] ‘better’ and nas miosa [nas´mesə] ‘worse’, no fewer than 13 forms are listed in the SGDS results:

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611 Strictly speaking, the term ‘superlative’ is not entirely accurate in Gaelic grammar, but for all practical purposes, forms in nas and as have come to be used as equivalent to the comparative and superlative, respectively, in English.

612 The SGDS results consistently use the spelling na´s. This is now considered obsolete, and has been changed to nas in the following table, in accordance with GOC rules.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Headword</th>
<th>Comparative/ Superlative Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>beag</em></td>
<td><em>nas lugha</em></td>
<td><em>nas l’ý?ý</em></td>
<td>smaller&lt;sup&gt;613&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>blàth</em></td>
<td><em>nas blàithe</em></td>
<td><em>nás bh’ a čí</em></td>
<td>warmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>bodhar</em></td>
<td><em>nas buidhre</em></td>
<td><em>nás bhúirí</em></td>
<td>more deaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>domhainn</em></td>
<td><em>nas doimhne</em></td>
<td><em>nás doimhne</em></td>
<td>deeper&lt;sup&gt;614&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>dorcha</em></td>
<td><em>nas duirche</em></td>
<td><em>nás duriçi</em></td>
<td>darker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>fliuch</em></td>
<td><em>nas fliche</em></td>
<td><em>nás fliuççi</em></td>
<td>wetter&lt;sup&gt;615&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>iseal</em></td>
<td><em>nas isle</em></td>
<td><em>nás i’ʃi</em></td>
<td>lower&lt;sup&gt;616&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>lom</em></td>
<td><em>nas luime</em></td>
<td><em>nás l’u’imh</em></td>
<td>bare&lt;sup&gt;617&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>luath</em></td>
<td><em>nas luaithe</em></td>
<td><em>nás l’uáji</em></td>
<td>faster&lt;sup&gt;618&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>mór</em></td>
<td><em>nas motha</em></td>
<td><em>nás mo’o</em></td>
<td>bigger&lt;sup&gt;619&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>righinn</em></td>
<td><em>nas rìghne</em></td>
<td><em>nás rìghne</em></td>
<td>tougher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>sean</em></td>
<td><em>nas sine</em></td>
<td><em>náʃi’ɲi</em></td>
<td>older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>teth</em></td>
<td><em>nas teotha</em></td>
<td><em>nàʃ t’ʃo’o</em></td>
<td>hotter&lt;sup&gt;620&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phonetic issues aside, it seems that the Colonsay dialect generally has the same comparative/superlative forms of adjectives as other Scottish Gaelic dialects.

<sup>613</sup> Headword is *beag: lugha*.
<sup>614</sup> Headword is *domhain: doimhne*.
<sup>615</sup> Note the vestigial influence of the positive form in the combination [ɪʊ̯].
<sup>616</sup> Headword is *ìosal: isle*.
<sup>617</sup> Headword is *lom: luime*.
<sup>618</sup> Headword is *luath: luaithe*.
<sup>619</sup> Headword is *mór: motha*.
<sup>620</sup> Headword is *teth: teotha*. The form [nàʃ t’ʃe’e] is also found (Conversation with Niall Brown, 29 August 2017).
Pronouns

Colonsay uses the same set of pronouns that are commonly used throughout the Gaelic-speaking area: *mi*, *thu* (*tu*), *e*, *i*; *sinn*, *sibh*, *iad*, with the corresponding emphatic forms *mise*, *thusa* (*tusa*), *esan*, *ise*; *sinne*, *sibhse*, *iadsan*.

In terms of pronunciation, it should be noted that *e*, when unstressed, is pronounced [a], while the emphatic form *esan* is [eʃaN], with [e] rather than [ɛ]. *Iad* is usually pronounced [aːdːə], while the emphatic form *iadsan* is [aˑd̥əs]. In common with most of Argyll, the emphatic form *sibhse* is pronounced [ʃɪvɪʃɪ], not [fiːvɪ : fiːfi], as is the case further north.

Although either *e* or *i* may be used to translate the English neuter pronoun ‘it’, depending on the gender of the underlying noun, there is a tendency to use *e* for inanimate objects, irrespective of grammatical gender: *Chan eil mòran ann a bhruaidhneas e* (Gàidhlig) ‘There are not many who speak it (Gaelic)’. This is undoubtedly due to English influence. (Cf. Dorian 2010: 72).

Prepositional pronouns

A characteristic feature of the Goidelic languages is the way in which prepositions and pronouns are combined to produce inflected forms. There are a number of such preposition/pronoun combinations where the Colonsay forms differ from those encountered elsewhere. These differences are most apparent in the 3rd person plural of certain prepositions, where Colonsay Gaelic has a strong ending in -cha. Thus we find the forms *dhiucha*, *riucha*, *leocha* [juxa : riuxa : lɐoʃxa] for *dhiubh*, *riù* (or *riutha*), *leò* (or *leotha*). The standard response to the New Year greeting *Bliadhna Mhath Ùr* on Colonsay is *Mar sin dhuit fhè*, ‘s mòran *dhiucha* ‘the same to you, and many of them’. The forms of the 3rd person singular feminine also show differences in some instances.
In researching these words, it has been striking to find that present-day speakers of Colonsay Gaelic seem quite unsure about some of the forms used in the 3rd person, especially in the feminine singular. For this reason, some of the forms listed below represent a ‘best guess’ as to the form used, supplemented as appropriate with material from the morphological section of the Language Survey of Scotland.

As with the irregular verbs, it will be useful, in some instances, to set out the paradigms of the main combining prepositions, highlighting the points where Colonsay usage differs from ‘standard’ Gaelic. In most cases, these differences will be found in the 3rd person (singular and plural) forms. Where the paradigm corresponds to ‘standard’ usage, it will not be given in full.

In the interests of economy, any points to be made about the prepositions themselves will be made here also, rather than listing them again separately.
**aig – ‘at’**

In the paradigm of *aig*, the medial *g* is often not heard, except when deliberately enunciated. Instead the glottal stop [ʔ] is used in stressed position, while monosyllabic forms are found in unstressed position, as they are in many other varieties of Gaelic. In the set phrase *gu robh math agad/agaibh* [kɔɾoˈmeʔ aɡəd / aɡəɪv] ‘thank you’ (see p. 346), medial *g* is, however, generally pronounced.

The full paradigm is as follows:

- *agam* [aɡəm : aʔam : am]
- *againn* [aɡɪŋ : aʔɪŋ : aɪn]
- *agad* [aɡəd : aʔagetattr : aɡəd]
- *agaibh* [aɡəv : aʔɪv : aɪv]
- *aige* [ɛɡɬɪ : ɛɡɬ]
- *aca* [aʃa : aʃa]
- *aice* [ɛɬɪ : ɛɬɪ]

**air – ‘on’**

The only point to be noted in relation to *air* is the pronunciation of the 3rd person fem. sg. form *oirre* (20) as [uʀə], contrasting with 3rd person pl. *orra* [ɔɾə]. The singular form may be reduced to [uɬ] in an unstressed environment.

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621 *SGDS* (headword (20) *air: oirre*) gives the forms [uɬɾə / u ɾə], [ɔɾə / ɔɾə], without glottalisation. Glottalisation is absent in an unstressed environment (see p. 256). For the phonetic representation of *r*, see p. 79.
**ann – ‘in’**

Phonetically, *ann* is articulated as \([ɛ̃ʊ̃nˈ]\), in keeping with the ‘raising’ of [a] to [ɛ] in this dialect (see p. 50). The form used with the definite article, *anns an*, is generally pronounced [as `n], making it a homophone of *ās an* (see below). No semantic ambiguity appears to result.

The pronominal forms are heard as *aonnam, aonnad* [y’n`am : y’n`aɖ], etc. It is clear from the *Survey* (*SGDS*, Vol. II: 84-85) that this pronunciation (transcribed as [ʊn`am] in the *SGDS*),\(^\text{622}\) is unique among Scottish Gaelic dialects. A pronunciation with [u] or [o] is fairly widespread, although not found on the immediately neighbouring islands of Islay and Jura.\(^\text{623}\) The full paradigm is as follows:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>aonnam</em></td>
<td>[y’n`am]</td>
<td><em>aonnainn</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>aonnad</em></td>
<td>[y’n`aɖ]</td>
<td><em>aonnaibh</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ann</em></td>
<td>[ɛ̃ʊ̃nˈ]</td>
<td><em>aonnta</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>innte</em></td>
<td>[iˑɲd̥zɪ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ās – ‘from, out of’**

The form *ās*, normally used before the definite article, is also used with proper names, when they begin with a vowel: *ās Ìle* ‘from Islay’, *ās Èirinn* ‘from Ireland’.

The pronominal forms *asam, asad*, etc. are exactly as in ‘standard’ Gaelic.

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\(^{622}\) See phonological discussion, pp. 53-54.

\(^{623}\) Points 51-56.
The forms *bho/o* are used fairly interchangeably throughout the Gaelic-speaking area, and Colonsay is no exception. However, forms based on *bho* seem to be preferred in the case of prepositional pronouns, and these are given here. The morphology is the same for forms based on *o*, save that the initial *bh-* is omitted: *uam, uat*, etc.

This was one of the instances where there appeared to be uncertainty about the 3rd person forms, despite this being a very common preposition. The following paradigm is, however, confirmed by the LSS findings (p. 42):

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{bhuam} & [v\l u\alpha\l m] & \text{bhuainn} & [v\l u\alpha\l n] \\
&\text{bhuat} & [v\l u\tilde{i}\tilde{f}\tilde{f}] & \text{bhuibh} & [v\l u\tilde{i}\tilde{j}\tilde{y}] \\
&\text{bhuaithe} & [v\l u\alpha\tilde{i}\tilde{f}] & \text{bhuach} & [v\l u\alpha\l x\alpha] \\
&\text{bhuache} & [v\l u\tilde{i}\tilde{g}\tilde{i}] \\
\end{align*}
\]

**de** – ‘of, off’

As in a number of other varieties, this preposition is easily confused with *do*, being pronounced [dɔ] rather than *[d'zɛ]*. Like *do*, it can be reduced to *a:* *gu leòr a Ghàidhlig* ‘plenty (of) Gaelic’. The pronominal forms are, however, clearly differentiated, the only potentially ambiguous form being the fem. sg. *dhi* [ji], which is phonetically identical to *dhi* ‘to her’.

As noted above, the 3rd person plural form is *dhiucha*. Otherwise the paradigm of *de* is regular.
**do – ‘to’**

As noted above, some confusion is possible between this preposition and *de*. When unstressed, *do*, like *de*, can be realised as [də], a [a] or even [ə], rather than [də]. Before a vowel, it usually has the form *a dh*: *tha mi a’ dol a dh’Orasa* ‘I am going to Oronsay’. When combined with pronouns, however, the resulting forms are quite different, with the exception of *dhi/dhith* (see above under *de*).

The only morphological point to be noted in relation to this preposition is the typically Argyll form *dhuit* [ɣuίtʃ] in the 2\(^{nd}\) person singular, where more northerly varieties would have *dhut*. Otherwise the paradigm of *do* is regular.

**fo – ‘under’**

The 1\(^{st}\) and 2\(^{nd}\) person forms of this preposition present no problems: *fodham*, *fodhad*; *fodhainn*, *fodhaibh*.

In the 3\(^{rd}\) person masc. sg., the form elicited was, unsurprisingly, *fodha* [foʔa], realised with typical Colonsay glottalisation and ‘echoing’ of the vowel. Satchel, in the original version of her essay ‘Làithean m’ Òige anns a’ Ghlasaird’ (Satchel 1995: 120), uses the form *foidhe* [foʔi].\(^{624}\) The LSS notes (p. 43) also give [foʔi], but I have been unable to elicit this form from present-day informants. It may be that the ‘standard’ form *fodha* has gained ground in the sixty years since the *Survey* was conducted. Jones lists the corresponding Jura forms as *foide* [foʔi foʔo foː].

For the fem. sg., the form *fòithe* [fɔ̞çɪ] was offered rather tentatively. The ‘standard’ form *foipe* [fɔiβa] was not spontaneously offered, although it is the form shown in the LSS (p. 43). I was able to elicit *fodhpa* for the plural, although the LSS has *fodhcha* [foˈxə], which fits the general pattern of 3\(^{rd}\) person pl. endings in this dialect.

\(^{624}\) This was corrected to *fodha* in the edition published by Acair (Law 2013: 60).
**gu** – ‘to’

This pronoun is not much used in the Colonsay dialect, forms of *a dh’ionnsaigh* [(ə) ʃiːɪnʃə] being preferred. As a consequence, forms using the stem *thug-* (*thugam*, *thugad*, etc.) are not found. This is confirmed by the LSS findings (LSS: 43-44).

**le** – ‘with, by’

The initial *l* of *le* and its pronominal derivatives is consistently realised in this dialect as [l′], not *[ʎ]* as might be expected in initial position. The first and second person singular forms *leam* and *leat* are pronounced [l′em : l′ɛh], respectively.

As noted above, the 3rd person plural form is *leocha* [l′ɛoxta], or if unstressed [l′oxa].

The full paradigm is as follows:

- *leam* [l′ɛm]
- *leinn* [l′ɛn]
- *leat* [l′ɛh]<br />
- *leibh* [l′ɛiŋ]<br />
- *leis* [l′ɛʃ]<br />
- *leocha* [l′ɛoxta : l′oxa]<br />
- *leatha* [l′ɛʔɛ]
**mu** – ‘about, around’

I was unable to elicit pronominal forms for this pronoun, which appears to be used mainly in the compound forms *mun cuairt* (in a spatial context), or the divergent form *mu dhèidhneamh* [mó ɪʃ ɲɪv] with a figurative meaning (= ‘concerning’). As in other varieties, *mu thimcheall*, or more idiomatically *timcheall air*, is used in both senses. The LSS notes (p. 44) do not offer any compound forms for *mu*.

Jones (2009a: 201-202) reports exactly the same situation in Jura.

**ri** – ‘to’

As noted above, the 3rd person plural form is *riucha*. Otherwise the paradigm of *ri* is regular, although with the vowel [u] rather than [i] or [iu] as in some dialects.
**ro** – ‘before, in front of’

As in many other instances, 1st and 2nd person forms are regular, as is the 3\textsuperscript{rd} person masc. sg. The fem. sg. was tentatively given as **roithe** (LSS (p. 45) has the regular form **roimhpe**), and the 3\textsuperscript{rd} person plural as either **rocha** or the regular **romhpa**. This gives the following paradigm:

\[
\begin{array}{lcl}
\text{romham} & [\text{ɾɔʔɔm}] & \text{romhainn} & [\text{ɾɔʔiɲ}] \\
\text{romhad} & [\text{ɾɔʔəd}] & \text{romhaibh} & [\text{ɾɔʔiv}] \\
\text{roimhe (714)} & [\text{ɾɔʔi}] & \text{rocha/romhpa} & [\text{ɾɔxə : ɾəh̥ə}] \\
\text{roithe}, \text{roimhpe} & [\text{ɾɔcɨ : ɾ[ɨi]ʃə}] 625
\end{array}
\]

Niall Brown suggested that forms with initial *f* are also found: [ɾɔʔəm : ɾəʔəd], etc. This is an interesting observation, as it would align with other cases where there is ambiguity over initial *r/fr*, e.g. roithneach/ froithneach\textsuperscript{626}, radharc/fradharc.

**tro** – ‘through’

The LSS found that the pronominal forms of *tro* are phonetically identical to those of *ro*: **thromham** [ɾɔʔəm], **thromhad** [ɾəʔəd], etc. This accords with my own findings.

Netta Titterton suggested that the 3\textsuperscript{rd} person pl. form **thromhpa** [ɾəh̥ə] was used more in a figurative sense – going through photographs, etc., whereas **throcha** [ɾəxə] was used for physical movement: *choisich mi throcha* ‘I walked through them (e.g. gardens)’\textsuperscript{627}.

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\textsuperscript{625} Second form transcribed from LSS (p. 45).
\textsuperscript{626} SGDS headword (692): raithneach.
\textsuperscript{627} Conversation, 11 August 2017.
SYNTAX

John MacInnes has expressed the view that there are no significant syntactic differences to be observed among Scottish Gaelic dialects.

Over the whole area, syntactical variation is minimal. [...] In contrast to Irish, for example, Scottish Gaelic is remarkably uniform.

(MacInnes 2006: 110-11)

It is certainly true that very few syntactic variations have been found in the Colonsay material, and none of those identified is peculiar to this dialect. Those that have been identified are listed here.

Perfect and pluperfect tenses formed with an dèidh

A familiar feature of Scottish Gaelic is the formation of a periphrastic perfect tense using the preposition air, which is used here to mean ‘after’. Colonsay speakers, on the whole, do not use air in this way; like speakers of some other dialects, they use either the preterite, or a construction with an dèidh, to express the sense of the English perfect. The preterite is heard, e.g. in thill thu dhachaidh ‘you’ve come [back] home’ (to someone returning from holiday), dh’ith mi mo dhìnnear ‘I’ve had my dinner’. In both cases, the remark relates to a recent event, with continuing relevance in the present, where English would normally use the perfect. An dèidh is often heard when referring to something that has just happened: tha mi an dèidh immse dhuit ‘I’ve (just) told you’. By extension, the pluperfect is expressed using an dèidh with the preterite bha.

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628 I am indebted to Professor Wilson McLeod for drawing my attention to this quotation.

629 Cf. the (literary) English use of ‘on’ or ‘upon’: ‘Upon leaving the house, he met someone coming the other way; on closer examination, it turned out to be his neighbour’.
The use of *air* to form the perfect can cause confusion to Colonsay Gaelic speakers. In one instance, the informant misunderstood my (slightly clumsy) construction in *Bhiodh mòran daoine ann a bh’air a bhith anns a’ Riasg Bhuidhe* ‘There would be a lot of people who *had been* in Riskbuie’, and responded with *Cha robh, bha iad an dèidh tighinn don Ghlasaird* ‘No, they had come to Glassard’, thinking I meant ‘people who *were still living* in Riskbuie’. Yet the same informant used the expression *air atharrachadh* ‘changed’ twice in the course of the interview, indicating that *air* may be used with a passive meaning, but not to express the active perfect/pluperfect. It also occurs in set expressions, e.g. *air falbh* ‘away’, *air chall* ‘lost’.

**Relative clauses involving prepositions**

There are two ways of handling relative clauses involving prepositions in Scottish Gaelic (Adger and Ramchand 2006). The more formal construction is preposition + dependent verb:

*An duine ris an robh mi a’ bruidhinn*

Alternatively, the preposition can be placed at the end of the clause, as is common in English (‘the man I was talking to’):

*An duine a bha mi a’ bruidhinn ris*

My informant Flora Macneill seemed certain that the latter construction is the one generally favoured in Colonsay. Flora herself, nevertheless, used the expression *an taigh anns a bheil mi a-nis* in an interview, although it is possible that in this instance she was influenced by the construction *far a bheil mi*. My impression is that Colonsay speakers would be more likely to say *an taigh a tha mi a’ fantail ann a-nis* (or *far a bheil mi a’ fantail*), although it has become difficult to verify such things, given the very small number of native speakers on the island.

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630 The original eight houses in Glassard (*A’ Ghlasaird*), on the east side of Colonsay, were built in 1920-22 to re-house the inhabitants of the fishing hamlet of Riskbuie (*Riasg Buidhe*), about half a mile to the north.
Directional v. locational adverbs of place

Like many other languages, Gaelic makes a distinction, in the case of certain very common adverbs of place, between directional forms, involving movement, and locational forms, where the subject is assumed to be stationary. Thus ‘I am going out’ would be rendered as tha mi a’ dol a-mach, whereas ‘he is sitting outside’ would be tha e na shuidhe a-muigh. ‘I came in’ would be thàinig mi a-steach, whereas ‘I am staying in’ is tha mi a’ fuireach a-staigh.

In Colonsay Gaelic this distinction is not made with these adverbs. ‘Out’ is always a-mach (34) [mɛx], and ‘in’ is always a-staigh [(s) sðỳj : (s) sðý]. A-muigh (38, 39) is not used;631 a-steach is readily understood, but not commonly used. It is perhaps noteworthy that this is an ‘asymmetric’ correspondence, in that a-mach is used in the ‘standard’ language for direction, whereas a-staigh is used for location.

As well as distinguishing motion from location, the words for ‘over, across’ present different forms according to whether motion is perceived as being towards or away from the speaker; or if the speaker is the subject, to or from his/her present location. Motion towards the speaker is expressed by a-nall [(s) nəvː]’, whereas motion away from the speaker is expressed by a-nunn (45) [(s) nũnˇ]. The corresponding locational forms are thall (over there) and a-bhos (over here). These distinctions were neatly expressed by my informant Flora Macneill, when describing how she and her husband took over the running of Oronsay Farm from her mother and brother: Bha iadsan thall man daidh sinn a-nunn, ’s sin thànaig iadsan a-nall [...] do Bhaile Raomainn Mòr ‘They were over there before we went over, and then they came over (here) to Balerominmore’ (Interview, 23 May 2009).

631 Footnote to headword 38 (a-muigh) states ‘word rarely used’. In my experience, it is never used by Colonsay speakers.
As in most varieties of Gaelic, the concepts ‘here’ and ‘there’ are expressed by *an seo* [əˈʃo] and *an sin* [əʃɛn] respectively, which are often reduced to *seo* and *sin*. *Sin* or *sineach (seanach)* [ʃɛˈnʌx] is also used with the temporal meaning ‘then’: *sineach thànaig tractors a-staigh* ‘then tractors came in’.632 In this sense, it is used in preference to *an uair sin*. Emphasis can also be marked by the forms *ann an seo*, *ann an sin*.

For a more distant prospect, *an siud* is used for both direction and location as in the ‘standard’ language. *Ann an siud* is also used.

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632 Interview with Jessie McNeill, 26 May 2009. She is talking about developments in agriculture over the course of her lifetime.
Clefts: ‘s ann and ‘s e

These constructions, both incorporating the copula *is* (*is ann*, *is e*), are very commonly used in Gaelic to indicate *clefts*, where a particular element of an utterance is ‘highlighted’ (given extra prominence) by being brought forward in the sentence to initial position (Lamb 2008: 73-77; 267-269). As is well known, Gaelic word order requires the verb to be placed first in the sentence, but the use of the copula in ‘s ann / ‘s e enables another word or phrase to be placed ahead of the main verb, which can then be ‘relegated’ to a relative clause, while still observing the verb-subject-object (VSO) sequence. It is thus a highly versatile device, enabling degrees of emphasis to be accommodated within what would otherwise be quite a rigid word order.

In traditional Gaelic grammar, the distinction between the two forms is that ‘s e is used to reference a noun phrase (or a dependent clause), while ‘s ann introduces another type of element, e.g. an adverbial or prepositional construction:

‘S e Dòmhnall a rinn sin.
‘S e gu robh mi ag obair a dh’fhàg cho sgìth mi.
‘S ann an-dè a ràinig sinn.
‘S ann anns a’ bhaile mhòr a bha e fuireach.

In Colonsay Gaelic this distinction is not rigidly observed, and ‘s e is found with all types of sentence elements in cleft constructions. In response to the sentence *Chan ann an seo a rugadh ‘s a thogadh tu*, ‘this is not where you were born and brought up’, both Mary Ann MacAllister and John Clark, in separate interviews, responded with *Chan è.*

‘s ann appears to be favoured in phrases using the preposition *ann*, which may then be reduced to *an*: ‘s ann an Colbhasa a rugadh e ‘he was born in Colonsay’. Otherwise ‘s e is generally preferred: ‘s e a-màireach a tha i a’ tighinn ‘it’s tomorrow she is coming’. Jones (2009a: 153-154) reports similar usage in Jura, although he suggests the use of ‘s e in such constructions may be regarded there as more of an Islay feature.

633 The question related to the precise location on the island. Both were born and brought up on Colonsay.
Formal and informal forms of second person pronoun

In Gaelic, as in many European languages (but not in standard English), a distinction is generally made between the second person pronouns used to address intimates (family members, friends, children, animals, etc.) and those used to address strangers, or people who are regarded as superiors. In line with the practice in other languages such as French (*tu*/*vous*), the singular form *thu* is used when addressing intimates, while the plural form *sibh* is considered more appropriate where a degree of respect is called for. Very often the distinction is based on age: in many varieties of Gaelic, *sibh* is used when addressing one’s elders, *thu* when speaking to contemporaries or those younger than oneself. The precise modalities of who may be addressed as *thu* vary from one locality to another, and can be a source of social awkwardness when they are incorrectly handled.

In Colonsay, by contrast, *thu* and *sibh* are used – as in Irish, and some other Scottish dialects – purely to indicate singular and plural: *thu* is the normal form of address to an individual, whatever his or her age or social status. To some extent this reflects the sociodynamics of a small, isolated community, where most people, especially if they are Gaelic speakers, live on terms of close social intimacy – although the same could be claimed for the many Gaelic-speaking communities where the distinction is observed. The reality of life on Colonsay means that strangers will be addressed in English, in the first instance, but if they turn out to be Gaelic speakers, *thu* will be used. Colonsay speakers are aware of the use of *sibh* in ‘polite’ register elsewhere, but to a Colonsay ear it sounds excessively formal and unnatural.

Holmer (1957: 123) notes that in Arran, ‘the forms *tu*, *thu* were once common words of address to a single person, but are gradually giving way to *sibh*. Since Gaelic itself has given way to English in Arran since the time of Holmer’s fieldwork (1938), this trend cannot be further verified. Ó Baoill (1978: 176), citing Holmer, suggests that the practice ‘has spread recently to the southern islands from further north’, and notes that it is ‘generally absent’ in Irish. Whatever the truth of these claims may be, the practice is generally absent in Colonsay also.

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634 Italics added.
That the use of *thu* to a superior is a long-established practice in Colonsay is illustrated by the account of I.M. Moffatt-Pender, a noted Gaelic enthusiast of the early 20th century, who visited the island in 1924 and was surprised to be addressed as *thu* (*tu*) by the man who came to collect his luggage.

Air ball mhothaich mi rud àraidh – b’e “*tu*” a thuir Murchadh rium, a’ sealltuinn gu soilleir dhomh gur e sin dòigh-bhruidhne anns an eilean so – (gidheadh, tha iad ag innsadh dhomh gu bheil iad direach cho modhail ri an coimhearsnaich, ged nach cleachd iad “*sibh*”!)

(Moffatt-Pender 1924: 32, spelling and punctuation original.)

There is some slight evidence that in Colonsay, *sibh* may have been used as a mark of respect in still earlier generations. In the 1970s, some Colonsay residents born around the time of the First World War recalled being taught to address older relatives (e.g. grandparents) as *sibh*, but insisted that this usage had not been current in their own adult lifetime.635 None of my more recent informants could remember using *sibh* in this way.

### Summary of findings

In contrast to the view expressed by MacInnes (see above), Adger and Ramchand (2006: 191) conclude that ‘syntactic dialectal variation in Scottish Gaelic is an important feature of the language [which] has gone largely unstudied’. While this may well be true, the relatively small number of instances in which Colonsay usage can be shown to differ from more ‘standard’ varieties reinforces the view that syntactic and morphological features are a less prominent marker of difference than phonological and lexical features. That is not to say that they are undeserving of close study.

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635 Conversations with Katie Brown and her sister Morag Titterton, c.1975.
While it is difficult to draw general conclusions from such a diverse collection of highly specific data, it can be seen that Colonsay, despite its relative isolation from other varieties of Gaelic, participates in the general erosion of morphological forms that is taking place within the language, particularly in relation to case marking for nouns and adjectives (and the definite article as appropriate). Differing morphological forms of irregular verbs are also a significant feature, particularly affecting the preterite, and to some extent the future and conditional tenses. In the area of prepositional pronouns, variant forms are found especially for the 3rd person sg. feminine, and the 3rd person plural.

In the case of syntactic features, the use of *an dèidh*, in preference to *air*, as a marker of the perfect tense (recent past, continuing significance) is noteworthy, as is the tendency to use *’s e* in preference to *’s ann* for non-nominal clefts. The Colonsay use of *thu/sibh* merely to indicate singular/plural, and not any form of distinction based on age or social status, is of interest from a sociolinguistic point of view.

Many of the morphological and syntactic features identified in Colonsay are shared across a broader swathe of Argyll dialects, in particular the neighbouring islands of Jura and Islay. Given sufficient data, it might be possible to draw morphological and syntactic ‘isoglosses’ across the area covered by the *SGDS*. That, however, would take us well beyond the scope of the present study.
5. LEXICAL FEATURES

Differences in the realisation of speech sounds, and points of grammatical usage, are by no means the only features which serve to distinguish the dialects of a language from one another. Differences in vocabulary, and in the way words are used, can be every bit as important in determining the unique characteristics of how the language is expressed in a particular locality (Grant 1995-96: 52). This chapter does not set out to give a comprehensive account of all words that are used, or might have been used in the past, by Gaelic speakers living on Colonsay. To a very great extent, Colonsay speakers use the common vocabulary of Scottish Gaelic. Where phonological, morphological or syntactic differences exist, these have been examined in the relevant chapters. The purpose of this final chapter is, rather, to examine the ways in which certain words and expressions used by Colonsay speakers differ from those found in other Gaelic dialects; or if not entirely different, are at least used in a different way, and with a different semantic reference.

Together with the phonological differences already analysed, this can sometimes make it difficult for Colonsay speakers to understand speakers from other areas of the Gàidhealtachd, and vice versa. One informant even went so far as to suggest that it was easier for speakers of Colonsay Gaelic to understand spoken Irish than the Lewis dialect.636

Unfamiliar dialects meant that, in the past, Gaelic radio broadcasting on BBC Radio Scotland, and later on Radio nan Gàidheal, was largely ignored by Colonsay listeners. The advent of regular television programmes, with the benefit of visual cues and, in some cases, English subtitles, has proved more popular, especially since the establishment of BBC Alba in 2008, and this has undoubtedly led to greater exposure to, and acceptance of, other varieties of Scottish Gaelic.

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636 Interview with Netta Titterton, 20 June 2011.
Parallels with Irish

While the view that Colonsay speakers find it easier to understand Irish than the Lewis dialect may be something of an exaggeration, it is true that a handful of expressions very commonly used on Colonsay (and elsewhere in Argyll, notably in Islay) are reminiscent of Irish, rather than more standard Scottish Gaelic forms. These include the most formal way of expressing thanks, gu robh math agad/agaibh [kɔˈro̞ mɛʔ aɡ̥əd / aɡ̥ɪv]. More colloquial alternatives are taing dhuit/dhuibh, or more colloquially still ta or even thanks. Neither mòran taing nor tapadh leat/leibh, which are the standard formulae for expressing thanks in most other varieties of Gaelic, is commonly used on Colonsay; indeed, the latter expression is regarded there as a very odd way to say ‘thank you’.

Other lexical items which bear a superficial resemblance to Irish forms include cosmhail ri [kɔs̪iɻˈiː],638 which is used in preference to coltach ri meaning ‘like, similar to’. Coltach is used to mean ‘likely’, ‘probable’, and the noun coltas [kɔlˈtas] is used to mean ‘appearance’, especially in the expression a rēir coltais ‘apparently’ (‘seemingly’, in Colonsay English). Maidinn [meɻdˈzˈiːn], rather than madainn, is the word for ‘morning’, giving the expressions maidinn mhath [mɛɻdˈʃiːn ˈvɛ] ‘good morning’, and an-diugh sa mhaidinn ‘this morning’. Deifir, rather than cabhag, is used for ‘hurry’. The pronunciation of nas miosa ‘worse’ as nas measa [nas ˈmesə] by some, though not all Colonsay speakers,639 is also reminiscent of Irish, as is the form bainntrach (77) [bɛɪnˈdər̥ˈzɜɹə] for bantrach ‘widow’.

637 The pronunciation of the first syllable as [kɔ], rather than *[ɡʊ] is also attested by Jones in Jura. Jones thinks this may represent ‘a fossilised by-form of gu’ or ‘a reinterpretation of the phrase in the minds of speakers, perhaps involving the word cothrom or comharradh’ (Jones 2009a: 248). Re-analysing the phrase as cothrom math agad would make phonological sense in terms of the Colonsay data – but Colonsay speakers, when asked, interpret it as meaning ‘may good be with you’. Jones further notes that the same pronunciation was obtained by Wentworth (1996: 191) for Wester Ross, albeit with a slight difference in usage.

638 Spelt cosail in accounts of other Argyll dialects (Grannd 2000, Jones 2009a, Edwards 2007).

639 Interview with Donald MacArthur, 30 June 2010. Niall Brown (in conversation, 10 July 2017) insisted that nas miosa was the form most commonly used.
Both Ó Baoill (1978, 2000) and Grannd (Grant) (2004) have drawn attention to the area of overlap, in lexical terms, that exists between ‘Irish’ as spoken in the north of Ireland and ‘Gaelic’ as spoken in the southern part of the Scottish Gàidhealtachd, notably in Argyll. In Ó Baoill (1978) the main focus is on typically Scottish features which are also found in northern varieties of Irish, but in Sections 1-6A (pp. 1-72) he adopts the opposite approach, and lists features which are common to Ireland and some southern dialects of Scottish Gaelic, but are not found further north. In the absence (to date) of any serious study of the Colonsay dialect, no direct comparison is drawn between Ulster and Colonsay forms, except where the latter are occasionally mentioned in the literature, but a few cross-comparisons can be made with other southern dialects.

For example, the use of bròdail, rather than pròiseil, as the word for ‘proud’ (p. 12), is attested in Colonsay, for example in a poem by Donald MacNeill (Scouller 1998: 19), although the word most commonly used is moiteil, which carries a positive connotation: bidh sinn moiteil asad ‘we’ll be proud of you’. The word ladhar is used for ‘toe’ (pp. 45-46), although òrdaig is also used, meaning specifically ‘big toe’.

Further examples cited by Ó Baoill and attested in Colonsay include crotach, rather than guilbneach, for ‘curlew’ (pp. 37-38), dreòlan [drεol’a], rather than dreathan (donn), for ‘wren’ (p. 39), gart meaning ‘standing corn’ (pp. 196-197) (also ‘field’, as in the placename Gart a’ Ghobhainn), and the admittedly rather obscure word tarraing-air-èiginn for ‘heath rush’ (pp. 49-50; cf. Loder 1935: 368). But the degree of identifiable overlap is really quite limited, and the fact that a handful of words, in nearly contiguous dialects, should show some similarity, is not in itself particularly surprising.

On the other hand, the word used for ‘(joiner’s) hammer’ in Colonsay is òrd, as throughout most of the Scottish Gàidhealtachd, rather than geannaire, which is found in Islay and Kintyre, or casar (cf. Irish casúr), which is recorded in Arran (p. 13; cf. Holmer 1957: 2). The distribution of òrd, geannaire and casar in Argyll and

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640 Grannd (2000) discusses the distribution of ladhar/òrdaig (pp. 22-23 and Map 20), bròdail (pp. 41-42 and Map 54) and dreòlan/dreathan (p. 25 and Map 25).

641 The translation is ‘rough grass’ in Ó Baoill’s heading; ‘heath-rush’ is shown as the entry for Colonsay (citing Dwelly, who identifies it as a Colonsay form).
Arran dialects is shown in Grannd (2000: 41 and Map 53). The informant I questioned about this in Colonsay seemed unfamiliar with either *geannaire* or *casar*, but volunteered *meal* [meɪl] for ‘sledgehammer’. There is an English word ‘mell’, meaning ‘heavy hammer, sledgehammer’, but whether this is the origin of the Gaelic word, or is itself derived from a Celtic original, is difficult to determine.

Grannd (2004) goes so far as to postulate the existence of a ‘North Channel dialect’ covering southern Argyll (Islay, Jura, Colonsay, Gigha, Kintyre and Arran) and the northern extremity of Co. Antrim, including Rathlin. He identifies a number of ‘features’ that are common to all these dialects (11 in this particular article, although he refers in passing (p. 94) to a list of 89 features, which form the basis of his 2000 publication). Of the 11 listed by him in 2004, all but one are found in Colonsay as well as Islay. Nevertheless, Grannd’s data, as presented, is not sufficient in itself to demonstrate that Argyll and Antrim constitute a single dialect area. A similar hypothesis, suggested by Ó Cuív as far back as 1951 (1951: 48-49), had previously been examined by Ó Baoill (2000) who, while accepting that there would have been a measure of mutual comprehension among the dialects concerned, concluded that ‘to say that we have therefore proved the existence of the single Gaelic continuum as long as the language survived in the ‘interface’ area would be dangerous because the evidence is in reality so meagre’ (pp. 131-132).

As far as Colonsay is concerned, it must be recognised that, for the most part, the lexis used in day-to-day speech has much more in common with other varieties of Scottish Gaelic than with any forms of Irish.

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642 The exception is Feature 4: Treatment of Old Irish *ig* (pp. 77-78), where Colonsay follows the general pattern of Scottish Gaelic in pronouncing final -*ich* as [iç], but agrees with Islay in also pronouncing final -*idh*, -*igh* as [iç] (See pp. 70-71; cf. Grannd 2000: 59). For a full examination of this issue, see Ó Maolalaigh (2000).
Preferential choices

It is important to realise that, in many cases, the difference between Colonsay forms and those used in other parts of the Gàidhealtachd is a matter of preferential usage, rather than a binary choice. Words used elsewhere will often be recognised as forming part of the wider Gaelic lexicon, but may not be actively used in local speech. Comments such as ‘That’s what they say in Islay’ are commonplace. Conversely, many expressions which are commonly used in Colonsay speech are known in other varieties of Gaelic, but with a more restricted reference compared to their use on Colonsay. For example, the word *gasta* is universally used in Colonsay, and in the rest of Argyll, as a mark of approval (‘fine’, ‘great’). The standard response to the greeting *Ciamar a tha thu?* is *Tha (mi) gasta*, while *tha sin gasta* is a normal way of expressing satisfaction with just about anything. In other varieties of Gaelic the word is less commonly encountered; it is found in expressions such as *duine gasta* ‘a fine (decent) man’, but would not normally be used as a ‘catch-all’ term of approval.

A parallel situation can be found in English: the Scottish/Irish use of ‘grand’, or the Lancashire expression ‘champion’, as a general mark of approval, tends to strike a speaker of Standard Southern English (SSE) as quaint, or even odd. The words themselves form part of the SSE vocabulary, but have a more restricted range of application.

Similarly, *bitheanta* is a perfectly normal Gaelic word, meaning ‘frequent’ or ‘common’. As such, its area of semantic reference overlaps with that of *tric*. But *tric* is the more frequently used expression for ‘often’, with *bitheanta* or *gu bitheanta* available as a synonym. In the Colonsay dialect, (*gu* *bitheanta* [b̥içɪnɗə]) is a commonly used word meaning ‘often’, found alongside *tric*. Similarly, the expression for ‘usually’ in Colonsay tends to be *am bitheantas*, rather than *mar is trice*.

Other examples may be given. The word (*a* *cheana*, meaning ‘already’, is known and used in most varieties of Gaelic, but the more commonly used expression in most cases is *mu thràth*, or as it is often rendered, *mar thà*. In Colonsay, *cheana* [ç’e’nə] is the normal word for ‘already’, with *mu thràth/mar thà* much less commonly used.
The opposing concepts of ‘easy’ and ‘difficult’ are neatly expressed by the pair *soirbh/doirbh* [sɔr(ɬ): ɗəri(ɬ)] rather than *furadas/doilich*, although the latter words are known and readily understood. In the comparative, *nas doirbh* [nas ɗərivɪ] is used for ‘more difficult’, but ‘easier’ is usually expressed as *nas fhasa*. The word *duilich* (357) [ɗo’lɪç] (note the quality of the vowel: [o]) is generally used only with the meaning ‘sorry’. *Tha mi duilich (doilich)* is the standard formula for expressing condolences, as well as a general apology.643

The pair *diofar/deifir* presents an interesting contrast. In most varieties of Gaelic, these forms are regarded as synonymous; *diofar* is considered to be the more correct spelling, as sanctioned by *GOC*, while the spelling *deifir* is considered obsolete.644 In Colonsay, the two are distinguished. *Diofar* [dʏfəɾ] expresses the idea of ‘difference’, and is clearly influenced by the English word ‘differ’ (note the presence of hard [d] in onset): *cha dèan e diofar* ‘it doesn’t matter’. By contrast, *deifir* [d'z'efɪɾ], with a different vowel, and palatalised onset, expresses the idea of ‘haste, hurry’: *a bheil deifir ort?* ‘are you in a hurry?’ The same distinction is maintained in Jura (Jones 2009a: 251-252), and in Irish: *difear/deifir*. The word *cabhag* [kafaɡ] is also known, but is not normally used to mean ‘hurry’; its principal use, even in Colonsay English, is to refer to a gaggle of seagulls feeding on a shoal of mackerel, or a patch of discarded offal, offshore.

On the subject of speed, the meaning ‘fast, quick’ is more frequently conveyed by *clis*, rather than *luath*, in Colonsay Gaelic, although *luath* is also used.

The adjective *deas* (304) [d'z'es], as well as meaning ‘right’ (as opposed to left), or ‘south’, is also the normal word for ‘ready’ in this dialect, and as such is used in preference to *deiseil* or *ullamh*. Some of my informants used *deiseil*, but only when prompted; *ullamh* appeared to be unknown to them. Grannd reports *deas* as the only word used for ‘ready’ in Islay, and shows that it is used in this sense over almost the whole of Argyll, apart from Cowal and one informant in Luing (Grannd 2000: 12-13 and Map 4). The meaning ‘finished’, which is expressed by *deas* in some dialects, is

643 Colonsay people are aware that *duilich*, not *doilich*, is the pronunciation elsewhere, and will sometimes use the form [du’lɪç] when speaking to non-locals.
644 *GOC* has only *diofar*, while *Dwelly* includes only *deifir.*
conveyed by rèidh (698, 699) [reˑ] in Colonsay Gaelic. Again, Grannd shows that the same holds true for Islay and the rest of southern Argyll (Grannd 2000: 23 and Map 21). Despite some similarity in semantic reference, rèidh is never used to mean ‘ready’ in Colonsay, as it is in Irish: a bheil thu rèidh? always means ‘have you finished?’

Just as the Inuit peoples notoriously (or allegedly) have a large number of words for ‘snow’, so Gaelic possesses many words for ‘sea’. In Colonsay, the most commonly used term is fairge (388) [fariːɡi],645 which in some other varieties implies ‘rough sea’ (Grannd 2000: 20). Muir, probably the most common word for ‘sea’ in Gaelic generally, is also used, as is cuan, referring particularly to the open Atlantic off the west coast of Colonsay.646 Sàil is also used, though less commonly.

The word used for ‘language’ is cainnt (142) [kɛɪɲd̥ˈz̥], rather than cànan: a’ chainnt a’ainn fhè’ [ə xiɛilp̥d̥z̥’ [aiɲ ‘he] ‘our own language’ (i.e. Gaelic). Elsewhere, cainnt has the closely related meaning ‘speech’. Cànan is known on Colonsay, but has a more literary ‘feel’ to it.

By far the most usual way of saying ‘I want’ in Colonsay is tha [...] a dhìth orm [ha [...] ə ‘iː orəm], which elsewhere has the meaning ‘I need’ or ‘I am lacking’: dè tha a dhìth ort? ‘what do you want?’; tha a dhìth orm a dhol ann ‘I want to go there’. But again, it is a matter of preference: tha mi ag iarraidh is also used.

The sense of ‘I can’ is most commonly expressed as théid agam air. In other dialects, this expression has a somewhat stronger meaning: ‘I can manage to’. The meaning ‘I could’ (either past or conditional) is normally rendered as rachadh agam air; the preterite form chaidh agam air implies ‘I managed to do it (despite difficulty)’. The standard Gaelic expression ’s urrainn dhomh is also very commonly used. Contrary to the statement by Grannd (2000: 27 and Map 27), the typically Islay forms mandaidh mi/cha mhand mi are not found in Colonsay.

645 Spelt fairrge in SGDS.
646 Iain a’ Chuain, held to be the progenitor of most of the McNeills on Colonsay, was so named because he was reputed to have been born in an open boat sailing from Barra to Colonsay (Loder 1935: 59).

The channel in The Strand, named on the OS map (and by Loder 1935: 406) as Abhainn a ’Chùirn is more likely to be Abhainn a’ Chuain, since it flows westwards towards the open ocean.
In most Gaelic dialects, *fan* is used with the meaning ‘stay, remain’, while *fuirich* may be used with this meaning, but also means ‘live, reside’. In Colonsay Gaelic, *fuirich* is little used, and *fan* ([fən]) (verbal noun *fantail* ([fəntəl’]))\(^647\) is used in all senses: *tha mi a’ fantail ann an Colbhasa* ‘I live on Colonsay’. (Cf. the use of ‘stay’, meaning ‘have one’s permanent residence’, in Scottish English: ‘Do you stay in Glasgow’).

The verb *coimhid* is widely used in Scottish Gaelic with the meaning ‘look, watch’. In Colonsay, although *coimhid* is also known (mainly in the sense of ‘observe’), the word normally used is *amhairc* ([ɛ’rɪç’]), with verbal noun *amharc* ([ɛ’rʌxɡ̥’]): *Bha mi ag amharc air a’ bhàta a’ tighinn a-staigh* ‘I was watching the boat coming in’.

(Note that metathesis has occurred in the way these forms are realised).\(^648\) The word *amhairc* is of course quite commonly found in other dialects, and in the literary and Biblical language, but outside Argyll it is not usually found as the standard word for ‘look’. The verb *seall* (vn *sealltainn*) ([ʃɛʊl`], [ʃɛʊl̥`ɪɲ]) is in common use as a synonym, as it is in other varieties.\(^649\) With the meaning ‘show’, however, *seall* is less commonly used; the preferred construction is *leig fhaicinn* (do), which is also found in other dialects.

The verb *ùisnich* (or *ùisinich*) [uˑʃɲiç : uˑʃɲiç] tends to be found for ‘use’ rather than *cleachd*, although *cleachdte ri* is standard for ‘used to, accustomed to’. As in most forms of Gaelic, the past habitual sense of ‘used to’ is conveyed either by *b’ àbhais*, or by the conditional tense: *bhithinn ag obair don Oighreachd* ‘I used to work for the Estate’.

Causation is commonly expressed in Gaelic using the construction *a chionn ’s gu* followed by the dependent form, or more straightforwardly by *oir*. In Colonsay, by far the commonest way of expressing ‘because’ is *chionn [çɔn’]* followed by the positive (i.e. non-dependent) form of the verb: *Chaidh sinn air ais do dh’Orasa,*

\(^647\) Cf. headword 412 (feith: feitheamh).

\(^648\) Metathesis must have intervened after the raising of [a] to [ɛ] before (now silent) *mh*. The accompanying glottalisation has either been retained from an earlier form *[ɛ’vəɾɡ̥’], or re-introduced before the sonorant [r].

The *SGDS* results for Colonsay give [ɡɛ’vəɾɡ̥] for *ag amharc* (36), although metathesised forms are recorded in Islay, Jura, and across a broad swathe of mainland Argyll, from Tarbert to Benderloch (*SGDS*, Vol.II:72).

\(^649\) The English word *watch* (vn *watchadh*) is also commonly used in a Gaelic context.
chionn bha mo mhàthair is mo bhràthair [...] a’ ñàghail Orasa ‘We went back to
Oronsay, because my mother and brother [...] were leaving Oronsay’. 650 (See Lamb
2008: 259). A chionn ’s gu may be used for greater emphasis, but sounds more
formal; air sgàth ’s gu is also found. I do not recall hearing anyone on Colonsay use
oir in normal speech.

‘When’ as a conjunction is regularly rendered as mar a [marə : məɾə]: mar a bha
mis’ as a’ sgoil ‘when I was at school’. The form nuair a is known and accepted (e.g.
in the line of a popular song: nuair a bha mi ann an Ìle), and might be used in
situations calling for particular emphasis and/or formality, but mar a is the normal
everyday expression.

Substitutionary choices

On the other hand, certain words are used on Colonsay to the exclusion of equivalent
terms used elsewhere. The veracity of this claim has been tested by the rough-and-
ready method of trying alternative forms on native Colonsay speakers, to see if they
are recognised. Of course, the fact that a given speaker does not recognise a
particular word, on a particular occasion, is no guarantee that the word in question is
not, or has not been, used by other speakers at other times. O’Rahilly sounds a word
of caution in this regard:

It is easy enough to say that a particular word is in use today in a
particular area; but to say that such and such a word is not in use in a
particular district may be risky, in view of the fact that the vocabulary
of most districts has as yet been imperfectly explored. (O’Rahilly
1988: 244)

In most varieties of Gaelic, the verb lorg can mean both ‘to seek’ and ‘to find’. In
Colonsay Gaelic, by contrast, lorg is not used as a verb, but only as a noun, with the
meaning ‘footprint’, 651 or more figuratively ‘trace’: fluair mi lorg air ‘I traced him’.

651 In this sense, it is found in the placename Lorg an Fhomhair (Loder 1935: 11 and Plate XVII).
The sense of ‘looking for’ something is usually conveyed by *rùraich* (vn *rùrach*) [ruːrɪç : ruːrax], which elsewhere has the narrower meaning ‘grop for, search for’: *tha mi a’ rùrach spàin* ‘I’m looking for a spoon’. The expression used for ‘finding’ something is *amais air* (vn *amas*) [ɛ’mɪʃ : ɛ’məʃ]: *an do dh’amais thu air?* ‘have you found it?’ As in other dialects, *faigh* can also be used: *fhuarir mi fon bhòrd* e ‘I found it under the table’.

The verb for ‘to feel’, in most varieties of Gaelic, is *fairich*, but in Colonsay, as in much of Argyll, the word used is *mothaich* (vn *mothachainn*) [moʔɪç : moʔoxɪɲ], which elsewhere has the meaning ‘notice, be aware of’: *a beil thu mothachainn an fhuachd?* ‘are you feeling cold?’. As in other dialects, *faigh* can also be used: *thà mi a’ mothachainn nas fhèarr a-nis* ‘I’m feeling better now’ (Cf. Grannd 2000: 18 and Map 13).

The verb *fàs*, in most varieties of Gaelic, has the primary meaning ‘grow’, and by extension means ‘become’. In Colonsay Gaelic, the meaning ‘grow’, whether predicated of plants or human beings, is conveyed by *cinn* (vn *cinntinn*) [k’iɲ : k’iɲ’d’z’iɲ], while *fàs* is used primarily to mean ‘become’: *tha ròs a’ cinntinn as a’ ghàrradh* ‘there is a rose growing in the garden’; *tha am patach sin a’ cinntinn gu luath* ‘that child is growing quickly’; *dh’fhàs e dorcha* ‘it became dark’. *Fàs* is found in the expression *tha e a’ fàs orm* ‘he’s growing on me’ (i.e. ‘I’m becoming used to him’). The sense of *fàs* as a noun (‘growth’) is conveyed by *cinneas* [k’iɲəs].

A notable feature of the Colonsay dialect is the form *drùin* (vn *drùnadh*) [ druˑɲ : druˑɲəy] for ‘close, shut’, which is also the form found in Islay. This appears to be a conflation of two forms: *dùin*, which is the word most commonly used in Gaelic, and *druid*, which is recorded in Kintyre and Arran (Grannd 2000: 34 and Map 41). On the other hand, *drùin* may reflect an independent development – an intermediate form, rather than a conflation.

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652 Holmer (1938: 205) asserts that *rùraich* is ‘a word peculiar to Islay’. Presumably he means with the general sense of ‘look for’, since it is quite commonly used elsewhere to mean ‘search’. In any case, he is wrong in his assertion: in addition to its prevalence in Colonsay, Jones (2009a: 268) reports the same usage in Jura.
The word *sguir* ‘stop, cease’ is not used in Colonsay, where the word used, in all cases, is *stad*.653

In common with much of Argyll, the word used for ‘barking’ (of a dog) is *tabhann* [tafean’], rather than *comhartaich* (Grannd 2000: 17-18 and Map 12).

The word *falt*, for ‘hair’, is understood on Colonsay, but the word actively used is *gruag* [q̥aɾaɡ]. Although the SGDS results for *falt* (392) show versions of *gruag* from a number of locations, notably in South Uist, Arran and Islay, the entry for Colonsay shows only [faʃd̥ː t]. Both *gruag* and *falt* refer to the mass of hair on the head; a single hair is *ribeag* [ribaɡ], which appears, as a phonetic correlate, in the SGDS entry for *rib* (703) ‘ensnare’.

The normal way of saying ‘maybe, perhaps’ in Colonsay is not *is dòcha*, but *cha lughaide* [xa ‘ʃy d’ʃi]: *cha lughaide gum faic mi e a-màireach* ‘maybe I’ll see him tomorrow’. Jones reports *cha lughaide* as the expression used in Jura (2009a: 245); Grannd (2000: 60; 1987:30) gives the phonetic form [ha føːtʃa] for Islay, but mistakenly interprets it as a reflex of *math dh’fhaodte*. The latter expression is used in Colonsay (397) [ʃmeʔe ‘ʃy d’ʃi’i], but with a more definite emphasis: *is math dh’fhaodte gu dubhart e sin* ‘he may well have said that’.

Where *is dòcha* is used, it is usually with the original meaning ‘probably, hopefully’: *is dòcha gun tig e a-màireach* ‘he’ll probably come tomorrow’. The noun *dòchas* is used for ‘hope’, but *tha mi’n dòchas* sounds rather a formal way of saying ‘I hope’; *tha fiughar orm*, or more idiomatically, *bidh fiughar orm* (since it refers to a future expectation) is the preferred form. In other varieties *tha fiughar orm (ri)* means ‘I am looking forward (to)’, rather than ‘I hope’.

Sometimes the wrong choice of word can cause misunderstanding or even offence. Words for ‘dying’ are a notoriously sensitive area in different Gaelic dialects. In Colonsay, as in many other parts of the Gàidhealtacht, the verb *bàsaich* is applied only to animals, and is considered offensive if used of humans. The word for ‘die’ in a human context is *siubhail* [ʃiʔol̥] (literally ‘to travel’, i.e. ‘to pass on’): *siubhail e*

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653 Conversation with Niall Brown, 10 July 2017.
an-uïridh ‘he died last year’. Siubhail is also used in a non-figurative sense, meaning ‘walk’; siubhal a’ chladaich ‘walking the shoreline, beachcombing’ (see Alexander 2017: 67-68). The loanword travel [treval]’ is also used, with its verbal noun traveladh [treval’ăv] thoroughly assimilated to the South Argyll phonetic environment, as if spelt *tramhladh (cf. samhradh, damhsadh).654

Expressions of time

The English word ‘time’ can be translated into Gaelic in many different ways. Time as a quantifiable substance is most frequently expressed by ùine.655 A particular point in time, an occasion, is expressed as àm (33) [ɛm’]: aig aon àm ‘at one time’; tha an t-àm ann dhuit a bhith falbh dhachaigh ‘it’s time you were going home’. Àm can also denote a recurring point in time, such as ‘time of year’: àm na Nollaig ‘Christmas time’; àm breith nan uan ‘lambing time’. Colonsay usage, in this respect, does not differ greatly from that of other Gaelic dialects, although the pronunciation does.

An indefinite point in time is expressed as uair: gach uair a chì mi thig ‘every time I see you’. In Colonsay, this sense can also be expressed with the word troth [tro]: a h-uile troth a thigeadh e ‘every time he came’. It is possible that troth derives from tràth ‘season, time’. Jones records tròth (with long ò), used in the same sense, in Jura (2009a: 274).

As in other dialects, uair can be used to denote ‘once’, as in uair no dìthist ‘once or twice’ (see below). It is also used with its primary meaning ‘hour’, where other varieties would further specify this meaning as uair an uaireadair, uair a thìde.656 (The words tide, tim are not found in Colonsay).657 As in other varieties of Gaelic, uair also means ‘one o’clock’, while other hours are expressed as dà uair, trí uairean, etc. Dà uair dheug ‘twelve o’clock’ is pronounced [də’ re’q].

654 I have resisted the spelling *treabhaltreabhaladh (cf. treabhaileár in Murchison 1988: xxix) because this would imply glottalisation of [v], which is not the case. Jones transcribes the same word as tràbhaileadh [tɾɛʔvələɣ] (with glottalisation) in his Jura extracts.
655 A standard Colonsay greeting, to returning natives or regular visitors, is Dè’n ùine a th’ agad? ‘How long are you here for?’
656 Uair an uaireadair might be used in case of ambiguity, to specify what sense of uair is intended.
657 An tide is, of course, phonetically identical to an t-side, meaning ‘the weather’.

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The word for ‘now’, a-nis, is generally pronounced [(ə) ‘niʃ], although [(ə) ‘niʃ] is also heard, and is felt to be more ‘correct’. The word most frequently heard for ‘at present, just now’ is an ceartuair [ŋ ‘qʰaɾ乾隆]. This is used in preference to an dràsta, which is, however, readily understood by Colonsay speakers. ‘Soon’ is expressed as gun dàil [gun ‘dəi]; a dh’aithghearr is not used.

**Numerals**

The cardinal numerals aon, dà, trí, etc. are used in this dialect in much the same way as in other varieties of Gaelic. The form sè, not *sia, is used for ‘six’, reflecting the fact that ‘original long ē’ is generally not ‘broken’ in this dialect (Jackson 1968; see p. 99). For the same reason, deug (308) ‘teen’ is pronounced [d̥'z̥'ɡ̥ˑ], not *[d̥'z̥'iaɡ̥]. As is usual in Gaelic, the particle a is used when counting: a h-aon, a dhà, a trí, etc. (Cox 2011).

Ordinal numerals, likewise, are the same as in other varieties: a’ chiad,658 dàrna, treas, etc. Ceathramh, in addition to meaning ‘fourth’, is used for ‘quarter’ in all senses, including telling the time, where other varieties would use cairteal: ceathramh gu trí ‘quarter to three’. This reflects widespread usage in Argyll.

Collective numerals are scarcely used. Only dìthist ‘two’ occurs in this dialect,659 and it can be used for either persons or objects, whereas in most Gaelic dialects it is used only of persons. Uair no dìthist is the way of saying ‘once or twice’. The remaining collective numerals triùir, ceathrar, etc. are not found – despite the fact that ceathrar (176) appears in the SGDS results. As in other Argyll (and Perthshire) dialects, the cardinal form (a) h-aon (49) [hɤ̞ŋ] is used for ‘one’ where certain other dialects would use aonan or simply aon (for details, see Cox 2011). ‘One’ in a negative or interrogative context is generally expressed by gin: cha robh gin air fhàgail ‘there was not one (none) left’; a bheil gin agad? ‘have you got one?’. Gin is also used in the expression a h-uile gin aca/dhiucha ‘every one of them’.

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658 A’ chiad, or as he spells it, a’ cheud (cf. SGDS headword ceud (182) [ʧiəd]) is the only one of Jackson’s eight key words to be ‘broken’ in this dialect (Jackson 1968: 66, 70).
659 Holmer reports the same usage in Kintyre (1981: 87).
Intensifiers

The use of intensifiers in this dialect shows some interesting divergences from standard Gaelic practice. The most commonly used word for ‘very’ is *fiadhaich* [fɪʔiça], as in *fiadhaich math* ‘very good’. An alternative, with a positive connotation, is *anabarrach* [ɛ’naɾə], while in a negative context, *garbh* [ɡəɾə] may be used: *Chan eil mi garbh cinnteach* ‘I’m not very sure’.\(^{660}\) For a stronger degree of intensity, *fuasach* (fuathasach) [fəʔasax] or *uamharra* [uəɾə] ‘terribly’ may be used: *bha sin fuasach doirbh* ‘that was terribly difficult’, *tha mi uamharra sgìth* ‘I’m awfully tired’. *Uabhasach* tends not to be used as a modifier, but as an adjective in its own right, meaning ‘terrible’. The ultimate degree of intensity is conveyed by *diabhlaidh* [dəʔiːlə] : *tha i diabhlaidh fuar* ‘it’s hellish (lit. devilish) cold’.

*Glè*, which is used elsewhere for ‘very’, has the attenuated meaning ‘quite’ in Colonsay. Thus *glè mhath* [ɡə’vɛ] means, not ‘very good’, but merely ‘quite good’.\(^{661}\) Cf. English ‘that’s all very well (but)’.

The sense of ‘too’ as an intensifier is conveyed by *mòs* (from *mò* ‘greater than’): *mòs anmoch* ‘too late’ [məs ’enəmə]. *Tuillidh* is [tulıç əs] is also commonly used. *Ro* in this sense is understood, but not actively used. ‘Too much’ is expressed by *tuillidh ’s a chòir* [tulıç sə ’kəɾ]; the word *cus* is unknown in Colonsay. ‘Nothing’ (or indeed ‘anything’) is usually expressed as *mir* [miɾ], rather than *dad or càil: cha robh mir ann* ‘there was nothing there’; *a bheil mir air fhàgail*? ‘is there anything left?’

As in other dialects, the sense of ‘a bit’, modifying an adjective, is conveyed by *car/ caran* or *rud beag*: *tha sin car neònach* ‘that’s a bit strange’; *tha mi rud beag sgìth* ‘I’m a little tired’.

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\(^{660}\) Interview with Mary Ann MacAllister, 27 August 2009.

\(^{661}\) Niall Brown (interview, 7 December 2016), having used the expression *glè bheag*, felt compelled to gloss it (in English) by saying ‘Glè meaning “very”, more than “a wee bit”, like in Colonsay’. He also told me that the old ‘aunties’ in Colonsay, when told about new-fangled mainland ways, would respond, unimpressed, with *Oh? Tha sin glè ghasda* (‘Oh? that’s quite nice’).
The influence of English

All varieties of Gaelic make copious use of English expressions, although in more formal registers, such as sermons and written prose, a conscious effort is usually made to avoid the more obvious borrowings (Lamb 2008: 143-145).

Throughout the development of prose writings in the 19th and 20th centuries there is considerable evidence of resistance to borrowing in ‘serious’ writing […] and it certainly obscures the extent to which borrowing has developed in the spoken language during that time. (Macaulay 1982: 210).

In ordinary conversation among native Gaelic speakers, no such effort is normally made, nor is there generally felt to be any need for it. Nowadays, virtually all Gaelic speakers are equally fluent in English, in most cases will have been educated through the medium of English, and generally receive almost all their information (other than purely local or family news) from English sources. This means that for many concepts, especially those relating to technical or scientific subjects, but also including sport and politics, the English word is regarded as the appropriate term to use, and there is no perceived need to translate it into Gaelic merely for purposes of communication. That said, many Gaelic speakers are acutely aware that this practice represents an impoverishment of their language, and may, in more reflective mood, seek to find a more idiomatic way of expressing such concepts in Gaelic (Dorian 2010: 96-98).

Non-Gaelic speakers are quick to point to the use of English loanwords, for example in news broadcasts, as evidence of the perceived inability of the language to express modern or complicated concepts. Such broadcasts, although primarily intended for Gaelic speakers, are of course readily available to a wider audience, and words such

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662 Attitudes towards borrowing naturally vary from person to person, and from one speech community to another.
663 Although Gaelic-medium education has made great advances in the past 20 years, it is still not available on Colonsay, and was not even thought of when the present generation of Gaelic speakers there were at school.
664 As expressed to me by the late Katie Brown (Ceitidh Cholla), ‘We can usually find a way of saying it’. (Personal conversation, c.1973)
as *helicopter, computer* or indeed *Brexit* tend to leap out as recognisable items amid a mass of otherwise unintelligible discourse. Such dismissive reactions on the part of monoglot English speakers fail to appreciate that (1) native Gaelic speakers find such occasional use of English terms quite unremarkable, and (2) all languages throughout history have borrowed heavily from other languages, with English being a prime example.\(^{665}\) The words *Helikopter, Computer* and *Brexit* are just as likely to feature in a news bulletin in German (and *mutatis mutandis* in many other languages) without anyone seriously suggesting that the German language is incapable of expressing modern or complicated concepts.

Gaelic speakers on Colonsay, as in other parts of the *Gàidhealtachd*, are adept at ‘code-switching’ between Gaelic and English (Cram 1986: 126-127). Within the local community, *diglossia* is the norm: certain situations will call for the use of English, whereas Gaelic will normally be used in other contexts. As the numbers of Gaelic speakers decline, its use is increasingly confined to the home environment, and even there it can be used only with a few individuals. As in most parts of the Highlands, it has long been considered the height of rudeness to converse in Gaelic when non-Gaelic speakers are present; if a monoglot English speaker joins the company, conversation will automatically shift from Gaelic to English. It goes without saying that this deeply-ingrained expression of native courtesy has helped to hasten the decline of the language.

Even in the context of a Gaelic conversation, speakers are quite likely to switch to English and back again, perhaps to express a concept for which no Gaelic equivalent is readily available, or because a particular phrase in English is felt to convey the right nuance of meaning. Often the conversation will then continue in the other language for a few sentences before switching back again. This is a common enough phenomenon in cases where the participants in a conversation are thoroughly

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\(^{665}\) Attempts have of course been made, by institutions such as the *Académie Française*, to eliminate foreign borrowings, but in practice these have been largely unsuccessful. Only Icelandic, among European languages, has consistently produced native equivalents for most innovative concepts (Bandle *et al* (eds) 2002: 1560).
bilingual, whatever the languages concerned may be. In two recent papers, Smith-Christmas (2013, 2014) analyses the (largely subconscious) motivation underlying code-switching, and in particular how it may be used as a means of taking a particular ‘stance’ in a conversation, rather than just supplying expressions for which no Gaelic equivalent can be found.

Commercial operations such as the shop, post office and hotel must originally have been regarded as ‘foreign imports’ in a society traditionally dependent on estate work, farming and crofting. It is therefore not surprising that these continue to be referred to using English words. Colonsay speakers are familiar with the word **bùth**, and will use it when making an effort to use genuine Gaelic words, but the preferred expression is **siop** [ʃɔhɔ], complete with preaspiration to show how fully it has been integrated into the Gaelic phonological system. **Oifis a’ Phuist** may at one time have appeared on the sign outside Colonsay Post Office, but local Gaelic speakers invariably say **Tha mi dol don Phost Office** [ha mi ˈdo ˈʃɔn foˈʃɔfis] with lenited p, and the stress firmly on the second syllable of **Post Office**. Similarly they will say **Bha mi as a’ Hotel** [va mi ə hoˈtɛl], although the word **taigh-òsta** is known. On the other hand, **taigh-seinns** [tə ʃɛɪn] (from obsolete English ‘change-house’), is – or was – used for ‘the pub’; perhaps it was seen as less of an alien imposition, despite being an integral part of the hotel itself. **Bàr** is also commonly used.

A kettle, in its modern guise, must at one time have been an innovation on the island, which is perhaps why the word used is **ceatal** [kɛʰdɔl], rather than the native-born **coire**, which is found in other dialects. Again, the phonetic realisation has been assimilated to the Gaelic phonological system, with initial palatalisation and medial preaspiration, suggesting that the borrowing dates from a period when Gaelic was the near-universal medium of communication on the island, and English was spoken using Gaelic speech sounds. Grannd (2000:15 and Map 8), citing a Colonsay

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666 This is borne out by my own experience of working as a conference interpreter, where conversations with colleagues would regularly move backwards and forwards between languages. 667 Interview with Flora Macneill, 23 May 2009: ‘... don bhùth, ach ’se siop a tha sinne ag ràdh an seo.’ **Bùth** derives from English ‘booth’, but is now firmly naturalised in Gaelic. Loder’s list of placenames includes **Bùth Beag**, translated as ‘little hut’ (Loder 1935: 413). 668 Interview with John Clark, 27 May 2009.
informant among others,\textsuperscript{669} shows that \textit{ceatal} is the normal word for ‘kettle’ throughout Argyll, apart from a handful of locations in Mid-Argyll. Against this, \textit{SGDS} (235-237) shows [kō’ɾi : ka’ɾi] for Colonsay, but forms of \textit{ceatal} in other parts of Argyll (and Perthshire). This reflects the fact that \textit{coire} is used in Colonsay, as elsewhere, to mean ‘cauldron’ (and by extension, a ‘corrie’ i.e. a rounded hollow on a hillside),\textsuperscript{670} but not as the normal word for ‘kettle’. The same distinction is found in Irish, between \textit{coire} ‘cauldron, pot’ and \textit{citeal} ‘kettle’ (Ó Baoill 1978: 76).

Although Colonsay has experienced three full centuries of non-native land ownership, first under the McNeills and then the Strathconas, the concept of a \textit{laird} [lɛˑɹd] is evidently still sufficiently ‘foreign’ to be rendered in its English (Scots) form. In this case, however, there is no phonetic assimilation: \textit{r} is realised as a slightly retroflex approximant, rather than with accompanying frication, as in \textit{àrd} [aˑɾd],\textsuperscript{671} and there is no final devoicing of [d]. The word \textit{uachdar} is also used, but less frequently. The Estate, on the other hand, which still dominates economic life on the island to a considerable extent, is always known as \textit{an Oighreachd} [n ʋiˑɾəxə].

Other English borrowings appear to be fairly random. The verb \textit{play} [pleˑ] is frequently used, alongside \textit{cluich: an robh thu playadh golf? ‘Were you playing golf?’ Spell [sɾɛˑl]’ is generally preferred to \textit{litrich: bidh iad a’ spelladh Colbhasa le bh ann ‘they spell Colbhasa with a bh in it’}.\textsuperscript{672} One of the most basic human emotions, \textit{anger} [aŋəɾ], is expressed using an English word, without phonetic adjustment, but assimilated to the syntax of a Gaelic masculine noun: \textit{thànaig an t-anger air} ‘he became angry’; \textit{tha sin a’ cur anger orm} ‘that makes me angry’.\textsuperscript{673} The word for ‘job’ may be \textit{obair}, but is just as likely to be expressed as \textit{job} [d̥zəbʰ], perhaps in an attempt to reflect the distinction in English between ‘job’ and ‘work’.

\textsuperscript{669} Neil Darroch, who lived in \textit{An t-Sràid Cham} (Squint Street), Scalasaig. See McPhee 1972: 81-84.
\textsuperscript{670} As in other varieties, \textit{coire} [kɾi] means ‘fault, blame’.
\textsuperscript{671} \textit{SGDS} (55, 56) gives the transcription [aˑɾd] / aˑʴs, but for reasons already stated (pp. 84, 87), I prefer to transcribe this and similar words using [ɾd].
\textsuperscript{672} Dougie MacGillvary (BBC interview, 9 December 1998), referring to the long-standing controversy among locals over the spelling of Colbhasa/Colasa.
\textsuperscript{673} Professor William Gillies suggested there might be some crossover with \textit{àmhghar}. 

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Sometimes a word which is no longer commonly used in English becomes ‘fossilised’ in Gaelic. This is the case for *droil* [drol’], from English ‘droll’, which in English is now reserved for a particular type of humour, but in Colonsay Gaelic is used with the more generalised meaning ‘funny’ (either ‘amusing’ or ‘odd’), alongside the native form *èibhinn*. The expression *tha e gam chur droil* means ‘it’s driving me crazy’.
Discourse markers

Discourse markers such as *well* and *so* introducing sentences or clauses are now so universally naturalised in day-to-day Gaelic speech that few Gaelic speakers would even recognise them as non-native terms. Similarly, words such as *aye* and *right* are frequently used, especially in a conversational context, to indicate assent. In Colonsay Gaelic, a number of other expressions are likewise used quite naturally in ordinary discourse without necessarily being regarded as ‘foreign imports’. These include *all right* and the ubiquitous *OK*, which are both encountered very frequently in Gaelic conversation, although *ceart gu leòr* is also frequently used. On the other hand, the common discourse markers *you see* and *you know* are only rarely heard in their English forms, *fhaic thu* [ɛçgˈo]674 and *fhios a’ad* [isaɾ] being much more common. (See Smith-Christmas (2016) for a detailed analysis of the use of Gaelic/English discourse markers.)

In similar vein, *really* [ɾiəɾiˈiː : riɾiˈiː] is used to highlight or qualify a statement, often with strong emphasis: *chan eil really* [xa neˈlɛɾiɾiˈiː] ‘not really’. The equivalent native expression *da-riribh* [daˈriɾiβ] is also used.

More surprising is the frequent use of *still* [sðəlˈ], where the Gaelic synonym *fhathast* is readily available: *tha’n t-uisge still garbh* ‘the rain is still fierce’.675 *Fhathast* is also found with the same meaning, and is invariably used with a negative or interrogative construction, where English would use ‘yet’: *cha do stad e fhathast* ‘it hasn’t stopped yet’. It may be that the use of *still* is an attempt by bilingual speakers to introduce the ‘still/yet’ distinction found in English, when speaking Gaelic.

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674 Jones (2009a: 176) gives *fhaic thu* as the imperative form of *faic*.
675 Interview with Jessie McNeill and Mary O’Mahoney, 11 November 2011.
Personal names

Until the 1980s, MacNeill (various spellings) and MacAllister were the commonest surnames on Colonsay. Bearers of these names, and others, were therefore more likely to be referred to by a nickname or to-name in all but the most formal circumstances. Such naming strategies are common in most Gaelic-speaking communities in Scotland, especially in areas where, for historical reasons, certain surnames are dominant.

Many of these local designations persist to this day, in spite of the shift from Gaelic to English as the day-to-day language of the island. They fall into a number of categories.

A common naming technique was to identify a child by the name of his/her father, and in some cases grandfather. Thus Mary Rutherford (1947-1992), the daughter of Calum MacAllister, who in turn was the son of Coll MacAllister, was known as Màiri Chaluim Cholla;676 for similar reasons, my grandmother Mary Scouller (née MacNeill) was known in her early years as Màiri Chaluim Alasdair. Donald, son of Gilbert McNeill, was known as Dòmhnall Ghibi (and in English as ‘Donald Gibbie’). Duncan, son of Sandy MacAllister, is known as Donnchadh Shandaidh ‘Duncan Sandy’. Occasionally a child might be called by the name of his/her mother, as in the case of Alasdair Annie (Alasdair McNeill).677

Another frequent naming strategy was to identify a person by the name of his or her farm or croft. This was particularly useful at a time when about half the farms on the island were tenanted by members of the same extended family of MacNeills. Donald MacNeill (1924-1995), the tenant of Garvard Farm, was known as Dòmhnall a’ Gharbhaid ‘Donald Garvard’.678 His brother-in-law Andrew MacNeill (1916-1997), who farmed on Oronsay, was Anndra Orasa ‘Andrew Oronsay’ 679 Their cousin Alasdair (1933-2001), who farmed at Machrins, was Alasdair na Machraichean. It is

677 Many visitors to Colonsay know Alister Annie’s [sic] as the name of a cottage in Kilchattan, without realising that it commemorates a living person.
678 See Scouller 1998: 7. The older generation tended to call him Domhnall Orasa, after the island where he was born and brought up.
679 In later life, however, they tended to be called ‘D.A.’ and ‘A.S’ respectively.
worth noting, from a linguistic point of view, that these nicknames illustrate the Colonsay forms of the genitive case, which in many instances is the same as the nominative (see pp. 318-322). Other family members are also commonly referred to by the toponym, even when they have long since left the family home: Seònaid na Machraichean ‘Jessie Machrins’, Ceit a’ Gharbhraid ‘Kate Garvard’.

Calling people after the name of their croft was less common, but the Martin family, who worked the croft of Gortain (An Goirtean), in Upper Kilchattan in the first half of the twentieth century, were known as Màiri Ghoirtean, Niall a’ Ghoirtean, etc. A crofter of a younger generation, who died young, Iain MacKinnon (1947-1984), is still fondly remembered as ‘Seaview’, the name of his croft in Lower Kilchattan.

Adjectives, as might be expected, feature in the nicknames or to-names by which people are known. At one time, hair colour seems to have been an important determinant: two McNeill brothers, born around the turn of the nineteenth century, were known as Calum Ruadh ‘red-haired Malcolm’ and Donnchadh Bàn ‘fair-haired Duncan’ respectively. What is more unexpected is that the to-name Bàn persisted into the next generation, although it is not known whether all Donnchadh’s children were in fact fair-haired. Other physical features might be used: Peter Macneill, the father of ‘Andrew Oronsay’ (see above) was known as Para Caol ‘thin Peter’, to distinguish him from his kinsman Para Mòr ‘big Peter’. In more recent times, the same cognomen Para Mòr ‘Big Peter’ was used to designate the piermaster Peter McAllister (1930-1990), mainly on account of his heavy build, but also in recognition of his leading role in the community (Alexander 2017: 15-16).

On the other hand, the adjective beag does not necessarily reflect small stature, but is applied in situations where a child is given the same name as a parent, corresponding to the use of ‘junior’ in English. This naming convention is maintained in English forms of names, using the word ‘wee’. Thus Màiri Chaluim Cholla (see above) was also known, especially in adult life, as Màiri Bheag ‘wee Mary’, because her mother was also Mary; Angus McFadyen, the son of the one-time postmaster Aonghas am Post ‘Angus the Post’ is known as Aonghas Beag ‘wee Angus’, and his nephew Donald MacAllister as ‘wee Donald’, for the same reason, although neither of them
is particularly short. As an example of how nicknames can persist, Donald MacNeill, the son of ‘Donald Garvard’ (see above) was referred to in early childhood as ‘peedie Donald’ by a nurse from Orkney (‘peedie’ being the Orcadian word for ‘small’); now in his sixties, and around six feet tall, he is still universally known on the island as ‘Pedie’.
Lexical comparisons with other Argyll island dialects

The lexical features described here place Colonsay in the context of southern Argyll dialects. Many of them are shared with neighbouring islands, especially Islay and Jura. It will therefore be useful to situate Colonsay in its wider context by setting out a comparative table showing corresponding forms for Islay, Jura and, more distantly, Tiree. This comparison is based principally on the findings of Jones (Jura), Grannd (Islay), Holmer (Islay) and Boyd (Tiree), supplemented as appropriate with entries from the relevant SGDS results.

Where a number is shown in round brackets ( ) the entry is copied from the SGDS results. In the case of Islay, Point 55 (Bowmore) has been chosen as the point of reference, being the most central location on the island. In the case of Jura, Point 52 (Craighouse) has been chosen.

Entries marked (H) are copied from Holmer (1938).

Entries in *italics* for Jura and Tiree are copied from Grannd (2000), and have not been independently verified.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colonsay</th>
<th>Jura</th>
<th>Islay</th>
<th>Tiree</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abair</td>
<td>abair</td>
<td>abair</td>
<td>abair</td>
<td>say</td>
<td>Not *can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amharc</td>
<td>amharc [ɛ?rəx]</td>
<td>amharc [ɛrəx]</td>
<td>sealltaiann</td>
<td>looking</td>
<td>Grannd does not show glottalisation in Islay transcription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sealltaiann</td>
<td></td>
<td>(SGDS: [ɡe’rəx])</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an ceartuair</td>
<td>an ceartair/ an dràsda</td>
<td>an ceartair</td>
<td></td>
<td>just now</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an creutair!</td>
<td>an Criosdàidh bochd!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>poor thing!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bainntreach</td>
<td>baintreach/ banntrach</td>
<td>[ŋɛŋ&lt;’d’z’rəx] (77)</td>
<td>bainnteareach</td>
<td>widow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ceatal</td>
<td>ceatal</td>
<td>ceatal</td>
<td>ceatal</td>
<td>kettle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ceathramh</td>
<td>ceathramh</td>
<td>ceathramh</td>
<td>ceathramh</td>
<td>quarter (hour)</td>
<td>Not *cairteal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ceidhe</td>
<td>ceidhe (H)</td>
<td>ceidhe</td>
<td>ceidhe</td>
<td>pier</td>
<td>Not *cidhe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cha lughaide</td>
<td>cha lughaide</td>
<td>[ŋɛlːtʃə]; cha lughaide (H)</td>
<td></td>
<td>perhaps, maybe</td>
<td>Grannd (2000: 60) interprets Islay form as math dh’fhaoidte.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chan fhacaig</td>
<td>nach fhacaig</td>
<td>chan fhaca (H)</td>
<td>chan fhacaig</td>
<td>did not see</td>
<td>Alone or before vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chualaig</td>
<td>chualaig</td>
<td>cha chuala (H)</td>
<td>chualaig</td>
<td>heard</td>
<td>Alone or before vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ciamar</td>
<td>[t’ɛ’mar]</td>
<td>deamar</td>
<td>dé mar</td>
<td>dè mar</td>
<td>how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clis (luath)</td>
<td>luath</td>
<td>clis</td>
<td></td>
<td>quick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cneasda</td>
<td>cneasda</td>
<td>cneasda (H)</td>
<td></td>
<td>pleasant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cnò [kruʔu]</td>
<td>enumha</td>
<td>[krʊ̃a] (212)</td>
<td>[kr̥ː] (212)</td>
<td>nut</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collainn</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collainn</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collainn/Callainn</strong></td>
<td><strong>[ko'liɲ] (143)</strong></td>
<td><strong>New Year's Eve</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>copan</strong></td>
<td><strong>copan</strong></td>
<td><strong>cupan/copan</strong></td>
<td><strong>[kuɸə] (290)</strong></td>
<td><strong>cup</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cosmhal</strong></td>
<td><strong>cosail</strong></td>
<td><strong>coltach</strong></td>
<td><strong>like, similar</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>wear away</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>creic (reic)</strong></td>
<td><strong>creic/reic</strong></td>
<td><strong>creic/reic (252, 696/697)</strong></td>
<td><strong>sell</strong></td>
<td>SGDS Point 55 (Bowmore) does not show <em>reic.</em> Other Islay locations do.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>crùban</strong></td>
<td><strong>crùban</strong></td>
<td><strong>crùban</strong></td>
<td><strong>crùban</strong></td>
<td><strong>edible crab</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>damhsadh</strong></td>
<td><strong>damhsadh</strong></td>
<td><strong>damhsadh</strong></td>
<td><strong>crùban</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>dèanadh</strong></td>
<td><strong>[dʑ'ɛ ɲa̯] (302)</strong></td>
<td><strong>[dʑ'ɛ ɲa̯] (302)</strong></td>
<td><strong>dèanadh</strong></td>
<td><strong>doing, making</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>deas</strong></td>
<td><strong>deas</strong></td>
<td><strong>deas</strong></td>
<td><strong>deas</strong></td>
<td><strong>ready</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>deifir</strong></td>
<td><strong>deifir</strong></td>
<td><strong>deifir</strong></td>
<td><strong>cabhag</strong></td>
<td><strong>hurry</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Didaoirn</strong></td>
<td><strong>Didaoirne</strong></td>
<td><strong>Di-Daoin (H)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Thursday</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>diofar [dɨfəɾ]</strong></td>
<td><strong>diofar [dɨfəɾ]</strong></td>
<td><strong>differ [tɨfəɾ] (H)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>difference</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>dithist</strong></td>
<td><strong>dithist</strong></td>
<td><strong>dithisd (H)</strong></td>
<td><strong>dithist</strong></td>
<td><strong>two, a pair</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>doirbh</strong></td>
<td><strong>doirbh</strong></td>
<td><strong>doirbh</strong></td>
<td><strong>dulich</strong></td>
<td><strong>difficult</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>dorasd</strong></td>
<td><strong>dorus(d) (H)</strong></td>
<td><strong>dorast</strong></td>
<td><strong>door</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>droil</strong></td>
<td><strong>droil</strong></td>
<td><strong>droll (H)</strong></td>
<td><strong>droll</strong>*</td>
<td><strong>funny, odd</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>drùin</strong></td>
<td><strong>druid/drùin</strong></td>
<td><strong>drùin</strong></td>
<td><strong>düin</strong></td>
<td><strong>close, shut</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>eigheanntach</strong></td>
<td><strong>eidheantach</strong></td>
<td><strong>eigheanntach</strong></td>
<td><strong>deigheannach</strong></td>
<td><strong>ice</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>fantail</strong></td>
<td><strong>fantail</strong></td>
<td><strong>fantail</strong></td>
<td><strong>fantail</strong></td>
<td><strong>staying, living</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- **Collainn/Callainn** (143)
- Pronounced [dɛvəsəɣ]
<p>| <strong>faoileann</strong> | faolain [sic] | faoileann/faoileag (H) | faoileann | seagull |
| <strong>faotainn</strong> | faotainn | faotainn (H) | faotainn | getting |
| <strong>fiadhach</strong> | fiadhach | fiadhach (H) | | very, terribly |
| <strong>figheadair/damhan-allaidh</strong> | damhan-allaidh | damhan allaidh (H) | figheadair | spider |
| <strong>fiughair</strong> | fiughair | fiughair | | hope |
| <strong>foidhe</strong> | foidhe | foidh (H) | foidhe | under him/it |
| <strong>fóithe</strong> | fóithe | fóipe (H) | | under her/it |
| <strong>folbh</strong> | folbh/falbh | falbh [fɔlav] (H) | folbh | leave, go away | Usually spelt falbh |
| <strong>fua(th)sach</strong> | fuathasach | fuathasach | folbh | terribly, awfully |
| <strong>gaoith</strong> | gaoith | gaoth/gaoith (H) | | wind |
| <strong>gasta</strong> | gusta | gasda (H) | | fine, great |
| <strong>glaodhaich</strong> | glaodhaich | glaodhach/-aich | glaodhaich | call |
| <strong>gruag</strong> | falt/gruag | gruag | [fɔl̥tj] (392) | hair |
| <strong>gun dàil</strong> | gun dàil | | gun dàil | soon |
| <strong>ladhar (òrdag)</strong> | ladhar | ladhar | òrdag | toe | Òrdag means 'big toe' in Colonsay. |
| <strong>làmh ri</strong> | làmh ri | làmh ri (H) | làmh ri | beside |
| <strong>leac [lɛxɔ]</strong> | sleac [slɛxɔ] | lioc | | flat stone |
| <strong>leamsa [lɛməsɔ]</strong> | leamsa [lɛməsɔ] | leam[ə]sa | | with me |
| <strong>leathrach</strong> | leathrach | | | leather |
| <strong>maidinn</strong> | madainn/maidinn | maidinn | madainn | morning |
| <strong>manadh</strong> | manadh | manadh | tamhasg | ghost |
| <strong>mar a</strong> | ona | mar a | mar a | when (conj.) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>miomhail</th>
<th>miomhail</th>
<th>badly behaved</th>
<th>From mi-mhodhail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mir</td>
<td>mir (stuth)</td>
<td>stuth</td>
<td>anything, nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mughairne</td>
<td>mughairn</td>
<td>mughairle (46)</td>
<td>aobrann (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>olann</td>
<td>olann</td>
<td>olann</td>
<td>clòimh (203)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>òrd</td>
<td>òrd</td>
<td>geannaire</td>
<td>òrd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patach</td>
<td>patach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>piocach</td>
<td>pioca(i)ch</td>
<td>piocach (H)</td>
<td>piocach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>putan</td>
<td>putan</td>
<td>cneap</td>
<td>butan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rallsa</td>
<td>[ræl’sæ] (685)</td>
<td>[r’æl’sæ] (685)</td>
<td>rásal</td>
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<tr>
<td>reidh</td>
<td>rëidh</td>
<td>reidh</td>
<td>ullamh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>riumsa</td>
<td>riumsa</td>
<td>rium[ə]sa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rūraich</td>
<td>rūraich</td>
<td>rūraich (H)</td>
<td>siubhail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>side</td>
<td>uair</td>
<td>airmir (H)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>siubhail</td>
<td>siubhail</td>
<td>siubhail</td>
<td>siubhail</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soirbh</td>
<td>soirbh</td>
<td>soirbh</td>
<td>furasda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solas(d)</td>
<td>solast</td>
<td>solus(t) (H)</td>
<td>solast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sràid</td>
<td>sràid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>steirneal</td>
<td>steirneal</td>
<td>stearnal (H)</td>
<td>stèarnal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tabaid</td>
<td>tabaid</td>
<td>tabaid</td>
<td>tabaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thèid agam air/ is urrain dhomh</td>
<td>is urrainn dhomh (mandaidh mi)</td>
<td>mandaidh mi</td>
<td>I can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toiridh-trèan</td>
<td>tarbh-treun</td>
<td>corncrake</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>troth</td>
<td>tròth</td>
<td>time, occasion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>truinsear</td>
<td>flat [fleht]</td>
<td>flat</td>
<td>flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>saucer</td>
<td></td>
<td>saucer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uamharra</td>
<td>uamharra(idh)</td>
<td>terribly, awfully</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ùis(i)nich</td>
<td>ùisnich</td>
<td>use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>urball</td>
<td>urball</td>
<td>tail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSION

This thesis has sought to describe the particular form of Gaelic which, until the last quarter of the 20th century, was the local vernacular spoken by most people on Colonsay. In Chapter 1, I have outlined the social and demographic changes that have taken place in the last forty years, leading to a situation in which Gaelic is now spoken by only a handful of people on the island.

In Chapter 2, I have examined the phonological structure of the dialect, highlighting those features where Colonsay pronunciation differs from that of other varieties of Gaelic. This has enabled me to set out the phonemic system of this particular dialect, and to list the phonemes individually, along with their allophones and variant forms, where appropriate.

Among the more notable phonological features identified are the following:

- ‘unbroken’ long [ɛˑ] in words such as feur, sè (for sia), déanadh (Jackson 1968);
- the ‘raising’ of [a] to [ɛ] in contact with a nasal consonant, as in math, àm, fantail;
- ‘fronting’ and ‘rounding’ of unrounded back vowels [ɯ ɤ] to give a single phoneme /ɬ/, realised across the range [y ɣ ø];
- the articulation of final -idh/-igh as [iç];
- a single vibrant phoneme /ɬ/ where other varieties distinguish /r/ and /ɬ/;
- no palatalisation or ‘j-glide’ after labial consonants.

Many of these features are also present, to a greater or lesser extent, in the Gaelic spoken in neighbouring districts. Colonsay therefore sits firmly in the context of South Argyll dialects. This term, which appears to have been first used by Jones, includes the dialects of Islay, Jura, Colonsay, Gigha, and Kintyre, as well as Arran (which does not form part of the historical county of Argyll). Following the work of

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680 Jones 2006 (in Gaelic: ceann a deas Earra Ghàidheal); 2009a (in English).
Holmer (1938, 1957, 1981), Grannd (2000) and Jones (2009a), the completion of the present study means that we now have monographs for all the dialects concerned – with the exception of Gigha, which was covered by Holmer (1938), but has not been the subject of a specific study.

One area where Colonsay speech patterns differ from those of neighbouring dialects is in the treatment of final unpalatalised -nn and -ll, in words such as ceann, donn, ball. Here, Islay and Jura varieties, in particular, are characterised by monophthong vowel articulation, followed by a lengthened sonorant. This is different from the situation in more northerly varieties, where a diphthong [æʊ : ɛʊ : oʊ] is followed by an unlengthened sonorant. I have argued (p. 77) that Colonsay forms a transition zone, in which the vowels in question are short monophthongs, but the following sonorants are rounded as well as velarised. This puts me at odds with the findings of the SGDS, where these sounds are interpreted, more conventionally, as diphthongs, with the rounding affecting the vowel segments rather than the following sonorants. My analysis has led me to posit a separate ‘rounded and velarised’ lateral phoneme /lʷ/ in this dialect. The corresponding dental phone [nʷ], on the other hand, can be defined, on positional grounds, as an allophone of the /nˠ/ phoneme.

In Chapter 3, I have examined a number of non-segmental features in the phonology of this dialect, including not only the classic suprasegmental features (stress, duration, tone), but also others, such as preaspiration, epenthesis and glottalisation, which are more characteristic of Scottish Gaelic pronunciation in general. Glottalisation, in particular, is a prominent feature of the Colonsay dialect (Scouller 2010), as well as a number of other Argyll varieties, and has been shown to fulfil a similar function to the use of tone in dialects such as those of Lewis and Applecross (Ternes 2006: 129-145). The pattern of epenthesis in Argyll dialects is also different from that found in more northerly varieties. I argue that most, if not all, of these non-segmental features can be shown to be inter-related, in the sense that they interact with one another to give added prominence to certain syllables within an utterance, thus fulfilling a prosodic function. Some recent insights from syllable theory appear to support this contention.
Chapter 4 has dealt with issues of morphology and syntax, noting especially those areas where usage in this dialect differs from that generally encountered in Scottish Gaelic. The differences are most marked in the paradigms of some irregular verbs, and of prepositional pronouns. Colonsay also seems to share in a general erosion of morphological distinctions in Gaelic, particularly affecting noun and adjective agreement for case, gender and number. Syntactic differences are, on the whole, less significant, and none have been identified as being specific to the Colonsay dialect.

Chapter 5 has reviewed the lexis of Colonsay Gaelic, identifying words where usage in this dialect is different from that in other varieties. In most cases the words themselves are not unique to this variety, but are used with a different semantic reference. A considerable overlap, in lexical terms, exists with forms used in neighbouring dialects. These include:

- forms reminiscent of Irish, such as the phrase *gu robh math agad* for ‘thank you’, and the forms *maidinn* ‘morning’, *cosmhail* ‘like, similar’;
- the preferential use of words such as *gasta* ‘fine, great’, *deas* ‘ready’, *amhairc* ‘look, watch’;
- the exclusive use of expressions such as *tuillidh ’s a chòir* ‘too much’ (for *cus*), *coimhearsnach* ‘neighbour’ (for *nàbaidh*), *gruag* ‘hair’ (for *falt*).

Some of these correlations across dialects are illustrated in a comparative table.

Although this thesis concentrates on the Colonsay dialect, and does not set out to be a comparative study, it is hoped that my findings for Colonsay will assist future research into South Argyll dialects, all of which, with the exception of Islay, are now moribund if not actually extinct.
Sunset over Colonsay

When I began my detailed study of Colonsay Gaelic, in 2008, I did not realise that I would be writing its obituary. In the nine years of my research, 8 out of 14 fluent speakers living on the island have died, and one has moved away. What was, within living memory, a vibrant Gaelic-speaking community has become almost entirely English-speaking. Nonetheless, Gaelic continues to occupy a place in the native culture of the island: in placenames, in remembered songs, and in the folk memory of how things were, not many decades ago.

The sun is setting on the Gaelic of Colonsay, although the light has not yet entirely disappeared. With its departure comes a sense of loss, of a glory just slipping below the horizon. The colour that once infused every feature of the landscape has faded, and the distinctive sound that once characterised the Colonsay community has been all but drowned out. It is my hope that this thesis will stand, like the monument to Lord Colonsay on the hill overlooking Scalasaig, as a memorial to the way people on Colonsay once spoke.
Glossary

Where a number is shown in round brackets ( ), this refers to a headword in the SGDS results.

a-mach (34) [mɛx] out, outside (motion or position). A-muigh (38, 39) is not used.⁶⁸¹

a-nall [(ə nə] over, across. Used of motion towards the speaker. Thàinig iadsan a-nall ‘they came over (to this side)’. Cf. a-nunn.

a-nis [(ə neʃ] now. Note vowel [e], and unpalatalised [n]. Emphatic forms a-neist, a-neiste.

a-nunn (45) [(ə nʊnˈ] over, across. Used of motion away from the speaker. Chaidh sinn a-nunn do dh’Orasa ‘we went over to Oronsay’. Cf. a-nall.

a-staigh [(ə sɲiː] : (ə sɲv] in, inside, indoors (motion or position). A-steach is recognised, but not commonly used.

abair [aˈbair] say. The standard word for ‘say’. Can is not used.

air uairean [eɾˈuaɾin] sometimes. The normal way of saying ‘sometimes’.

amais [eɾˈmʃ] vn amas [eɾˈməs] (air) find. Lorg not used in this sense.

amharc [eɾˈɾɔk] vn amharc (36) [eɾˈræk] (air) look at. Coimhid is not used.

an ceartuair [ŋˈɾaɾə] at present, just now. Used in preference to an dràsda.


balach (70) [baˈlˠax] boy, lad. A bhalaich is very commonly heard as a friendly form of address to males, of whatever age. Cf. eudail.

⁶⁸¹ Footnote to headword 38 (a-muigh) states ‘word rarely used’.
⁶⁸² SGDS gives the form [balˈəx], without glottalisation (see p. 1).
bainntreach (77) [b̥ɛiŋ¹d⁷z'ɪɾəx]\(^683\) widow. The form *banntrach is not found in this dialect.

bàsàich [ʰaːsiɡ] die. Used only of animals; for human beings, siubhail is used.

bigean [b̥iɡ'əŋ] pl bigeanan [b̥iɡ'əɲəŋ] small bird (e.g. garden birds). Eun [ɛ'ŋ] refers to larger species, e.g. seabirds.

biorach (239) [b̥i'ɾax] 1. (noun) heifer. 2. (adj.) pointed.

bitheanta [b̥içɪŋdə] frequent, often. Used in preference to tric. Am bitheantas [m biçɪŋdəs] usually, generally. Mar is trice not commonly used.


cabhag [ka'fafaɡ] a flock of seagulls feeding on a shoal of mackerel. In the sense of ‘hurry’, deifir (q.v.) is more frequently used.

caille [ka'liŋ] girl

cainnt (142) [kɛiŋd'z'] language, speech. Used in preference to cànан.

car-a-mhil [kærə'vɪlʹ] somersault; reversal. Chaidh sin car-a-mhil orra ‘that rebounded on them’, ‘the tables were turned’. Car-a-mhùilteach also used for ‘somersault’.


cethramh [k'ɛɾə(y)] 1. fourth. 2. quarter. Cethramh gu tri ‘quarter to three’.

Cairteal not used.

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\(^{683}\) Headword is banntrach.

cha lughaide [xa 'l'y d'zʔ] maybe, perhaps

chaidh (687) [xaʔiː : xaç] went. Preterite of rach.

cheana [će'nə] already. Used in preference to mar thà (mu thràth).

chionn [çon'] because. Used in preference to oir, or the more complicated construction a chionn ’s gu. Followed by simple (not dependent) form of verb.

cinn [k'iɲ] vn cinntinn [k'iɲd'z'ɲ] grow. Fàs only used with meaning ‘become’.

elis [kl'iʃ] fast, quick. Luath also used.

closach [kl'ɔsax] carcase (especially sheep carcase lying on the hill). Used in the friendly greeting Ciamar a tha do chlosach an-diugh? ‘How’s your old body today?’

cneasda [krɛsda] kind, nice. Used negatively of unpleasant things, e.g. weather: chan eil e cneasda ‘it’s not nice’.

coimhearsnach (642) [kɔʔiʃ'nax] neighbour. Nàbaidh is never used in Colonsay.

còir (232) [kɔːɾ] noun right. Tha còir agad you should, you ought to. Bu chòir dhuit also used.

Collainn (143) [kɔ'lɪɲ]684 New Year’s Eve, Hogmanay. Forms such as Callainn, Callaig not found.

copan (290) [kohbaɲ] a cup. Used for ‘a cup of tea’: An gabh thu copan? Used in this sense by Colonsay speakers, even in English: ‘Will you have a copan?’ Cupan, cupa not used.685

cosmhail (ri) [kɔsɨl'] similar (to), like. Coltach is used with the meaning ‘likely’; also in the expression dè ris a tha e coltach? ‘what is it like?’

684 Headword is Calluinn.
685 SGDS (290) gives forms [kuhbaɲ / koβbaɲ]; footnote states ‘first form literary?’ The LSS notes (p. 8) reveal that the informant knew the form cupan from the 23rd Psalm.
cost [kɔsɖ] wear away

creic (252) [kreçɬ] sell. Used in preference to reic (696, 697) [reçɬ], although reic is also found. Probably a back-formation from ag reic.


crùban [kruˈbaŋ] m. edible crab, brown crab. The form crùbag f. is not found. Partan is used for other species of crab (e.g. velvet crab).

curs [kuɹs] rough. Often used of weather: tha i curs an-diugh. From Scots coorse, English ‘coarse’.

damhais [dəvɪʃ], vn damhsadh [dɛəsəɣ] dance. The forms dans, dansadh *[dɨɛn’s : dɨɛn’səɣ] are not found (see p. 274).


dead (304) [dɛˈes] 1. right (as opposed to left). 2. south. 3. ready. Used in preference to deiseil. (Cf. Grannd 2000: 12-13 and Map 4).

defir [dɛˈfɪɾ] hurry. A bheil deifir ort? ‘are you in a hurry?’ Distinguished from diofar (q.v.).


Didòmhnaich [dɛˈzɬiɹɲəʃ] Sunday. Sàbaid used only to mean ‘sabbath’. An Dòmhnach also used: an Dòmhnach bha sin ‘that Sunday’.

diofar [dɪfəɾ] (Note hard [d] in onset) difference. Cha dean e diofar ‘it doesn’t matter’. Cha robh diofar dè thachradh ‘no matter what’. Distinguished from deifir (q.v.).

dith [dɪˈzɬiɾ] lack, want. Tha sin a dhit orm. ‘I want that.’ Tha mi ag iarraidh sin also used.

dithist [dɪˈzɬiɾɪʃ] two, a pair. Used of persons or objects. Uair no dithist ‘once or twice’, ‘occasionally’. Cupall also used. Other collective numerals (tréun, ceathrar, etc.) are not generally used.
doilich (357) [do̞lɪç] sorry. Note vowel [o]. Not used to mean ‘difficult’. See doirbh.

doirbh [do̞ri(ɣ)] comp nas doirbhhe [nas ˈdo̞rivɨ] difficult, hard. In this sense, used in preference to doilich (q.v.)


eigheanntach [eʔənˈdax] ice. Also found in Islay, Jura (Grannd 2000: 40-41 and Map 52).

cēldear [e̞ˈʃdɪər] elder (in church). Foirfeach also used.

eudail [e̞ˈdəl̠] (my) dear. Used as standard form of address by men to women and girls, and by women to either sex. Cf. balach.

fairge (388)686 [fərtɬɬ̥] sea. The most usual word for ‘sea’. Muir, cuan, sàil also used.

falbh (390)687 [fəl`əv] go away, leave. Note Argyll pronunciation, with vowel [ə] rather than [a].


faoileann [fyˈlən̥] seagull. Faoileag is found elsewhere.

fhēin [heˑn] self. Note that final [n] is not pronounced.

fiadhaich (419) [fiʔiç]689 1. wild. 2. very. The commonest way of saying ‘very’.

686 Spelt fairrge in SGDS.
687 Headword is falbh: falbhaidh, and the form given is the future falbhaidh [fəl`əç].
688 Cf. headword 412 (feith: feitheamh).
689 SGDS gives the transcription [fiʔiç], with the symbol ‘=’ to indicate [sic]. My own perception is that when stressed, there is a glottal stop in the middle of this word, which disappears when the word is unstressed.

fo [fɔ] under, below. *Cha robh mir foddhainn (ach)* ‘We had no choice (but); there was nothing for it (but)’.

foirfeach [fɔrɪfəx] elder (in church). Èildear also used.

fuasach/fuathasach [fuatʃ] terribly, awfully (modifying an adjective). Synonym uamharra (q.v.). Used in preference to uamhasach in this context, although uamhasach is used as an adjective in its own right, ‘terrible’.

gaoith (459, 460) [gɔˈtʃ] wind. An original dative form used as nominative (cf. beinn). Forms with final [ʃ] also found in Islay (Points 53–56).

gasta [gəsɔðə] fine, great

giobarsaich [giəbəɾsiç] weed(s)

glè (476) [gle] quite, fairly. *Tha sin glè ghasda.* ‘That’s quite nice.’ Does not mean ‘very’.

gruag [ɡɾuːɡ] hair. Used in preference to falt. Refers to the mass of hair on the head; riobag (703) [ɾiˈbaɡ] (q.v.) is used for a single hair.

grunnd [ɡrun`d] ground. Used alongside fearann, talamh.


gun dàil [ɡun ˈdaːl] soon. A dh’aithghearr not used.

ladhar [l̥ˈʃəɾ] toe. Òrdag used to mean ‘big toe’.

leathrach [ʎeɾ̥tʃ] leather. A genitive form used as nominative.

leig fhaicinn [ʎeq] ‘fGabq ʃeʃɛn] show. *Leig fhaicinn dhomh* ‘show me’. Used in preference to *seall* with this meaning.

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690 *SGDS* does show falt (392) [fɔl̥t̥ / fa[l̥t].
maidinn [meˈd̥zʹiŋ] morning. Cf. Irish. Also found in Islay, Jura. Jones (2009a: 262) suggests this may be an Islay, rather than a Jura form.


mar a [marə : marə] 1. as. 2. when. Overwhelmingly used in preference to (or as an unstressed form of) nuair a.

mir [miːɾ] anything, (with cha) nothing.

monadh [məˈnəɣ] mountain. Used only of high mountains, principally on the mainland. Not found in any recorded Colonsay placenames. Synonym beinn can be used for any size of hill or mountain: Beinn Orasa ‘Ben Orsasay’ (93m), na Beanntan Diùrach ‘the Paps of Jura’ (734-785m). The sense of ‘moorland’ (‘the hill’, in crofting parlance) is expressed as mòinteach [məˈp̥dzˈʌx].

mòs [məˈs] too. Mòs tràth ‘too early’. Tuillidh is also used (cf. tuillidh ’s a chòir).

Ro not commonly used.


mughairne [muʔɔɾɲi] ankle. Aobrann not known. SGDS has caol na coise (46) [kʰyɭ nə koʃə].691 Jones gives mughairn as the Jura form (2009a: 264).

olann [əˈlən]’ wool. Clòimh means ‘down’.

patach [pahd̥x] child. Påisde also found.

peitean [pehɗˈʃaŋ] jacket, coat, outdoor garment

piocach [piˈuʃxɭ] saithe


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691 Headword is aobrann. Flora Macneill’s comment on caol na coise was ‘I suppose that sounds all right’. (Interview, 30 April 2015).
pongail (683) [ponˈɡal̠]⁶⁹² neat, tidy. Can mean ‘tidy-minded’, as in *tha thu pongail*, used when someone starts to clear away dishes, etc.

*Post Office* [poˈʃɔfis] – note stress on second syllable.

rabhaint [raˈværtʃ] spring tide. Elsewhere *reothart*.

ralla (685, 686) [raˈwʌiʃ]⁶⁹³ rake. *Ràcan* not used.


riobag (703) [riəpa] (a single) hair.⁶⁹⁴ Cf. *gruag*.

romhaid [rəˈɹɪʃ] the other, as in *an latha romhaid* ‘the other day’.

rùraich [ruˑɹɪc] *vn rùrach* [ruˑɹax] look for

saod [səˈd] state (of mind), mood. *Dè’n saod a th’ort?* ‘How are you feeling?’ (i.e. ‘What sort of mood are you in?’) Also found in Jura (Jones 2009a: 268).

sàrach [saˑrʌx] nuisance, burden. Verb *sàraich* (*vn sàrachadh*) commonly found elsewhere.

searbh [ʃɛrəv] bitter. *Tha e searbh* is the standard expression for ‘it’s a pity’, used in preference to *is truagh: tha e searbh nach robh tuillidh ann* ‘it’s a pity there weren’t more there’. Also used to express sorrow: *Tha mi searbh a chluinninn sin* ‘I’m sorry to hear that’.

sgeith-ròin [ʃəˈɹiɔn] jellyfish. Literally ‘seal’s vomit’.

sgrog [ʃəˈɾɔɡ] 1. bite. 2. bite (to eat), snack. *Gheibh thu sgrog*. ‘You’ll have a bite to eat’.

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⁶⁹² Headword is *puncaill*.
⁶⁹³ Headwords are *ràcan, do ràcan*
⁶⁹⁴ Headword is *rib* (ensnare).
sgùid [sqùtʃ] an overhanging rock or shallow cave, where sheep often shelter.

Several placenames: Loch na Sgùid, Sgùid nam Ban Truagh, Sgùid Brideig (see Loder 1935: 442-443). Possibly from Old Norse skuggi ‘shadow’.

siop [ʃɔʰ] Note preaspiration. Bùth is recognised, but siop is preferred.


siubhail [ʃiˈʔol̠] vn siubhal [ʃiˈʔol̠] 1. walk, travel. 2. die (of human being).


soirbh [ʃɔrɪ(ʃ)] easy. Used in preference to furasda. Comparative usually nas fhasa.


sràid [sraˑd̥ʃ] 1. street. An t-Sràid Chàm ‘Squint Street’ (a row of houses in Scalasaig). 2. walk. Bha mi a-mach airson sràid ‘I was out for a walk’.

tabaid [təb̥iˈtʃ] fight. Presumably a back-formation from an t-sabaid. Also found in Tiree and Jura.

tabhann [tafan] barking. Comhartaich is not used.

tacan [txəɡən] a short time

thalla! [haˈʃ] come! (thig! also used). Thalla seo ‘come here’. Unlike some varieties of Gaelic, implies movement towards the speaker.

thēid (688) [heˈʒ] Future tense of rach [ræ] go. Thēid agam air, I can.

Rachadh agam air, I could. The commonest way of expressing ‘I can’ in this dialect. ’S urrainn dhomh, b’urrainn dhomh also used.

toiridh-trèan [təiˈtɾən] corncrake

travel [trəˈvæl]’ travel

truis [truʃ] vn trusadh, truisil [truʃiəl] gather (transitive or intransitive), pick up

tuillidh [tuˈʎiç] more. More common than barrachd, and with a more positive connotation: *an gabh thu tuillidh tea?* ‘will you have some more tea?’ *Barrachd* implies ‘what is left over’, but is used in set expressions, e.g. *a bharrachd air sin* ‘besides which’. *Tuillidh* is means ‘too’, modifying an adjective (cf. mòs).

tuillidh’s a chòir [tuˈʎiçiɾ] too much. *Cus* is unknown in Colonsay.

uamharra [uaˈɾə] terribly, awfully (modifying an adjective). Synonym fuasach (q.v.). Both used in preference to uamhasach in this context.

ùisnich [uˑʃɲiç] use. Used in preference to cleachd, although cleachdte is normal for ‘used/acquainted to’. The form ùisinich [uˑʃiɲiç] is also found.

urball (371) [uriʃəl]695 tail. This form, not earball, used in this dialect.

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695 Headword is earball.


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