

An Introduction to Braid Scots
illustrated from the folk songs of Scotland

Robert B. Waltz

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To
Mollie Spillman

*“For I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”*

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Introduction

There is an old tag that says that a language is a dialect with an army.

It's expressed as a joke, but in fact there is a lot of truth in that statement. When I was young, there was a language called "Serbo-Croatian." Not any more; it's "Serbian" and "Croatian." What changed? Nothing about the language people used — but there is now an international boundary inside what was once Yugoslavia. Norwegian and Danish are mutually comprehensible, and Swedish isn't much different, but they're called different languages because they are used in different countries.

On the other hand, some of the dialects of Italian are *not* mutually comprehensible, but they're called one language because Italy is unified. The situation is almost as bad with German.

Which leads to another tag: "Scottish is more than a dialect but less than a language."



The spread of English/Scottis in Scotland. Originally most of Scotland spoke Gaelic, and the Highlanders continued to use it until the Highland Clearances; now, Gaelic speakers are rare outside the Hebrides.

Scottis, the language of the Lowland Scots, was derived from early Middle English — the lowland Scots were heavily influenced by the Anglo-Saxons, and they had little to do with the Gaelic-speaking Highlanders. The very name "Edinburgh" is in fact English — "Edwin's burgh," or Edwin's capital, named for a now-mostly-forgotten king. Malcolm III Canmore, who overthrew MacBeth (MacBethoc) in 1057, was the last true Highland king — and he lived in England before conquering his cousin, and married an English wife; he brought both retainers and language from the south. Lords like Robert the Bruce had lands on both sides of the border in the thirteenth century, and they obviously didn't start speaking a different language just because they slept in a different castle! After Bruce gained Scottish independence at Bannockburn in 1314, that changed.¹ *Scottis* was well on its

1. The change was slow, of course. John Barbour's *The Bruce* is considered the earliest surviving sample of genuine "Scots" literature, written perhaps around 1390. But it is effectively indistinguishable from the English of the period — hard for us to understand, but no harder than anything else of this time. A sample from [Sisam](#), p. 108, regarding the 1319 siege of Berwick:

Thai [that] at the sege lay,
Or it wes passit the fift day,
Had maid thame syndry apparale
To gang eftsonis till assale

*They that at the siege lay,
Ere it was passed the fifth day,
Had made them sundry apparal
To go eftsoon [swiftly] to assail [the city].*

way to becoming a separate language in the fifteenth century — a Londoner certainly couldn't have made heads or tails of it. (Of course, a Londoner couldn't make any more sense out of Yorkshire or Cheshire English.)

But then the crowns were united in 1603, and James VI and I took his Scots ministers south — and opened up a lot of Scotland to English governance. *Scottis* was drawn much more toward English. Throw in the effects of printing, and the languages, which seemed fated to diverge, instead began to reconverge.¹ Many southern Scots speak a language that is little more than English with a few twisted vowels.² In Aberdeenshire (pronounced AY-ber-deen-shire, note, not Ab-er-DEEN-shire), much more of the old language is preserved — but even there, the Scots grammar (such as it was) is gone.³ All that is required to speak Aberdeenshire Scots — the braidest of braid Scots — is knowledge of the vocabulary and the way the words are pronounced. Compared to learning, say, German, it's a very easy task — and easier still if you merely want to read it. This book will try to help you with the reading.

The vocabulary found in this book doesn't begin to approach that of the fullest Scottish dictionaries. [Warrack](#) probably has more than thirty times the number of words found here. This book is intended to look particularly at the folk vocabulary found in Scottish folk songs. The Scots have probably the strongest folk song tradition of any English-speaking nation. If this book does anything to help keep that tradition alive, strong, and understandable, it will have fulfilled its goal.

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1. It is common to speak of “Middle Scots” as being the language of the Scottish Lowlands from perhaps 1375 (the time of the first genuine surviving literature) until around 1550 — a period which does not correspond at all to Middle English (which covers the period from 1200 or earlier until around 1500). In other words, Middle Scots covers, very loosely speaking, the period from when Scotland firmly broke away from England after Bannockburn until the time when it started back into the English orbit as the possibility increased that a Scottish monarch would succeed to the English throne.
 2. This makes modern Scots one of the oddest things in linguistics, a creole language with itself! A *creole* language arises when two mutually incomprehensible languages come in contact. The first people in contact start to speak a pidgin dialect — not really a language, because it doesn't have a grammar. But their children will take this pidgin and create a grammar for it, thus producing a creole. Most Caribbean nations, for instance, have creoles, as the people of Haiti, e.g., speak Creole French. The history of *Scottis* apparently began with Malcolm III Canmore, who took English into Gaelic Scotland in 1057. The result was an English-Gaelic creole. Meanwhile, the Norman Conquest of England produced something of an Old English-Old French creole; we call this Middle English. Over the next several centuries, this was imported to Scotland, so *Scottis* became a creole of what we might call Old Scots with Middle English. Then the Union of the Crowns caused *Scottis* to re-creolize with Modern English, causing *Scottis* to effectively vanish. I know of no true parallel in the history of languages.
 3. Examples of Scots grammar that is now lost include the -s endings, used in both third person singular and plural. For example, where in Modern English we would say “he hears” and “they listen,” in Middle English this would be “he heareth” and “they heareth” but in Scots “he hearis” and “they hearis.” Even more noticeable is the loss of the -and endings for present participles (e.g. “he walkand” for “he is walking,” or *hearand rehers* for “hearing rehearsed” in the seventh line of Henryson's *Orpheus and Euridice*). This is not to say that Scots speak with exactly the same grammatical style as native speakers of English. [Wittig](#), p. 6, notes a number of Scottish usages that are rare in English: “I was wanting a cauliflower”; and when “a ring comes to the door,” the homeowner wonders “who will that be now, I'm wondering?” But these constructions, while rare in English, are not incomprehensible, simply things we would not ordinarily say. For someone who is *reading* Scots, there is no grammar to learn.

Pronouncing Braid Scots

Braid Scots uses a rather different sound set than standard English. Much of this involves the vowels. The long *o* of English, for instance, is generally transformed into *ae*, so English *go* is *gae*, *so* is *sae*, *to* is *tae*. But there are three sounds not found in standard English.

The flat English *r* does not exist in Scots. The *r* is to be rolled. Always.

Scots uses a fricative *ch*, as in *loch* or the German name *Bach*; it's the χ of the phonetic alphabet. This is a fascinating remnant — the χ sound is generally used in Scots where English now uses (mostly-silent) *gh*. So, for instance, the word *sought*, which in modern English is *sawt*, in Braid Scots is *socht* or *soxt*. *Laughed*, which in English is *laffed*, in Scots is *laucht* or *lauxt*. *Fought*, English *fawt*, is Scots *fecht*/*fecht*. This goes back to a divergence in the use of the Anglo-Saxon letter ȝ (yogh);¹ it was pronounced every which way in Middle English. (There were three special letters in Middle English, *eth*, *thorn*, and *yogh*. In teaching students, it is said that *eth*, ð, is pronounced like *th*; *thorn*, þ, is pronounced like *th*, and *yogh*, ȝ, is pronounced like *yogh*).² In modern English, ȝ has come to be spelled *gh* and has mostly gone silent in the words that use it; in Scots, it is fairly consistently pronounced χ . This is a throwback to the time before the Union of the Crowns; the pronunciation of Braid Scots is not far different from that of Elizabethan times. Want to hear what Shakespeare sounded like? Read the plays in Scots dialect. It is, frankly, a much more attractive-sounding speech than our clipped modern English.

Scots also uses (rather less consistently) the glottal stop, frequently written ' . A stop is an instance where one stops the breath, producing a silence rather than a sound. The *glottal stop* (which is properly pronounced *glòal stop*) is so-called because it occurs in the glottis. It consists of shutting the throat to halt the breath. In Scots, it very often applies to an internal *t*. Hence *glòal* for *glottal*, or *bo'el* for *bottle*, or indeed *Sco'land* for *Scotland* and *Braid Sco's* for *Braid Scots*.³

1. The ȝ form is said to be derived from an early insular form of the letter *g*, ȝ. However, ȝ was not in general used as a substitute for *g*; the two became separate letters.
2. Old English had no fewer than six special letter symbols, most of them clearly visible in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts such as *Beowulf*: ð/ð (*eth*, pronounced *th*), þ/þ (*thorn*, pronounced *th*), ȝ/ȝ (*yogh*, variously pronounced), ƿ (*wynn*, pronounced *w*; this was the period before *w* became an accepted part of the Latin alphabet), Æ/æ (*ash*, the diphthong *a+e*), and 7, a shorthand for *et/and*, equivalent to the ampersand & (a symbol itself derived from a script version of Latin *et*, our *and*). Once in a while, we see others; curiously, the German double *s*, ß, occurs in the Asloan-Chalmers manuscript of Robert Henryson's works. But this seems not to have been widespread; the usual additional symbols were ð, þ, ȝ, ƿ, æ, and 7. Of these, ƿ, æ, and 7 went effectively extinct with the Norman Conquest. ð/ð lasted a little longer but was effectively gone by the fourteenth century. Both þ and ȝ were still in common use in the 1300s, however, as the first three lines of the Auchinleck text of *Sir Orfeo* show (from [Sisam](#), p. 14):

Text	Pronounced	Meaning
Orfeo was a king,	<i>Orfeo was a king</i>	<i>Orfeo was a king</i> ,
In Ingland an heiȝe lording,	<i>In England an aichë lording</i>	<i>In England a high lord</i> ,
A stalworþ man and hardy bo.	<i>A stalworth man and hardy bo</i>	<i>A stalwart man and hardy both</i> .

þ in particular continued to be used into the fifteenth century. I suspect it was the invention of printing that finally drove it out; printers didn't want to bother with an English letter they couldn't use for Latin typesetting.

3. It is my informal observation that glottal stops are less common in sung than in spoken Scots, probably because a stop while singing interferes with the note. But I have no firm data on this.

Letters can disappear without being stopped. Braid Scots tends to avoid the letter “v,” e.g. So *have* becomes *hae*, *love* becomes *loe*, *give* becomes *gie*. *Ne’er* for *never* is attested in English, but much more common in Scots. These eliminated consonants are *not* stopped; simply omitted. Unfortunately, it is common to put in an apostrophe anyway, even when the word is unstopped (e.g. the Scots pronunciation of *love*, which should be written *loe*, is typically written *lo’e*), simply because it makes it clearer what word it represents.¹

The letter *l* is also frequently elided within a word, and even more so at the end, so *all* becomes *a’*, *ball* is *ba’*, *call* becomes *ca’*, *fa’* represents *fall*, etc.

Hard consonants such as *b*, *d*, and *p* may also be suppressed within a word, so *tumble* might become *tum’le* or *bounds* might be pronounced *boun’s*.

In addition to *χ* for *gh*, there are other sound changes found in certain Scots dialects. In Scottis, e.g., especially older texts, we find a number of instances where *qu* is used when we would expect *wh*. The replacement of *wh* is still found in Aberdeenshire, but there the substitution is *f* for *wh*, so *what* becomes *fit*, *when* becomes *fan*, etc. There are also dialects in which *sh* is reduced to *s*, so e.g. *shall* becomes *sall*.

Effectively all instances of initial letter “g” in Scots are hard (“g,” not “j”), so “gin” is “ghin,” not “jin”; “gied” is “ghied,” not “jeed,” etc.

The summary above doesn’t begin to cover all the vowel changes, but we might as well just dive into the vocabulary and hope it makes things clearer.

Unfortunately, there is no “standard” way of writing Braid Scots — and, indeed, there is no standard Braid Scots. So the word that in English is written *once* in Scots becomes both *aince* and *yince*, and might also be written *ains* or *aynce*; you just sort of have to guess at this.... Any particular area in Scotland will use only a subset of these words (e.g. there are areas which use *gang* and *ganged* for *go* and *went*, while other regions use *gae* and *gaed*), but they are (or at least were) all used somewhere....

1. In recent years there have been attempts to produce a more phonetic system for writing Braid Scots, in which *lo’e* would in fact be properly written *loe*, e.g.. It’s a nice idea, but no help in reading older writings! So I haven’t bothered with it.

How the Vocabulary Works

The vocabulary below has three parts. The leftmost column is the Scots word (generally following the most common spelling, although I have tried to list multiple spellings if needed). In a few cases, especially verbs, I have noted the part of speech (n.=noun, v.=verb, etc.)

If a spelling corresponds to multiple meanings, these will be numbered.

The second column gives clues about ways to remember the word, or how it came to be. There aren't many entries in this column, but where they exist, they can be important in clarifying the word (e.g., if you want to know why Scots call trousers "breeks," keep in mind the word "breeches").

The third column gives meanings. For most words, a simple meaning or two is given. A few give background on the word, e.g. mentioning if it is derived from Gaelic. Others have speech samples, often idiomatic.

Many words are noted as survivals from Middle English. This is given simply as a clue: You will find these words in many Middle English texts, but they have ceased to be used in Modern English — except in Scotland. The point is that these are not *Scots* vocabulary as such. In practice, the point probably doesn't matter.

To try to give the *feeling* of Braid Scots, many of the words have usage examples. The examples are almost always from actual Scots songs. The Scots text is given in *italics*, followed by an English "translation," in quotes. Then, in brackets, I list the title of the source song.

When a word occurs in the historical samples of Scots in Appendix II, I have also noted this. For example, "Suld" for "Should" occurs in the fourth line of Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Euridice*. So the entry for *suld* concludes with the (underlined) comment "Henryson, *Orpheus*, I.4." This means that an example using the word can be found in the fourth line of the first stanza of the *quoted* text of Henryson's *Orpheus and Euridice*.

Sláinte,
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May 2, 2013

Vocabulary

A

<i>Scots</i>	<i>Think in terms of</i>	<i>Meaning/Usage</i>
<i>a'</i> (1), <i>aa</i>		all. <u>SMM, Tullochgorum II.2, 5-9, III.10; Ewie II.4</u>
<i>a'</i> (2)		at
<i>ablins</i>		see <i>aiblins</i>
<i>aboot</i>		about
<i>abune</i> (<i>aboon</i> , <i>abeen</i>)		above. <i>Oh loath, loath were the gude Scots lords, To wet their cork-heeled shoon, But ere the game was half played oot, Their hats they swam aboon</i> =“Oh loath, loath were the good Scots lord, To wet their cork-heeled shoes, But before the game was half played out, Their hats they swam above” [“Sir Patrick Spens,” referring to a ship of nobles that sank in a storm]
<i>ae</i>		one, aye, very, <i>i.e. let me in this ae nicht</i> =“let me in this very night”; compare <i>aye</i> . Used as an intensifier primarily before superlatives
<i>afore</i>		before
<i>aff</i>		off
<i>affa</i>		awful
<i>aft</i>		oft, often
<i>agee</i> , <i>ajee</i>		ajar; variant of <i>aglee</i>
<i>aglee</i> , <i>agley</i>		astray, off course. <i>We're a' gaun east an' west, We're a' gane aye aglee</i> =“We're all going east and west, We're all gone astray/crazy” [“Mallie Leigh”]
<i>ahint</i>		behind. <i>The beggar he took aff his pack, And doon ahint the ingle he sat</i> =“The beggar he took off his pack, and down behind the fireplace he sat” [“The Gaberlunzie Man”]
<i>aiblins</i> , <i>aiblens</i>		perhaps, maybe. <i>Oh, lad, my hand I cannae gie, But aiblins I may steal the key, And I'll meet ye at the birken tree</i> =“Oh, lad, my hand I cannot give, But perhaps I may steal the key, And I'll meet you at the birch tree” [“The Birken Tree”]
<i>aik</i>		oak. <i>Young Charlie Cochran was the sprout of an aik, Bonnie and bloomin' and straught was its make</i> =“Young Charlie Cochran was the sprout of an oak, Bonnie and blooming and sraight was its make” (or, possibly, “was its mate”) [Robert Burns, “Lady Mary Anne”]
<i>aiken</i>		oaken, made of oak
<i>ain</i>		own. <u>SMM, Tullochgorum III.3; Ewie III.2</u>

<i>Scots</i>	<i>Think in terms of</i>	<i>Meaning/Usage</i>
<i>aince</i>		once
<i>airles</i>		token of agreement, earnest money, deposit. <i>Airles ran high, but makings were naething, man</i> ="Pre-payments ran high, but it all came to nothing, man" ["Donald MacGillavry"]
<i>airms</i>		arms
<i>airt</i> (1)		direction, point of the compass. From Gaelic <i>àirde</i> . <i>Of a' the airts the wind can blaw, I dearly like the West</i> ="Of all the ways the wind can blow, I dearly like the West" [Robert Burns, "I love my Jean," usually called "Of A' the Airts"]
<i>airt</i> (2)		art
<i>aith</i>		oath
<i>aix</i>		ax
<i>ajee</i>		see <i>agee</i>
<i>alane</i>		alone. See also <i>lane</i> (<i>my lane, her lane, his lane</i>)
<i>alang</i>		along. <u>SMM, Tullochgorum I.11</u>
<i>amang</i>		among
<i>an</i>		if. <i>An if</i> =indeed if (emphatic). <i>For surely Watkin's ale, an if it be not stale, Will bring them to some bale, as hath report</i> ="For surely Watkin's ale [sex], if indeed it be not stale, Will turn them to some bale, as hath report" ["Watkin's Ale"]
<i>ance</i>		see <i>aince</i>
<i>ane</i>		one; also an. <u>SMM, Tullochgorum II.2</u>
<i>aneath</i>		beneath
<i>aneuch, aneuk</i>		see <i>eneuch</i>
<i>anither</i>		another
<i>ark</i>		cupboard, container, cabinet. <u>Henryson, Mouse, II.7</u>
<i>arles</i>		thrashing, beating
<i>ashet</i>		plate, dish
<i>a'thigether</i>		altogether
<i>atweel</i>		certainly, definitely, in truth. <i>atweel na</i> : by no means
<i>atweesh</i>	betwixt, atwixt	<i>between</i>
<i>aucht, auxht</i>		see <i>oucht</i>
<i>auld</i>		old. <u>SMM, Tullochgorum IV.8</u>
<i>auld Reekie</i>	(old Smoky)	Edinburgh
<i>ava, ava'</i>		at all. <i>Oh, lassie, lassie, your fortune's sma', And maybe it will be nane ava</i> ="Oh, lassie, lassie, your fortune's small, And maybe it will be nothing at all" ["The Rigs o' Rye"]
<i>awa, awa'</i>		away. <u>SMM, Ewie, chorus.4</u>
<i>awauk</i>		awake
<i>awin</i>		own (compare <i>ain</i>). <u>Henryson, Mouse, VI.4</u>

<i>Scots</i>	<i>Think in terms of</i>	<i>Meaning/Usage</i>
<i>ay, aye</i> (1)		an interjection: <i>He's aye a fule</i> =“He's indeed a fool.” Compare <i>ae</i>
<i>ay, aye</i> (2)		always
<i>aye</i> (3)		yes, as a response to a question
<i>ayock</i>	at (the) yoke	at work
<i>ayont</i>		beyond; sometimes by extension “behind”

B

<i>ba'</i>		ball. Usually refers to the object, but can also refer to a game, typically a handball game. <i>Two pretty boys were gaun' tae the school, And one evening comin' hame, Says William tae John, O can ye throw a stane, Or can ye play a' the ba', ba'</i> =“Two pretty boys were going to the school, And one evening coming home, Says William to John, Oh, can you throw a stone, Or can you play at the ball, ball” [“The Twa Brothers”]
<i>baed</i>		stopped
<i>baggie</i>		belly
<i>baillie</i>		bailiff, landlord's deputy
<i>bairn, bairns</i>		child, children
<i>bairnie, bairnies</i>		child, children; compare <i>bairn, bairns</i> . <i>To get wi' bairn</i> =“to make pregnant.” Sometimes also a verb, <i>bairned, made pregnant</i> . <i>Bairn-time</i> can be either <i>the time of childbirth</i> or a <i>family of children</i>
<i>baith</i>		both. <u>SMM, Ewie, chorus.2</u>
<i>bale</i>		harm, hurt, ill (survival from Middle English): <i>For surely Watkin's ale, an if it be not stale, Will bring them to some bale, as hath report</i> =“For surely Watkin's ale [sex], if indeed it be not stale, Will turn them to some bale, as hath report” [“Watkin's Ale”]
<i>balk</i>		ridge, rise, hill. <u>Henryson, Mouse, III.3</u>
<i>ballat</i>		ballad
<i>ban, banned</i>		curse, cursed (survival from Middle English)
<i>band</i>		bond, agreement, legal obligation, financial promise. <i>My daddy signed my tocher band Tae gies the lad wha has the land, But tae my hairt I'll add my hand And I'll gie it tae the weaver</i> =“My daddy signed my dower agreement, To give (me) to the lad who has the land, But to my heart I'll add my hand And I'll give it to the weaver” [Robert Burns, “The Gallant Weaver”]
<i>bandster</i>	binder	binder of sheaves
<i>banes, bains</i> (1)		bane, slayer (survival from Middle English)
<i>banes, bains</i> (2)		bone, bones

<i>Scots</i>	<i>Think in terms of</i>	<i>Meaning/Usage</i>
<i>bann</i> (1)		curse; see <i>ban</i>
<i>bann</i> (2)		banns (announcements, calls for comment) on matrimony or other ceremony (survival from Middle English)
<i>bannock</i>		small loaf of bread or cake, flat bread. From Gaelic <i>bonnach</i>
<i>bardie</i>		diminutive of <i>bard</i> , so a minor poet
<i>barefit</i>		barefoot
<i>barkit</i>		covered with dirt, dirtied
<i>barley-bree</i>		whiskey (barley-juice)
<i>barm</i>		yeast
<i>bauckie-bird</i>		bat
<i>baudrons, bauldrons</i>		cat (hence the common phrase <i>pussy, pussy baudrons</i> is is rather like <i>kitty, kitty cat</i>). “Baudrons” is said to be derived from “Baldwin,” apparently a popular name for felines.
<i>baukit</i>		balked, refused, hesitated
<i>bauld</i>		bold
<i>bawbee</i>		halfpenny (six Scots pennies, equal to half of an English penny)
<i>bawd</i>		hare
<i>bawk</i>		a strip of unplowed land between plowed sections; it might mark the boundary between holdings
<i>bear</i>		see <i>bere</i>
<i>bedene</i>		early, quickly
<i>beerly, bierly</i>		large, heavy, portly
<i>beese</i>		vermin
<i>beire</i>		complaint, fuss, noise
<i>behint</i>		behind (compare <i>ahint</i>)
<i>belang</i>		belong
<i>belyve</i>		soon, quickly, immediately. <i>They’ll be back belyve, Belted, brisk, and lordly</i> =“They’ll be back at once, Belted, brisk, and lordly” [“Cam’ Ye O’er Frae France?”]
<i>ben</i>		in (<i>but and ben</i> = <i>in and out</i> ; “a wee but-and-ben” is a dwelling so small that you’re back outside as soon as you’re in, typically a kitchen and parlor. <i>But and ben</i> can also <i>forward and back</i>)
<i>benison, bennison</i>		blessing (compare <i>malison</i>). <i>So Johnny, for my benison, To the greenwood dinnae gang, gang</i> =“So, Johnny, for my blessing, To the greenwood do not go, go” [“Johnny o’ Braidesley”]
<i>benmaist, benmost</i>		innermost
<i>bent</i>		open field, meadow, low hill, place where the grass is rough (can also refer to the rough grass itself)
<i>bere, beir, bear</i>		barley, especially coarse barley

<i>Scots</i>	<i>Think in terms of</i>	<i>Meaning/Usage</i>
<i>besom</i>		broom, to sweep with (“broom” referring to the flowering broom plant, so a “broom besom” is a broom made of broom)
<i>beuk</i>		book
<i>beyont</i>		beyond (compare <i>ayont</i>)
<i>bicker</i> (1)	beaker	ale-pot — specifically a wooden vessel with one or two handles
<i>bicker</i> (2)		quarrel, fight
<i>bide</i>		stay, wait. Often used with the particular sense “lived, resided, dwelt.”
<i>biel</i>		shelter
<i>bien</i>		comfortable, cozy, home-like
<i>big</i> (v.)		to build; also “to grow large” (perhaps by pregnancy)
<i>biggin</i>		building
<i>bike, byke</i>		nest, e.g. <i>foggie byke</i> =“bee’s nest”
<i>billy</i>		brother (informal). <i>A babe there lies, atween my twa sides, Atween you, dear billy, and I</i> =“A babe there lies, between my two sides, Between you, dear brother, and I” [“Lizzie Wan”]. Also used for close friends or comrades
<i>bing</i> (1)		cant for <i>travel</i> or <i>to make off</i> : <i>I binged avree</i> = “I went away (with it)”
<i>bing</i> (2)		heap, pile
<i>birk, birks</i>		birch, birch trees
<i>birken</i>		birch; also “of birches”; “The Birken Tree” is the birch tree
<i>birkie</i>		lively young fellow. Not always complimentary: <i>You see yon birkie ca’d a lord, Wha struts, and stares, and a’ that, Though hundreds worship at his word, He’s but a coof for a’ that</i> =“You see yon stripling called a lord, Who struts, and stares, and all that? Though hundreds worship at his word, He’s but a fool for all that” [Robert Burns, “A Man’s a Man For A’ That”]
<i>birl(e)</i> (v.)		spend, carouse, be free with money; also to ply with drink; <i>birling</i> usually means <i>drinking</i>
<i>black-nebbit</i>		One opposed to the government, usually by believing in democracy; Burns himself was a black-nebbit
<i>blad</i> (1)		incapable person — typically one who is not very fit due to a soft lifestyle
<i>blad</i> (2)		(large) portion, serving, full helping. Hence a <i>blad</i> (1) is a person who consumes <i>blads</i> (2). <i>Donald was blinded wi’ blads o’ property</i> =“Donald was blinded with large awards of property” [“Donald MacGillavry”]
<i>blae</i>		blue
<i>blaeberry</i>		blueberry
<i>blate</i>		shy, bashful

<i>Scots</i>	<i>Think in terms of</i>	<i>Meaning/Usage</i>
<i>blaw</i>		blow, hence by implication “to boast”
<i>blether</i>	blather	talk idly and at length
<i>blin’</i>		blind
<i>blinkit</i>		to blink; also to wear blinkers, have limited vision; be drunk
<i>blud, bluid</i>		blood
<i>bobbit</i>		bobbed, bowed, curtsied, showed respect
<i>bocht, boxt</i>		bought. <i>I bocht a wife in Edinboro for ae bawbee, I go’ a farthing back again to buy tobacco wi’</i> = “I bought a wife in Edinburgh for a halfpenny, I got a farthing back again to buy tobacco with” [“Johnny Lad”]
<i>bock</i>		throw up, vomit
<i>body</i>		person. <i>Gin a body meet a body, comin’ through the rye</i> = “If one person meets a(nother) person, coming through the rye” [“Coming Through the Rye”]
<i>bo’er, bour</i>		bower
<i>bogle</i>		ghost; also hobgoblin or malign spirit
<i>bole</i>		indentation, hence hole, cupboard, shelf, storage-spot in a wall
<i>boord</i>		board=table, hence <i>boord-en’</i> =end of the table
<i>boortree</i>		the elder tree, shrub-elder. <i>Fearfu’ flows the boortree</i> <i>bank</i> = “[The stream with the] elder-lined bank flows fearfully” [“Are Ye Sleepin’ Maggie?”]
<i>borrow</i>		ransom; also a loan
<i>bort</i>		bored
<i>bothy</i>		the cottages granted to farm tenants or servants, in which they slept, cooked, etc. From Gaelic <i>bothan</i>
<i>boun(e)</i>		prepare, get ready; also to be ready
<i>boun’s</i>		bounds
<i>bous(e) (v.)</i>		drink
<i>brae</i>		steep bank, slope of a hill — a common land feature in Scotland. Often refers to the upper slopes, i.e. <i>Ye banks and braes o’ bonny Doon</i> [Robert Burns] refers to the lower slopes by the river Doon and the higher ground above. From Gaelic <i>braighe</i>
<i>braid</i>		broad
<i>brak’</i>		break, broke. <i>It’s mony a time my hairt’s been sair, And like to brak in twa</i> = “It’s many a time my heart’s been sore, And like to break in twa” [“When Fortune Turns Her Wheel”]
<i>bran</i>	brand	sword
<i>brankie</i>		conspicuous, usually in the sense of “showy” or “gaudy”
<i>brast</i>		burst
<i>braw (1)</i>		brave

<i>Scots</i>	<i>Think in terms of</i>	<i>Meaning/Usage</i>
<i>braw</i> (2)		beautiful, handsome, presenting a fine appearance, hence also well-dressed. Possibly derived from Gaelic <i>brèagha</i>
<i>brawlie, brawly</i>		well done, bravely done (to be braw)
<i>braxie</i>		a sheep dead of disease. <i>Braxie ham</i> is flesh from such an animal.
<i>bree</i> (1)		brow, top of the head. <i>Wi her cap upon her bree</i> =“With her cap upon her head” [“Saw You My Maggie?”]
<i>bree</i> (2)		brew, juice of a plant
<i>breeks</i>	breeches	pants, trousers. Possibly derived from Gaelic <i>briogais</i>
<i>breid</i>		bread
<i>breist</i>		breast
<i>bricht, brixt</i>		bright
<i>brig, bryg, brigg</i>		bridge. <i>Brig o’ tree</i> =“wooden bridge”
<i>brock</i>		badger (survival from Middle English)
<i>broom</i>		the flowering broom, a common plant (from which the Plantagenet/Angevin dynasty took its name)
<i>brogue, brogan</i>		shoe
<i>brook</i>		accept, tolerate, enjoy (survival from Middle English)
<i>brose</i>		raw oatmeal and water — a sort of emergency dinner
<i>browst</i> (1)		a brew
<i>browst</i> (2)		the effects of one’s actions (usually of drinking)
<i>brunt</i>		burnt
<i>brust</i>		burst
<i>bucht</i>		fold for sheep or cattle, so <i>ewe-bucht</i> = <i>sheep-pen</i>
<i>buchtin-time</i>		time to put the sheep in the bucht. <i>As o’er the hill the eastern star tells buchtin’ time is near, my Jo</i> =“As over the hill the eastern star tells penning-time is near, my love” [Robert Burns, “The Lea-Rig”]
<i>buckle</i>		dress
<i>buik</i>		book
<i>bun</i>		bound
<i>bunbee</i>		bumblebee
<i>bunemaist</i>		(abunemaist:) highest above
<i>burd, bird, buird</i>		maiden
<i>burd-alone</i>		by one’s self
<i>burn</i>		small stream, e.g. <i>Bannockburn</i> =“stream of loaves” (bannocks). <i>How blythe each morn was I tae see My lass come ower the hill. She tripped the burn and she ran tae me, I met her wi’ guid will</i> =“How blythe each morn was I to see My lass come over the hill. She jumped the stream and she ran to me, I met her with good will” [“The Broom of Cowdenknows”]

<i>Scots</i>	<i>Think in terms of</i>	<i>Meaning/Usage</i>
<i>busk</i> (1) (v.)		dress up, adorn one's self
<i>busk</i> (2) (v.)		prepare to leave, depart
<i>busk</i> (3) (n.)		bush (archaic). <u>Henryson, <i>Mouse</i>, I.5, IV.2</u>
<i>but</i> (1)		out, outside; compare <i>ben</i>
<i>but</i> (2)		without, i.e. <i>but the breeks</i> ="without his trousers"
<i>but-and-ben</i>		see under <i>ben</i>
<i>byre</i>		barn or cattle-shed

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<i>ca'</i>		call. <u>SMM, <i>Ewie</i>, III.4</u>
<i>ca' thro'</i>		push forward. <i>Hey, ca' thro', ca' thro', For we hae muckle ado</i> ="Hey, push aside, push aside, For we have much to deal with" ["Hey Ca' Thro'"]
<i>caddie</i>		young servant; also an urchin. <i>My love he is a handsome laddie, And though he's but Dumbarton's caddie</i> ="My love he is a handsome laddie, And though he's but Dumbarton's servant" ["Dumbarton's Drums"]
<i>caird</i> (n.)		tinker; traveller; sturdy beggar. From Gaelic <i>cèard</i>
<i>caird</i> (v.)		card (card wool)
<i>Caledonia, Caledon'</i>		Scotland
<i>callan</i>	gallant	worthy person, fine fellow. <i>Donald's the callan that brooks nae tangledness</i> ="Donald's the gallant who allows no trickiness" ["Donald MacGillavry"]
<i>caller</i>		fresh. <i>Wha'll buy my caller herring, They're bonnie fish and halesome faring</i> ="Who'll buy my fresh herring, They're bonnie fish and wholesome food" ["Caller Herring"]. Often bears the secondary sense "cool," "chilly"
<i>cam'</i>		came
<i>camowine</i>		camomile
<i>canker</i>		properly a cancer; as used, unpleasant, unkind, complaining
<i>cankerit</i>		the state of having or being a canker; <u>Dunbar, <i>Flyting</i>, 13</u>
<i>canna, cannae</i>		cannot. As <i>canna</i> in <u>SMM, <i>Tullochgorum</i> IV.11</u>
<i>cannie</i> (1)		candle
<i>canny, cannie</i> (2)		clever, skilled, able, hence also pleasant, capable, even beautiful; also cautious, careful
<i>cant</i>		common language, style, so a <i>cant phrase</i> is a common dialect phrase

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