John Stuart to Thomas Pennant, on place names of Arran

ID:	0424
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To:	Thomas Pennant
Date:	1773-05-12
Repository:	WCRO
Identifier:	WCRO CR2017/TP369, 4/1a-4/1b
Cite:	'John Stuart to Thomas Pennant, on place names of Arran 1773-05-12' in Curious Travellers Digital Editions [editions.curioustravellers.ac.uk/doc/0424]

Killin May 12th. 1773.

Dear Sir

I am sorry that my being absent from home for some weeks past has prevented my writing a return sooner to your last agreeable letter, which has come to my hands without date, but I suppose must have been written about the beginning of last month.

I send you inclosed some Remarks relative to the island of Arran . With regard to Bute x, Insh-marnoc , and Tarbat , your own notes, which you favoured me with the perusal of, are so accurate and particular that I have nothing to add.[1]

On June 17th., the first day of your voyage, you observe that Kingarth in Bute x 1 is so named from Kin a head, and garth a corn field. The Galic words are Ceann a head and gart a corn field.

‘ Loch-fad ’ i.e. the long lake.

June 21st. ‘ Corra ’ It should be rather spelt Corry

22d. ‘ Machrie ’ rather Machry .

‘ Torr-more ’ i.e. the great round eminence.

‘ Drumadoon ’ In Galic Druim-an-dùin i.e. the ridge of the fort or castle; probably called so from the old round tower which you saw the remains of upon an eminence as you ascended from the shore after viewing the Cave.

‘ Fin-mac-coul ’ rather Fin-mac-Cuil, i.e. Fingal the son of Chumhal.

‘ Cairn a baan ’ rather Carn-baan i.e. the white cairn or heap of stones.

‘ Feoirlin ’ should be written Feorling ; and ‘ Shedeagh ’, Sheddag .

June 23d. ‘ Torr-an-schian castle ’ I imagine it should be Torr-an-tian castle, i.e. the castle of the fairy-haunted eminence.

‘ Goatfield said to be 1/4th mile high’. I suppose it must at least be double that of perpendicular height.

‘500 Bolls of beare ’. It is commonly written bear.

According to your desire I have presented your compliments to Achalader, who offers you his best respects, and is happy to learn that the book he sent you will be of service to you.

I return you many thanks for *your Synopsis of Quadrupeds* though it is not as yet come to my hands, as I likewise do for *your new Genera of Birds* , which D^r. Ramsay has sent me, and gives me great satisfaction. He is surely much obliged to you for your friendly dedication to him – I have no doubt but the Doctor meant and wished to have assisted you in your researches into the Natural history of this country to the best of his power, however much the success may in some instances have fallen below his expectation.

Staffa is without any variation the only Galic and English name of that island, and it's etymon, like that of the greatest part of the other W. isles is only to be sought for in the Norse language.

It gives me much pleasure to hear that M^r Banks has consigned to you all his fine drawings of it.

I have as yet learned nothing with certainty as to the affair of M^r. Robertson Min^r. of Loch-Broom. Whenever I do I shall be sure to acquaint you of it.

For fear of swelling this letter to too great a size, I send you one half of the Remarks upon Arran by the same Post; but inclosed under another Cover.

I am
With Sincere regard
Dear Sir
Your most obliged
and humble Servant

John Stuart

To Thomas Pennant Esq^r.

Downing

Flintshire

S. Britain

Mr Stuart on our voyage.

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Arran

Editorial Notes

[1] The following locations and dates correspond to the itinerary of *Pennant's Tour in Scotland and Hebrides 1772* .

Authorial Notes

[1] x In Galic, Bòit .