

Baile nan
Gàidheal
Highland Village
MADE OF STORIES



The Highland Village
Gaelic Folklife Magazine

an rubha

HIGHLANDVILLAGE.CA

VOLUME 17 • NUMBER TWO



Soraidh Slàn le Deagh Chàirdean
Farewell to Good Friends

Air Bràigh Bhaile | On the Farm
Lusan aig a' Bhaile | Plants at the Village

Léirmheasan | Book Reviews
North American Gaels & Biorachan Beag

Commun Baile Ghàidheal na h-Albann Nuaidh | Nova Scotia Highland Village Society

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for your Cape Breton
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Stòras na h-Òigridh | Treasures of Youth Scholarship Fund provides financial support and assistance to up-and-coming Nova Scotia youth between the ages of five and twenty-one, who are keen to advance their skills in the Gaelic tradition including: fiddle, pipes, piano/guitar accompaniment, language, storytelling, song, and dance.

The fund welcomes donations. A downloadable brochure with details and a pledge form is available on our website. Donations may also be made online through CanadaHelps.org.

Pictured above the 2020 bursary recipients (L-R): Committee Chair Lisa MacNeil; Abby Hanson, a fiddler, piano player and Gaelic singer from Montague Coal Mines, HRM; Gracie Hawes, a fiddler and piano player from St. Andrews, Antigonish County; and Phillip Whyte, a Gaelic speaker and singer from Barrachois, CBRM; Secretary Susan MacLean. To the right (L-R): Lisa MacNeil, Haley Rose MacLean with her borrowed half-size fiddle and Susan MacLean.



WWW.TREASURESOFYOUTH.CA

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Mòrag doesn't want to dirty the cup
while measuring molasses! Animator
Phyllis Williams shows how not to
make extra dirty dishes.

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Facal bhon Neach-stiùiridh | From the Director's Desk

A' DÉILIGEADH RI CÙISEAN CAOCHLAIDEACH | ADAPTING TO CHANGING REALITIES

The past year at *Baile nan Gàidheal* has been one of continued forward motion in spite of our uncertain and changing realities. The 2019 season was a great success with continued growth in the programs and offerings core to our mission, and a third consecutive year of record visitation. We were also beginning to celebrate 60 years as an organization and 20 years as part of the Nova Scotia Museum.

And then, in early 2020, the world changed, forcing us to quickly pivot and adapt to a growing global health and economic crisis. Early in 2020, it became evident that it was going to be a year like no other with incredible uncertainty.

Fortunately, thanks to secure operating funding from the Province of Nova Scotia, wage subsidies from the Government of Canada, and effective Nova Scotia public health protocols, we were able to safely open for a portion of the season. We had shortened opening hours, enhanced public health protocols, an absence of cultural and hands-on programming, and 90% less visitors. It was a very different year. I commend and thank staff for all of their efforts and flexibility in making the best of the year.

I also appreciate the work our team did to provide virtual programming and outreach to our community. These initiatives (which Katherine discusses in *Naidheachd a' Bhaile*) enabled us to not only stay in touch with our local community during the pandemic, but also connect with our international friends who could not come to visit.

Site Development

Aside from the impact of COVID-19, the big news for Highland Village has been the implementation of our most ambitious site development program (valued at more than \$5 million), which will address many infrastructure challenges. The program will better position us for future growth, in particular areas of programming and visitor experience.

Construction began in late 2019 with a new washroom building next to the church to better serve our busy cruise ship market and church functions. A new building to house working shingle mill equipment from the Cash family in Irish Cove was built opposite the Cash Carding Mill. The little barn adjacent to the church has been converted to an on-site activity/programming space

and a green room for church functions. A new maintenance workshop and the recladding of our existing visitor centre (which will become our Curatorial Centre housing our artifact storage and costuming) are also complete.

Work on the centrepiece of this program, our new welcome centre, is underway. It will feature our reception/gift shop, orientation exhibit gallery, contemporary Gaelic Nova Scotia exhibit gallery, library/archives, year-round multipurpose room, kitchen, and administrative offices. There will also be outdoor exhibits on the Mi'kmaq and the Bras d'Or Lake. Our project should be completed in time for the 2022 visitor season. We will have more on this important program in the next issue of *An Rubha*.

I want to acknowledge our government funding partners: Municipality of Victoria



County, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Province of Nova Scotia, and Department of Canadian Heritage. We express our appreciation to the private sector and community donors who have supported our \$1 million Next Chapter Campaign to date.

Móran Taing!

In closing, I wish to thank our board, staff and volunteers for their unwavering support and contributions over the past year - and over the past 60 years. We certainly could not have made the progress we have without their dedication, commitment and passion for our Gaelic Nova Scotia culture.

While the future remains uncertain, we will work together to build a resilient Highland Village. Our site development program and strategic plan provide us with a stronger

foundation from which to rebuild and grow. We have much to celebrate and much to share as we work to ensure continued success and growth over the next 60 years.

James O. St.Clair (1930-2021)

As this issue of *An Rubha* was going to print, we heard the sad news that our long-time supporter, mentor and friend, Jim St.Clair, had passed away. Jim made it his life's work to share the culture, heritage, identity and the legacy of those who called Cape Breton Island home, through his teaching, writing, broadcasting, storytelling, community advocacy and his volunteer leadership in the museum community. The staff and board of *Baile nan Gàidheal* | Highland Village have been extremely fortunate to have benefited from Jim's support, leadership, mentorship and friendship for over 40 years. Jim became involved with the Village in the 1970s. He saw the value and potential of the Village and worked hard to mentor both volunteers and staff in striving to meet that potential. He served on the board from 1978 to 2003 including a period as president from 1987 to 1993. He was instrumental in interpretive development, the establishment of our genealogy service, the moving of the MacQuarrie-Fox House and the Malagawatch Church to the site, the offering of candlelight tours, production of our first orientation video, and the Highland Village joining the Nova Scotia Museum in 2000, amongst many achievements. He has received both the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society's Award of Merit and Volunteer of the Year awards, a volunteer award from the Nova Scotia Museum acknowledging his 40 years as volunteer, and a national museum volunteer award from the Canadian Museums Association and the Canadian Federation of Friends of Museums in 2016. The Village has grown greatly over the past six decades. Jim has played a significant role in that journey. We are grateful for his contributions to the Village and the wider Gaelic culture and will forever treasure his friendship and the richness of that friendship. Rest in peace Jim.

Cuiridh sinn clachan air a chàrn. | We'll put a stone on his cairn.

We'll have much more on Jim and his contributions in the next issue of *An Rubha*. ©

Rodney Chaisson
Director of the Highland Village

Mar is Léir Dhomh Fhìn | As I See It

DÉ FEUM A THA 'S A' GHÀIDHLIG? | GAELIC AND USEFULNESS

Most Gaelic learners have come up against the question, "Why don't you learn a useful language, like French or Mandarin?" at some point. There's a big assumption built into this question. "Useful" equals "helps you make money" in this worldview, which is why the examples are always French (which opens up federal government jobs in Canada) and Chinese (which is big in international trade). But part of the motivation to learn Gaelic is often to escape this money-centric worldview.

For me, as for hundreds of thousands of other Atlantic Canadians, Gaelic is a heritage language. It's my Grandma's first language. It shaped the values and humour of my parents' generation although they didn't grow up speaking the language themselves. Gaelic has always been metaphorically in my peripheral vision: in old songs, on stone monuments, in words and phrases that everyone knows. The old house is a bit *robach* now. Wipe that *bus* off your face. *Ios, Ios, a Mhoire Mhàthair an Dé.*

Learning a heritage language is very different from learning a foreign language. Believe me, I studied Russian intensively for a few years, so I know. And it was interesting, but learning Gaelic has been an utterly different experience. It's not just about learning

the language, it's about becoming part of a community. It's slipping into something that feels familiar and comforting. It's realizing that family quirks are actually cultural practices. It's connecting – or re-connecting – to a missing piece of ourselves.

Gaelic has changed my life. It may sound scary, but in order to become fluent I think you have to let Gaelic consume you a bit. You have to go to every class, event or immersion you possibly can. You have to build up a network of Gaelic speaking friends. You have to stay up late singing Gaelic songs by the fire. You have to listen to a lot of funny stories. You have to spend time with elders. You have to get to know younger people. You have to laugh at your own mistakes in speaking. You have to learn your own family history and

stories. You have to face up to the wound of colonialism, what it's done to you and what it's done to other peoples. You have to help out the learners who start after you. You have to let Gaelic take over your life.

If you do – you may well find that learning Gaelic is its own reward. Those strengthened connections, those intergenerational bonds (which for the Gaels go beyond the bonds with living into bonds with the remembered and beloved dead), that sense of belonging to a community with a shared purpose, are of value in a way that money can never match.

The funny thing is, though—many Gaelic learners in Nova Scotia have gotten hired for projects or jobs because of their Gaelic experience. So there, "useful" language questioners (who are usually monolingual themselves...).

But really, the way my grandmother's face lights up when I ask her, "*Ciamar a tha sibh?*" is all I need to know about how useful Gaelic is to me. ©

Joyce MacDonald
Director of Library and Archival Services
Colaiste na Gàidhlig | Gaelic College



Leanaibh dlùth ri cliù bhur sinnsir.

Commun Baile Ghàidheal na h-Albann Nuaidh |
The Nova Scotia Highland Village Society was incorporated on November 3, 1959 under the Societies Act of NS. Its purpose was to construct and operate an outdoor folk museum dedicated to the Scottish Gaelic culture in Nova Scotia.

The Nova Scotia Highland Village Society operates Baile nan Gàidheal | Highland Village, A Part of the Nova Scotia Museum, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Museum (Department of Communities, Culture & Heritage).

A PART of THE NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM

Baile nan
Gàidheal
Highland Village
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Our vision is to be the leading Gaelic folklife centre, recognized in Nova Scotia, nationally and internationally as an essential institution for continuing development and representation of a vital and sustainable Gaelic community.

Our mission is to grow as a Gaelic folklife centre that bilingually nurtures, communicates and celebrates the heritage and cultural identity of Nova Scotia's Gaelic community.

We are a member of Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM), Canadian Museums Assoc. (CMA), Heritage Cape Breton Connection, Council of NS Archives (CNSA), Genealogical Assoc. of NS (GANS), Cape Breton Genealogical & Historical Association, Assoc. of Living History, Farms and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM), Celtic Heart of North America Marketing Cooperative, Tourism Industry Assoc of NS (TIANS), Baddeck & Area Business Tourism Assoc. (BABTA), Sydney & Area Chamber of Commerce, Strait Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Cape Breton Partnership.

Naidheachd a' Bhaile | The Village News

BLIADHNA CAR DIOFAR | A DIFFERENT KIND OF YEAR



Howie MacDonald and Buddy MacDonald

*I*s ioma caochladh thig air an t-saoghal fo cheann bliadhna. | Many changes come over the world in a year.

Little did we know just how fast things would have to change at the beginning of last year. Each January, we begin to work on the upcoming calendar of programs and events. It didn't take long to realize that the 2020 season would be like no other due to COVID-19 and our plans for celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society would not take place as planned.

Our team set to the task of transforming our site to ensure that the safety of our staff was top priority. It was also very important to make sure our visitors felt safe while still allowing them the opportunity to create their own meaningful experiences as they visited the Village.

Knowing we could not offer our full calendar of programs and events, we began to think outside of the box. How could we still engage with visitors who may have been planning their very first trip to the Village and with all of the visitors who come each year? After some discussion we decided to reach out virtually through our social media platforms. If visitors couldn't come to *Baile nan Gàidheal*, *Baile nan Gàidheal* would come to them!

As mentioned earlier in our Director's Report, we used our social media platforms to engage with visitors from around the world, many who had visited the Village previously, and many more who were just

finding out about *Baile nan Gàidheal* for the first time. *Na Cleasaichean* | The Village Players quickly took to the role of providing online content that allowed us to share with followers our Gaelic language and culture. We were able to create spaces for learning, sharing, and strengthening our community during the pandemic. We shared how to wash the dishes in Gaelic, sang a few songs and offered a recipe or two for everyone to try and make at home.

When the Village did finally open for the season in early July, the animation team did an amazing job, quickly adjusting to all of the changes and challenges they faced. Everyone settled into a routine and made the best of an unknown situation. As the animators interacted with visitors who came to the site, they also spent time working on traditional crafts and cultural skills. Using those skills throughout the days, staff took it upon themselves to create a crazy quilt. Each staff member took a quilt block, which they designed, and added their own personal touches by embroidering memorable events that occurred through the season. The 'pandemic quilt', as it soon became known, took on a life of its own and saw more than 20 squares made. In September, the pieces were placed together for the first time. Staff will complete the quilt this upcoming season, sewing the blocks and adding the finishing hand-sewn touches.

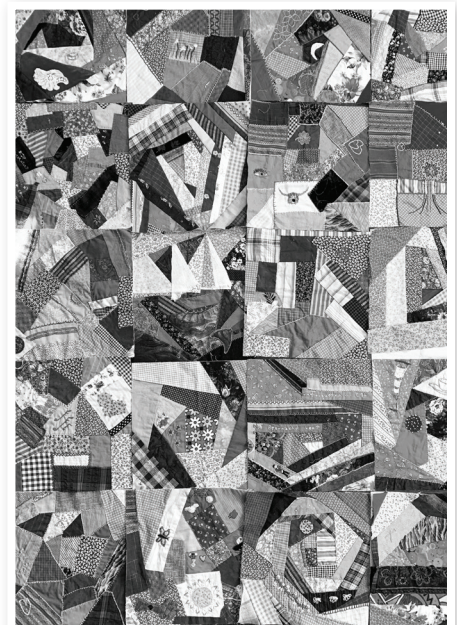
Another important program that had to change course due to the pandemic was that of the Highland Village Day Concert. We were set to host the 59th annual concert in 2020. When we realized this couldn't happen

in person, the idea was brought forth by Highland Village Day concert producer, Quentin MacDonald, to host a virtual concert. Like they say, the show must go on! The concert was filmed the last week of July and aired on our social media platforms the first Saturday of August, the same day the concert would have been held. It might not have taken place on the concert hill overlooking the beautiful Bras d'Or Lake, but the video was certainly magical. You can watch the full concert online on our Facebook page or YouTube channel.

Although our season may have been short, both staff and visitors made the most of their time here at the Village. How could you not when you work in one of the most beautiful locations in Cape Breton! In addition, the shorter season allowed time in the early fall for some much-needed interior upgrades to the buildings. Several of the houses were given fresh, new coats of paint and some minor renovations were done.

Now, as we plan for the upcoming 2021 season, we realize it may look much like the 2020 season. We look forward to having visitors back on site to experience Gaelic life in Nova Scotia. We are also excited to be working on four new exhibit components for the capital project that is underway. In the next issue, we will share more about what you can expect to see when you visit the new Cultural Centre in 2022. ©

Katherine MacLeod
Manager of Interpretation



Uair gu robh Saoghal... | Once Upon a Time...

AM MADADH-RUADH AGUS AN T-ACRAS | THE HUNGRY FOX

Air a h-aithris le Mìcheal Eòin Chaluim Sheumais Mhóir, Baile Sheumais, Siorramachd Bhictoria.

Chuala tu an naidheachd... madadh-ruadh air a bha e uamhasach acrach. Bha an t-acras air. Dh'éirich am madadh-ruadh, bha e 'na chadal fo chraobh mhóir. Agus, dh'éirich e. Chuir e 'làmhnan suas, chuir e 'spògan suas ri shùilean, o, bha e uamhasach acrach. Bha e dìreach gus *starbhradh*. Agus cha robh fhios aige, dé mar a gheobhadh e biadh. Ach, có dhiubh, chunnaic e fitheach air feansa. Agus bha cnap mór do chàise 'na ghob.

"O," thuirt e ris fhéin, "Seo mo theansa."

Chaidh e null dha 'n fhitheach. Thuirt e ris, "O, Mhuire Mhàthair, nach na h-itean breagha a th' agad, cho breagha 's cho faileasach 's a tha 'ad. Cho faileasach, agus, tha mi 'cluinntinn gu 'eil thu uamhasach, uamhasach math gu gabhail òran."

O, dh'fhàs a' fitheach, dh'fhàs e cho leòmach 's bha e uamhasach.

O, thuirt e ris cho math 's a bha e gu gabhail òrain, "Agus, an gabhadh tu ceathramh dhomhsa? Nan gabhadh tu òran dhomhsa, chòrdadh e rium glé mhath."

O, uill, a' fitheach... "Dh'fhàs e cho leòmach 's dh'fhosgail e 'ghob 's dh'fhalbh an càise sios air an talamh. Leum am madadh-ruadh suas, fhuair e 'n càise. Sin mar a dh'éirich dha 'n fhitheach."



Mickey John H. MacNeil, Caintnt mo Mhàthar, photo by Ryan MacDonald

You heard the story... the time the fox was awfully hungry. He was hungry. The fox got up, he was sleeping under a big tree. And he got up. He put his paws up, he put his paws up to his eyes, oh, he was so hungry. He was just about starving. And he didn't know how he'd get any food. But anyway, he saw a crow on the fence. And there was a big lump of cheese in his beak.

"Oh," he said to himself, "this is my chance."

He went over to the crow. He said to him, "Oh, Mother Mary, aren't your feathers handsome, they are so beautiful and shiny. So polished, and I hear that you are terribly good to sing."

Oh, the crow became proud, he grew so vain and it was awful.

"Oh," he said, he told him how good he was to sing, "And would you sing a verse for me? If you would sing me a song, I'd enjoy it very much."

Oh, well, the crow...he grew so arrogant and he opened his beak to sing and the cheese fell down to the ground. The fox jumped up and he got the cheese. That's how it happened to the crow. ©

Recorded, transcribed, and translated by
Shannon MacMullin
Ban-chleasaiche | Cultural Experiences Coordinator,
in apprenticeship with Michael MacNeil, Jamesville
as part of Bun is Bàrr, a Gaelic Affairs program

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Government of Canada through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Departments of Canadian Heritage, and Employment & Social Development Canada;

Municipality of Victoria County.

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Sgeul ri Aithris | The Storytelling Tradition

AIG GAIRM NA DROCHAIDE | AT THE "CROW OF THE BRIDGE"

A humorous anecdote about a man unaccustomed to speaking English who was mixed-up in his grammar.

Air a h-aithris le Dòmhnall Mac a' Phearsain, Boston Ùr, Siorramachd Cheap Breatainn.

Bha nàb' againn aon uair agus bha e an còmhnaidh a' cur a' chairt air thoiseach air an each. Agus chaidh e ann latha a-staigh a Shudnaidh dhan a' *wholesale*. Agus choinnich e fear ann a' shin. 'S thuirt e, dh'fhoighneachd a' fear dha - 's thuirt e ris, "Feumaidh gun do dh'fhalbh e tràth an-diugh."

"O gu dearbha, gu dearbha, dh'fhalbh mi tràth an-diugh. Bha mi dìreach a-null mun choileach nuair a ghairm an drochaid."

.....

We had a neighbour one time and he was always putting the cart before the horse. He went to the wholesale in Sydney one day. And he met a fellow there. And he said, the fellow asked him, he said to him, "You must have left early this morning."

"Oh indeed, indeed, I left early this morning. I was just about to the rooster when the bridge crowed." ©

*Told by Dan MacPherson, New Boston
Recorded by John Shaw
Transcribed and translated by Shannon MacMullin
© CB Gaelic Folklore Collection
For more information visit www.androchaid.ca
Illustration by Ed MacDonell*



Seònaid Mairead ni'n Dhòmhnailh Iain ic Iain | Jessie Mary MacLeod, Breton Cove

Cleachdaidhean nan Gàidheal

Gaelic Customs

A' RÉITEACH | THE BETROTHAL

The tradition of making a *réiteach* | a betrothal, involved making an agreement and settling any logistics regarding the union of a couple. Often, the prospective groom had an older man (an uncle, godfather, friend or other relative) speak on his behalf to make the proposal and marriage arrangement. Here is one account outlining the *réiteach* on the North Shore.

Air aithris le Seònaid Mairead ni'n Dhòmhnailh Iain 'ic Iain, Breton Cove, Siorramachd Bhictoria.

Bha balach a' dol a choimhead airson bean bho chionn fhada, bliadhnaichean air ais, nuair a bhiodh iad dol a choimhead airson bean, dh'fheumadh 'athair a dhol còmhla ris. 'S e réiteach a bh' ac' air, air a' sin. Agus dheigheadh an t-athair is a mhac, dheigheadh iad chun an taigh'. 'S bhruidhneadh iad mu dheidhinn a' nighinn 's bhiodh a h-uile dad a chur air dòigh ann a' shin. 'S dheanadh iad an uair sin suipear mhór 's dh'itheadh iad a' suipear 's dheigheadh iad dhachaigh. Phòsadh iad an ceann tìde. Cha bhiodh iad glé fhada gun

phòsadh as deoghaidh sin. Bha iad a' toirt seachad bó leis a' nighean. A h-uile nighean a phòsadh an uair 'ud, dh'fheumadh iad, dh'fheumadh a h-athair bó a thoirt dhi.

.....

A long time ago, there was a young man looking for a wife. When courting, his father would be required to accompany him. They called it a *réiteach*, a betrothal. And the father would go with the son, they would go to the house. And they would speak about the young woman and everything would be arranged then. They would make a big supper and they would eat supper and after that, they would go home. They would marry after a time. It wouldn't be very long before they would marry after making the *réiteach*. They would provide a cow for the dowry. Every young woman who would marry at the time, her father was required to give her a cow. ©

*Told by Jessie Mary MacLeod (née MacInnis)
Recorded by John Shaw
Transcribed and translated by Shannon MacMullin
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For more information visit www.androchaid.ca*

Mar Chuimhneachain | In Memory



*Seònaid ni'n Fhionnlaigh 'ic Dhòmhnail Mhóir 'ic
Aonghais Dhuinn • Janet Cameron
1930-2020*

Janet had a great love and appreciation for all things connected to the Gaelic culture. She loved the language and worked very hard to become a fluent speaker. She also liked to challenge herself by reading Gaelic books. The songs, the music, and the stories—she loved it all. She was always promoting the language. Her support of activities involving Gaelic led her to driving many miles in all kinds of weather to attend various functions. Her support for the Highland Village, the Christmas Island *Féis*, the Cape Breton Fiddlers Association, the Gaelic Society in Sydney and the Gaelic College is well known.

She was a beacon of encouragement to anyone who was learning to become a Gaelic speaker, musician or singer.

Janet was born in Mabou, but the family moved to North Sydney, then to Boisdale when she was very young. When Janet began school in North Sydney, Gaelic was the only language she knew. But that soon changed when she mingled with the other children who spoke only English. However, in the Cameron house, the Gaelic traditions lived on in the songs and music that were always part of the *céilidhean* | visits often held there.

When the revival of the Gaelic began in the early 2000s, Janet was part of it. Her best day of the week was Wednesday when the Gaelic speakers around the area met for breakfast and conversation at Flynn's Canteen in Beaver Cove.

Janet will always be remembered for her kindness and endearing personality. *Fois shiorraidh gu robh aig a h-anam*. Rest in peace, Janet. ©

*Flòraidh ni'n Sheonaidh 'ic Mhurchaidh
Flora MacIsaac, Gaelic tradition bearer and dear friend to Janet*



*Ìomhair mac Jack Mhìcheil Dhòmhnail Ìomhair
Eddie Jack MacNeil
1931-2020*

Ìomhair mac Jack Mhìcheil Dhòmhnail Ìomhair | Eddie Jack MacNeil of Rear Christmas Island was a regular visitor to Baile nan Gàidheal. He'd arrive with a smile and inspired good fun and laughter as he made the rounds. He was a wonderful and engaging storyteller.

A grand supporter of Gàidhlig learners and those keeping up Gàidhlig cultural arts, it was a pleasure to see him coming. His enthusiasm for Gàidhlig culture was contagious. He'd never be shy to give a step! *Bidh sinn 'ga ionndrainn gun teagamh*. We'll surely be missing him. *Fois shiorraidh dha 'anam*. ©

Photo by Shamus Y. MacDonald, PhD.

MAC-TALLA.

"An nì nach cluinn mi an diugh cha'n aithris mi maireach."

VOL. I.

SIDNI, C. B., DI-SATHAIRNÈ, IUN 24, 1893.

No. 57.

June 24, 1893

FACAL Á MARGAREE

Tha 'n t-sìde tioram, agus tha 'm bàrr ann an cunnart mura tig uisge 'n ùine aithghearr. Tha aodann nam beann us àirigh nan gleann air an sgeadachadh ann an àilleachd ro dhreachmhor; agus 's mór an toileachadh inntinn do neach air bith dol air faontradh feadh nan stùc mun àm seo 'n t-samhradh. Tha sgeul a' tighinn 'ugainn gu bheil am bradan glé phailt aig Acarsaid Mhargaree, agus gu bheil triùir 'ga cheannach am bliadhna airson margadh nan Stàitean. Tha iad a' pàigheadh naoi centachan am punnd air; agus tha seo 'na phris fìor mhath. Chuala mi gun d' fhuair aon fhear ceithear a' latha roimhe a thomhais ceud punnd. Bha seo naoi dolar airson beagan uairean do thrioblaid. Tha slàinte buadhach anns na crìochan seo o chionn ùine mhath, agus tha MAC-TALLA 'toirt fìor shòlas 'ugainn le chéilidh gach seachduinn, air chòir 's nach eil farmad againn ri àite tha fo 'n ghréin.

CAORSTADH

A WORD FROM MARGAREE

The weather is dry and the crops are in danger if we don't get rain soon. The face of the mountains and the hill pastures of the valleys are decorated with very handsome beauty and colours; and it is a great pleasure to any person wandering over the hills at this time of summer. We hear that the salmon are very plentiful at Margaree Harbour, and that there are three buyers this year for markets in the States. They are paying nine cents per pound; and this is a very good price. I heard a fellow caught four that weighed a hundred pounds. That was nine dollars for a few hours of trouble. We've had excellent health in these parts for a good while, and MAC-TALLA is a true delight coming to visit every week, so that we don't envy any other place under the sun.

KIRSTY

July 1, 1893

GUTH BHO 'N CHAMUS

Tha 'n t-sìde anabarrach tioram agus rud-eigin fuar o cheann dà sheachdain. Tha cùram mór air na tuathanich gu lean an turadh agus gum bi am bàrr air a mhilleadh mar a bha e 'n-uiridh.

Cha deach a bheag de dh'iasg a ghlacadh air a' chladach againn air an t-samhradh seo. Tha iasg ann an deagh phris agus tha dòchas againn gum faigh na daoine tha call na h-ùine mu thimchioll beagan dheth co-dhiù.

Tha dùil mhór againn ris an rathad-iarruinn a thighinn na 's faisg' oirnn. Tha cùisean a' coimhead glé choltach cho fad' seo, ach tha e glé luath barail a thoirt aig an àm seo, oir "'S iomadh atharrachadh a thig air an oidhche fhad' fhoghair."

Tha "Caorstaigh" a' smaointeachadh nach eil ceàrna sam bith dhe 'n dùthaich air a sgeadachadh cho briagha le Nàdur aig an àm seo ri beannan 'us gleannan Mhargaree. Tha e glé nàdurra dhithse bhi dhe 'n bheachd sin; ach tha fios agam nan tigeadh i 'nall do 'n Chamus agus a sùil a thogail suas ri Beinn-na-Guiseadaidh gu faiceadh i sealladh a bhiodh ro thlachdmhor leatha agus a chuireadh 'na cuimhne mar a thuirt Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair—

"A' choill' gu h-uile fo làn-duilleach, 'S i 'na culaidh-bainnse."

"Lusan cùbhraidh 'mach a' brùchdaidh, 'S cuid dhuibh cul-ghorm bainndearg."

"'S ceòlar, éibhinn, bàrr gach géige, 'S na eòin fhéin a' danns' orr'."

SEÒNAID, Iun 28 là, 1893

A WORD FROM BROAD COVE (INVERNESS)

The weather has been exceedingly dry and a bit cold for two weeks. The farmers are very anxious that the dry spell will continue and the crops will be ruined as they were last year.

The catches on our shores weren't great this year. Fish is making a good price so we hope the fishers will make a little bit anyway.

We are greatly anticipating the railroad coming closer to us. Everything looks very good so far but it is too early to form an opinion yet, because "Many changes came on the long fall night."

"Kirsty" thinks that there isn't a corner of the country so beautifully decorated by Nature at this time as the mountains and glens of Margaree. It's natural for her to be of that opinion; but I know if she came over to Broad Cove and took a look at Gusset Mountain, she would see a view that would be altogether pleasing to her and it would remind her of Alexander MacDonald's words—

"The forest completely covered in foliage, and wearing her wedding suit."

"Fragrant plants blooming, in colours of blue and pink."

"Melodious music atop each branch, and the birds themselves dancing on them."

JANET, June 28, 1893

July 15, 1893

SGEUL Á MARGAREE

A MHIC-TALLA RÙNAICH — 'N uair a sgrìobh mi 'ugaibh mu dheireadh, bha sinn ann an cùram mór mu dheidhinn a' bhàrra, le fìor thìormachd na sìde. Uaithe sin, 's ann air ais a chaidh a' feur agus roinn dhe 'n bhuntàta. Rinn fìor dheàrrsadh na gréine a' feur a losgadh, agus tha e na 's tainne 'n diugh na bha e o chionn dà sheachduinn. Thàinig reòdhadh air oidhche àraid a mheath bàrr a' bhuntàta ann an àitichean nochda 's a rinn mòran milleadh air. Ach tha chuid nach d' rug an reòdhadh air a' coimhead glé mhath, agus ma bhios an t-side fàbharach a' seo suas agus an daolag a dh'fhuireach air falbh, tha misneach mhath againn às a' phòr sin fhathast.

Bheirinn cagar do "Sheònaid" bhochd ann a' seo gu bheil mór àille sgaoilte fhathast ma ghleannan Mhargaree, agus nach do chaill iad a bheag dhe rìomhadh air tàilleabh a cuid-sa atamachd ri "Beinn-na-Guiseid." Tha a' Bheinn sin bòidheach gu dearbh le crùn iomadhathach 's le tlà-ghaath fheasgair, 's ma dh'fheudte le leannan Seònaid a' tàmh oirre, ach ann an coimeas ri gleann Mhargaree, chan eil i ach mar bhealamas na cuilm.

Tha Riaghladair na Mór-roinn, *Daly*, a' tàmh 'nar measg o chionn dà sheachduin, agus tha gach nì còrdadh ris cho math agus nach eil teagamh nach doir e cliù air a' cheàrn seo do 'n tìr 'n uair a thilleas e air ais go *Halifax*. Bha e 's an eaglais againn Di-dòmhnaich, agus bha mór thlachd aig na h-uile dha irioslachd, dha chaoimhneas, 's dha choltas gu léir. Dé do bharail, a "Sheònaid," ciamar a chòrdadh e ris an Urramach seo dà sheachduinn a chaith air "Beinn-na-Guiseid"? Ged tha mi glé chinnteach gu faigheadh e daoine fialaidh ann agus Gàidheil gu 'n cùl, tha amharus agam nach biodh inntinn gu tùr riaraichte. Ach tha mi 'creidsinn gun abair Seònaid, "Tha fear a 's fheàrr no e fuireach ann."

Tha fuathas do nigheanan a' tilleadh dhachaidh á *Boston* air an t-samhradh seo - mòran dhiù a chaill an coltas agus beagan a chaill a' Ghàidhlig. Ach tha mi 'creidsinn gur i a' Ghàidhlig a 's giorra chaidh 'uatha.

Tha sinn uile bòsdail a bhi faicinn MHIC-TALLA air a dhùbladh ann a' meudach, agus tha sinn glé chinnteach gum bi gach neach anns a bheil fuil Gàidheil a' toirt an cuideachaidh dha mar is còir, agus 's e 'n cuideachadh a 's fheàrr an dolar a phàigheadh ro-làimh. Duine sam bith a leubhas MAC-TALLA fad bliadhna 's nach cuir air adhart am beagan a thathas ag iarraidh air a shon, 's e neach gun treibhdhireas, gun spiorad Gàidheil a th' ann, fear a chumadh a chlaidheamh 's an truaill an teis còmhraig. Mura tig pràdhainn teann orm, cluinidh sibh 'uam fhathast an ùine ghoirid.

CAORSTADH

A WORD FROM MARGAREE

BELOVED MAC-TALLA — When I wrote to you last, we were very worried about the crops, with the extremely dry weather. Since then the hay and the potatoes are behind. The hay has been burnt with the strong sunshine and it is thinner today than it was two weeks ago. On a particular night, there was a frost which injured the potato tops in exposed areas which did a lot of damage to them. But, a portion that weren't touched by the frost are looking very good, and if the weather is favourable from here on and if the potato bugs stay away, we are encouraged concerning the crops.

I would put a whisper to poor "Janet" here that there is much beauty spread over Margaree yet, and it hasn't lost a speck of finery due to her partiality to Gusset Mountain. That Mountain is indeed beautiful, with a multi-coloured crown and a mild evening breeze and perhaps with Janet's sweetheart living there, but compared to Margaree Valley, it isn't but the leftover crumbs after a feast.

Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, *Daly*, was visiting with us two weeks ago, and he enjoyed everything so much that there is no doubt he will praise our area of the province when he returns to Halifax. He was in our church Sunday, everyone was delighted altogether by his company, humility and kindness. What do you think, "Janet," how would this Noble like to spend two weeks on Gusset Mountain? Although I'm sure he would find the people hospitable and Gaels to their backs (through and through), I suspect he wouldn't be totally satisfied. But, I believe Janet would say, "There's a better man than him living there."

Many young women are returning home from Boston this summer—many who lost their way of being and some who lost their Gàidhlig. But, I believe the Gàidhlig is the most recent to have left them.

We are all proud to be seeing MAC-TALLA doubling in size, and we are certain that every person with the blood of the Gaels will help as they should, and the best help they can offer is to pay their dollar in advance. Anyone who reads MAC-TALLA for a year and doesn't send the small price, that's a person without honesty, without the spirit of a Gael, a person who would keep their sword in its sheath in the middle of a fight. If I don't get too busy, you'll hear from me again in a short time.

KIRSTY



An excerpt from Mac-Talla edited and translated by Shannon MacMullin, Ban-chleasaiche | Cultural Experiences Coordinator.

Mac-Talla, published in Sydney, Nova Scotia, was the longest running Gaelic weekly paper, ending as a bi-weekly (1892-1904). Eòin Aonghais Chaluim | Jonathan G. MacKinnon, editor, was a life-long promoter of Gaelic and was involved in other publications including Gaelic translations of English literature.



Sàdaidh ni'n Leonard 'ic Iain Ghilleasbuig 'ic Dhòmhnaill Sadie MacDonald • 1954-2021

We dedicate this issue of An Rubha in memory of our friend and colleague Sàdaidh NicDhòmhnaill | Sadie MacDonald, who passed away this past winter after a brief but valiant battle with cancer.

Sadie joined our staff team in 1995 as a Reception/Gift Shop Clerk. For the next 25 years, along with her partners in crime (the late Gerry MacNeil, Marlene MacDougall, and Anne MacNeil), she would welcome hundreds of thousands of visitors to our site. When Gerry retired in 2013, Sadie took on the role of Coordinator of Visitor Services with the responsibility of coordinating gift shop purchasing and ensuring our front end ran like a well-oiled machine.

Sadie was a dedicated employee who came to work everyday with great pride and enthusiasm for the Village. She also had a wonderful sense of humour. She would often have a mischievous smile on her face, or look like she was up to no good - especially when she seized an opportunity to get one up on one of her colleagues - although she never did top TriMac Tours. She helped make Highland Village a great place to work.

Sadie was the youngest daughter of the late Leonard and Kathleen (Bonaparte) MacLean. Kathleen was also a former Highland Village staff member. She is survived by her husband Charles, twin daughters Alicia (Joel) and Julie (Bernard), grandchildren Calder, Sadie and Charlie Louise, brother Leonard, sisters Mae (John Angus) Matheson, Ann (Brian) Whittleton and Marguerite (Adrian) MacNeil. Sadie passed away March 3, 2021. Our hearts go out to all of Sadie's family and friends.

Sadie retired in June of 2020. Little did we know that our visit with her this past December would be our last. Although her passing will leave a huge hole in our hearts, she has left us with memories that will last a lifetime.

We'll make sure that there will be a special place to put the napkins in the new gift shop for you and Gerry.

Cuiridh sinn clach air a càrn. | We'll put a stone on her cairn. ©



Rodney presents Sadie with her Highland Village staff retirement book in December 2020.



Sadie with the Gerry MacNeil at a Village function.

Joan ni'n Iain Steabhain Theàrlaich Alasdair an t-Saoir Joan (MacKenzie, MacDonald) Gillis • 1928-2020

Joan was the daughter of Mary Ann (Devoe) and John Stephen MacKenzie of Washabuck Bridge. She was born into a family of 12 children which included many fiddlers, piano players, singers, dancers, and guitarists. Her mother and father were great singers and fluent in Gaelic and Joan learnt many of their songs. The MacKenzie house in Washabuck Bridge was a frequent gathering place for community entertainment.

With her first husband, Ranald MacDonald, Joan raised five children. When living at home and with her own family, Joan was heavily involved in the hard work of running a small farm. Visitors were welcomed to Joan's house, no matter the number or the time of day or night. She considered it a privilege. She had the knack of preparing tea and meals quickly with what she had baked, and no one left the house hungry.

Joan was a long-time volunteer with the Nova Scotia Highland Village and was known for promoting Celtic music and dancing. Joan was very involved with Gaelic culture and intent on passing it on to young people. She was part of a step dance group along with Theresa MacNeil and Bernie & Stanley Campbell. They would often dance a Scotch Four figure (*top photo*) at Highland Village Day concerts. During the 1960s, they appeared on television, which was considered quite an achievement at the time.

While her son, Quentin, and daughter, Helen, were members of the Highland Village Pipe Band, Joan assisted Helen MacNeil and Lucille MacNeil in the operations of the band. Joan was a long-time member of the Highland Village Day Entertainment Committee. She frequently travelled, at her own cost, to other concerts in the area to scout talent, often visiting performers at their homes in order to enlist them for the Highland Village Day concerts. She also organized 'Scotch Hour' mini-concerts and milling frolics in Washabuck. She donated her famous baked goods and worked at numerous community fund-raising suppers and events. She was honoured to receive the Highland Village Volunteer of the Year award in 2000 (*middle photo*).

In 1978, Joan travelled with a Cape Breton tour group to Scotland where she was able to visit and explore Barra, the area from where the Gaelic culture she loved so much had sprung. She enjoyed keeping in contact for many years with the friends she met there.

After the passing of her husband Ranald, Joan married John Anthony Gillis who was living in Antigonish. She now had more family, friends and musicians to meet. John was a noted performer in his own right, as a member of the Iona Gaelic Singers. When they moved to John's old home in Jamesville, the kitchen was usually full of people and entertainment.

Into her 90s, Joan maintained her love of music and step dancing. Despite her reduced physical mobility, a fiddle tune would bring her to her feet, eager to show off her steps and she would encourage others to do the same. She loved the people and her homes on the Iona Peninsula, especially along the Washabuck shore.

Gun robh fois ann an sìth. | Rest in peace. ©

Stephanie MacDonald, fiddler, dancer, music teacher and granddaughter to Joan



Ag éirigh air Òrain | An Rubha Song Selection

AN TÉ SIN AIR A BHEIL MI 'N GEALL | THAT WOMAN TO WHOM I GAVE MY PLEDGE

Coinneach Mac Dhòmhnaill Nìll 'ic Choinnich | Kenneth Morrison was a gifted singer who made a lasting contribution to the song heritage of Gaelic Nova Scotia. Starting more than sixty years ago, he preserved and produced collections of recorded music from Loch Lomond, Gabarus Lake, and Framboise. More importantly, he was an accessible and encouraging tradition bearer who readily shared those recordings—and his knowledge of the song tradition they preserved—with others. Long after his retirement from Sydney Academy, he continued teaching those of us who came to learn from him.

Over the last fifteen years, Kenny and I spent many afternoons listening to old tapes in his kitchen in Ashby, often while looking through folders stuffed with song lyrics. Some were filled with his small, neat writing. Others were clearly inherited from friends. Over time, Kenny became the default repository of the collective memory of the Gaelic tradition of Loch Lomond.

In some ways, he seemed destined to fill that role. His father was a well-known singer and his sisters also inherited a talent for music. For decades, Kenny sang at milling frolics in eastern Cape Breton, where his full, confident voice, and knack for embellishment, made him a welcome presence. A long-time member of the Gaelic choir in Sydney, he was regularly invited to sing at funerals. Having maintained the tradition of Gaelic psalm singing at church and home for much of his life, Kenny was likely the last of the old-time precentors in Gaelic Cape Breton.

Morrison was descended from immigrants from Berneray, Scotland. During our visits, he shared his thoughts on the precenting styles of Loch Lomond and the North Shore, discussed his own musical influences, and recalled how his father learned to read music at night school using the tonic solfa method. Though unflinchingly modest about his own talents, Kenny was keen to identify people he thought should be recorded and never ceased to praise an earlier generation of singers from his part of Gaelic Cape Breton. In addition to his own father, he was particularly fond of the singing of Angus and Philip MacDonald (*Gilleann Dòmhnail Shandaidh*).

A few years ago, Kenny showed me around Loch Lomond. Although most of his life was spent in Sydney, the rural community of his youth always remained close to his

heart. That's where this picture was taken, overlooking the old family property, not far from the place a previous generation called the *Creagan*. And of course, on the way, we had to stop to see friends in Enon and bring some bread to Chrissie MacInnis in Big Pond where we had a chat with Father George. In his obituary, it was said people were his hobby. Because of the close relationships he cultivated with others, I always enjoyed going visiting with Kenny. But looking back, one afternoon stands out.

After stopping in for lunch with Alex and Annie MacLean in Gabarus Lake, Kenny suggested we keep going to Framboise. Soutter Strachan didn't know we were coming and was visibly moved to see Kenny coming up the steps outside. The hours that followed were filled with laughter as the pair reminisced about singers, songs, and much-loved characters from years gone by—like Maggie *Ruadh* who always got guests working for her. As we went to leave, Kenny turned around at the door, grabbed Soutter by the hand and started singing, each man swinging his arm in time with the melody. It was a fitting end to the visit, and perhaps the best way a singer could say goodbye. And for that reason, it seems a good way to remember Kenny Don Neil, who was a friend to many, a teacher to the end, and a credit to the Gaels of Loch Lomond. ©



Shamus Y. MacDonald, PhD.

Kenny Morrison first heard this song at a wedding at Fergusson Lake where it was sung by Seonaidh Ceit Bheag | John H. MacLeod. It soon became his favorite and was often requested of him. For that reason, it was not surprising he chose to draw our visit with Soutter Strachan to close with this song. (Words available in An t-Òranaiche, Page 121-122).

*An té sin air a bheil mi 'n geall,
Gruaidh mar chaorann dearg air chrann;
Cruinneag bhòidheach a' chùil duinn,
'S gil' thu na sneachda nam beann.*

Di-luain a ghluais sinn às an tìr,
Leis a' cheilp 's bu mhór a phrìs;
Ach mur leig sibh dhachaidh mi,
Bidh an tuath gun nì no geall.

'N uair a thog mi rithe na siùil bhàn,
'S a ghlaic mi 'n ailm ann am làimh,
Thòisich i ri dèanamh bàir,
'S i toirt làn às bhos a's thall.

'N uair thàinig m' uair aig an stiùir,
Dearbh cha robh an fhainge ciùin;
'S 'n uair a thug mi riut mo chùl,
Shil mo shùilean mar an t-allt.

'N uair a shéid e gu cruaidh,
B' éiginn domhsa dhol suas;
Cùram mór nach till mi nuas,
'Smaointinn air mo luaidh 's an àm.

'N uair a bhios mi 'reefadh an t-siùil,
Bidh na deòir a' ruith o m' shùil,
A's eagal orm gu'n tig fear ùr,
Air mo chùl a nì mo chall.

Na biodh cùram ort, a ghaoil,
Ged a sheòlainn roimh na caoil;
Bidh an sgiobair air mo thaobh—
'S e Mac-Ille-Mhaoil a th' ann.

Na bhiodh cùram ort mu d' lòn,
Ged a sheòlainn air luing mhóir,
Théid i 'Ghrìanaig fo 'cuid sheòl,
'S théid am bròn a-null 's a-nall.

Fhuair mi do litir Di-màirt,
'S ro mhath dh'aithinich mi do làmh,
'S mu 'n do leugh mi dhi ach pàirt,
Dh'òl mi do dheoch slàint' 'n rum.

Ach 'nam bithinn-sa 'nam shaor,
Dhèanainn bàta shnàmhachd caoil,
'Dhol a shealltainn air mo ghaol,
Ged robh mhuir 'na caoir 's an àm.

Gur h-ann glé mhoch air Di-luain
A fhuair mi 'm *present* thar a' chuain—
Prìne-broillich 'bh' aig mo luaidh,
'S dual de 'n ghruaig a bh' air a ceann.

Meòir is grinne 'thairgneas sgrìob,
Leis a' pheann 'ga 'chur a sìos;
Do litrichean gu'm faighinn fhìn,
Anns na h-Innsean fada thall.

Feasgar foghar air Cnoc-àrd
Air a' bhuain cha robh thu càrr;
'N uair ghlacteadh corran leat 'ad làimh
Dh'fhaodadh càch bhi dèanamh bhann.

Seinn fo Sgàil nan Geugan Uaine | Songs from the Greenwood

ÒRAN NAN SHINGLES | SONG OF THE SHINGLES

Language in Lyrics is a three-year, SSHRC-funded project with a remit to create a public database of the Gaelic songs made or known in Nova Scotia, and to digitize the texts of around 4,000 of these. The text of *Òran nan Shingles* came about by joint effort during a series of online 'transcription frolics' organized by the Language in Lyrics project in 2020.

Whilst many of the songs exist already in books, manuscripts and newspapers, there are a large number of locally-composed songs which were recorded but have never been transcribed. As part of our community outreach mission, Language in Lyrics has been developing the concept of a 'transcription frolic' where we work with community members to crowd-source song transcriptions. As our team member, Mary Jane Lamond, says: 'It takes a village to transcribe a song!'

We held four online frolics during the COVID-19 lockdown of 2020 where community members from both sides of the Atlantic came together in Google Docs to simultaneously create a transcription at a pre-arranged time. It sounds like it would be mayhem, but it was actually remarkably successful! We sent the results to the ever-generous John Shaw who reviewed them and added his own edits and suggestions.

Despite our best efforts, however, there are still parts of the songs that are very difficult to make out. Developing the necessary familiarity with the language, local dialects, characters and historic events needed to achieve a complete transcription is challenging, not to mention the variable recording quality. We encourage readers to follow the link below to our website where you can listen to the recording of this and other transcribed songs and send us your suggestions.

Òran nan Shingles seemed a particularly apt choice for our frolic, since its subject is the struggles and benefits of working as a group! It was made by Aonghas Eòin Ghilleasbuig | Angus Gillis of Rear Beaver Cove. Angus was the son of Eòin Dubh | Black Jonathan who as a child immigrated to Cape Breton from Barra. His mother was Ann MacNeil. An interesting account of the family and their early struggles in Cape Breton can be found in *To the Hill of Boisdale* (MacMillan, 1986, p. 87). The singer in this recording is Rod Francis

Nicholson who was born in Rear Beaver Cove in 1884 to parents Hector Nicholson and Bridget Johnston, both of Barra descent. He worked as a blacksmith and carpenter and is remembered as a "...fine fiddler and treasure trove of Gaelic songs..." (MacMillan, 1986, p. 572). He never married and later in life went to live with relatives in Beaver Cove where his talents were greatly enjoyed. He later joined this family when they moved to North Sydney where he remained until his death in 1969. He would have been a double first cousin of Hector Mick MacLean, grandfather of Highland Village animators Basil MacLean and Catherine Gillis. ©

Visit the website www.languageinlyrics.com to listen to recordings, browse indexes and learn more about the project.

Màiri Britton, Mary Jane Lamond,
& Stacey MacLean, Language in Lyrics (pictured below)



Fàill il ó 's na ho ro hù o,
Hiùraibh ó 's na ho ro hù o,
Fàill il ó 's na ho ro hù o,
Rinn sinn a' fhroilig gu sunndach.

Smaoinich mi gun deanainn éibh ann,
Nam biodh na nàbannan dileas,
Gum faighinn fhìn a dhà na trì dhiubh,
Seachd a bhith 'g obair leam fhìn air.

'S fhuair mi *shingles* air an sàbhadh,
Dh'fhòghnadh dhomh mìle no dhà dhiubh;
Fhuair mi siud 's gun d' fhuair mi tàirnean,
Rinn mi sgafall agus fàradh.

Ràinig mi Eachann ri chiad fhear,
Dh'innis mi dé bha mi ag iarraidh,
[Gur aon duine dh'fhalbh a-raoir oirnn?],
[... nach bi clìor air? ...]

Labhair esan rium-s' an droch-bheul,
'A Dhòmhnaill nach tu tha gòrach?,
A bhith 'gam iarraidh-s' 's mi 'nam ònrachd,
'S a' bhuain air a dhol 'na tòrr oirnn."

Ràinig mi Iain Néill an uair sin,
Dh'innis mi gu dé bha bhuam-sa,
Gun robh an taigh air a dhol bhuath' oirnn,
'S gun do dhùisgeadh taobh na tuaigh' e.

Labhair esan rium gu seòlta,
"Chan eil *hatchet* anns a' Phròvince,
Bhuaileas daraich ann am *board-wood*,
Mura buail mi fhìn le m' dhòrn i."

Thàinig Èairdsidh an Crìostaidh,
O 'n a bha e riamh cho rianail;
Thàinig e 's gun d' rinn sinn pios, is
Cha mhór nach do chuir sinn crìoch air.

Fàill il ó 's na ho ro hù o
Hiùraibh ó 's na ho ro hù o
Fàill il ó 's na ho ro hù o
We made a merry frolic.

I thought I would put the call out,
If the neighbours would be faithful,
That I would have the company of two
or three of them,
Instead of working by myself.

I got shingles which had been sawed,
A couple of thousand would suffice me;
I got them and I got nails,
I made a scaffold and a ladder.

Hector was the first one I reached,
I told him what I was seeking,
[That one man left us last night?]
[...]

He said to me rudely,
"Donald, aren't you foolish?,
To be seeking me out while I'm by myself,
And the harvest piling up on us."

I reached Iain then,
I told him what I needed,
That the house was falling apart,
And the side of the axe would revive it.

He said to me slyly,
"There isn't a hatchet in the province,
That would strike oak into board-wood,
If I don't hit it with my fist."

Archie the Christian came,
He was always so well disposed,
He came and we did a piece (of it), and
We pretty much finished the job.

Dèante le Làimh | Handmade

TARTAN IN THE HIGHLAND SETTLEMENTS OF NOVA SCOTIA

*Thàinig sinn a Cheap Breatainn
gun airgid gun òr,
Le gùn de dhrògaid is
briogais de chlò...*

*We came to Cape Breton,
no silver or gold,
With dress made of homespun
and breeches of wool...*

These lines from *Òran A' Mhinisteir* | The Minister's Song by the Rev. Kenneth MacLeod, a native of Bucklaw, Cape Breton, are an apt description of newly-arrived immigrants from the Highlands of Scotland to Nova Scotia. They were dressed, not in tartan, as one might expect, but in 'English-

woven. How then, did these homespun-clad Gaels settling in eastern Nova Scotia become swept up into the image the province presents to the world today of 'tartan-clad' Highlanders and of Nova Scotia as being essentially Scottish?

Conditions were harsh for many Gaels in the period of settlement. The cold weather made warm clothing a necessity, but little was available. Eventually, though, flax was grown to make linen, sheep were acquired to provide wool, and looms were built to weave cloth. As a result, most people continued to wear homespun, men as well as women.

Francis MacGregor, who grew up near Baddeck at the end of the nineteenth century

those used in weaving tartan would have been too time consuming.

We know from first-person accounts of the nineteenth century that tartan was conspicuous only by its absence. An American travel writer, Frederick S. Cozzens (*Acadia, Or a Month with the Blue Noses*), visiting Cape Breton in the late 1850s admitted that he had been expecting to see the "Highlandman of romance" he had read about in Sir Walter Scott's widely popular Waverly novels. He declared, "It is true here were the Celts in their wild settlements, but without bagpipes or pistols, sporrans or philabegs (kilts)...."

That is not to say that tartan was never seen. But very, very few accounts appear. It has been recorded that there were men in kilts aboard the Hector when it sailed into Pictou Harbour in 1773; there is an account of a small boy in tartan trousers from River Denys in the 1830s; and there is one account (perhaps two) of tartan cloth, possibly from Scotland, being passed down in families near Antigonish. The best known anecdote regarding tartan of some value comes from Clara Dennis in *Cape Breton Over* (1942). She tells of a plaid overcoat being traded by settlers from Skye in 1829, for 400 acres of land in North East Margaree.

But tartan really had no part in the daily life of the Gaels. As Florence Mackley definitively stated in *Handweaving in Cape Breton*, "One would probably expect to find many of the old tartan setts in Cape Breton homes. This is not so, however... Most of the early settlers were not accustomed to tartan weaving."

The ascendancy of tartan in Nova Scotia began, not with the Gaels who settled here, but back in Scotland. A chain of events began in the mid-eighteenth century that resulted in changes to the general public's attitudes about tartan and about Highlanders. Tartan evolved from *breacan an fhéilidh* | the long, belted plaid that had been worn as the practical everyday clothing of the 'barbarian' Highlander, to the *féileadh beag* (philabeg) | modern-day tartan kilt that was seen not only as the uniform of



"Highland Laddie", a postcard dated 1908, Lord Lovat visits Antigonish.

style' clothing—primarily homespun wool clothes, with trousers and jackets for the men.

Visitors to the province today often look for examples of a tartan that was made for our 'clans'. Very few would be aware that tartan was not woven in the new Highland settlements. Instead, it was the decorative 'overshot' patterns that had been brought with the families that were cherished and

recalled that, "Cotton warp was sold at local stores to mix with wool for weaving. ...Not too many suits for men were in demand as the loom in nearly every home took care of that." Some accounts of the time mention that the clothing of the men had a purplish-blue colour, an indication of indigo dye. Homespun clothing in the early years was often of one colour, or stripes or checks, using a small amount of contrasting colour. Complicated dyeing techniques such as

heroic military deeds, but also as a badge of clanship and a reminder of a romantic past. These ideas spread in the nineteenth century from Scotland, throughout Europe, and to the Americas—eventually reaching the government of Nova Scotia in the twentieth century.

It all began when the British government banned the wearing of tartan and 'Highland garb' for men and boys after its decisive defeat of Jacobite Highlanders at Culloden in 1746. (Tartan had become a symbol of the Jacobite cause.) Proscription, as it was known, lasted for more than a generation, effectively allowing domestic tartan weaving and dyeing to die out in the Highlands. Much of the weaving of tartan had been done by independent weavers or by women in their homes, where many were known for producing a high quality cloth of finely combed wool. One of the Old Statistical Accounts from 1799 (Sir John Sinclair, Kincardine), mourned the loss of the women's skills: "Deprived of the pleasure of seeing their husband, sons, and favourites, in that elegant drapery, emulation died, and they became contented with manufacturing the wool in the coarsest...manner..." By the time proscription ended in 1782, poverty would have prevented most from making new clothing, even if the desire had been there.

But tartan did not completely disappear with proscription. After Culloden, the British military needed manpower to fight its wars in Europe and North America, so Highland regiments were raised. The uniforms were

tartan kilts—a government tactic thought to encourage the willing recruitment of Highlanders—and were not affected by the tartan ban. A large volume of cloth of a standardized tartan pattern was required to supply these regiments, and the new industrial weaving mills that were starting up on the edge of the Highlands were ready to fill the need. With this new business, the mills were able to thrive and expand.

By the early nineteenth century, with the end of the wars in Europe and North America, the regiments had been disbanded and the mills had to look for new customers. Fortunately for them, the newly-crowned King George IV had grown up reading the novels of Sir Walter Scott, and was enthralled with the romantic fictional tales of rugged Highlanders as heroes. He enlisted Scott to help organize his 1822 visit to Edinburgh where he hoped to see these Highlanders for himself.

Although the clan system in the Highlands was clearly in disarray by the early nineteenth century, clan chiefs were invited to appear with their men, dressed in kilts of their 'clan tartan'. But there were very few patterns actually attached to a specific family. This caused a scramble to come up with suitable designs. The mills, delighted to have a new source of revenue after the loss of the regimental uniforms market, were more than willing to accommodate them. The most well-known of the mills, Wilson Brothers, in Bannockburn, had an extensive collection of odds and ends of patterns. Well-documented records from

this time show that they began reviving some old patterns and borrowing, altering, and inventing others to suit the wishes of the families. The plaids were chosen, renamed for certain clans, and woven to order. Wilson Brothers are, in large part, responsible for the creation of tartan as it is known today.

The ensuing parades of bagpipes, military accessories, and kilts made of 'clan tartans' were such a success, that the popularity of tartans on a wider scale was assured. The idea of belonging to a clan was attractive, as was romanticizing the heroic military legacies of the Highland warrior. Now the tartans had become an integral and inseparable part of Highland dress. A quest for other family or district patterns was expanded, even throughout the Lowlands, and then around the world, from Europe to the Americas.

The popularity of tartan in the Lowlands meant that all of Scotland was now visually represented as a nation of Highlanders. By the 1850s, this 'Highland-centred' view of Scotland was spurred on by Queen Victoria's romantic view of Highland clans and love of all things tartan. Tartan began to appear, not as woven cloth necessarily, but as a printed pattern on souvenir items such as snuff boxes, plates, jewellery or an assortment of knick-knacks. The commercialism of tartan had begun. ©

Part two will appear in the next issue of An Rubha.

*Vicki Quimby
Researcher, Textile Consultant and Animator*



It is with heavy hearts we mark the passing of Lucille 'Lou' MacKenzie. Lou played an instrumental role in forming and supporting the Highland Village Pipe Band in the late 1960s. She, along with Helen MacNeil, received the Award of Merit in 2011 for her work in the early days of the pipe band.

Lou was a frequent visitor to the Village in later years, visiting her son, the blacksmith, Austin 'Hoss' MacKenzie.

She will be remembered as a strong supporter of the Village and the continuation of Gaelic Culture. Dia bhi math dhi.

Cuiridh sinn clach air a càrn. | We'll place a stone on her cairn. ©



Lou with her granddaughter, Breigh MacKenzie, Mira Jean and son, Hoss MacKenzie

An Gàidheal Portmhor | Scotch Music

CAIPTEAN CARSWELL | CAPTAIN CARSWELL

Treasag ni'n Raghnaill Mhóir mac Iain 'ic Iain 'ic Aonghais | Theresa MacLellan, the Cape Breton Queen of the Marches, left this world on August 31, 2020. She was one of the last, if not the last, great violinists of her generation. Growing up in a Gaelic-speaking household, Theresa's music "had the Gaelic in it." She was born in 1927 at Riverside, Inverness County, to Màiri Ann nighean Ruairidh Chaluum | Mary Ann MacDonald and Raghnaill Mór mac Iain 'ic Iain 'ic Aonghais | Big Ronald MacLellan.

Theresa came by her musical talents honestly. In fact as the story goes, the MacLellans were gifted their music from *na sìtheachan* | the fairies. Her mother was an organist and singer and her father was one of the best fiddlers of his generation. With her father dying when she was young, it was Theresa's brother, Donald, who provided the musical mentorship. Theresa's other siblings, Baby Joe, Big John A, and Marie all had musical talents of their own. Rory died in infancy.

At a young age, Theresa expressed interest in the music and through the years, she developed a rich and unique sound to her music. Theresa's playing was filled with ornamentation, drive, and swing. Most notable, was the bagpipe-like sound Theresa took out of the violin. Likely, this was a result of the frequent musical visitors to the MacLellan home including pipers, Gordon MacQuarrie and Sandy Boyd.

Using the entire length of the bow allowed Theresa to fill in the melody with various embellishments including pipe-like trills, gracings and cuttings. Theresa also had a unique way of flattening her fingers on the fingerboard, which allowed her to create drones, double stops and chords. The simultaneous intertwining of what she was doing with the finger embellishments and her bowing, along with the phrasing she used, is what created that pipe sound. In addition, Theresa drew greatly from the pipe repertoire of tunes, particularly favouring pipe marches. The title of her LP, *Trip to Mabou Ridge*, takes its name from the Dan Hughie MacEachern composition, which was composed in the style of a pipe march.

Her favourite tune of all was Captain Carswell, a pipe march composed by Uilleam Eòghann Uilleam Thòmais Uilleam Labhruidh | Pipe Major William Lawrie (1881-1916) of *Baile a' Chaolais, Alba* | Ballachulish, Scotland. Lawrie developed his pipe skills at a young age and went on to become one of the finest pipers of his day. At the

onset of the First World War, he joined with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and became a pipe major. Sadly, Lawrie succumbed to illness at age 35, as a result of trench conditions during his time at the Battle of the Somme. Theresa played a number of Lawrie's compositions including *Sgùrr na Ciche* | The Pap of Glencoe as well as the well-known 9/8 retreat, The Battle of the Somme, which Cape Breton fiddlers today play as a jig.

Theresa, though humble, was true to her style and let nothing deter her musically. "The men are strong players. You've gotta get in there with them, follow them and drive 'er with them! I was the only woman playing with those men for a long time. If you have quality, there's no disadvantage being a woman!" Her musicality was tremendous and her repertoire vast. Long may her musical influence be felt amongst future generations of Cape Breton violinists. *A cuid do Phàrras dhi.* ©

Shelly Campbell
Teacher, fiddler and Gaelic learner
Tune provided by Paul Cranford



Theresa MacLellan, St Ann's, 2009
Photo by Vic Faubert

Captain Carswell

Wm. Lawrie

march

A

Amin

Amin

G

G

Emin

B

Amin

Amin

G

Emin

Amin

C

Amin

C

G

G

Amin

D

Amin

Amin

G

Emin

1. Amin

Amin

G

Amin

2. Amin

Amin

G

Emin

Amin

Fois gu Sìorraidh | Dedication

BHIONSANT MACFHIONGHAIN | VINCENT MACKINNON

On January 8, 2020, many were saddened to hear of the passing of Gaelic tradition bearer, Vincent MacKinnon. Vincent passed at home in Gillisdale surrounded by his family and loving wife of 63 years, Mary MacKinnon (née MacDonald).

Vincent was born in Gillisdale, in the same home where he and Mary raised a family of six. He spent most of his working career as a pipe fitter at the pulp mill in Port Hawkesbury, but continued to raise livestock on his farm in Gillisdale with the help of his brother-in-law, Finlay MacDonald. Throughout his life, he continued many traditional activities such as fishing gaspereau and eels on the Margaree River, hunting, harvesting firewood and growing potatoes. Vincent loved to be outside on the land and enjoyed walking or exploring the backroads on his ATV. Family and community were the most important thing to Vincent and he once told me, "S e an teaghlach an rud as riataanaiche! | Family is the most important thing!" What a blessing that he spent his final days surrounded by his children and many grandchildren who came from far and wide to spend time with their beloved 'Poppy'.

I first visited Mary and Vincent in 2007, but got to know them better when I moved to Kiltarlity Road and became their neighbour in 2012. Vincent was the best neighbour anyone could ask for. He lent me a hand many times; helping to carry a washing machine into the house when I first moved in, bringing a load of firewood when I had run out and coming to make sure I was safe while painting on a tall ladder. He was generous with his time and always willing to come to the aid of friends and neighbours. On the many occasions that I visited their home, I was always touched by the warmth of his greeting. He had a special way of making visitors feel welcome. Even when he was obviously busy, he always made time for a chat. What a special skill he had of welcoming people while still getting so much accomplished!

Some of the most enjoyable afternoons I have ever experienced were spent chatting with Vincent and Mary in Gaelic about every topic under the sun, but especially farming, fishing and the natural world. Here are a couple of examples of the wisdom I learned from him:

*Dar a bhios na beanntaichean
a' seinn, tha stoirm a' tighinn. |
When the hills are singing,
a storm is coming.*

*Dar a thig na gobhlachain, thig na
gaspereau. | When the swallows
arrive, so do the gaspereau.*

Because I live on a small farm, I took a particular interest in words and phrases pertaining to farming. Some examples of farming terminology I learned from Vincent are:

*mart gamhnachd: a cow that was
not bred so she could continue
producing milk through the
winter*

*mulan fèir: a stack of hay made
when hay was being put in the
wagon loose*

*A' cocadh an fheòir: the act of
making haystacks, mostly done
by women and children*

Another favorite topic of conversation was the 'old people' Vincent remembered as a child and young man in Gillisdale. He and Mary went through the whole community, including Kiltarlity, Pipers Glen and South West Margaree, explaining who resided on every farm. They talked about their lineage and added little stories about people such as Dòmhnall Alasdair Mhór, Iain Aonghais Fhearchair and Seonaidh Mhìcheil. Although I never met these people I felt as

if I knew them from hearing about them so often.

This is only a small sample of the knowledge that Vincent has passed on to me and others. He seemed to derive pleasure from reminiscing about the old ways and would let out a chuckle whenever I jumped up to grab my recorder or a pen and paper to capture a new word or phrase. No matter how many times I visited, there was always something new to learn and I am saddened to think of all the knowledge that has gone with him. The loss of any friend is difficult, but also it feels like the end of an era as native Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia become increasingly sparse. Despite the deep sadness felt by many, I am struck by how the passing of an elder can strengthen our determination to carry on what we have learned from them. Kindness, hospitality, dedication to family, and connection to nature and place are some of the qualities that come to mind when I think of Vincent. *Tapadh leibh Vincent. Bidh sinn fada 'nur comain.* ©

Since this piece was written, Vince's wife Mary has also passed. We will have a piece dedicated to her in the next issue of An Rubha.

*Carmen MacArthur
Community Educator and Ban-Chleasaiche*



Photo by Communications Nova Scotia

Air Bràigh Bhaile | On the Farm

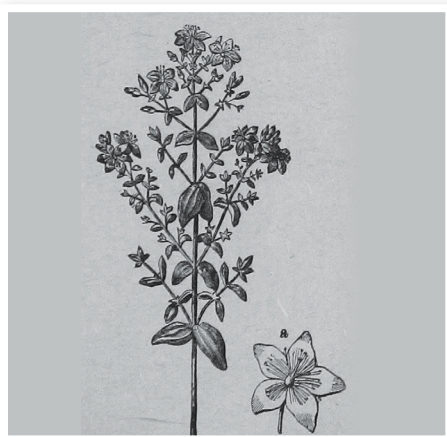
LUSAN AIG A' BHAILE | PLANTS AT THE VILLAGE

Plant introductions make up more than a third of the plant species present in the Maritimes. Some of these plants have been intentionally introduced for ornamental, agricultural, or medicinal purposes, while others arrived unintentionally. A number of these species are now well established in areas of human activity, such as around farms and settlements, and many had a particular value to the Gael at one time or another.

The uses for plants were many and diverse. A contributor to the Cape Breton Gaelic newspaper *Mac-Talla* related that, in older times, Gaels adhered to the belief that certain plants could offer protections from evil and convey blessings. One such plant mentioned to this effect was St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), which is known to some in Gaelic as *achlasan Chaluim Chille* (lit. armpit package of St. Columba). The Scottish folklorist Alexander Carmichael states that this plant was secretly carried under the left armpit to ward off evil and bring prosperity, but is said to only be effective if happened upon by accident. Carmichael recorded a number of sayings associated with this plant, including the following:

*Achlasan Chaluim Chille,
Gun sireadh, gun iarraidh!
Dheòin Dia agus Chrìosda,
Am bliadhna chan fhaigheam bàs.*

St. John's wort, St. John's wort,
Without search, without seeking!
Please God and Christ Jesus,
This year I shall not die.



Achlasan Chaluim Chille | St. John's Wort

To the Gaels, yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) had a variety of uses. To reflect upon one of its names, *lus chasgadh na fala* (lit. plant that staunches blood), will illustrate one of its traditional uses. Indeed, the genus name *Achillea* comes to us from the ancient Greek hero Achilles who, tradition relates, used this plant to staunch the blood of his soldiers during battle.

A prophesying tradition, again from *Mac-Talla*, tells of how young women would harvest yarrow and place it in the stocking of their right foot, which was then placed under their pillow in the hope that their sweetheart would appear to them in a dream. However, if they spoke a word between harvesting the plant and going to bed, they would have no luck. A rhyme, sung in private, by a young woman cutting yarrow by moonlight for this purpose is illustrated below:

*Fàilte, fàilte, eàrr-thalmhainn mhìn!
Agus trì uairean furan ort fhéin,
Foillsich dhomh roimh éirigh gréin,
Cò am fear bhios dileas dhòmh's?*

Welcome, welcome, O delicate yarrow!
And three times a greeting on you,
Reveal to me before sunrise,
Who is the one who will be faithful to me?

This practice is also described to us in verse:

*Gun dh'éirich mi moch, air madainn an dé,
'S gheàrr mi 'n eàrr-thalmhainn,
do bhrìgh mo sgéil;
An dùil gum faicinn-sa rùin mo chléibh;
Ochòin! Gum facas, 's a cùl rium fhéin.*

I rose early yesterday morning,
And cut the yarrow, because of my misery;
In hope that I would see my heart's desire;
Alas! I saw her, with her back to me.



Lus chasgadh na fala | Yarrow

Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farafa*), one of the earliest flowers to appear in our region, is known to some as *cluas liath* (lit. grey ear), likely attributed to its large, round leaves, which were traditionally smoked to ease a cough and disorders of the lungs. Broadleaf plantain (*Plantago major*) or *cuach Phàdraig* (lit. St. Patrick's cup) was traditionally applied as a poultice. The dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), known as *beàrnan-Bride* (lit. little notch of St. Bridget), referencing its notched leaves, was used in salads and was used to treat jaundice and cachexia.

Around the month of July, we might begin to notice the flowers of Queen Anne's lace (*Daucus carota*), which is known as *curran-fiadhaich* (lit. wild carrot), or *curran-coilleadh* (lit. forest carrot) as Seumas Watson, our late Manager of Interpretation, called it. It is the wild cousin to our cultivated *curran* | carrot. The writer Martin Martin, while travelling through North Uist sometime in the final years of the 17th century, describes women presenting men with "fine garters of diverse colours" and "a quantity of wild carrots" on Michaelmas Day. He also describes in Harris that the seeds of a certain white wild carrot are used in the place of hops to brew beer.

The plants and their traditional uses described herein represent a small sample of the plant knowledge of the Gael. The plants described are generally cosmopolitan in occurrence and have long associations with Gaels. With the return of the growing season, I believe I will be looking upon a number of these plants with a newfound appreciation, and perhaps a few readers may be doing the same. ☺

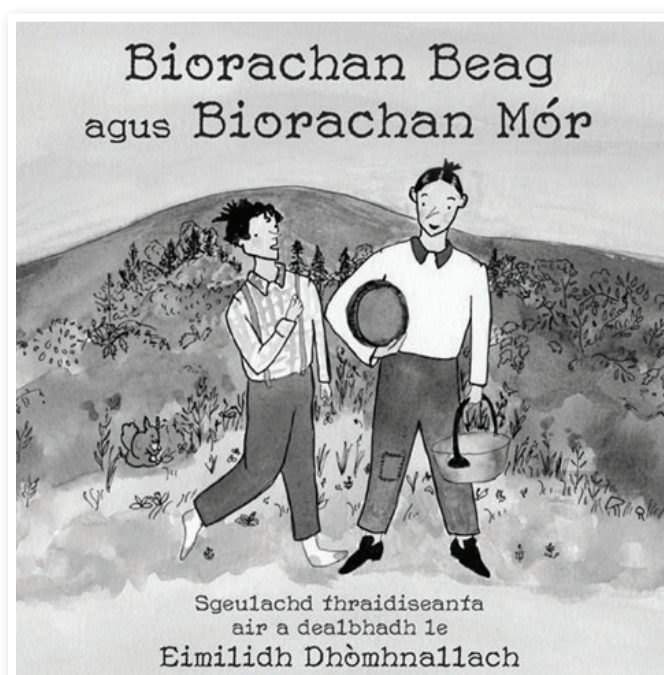
Edward C. MacDonell,
MSc in Plant Agr., Cleasaiche | Cultural Animator



Cuach Phàdraig | Coltsfoot

Léirmheas | A Book Review

BIORACHAN BEAG AGUS BIORACHAN MÓR



For generations, Gaels have shared their experiences through storytelling. Our culture is steeped in hero tales, clan legends, local histories, supernatural tales and funny anecdotes with colourful characters. Stories have brought us closer together, taught us our place in the world and have passed the time on long, winter nights.

Last summer, I was delighted to hear about an upcoming release of a Gaelic children's picture book offering a new take on an old tale. Fellow staff member Emily MacDonald, in collaboration with Nova Scotia-based Gaelic-focussed publisher Bradan Press, unveiled *Biorachan Beag agus Biorachan Mór*

& *Bodkin Beag and Bodkin Mór* at a launch at the Highland Village in Iona in September. The event was well attended, with a good mix of Gaelic learners, teachers, staff, children and native Gaelic speakers. With so few Gaelic events this summer, it was such a treat to gather together, have a cup of tea and hear Emily read from her carefully crafted story.

The tale of *Biorachan Beag and Biorachan Mór* was, at one time, well known throughout Gaeldom. Gaels who settled in Nova Scotia brought this story with them and shared it with

younger audiences. Stop in to see beloved local elder Mickey John H. MacNeil and he will still recite the story as he heard it in his youth. Emily's new release is available in both Gaelic and English translations. It features beautiful and whimsical watercolour illustrations that will appeal to readers of all ages. The images feel very familiar featuring traditional 19th century style Gaelic homes, rural Cape Breton landscapes and both wild and domestic animals that you might see on any local hillside.

For those not familiar with the tale, *Biorachan Mór* and *Biorachan Beag* are two little characters who set out one day to

gather nuts. While *Biorachan Mór* harvests, the greedy *Biorachan Beag* eats the delicious yield. In anger, *Biorachan Mór* heads out to properly punish his partner, which turns out to be much more challenging than he expects, and results in a very surprising ending!

Biorachan Beag agus Biorachan Mór fills a great need in the Nova Scotian Gaelic community for Gaelic children's literature. The publication proves to be a great resource for parents and teachers as the story is cumulative (think, the Old Lady who Swallowed a Fly) with repetition and a rhyme scheme throughout - serving as a great memory exercise and language learning tool. With younger readers, morals can be surmised, and reading can be shared - my own children like to do the voices for all the interesting little characters *Biorachan Mór* meets on his journey. Language used in the book is everyday speech and easily comprehended by fluent and native speakers. The story could be shared with preschoolers, school-aged children and adult language learners.

Witnessing Emily reclaim the Gaelic language in her family and now sharing her artistic talents to breathe life into this wonderful traditional tale is inspirational. She is giving a whole new generation of Gaels access to such a rich tradition. With a vast corpus of traditional Gaelic tales to draw from, I eagerly await Emily's next publication! ©

Published by Bradan Press, 2020 (Gaelic & English editions)

Review by Emily C. MacDonald
Community Educator and Ban-chleasaiche

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Léirmheas | A Book Review

NORTH AMERICAN GAELS — SPEECH, STORY AND SONG IN THE DIASPORA



In this volume of essays which has been published in honour of the late Dr. Kenneth Nilsen, the editors, Natasha Sumner and Aidan Doyle, both express their regret "for the loss of a kind, generous and erudite scholar." This testimony is continually repeated by the writers included in the volume, whether colleagues, friends or former students: I wish to add, simply but sincerely—"S e duine uasal—agus iriseal a bh' ann."

Ken's interest in and knowledge of all the Celtic languages was profound, but his main body of research was in the field of Scottish and Irish Gaelic language and culture in North America; it is therefore fitting that both be addressed chronologically in this publication. It is a bonus for the reader to be able to compare both sources in one compilation since both cultures have many similarities of experience in culture, education and loss of language.

Irish scholars have limited documentary evidence for the very earliest immigrants to arrive in America. Pádraig Ó Liatháin gives us a fascinating but brief glimpse into some of the work of the mid-18th century poet, Donnacha Rua Mac Conmara and his connection to *Talamh an Éisc*, his designation for Newfoundland. In his macaronic "As I was Walking One Evening Fair"—the poet appears to praise the English King George while his true Jacobite sympathies are obvious only to his Irish speaking audience.

Tony Ó Floinn provides us with contemporary evidence regarding the Irish poet, Pádraig Phiarais Cúndún, who settled in Deerfield, Utica in 1826; his evidence comes from correspondence which the poet addressed in letters back to Ireland—in his native tongue—but these letters contain little information about the poet's life in America or about his poetry. As with Mac Conmara, the reader is left wishing for further information.

Tomás Ó hÍde provides an account of the bilingual monthly paper, *An Gaodhal/The Gael*, which appeared in Brooklyn, New York in 1881, and which became over time one of the few

existing sources for folklore collected from Irish speakers in the United States.

Then in 1886, the first volume of a more militant, short-lived publication appeared in Boston—*The Irish Echo*. Matthew Knight reviews the work done by several of its many editors, where it becomes clear that much effort and time was spent on trivial arguments concerning the use of Roman or Gaelic type, contentious points of grammar and the initial surprising preference for the use of English over the Irish tongue.

In his essay on the use of phonograph recordings for Irish language instruction, William Mahon outlines some initial drawbacks, such as the temporary life of cylinders; after many technical improvements however, the phonograph became an extremely valuable tool whereby students in America could eventually hear and learn from the linguistic delivery of native Irish speakers.

Seán "Irish" Ó Súilleabháin was born in 1882 on the island of Inishfarnard, County Cork and emigrated to Montana in 1905 to pursue a mining career; it was here that he acquired literacy in his own native tongue and where he became known as Butte's Irish Bard. According to Ciara Ryan, Sean transcribed hundreds of traditional Irish songs from memory, particularly verse of the Aisling type.

Pádraig Ó Siadhail's final essay deals with three Irish novels from the 1920s and thirties; all have a Canadian connection, not always complimentary, but, despite the fact that Ireland is not portrayed in a nostalgic light, all three include aspects of reverse migration back to the "Old Country."

Rob Dunbar opens the Scottish Gaelic section with an essay on the Bard MacLean's secular songs and, unlike his Irish research colleagues, he has much written evidence on which to base his study. John MacLean was literate in his own language, he owned valuable manuscripts of poems which he brought to Nova Scotia and was a published poet prior to his emigration. Moreover, men such as John Boyd of the Casket newspaper, Norman MacDonald who published a Nova Scotian edition of *The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry* and Maclean's grandson, Alexander MacLean Sinclair, all published examples of his work—the latter taking considerable editorial liberties with his texts.

Alexander MacLean Sinclair's name surfaces again in Michael Linkletter's essay on the very public quarrel between the poet Alexander "The Ridge" MacDonald and Johnathan G.

MacKinnon, editor of the Gaelic newspaper *Mac-Talla*. What began as a difference of opinion over the printing of a poem soon escalated into two satires by the poet, one in which he appears to parody MacLean Sinclair's idea for a poetic competition to raise subscriptions for the Gaelic newspaper.

Tiber Falzett's essay on nineteenth century Scottish Gaelic songs from Prince Edward Island provides us with information on the Lamont family of poets and collectors—as well as fascinating connections between religion and Gaelic poetry. For example, the fervent MacDonaldite sect often used secular milling song airs for many of their hymns, and, after migrating to the States, some apparently alarmed their neighbours with their unrestrained evangelical expressions.

Michael Newton's essay on Alexander Fraser provides us with much needed background on this immigrant's literary output as a journalist and editor in Canada from 1886 onwards. In particular, his major opus, *Leabhar nan Sonn*, provided his Gaelic readership with positive examples of cultural success in "many fields of endeavour"—thereby strengthening their self-respect and portraying Canada as a place where progress and advancement were possible.

Animal apocrypha in religious lore is the topic Kathleen Reddy deals with in her essay. Using examples gleaned from Catholic areas of Barra and Cape Breton and from one Protestant source in North Uist—she advises caution when making assumptions about the survival of such lore and of regional attitudes towards it.

The islands of Barra and Cape Breton feature once again in Lorrie MacKinnon's essay on Annie Johnston's 1954 visit to Nova Scotia. As a noted Gaelic tradition bearer, Annie was welcomed by Gaels at every level in Nova Scotia; as a result, correspondence and kinship links between both countries were strengthened and Gaelic songs, stories and lore were revived, exchanged and recorded.

Catriona Parsons concludes the Scottish Gaelic section with nine translated articles from Ken Nilsen's columns in the Antigonish Casket—all of which were recorded from Danny Cameron, one of the last last native speakers from mainland Nova Scotia. Folklore notes are provided by Gregory R. Darwin, followed by a valuable index for all of Ken Nilsen's Casket contributions from 1987-96. ©

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Review by Effie Rankin
Gaelic scholar, author, and colleague of Ken Nilsen



Comunn Ar Rùin | Our People

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Congratulations

To Beth MacNeil (Animator) and David MacKenzie (Groundskeeper) for their 35 and 20 years of service respectively; staff member Emily Clegg and her partner Kevin Murphy on the birth of their daughter Una Laurel.

Best Wishes

To Jamie Kennedy (Blacksmith) who has left Highland Village to move on to new opportunities. Well wishes to Chris Kaiser (son-in-law to animator Pauline Campbell).

Sympathies

To the families of Thane Cameron (husband of Past President Susan Cameron); George Cash (donor of shingle & grist mills); Winnie Chaffe (Cape Breton fiddler); Rosalie Courage (fundraising consultant); Marilyn Lamond (mother of Mary Jane Lamond, Gaelic consultant); Cecilia MacDonald (Gaelic tradition bearer Mickey MacNeil's partner); Annie MacKenzie (mother of HV staff David Brian MacKenzie); John Mackley (brother of HV staff Pauline Campbell); Clare MacDonald (HV volunteer); Winifred MacDonald (tradition bearer of Cape Breton music); Gail MacNeil (sister-in-law of former staff Sharon FX MacNeil); Fr. Hughie MacNeil (HV supporter); Louise MacNeil (wife of late Gaelic tradition bearer Jamie MacNeil); and Dena O'Handley (sister to HV staff Basil MacLean). ©

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Help us share Nova Scotia's Gaelic language and heritage by joining the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society.

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- Attend general meetings;
- Elect the Board of Trustees;
- Receive *An Rubha*, our Gaelic Folklife Magazine;
- Receive notices for events.

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