

Baile nan
Gàidheal
Highland Village
MADE OF STORIES



The Highland Village
Gaelic Folklife Magazine

an rubha

HIGHLANDVILLAGE.CA

VOLUME 16 • NUMBER TWO



Mac-Talla - Na Seann Sgeulachdan | The Old Times

A' Toirt Spéis do Sheumas Seumas | Watson: A Tribute

Mar a Chì Mi Seumas | My Memories of Seumas



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.

One \$1000 scholarship will be awarded in the spring of 2019. See our website for more details and the deadline for scholarships for 2020.

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 Canada Helps.

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Piper Gillian Blaney received her \$1,000 scholarship from Treasures of Youth Committee Chair Susan MacLean.



Pianist Maggie Power (centre) received her \$1,000 scholarship from Treasures of Youth Committee members Meaghan O'Handley (left) and Lisa MacNeil (right).



Fiddler Maggie Morais received her \$500 scholarship from Highland Village Director Rodney Chaisson.



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NOVA SCOTIA HIGHLAND VILLAGE
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AN DROCHAIL EADARAINN

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Tha An Drochaid Eadarainn stéidhichte air Stòras a' Bhaile: sgoil bheul-aithris air a chumail aig Baile nan Gàidheal gu bliadhnaid. 'Na làraich-lin eadar-gníomhaill, tha An Drochaid Eadarainn a' cleachdadh tecneolais mar mhodh a lionas beàrn far a bheil dualchas air tar-aisig o ghlùin gu glùin a dhith.

An Drochaid Eadarainn (The Bridge Between Us) is an interactive website emulating the social transmission of Gaelic language and culture through technology. Communicating recorded expressions of Nova Scotia Gaelic culture, visitors will witness native speakers through storytelling, music and dance, dialectal samples, kinship, belief, traditional foods, home remedies and cures.

Participants can meet, share and exchange Nova Scotia Gaelic traditions on *An Drochaid Bheò* (The Living Bridge), an interactive feature of the website.

an rubha

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The late Alan MacLeod, New Boston,
chatting with Jim Watson during *Stòras a' Bhaile* 2010.

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Facal bhon Neach stiùiridh | From the Director's Desk

Fàilte oirbh! Welcome to the 2019 issue of *An Rubha*, the Highland Village Gaelic Folklife Magazine. In this edition, we explore and reflect on the legacy of Seumas mac Sheumais Sheumais Sheumais | Jim Watson, our Manager of Interpretation, Gaelic leader, mentor, and friend. Seumas' knowledge of, and passion for, the traditions and identity of the Nova Scotia Gael were deep, authentic and infectious. His lifelong impact on *Baile nan Gàidheal*, Gaelic Nova Scotia, and all of us who worked with him, is immeasurable. Seumas passed away after a lengthy battle with cancer on November 26, 2018.

Seumas' tenure at *Baile nan Gàidheal* began 1984. He was hired with the goal of creating a Gaelic program for staff and visitors featuring Gaelic training materials, sessions with tradition bearers, the gathering of cultural content, and Gaelic translations. In 2000, when the Village joined the Nova Scotia Museum, he became Manager of Interpretation, and led the transformation of *Baile nan Gàidheal* to the Gaelic place it is today. His vision resulted in significantly increased presence of language and cultural expression throughout the site; telling the story of the people through their intangible cultural heritage; introduction of first-person role playing; the first institutional Gaelic policy in Canada; new programming (Gaelic feast days, workshops, lectures, etc.); and most recently, deepening interpretation through the addition of Gaelic ambiance - the cultural nuances of the Nova Scotia Gael. Seumas also led a robust outreach program to the wider Gaelic community, including *An Rubha*, The Highland Village Gaelic Folklife Magazine; *Stòras a' Bhaile* (Village Treasures) a Gaelic Folklife School established based in a pedagogy of social learning; and *An Drochaid Eadarainn*, an on-line portal to support language learning and cultural transmission.

Seumas' contributions to Gaelic Nova Scotia extended far beyond his work at *Baile nan Gàidheal*. In addition to decades of recording and documenting Gaelic Nova Scotia identity from Gaelic tradition bearers, he spearheaded, or played a significant role, in Gaelic community building initiatives such as *Gàidhlig aig Baile* (he embraced social learning and

invited Finlay MacLeod over from Scotland to introduce the Total Immersion Plus methodology of language learning); *Bun is Barr*, Cape Gael Associates, *Eilean nan Òg, Am Bràighe, Cainnt mo Mhàthar*, and many others.

Seumas was recognized internationally for his work. He presented at many conferences at home, as well as in Ireland, Scotland and Korea. In 2016, he was presented with the Scottish Gaelic Award - Best Contribution in Glasgow. In 2017, the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society recognized Seumas' significant contributions to the growth of *Baile nan Gàidheal* with its annual *Buidheachas do Ghaisgeach Airidh - Le Sàr-mhathas* | Award of Merit - with Excellence.

It has been my pleasure to work with Seumas over the past 25 years. I very much appreciate his leadership, advice, support, and mentorship, as we worked to grow *Baile nan Gàidheal* to the institution it is today. His passing has been a big loss for all of us here at the Village. We are going to miss him greatly. His efforts have left us with a great foundation from which to continue to grow our interpretation and programming and a vision to continue to deepen our interpretation and promotion of the cultural identity of the Nova Scotia Gael - *Nàisean nan Gàidheal* - a Gaelic Cultural Nation. Our hearts to go out to his family and friends, especially his wife Marlene, his children Colin, Anna, Lili, and Angus, and his grandchildren Rayden and Michael Angus.

We also pay tribute to tradition bearer, community builder, and Highland Village supporter *Ruairidh Iain Sheumais Dhòmhnaill Òig* Iain Ruairidh | Rod C. MacNeil, who passed away on June 7, 2019,

shortly after celebrating his 95th birthday.

Rod C. was a Gaelic Nova Scotia tradition bearer, known far and wide for his kindness and generosity, as well as his Gaelic hospitality and songs. He and his wife Helen, who passed away several years ago, welcomed many to their home in Barra Glen for a meal, a roof over their head, or simple kinship. He served his country during World War II. After returning to Barra Glen to raise his family, he became instrumental in community building in the entral Cape Breton area including the Iona Volunteer Fire Department, Grandona Legion Branch 124, Grand Narrows & District Board of Trade, the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society, and others.

For almost 60 years, Rod C. was a champion for the Highland Village. He contributed greatly to our growth with tireless hours of volunteer work, especially during those critical early years of development. He served on our board and committees, including roles of President and Secretary. As recent as last year, he continued to share his time with songs at a *céilidh* or on stage on Highland Village Day, the story of Donald 'Og' and the meeting with the Mi'kmaq on Donald 'Og' Day, and soap making on Pioneer Day.

Our hearts to go out to his family and friends, especially his children Marion, Rosemary, Myrna, Lorne, Tim, and Paul, their spouses, and his grandchildren and great-grand children. Rod's son Tim and his wife Janet are long-time Highland Village employees. His legacy lives on here at the Highland Village. ☺

Rodney Chaisson
Director of the Highland Village



Rodney and Rod C. MacNeil cutting the cake for the Highland Village Society's 40th anniversary.



Rodney and Jim deep in discussion during an exhibit opening.



Leanaibh dlùth ri cliù bhur sinnisir.

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

Since 2000, the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society has operated *Baile nan Gàidheal | Highland Village*, A Part of the Nova Scotia Museum, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Museum (Department of Communities, Culture & Heritage).

Baile nan Gàidheal Highland Village

MADE OF STORIES

A PART OF THE NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM

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.

Mar is léir dhomh fhìn | As I See It

DÉ 'S URRAINN DHUT CANTAIL MU SHEUMAS MACBHATAIR?

What can you say about Jim Watson? Others are more qualified to list his accomplishments; varied and numerous as they are. They can speak about his fierce intellect, resourcefulness, and decades of advocacy for Gaelic. They can describe his deep knowledge of dialects, stories, and songs. But maybe I can add something too. Like many people learning Gaelic, I also came to know Jim, eventually making my way to his office at the end of the hall at the Highland Village.

A number of years ago we worked on a fieldwork project together, spending several months recording people around Cape Breton. Jim enjoyed these visits; enjoyed many of them tremendously, I suspect. And the older people were always pleased to see Jim. In the last few years many of them asked about him continually. Have you seen him? How is he feeling? They were in his corner because they knew he was in theirs. Jim was a champion of Gaelic Nova Scotia. But more importantly, he was a champion of the Gaels of Nova Scotia.

And what an advocate we had in Jim. In his research, he was passionate. In his work, he was meticulous. Anyone who has seen him transcribe recordings will recall his rigorous attention to detail. His support for language learners was equally well known. He took them seriously, engaging in ways that were never contrived or artificial. Jim was an original, as comfortable gutting fish on the wharf as he was delivering a paper at an international conference. In many ways, he represented the best attributes of a community scholar, bridging the gap between the local tradition and international scholarship, drawing on a deep knowledge of both in his everyday work. Jim understood the community where he lived, but always remained open to new ways of seeing it.

No doubt about it, Jim was an intellectual. But when it was time for action, he was ready for that too. Much of his energy went to nurturing the growth of the Highland Village, helping set a steady course for its development and holding the rudder along the way. Jim recognized



Jim and Shamus talking during Stòras a' Bhaile in 2014.

that tourism was the bread and butter of the museum, but his primary concern was always its educational and cultural value to the community. This required vision and commitment. The fruits of his labour surround us today. His fingerprints are all over some of the most successful Gaelic developments of the last thirty years. In these efforts, sociability and human connections were always priorities. That was obvious during our work together.

Jim recognized the reciprocal nature of a good visit, the importance of giving something back; not in a material sense, but in terms of himself. He responded to stories with stories, laughter with laughter. Fieldwork was visiting, and visiting was meant to be enjoyed. I remember him singing to Katie Maggie MacLeod; an old song her father used to sing in Broad Cove Marsh. Not long ago I stopped in to see her. We spoke about the usual topics; the weather, the roads, and Gaelic. But we also spoke about Jim. Katie Maggie told me that on the day a person is born, a plan is set in motion. Everyone is given a certain number of days to live, but no one is told how many. I don't know if that's true or not, but with the days Jim was given he chose to live in a place he cared deeply about, surrounded by people who cared about him. His presence here shortened many a night and lightened many a burden. And his contributions to this community, its people, and language, will not soon be forgotten. ☺

Dr. Shamus Y. MacDonald, PhD.

CHA DEAN CAS THIORAM IASGACH.

THE DRY FOOT CANNOT FISH.

Naidheachd a' Bhaile | The Village News

"BHITH 'GAN CUIMHNEACHADH 'S 'GAN IONNDRAINN"

"Remembering them and missing them"

As we reflect on the 2018 season, we want to honour the more than 30 years that Jim Watson spent working at the Village. This special issue of *An Rubha* is filled with heartfelt tributes from long-time friends who, like Jim, have spent their lives dedicated to collecting and sharing our Gaelic language and culture. Jim's vision of Gaelic Nova Scotia has touched every aspect of the Highland Village from our rebranding to *Baile nan Gàidheal* in 2015, to the way our animators present the history of our ancestors. Jim's hand also touched this folklife magazine, that fills the pages of each issue with songs, stories and local histories. Without Jim's vast knowledge and foresight the Highland Village would not be what it is today. We will continue to honour the legacy Jim has left us as we further our work here at the Village and in Gaelic Nova Scotia, remembering him and knowing that he will be with us in spirit going forward.

Last Spring as we prepared for the upcoming season, Jim was able to join staff for a day of orientation followed by three days of first-person interpretive training with Peter Pacey of the Calithumpians Theatre Company in Fredericton, NB. After completing our 8th year of first-person interpretation, staff research focused on adding elements of the cultural expressions into their stories. *Na Cleasaichean* | The Village Players play a key role in assisting staff with this effort. We were happy to welcome for part of the year Joanne MacIntyre and Shamus Y. MacDonald to the *Cleasaichean* team.

In early spring, there were two concerts held in the Malagawatch Church. In late May, Cathy Ann MacPhee, Joanne MacIntyre and Shelly Campbell braved the cold weather for a beautiful afternoon of Gaelic songs and tunes. In June, Anita MacDonald, Ben Miller and Zakk Cormier



(L-R) Anita MacDonald, Ben Miller and Zakk Cormier performed for the 'South Haven' album release concert in May.



Barry Shears at the launch of his new books, *Play It Like You Sing It*, Volumes 1 and 2.



Marilyn Kellough at the opening of her art show in the Malagawatch Church in October during Celtic Colours.

held a concert to celebrate the release of their album "South Haven" with the sounds of fiddle, pipes, guitar and Gaelic songs.

Throughout the month of May, we welcomed our first cruise ship passengers before officially opening for the season on June 1st.

Also in June, members of the Nova Scotia Museum Education Sub-Committee travelled to Iona to run the test pilot of the newly developed grade one Science program. Students from the grade one class at Rankin School of the Narrows were the first school in the province to participate in this new program, that looks at nature through stories and language of the four founding cultures.

July was a busy month. It kicked off with a Canada Day Open House followed by *Danns a' Bhaile* in the evening, as part of KitchenFest. The annual Malagawatch Church service was held, as well as the Musique Royale Best of Boxwood concert hosted by Chris Norman and guests.

Donald Og Day is always a great way to start Highland Village Day weekend celebrations. Once again, we were greatful to have our friends visit from Eskasoni Cultural Journeys. They spent the day with us as sharing their Mi'kmaq culture and



John Philip Rankin and Anna MacKinnon pictured on Pioneer Day. Anna was the recipient of this year's NSHVS Award of Merit.

traditions with staff and visitors. As well, the late Rod C. MacNeil, a local tradition bearer, provided visitors with the history of Donald Og and his significance to the Iona area.

Rounding out the summer concerts last year was the music of Archie Fisher and Garnett Rogers. A packed church enjoyed an evening of traditional songs and stories.

September and October saw the increase of daily visitation to the site from cruise ship passengers who docked in Sydney Harbour and bussed to Iona for their shore excursions. Many of these visitors took part in cultural tours of the Village and got to participate in milling frolics while enjoying a cup of tea and the beautiful view of the Bras d'Or.

The season wrapped up with a busy week of Celtic Colours programs and experiences including; the book launch of Barry Shears new books "Play It Like You Sing It"; and an art show of beautiful scenic watercolours of the Highland Village by Marilyn Kellough.

As we go forward for the 2019 season and the years to come, we will continue to hold tightly and foster the identities of the Nova Scotia Gaels as Jim would want us to. ☺



Kathy Ogden read to the grade one class at Rankin School of the Narrows during the test pilot of a new NSM science program.

Fo na Cabair | Under the Rafters

Obair a' Bhaile | Work in the Home



Air a h-aithris Ale Mairi Ni'n Ailig Bhig Alasdair Òg (NicDhomhnaill), Kiltarlity, Siorra machd Inbhir Nis.

Carman: Bha an ceann shìos car spaidh?

Mairi: [...] na coimhearsnaich, 's ann 'sa' chidsin a bhiodh 'ad dar a thigeadh 'ad. Nan tigeadh duine, gu h-àraid as t-samhradh air chéilidh ort bheireadh 'ad dhan cheann shìos 'ad a bhruidhinn riu'.

C: Có shuidheadh 'sa cheann shìos? Feadhainn nach tigeadh ro thric?

M: Ro thric. Feadhainn nach tigeadh ro thric.

M: 'S ann 'sa chidsin gu h-àraid na coimhearsnaich a bha mun cuairt, dar a thig 'ad, 's ann 'sa chidsin a bhiodh 'ad 'nan suidhe, air a' bheintse mar siod, no air seithrichean mu chuairt air a' chidsin. Agus chan eil fhios a'm ciamar a bha ùine ac' air a h-uile sian a dheanadh, Carmen. An nigheadaireachd fhéin, a' deanadh an uiste teth air a stòbh agus an uair sin ga chur 'san tòba, bòrd sgùraidh aca.

C: Cha robh e cho furasda 'sa tha e an diugh.

M: Uell, cha robh. Bheil fhios agad dé? Nam biodh na boireannaich bhochd 'ad beò an diugh, bhiodh 'ad beartach.

C: Bhiodh 'ad ag obair cho cruaidh 's gum biodh 'ad beartach?

M: Bhitheadh. Cho cruaidh 'sa bha 'ad ag obair. Chan e sin ach a' nigheadaireachd 's a' sgùradh. Mar a bu thrice 'se bùird a bhiodh air an ùrlar. Dh'fheumadh 'ad a bhith 'ga sgùradh le gainmheach airson a chumail geal, a chumail glan.

C: Carson a dheanadh 'ad sin?

M: Dheanadh a' ghainmheach glan an t-ùrlar spruis. Ùrlar spruis a bu thrice, dh'fhaoidte ann an àite gum biodh ùrlar cruaidh ann. Ach mar is trice 'se ùrlar spruis. Chan eil cuimhn' agamas dé, start 'ad air cur oilcloth sìos air na h-ùrlaran. Bhiodh 'ad ag obair air, ciamar a chanas tu "braideadh mats"? Bhiodh 'ad ag obair air mats a dheanadh is bhiodh sin aca mun an rubha

cuairt air a' cheann shìos. Sin a bhiodh air an ùrlar 'sa cheann shìos. Bhiodh mats aca air an ùrlar. Agus uairean, bhiodh fear 'sa chidsin, gu h-àraid ma bha rocking chair 'sa chidsin, bhiodh fear fo'n rocking chair, fear dhe na mataichean air am braideadh. Chan eil fhios am ciamar a chanas tu 'braideadh.

C: An d' rinn sibh fhéin riamh mat mar sin?

M: Bhithinn 'gan cuideachadh 'ga dheanadh. Bhiodh trì seòrsaicéan do dh'aodach agad. Bha thu 'ga [dheanadh] mar a bhiodh tu braidheadh falt. Agus an uair sin start 'ad air a bhith 'ga hookadh, hooked mats. Bhiodh pàtaran, gheobhadh 'ad canabhas, bhiodh pàtaran air is bhiodh 'ad a' cur diofar dathan. An uair sin bhiodh 'ad a' dath an t-snàth, dar a bha 'ad a' dol a dheanadh fear dhe na mataichean sin.

C: Bhiodh 'ad a' dath an t-snàth?

M: Bhiodh 'ad a' dath an t-snàth, a' cur gu bi dé 'n dath a bhiodh bhuapa air.

C: A' faigheadh 'ad dath aig a' stòr?

M: Gheobhadh 'ad aig a' stòr e. Gheobhadh tu dath. Bha 'ad 'ga dheanadh. Bhiodh 'ad 'ga chur ann am poit agus an uair sin a' cur a' skein, a' cur an t-snàth ann, ceirslean snàth ann. Agus bheireadh 'ad às e is chuireadh 'ad uiste fuar air. Phaisgeadh 'ad e agus an uair sin bha 'ad 'ga thiormachadh. Dar a bhiodh e tioram, dheanadh 'ad bál dheth is bha 'ad 'ga ùsaideachadh.

C: Ciamar a bha ùine acá gus na rudan sin uile a dheanadh?

M: Shin a thuirt mi riut. As deòghaидh dhan chlann a dhol a chadal 'san oidhche 's ann an uair sin a bhiodh 'ad ag obair air uamhas dhe na rudan sin. Bhiodh 'ad a' fuagheal aodach dhan chlann.

C: Chan urrainn nach robh na boireannaich ag obair gun sguir.

M: Chan urrainn nach biodh 'ad gu math sgith a' dol a chadal, pàirt dhiubh. An obair a bhiodh aca, gu h-àraid ma bha teaghlaich mòr ann.

Translation

An interview with Mary MacKinnon, Kiltarlity, Inverness County.

Carmen: The *ceann shìos* was sort of spry?

Mary: [...] The neighbours, it's in the

kitchen that they'd be when they came. If a person came, especially in the summer to visit, you'd take them to the *ceann shìos* (*sitting room*) to speak with them.

C: Who would sit in the *ceann shìos*? Folks that didn't come too often?

M: Not too often. Those that wouldn't come too often.

M: It's in the kitchen that the neighbours, the ones who were around, would sit when they would come to visit. On a bench like that, or on chairs around the kitchen. And I don't know how they had time to do everything. The washing itself, heating the water on the stove and then putting it in the wash tub, they had a washboard.

C: It wasn't as easy as it is today.

M: Well, it wasn't. Do you know what? If those poor women were alive today, they'd be rich.

C: They would work so hard that they'd be rich?

M: Yes. They worked so hard. That's only the laundry and scrubbing. Usually, it was boards they had on the floor. They'd have to scrub it with sand to keep it white, to keep it clean.

C: Why would they do that?

M: The sand would clean the spruce floor. It's usually a spruce floor they'd have, maybe there'd be hardwood flooring in some places. But, usually, it was spruce. I don't remember what...they started putting oilcloth down on the floors. They'd be making, how to you say "braided mats"? They'd make mats and that's what they'd have around the floor in the *ceann shìos*. That's what they'd have on the floor in the *ceann shìos*. They'd have mats on the floor. And sometimes, there'd be one in the kitchen, especially if there was a rocking chair in the kitchen. One of the mats would be under the rocking chair, one of the braided mats. I don't know how you say 'braided' in Gaelic.

C: Did you ever make a mat like that yourself?

M: I'd be helping to make them. You'd have 3 types of cloth. You'd be making the mats as you'd braid hair. And then, they started to hook them, hooked mats. They'd get canvas and there'd be a pattern on it. And they'd put different colours in it. And then

they'd be dyeing the yarn when they were going to be making one of those mats.

C: They would dye the yarn?

M: Yes, they'd dye the yarn, they'd put whatever colour they wished on it.

C: Would they get the dye at the store?

M: They'd get it at the store. You'd get the dye and you'd be making it. You'd put it

in a pot and then you'd put the skein in, you'd put the yarn in. And they'd take it out and they'd put it into cold water. They wring it out and then they'd dry it. When it would be dry, they'd make a ball of it and they'd use it.

C: How did they have time to do all those things?

M: That's what I said to you. After putting the children to bed at night, then they'd be

working on many of those things. They'd be sewing clothes for the children.

C: The women must have been constantly working.

M: They must have been very tired when they went to sleep, some of them. The work they had, especially if it was a big family. ☺

Recorded and transcribed by Carmen MacArthur
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Sgeul ri Aithris | The Story Telling Tradition

NAIDHEACHD BHEAG AIT | A FUNNY LITTLE STORY

© Photo by Ryan MacDonald



Air a
Ah-aithris
le Mìcheal
Eòin Chaluim
Sheumais
Mhóir, Baile
Sheumais,
Sioramachd
Bhictoria.

trick air a's a' stòr. Bhiodh 'ad a' ceannach leth-bharailte sgadain a h-uile toiseach geomhraidi. Agus, dé rinn 'ad ach thug 'ad a' sgadan ás agus chuir 'ad breigeachan ann 'na àite. Agus, bha sin math. Chuir 'ad an ceann air 's air a' bharailte. 'S thug e dhachaigh e 's bha a bhean 'dol a dheanamh dinnear. Chaidh i sios dha 'n t-seilear, choimhead i, thug i an ceann far a' bharailte. 'S cha robh ann ach breigeachan!

Thàinig i 'nuas 's thuirt i ris a' chompanch, "Chan eil sgath a' siod ach breigeachan!" That was it.

"Falbhaidh mi." Uell, dh'fhalbh e. Thug e 'n aghaidh air a' mharsanta an Iona. "O, Mhuire, Mhuire."

"Ist, ist!" thuirt e ris. "Bheil fhios agad dé latha a th' ann an diugh? Dihaoine na Ceusda 's thu 'damaineadh."

O, bha e wicked gu damaineadh.

"O, tha mise coma. Air a dh'eugas mise, chan eil a dhìth ormas ach oisean beag an iùrrionn gun a bhith ro theth."

Air a clàradh, air a tar-sgrìobhadh, 's air a tonndadh dha 'n a' Bheurla le Seigheag ni'n Aonghais Iain Pheadair. ☺

Translation

Mickey: [There was this fellow and] the young boys played a trick on him in the store. They'd be buying a half-barrel of herring at the start of every winter. And what did they do but they took the herring out and they put bricks in their place. And that was good. They put the lid on the barrel. And he took it home and his wife was going to make dinner. She went down to the cellar, she looked, and she removed the lid from the barrel. There was nothing there but bricks!

She came up and she said to her husband, "There's nothing there but bricks!" That was it.

"I'll go." Well, he left. He went to face the merchant in Iona. "O, Mary, Mary."

"Ist, ist!" he said to him. "Do you know what today is? It's Good Friday and you're swearing."

Oh, he was bad for swearing.

"Oh, I don't care. When I die, I don't need anything but a small corner of hell without it being too hot." ☺

Told by Michael MacNeil, Jamesville. Recorded, transcribed and translated by Shay MacMullin.

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© Photo by Marlene Ivey

Céilidh with Seumas & Shay & Joe.

Bun is Bàrr | Root & Branch is a mentorship program created by Seumas Watson, in collaboration with Frances MacEachen, Office of Gaelic Affairs.

Through everyday and cultural activities, apprentices connect with Gaelic language, song, story, cultural values, elder Gaels and the céilidh (visiting) tradition. Carmen MacArthur and Shay MacMullin were fortunate to be mentored by Seumas as àrd-eòlaiche in the pilot run of the program in 2009. Mary Jane Lamond joined the program to support with hosting and song mentorship. Together, they all cooked, laughed, shared stories, put wood in, scouted for a good Christmas tree, learned songs, read, made beds, laughed a lot, worked on transcriptions, did housework, and visited many elder Gaels. In addition, they enjoyed Seumas' warm hospitality, patient encouragement and beautiful fellowship together. Since that time, Shay and Carmen have continued to work in Gaelic Nova Scotia. Included here are some seanchas pieces they recorded and transcribed, skills they gained during their apprenticeship with Seumas.

Ceud 's millean taing, a Sheumais! Cumaidh mi mo làmh air.



Carmen & Seumas making crafts.

an rubha

A' Cuimhneachadh air Sàr-charaide Dhomh Fhìn

REMEMBERING MY BEST FRIEND



Jim Watson was raised in a small community on the West Coast of Maine. From his own account his first exposure to Gaelic had been while working there with gravediggers from the west of Ireland, and once in Cape Breton he formed a friendship with the colourful Rev. Charles MacDonald ('Holy Charley') on the North Shore. His first active engagement with Gaelic in Cape Breton was in 1975 when he was working for the Bill Lynch Shows and enrolled in the Gaelic language course for beginners offered by the college in Sydney. What set him out immediately from other students was his faithful attendance at the course for fluent speakers which was offered entirely through the language. Although he understood very little at the beginning, his willingness to go in at the 'deep end' enabled him to progress rapidly. Some months later, again on his own initiative, Jim decided to learn a song, *Bu Deònach Leam Tilleadh* (I Would Willingly Return), an emigrant song by the Christmas Island bard Hugh Francis MacKenzie praising Cape Breton's Gaelic culture and natural environment. It was a choice that said much about the focus of Jim's future career in Gaelic; by the time he was finished learning the verses he understood and was able to explain every word of the Christmas Island bard's poetic language. This was to be followed over the coming decades by scores of songs carefully acquired from the *sluagh* (people), and memorably performed at hundreds of occasions. Within the year Jim's Gaelic was fully functional, and he was quick to realize the vast potential of the island's Gaelic culture, and the social and institutional challenges that it faced in Cape Breton of the 70s. Not only did the island's Gaelic world seem destined to become '*An gad air an robh an t-iasg*' (the stick on which the fish used to be strung) as one storyteller put it; Jim saw clearly that the uncritical embracing of Old World Victorian versions of Scottishness - for all their perceived respectability - was no solution for Gaelic speaking Cape Bretoners and their descendants, and a few of the younger people from the post-Gaelic

industrial area began to take notice and offer their friendship and moral support.

In the meantime, Jim regularly made visits to Gaelic households throughout the island - in Inverness County, Big Pond, the North Shore and Iona - acquiring basic training in the skills of Gaelic culture through singing at milling frolics, participating in the sharp, humorous give-and-take of Gaelic conversations and rapidly building up his own unique repertoire from the hundreds of stories current among older people in communities (it was later suggested that he should title his memoirs '*Anecdotaly Yours*'). This direct initiation into what he termed 'a brilliant social culture' led him to remark on the way home after a memorable session sometime in the 80s, 'We're so mesmerised by the place we hardly notice the *** is out of our pants'.

It was around this time that two positive developments took place. Jim settled and put up a house near River Denys beside Collie Macintosh ('Collie Angain Dhòmhnaill a' Chùbair'), a renowned singer. Collie's place became a *céilidh* house, regularly attracting singers such as Maxie MacNeil and John Rory MacNeil from the Iona area for extended sessions. The second development, with long term implications for Gaelic, was his hiring at Nova Scotia Highland Village to promote Gaelic on the site and in the community. The Gaelic remit was further strengthened when the Highland Village joined Nova Scotia Museum and the result over the years has been a network of mutually reinforcing programs addressing the needs of all ages and firmly founded on the regional culture. Jim understood that a central component of any successful Gaelic initiative would be individual and community confidence building, based on 'small successes', where Gaelic addressed social needs including that of 'continuity' within the culture and direct, supportive communication between young and old. Jim was fully conscious that the enrichment Gaelic speakers had brought to his own life was a gift to be repaid to the culture and an investment for this and future generations. One means by which this was realized was his contribution to the publication of *Am Bràighe*, a quarterly dedicated entirely to Gaelic Cape Breton and performing an important service not addressed since the publication of the island's Gaelic newspaper Mac-Talla ended in 1904. Here Cape Bretoners, and many beyond the island's shores, could see the wealth of tradition contained in the lives

of apparently ordinary Gaelic people, and realize its value. *Am Bràighe*, in addition to providing access to an oral and musical tradition, much of it through the medium of Gaelic, also addressed directly issues of language and cultural rights, and the Gaelic world's right to a future. Jim led the Highland Village publication *An Rubha*, which also provides valuable items of regional lore. A further - and major - contribution was the introduction of 'social learning' in Highland Village and community language/culture programmes, where people acquire language and cultural skills through traditional activities in an open and relaxed social context, in preference to a bookish approach. It is this technique and philosophy, derived from Jim's own experiences in the island's country parishes, and reflecting centuries-old techniques of transmission in Gaelic communities, that is responsible for the active core of younger Gaelic speakers in Cape Breton today, and the increasing numbers now acquiring the language as spoken by their grandparents.

Jim presented many papers at conferences nationally and internationally and received a major international Gaelic award in 2016. However, what will best be remembered is his effect on Gaelic and its people, performed with thoughtfulness, humour and generosity. His was one of the few families on the island where the children were raised to speak Gaelic and have acquired traditional skills such as song and music. His legacy is with those of his own generation and with the younger Gaelic speakers and learners befriended, inspired and guided by him, who once having acquired Gaelic will not let it go anytime soon. *Bidh sinn 'ga ionndrainn mar charaid, mar cho-obraiche agus mar bhràthair.* ©

Dr. John Shaw, Honorary Fellow, School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh.



© Photo by Marlene Ivey

A' Toirt Spéis do Seumas

SEUMAS WATSON: A TRIBUTE



© Photo by Marlene Ivey

There are a few people who make such an immediate impact on you that you never forget the first encounter. Seumas Watson was such a person. I first met him at the University of Toronto, on a beautiful late spring Saturday in about the year 1992. He had been invited by the organisers of *Mòd Ontario* to perform and adjudicate at the *Mòd*. The *Mòd* committee usually invited well-known Gaelic singers and other notable Gaels from Scotland. Their invitation to Seumas was the first, but hardly the last, indication to me of the great esteem in which he was held by Gaels on both sides of the Atlantic.

I particularly remember the evening *cèilidh*, a rather formal affair held in one of the big dining halls at the university. It was a setting radically different from the Cape Breton kitchens in which Seumas learned his great store of songs and oral tradition, and one in which he was never very comfortable. The invited performers from Scotland sang popular Old Country '*cèilidh*' songs. These songs were not part of Seumas' repertoire. His turn came and he made his way almost shyly and reluctantly to the stage, and immediately launched into,

'S ann aig Port an Taighe-Thàirneadh

*Thogadh siùil ris a' bhàta;
Cha b'e 'n stiùir a rinn
t'fhàgail,
Gu robh fàillinn 'sna bùird.*

*Air fail irinn illrinn oich irinn
ù...*

His powerful, melodic tenor, jolted me to attention. This was something else, something from an older, deeper Gaelic tradition. This was the tradition he loved, and sought tirelessly and generously to convey to others.

Seumas was one of the finest Gaelic-speakers that I have ever met, and he had a profound understanding of the language and culture. He had a great respect and admiration for the older Gaels with whom he spent so much time, a respect and admiration which was fully reciprocated. He was

deadly serious about the language and culture and about the well-being of the community. He was also the best, most entertaining company you could hope to have. I think about Seumas every day, and amidst the sadness, I also often find myself chuckling as I recall something pithy he said, some nickname he had bestowed, some story he related, and I still see that wicked smile and the devilish twinkle in his eyes.

Seumas' contribution to Gaelic culture in Nova Scotia—and more generally—was profound. He recorded a large and diverse body of Gaelic oral tradition from Cape Breton Gaels, from which he contributed extremely valuable material to a variety of publications, including the outstanding Gaelic cultural journal *Am Bràighe*, the Highland Village publications *Naidheachd a' Chlachain* and *An Rubha*, and a valuable collection which he co-edited, *Sealladh gu Taobh*. Seumas also did a tremendous amount to enhance the use of Gaelic, particularly as an interpretive tool, at *Baile nan Gàidheal*, the Highland Village Museum.

Arguably as important was his advocacy

on behalf of Gaelic in Nova Scotia—his ideas on language and community regeneration planted many valuable seeds which are now bearing fruit. Seumas played a crucial role in the development of language and cultural acquisition programming such as '*Gàidhlig aig Baile*', '*Bun is Bàrr*', and '*Stòras a' Bhàile*', as well as in important projects such as '*Cainnt mo Mhàthar*' and '*An Drochaid Eadarainn*' which have helped to build an infrastructure to support linguistic and cultural regeneration. The hugely impressive expansion in numbers of fluent young Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia in recent years is in no small part due to Seumas' efforts, and was something which gave him great and justifiable satisfaction. A very large number of people have benefited more directly from Seumas' support, guidance, and tutelage. I am one of them.

Seumas also made a significant contribution to Scottish Gaelic scholarship, not only through his participation at conferences, but also through his advice to and support of a range of fine Scottish, Irish and North American scholars. He was a valued and respected contributor to BBC *Radio nan Gàidheal*, who marked his passing by rebroadcasting early this year a number of important programs which they had made with him. As a mark of the high esteem in which he was held in Scotland, in 2016 Seumas received the award for best contribution to Gaelic at the annual Scottish Gaelic Awards, sponsored by *Bòrd na Gàidhlig*.

'*Chan fhaisear a leithid a-rithist*', 'his like won't be seen again', is something that has been said of some of the greatest of Irish and Scottish Gaelic tradition bearers. It is an expression that can well be applied to Seumas Watson. I hope he knew that I loved him like a brother. Whatever I brought to his life cannot ever equal what he brought to mine. Like many others, I will miss him every day for the rest of my life, and hope that at its end, we'll meet again. ©

Dr. Rob Dunbar, Chair of Celtic Languages, Literature, History and Antiquities at the University of Edinburgh.

'S I A' MHUC AS SHÀMHAIKH' AS MOTH' A DH'ITHEAS.

THE QUIETEST PIG EATS THE MOST.

Cumha Do Shéumas MacBhàtar

LAMENT FOR SEUMAS WATSON

This was inspired by a lament which Maxie MacNeil often sang', *Cumha do Dhòmhnull MacFhionghain*. Maxie recorded it on the CD 'Còmhla Cruinn / Gathered Together: a Cape Breton Celebration', and I know that Seumas had a high opinion of both the song and of Maxie's treatment of it, as Seumas has had it published in a couple of places. The first time I heard Maxie singing it was at the Iona Legion, during *Fèis an Eilein*, in about 1994. I spent the day with Seumas at the Highland Village, and we went to the Legion, as people from the community were gathering there after a funeral mass for two older Gaelic speakers. The afternoon was a remarkable one: a celebration in song and music of the two men, and this was one of the songs Maxie chose to sing. I'll always associate the song with Maxie and with Seumas.

Composed: Rob Dunbar - 13/12/2018



© Photo by Marlene Ivey

Seumas Watson & Rob Dunbar

Fonn: Ho hi rithill a bha ho
Ho hi rithill a bha ho
Ho ro 'illean, 's hog i ò
Mo chridhe trom 's cha neònach

1. Fhuair sinn sgeul a tha na bheum
Mun an laoch a rinn mòr-fheum,
A bha air thoiseach anns gach ceum:
Ar caraid gasta, gràdhach.
2. Bha e riamh measg an t-sluaign
A thug air-san iomadh buaidh;
An dualchas aca bhiodh e 'luaidh
Le urram agus sàr-chliù.
3. Air na h-òrain thug e spèis,
A h-uile latha gu ceann a rèis,
Thog e fonn aig gach fèist,
Le binneas is guth làidir.
4. Fear nan Con a chanadh ris,
Aig an robh an inntinn clis,
Cridhe gaisgeil nach do bhris
'San àm a phian 's a chràdh-lot
5. Am fear èibhinn a thug bàrr,
'Gabhal dhàn is sgeul gu latha
Leis a' gheur-chainnt chuir e gàir'
Air iomadh aodann aigh'reach
6. Caraid dileas do gach aon
A ghabh tlachd à cainnt nan daoin',
Fial, pàirteach nach robh claoen
Le a eòlas lionmhòr àraid.
7. Tha mo smuaintean air Marlene,
Air Anna chòir is Cailean binn,
Air Lileag òig is Aonghas mìn,
Nan call a tha do-labhairt.
8. Soraidh slàn do Sheumas mòr
Bidh ionndrainn mòr aig daoine còir
Air an duine as àirdé glòir,
Cho fad sa labhrar Gàidhlig. ©

Chorus: Ho hi rithill a bha ho
Ho hi rithill a bha ho
Ho ro 'illean, 's hog i ò
My heart is heavy and it is not strange

1. We got news, it was a blow
About the hero whose impact was huge,
Who broke the path in so many ways:
Our excellent, beloved friend.
2. He always spent time with the folk
And they had a big impact on him;
He always praised their great traditions
With respect and with great praise.
3. He always loved and esteemed the songs
Every day until the end of his life,
He raised a tune at every gathering
Tunefully with his strong voice.
4. 'Man of the Dogs' he would be called,
Who had the most agile mind.
A heroic heart which never broke
Even in his pain and his agony.
5. The humourous man who was outstanding
In singing songs and telling stories to dawn,
With his witty conversation he would put
A smile on many a merry face.
6. A faithful friend to many a person
Who took pleasure in common conversation,
Generous, sharing, who wasn't partial
With his huge and amazing store of knowledge.
7. My thoughts are now with Marlene,
And with Anna and Colin of the sweet voice,
And with young Lili and Angus of the tender years,
In their loss, which is unspeakable.
8. A fond farewell to great Seumas,
Good people will miss greatly
the man of the highest praise,
As long as Gaelic is spoken. ©

MAG-TALLA

AN RI NACH GUINN-MI AN DIUGH CHAN ALTRUIOS MHAIRACH

September 9, 1893
Na Seann Sgeulachdan
Le A. MacG. Sinclair

Diomhanas nan diomhanas," arsa Dòmhnull Mügach, nuair a leugh e mu 'n fhear a ghoid nighean an easbaig. "Nach uamhasach an obair," ars' esan, "a bhi 'craobh-sgaoileadh a leithid sin de bhriagan air feadh an t-saoghal." Cha do rinn Dòmhnull briag riamh ach an uair a bhiodh e gu buannachd shaoghalta dha. Mar sin, bha sgeulachdan nan diomhanas fior mhór 'na bheachd. Chan innseadh e sgeulachd fhaoi mu ghoid eich; ach nuair a bhiodh e creic eich dh'innseadh e gur robh e móran na b' fheàrr na bha e. Agus aig a' cheart àm bheireadh e an deagh aire nach innseadh e cron sam bith a bhiodh air. Nam b' e seann each a bhiodh ann, each a bhiodh fichead bliadhna' a dh'aois, dh'innseadh Dòmhnull gu robh e ceithir-deug. Cha bu thoigh leis a ràdh nach robh e ach ceithir-deug, ach nan digeadh a' chùis teann air theireadh e sin cuideachd.

Bha na seann sgeulachdan Gàidhealach anabarrach taitneach. Bha cuid diù a bha air an cur ri 'chéile gu fior shnasmhor. Cha b' e buamalairean, no cealgairean, no daormunnan a dhealbh iad; ach daoine tuigseach, firinneach, blàth-chridheach. Thigeadh dhuinn a bhi gu mór ann an comain Iain Chaimbeul, an t-ìleach ionnsicht', uasal, eireachdail, measail a chaidh gu 'dhìchioll gu 'n cruinneachadh. Chuir e am mach ceithir leabhricean diù, 's thathar an nis a' cur am mach nan leabhrachean sin ás ùr. Dheanadh e feum mór do Dhòmhnull Mügach, an t-snaoim chruaidh a th' air a sporan fhuasgladh, agus an ceannach, 's an leughadh gu cùramach. Cha chosdadadh iad dha ach sia dollair, agus is nì gur bhrigh sia dollair ann an coimeas ri sia fichead sgeulachd mhath. Bha Caimbealach lìe 'na chliù d' a chinneadh agus do na Gàidheil uile.

Bha móran de dh'fiosrachadh de bhaighealachd, agus de shonas am measg dhaoine ri àm nan seann sgeulachdan. Chruinnicheadh buidheann chàirdil an ceann a chéile aig beul na h-oidhche. Dh'innseadh fear sgeulachd mu shithichean, mu bhuidseachd, mu dhruidheachd, mu dhaoine a reic iad-fhéin ris an droch-spiorad, agus mu chrioch nan daoine sin. Dh'innseadh fear eile naidheachd mu bhòcain, na mu thaghairm nan cat. Sheinneadh fear eile, no bean no

nighean, òran a chuireadh fonn air gach cridhe. Gheibhteadh na h-aithinnean, sgaoileadh a chuideachd, agus rachadh an luchd-céilidh dhachaидh gu sunndach, solasach.

Ach chuir an t-strì gu bhi nor agus a' chabhag ás do 'n chéilidh. Nuair a tha daoine gu dichiolach a' feuchainn ri airgiod a chur ri 'chéile, chan eil ùine aca gu dhol air chéilidh. Agus ged a rachadh cha bhiodh móran toileachaидh aca. Leis mar a bhiodh an cridhe air an t-saoghal cha b' urrainn iad labhairt mu nì anns am biodh brigh na taitneas.

Their cuid nach robh móran fiosrachaidh aig na seann Ghàidheil. Chan urrainn mise sin a ràdh. Na seann daoine air an robh mi eòlach cha bu daoine gun fiosrachadh iad. Gheibhteadh eachdraidh, is sgeulachdan, is òrain 'nam measg. Thug iad uile greis mhór anns an sgoil-oidhche. Sgoil-oidhche! An robh sgoil-oidhche aig na bodaich a thàinig am mach ás an t-seann dùthaich? 'S ann aca fhéin a bha 'n sgoil-oidhche. Gu dé a bha 's a' chéilidh ach sgoil-oidhche? Agus bu sgoil mhath i. Bha i math gus an inntinn a gheurachadh, gus a chiuimhne a neartachadh, agus gu eòlas a thoirt do 'n òigridh mu 'n t-sluagh bho 'n dàinig iad, mu 'n dùthaich do 'm buineadh iad, agus mu euchdan Wallais, Bhruis, agus ghasgeach eile.

Co dhiù a bha fiosrachadh am measg nan seann Ghàidheal no nach robh, bha sgeulachdan 'nam measg. Ach dh'fhalbh na sgeulachdan. Chuir an t-aineolas,

a' mhórchuis, an tì, agus na pàipearan naidheachd ás daibh. Nuair a sguir na mnathan de 'n bhrochan agus a thòisich iad air an tì cha b' fhiach na seann sgeulachdan. Chan fhoghnadh an sin ach còmhradh mu na fleasgaich 's na caileagan a bhiodh a' gluasad an cuideachd a chéile, mu 'n dòigh 's an robh 'n té mu dheireadh a phòs air a sgeadachadh, mu chuma aodaich, mu bhoineidean is adan, mu chearcuill 's mu shumagan-cùil, mu 'n chloinn a thàinig 's a bha ri teachd, agus gu sònraichte mu mheud mhór, cabaireachd, struidhealachd, cealgareachd, agus droch dhòighean am bana-choimhersnach. Nuair a fhuair na daoine na pàipearan naidheachd cho luath 's a bhiodh e dorcha gu leòir gu coinneal a lasadh. Leughadh iad le solas inntinn mu 'n mhort eagallach a chuireadh an gniomh an California, mu 'n aobhar a bha aig mnaoi òig ann an Chicago air litir-dhealachaidh a thoirt d'a fear, mu chuibheartachd tiolpadair-poca ann am Boston, mu 'n dòigh anns an do chrochadh am mortair mu dheireadh an Ontario, mu 'n phrionnsa òg mu dheireadh a rugadh 's an Roinn-Eòrpa, mu chuairean is òraidean luchd-riaghlaidh na dùthcha, agus gu sònraichte mu innleachdan riaghlaidh a dheanadh an t-airgiad cho pait agus gum faodadh daoine a bhi 'nan tàmh leth na h-ùine. Nach math an gnothach gun deachaidh na seann sgeulachd ás! Nach taitneach, blasda beannachte na nithean a thàinig 'nan àite! Nach h-ann aig Dòmhnull Mügach a tha 'n t-aobhar taingealachd!



© Illustration by Ellison Robertson

Translation

September 9, 1893
The Old Tales
By Alasdair MacLean Sinclair

“**F**olly of follies,” said Gloomy Donald when he read the story about the man who stole the bishop’s horse. “What atrocious work it is,” he said, “to spread the like of such lies around the world.” Donald never told a lie, unless some material gain would come of it. So it was that he had such a strong opinion about idle yarns. He wouldn’t tell a silly story about stealing a horse, but when he was selling a horse he would claim that it was much better than it actually was. At the same time, he was very careful not to mention any of its faults. If it should be an old horse, a horse twenty years old, Donald would say it was only fourteen. He didn’t like saying it was fourteen years old. But if the bargain was near at hand, he would say it anyway.

The old Gaelic tales were especially enjoyable. Some of them were put together very ornately. It wasn’t dolts, connivers, or eccentrics that created them, but intelligent, decent and thoughtful people. It would greatly become us to be in the debt of John Campbell, the scholarly and esteemed Islay gentleman who so devotedly set about collecting Gaelic stories. He produced four volumes of them and they are now being republished. It would do Gloomy Donald good to undo the hard knot on his purse, buy them and read them carefully. The cost is only six dollars and there’s not much comparison between six dollars and one hundred and twenty good stories. John Campbell of Islay is a credit to his surname and all Gaels.

There was a good deal of civility and pleasure among people during the age of Gaelic storytelling. Congenial groups would gather together in the evening while a storyteller would recite tales about the fairies, witchcraft, magic, or people who sold themselves to the devil and their demise. Someone else would tell a ghost story or a tale about talking cats. Another man, or a woman or a girl, would sing a song that would gladden the hearts of all present. Lanterns were distributed, the gathering would disperse, and the visitors went home pleased and cheerful.

Striving and hurry have put an end to the céilidh (visit). When people are committed to earning money, they don’t have time to socialize. Even if they did, they wouldn’t enjoy it very much. Concerned as they are with worldly pursuits, they have nothing to say of interest or that’s entertaining.

Some will put forth that the Gaels of old were unknowledgeable. I can’t say

that. The old people that I have known were certainly not uninformed. They knew history, songs and stories. They were all of long time attendance in night school. Night school! Did the old-timers coming from Scotland have a night school? Indeed they did. What was the céilidh (visit) but a night school and a good one. It was conducive to sharpening and strengthening the mind and memory and to educate the youth about their forefathers, the country from which they came and the deeds of Wallace and Bruce and other heroes.

Whether or not the old Gaels were informed, they had stories. But the tales have ceased to be told. Ignorance, pride, tea and the newspapers have killed them. When women changed from gruel and started on the tea, the old stories lost their value. The only conversation worthwhile then was about young men and women and who they were keeping company with, how the bride was dressed, clothing fashions, bonnets and hats, rugs, rings, children born and to be born and especially the great extent of other women neighbour’s gossip, wickedness, deceitfulness and ill ways.

When the men got the newspapers, there was no time to go and visit or listen to an old story. They wouldn’t be as ignorant as their fathers. The humblest man would be up-to-date as his grandfather never could have been. They became immediately engrossed in the newspaper as soon as it was dark enough to light a candle. They would read with mind ablaze about a dreadful murder committed in California, the reason a young woman in Chicago sent a parting letter to a man, a pickpocket’s crime in Boston, how the most recent murderer in Ontario was hung, the latest prince born in Europe, about the travels and speeches of national politicians and particularly about the newest government schemes that would make money so abundant as to enable people to be at leisure half the time.

Isn’t it a good thing that the old stories have disappeared? Aren’t the things that have replaced them delightful, tasteful and blessed?! Doesn’t Gloomy Donald have a good reason to be thankful?! ☺

An excerpt from *MacTalla*, Gaelic edited by Shay MacMullin. Translated by Seumas Watson. The English translation first appeared in *Am Bràighe*, as “Lamenting the Loss of Old Tales”, Summer - 1996, page 20.

Eòin Aonghais Chaluim
Jonathan G. MacKinnon



A’ cuimhneachadh air Sàr-Ghàidheal
Remembering an Excellent Gael

O chionn ceud wgu leth bliadhna, ann an 1869, rugadh Eòin Aonghais Chaluim. Thàinig a chuideachd ás an t-Eilean Sgiathanach. Chaidh a thogail ann an Dunakin. Bha e ‘na ghaisgeach dha na Gàidheil. Nuair nach robh e ach òg, shaoil leis gun deanar feum air goireasan ‘s a chainnt mhàthaireil. Ann an 1892, chuir e Mac-talla air bhonn, pàipear naidheachd ‘s a’ Ghàidhlig air fad. Mhair Mac-talla fad dusan bliadhna gu ruige 1904. Dh’ionnsaigh an latha seo fhéin, cha robh riamh ann pàipear naidheachd ‘s a’ Ghàidhlig a sheas cho fada sin. Chaidh e air feadh an t-saoghail a sgoileadh naidheachdan, seانfhaclan, litrichean, òrain, toimhseagan is eile. Thathas ‘ga chur gu feum fhathast.

A bharrachd air a sin, thionndail e Treasure Island dha ‘n a’ Ghàidhlig, am measg naidheachdan eile. Bha Eòin ‘na sgoilear agus ‘na fhear-tagraidh a thog stri air sgath na Gàidhlig fad a bheatha. Chaochail e ann an 1944 o chionn ceud gu leth bliadhna. Tha sinn fada ‘na chomain agus ‘ga cuimhneachadh gun teagamh.

Jonathan Gillies MacKinnon was born in 1869. His ancestors originated on the Isle of Skye and he was born and raised in Dunakin. He was a hero to the Gaels. When he was young, he saw a need for Gaelic materials. In 1892, he began publishing a Gaelic newspaper, *Mac-talla*. The paper ran for twelve years. To date, it is the longest running Gaelic newspaper. It went all over the world and contained stories, proverbs, letters, songs, riddles, and more. It is still a useful resource.

In addition, he translated other books and stories like *Treasure Island*. Jonathan G was a scholar and an advocate who worked throughout his life to promote Gaelic. He was born one hundred and fifty years ago. No doubt, we are still deeply in his debt and remembering him.



Séumas mac Sheumais Sheumais Sheumais

Through the Years at Highland Village with Jim Waston



*Jim Watson and John Shaw at the milling table during Stòras a' Bhaile.
Painting - by Joe Murphy*



Jim & Marlene Ivey at the launch of An Drochaid Eadarainn.



Society President M.A. MacPherson presenting Jim with the Award of Merit.



Joe Neil MacNeil, a good friend and mentor, pictured here with Jim.



Jim & Catherine MacNeil during Stòras a' Bhaile.



Jim in the school house at Highland Village in 1988.



Jim, Joe Peter MacLean & John Shaw during an afternoon cèilidh.



Jim standing in front of the new Baile nan Gàidheal sign.



Jim & Allan MacLeod working in the barn.



Joe Peter MacLean, Jim Watson, Mickey MacNeil, Catherine MacNeil, Shamus MacDonald, Katie Margaret MacLeod & Catriona Parsons.



Mary Jane Lamond and Jim leading a Gaelic tour of the Village.



An outdoor milling frolic at Highland Village.



Jim telling Gaelic stories to children at the Village.

Mar a Chì Mi Seumas

MY MEMORIES OF SEUMAS

If you're headed for the Island in search of Gaelic there's one man you've just got to meet!', advice given me by fellow-Gael, Joe Murphy, in the spring of 1991 as he drove me north through a snow-laden landscape to a rendezvous in Vi's Restaurant in Wycocomagh. There Seumas (Jimmy) Watson was waiting for me: I listened, captivated by the idiom of his fine Inverness County Gaelic for hours that seemed like minutes. It was the beginning of a beautiful and rewarding friendship, foreshortened last year by his untimely death. Seumas had an instinctive feel for the language. His writings in Gaelic -- sadly too few -- are masterful. In his columns as Gaelic editor of *Am Bràighe* are preserved many gems from Island tradition-bearers recorded by himself and others -- work continued in *An Rubha*, and elsewhere. Acknowledging the authority of the native-speaker, Seumas sought to reproduce texts which were truly authentic. His opening question of a recording session with an informant would be, 'Ciamar a tha sibh gur stoidhleadh fhèin?' 'How do you "style" yourself?' summoning up for me a figure of ambassadorial rank being presented in a royal court.

The richer and more authentic a tradition-bearer's Gaelic, in pronunciation, vocabulary and lore, the higher Seumas' regard for her or him. Jimmy had a very fine ear for such points and revelled in meeting folk each of whose parents had a different dialectal background, such as Lewis-Harris or W. Inverness-shire respectively. On one occasion, endeavouring to further an investigation, he sought out near Orangedale a Gaelic-speaker, whose brother he knew well, to

see if their Gaelic was completely identical. On my enquiring later how the mission had gone, Jimmy replied, 'He sure turned out to be one totally monosyllabic brother!' This understated, mischievous, sense of humour undoubtedly helped Seumas rub along with others whose outlook on life was sometimes radically different from his own. In the days when he lived in the River Denys area I recall an acquaintance casually enquiring whether Seumas was trapping many beaver, to which he responded somewhat drily, 'Matter of fact, I rather like the little guys', to which he added, after a suitable pause, 'besides, isn't it against the law?'

Beyond the scope of this brief account is a full assessment of Seumas' multiple talents and accomplishments, ranging from the pedagogical and academic to the artistic and practical. Suffice to say that, deployed in an urban university setting, they would undoubtedly have rendered him a wealthier and even more celebrated person. He was, however, totally at home among the birds and animals of the nature reserve that is rural Cape Breton, and, equally importantly, among those impressive personalities who constituted the last generation of Gaelic tradition-bearers. One of Seumas' proudest accomplishments was working alongside Gaelic singer, Collie MacIntosh, as they constructed the Watson home in River Denys, premises which, like their successors, were a haven for Gaelic singers, storytellers and pilgrims from the 'Old Country', who all seemed instinctively to understand what Seumas was about.

As the reputation he established in his work of preserving and transmitting



Jim Watson and Seòsamh Watson chatting during a visit to the Highland Village.

© Photo by Seòsamh Watson

Cape Breton's unique heritage grew internationally Seumas began more and more to visit not only Scotland, where he had numerous friends and where, as a Transatlantic Gael, he was uniquely honoured, but Ireland also. This country, on account of enduring *Gaeltacht* community life, the language Revival Movement, Government bodies supporting Irish and the growth of *Gael-Sgoiltean*, was regarded by Seumas as the Mecca of the Gaelic world and whatever useful elements or instructive developments he witnessed, these he endeavoured to transplant to Nova Scotia. *Am Bràighe* -- that uniquely Nova Scotian success story to which he contributed -- proved the ideal medium for this work of reaching out across the Atlantic. A photo of the Donegal *seancháí* I had worked with featured on the cover of one edition and I was moved to observe his pride in a framed copy he saw on display in Ireland.

No-one who knew Seumas can fail to recall his impressive singing voice and mastery of the *seann nós* style learned so faithfully from expert Inverness County mentors after many master-classes, both formal and informal, over the years. I was fortunate enough to be present at one such when participants of the *Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig Conference* (StFX University 2009) visited the Highland Village. Local performers took part that day along with Seumas included Peter Jack MacLean, Maxie MacNeil, and Joe Peter MacNeil -- *beannachd Dhè leotha!* Sadly, Seumas was too much engaged on behalf of other causes to pay but scant attention to this gift of his own. We may hope, however, that sufficient numbers of individual recordings still exist of his singing at gatherings and *céilidhean* over the years for this task still to be undertaken as a



Jim Watson, Seòsamh Watson, Vivien Hick & Ian Hick.

© Photo by Marlene Ivey

particularly personal tribute to Seumas, whose unique combination of Gaelic language skills, qualities of community leadership and singular performance techniques will be sorely missed and are surely rarely encountered in a single person. In the meantime here is my own small homage in Irish Gaelic:

'Cumha Sheumais Mhic Bhàtar'

*Brat na cumha os cionn Cheap Breatainn,
ar an Eilean ualach bróin,
d'imigh Seumas a b'aoibhne guth:
ar chór ainglí inniu a ghlór.*

*B' é ab eolaí ar gach sean-nós,
aigesean bhí scotch gach scéil,
ba mheidreach cách in a chomhluadar,
Seumas cara cléibh na nGael.*

*Tuar ár ndóchais mar a chothaigh
gaisgíoch óg ón Mhéan a-nuas
stór an dúchais beo ar bhéalaibh,
ag déanamh foinn is focla buan.*

*Leanaimisne a shlí go bródúil:
urrainn don dúchas a tháinig slán
lasair romhainn gach lá 'na lóchrann,
i gcuimhne Sheumais ba dílse croí.* ©

'Lament for Seumas Watson'

On Cape Breton sorrow's mantel,
all the Island charged with grief
gone is Seumas whose voice was sweetest
with angelic choir today he sings.

'Twas he who best knew old tradition,
choicest form of every tale,
'twas he enlivened every gathering,
our own Seumas, of Gaels belov'd.

Our hopes he raised, abiding ever
heroic journey north from Maine
tradition's treasures live again:
now our tunes and tales made new.

Follow proudly in his pathway:
tradition honouring in life
his shining lantern ever guiding.
token of his faithful heart. ©

* Sung to the air of *Boolavogue*

Seòsamh Watson, Dean of the Celtic Faculty and,
until 2008, Chair of Irish Language & Literature,
University College Dublin.

Though not related to Seumas, the paternal
ancestors of both men came the same southeastern
area of the province of Ulster, Ireland.

SEUMAS NAN CON



© Illustration by Ellison Robertson

Dèante le Làimh | Handmade

From Flax to Linen in the Highland Settlements of Nova Scotia



Lion | Flax was one of the earliest fibres that was found to be useful to mankind. Fragments of wild flax fibre, twisted and dyed, were discovered in Georgia, Eastern Europe, dating from around 30,000 years ago. By 5,000 years ago, the production of finely woven linen cloth was a well established Egyptian Middle Kingdom industry, facilitated by an efficient system of slave labour. Even the Latin name for fibre flax, *linum usitatissimum*--'most useful'--denotes its importance.

In Scotland, too, flax and its spun fibre, linen, was becoming an essential part of life. It was domesticated there as early as the Neolithic period. From the time of medieval accounts of the closely-pleated saffron-coloured *léine-chroich* | linen shirts used for battle dress, up to I. F. Grant's *Highland Folk Ways* description of fine linens that had been woven on some nineteenth century Highland looms, the making of linen cloth had become common throughout the centuries. Hemp (*cannabis sativa*), a bast fibre similar to flax, was also grown and processed like flax, but its fibre was normally used for more coarse cloth--to make sacks and canvas, or to twist into ropes and netting.

By the 18th century, the production of linen cloth was the most important industry throughout Scotland, with 13 million yards being approved for sale in 1771. To enable so much cloth to be produced, more land for flax cultivation and spinners were sought. (Three or four spinners were needed for each linen weaver.) Little flax had been grown in the Highlands until after the Jacobite uprising of 1745. At this time, estates were forfeited to the Crown, and an act of Parliament in 1753 set out to begin programs for "civilizing and improving" the Highlands. Groups such as the Trustees of the Forfeited Estates complied. They started spinning schools, offered, for free, the new flax flyer wheels, and encouraged flax cultivation. But many areas of the Highlands were too isolated to easily transport goods, and there was possibly a feeling by the population of being forced to comply. For example, instructions given to the factor of Iona in 1792 stated that much of the rent there should be paid in linen yarn or cloth, as the land was suitable for flax and there were many idle women living there! At any rate, although their efforts were somewhat accepted in the east and south, there was little success throughout much of the rest of the Highlands, including the Hebrides.

Spinning flax into linen required tools.

The earliest implement used was the *fearsaid* | spindle, and spindle whorls from as early as the Iron Age have been discovered all over Scotland. The flax fibre could be wrapped onto a long wooden stick, or *cuigeal* | distaff, tucked under an arm, and spinning could be continued while walking to market or tending to the cows. I. F. Grant informs us that spindles were in general use all over the Highlands in the late eighteenth century when the flax flyer spinning wheels were being introduced by the government-blessed spinning programs. Although the wheels, which had treadles, could produce linen thread more quickly, they were not very well accepted into many of the more remote Highland areas--even up to the early nineteenth century, the time of emigration for many.

Highland settlers arriving in the eastern parts of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton were greeted with thick forests and little cleared land. Because few had money to purchase cloth or fibre, they were left with little choice but to wear what clothing--both linen and woolen--they had brought with them while waiting until they could make their own. First they had to clear land. Oats and potatoes were generally the first crops, and in the years after that, flax. Then they would be able to make their own fibre into linen, although they would often have to wait even longer to clear enough land to raise sheep for wool.

Flax cultivation had been well established in the Port-Royal and Minas areas of early Nova Scotia (Acadia) by 1699. The memoirs of a resident French official stated that flax and hemp were growing there "extremely well" and were fulfilling the domestic needs of some of the settlers.

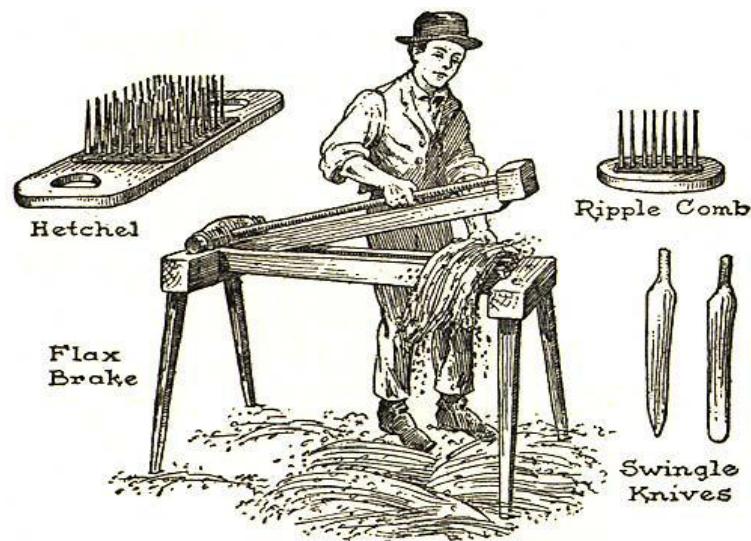
Cultivation had spread well into Cape Breton by the late eighteenth century, so even if they had not grown their own flax in the Highlands, the newly arrived Gaels were able to learn how to grow and produce their own fibre on their new land.

Converting

the coarse flax plant into a spinnable fibre was a labour-intensive process that had changed little in hundreds of years. As soon as land was cleared, the flax seeds were planted thickly enough for the stalks to grow closely together. This was done to avoid any branching out of the stems. The best time for planting was said to be when the red buds appeared on the maple trees. A family was said to need to plant around a $\frac{1}{4}$ acre per year at a rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of seed per acre. Nineteenth century documents state that in order to grow enough fibre to make a bedsheet or a tablecloth one would need to sow a 20 ft. by 30 ft. plot, using 2 pounds of seed. The flax was weeded when the plants were just a few inches (several centimetres) high. The plants grew to about 3 feet (1 metre) high, with delicate blue (or white) flowers at the top of the stalks, developing round seed pods as they matured.

As the stalks began to mature and turn yellow, they were pulled out of the ground--never cut, as the fibres run down into the roots. The bundles were stacked to dry, then the seed pods were removed, or 'rippled', by drawing the heads of the stalks through a coarse metal comb or by beating them with a flail. Bushels of seed, if the crop was abundant, could be saved for sowing next year's crop, for pressing into linseed oil, or for using as barter in the local store.

A flax plant is made up of bundles of individual fibres held around a woody core by bands of pectins and all of that is covered by an outer bark layer. The next step, 'retting', used moisture to grow moulds and bacteria to dissolve





the substances holding the fibre bundles together. This was done by either soaking the flax straw in a pond or slow-moving stream, or by spreading the stalks on the ground to allow the rain and dew to release the fibres. The dew retting takes at least a few weeks to complete; the water retting takes about 3 to 5 days. (When properly retted, the individual fibres could be easily separated from the inner woody core.) The stalks were then left to dry thoroughly.

The next three steps--‘breaking’, ‘scutching’ and ‘hacking’, would clean the fibres from the *boon* | woody core to ready them for spinning. Breaking was usually done on a bench with dull wooden blades to crush and separate the boon from the long fibres. This action broke up the core, which would fall in small pieces onto the floor, leaving the fibre itself intact. Next, the handfuls of flax were scutched, or held over an upright wooden board and scraped with a blunt wooden blade to clean away any pieces of boon that were still clinging to the fibre. ‘Scutching tow’, or the shorter fibres entangled with these small bits of wood and bark, would be left at the end of this process. It was not wasted, but could be spun and woven into coarse cloth.

The long, fine, scutched fibres were then ready to be hacked, or drawn through a series of combs with long metal tines that aligned the fibres while removing the last of the shorter fibres and boon. This also left a shorter tow fibre caught in the hackle tines that could be spun and woven into towelling or rough cloth. The long, combed ‘line’ fibre was of the best quality and was spun into fine thread to be woven into cloth for underclothing that was worn next to the skin, or for fine shirting, fine household linens, or headwear such as mutches and kerchiefs. The tow towelling was used for everyday and became softer with use. Smaller pieces were used in food preparation--straining milk or covering bowls. The coarser tow yarns were used

to make bed sacks for mattresses or even grain sacks. Nothing went to waste.

Flax became a common crop in the Highland settlements of Nova Scotia. Few spinning wheels might have come along on the ships, but now the small flax flyer wheel with a treadle was becoming popular for the spinning of linen thread. Many of the cheaper large ‘walking’ (or ‘wool’) wheels were found in the early homes, but they were used for spinning the shorter fibres--wool, or sometimes, flax tow. The spinning of the long-fibred line flax was left for the spindles until a flax wheel could be bartered for or purchased.

Florence Mackley, in Handweaving in Cape Breton (1967), tells us that Cape Breton had many good flax-growing areas. River Denys was one, and many items were woven from the linen produced there--especially table linens. One of Mackley’s more elderly informants, a Mrs. Munroe, of Whale Cove, near Margaree Harbour, at that time well into her 90s, was “well acquainted” with the growing and processing of flax, as she had helped with it when she was growing up in Strathlorne. Their linen was used in the weaving of things such as towels, bed covers, and tablecloths. Mackley also includes a picture of a grain sack in her book. It is tightly woven of very coarse flax tow yarn, with the initials of the owner (A. MacPhee, from the Shore Road, near Port Hood) painted on it.

Eveline MacLeod, in *Celtic Threads*, mentions that Middle River, Baddeck, Mabou, again, River Denys, and some areas of St. Ann’s were good areas for flax. Baddeck’s annual agricultural report for 1852 states that flax had been grown there for the past two years with good results. Pictou County, on the mainland, was also known for its flax production. One of MacLeod’s prized possessions was a linen coverlet from there that she thought had been woven by her great aunt Jessie (Dunbar) MacLean, who lived in Lorne.

Nineteenth century census records reveal large amounts of flax being grown and processed in Cape Breton and the eastern mainland, areas with high numbers of Highland settlers. In 1871, Pictou County had produced 499 bushels of flax seed, almost 12,000 pounds of dressed flax and 17,882 yards of homemade linen cloth. Of the Cape Breton counties, Inverness had the most production: 266 bushels of seed, 15,739 pounds of dressed flax and 6,329 yards of homemade linen. One Mabou family, the MacDougalls, were recorded as having harvested 100 pounds of flax on their farm.

Production begins to drop a bit by the 1881 census. Pictou County had 208 bushels of seed, 7,332 pounds of flax and

hemp and 9,349 yards of homemade linen. Inverness had 155 bushels of seed, 9,549 pounds of flax and hemp and 5,792 yards of homemade linen cloth. The year before, Baddeck had hosted “The Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition”, to showcase Cape Breton products and skills. There were prizes awarded for the best peck of flaxseed, best scutched flax (not less than 5 pounds), and the best bundle of flax in its ‘raw state’. Linen products merited three of the Exhibition’s textiles competitions: “Best Flax tablecloth, not less than 8 feet by 6 feet”; “Best 6 yards Flax Towelling”; and “Best 8 yards Linen Sheetings”, each with a \$2 prize. We are told that an L.A. McEcheran (sic) not only exhibited apples and flax, but also made the best ‘flax’ (linen) tablecloth.

By the end of the nineteenth century, even though over 7,000 yards of homemade linen cloth had been recorded in 1891 for Inverness County, production of flax was down. In fact, by that time, linen weaving had become rare in most other areas of eastern North America. As early as the 1850s, imports of ready-made cotton cloth and clothing, as well as cotton warp threads for weaving on the looms, had become available--a result of the expansion of cotton mills in England and eastern North America. Cotton cloth, once unavailable or very expensive, now was becoming more and more affordable. It was inevitable that the labour-intensive processing of flax and the weaving of linen should die out eventually, even though accounts of flax growing, processing, and weaving in isolated areas of Cape Breton persisted into the 1920s. Flax has enjoyed a long history with the Gaels. ©

A Note About Jim:

Jim and I were good friends in our early years at Highland Village. These were the 1990s, when it seemed that the Gaelic community was dying out, along with any interest in it from the next generation. We car-pooled to work every day—an act of faith on my part, when we went in his rust-bucket little car with the hole in the floor. We discussed everything, from religion and anthropology to societal and political ills and he taught me to look at things from different perspectives. He could talk about anything with passion.

But of course he was concerned most of all about the loss of the Gaelic language and way of life. He never stopped worrying, but he did what he could to share all that he learned and all that he loved about life in the Gaelic community.

Vicki Quimby is Textile Consultant and Animator at the Highland Village.

'San Taigh-Chéilidh | In the Céilidh House

DH'FHALBH MO RÙN | MY LOVE HAS LEFT

Dh'fhalbh mo rùn is a song Jim learned from Margaret MacLean, née MacDonald, of Boisdale in the 1986. It was published in his collection *Sealladh gu Taobh* in partnership with Ellison Robertson. She, in turn, learned this song from *Màiri Dhòmhnaill Nill*. It comes from the Barra tradition.

This is the first song I learned from Seumas. Thanks to his coaching during our drives from Iron Mines to the Village, listening intently so as to gradually pick up additional verses from Seumas at the ceilidhs in the Centre Chimney house, and plenty of hoots of encouragement - especially when getting the words or the verses mixed up - I managed to finally execute the 12 verses he had collected from Margaret. It is one of many songs Jim shared and passed on to me during our years working together at the Highland Village. He shared much more than songs with me, however. He shared his passion for Gaelic language and cultural expression and helped shape my view of what it means to be a Gael. He is a mentor and a friend who I treasure and will always look up to. *Nach buidhe dhomh.*



Joanne and Jim during Stòras a' Bhaile.

Joanne MacIntyre is a Gaelic school teacher in Mabou, Cape Breton. The informant of this song was Mairead bean Ruairidh lagain Ruairidh | Margaret MacLean, Boisdale. Recorded, transcribed and translated by Jim Watson 1986 and appears in Sealladh gu Taobh.

Fonn: Dh'fhalbh mo rùn 's dh'fhàg e 'n cala
Dh'fhalbh mo rùn hi, i, iù
Thog e shiùil ris na crannaibh
Dh'fhalbh mo rùn 's dh'fhàg e 'n cala

Chours: My darling departed and left the harbour
My darling is departed hi, i, iù
He raised his sails to the masts
My darling departed and left the harbour

1. Dh'fhalbh mo leannan bhuam am bliadhna
'S iad 'ga riasladh aig na Gallaibh
2. Dh'fhalbh mo leannan bhuam a dh'Éirinn
'S ás a dhéidh cha bhi mi fallain
3. 'S dh'fhalbh mo leannan bhuam a dh'ìle
Air long riomhach nan trì chrannaibh
4. Dh'fhalbh mi ann 'nam nighneig ghòraich
'S ghabh mi seòladair mar leannan
5. A mhathan na tugaibh beum dhomh
On a thug mi spéis dhan mharaich'
6. Chan n-eil taobh dhan toir a' ghaoth e
Ma dh'fhaodas e gheibh e leannan
7. Thig a' bhonaid ghorm ri fàbhar
Air fear àrd nan sùilean meallach
8. Chuala mi gun d' rinn thu réiteach
Mar e bhreug a rinn iad aithris
9. Chuala mi gun d' rinn thu pòsadh
'S cha do dheònaich thu mi gu d' bhainis
10. Giomanach a' għunna bhòidhich
Leigeadh tu na h-eòin bharr mheangan
11. Giomanach a' għunna chaoil thu
Nuair a chaogadh tu an t-sùil 's a' mhala
12. Ach on a dh'fhalbh thu air a' bhàta
Dia 'gad shàbhlaadh gu cala. ©
1. My sweetheart left me this year
They have him harried among strangers
2. My sweetheart left me to go to Ireland
Without him I can't be whole
3. My sweetheart departed from me to Islay
On a handsome three-masted ship
4. I went a foolish lass
Who has taken a sailor for a lover
5. Women do not reproach me
Because I bestowed my affection on a sailor
6. Any direction the wind will take him
If he can he'll have a sweetheart
7. The blue bonnet will complement
The tall one of beguiling eyes
8. I heard you've become betrothed
Unless they've lied in reporting it
9. I heard that you're married
You did not permit me to go to your wedding party
10. Hunter of the elegant gun
You would fell the birds from branches
11. You are the hunter of the slender barrelled gun
When you would squint the eye of its brow
12. Since you have sailed on the ship
God see you safely to the harbour. ©

Ag Éirigh air Órain | An Rubha Song Selection

AN NOCHD IS TROM THA MO CHEUM | TONIGHT MY STEP IS HEAVY

When I was asked to choose a song for this issue of *An Rubha* in honour of Jim (Seumas) Watson, I immediately thought of “*An Nochd is Trom Tha Mo Cheum*”, not because of its sorrowful nature but because I have such fond memories of learning this song with him.

I had taken a shine to this song, as sung by neighbour and tradition bearer *Seonaidh Aonghais Bhig* | Johnny Williams and Jim was helping me to transcribe it from a recording that John Shaw had made of *Seonaidh* as a part of his Cape Breton Gaelic Folklore and Folksong Project. At one point, we were struggling to make out some of the words and Jim suggested that we just go visit *Seonaidh* to ask him, so off we went and what a lovely visit we had.

It was a beautiful spring day, and when we arrived *Seonaidh* was coming down from the barn with a lamb in his arms. He was, as usual, happy to drop everything if there was a chance to sing and discuss songs. I feel very fortunate to have been there that day to hear Jim and *Seonaidh* discuss this poetry and will always be grateful to Jim for taking me on visits like this one. I can’t imagine how I would have negotiated the world of Gaelic song without his friendship and mentorship. *Fhir nan Con, bidh mi gu bràth 'nad chomain agus 'gad ionndrann*.

Mary Jane Lamond is a Gaelic singer and Gàidhlig aig Baile instructor. Jim and Mary Jane were long-time friends and co-workers.



Mary Jane and Jim during Bun is Bàrr.

Fonn: An nochd is trom tha mo cheum
'S snigh' air mo ghruaidh fhéin
An nochd is trom tha mo cheum

Chours: Tonight my step is heavy
A tear drips on my cheek
Tonight my step is heavy

1. Gura mis' tha fo mhulad
'S mi air m' uilinn 'n Gleann Cuaicheadh
2. Tha 'ad 'nan sìneadh 's na càrnan
'S luchd mo ghràidh a chumadh suas sinn
3. Bha m' athair ann 's mo mhàthair
'S Raghnall àrd a' chùil dhualaich
4. 'S tric a thug 'ad dhomh prèasant
'S 'ad 'nan seasamh ri m' ghualainn
5. Cha n-eil fàth dhomh bhith 'gan ionndrann
Chaidh an ùir air an duathar
6. Gur h-iomadh piuthar tha gun bhràthair
'S gu bheil i cràiteach air uairean
7. Beannachd Dhia dha 'n anam
Righ nan Aingeal 'gam buaireadh
8. Cha n-eil mise 'ga àicheadh
Siod an dulag nach gluaiseadh ☺

1. Oh that I am sorrowful
Resting on my elbow in Glen Cuaicheadh
2. They lie stretched under the cairns
My beloved people who kept us
3. My father and mother were there
And tall Ranald of the curling tresses
4. They often gave me a gift
As they stood by my shoulder
5. There is no reason for me lament them
Their shades have been covered with dirt
6. Many a sister is without a brother
And sometimes pained by sorrow
7. God's blessing on their souls
The King of Angels has tempted them away
8. I am not denying that this
Is the knot that cannot be undone ☺

Highland Village Online Gaelic Resources



Check out our website!
www.highlandvillage.ca



An Drochaid Eadarainn
www.androchaid.ca



Cainnt Mo Mhàthar
www.cainntmomhathar.com



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Cha Leig Sinn air Diachuimhn' Fear nan Con

WE WILL REMEMBER SEUMAS

I remember my first experience of Seumas. He was doing an evening lecture at St. Francis Xavier University on Gaelic Songs. I had recently begun working at the library there, and Maureen Williams, then curator of the Celtic Collection, invited me to come along. I was sitting in on her Celtic Literature course at the time. After many years of participating in gatherings where songs were sung, I had never attempted to learn one with the intention of singing it on my own. A couple of summers ago, I decided that I would try, my motivation, really, was to show respect to Seumas, as well as to demonstrate, albeit in a small way, that what we were about with *Stòras a' Bhaile* was working. The song I chose was *Dòmhnaill Antaidh*. Mary Jane Lamond and I were speaking about that lecture recently, and she remembered that *Dòmhnaill Antaidh* was one of his selections, and perhaps the first that evening. Maybe my choice of that song was guided by a residual, but significant memory.

Another aspect of Seumas' life, which I witnessed, comes from the Library. He was often in the reserve readings section of the library, with two young children in tow, as he completed his B.Ed. at St.F.X. Although I didn't know him at the time, I can still picture him and the children clearly. The theoretical knowledge he gained in the field of education was evident in his life's work.

Seumas continued to be part of my 'Gaelic World' as a teacher, both at St.F.X 'Gaelic Days' and later in community classes in Antigonish. He was very dedicated to our classes and I am sure our small group have the same good memoires of conviviality and of appreciation for the well-chosen material he shared with us. I was also fortunate to attend sessions in Queensville, at his home along with other learners. Seumas was also involved in the *Bun is Bàrr* program in which I participated. His assistance to me in my role in the Celtic Collection, as I would often email him with questions, was always prompt, germane and gracious.

However, it was *Stòras* which provided the main opportunity for our collaboration. The *Stòras* event had its beginnings as an email I received, concerning the availability of funding from the Centre for Regional Studies, at St.F.X. As I had recently taken on the role of the librarian in charge of the Celtic Collection, I thought about whom I could reach out to, to develop a collaborative project which would benefit both the library and the wider Gaelic community. I immediately thought of

Seumas. I emailed him, the response came quickly. I often think of how that email yielded untold dividends, as it opened the door to a long and rewarding collaborative relationship, but more importantly a lasting friendship with Seumas.

We spoke on the phone and soon after, a meeting was arranged. It was an auspicious beginning. We agreed that, *Sruith nan Gàidheal* | Gaelstream, would be at the core of the endeavour. The Gaelic Folklore project was supported by the Multiculturalism Directorate of Canada as well as St.F.X. The activity for the project was carried out in Cape Breton during the 1977 to 1982 timeframe. It encompassed 2,000 audio files, which were recorded on 350 audio tapes. The corpus included, stories, songs, oral history and folklore. It was this material that was digitized for *Sruith nan Gàidheal* | Gaelstream.

As a result of our discussions, it was decided that, Dr. John Shaw, primary field worker, recorder and compiler of the St. F.X. Cape Breton Gaelic Folklore Collection, would be approached to work with us on the proposal. John agreed, the proposal was prepared, accepted and funding was obtained from the Centre for Regional Studies. This was my first meeting with John Shaw, and well I remember our conversation about how all of these sound files actually represented real people, and for him, listening to them, was akin to revisiting that time in his life. It made me think about the hundreds of conversations recorded in numerous kitchens and front rooms, and the wonder of it now being made accessible, and how that could not have been foreseen at the time.

These planning sessions culminated in an event entitled, *Stòras nan Gàidheal*, Gaelic Heritage workshop for Community Education Research, which was held in Port Hawkesbury in August 2007. The daylong workshop, led by Dr. John Shaw, brought community stakeholders together to explore topics such as, How can *Sruith nan Gàidheal* | Gael-Stream serve the needs of community-based Gaelic Education initiatives in Nova Scotia. The final report can be found on the Highland Village website.

A second call for funding applications from CRS provided another opportunity to plan a new event. My calendar records the fact that Seumas and I had a conversation on January 23, 2008 and that a meeting, including Mary Jane Lamond, followed on February 22nd at *An Rids* | Queensville. John Shaw was added to our planning group and work began. The findings from



Jim and Susan during *Stòras a' Bhaile*.

the Port Hawkesbury workshop informed the development of what would eventually become known as *Stòras a' Bhaile*. The inaugural event, again funded by CRS was called *Stòras*, A Gaelic Folklife School. It was partially modelled after some Folklife schools based in the United States. After the inaugural year, it was funded by other organizations, such as the Office of Gaelic Affairs and The Highland Village and became known as *Stòras a' Bhaile*. The name denotes the importance of the resource underlying the gathering.

I looked forward to the annual planning process, which always included a good visit, as well as a lunch meeting. The purpose and philosophy of the event did not alter significantly over the years. However, it did evolve over the ten years, in terms of different approaches with the schedule and activities, as we tried to incorporate feedback. Each year had its own *blas*. I include this elegant description of *Stòras*, taken from a presentation done by Seumas and his wife, Marlene Ivey, on *An Drochaid Eadarainn*, October, 2011.

...Gaelic Immersion Folk Life School that disseminates traditional cultural knowledge with reference to online sources and represented in an immersive social environment with interaction between native Gaelic speakers and learners. Inspiration is garnered from archived cultural knowledge, but this is explored in a contemporary environment where it resonates in spontaneity, conviviality...

Stòras began in 2008 and ran consecutively through to 2018, with the exception of one year.

The recordings, both the official ones

made at the village, and the personal ones made by participants will continue to provide learners access to a depth and breadth of knowledge from all the contributors. However, Seumas' contributions are now very *priseal | precious*.

In addition to *Stòras*, I worked with Seumas on other projects, most notably, *An Drochaid Eadarainn*. My professional

career benefitted as well, as he provided important reference letters and support for both my Sabbatical applications as well as for promotion. He also encouraged me to write articles for *An Rubha*.

As this issue is a testament to Seumas, I would like to conclude by saying a couple of things that I will remember him for in particular. He was a great man for the 'mot juste' and in his case, it was always chosen

to reflect a precise meaning, and never as an occasion for pretension. He had a knack for keeping in touch with emails and phone calls, so that I never felt forgotten. In turn, it is certain that he also will not be forgotten. I shall miss having him in my corner. ☺

Susan Cameron is Special Collections Librarian, St. Francis Xavier University & Past President of the NSHV Society.

Naomh Eòs is Deagh Bhiadh | St. Joseph's Blessing & Good Food MAC NA BRAICHE AN COILLE NA H-ALBANN NUOIDH | MOONSHINE IN THE NOVA SCOTIA FOREST



Seo agaibh Seonaidh mac Aonghais Thòmais (Seonaidh Mac'Ille-bhain) nach maireann à Cnoc nan Dòileach, Màbu an Ear-thuath. B' e cuspair searchas Sheonaidh an seòl a bhite cleachdadh gus briùthas a dheanadh gu ceart.

Seonaidh: Tha. Bha iad a' deanandh a' leann an toiseach. Bha. Bha thu 'ga éirigh. Bha thu 'deanadh éirigh. Éirigh, fhios agad, bha thu 'cur hops agus yeast cake 's buntàta 's flùr 's rudan mar sin ann, a' deanadh na h-éirigh. Bha thu 'startadh na h-éirigh 's bha thu 'n uair sin a' cur air beagan do mholaiseas. Bha thu 'cur air beagan do mholaiseas air gun tòisischeadh e air obrachadh. Ach, an uair sin, dar a gheobhadh duine éirigh, dar a gheobhadh tu a dh'obrachadh math i, chuireadh tu air a' leann, bha thu 'cur air molaiseas dh'fhaoidte gun cuireadh tu mu ghalan do mholaiseas 's mu chóig galan do dh'uisg' air. 'S ma dh'fhaoidte cóig galan do dh'uisge air galan do mholaiseas. Nam biodh a' phoit car móir, dh'fhaodadh tu dà ghalan, nam biodh a' phoit cuimseach móir, dh'fhaodadh tu trì galan a chur

am bogadh. Sin, nam bogadh tu trì galan, gheobhadh tu roinn ás a' sin. Gheobhadh tu, o gheobhadh tu teann air galan, teann air galan. Uell, ma bha 'n éirigh math, gheobhadh tu teann air galan air a' ghalan. Gheobhadh tu trì cairteal do ghalan co dhiubh air galan do mholaiseas. Gheobhadh tu stuth math. Ach, bha poidhle do dh'fheadhainn, bhiodh 'ad a' deanadh droch stuth air tàilleibh gun do leig 'ad leis ruith tuillidh 's fada.

Seumas: Tha mi 'tuigsinn.

Seonaidh: Bhiodh 'ad a' cur tarraing shingilte air. 'S bha thu 'ga ruith dà thrup. Bha thu 'ga ruith an toiseach singilte. An uair sin, bha thu 'cur, bha thu 'glenadh amach, bha thu 'dòrtadh a' leann ás a' phoit agus cuir ann an tarraing shingilte. 'S bha thu 'tarraing sin a-rithist. 'S e sin an tarraing dhùbailte.

Seumas: 'S e.

Seonaidh: Cha b' fhiach e mura robb. Uell, bha a' chiad chuid dhe 'n tarraing shingilte, bha e *alright*. Na faigheadh tu theagamh pinnt na leithid sin, dheanadh e a' chiad chuid dhe 'n tarraing shingilte. 'S e garbh-ghucag bheireadh 'ad ris. Bha curracag mhór a' tighinn air. 'S e garbh-ghucag a bhiodh aig an t-seann fheadhainn air. Agus bha e cuimseach math - a' chiad chuid dhe 'n tarraing shingilt'. Gheobhadh tu pinnt na leithid sin dheth airson, car a bhith agad airson

Translation

Here you have Johnny son of Angus son of Thomas, the late Johnny White, Doyle's Mountain, Northeast Mabou. Johnny tells us the way to make moonshine well.

Johnny: Yes. They were making beer in the beginning. Yes. You were letting it rise. You were making a mash. A mash, you know, you were putting hops and a yeast cake and potatoes and flour and things like that in, making the mash. You were starting the mash and you were then putting a little molasses on it so that it would start

working. But then when a person got the mash, when you would get it working well, you would add the beer, you were putting the molasses in it, maybe you'd put about a gallon of molasses and about five gallons of water in it. Maybe five gallons of water to a gallon of molasses. If the pot was somewhat large, you could put two gallons, if the pot was rather large, you could put three gallons in to ferment. If you fermented three gallons, you'd get a good portion out of that. You'd get, oh, you'd get about a gallon, near to a gallon. Well if the mash was good, you'd get near a gallon to the gallon. You'd get three quarters of a gallon anyway to a gallon of molasses. You'd get good drink. But, there were a lot of people, they'd be making bad drink because they let it run too long.

Seumas: I understand.

Johnny: They would do the first draw (once distilled). And you were running it a second time. You were running it 'once distilled' in the beginning. And then, you were putting, you were cleaning out, you were pouring the beer out of the pot and you were putting in the first draw. Then, you were drawing that again. That's the double distilled moonshine.

Seumas: That's it.

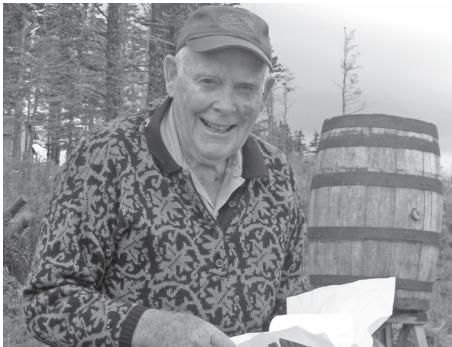
Johnny: It wouldn't very good if it wasn't. Well, the first bit of the first run, it was alright. If you got maybe a pint or the like, that would be the first bit of the first run. They called it the foreshot. There would be a great deal of foam and bubbles on it. The old people called it the foreshot. And it was pretty good - the first bit of the first run. You'd get about a pint of that, sort of to have for... ☺

Recorded by Jim Watson & Ellison Robertson.
Transcribed and translated by Shay MacMullin.

To view the original recording please visit *An Drochaid Eadarinn - An Drochaid Bheò*:
<http://www.androchaid.ca/forum/nòs-a'-bhìdh/mac-na-braiche-coille-na-h-albann-nuaidh>

Moladh Ruairidh mac Iain Sheumais Dhòmhnaill Òig

PRAISING ROD C. MACNEIL



Saoil seo àm a bhith ri mireadh
Ach cha shlànaich sin na cridhean
No cur stadh air deòir sileadh
Airson fir tha fuar fon fhoid.

Imagine now a time for merry-making
But that won't heal the hearts
Or stop the flow of tears
For men cold under the sod.

*Mas Diochuimhnich Sinn ar Cuideachd nach Maireann
Lest We Forget Our Fallen Comrades
Song and translation by Rod C. MacNeil*

At the turn of the twentieth century, a newly composed song such as *Ruairidh mac Iain Sheumais Dhòmhnaill Òig Iain Ruairidh* | Rod C. MacNeil's would likely have been published in Cape Breton's *Mac-Talla* (1892-1904), the longest running Gaelic newspaper anywhere in the world. *Mac-Talla*, Gaelic for "echo," still benefits those looking to its pages to deepen our knowledge of the Gaelic language and of the history and culture that it documented. *Mac-Talla* played an important role in the Gaelic community during its day. It helped connect people from across Cape Breton, the Nova Scotia mainland, and overseas. Its Gaelic-language ads helped drive the local economy. It provided a space where beloved songs could be recalled and new songs could be shared. And because only a few Gaels were literate, a new issue of *Mac-Talla* ensured ceilidhs were held at which neighbours gathered to hear its contents read aloud, inspiring neighbourly interaction.

Rod C. MacNeil (1924-2019) wasn't so different, really. He too played important roles in his community. He served his country in World War II, an experience that sparked the creation of the song quoted above. Upon his return, and after marrying his wife of 60 years, Helen (née Devon), he came back to the family farm in Barra Glen to help his parents. All his life, Rod found ways to support and develop the vitality of the Iona area. In 1948, Rod and his father helped run the Mutual telephone line through Barra Glen, and they provided local repair services for many years. In 1965, after training in Truro, Rod started an innovative bovine Artificial Insemination (AI) practice because he recognized a need on the island. He was one of the founding members of the Iona Credit Union (closed ca. 1990) and served at various times as its director, secretary, and president. The Credit Union provided local people with low-interest loans to establish their businesses and farms, and it kept local money in the community. In 2008, Rod and Helen were recognized for hosting the Cape Breton Regional Library's bookmobile staff for lunch every month for the entire fifty years that the service had been running. Rod was a founding member of many significant community groups, including the Hospice Society of Victoria County, the Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia, Legion Branch 124, and the Iona Fire Department. Rod also donated blood for 54 years.

In addition to his commitment to community development, Rod has supported Gaelic language and cultural revitalization efforts his entire life. His parents were native Gaelic speakers and Gaelic was his first language. His parents were avid singers and Rod became especially respected for his deep knowledge of Gaelic songs, their history, and their associated stories. For eight years, he and Helen drove more than an hour weekly to attend Gaelic choir rehearsals, under the direction of Catriona Parsons, at the Gaelic College. He sang at milling frolics his whole life. He co-authored *Mar a b' àbhaist 's a' Ghleann* (*As it was in the Glen*), a collection of Gaelic songs, with his daughter-in-law, Kim Ells,

and provided information for countless books authored by others. He performed at the Celtic Colours International Festival numerous times. And he both performed and taught at *Féis an Eilein* (Christmas Island Feis). Rod never took money for performances.

Many of Rod's passions came together at *Baile nan Gàidheal* | Highland Village, a place that brings history, Gaelic, and community development together, and a place that Rod supported in countless ways over its entire history. In 1962, Rod was one of the volunteers who worked at the first Highland Village Day concert. In 1971, when the Village faced a leadership crisis, Rod agreed to become Secretary-Treasurer with the assistance of his wife. Rod was crucial in negotiating the building of the Village's concert stage and the acquisition of a rare centre-hall house (which was floated to the Village from Troy in 1989) a key building in the present-day Village. Through the years, he was a regular volunteer singing, sharing history, telling stories, making soap, and so much more.

Henry Thoreau wrote that an echo is "a sound which is very much modified, sifted, and refined before it reaches my ear. The echo is to some extent an independent sound, and therein is the magic and charm of it. It is not merely a repetition of my voice, but it is in some measure the voice of the wood [in which it echoes]." For Rod C., it was important that family history, community wellbeing, and the Gaelic language and song should reverberate well into the future. But he did not merely echo what he himself learned; rather, he gently and indelibly left his own imprint on all that he passed on. And as we ourselves share that which Rod C. nurtured and gave us, we can be comforted in the knowledge that his legacy will echo for many tomorrows to come. ☺

Heather Sparling is Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology and a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair (Musical Traditions) at Cape Breton University.

We will share more about Rod C. MacNeil in the next issue of An Rubha.

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Mar Chuimhneachan | In Memorium

Marta ni'n Pheadair Mhóir Steabhain Mhícheil | Martha Ramey was a gifted tradition-bearer from a family deeply connected to the musical and linguistic heritage of Gaelic Cape Breton. But more than that, she was a beautiful person: thoughtful, engaging, generous, and gentle. As a result, many of us were deeply saddened to learn of her death last Fall.

Though she never sought out the limelight, Martha made a lasting contribution to Gaelic Nova Scotia. In her humble, understated way, she gave freely of her time, talents and cultural expertise. In addition to being a mentor to several language learners, Martha participated in various projects organized or supported by the Highland Village, including *Cainnt mo Mhàthar*, *Stòras a' Bhaile*, and *An Drochaid Eadarainn*. In this regard, she was often accompanied by her late sister, Theresa, and niece, Marion.

One of seven children born to Catherine and Peter MacNeil, Martha was raised in Rear Big Pond, an area settled by immigrants from Barra in the early nineteenth century. Her memories of life on the family farm were coloured by music and laughter. Her mother played the chanter, her uncle was a well-known piper and her grandfather played the pipes and violin. Days working in the fields were punctuated by nights dancing on a homemade stage under the stars. In the evenings, her father would read stories to the children in Gaelic.

Gaelic was always important to Martha. She spoke the language fluently, peppering everyday speech with rhymes and song verses. Family gatherings usually included Gaelic singing; songs from the old country or just down the road. Though most of her life was spent in town, the rural community of her youth remained close to her heart. Martha spoke about the country often, drawing on local legends, place names, and genealogies in ways that made clear an enduring sense of connection to the area.

While we are saddened to learn of her death, we are thankful to have known Martha, and grateful she was able to enrich the lives of those around her for more than ninety years. ☺

'S ann mar sin a bhios sinn 'ga cuimhneachadh. We will remember her that way. - Shamus Y. MacDonald



Carl mac Iain Steabhain Theàrlaich Alasdair an t-Saoir | Carl MacKenzie - With the recent passing of Carl, Cape Breton Island, indeed the Celtic World, lost a fiddling icon. A native son of Washabuck, Carl with his family spent his last 40+ years at Sydney Forks.

Carl would reflect about how as a lad he'd watch his older brothers, Charlie, Hector, and Simon play the fiddle, and he'd muse about whether he'd ever be able to do the same. He was a great admirer of Joe MacLean's fiddling playing. It was Winston Fitzgerald, however, who quickly became his idol. Winston played for years at the nearby old Iona Legion hall. Carl was mesmerized, influenced, and utterly inspired, by Winston's playing, and they quickly developed a close friendship, mentorship, and afterwards, a mutual respect for each other's fiddling talents. The other musician Carl held in high esteem, and again with mutual admiration, was fiddler and guitarist, Dave MacIsaac.

Carl played for his first dance at the Iona Legion when he was 15 years old, accompanied by his sister Jean. Included among his many favourite accompanists were: Gordon MacLean, Pat Chafe, Doug MacPhee, Donnie Campbell, Blanche Sophocleous, John Allan and Jessie Ann Cameron, and Marie MacLellan. Carl brought his love of the traditional fiddling style to stages not solely in Cape Breton and across Canada, but to Scotland, Ireland and the USA. He had devoted fans in many parts of the planet that truly admired and prized his playing. Carl was a long-time member of the Cape Breton Fiddlers' Association and was a regular performer at dances, fiddle workshops, and outdoor concerts, especially here at the Highland Village.

Through his journey of 80 years, Carl's realm of original fiddling compositions reflect undeniably the names of individuals he admired and held in high regard; family members, mentors, friends, and fellow musicians. Over the decades, he released a score of albums and CDs, and his striking compositions were recently compiled with the benevolent assistance of pianist, Pat Chafe, into the 2017 publication, "A Collection of Original Fiddle Tunes".

A professional engineer and a Professor of Civil Engineering at Cape Breton University, it can be truly affirmed that he was too, a Professor of traditional Cape Breton fiddling. He knew it, he studied it, he wrote it, he taught many - young and old alike - and he performed willingly and happily, for all that would listen and appreciate the music.

As one of his many brothers-in-law, I was privileged to share in and appreciate along with his musical siblings, many a kitchen session, community dance, and house party that Carl himself repeatedly and thoroughly relished, and even more so if it was happening in Washabuck. Although Carl's idol was Winston, when it came to genuine love, the fiddle played, 'second fiddle', for Carl's one and true love was always his delightful wife, Kaye. He was also a man with a playful sense of humour and a great sense of anecdote. His legacy will endure for ages. *Dia bhith math dha.* ☺ - Vince MacLean



Ealsaidh ni'n Alasdair 'ic Alasdair | Barbara "Elsie" MacLeod has been associated with the Highland Village for over four decades. In the mid 1980s, after a career in teaching, Elsie served as an interpreter in the Centre Hallway House. For many years after she retired from the Village, she supported our popular Pioneer Day program by interpreting the Whycocomagh-Portage School (a building she originally taught in before it was moved to Iona). An avid craftsperson, Elsie ensured our gift shop had a steady supply of her "A Couple of Ole Nuts" fridge magnets, which were popular with visitors and now decorate fridges all around the world. Elsie was born to Alexander and Barbara Rebecca (MacFayden) Campbell in Malagawatch. With her husband Malcolm Gillis (Mack) MacLeod they raised their family in Estmere. *Fois shiorraidh dha h-anam.* ☺



Comunn Ar Rùin | Our People

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & ACCOLADES

Tapadh Leibh-se Gu Mór

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Sustaining Membership

Our first Sustaining Member is Lawrence Glenn, Newport, RI. Móran taing!

Financial Contributions (2018)

The John & Judy Bragg Family Foundation, Oxford, NS; Pauline & Pius Campbell, Jamesville, NS; Rodney & Charlene Chaisson, Ottawa Brook, NS; Dan & Nancy Chiasson, Baddeck, NS; Peter Cook, Starks, ME; Raymond Fernandes, Halifax, NS; Chris King, Baddeck; Johanna Kyte, Toronto, ON; Betty Lord, Howie Centre, NS; Helen MacDonald, New Victoria, NS (In Memory of John Gillis); Charles & Sadie MacDonald, Ottawa Brook, NS; Quentin MacDonald, Washabuck, NS; Jodi MacDonnell-Scott, Coxheath, NS; Marlene & Danny MacDougall, Port Hastings, NS; J.J. MacEachern, Mabou, NS; Pauline & Donnie MacLean, East Lake Ainslie, NS; Vince & Charlotte MacLean, Washabuck, NS; Vince & Natalie MacLean, Northside East Bay, NS; Anne & Lawrence MacNeil, Ottawa Brook, NS; Beth MacNeil, Beaver Cove, NS; Donnie & Theresa MacNeil, Beaver Cove, NS; Janet MacNeil, Barra Glen, NS; Kaye Anne MacNeil, Benacadie, NS; Sandy MacNeil, Rear Big Beach, NS; M.A. & Sandra MacPherson, Creignish, NS; River & Lakeside Pastoral Charge, Orangedale, NS; Barry Shears, Royston, BC (In Memory of Margaret Shears); Michelle Smith, Skye Glen, NS; Jim St. Clair, Mull River, NS (In Memory of Jim Watson); and Phyllis and

Philip Williams, Point Edward, NS.

Stòras na h-Òigridh

Financial Contributions (2018)

Leslie Dominy, Renfrew, ON (in memory of Daphne Dominy); Charlie Ellis, Little Narrows, NS; and Vince & Charlotte MacLean, Washabuck, NS (In Memory of Sadie MacKenzie and John Gillis).

Congratulations

To staff Tim MacNeil & Rodney Chaisson on their 30 years and 25 years service; staff members: Colin Watson on the birth of his son James Michael Angus; Shay MacMullin on the birth of her second grandchild, Eòghan; Carmen MacArthur on the birth of her twins Calum Joseph and Angus Eòghan; HV President M.A. MacPherson on the birth of his second grandchild.

Retirements

We extend our best wishes and gratitude to Neil MacNeil and Sharon MacNeil who have recently retired from the Highland Village staff team. All the best to both of them as the move on to the next chapter.

Best Wishes

We also send our best wishes out to Donald Beaton, a former board member, volunteer and father of Animator, Colleen Beaton.

Sympathies

We extend our sympathies to the families and friends that have lost loved ones over the past year including Kevin Carrigan, brother to animator Phyllis Williams.

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

Board of Trustees (2018) - Dan Chiasson, Baddeck (Vice President); John Hugh Edwards, Ross Ferry; Angie Farrell, Benacadie; Catherine Ann Fuller, Baddeck; Betty Lord, Howie Centre (Treasurer); Quentin MacDonald, Washabuck (Secretary); Jodi MacDonnell-Scott, Coxheath; Vince MacLean, Northside East Bay; Donnie MacNeil, Beaver Cove; MA (Murdock) MacPherson, Creignish (President); Melissa Nicholson, Baddeck; Meaghan O'Hanley, Grand Narrows; and Michelle Smith, Skye Glen.

Staff (2018) - Colleen Beaton, Animator; Amber Buchanan, Ban-cleasaichean; Pauline Campbell, Animator; Rodney Chaisson, Director; Zoie Chaisson, Student Animator; Marie Chehy, Animator; Emily Clegg, Coordinator of Agricultural Renewal & Costumes; Patricia Gaudley, Custodian; Catherine Gillis, Animator; Brendan Higgins, Labourer; Jamie Kennedy, Blacksmith; Hannah Krebs, Student Animator; Cecelia Laing, Animator; Mary Jane Lamond, Ban-cleasaichean; Carmen MacArthur, Ban-cleasaichean; Emily MacDonald, Animator; Sadie MacDonald, Visitor Services Coordinator; Shamus Y. MacDonald, Na Cleasaichean; Marlene MacDougall, Visitor Centre Clerk/Animator; Joanne MacIntyre, Ban-cleasaichean; David MacKenzie, Groundskeeper; Hoss MacKenzie, Blacksmith; Connall MacKinnon, Student Animator; Aileen MacLean, Animator; Basil MacLean, Animator/Farmer; Jessica MacLean, Student Animator; Paul MacLean, Carpenter; Pauline MacLean, Manager of Collections/Genealogist; Stacey MacLean, Ban-cleasaichean; Logan MacLellan, Student Animator; Katherine MacLeod, A/Manager of Interpretation/Learning & Media Specialist; Shay MacMullin, Coordinator of Cultural Experiences; Anne MacNeil, Visitor Centre Clerk/Animator; Beth MacNeil, Animator; Cody MacNeil, Student Animator; Janet MacNeil, Administrative Assistant; Kaye Anne MacNeil, Animator; Jamie Anne MacNeil, Student Animator; Maggie MacNeil, Student Animator; Neil J. MacNeil, Manager of Operations (to July); Sandy MacNeil, Farm Hand; Sharon MacNeil, Animator (to September); Tim MacNeil, A/Manager of Operations; Sarah Mansfield, Student Animator; Vicki Quimby, Animator/Textile Consultant; Shaelyn Varnes, Visitor Experiences Assistant; Colin Watson, Animator (on leave); Jim Watson, Manager of Interpretation (passed away November); and Phyllis Williams, Animator.

Contractors (2018) - Linda Crockett (Fundraising Advisor); and Max MacDonald (Marketing Coordination)

Volunteer Programmers (2018) - Quentin MacDonald, HV Day Producer.



*J*onaidh mac Ruairidh 'ic Nill 'ic Iain Bhàin | John Anthony "Johnny" Gillis - A supporter for decades and well known to us at Highland Village, Johnny was a regular contributor to archival projects for Gaelic song and customs, including the *Nòs is Fonn* Collection. As a member of the Iona Gaelic Singers, he was frequently heard on concert stages and at the milling table, both home and away. Johnny was a genuine source for Central Cape Breton tradition, proud of his Barra heritage, with a redoubtable knowledge of his family's legacy in song, genealogy and local lore. He will be missed by family, friends and wherever Gaelic songs are sung in Nova Scotia's style of Barra presentation. *Fois gu siorraidh dha anam. Muinntir a' Bhaile.* ©



*U*alaidh mac Shomhairle | Wally Ellison whose mother was a fluent Gaelic speaker, carried his mother's tradition on for many years teaching beginner Gaelic classes in southern Inverness County. A retired school teacher, Wally was a passionate Gael, photographer and publisher of Cape Breton Island's geography and culture. Well known at local ceilidhs and Scotch concerts, he played the Highland pipes, often accompanied by pianist Gordon "Lighthouse" MacLean. *Fois shiorraidh gun robh aig anam.* ©



*M*gr. Aonghus Moireas | Father Angus Morris raised in Colindale, Inverness County, Father Angus served in many parishes over his 52 years in the priesthood, where he was well loved. He was widely recognized as a tradition bearer playing in the Gaelic style with great timing and a love of traditional tunes. Father Angus was also a great storyteller with a terrific sense of humour. *Bithear 'ga ionndrainn. He will be missed. Fois shiorraidh gun robh aig anam.* ©

BRISTEADH AN CRÀIMH AGAMAS 'S A' SMIOR AIG CÀCH.

ONE MAN HAS ALL THE TOIL AND ANOTHER ALL THE PROFIT.

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

Join us and support Nova Scotia's Gaelic language and folklife traditions by becoming a member of the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society. Membership is open to anyone.

Members can:

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

General Memberships:

Individual: \$10.00* & Family: \$20.00* per year (one household).

*Income tax receipts are issued for general memberships.

Membership Plus:

Individual: \$30.00* & Family: \$40.00* per year (one household).

In addition to general membership privileges, Membership Plus members get:

- Free admission for the year to the Highland Village *excludes special events & programs not part of regular admission
- 20% discount in the Highland Village Gift Shop
- Membership Plus fees are not tax deductible

Sustaining & Lifetime Memberships

Ask about our Sustaining & Lifetime Memberships

- Sustaining Membership - \$200 per annum
- Lifetime Membership - \$1000

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Eachdraidh, Cànan, Nòs is Dualchas - History, Language, Tradition and Heritage



Baile nan Gàidheal
Highland Village

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