

an rubha

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Soraidh Slàn le Deagh Chàirdean Farewell to Good Friends

*Tribute to Jim St. Clair
& Hector MacKenzie*

Mar is Léir Dhomh Fhìn | As I See It

*Air Chéilidh | A Visit with the Gaelic
Narrative Project*

Léirmheasan | Book Reviews

*Luran and the Mermaid &
From the Cove to the Glen*



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

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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.

Since 2014, the Highland Village has distributed \$17,000 to 20 youth to help them with their cultural journey. For more information see treasuresofyouth.ca.

Scholarship recipients for 2022 were Mya Ehler of Whycocomagh, fiddle & dance (\$1,000), Taya MacDonald, of Mabou, fiddle & paino (\$1,000) and Amelia Parker, Central West River, fiddle. (\$500).



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Baile nan
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Facal bho 'n Neach-stiùiridh | From the Director's Desk

AN ÀBHAIST ÙR AGAINN | OUR NEW NORMAL

As we assembled this issue of *An Rubha*, we were also preparing for what would hopefully be our first “normal” visitor season since 2019. The global COVID-19 pandemic has had a notable impact on the operations of *Baile nan Gàidheal* over the past two years, with a significant reduction in visitation and earned income, cancellation of programs and events, and an altered visitor experience. Many of the core cultural activities and presentations that define our culture and identity could not take place to ensure the safety of our visitors and staff. Even though the pandemic is not over, there is hope that we can safely return to some state of normalcy, celebrating and sharing our Gaelic cultural expression and providing the rich visitor experience for which we have become known to our community and visitors from all over the world.

Baile nan Gàidheal's new normal is not only shaped by the pandemic, but also by the success of the most ambitious and exciting capital project in our history. Currently, valued at over \$6.5 million, this project has seen significant enhancements to our site, and thus our capacity to grow and enhance our visitor experience and cultural offerings.

Construction began in the fall of 2019, with the addition of a new washroom building adjacent to the church to support growing cruise ship visitation and church functions, and a new shingle mill building to house the period shingle mill equipment from the Cash family in Irish Cove (see article on page 19). In the fall of 2020, work began on a new workshop to support our site, building and artifact maintenance program; exterior renovations to the existing visitor centre for its conversion in to a curatorial centre for artifact storage and costume storage and maintenance; and conversion of the *Sabhal Beag* | Little Barn from a storage building to an on-site activity/programming building. All of these buildings are completed and ready for the 2023 season.

Construction on the final and centrepiece of the entire project, our new Welcome/Cultural Centre, which will house our reception/gift shop, exhibit galleries, library, and archives, multipurpose space, kitchen, and offices began in February 2021. This new energy efficient, 7,700 square foot building will be fully operational for the 2023 season, when we will celebrate its completion. This building will not only expand our capacity

for programming and offerings during the season, but also through the off-season.

Accompanying our new and renovated buildings are four exciting new exhibits. Two of the exhibits will occupy the new galleries in our welcome centre - Orientation (pre-tour), and Contemporary Gaelic Nova Scotia (post-tour). There will also be two on-site outdoor exhibits - one for the Mi'kmaw story (and relationship with the Gaels) and one will focus on the Bras d'Or watershed, over which the Village stands. We will be sharing more on this program and what it means for *Baile nan Gàidheal* in future communications to our friends and community.

We very much appreciate the support of our partners including the Province of Nova Scotia, Government of Canada, Municipality of Victoria County, and very generous community and private sector donors.

While we have been focused on these exciting new developments here on Hector's Point, there have been some other wonderful

that took place during the pandemic to enable Gaels to stay connected and share.

In the spring of 2022, the work of the Language in Lyrics program went live on the Digital Archive of Scottish Gaelic as the Nova Scotia Gaelic Song Index, a searchable database of over 6,000 Gaelic songs, made, sung, or published by Gaels in Nova Scotia. The project was led by Dr. Heather Sparling at Cape Breton University.

In Mabou, *Colaisde na Gàidhlig* has been busy working on their new Mabou campus - *Beinn Mhàbu*, which in the fall of 2023 will offer its first university credit course with Cape Breton University. The campus is also home to *Taigh Sgoile na Drochaide*, North America's first Gaelic immersion school, a privately-funded and operated school.

Towards the end of this issue of *An Rubha*, you will see a review for *Luran agus a' Mhaighdeann-mhara* | *Luran and the Mermaid*, a children's book featuring a story told by Gaelic tradition bearer Mickey (John H) MacNeil, edited by Dr. Shamus Y. MacDonald and illustrated by Emily MacDonald. This is one of a number of Gaelic-related titles published by Bradan Press of Halifax, an up-and-coming Gaelic-focused publishing company.

2023 year marks the 250th Anniversary of the landing of the Ship Hector in Pictou Harbour, the start of the migration of Scottish Gaels to Nova Scotia. Plans are afoot in Pictou to celebrate this milestone, restore the replica Ship Hector, and make other interpretive improvements to their waterfront centre.

I want to conclude with a reflection on two individuals who were Highland Village builders - Jim St. Clair of Mull River, historian, broadcaster, storyteller, and author who passed away in May of 2021; and Hector MacKenzie, fiddler, composer, singer, and emcee extraordinaire of Washabuck Bridge who passed away in March of 2022. Both contributed greatly to the Highland Village and Gaelic Nova Scotia culture over the years. Our centre pages feature memories of them, and this issue of *An Rubha* is dedicated to them. ©

Rodney Chaisson,
Director of the Highland Village



developments and initiatives happening throughout the Gaelic community. While it has been difficult over the past two years to just simply gather, never mind dance a set, or come together in song, many in the community have come together virtually, and many initiatives have moved forward.

On the opposite page, Iain MacLeod introduces us to the Gaelic Narrative Project, a virtual *céilidh* which took place in 13 parts during the spring of 2021 and winter of 2022, a partnership between How We Thrive and the Gaelic Community supported by Gaelic Affairs. This is one of many virtual programs

Mar is Léir Dhomh Fhìn | As I See It

AIR CHÉILIDH | A VISIT WITH THE GAELIC NARRATIVE PROJECT

On a Friday night in winter, while the cold wind blows outside, lively fiddle music plays inside as a host leads a fascinating conversation about Gaelic. The guests, many drinking cups of tea, listen intently before stepping away from the main discussion to talk about what's being said with each other. Afterwards they rejoin the main group and the conversation resumes. Although you'd be forgiven for thinking it, if you believe what I've just described is a house visit in Iona or on the North Shore you're wrong... well, kind of.

For two "seasons" now *Air Chéilidh*, the Gaelic Narrative Project, has led an online community discussion where hosts and guests were invited to consider what Gaelic language and culture mean to them. We also explored the stories we tell ourselves and others about Gaelic Nova Scotia and asked, which of these serve us well and which perhaps we should leave behind. For six weeks in the Spring of 2021 and seven in the winter of 2022, people from both Iona and the North Shore (so you were sort of right) joined us on Zoom, along with people from all other parts of Cape Breton, mainland Nova Scotia, the rest of Canada, Scotland, Ireland, the United States, and even places not traditionally associated with Gaelic culture, like Brazil. The conversations we had were engaging, often funny, sometimes difficult, but always genuinely compelling. There was clearly an appetite for these talks in the community and it was humbling to be involved with them.

Air Chéilidh grew out of the grassroots How we Thrive series that started in 2018 with conversations about various community issues in Atlantic Canada. Covering a wide range of fields, How we Thrive is grounded in the re-authoring work of South African narrative coach and consultant, Chené Swart. How we Thrive "invited alternative stories to shine through the cracks—stories that inspired, nourished, challenged and provoked." Frances MacEachen was involved in this initiative and with support from How we Thrive and Nova Scotia's Office of Gaelic Affairs, started to organize a reauthoring project for the Gaelic community in late 2020. Various community members were contacted to gauge their interest in co-hosting and in the end, Frances led a team that included

Margie Beaton, Bernadette Campbell, Mike Kennedy, Hector MacNeil, and myself.

In season one, the *Air Chéilidh* of the title was meant to capture the spirit of what we wanted to do. The pandemic still showed few signs of ending and the goal was to replicate a house visit with our online guests, make them feel welcome, safe, and able to share their stories in English, Gaelic, or any language in which they felt comfortable. We wanted to explore our collective Gaelic roots and begin to reimagine what Gaelic Nova Scotia could look like. Some of the conversations centred on more familiar areas like dance and traditional storytelling, we visited with both John Shaw and Mickey MacNeil for example, but we also ventured down paths less often taken. We talked about the role of women in Gaelic Nova Scotia history and society, and of the sometimes surprising areas where Gaelic can and does live, on soccer fields and yoga mats. Additionally, we asked what Gaelic could do for us, which touched



on the inspiring stories of people who had their lives transformed in the best of ways by reconnecting with their language and culture.

In season two, which we subtitled *Gu Leòr*, the Gaelic term for both enough and plenty, we dug a bit deeper. While continuing to honour tradition bearers, we also talked about challenges, looked to the future, discussed language revitalization, spent time with Gaelic youth, and had a session featuring Mi'kmaw participants. In that session, we heard about the Mi'kmaw

perspective and tried to imagine a more just and equitable Mi'kma'ki where as Gaels we become better neighbours to our hosts than we have been to date.

We have all been deeply touched by the stories we've heard told in the sessions, whether from invited guests, or during the individual conversations participants had. And we've also been told how much these sessions have meant to so many people. Having finished the second series of *Air Chéilidh*, we are still in the planning stages for future iterations and are not yet certain what the next conversations will cover or where they will take place. One thing we do know is that whether the conversations about Gaelic happen online or in a kitchen, they must continue. As a community we have many stories to tell and to hear, and this feels like just the beginning. ©

Iain MacLeod,
Writer, Filmmaker, Adult Educator,
and Gaelic Learner

This piece was written in early spring 2022. To learn the latest about the GNP and to watch videos of past *Air Chéilidh* sessions, please visit: <https://www.howwethrive.org/gaelic-narrative>

For additional information or suggestions, please contact Frances MacEachen: Frances.MacEachen@novascotia.ca

I am really enjoying the How We Thrive on Zoom. I was especially happy with the young people – I have watched Abby, Hannah, Phillip, and Roddie grow from cute little people to these lovely intelligent beings they are today. Hannah I've known since she came to NS. She is a dear friend who visits me as often as possible. We speak only Gaelic and she is a mighty opponent when it comes to card playing.

I have a special memory with Roddie. It was the Gaelic Immersion weekend when he was 14 and I was eighty. It had snowed and on Sunday at lunch time, Roddie and I walked over to the gift shop and back and then he helped me clean the snow from my car. As we were doing that, I thought how lucky I am to be spending time speaking Gaelic with this delightful young man. Thanks for that memory Roddie. ©

Florence Anne MacIsaac,
Bana-Ghàidheal o 'n ghliùn | Gaelic Tradition Bearer

Naidheachd a' Bhaile | The Village News

NÀISEAN NAN GÀIDHEAL | WE ARE GAELS



The 2022 season is now behind us we are taking the time to reflect on the year and the accomplishments we have achieved. In July, we were finally able to be in our new Welcome Centre and November saw the start of exhibit installation. For the past three and half years, we have worked diligently to curate new exhibits that will provide visitors will a fuller understanding of Nova Scotia Gaels and why our culture matters today and every day.

In the past, upon arriving at *Baile nan Gàidheal*, visitors would watch a short orientation video before walking out to the path towards the *Taigh Dubh* | Blackhouse. This first house is where our story of the Gaels begins for us on site in Scotland. You would then travel through four eras of time ending in the 1920s in Nova Scotia. Once the tour was complete, visitors would see one last panel which read in a sentence or two, that the Gaels are still alive today. We relied on our first house to tell a few hundred years of history and culture in Scotland and our last house to give you a sense that our Gaelic culture continued to survive and is still alive today.

As we began to visualize what the exhibit spaces in new Welcome Centre would look like, we realized we needed to do better in the telling of our story as Gaels. We also felt it

was important to have the theme of 'home' running throughout the exhibit spaces as it already does throughout the houses around the Village in each era. The hope is that this theme will help visitors better connect with our sense of culture, our sense of pride, and our sense of understanding our worldviews that make us who we are to this day. We thought long and hard about the best approach to do this. We wanted visitors to connect with their own feeling of what home means to them, be it through their language or traditional customs found in their own cultures and maybe as they do that they can relate to our Gaelic culture and our story of who we are.

After much discussion and research, we created the first exhibit space, *Nàisean nan Gàidheal* | We are Gaels. This exhibit will allow visitors to gain an understanding of what led so many Gaels to the shores of Nova Scotia. Readers will get an overview of the *Gàidhealtachd*, what Gaelic life was like in the Highlands and islands of Scotland as well as a glimpse into what changes were leading so many to emigrate so far from home taking little with them but their culture and language. It is believed that 1/3 of people in Nova Scotia can trace their family's ancestors back to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Accounts say that more than 50,000 Gaels emigrated to Nova Scotia. After touring the site, visitors will re-enter

our Welcome Centre to find the second exhibit space. This space is dedicated to telling the story of the Gaels post 1920s to present day. The space will welcome visitors as they continue to learn about the Gaels and gain an understanding of why we are still relevant today as we celebrate and pass on our language and culture. As in the first exhibit space, visitors will have a chance to reflect and this time share their own story about why culture matters to them in an interactive display.

Throughout this process, we knew that we wanted to enhance the visitor experience. We also wanted to ensure that the visitors left with, we hope, a better understanding of who the Gaels were and still are today. Maybe someone will walk through the two new spaces and tour the Village and want to reconnect to their own Gaelic culture or maybe a visitor will see the common thread of home woven throughout the site and make a connection to their own culture, whatever that may be.

We look forward to having you visit with us to explore these two new spaces yourself in the near future. ©

Katherine MacLeod,
Manager of Interpretation

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

AN TUBHAILTE, A' LUCH 'S A' SEILLEAN, AGUS AM BATA | THE TABLECLOTH, THE MOUSE & BEE, AND THE STICK

Born in 1910, the late *Eòs Labhrainn mac Iain J. 'ic Iain 'ic Lachlainn a' Bhuachaille* | Joe Lawrence MacDonald was raised in Boisdale. His people originated in South Uist and in Barra. During a time when Gàidhlig was declining and experiencing tremendous pressure, Joe Lawrence was a champion for Gàidhlig maintaining a love for his language, culture, and people. He taught Gàidhlig for a number of years. He was also involved in collecting and recording with Gaels for the archives at the Beaton Institute. He was a wonderful singer and storyteller. In this issue of *An Rubha*, the first part of the *sgeulachd* | a tale that Joe Lawrence tells here and heard often growing up (International Tale Type ATU563 - The Table, the Donkey & the Stick). He remarked that stories of the like were commonly in the community.

Bha banntrach ann agus bha i 'fuireach, bha aon mhac aice dha b' ainm Iain. Agus bha 'ad a' fuireach air àite beag. Bha trì mairt aca agus samhraidh dha na samhraidhean a bh' ann, bha gnothaichean gu math cruaidh agus thuirt i ri Iain gu feumadh e falbh agus a' bhó a reic. Uill, dh'fhalbh esan agus bha e 'falbh fad a' latha agus an toiseach na h-oidhche, choinnich bodach mór ris. Agus dh'fhoigheachd e càit a robh e 'dol. Thuirt e gu robh a' dol a reic a' mhairt 'son biadh agus deoch fhaighinn dha fhéin is dha 'mhàthair.

"Glé cheart," ars' am bodach, "ceannaichidh mis' a' bhó agus bheir mise dhut tubhailte agus nuair a sgaoileas tu an tubhailte air a' bhòrd, rud sam bith a smaointicheas tu a tha dhìth ort, thig e air an tubhailte. Agus nuair a bhios tu uallamh dha do bhiadh, ma bhios sian air fhàgail, faodaidh tu 'chur air an darna taobh agus an tubhailte a chur dha 'n darna taobh airson an ath àm bìdh."

Uill, bha esan, bha Iain a' smaoinich gu robh seo dìreach uamhasach math. Agus thug e leis an tubhailte agus nuair a bha, mu 'n do choinnich e ris a' bhodach, chaidh e seachad air taigh. Agus bha e 'smaoitinn gu tadhladh e aig an taigh agus gu fanadh e fad na h-oidhcheadh. Ach co dhiubh, thadhal e a's an taigh agus dh'fhuirich e fad na h-oidhcheadh. Agus bha gilleann, agus dh'fhoighneachd 'ad dha 'staigh, agus dh'fhoighneachd 'ad dha a robh an t-acras air.

"O, cha robh, tha biadh agam fhìn."

There was a widow who had a son named Iain. They lived in a small place. They had three cows. One summer, things were pretty tough and she said to Iain that he would have to leave to sell a cow. Well, he left and he was gone all day and at dusk a large, old fellow met him. And he asked where he was going. He said that he was going to sell a cow to get food and drink for himself and his mother.

"Very good," the old fellow said, "I'll buy the cow and I'll give you a tablecloth and when you spread that tablecloth on the table, anything you think of that you need will appear on the tablecloth. And when you are finished with your meal, if there is anything left, you can put that aside and put the tablecloth away until the next mealtime."

Well, Iain was thinking that this was just awfully good. And he took the tablecloth. Before he met the old fellow, he had passed a house. And he was thinking he would visit the house and that he would stay all night. But anyway, he visited the house and he stayed all night. And there were boys, and they asked him in, and they asked him if he was hungry.

"Oh, no, I have my own food."

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Municipality of Victoria County through District 1 and the Recreation & Tourism Department.

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Agus dh'fhosgail e an tubhailte agus rud sam bith a bha e 'smaointeachadh air ithe, thàinig e air an tubhailte agus dh'ith 'ad sin. Agus chur e an tubhailt' an darna taobh.

Nuair a chaidh Iain a chadal, chaidh na gillea a dh'ionnsaidh na lobhtadh agus bha 'ad a' smaoinich cho math 's a bhiodh e an tubhailt' a ghoid. Ghoid 'ad na tubhailte agus chur 'ad seann tubhailte 'na h-àite. Chaidh Iain dhachaigh agus nuair a chaidh e far a robh a mhàthair, bha cabhag air dol a dh'fhosgail an tubhailte 'son feuchainn ri mhàthair a' rud a fhuair e. Agus co dhiubh, dh'fhosgail e an tubhailte 's ged a bhiodh e 'ga fosgladh fhathast, cha tigeadh sian air an tubhailt'.

Uill, thuirt a mhàthair gu robh seo truagh ach gu feumadh e falbh agus am mart eile a thoirt leis. Rinn e an aon rud an ath latha agus choinnich am bodach ris an ciaradh na h-oidhche.

Agus dh'fhoighneachd e, "Càit' a bheil thu a' dol an-diugh?"

"Tha mi 'dol a reic mart airson biadh is deoch fhaighinn dha 'm mhàthair."

"Uill, ceannaichidh mise a' bhó sin agus bheir mi dhut luch agus fìdheall agus bogsa. Agus cluichidh a' luch an fhìdheall. Agus bidh an seilean a' dannsa."

Bha Iain 'ga choimhead seo treis agus bha e 'smaointinn gum biodh e uamhasach math a-mach a's a' choillidh a bhith coimhead air a' seo fad na h-oidhche is fad ùine. Agus thill e air n-ais dhachaigh. Ach thadhal e 's an àite cheunda. Agus bha na gillea a' smaointinn gu dé na h-iongnaidhean a bh' aig an oidhche sin. Agus thàinig 'ad agus dh'innse e, thug e 'mach am bogsa agus thòisich a' luch ri cluich na fìdhleadh agus thòisich a' seilean air dannsa agus bha dùil aca cho math 's a bhiodh siud. Ghoid 'ad sin is fhuair 'ad bogsa is luch agus seilean agus chur 'ad a's a' bhogsa. 'S dh'fhalbh Iain dhachaigh.

Nuair a dh'fhosgail e 'm bogsa, thog a' seilean srannnd air a-mach air an doras. Agus rinn a' luch airson toll a bha 's a' chidsin. Agus sin na bh' aige airson a' mhairt.

"Uill," thuirt a mhàthair, "tha sin uamhasach truagh. Feumaidh tu falbh leis a' mhart mu dheireadh. 'S bheir an aire gun dean thu ceart an turas seo."

Agus co dhiubh, dh'fhalbh e agus mar a thachair dha na dà latha eile, thachair am bodach ris.

"Càit' a bheil thu a' dol an-diugh?" ars e fhéin.

"Tha mi 'dol a reic mart airson biadh is deoch fhaighinn dha 'm mhàthair."

"Uill, cheannaich mise am mart air a bhòn-dé. Agus cheannaich mi am mart bhuat an-dé. Agus dé rinn thu ris na thug mi dhut?"

"Uill, cha robh sian ag obair."

When Iain went to sleep, the boys went upstairs and they were thinking how good it would be to steal the tablecloth. They stole the tablecloth and they put an old tablecloth in its place. Iain went home and when he went to his mother, he was in a rush to open the tablecloth to show his mother what he got. And anyway, he opened the tablecloth and even if he'd be opening it yet, nothing would appear on the tablecloth.

Well, his mother said this was awful but he would have to leave tomorrow with another cow. He did the same thing the next day and the old fellow met him at dusk.

And he asked, "Where are you going today?"

"I'm going to sell a cow to get food and drink for my mother."

"Well, I'll buy that cow and I'll give you a mouse and a fiddle and a box. And the mouse plays the fiddle. And the bee dances."

Iain was looking at this for a spell and he was thinking that it would be really wonderful to be looking at this in the woods all night and all the time. And he went home. But, he visited the same place. And the boys were wondering what marvels Iain had that night. And they came and he told them, he took out the box and the mouse started to play the fiddle and the bee started dancing and they figured how good this would be. They stole that and they got a box and a mouse and a bee and they put that in the box. And Iain went home.

When he opened the box, the bee buzzed out the door. And the mouse made for a hole that was in the kitchen. And that's what he got for the cow.

"Well," his mother said, "this is awful pitiful. You'll have to go tomorrow with the last cow. And see that you do it right this time."

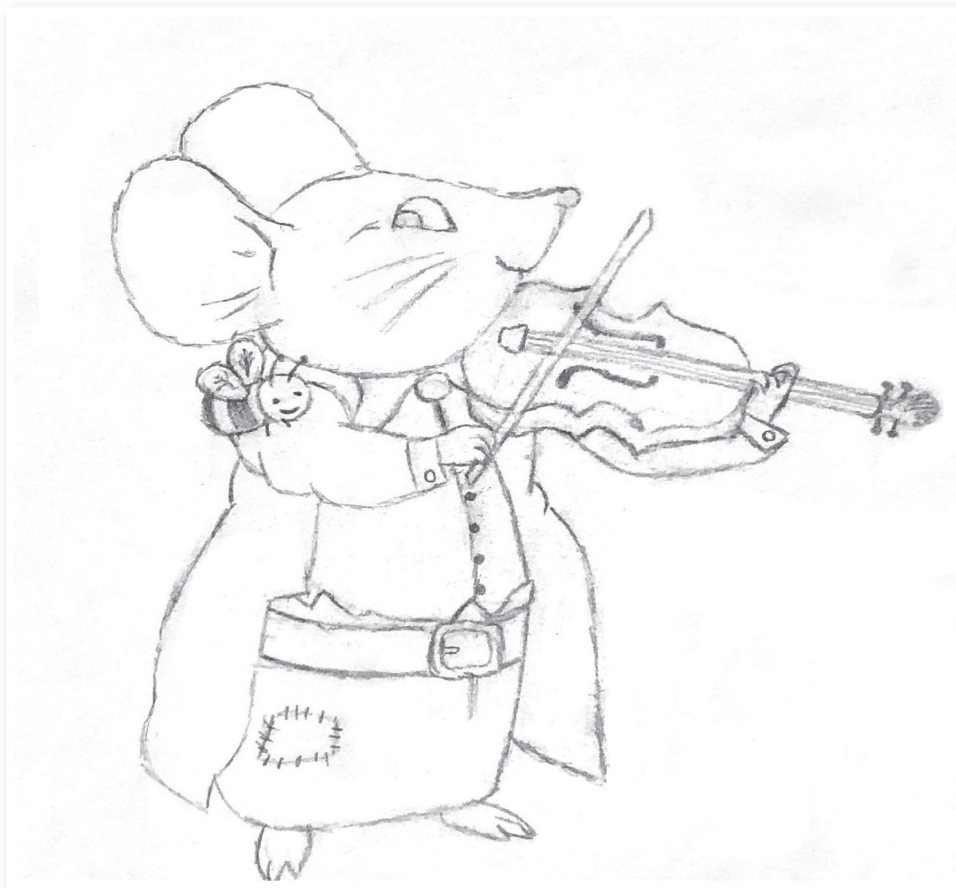
And anyway, he left and as it happened to him the other two days, the old fellow met him.

"Where are you going today?" he said himself.

"I'm going to sell a cow to get food and drink for my mother."

"Well, I bought a cow from you the day before yesterday. And I bought a cow from you yesterday. And what did you do with what I gave to you?"

"Well, nothing worked."



Sketch by Phillip Whyte.

"Thadhal thusa a's an taigh agus ghoid 'ad a' rud a thug mise dhut. Ach, tha mise 'toirt dhut a-nochd ... ceannaichidh mi a' bhó agus tha mi 'toirt dhut bata. Agus uair sam bith a bhios cuideachadh a dhìth ort, chan eil agad ach can, 'Stand up, a laochain!' ris a' bhata. Agus nì am bata a ghnòthach fhéin. Agus tadhladh tusa a's an taigh agus nuair a bhios tu 'dol a chadal, can riutha gu be dé nì 'ad gun 'Stand up, a laochain!' a ràdh ris a' bhata na bidh trioblaid ann. Agus nuair a théid am bata gu obair, na cuir stad air gus an toir 'ad dhut an tubhailte agus a' luch is a' seillean."

Uill, sin mar a thachair e. Agus nuair a chaidh Iain a chadal, bha na gillea a' gaireachdaich agus a' lachanaich a smaintinn dé an t-uamhas a bh' aig Iain a-nochd. Agus[...] dh'éibh fear dhiubh 'Stand up, a laochain!' ris a' bhata agus ma dh'éibh, thàinig am bata às an oisean, bha e sloic sloc agus b' fheudar dha éigheachd air Iain stad a chur air a' bhata gu robh e 'dol 'gam marbhadh. Thuirt e nach cuireadh e stad gus a faigheadh e an tubhailte agus a' luch agus a' seillean 's an fhìdheall.

Uill, 's e sin mar a thachair, fhuair e sin. Agus ràinig e dhachaigh.

"You visited the house and they stole what I gave you. But I'm giving you tonight ... I'll buy the cow and I'll give you a stick. And anytime you need help, you only have to say, 'Stand up, a laochain!' to the stick. And the stick will do its business. And you visit the house and when you are going to sleep, tell them that whatever they do, don't say 'Stand up, a laochain!' to the stick or there will be trouble. And when the stick goes to work, don't stop it until they give you the tablecloth, the mouse, and the bee."

Well, that's how it happened. And when Iain went to sleep, the boys were laughing, laughing long and loud, wondering what lot Iain had tonight. And one of them yelled 'Stand up, a laochain!' to the stick and if he yelled, the stick came out of the corner, it was a bish bash with the stick pounding them and one of them had to holler to Iain to stop the stick and that it was going to kill them. Iain said he wouldn't put a stop to it until he got the tablecloth and the mouse and the bee and the fiddle.

Well, as it happened, he got that. And he arrived home. ©

Part 2 will appear in the next issue of An Rubha
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Transcribed & translated by Shannon MacMullin, Ban-chleasaiche
Cultural Experiences Coordinator.
To view the video recording of this sgeulachd, visit
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXAYyYOeUswGt=2953s>

CHO SONA RI LUCH ANN AN LOFA | AS HAPPY AS A MOUSE IN A LOAF

MAC-TALLA.

“An nì nach cluinn mi an diugh cha’n aithris mi maireach.”

VOL. I.

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

No. 57.

March 3, 1894

Guth bho 'n Chamus

Is ro thaitneach leam, da-rìreadh, a bhi sgrìobhadh gu MAC-TALLA air amannan àraid. Tha e 'na mheadhon air a bhi cumail sgrìobhadh na Gàidhlig 'nam chuimhne; agus a thuilleadh air a sin, ma dh'fhaoidte nach misde le muinntir eile a chluinntinn ciamar tha dol dhuinn anns a' cheàrn seo dhe 'n dùthaich.

Thuit móran sneachda air a' bhliadhna seo, agus tha 'n t-sìde mar is trice stoirmeil, caochlaideach. Tha stoirmnean trom o 'n ear-dheas againn a h-uile seachdain, agus gaoth na 's mì-thaitnich' leinn cha tig á adhar. Tha na postaichean a' faighinn tàir; ach coma leibh, is ann uair àinneamh a bhios iad lath' air deireadh.

Tha roinn de dhaoine tinn air feadh na dùthcha,—tha 'n *Grippe* a' deanamh a dhìchill. Tha ioma leigheas air a thoirt dhuinn air a' ghalar seo. Thuirt seann duine còir rium an là roimhe nam biodh an *grog* cho pailt 's an dùthaich 's a chunnaic esan e, nach dàinig an *Grippe* riamh far a' Ghut,—gur ann aig daoine fhéin a bha choire! Is eagal leam gum bu mhiosa 'n leigheas na 'n euslaint fhéin.

Cha do phòs ach a dhà no trì chàraidean anns a' pharaisd' air a' gheamhradh seo. Bha tuilleadh ann a dh'fhaodadh pòsadh; ach a chionn iad a bhi tuilleadh is glic no tuilleadh is gòrach, leig iad seachad a' snuim a chur gu àm eile. Bha Mòr ag ràitinn rium gun robh feadhain eil' ann a phòsadh nam faodadh iad: Chan aithne dhomhs iad,—chan eil mi fhìn de 'n àireamh sin co dhiù.

Ged nach eil aghaidh an talamhain no mullach nam beann ma 'n cuairt cho maiseach dha 'n t-sùil an-dràsda 's a bha iad nuair a sgrìobh mi thugaibh a's t-samhraidh, gidheadh, faodaidh neach toil-inntinn gu leòir fhaighinn ma bhios e dhìth air. Ach chionn gu bheil mo litir a' fàs tuilleadh is fada, cha lean mi 'chùis sin na 's fhaid' aig an àm seo. Ma thig "Caorstaidh" a-nall, cha chreid mi nach còrd ar cluichean 'us ar fearas-chuideachd rithe, gu h-àraid ma tha i eòlach air dol air an t-shléighe bhig.

A word from Broad Cove (Inverness)

It is very delightful, truly, to be writing to MAC-TALLA at particular times. It is the medium to keep Gàidhlig writing in my memory; and more than that, perhaps it won't do any harm to others to hear how things are going for us in this part of the world.

Much snow has fallen this year, and the weather is often stormy and inconstant. There are storms from the southeast every week and wind that is more unpleasant with us, doesn't come from air. The postmen are having difficulty, but never mind, it is a rare occasion that they are delayed a day.

A good number of people are ill around the area,— the flu is doing its best. Many cures are offered to us for this disease. A kindly old man told me the other day that if grog was as plenty in the area as he'd seen, the flu would never would have come from Port Hawkesbury,—and the people themselves are to blame! I'm afraid that the cure is worse than the illness itself.

Only two or three couples in the parish were married this winter. There were more that could have wed; but owing to them being too wise or too foolish, they let tying the knot pass them by until another time. Sarah was telling me that there were others that would have married if they could have: I don't know them,—I'm not in counted in that number anyway.

Although the lay of the land or the mountain peaks around here are not as beautiful to the eye now as they were when I wrote to you in the summer, nevertheless, a person can get enough contentment if he is in need. But since my letter is growing too long, I won't continue on the topic any further at this time. If "Kristy" comes over, I believe she would enjoy our pastimes and companionship, especially if she is acquainted with going on the little sleigh.

SEÒNAID

JANET



.....

This is the final letter of the exchange between Seònaid and Caorstaidh. The first three letters can be found in An Rubha Vol 17 No 2. Edited & translated by Shannon MacMullin, Ban-chleasaiche | Cultural Experiences Coordinator.

.....

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

.....



Sketch by Ellison Robertson



Leanaibh dlùth ri cliù bhur sinnsir.

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

A PART of THE NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM

**Baile nan
Gàidheal**
Highland Village
MADE OF STORIES

Heritage).

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.

Jim St. Clair

• 1930-2021 •

James Otis St. Clair, or Jim as we knew him, was a beloved teacher, mentor, naturalist, storyteller, columnist, radio voice, community leader, and historian. His boundless energy, curiosity, caring, and love of Cape Breton Island touched and influenced lives of all around him.

Jim became involved with the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society in the 1970s, which was then a growing but fledgling community-based living history museum striving to tell and celebrate the Gaelic Nova Scotia story. He served as a member of the Society's board of trustees from 1978 to 2003, including president from 1987 to 1993.

Jim contributed many hours towards growing the organization and its capacity to preserve the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Nova Scotia Gaels, to adhere to contemporary museological standards, and to play a community development and leadership role in the wider community.

He was also instrumental in assisting Highland Village staff in growing the interpretive capacity of the museum, especially storytelling, Cape Breton history, and material culture presentation. Several initiatives were spurred by Jim's leadership including - the Roots Cape Breton genealogy service in 1986; relocation and restoration of the MacQuarrie-Fox House in 1989; production of our first orientation video in 1995; publication of the MacCallum House book on material culture in 1999; launch of an evening Candlelight/Story telling tour program in the early 2000s, and the relocation of the Malagawatch Church.

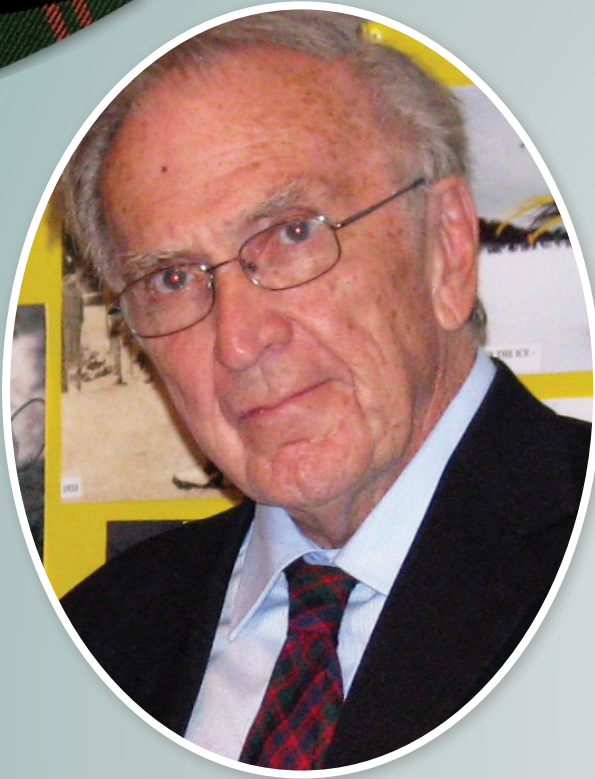
All of the work Jim led, and inspired, was critical in laying the foundation for the Village's biggest milestone - becoming a provincial museum under the Nova Scotia Museum system.

In 1999, when we were planning for the Funky Museum Road show, Jim suggested that we invite then teacher Rodney MacDonald (who was also running to be MLA for Inverness) over to the Village to play the fiddle on the Blackhouse roof while our staff recreated the dance to America. One year later, the Hon. Rodney MacDonald, Minister of Tourism and Culture oversaw the Highland Village becoming the 26th member of the Nova Scotia Museum family of museums.

Of course Jim's impact on the museum and heritage community went far beyond Highland Village - he worked with Angie and AWR MacKenzie at the Gaelic College in the 1950s. He played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Federation of NS Heritage (now the Association of NS Museums) in the early 1970s and the Iona Connection Heritage Network (now Heritage Cape Breton) in the 1980s - marking 200 years of Cape Breton being established as a colony. He taught Museum Studies at Cape Breton University in the 1990s. Two of his last students and mentees were myself and Catherine Arseneau who is Dean of Cultural Resources at Cape Breton University.

Jim's love of, and enthusiasm for, Cape Breton Island, its history, and its people was infectious. He was a teacher, mentor, storyteller, and friend. He freely shared his knowledge, insights, and passion and was an ardent champion for the heritage of Cape Breton Island and for museums as a place to preserve and interpret that heritage. Jim not only challenged the community to support its museums, he also challenged museums to make themselves integral to community life - especially being a catalyst for change by using the wisdom of the past to solve contemporary issues. ©

Rodney Chaisson



Hector MacKenzie

• 1933-2022 •

In the early morning of March 28th, our uncle Hector MacKenzie passed away at Alderwood Nursing Home in Baddeck. He was 89 years old. Hector was a real pillar in our family and in the community.

To know Hector was to love him. A gentle hero who was generous to all who entered his house. The consummate host who understood living in the moment and sharing life's simple pleasures. A good story. A tune on the fiddle. A witty parody of a popular song with local characters to add colour. A troubadour at a party. A master of ceremonies with a style of his own.

As kids visiting the MacKenzie home, or "the bridge" as most knew it, our earliest memories are of music and laughter going till the wee hours of morning. You would wake up to the sound of CJFX on the transistor radio in the kitchen. The smell of bacon would always awaken the senses. Coming downstairs into the kitchen, we would see Hector at his place in the kitchen doing crossword puzzles or reading from a stack of books. Silently doing a reset after last night's fun. The day would evolve as he would pick up his fiddle and read through a collection of tunes making mental notes as he flipped through the pages. Family. Friends. Strangers. Coming and going. Sharing the news. More laughs remembering the night before. The old turn-table spinning some vinyl. A Salada tea frog figurine weighing down the arm. Uncle Charlie and uncle Carl arguing, uncle Simon laughing. Women teasing Hector throwing in witty comments to feed an ever increasing crowd. Streams of nieces and nephews in and out. Stealing cookies and running outside. Hard to know how many people would come and go through that house in a day. It was a very welcoming home that was certainly a community hub.

As kids, our mother would put together some medleys of music and then bundle us up and our father would pile us into the station wagon. The old St. Columba Church hall was a place where we played in concerts in our early years. Hector was usually the MC. Seeing him entertaining the crowd while the performers came and went from the stage and always having the ability to keep the show moving was something he made to appear easy. Hollywood would have to wait while Hector worked his magic with the local crowds. His appearances at local ceilidhs and festivals were always appreciated by all and he was very generous in giving his time for a good cause.

He composed many fiddle tunes that are played by many of Cape Breton's finest players. His repertoire is being discovered by a new generation of players and listeners as well. Tunes like the Penny Hill jig, Memories of Mary Ann MacKenzie, and Corporal AB are now seamlessly woven into the fabric of Cape Breton music.

In the late 1990s, Hector suffered a series of strokes that severely affected his vision. His passion for reading was now not an option. The day after his birthday in the year 2003, on Old Christmas Day, he pulled out a couple of songs he wrote. One, appropriately enough, was a Christmas carol. "On the Very First Christmas" was a gem that was recorded on The Barra MacNeils Christmas Album 2. A rollicking carol that quickly became a fan favourite and is sung by many choirs from far and near.

The second treasure he shared was "One Wild Rose", a song based on Elmer Briand's lovely air "Beautiful Lake Ainslie". It is an epic song that paints a pastoral setting with Margaree as a backdrop.

A gentleman, a man of words, a fiddler, a carpenter, a songwriter, a family man. Just a small part of what made Hector special. He was our uncle and we will miss him dearly. Thank you, Hector, from all of us. ©

Stewart MacNeil, nephew to Hector



Ag Èirigh air Òrain | An Rubha Song Selection

'S ANN A-RAOIR NACH D' FHUAIR MI 'N CADAL | LAST NIGHT I DID NOT SLEEP

I fondly recall the beautiful, sunny, fall afternoon back in 2016 sitting at the milling table in the schoolhouse at *Baile nan Gàideal*—packed to the brim, singing songs and lifting hearts. Stacey MacLean, shared a wonderfully rousing song that she learned from Steaphan mac Iain Pheigi Ailein 'ic Èòin a' Ghriasaiche 'ic Iain Mhóir 'ic Niall Mhóir | Steve MacKinnon of Big Pond and of Barra stock. As she was telling us about the song and the singer, we all got a great surprise when a man in the audience stood up and declared, "That was my father!"

We had a wonderful visit that afternoon meeting Steve, the son, sharing memories and a love of song. Young Steve and I have kept in touch since that time. We exchanged emails and every so often, I'd receive a recording of a song. The recordings were always accompanied by some family history and additional information. Every email was like opening a box full of treasure!

When I first heard, 'S ann a-raoir nach d' fhuair mi 'n cadal | Last night I did not sleep, I just had to learn it. Sometimes, the song choses you. Agus, sin mar a dh'éirich. And that's what happened. I'm sharing here the lyrics of the song as I sing it. I learned the song from the tape, and also from two existing transcriptions. I could hear parts of the poetry so clearly, and other parts, I had to imagine and fill in with other versions and transcriptions. That's how it can often be working with archival material.

This is an òran fighte | a woven song. The last line of each two-line verse becomes the first line of the next verse, "knitting" the poetry of the song together and emphasizing the story.

I'm so happy to share this song with An Rubha readers and I offer my deep gratitude to all those who took the initiative to record Gaelic materials and gave permission to share them - most especially, the MacKinnon family of Big Pond. ©

Shannon MacMullin,
Ban-chleasaiche | Cultural Experiences Coordinator

Additional information, sheet music and transcription can be found in *Hebridean Folksongs Vol I*. Another transcription is available in *Òrain Luaidh Màiri ni'n Alasdair*.



Photos provided by Steve MacKinnon.

o ho hi o hao ri ù
o ho hi o hao ri ù
o ho hi o hao ri ù

o ho hi o hao ri ù
o ho hi o hao ri ù
o ho hi o hao ri ù

Chaidh mi 'n tràigh, cha d' rinn mi maorach.
Ged nach d' rinn, gun d' rinn mi caoineadh.

Chunnacas do chùl donn fo 'n fhaoilinn
Craiceann chùl do chinn orr' aodann
Craiceann do ghlùin [eil'] orr' aobrann
Chunna mi long a-steach dha 'n chaolas,
Ceathrar air ràmh 's fear 'ga taomadh
'S fear eile 'cur rith' a h-aodaich,
Bean na toiseach 's ise air ghlaodhaich
'S bean na deireadh 's ise air chaoineadh.
Dh'fhoighneachd mi dhi gu dé (a) h-adhbhar
"Chan e mo chrodh na mo chaoraich
Chan e bleoghann a' chruidh-laoigh e
Chan e bàs nan gamhna caola
Mo thriùir mac 's a' chuan gun fhaotainn,
Mo thriùir bhràithrean taobh ri taobh dhiubh.

Chan e sin a tha mi caoineadh
Ach a' fear dha 'n tug mi naoinear.
Chunnacas còmhlan seach a' bhuaille.
Ghabh iad gu doras beul uamha
Mo thriùir bhràithrean fhéin 'nan suain ann
Cuir iad annta saigheadan fuara
'Se mo leaba dhaibh bu chluasag.
'S e mo bhasan dhaibh bu chuachan.

I went to the shore, but I didn't gather shellfish.

Although I didn't, I was weeping.
The back of your head was seen under the tidemark

Your back scalp on your face
The skin of your knees on your ankles
I saw a ship in the narrows
Four were rowing and one was bailing
Another was hoisting her sails,
A woman in the bow was crying
And a woman in the stern was weeping.

I asked her what her is reason
"It's not my cattle or my sheep,
It's not milking the cows,
It's not the death of the lean cattle
My three sons lost at sea
My three brothers at their sides.
That's not what caused my lamenting
But the man to whom I gave nine children.
A group was seen passing the burial place.
They went to the door of the cave
My own three brothers were sleeping there
They put cold arrows into them.
It was on my own bed they rested
My hands were cups for them.

Seinn fo Sgàil nan Geugan Uaine | Songs from the Greenwood

ÒRAN DO BHEINN CHLANN-DÒMHNUILL | SONG TO CLAN DONALD'S MOUNTAIN

I have had many memorable moments of discovery during my time working on the Language in Lyrics project, but coming across manuscripts and clippings of Nova Scotia bards was a real highlight. Whilst working with Stacey MacLean at the Beaton Institute Archives, I was lucky enough to hold in my hands the typewritten manuscript of Aonghas R. MacDhòmhnaill | Angus R. MacDonald poetry, which was compiled by his daughter, Christena.

"Angus R. was born on the French Road in 1884. He was a carpenter "by nature," whose handicraft is found in the churches he built. He was fond of singing in Gaelic and when new verses were needed he would write them. MacDonald lived in Boston from 1922-1931 but as he did not feel he was experiencing enough success to warrant being far from Cape Breton he returned to work as a carpenter in New Waterford." (Beaton Institute Archives)

During the last session of Stòras a' Bhaile | Gaelic Folklife School online in November 2021, we spent time exploring his charming song composed from the point of view of Beinn Chlann-Dòmhnaill | Clan Donald's Mountain.



Hó rìtheag, ì rìtheag, ó rò ró
Hó rìtheag, ì rìtheag, ó rò í
Hó rìtheag, ì rìtheag, ó rò ró
Smeòrach le Chlann Dòmhnaill mi.

Bha mi 'n so, mu 'n d' thàinig Crìosda,
'S mi 'nam laidhe 'n so, air m' fhiaradh;
Leis a' lochan so, ri m' chliathnaich-
Do Chlann-Dòmhnuill, chaidh ar deanaibh

Tha mo cheann gu nochd'ar, riabhach,
'S mi ri sealltainn anns an iar-eas;
Chan eil beinn a' so 'nam fhianais
Nach robh 'n urram, agam, riamh, orr'.

'S iomadh feum a rinn mi riamh dhuibh,
Ged nach d' fhuair mi taing no fiach air:
'Cumail connaidh agus biadh ribh,
Anns gach dòigh a rinn sibh iarraidh.

Bidh eallach air mo dhruim 'san t-samhradh
Do chrodh-laoigh, do dh'eich 's do ghamhna:
'S mi 'gan àrach, dhuibh o Bhealltainn,
Gus an tig am fuachd 'sa gheamhradh.

Thug mi dhuibh gu leòr do choirce,
'S do bhuntàta, mar a chosg sibh;
Feur le dias, bu bhriagha, spealta,
'S dearcagan 'us clòbhar - pailteas.

Tha lochan beag an so 'nam achlais,
Bric us easganan, ro phailt ann;
'M feasgar ciùin, le driùchd, gum faic sibh
Cuartagan mun cuairt a sgapadh.

Bidh eòin nan geug a' seinn am puirt dhomh,
'S cearcan, air an làr 'gam furtachd;
Snagan ann an toll a' broснаich
'S cailleach-oidhche 'n crann ag osnaich.

Fhad 's a bhios na neòil a' gluasad,
Mar a chuireas gaoth mun cuairt iad;
Fanaidh mise 'n so gun ghluasad,
Ri Clann-Dòmhnuill fhad 's is buan iad.

Hó rìtheag, ì rìtheag, ó rò ró
Hó rìtheag, ì rìtheag, ó rò í
Hó rìtheag, ì rìtheag, ó rò ró
I am the thrush of Clan Donald.

I was here before Christ,
lying here, curved around
this loch beside me -
we were made for Clan Donald.

My head is exposed and grizzled,
as I look out toward the west.
There is not a mountain within my view,
that I have not always held in honour.

Many needs I provided for you
although I didn't get thanks or value for
them. Keeping you in fuel and food
in every way you sought.

In summer I bear on my back
a load of calves, yearlings and horses,
raising them from May Day
until the cold of winter.

I gave you plenty of oats,
and potatoes which you used.
Scythed hay, with beautiful, splendid ears
and plenty of berries and clover.

There is a little lake here in my arms,
full of trout and eels.
On a quiet evening in the drizzle you will see
eddies scattering them.

The birds on the branch sing me songs,
and partridge on the ground assist them.
Woodpeckers in their holes encouraging
and owls in their trees sighing.

As long as the wind moves the clouds,
I will stay here for Clan Donald
without moving,
as long as they survive. ©

Mary Jane Lamond, Language in Lyrics,
Gaelic Singer & Community Educator
Gaelic text edited by Dr. John Shaw
Translated by Mary Jane Lamond and Dr. John Shaw

Visit <https://beatoninstitute.com/macdonald-angus-r>
to learn more and to view the Angus R. MacDonald
manuscript and visit <https://soundcloud.com/beatoninstitute/angus-r-macdonald-t-77> to hear the song
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TARTAN IN THE HIGHLAND SETTLEMENTS OF NOVA SCOTIA

This is the second part of the article "Tartan in the Highland Settlements of Nova Scotia". In Part One, we examined the absence of tartan among the Gaels in the early settlements of Nova Scotia, the concurrent rise in popularity of tartan back in Scotland, and the transformation of tartan into a symbol of Scotland as a nation of Highlanders.

Of course, by the time of this romanticized and commercialized 'tartan revival', economic conditions in the north were so desperate that the exodus of the authentic Gael was well underway. As the Highlands were emptying of people to the Americas, a nostalgia for the old ways of Highland life had already begun to emerge in the outside world. The disappearance of the 'tartan-clad Highlander' was of no concern to the ordinary Gael. With the exception of the occasional ex-military man in his kilt, tartan would have rarely been seen on the emigrants of the early nineteenth century making their way to the eastern counties of Nova Scotia.

The Highland communities became well-established throughout the nineteenth century. Although most of the Gaels lived on farms, where language and culture were more easily maintained, life began to change for some as time went on. Younger generations moved away to pursue economic opportunities, large and small, in other locations. As their way of life was changing, and becoming more diverse, there arose a desire to reconnect socially and culturally with people who shared a nostalgia for the Highlands. In response, Highland Societies began to organize.

Scottish merchants in Halifax established the first society in Canada for the promotion of Scottish culture – the Scottish Merchants' Guild (1768), which became The North British Society. Other societies, under charter from The Highland Society of London in Halifax, began to organize throughout Nova Scotia in the late 1830s. Although making up less than 20% of the population of Halifax (well behind the Irish and British), many Scots

were prominent in the business and social life of the city, and wielded a strong cultural influence. By the mid-Victorian period, they had been strongly influenced by the re-imagining of the Highlands that had taken place, where the savage Highlander's image had been rehabilitated and romanticized.

When the 78th Highland Regiment of Foot arrived in Halifax in 1869, at the peak of this period, the kilted soldiers made quite an impact on the city. They were garrisoned in the city for only 2.5 years, but the Highland Societies arranged lavish social events to include them, culminating in the centenary (1871) of the ever-popular Sir Walter Scott's birth. There were Highland games, balls, and of course, military parades. Halifax citizens were awed by the kilts, drummers, bagpipes, and all the tartan. The new image of Highlanders had arrived in Nova Scotia, and a reenactment of the 78th's deployment can still be seen today at the Halifax Citadel National Historic Site.

Before 1930 in Nova Scotia, as noted by Ian McKay in *Acadiensis*, "Tartanism Triumphant", tartan was scarce: "...We search high and low for the signs which today mark the Scot, and by extension the Nova Scotian: we look for the tartans, kilts, bagpipes...and for the most part they are not to be found." But as the nineteenth century progressed, more Highland societies were forming and their presence began to initiate change. As we have seen in Halifax, these organizations played a role in creating a Highland identity for the public. Although they were often concerned with philanthropy, or with wanting to preserve the Gaelic language, critics argued that they tended to emphasize an idealized view of Highland life and its military aspects. Tartan was inevitably an important element of these societies.

One of the most active branches of Halifax's Highland Society of London, was the Antigonish Highland Society. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Antigonish was a thriving commercial, religious, and educational centre, with a university. The society seems to have been tentatively

organized sometime around 1836, operating off and on until 1861, when the organization was formalized and record-keeping began. (In 1863, they held the first of what were to become the present-day widely successful Highland Games.) The Society's goal was to "perpetuate the unique language, dress, music and games" of their ancestors.

Minutes from an 1862 meeting say that each member was to provide for himself a plaid and bonnet to be worn as the uniform of the organization. However, the tartan could be whatever pattern they chose. A later statement says that "Tartan is our most visible symbol of kinship and belonging..." In 1908, they participated in the visit of Lord Lovat (Simon Fraser, 14th Lord Lovat, 23rd Chief of Clan Fraser) to Nova Scotia. Photographs show the men, some dressed in bonnets, plaids, and kilts, gathered for the occasion of Lord Lovat's visit to Antigonish.

These gatherings were by no means the norm in most of the Highland communities. By the early 20th century, many Gaels were still living in rural areas, especially in Cape Breton, where homespun clothing and overshot coverlets were still being woven at home. But by the 1930s and '40s, as weaving in the homes was no longer a necessity, and weaving was beginning to die out, a new vision for Nova Scotia was being formulated, with tartan as a central part of the vision.

Angus L. MacDonald, a native of Dunvegan, Cape Breton, was elected premier of the province in 1933, and by the end of his term, he had convinced the world that Nova Scotia was essentially Scottish. He recognised the appeal of the re-imagined Highland culture with all its trappings of kilts, tartans, and clanship, seeing it as a way to promote tourism, and thereby improving the stalled economy of the province. MacDonald saw no conflict between promoting a culture and commercializing it. Tartan had maintained its popularity throughout the years, so ways were explored to market it, even though it was not part of any traditional Nova Scotian culture.



The visit of Lord Lovat to Antigonish 1908. © Antigonish Heritage Museum

Mary Black, the head of the government's newly-created Handcrafts Division of the Department of Trade and Industry, also saw it as a way to revive a flagging local handcraft industry. Weaving guilds were set up throughout the province and small weaving businesses were encouraged. A new tartan, created by Bessie Murray (a friend of Black's), was designed when indecision arose as to which clan tartan could be used to represent the province in a tapestry mural produced by the department for the Nova Scotia wool producers association. The creation of this 'Nova Scotia' tartan proved to be immensely popular and was the first to be officially registered, not for a clan, but for a political entity.

The newly established Gaelic College in St. Ann's was given provincial funds in the 1940s to teach local women how to weave tartan. Because the women were not familiar with weaving tartan, the founder of the College, Rev. A.W.R. MacKenzie, a Presbyterian

minister, enlisted Mary Black's help. As there were no local patterns to produce, she and MacKenzie's wife developed sixty setts (patterns), from a book they were able to get from an authority on tartans in Scotland. The weaving training began. As the techniques of tartan weaving were new to the women, it was a struggle at first to achieve the right quality, but they persevered and by 1947, demand exceeded the supply. Tourists loved it, and by the mid-1950s, the weaving of tartan at the Gaelic College was well established.

Tartan was also appearing at tourism and recreational sites around the province, and some places were given fanciful Scottish names. A piper was installed at the Nova Scotia-New Brunswick border provincial tourist bureau. Clad in the new provincial tartan and full Highland regimental gear, the piper became a very popular attraction for tourists entering Nova Scotia. MacDonald seized upon every opportunity to display

tartan. When the Cape Breton Highlands National Park was being developed around this time (including the building of an ambiguous 'Lone Shieling'), he suggested, in correspondence with the federal minister responsible, that it would be an excellent idea to have the park foresters wear kilts, as it would be "spectacular garb", or failing that, if kilts were thought to be unsuitable, perhaps tartan breeches?

Even without breeches in the Park, the whole idea of promoting a 'tartanized' Highland culture for Nova Scotia was a success. As a result, the weaving of tartan is now seen by some as a tradition for the Gaels in Nova Scotia. Yet if we could look into the trunks in the homes of the descendants of the Highland immigrants today, we would find treasured pieces of overshot weaving passed down in their families, not an abundance of tartan. ©

*Vicki Quimby,
Researcher, textile consultant,
and animator at Baile nan Gàidheal*

An Gàidheal Portmhor | Scotch Music

CAIRISTÌONA CHAIMBEUL | CHRISTIE CAMPBELL

Whether it's known by *Cairistiona Chaimbeul* | *Christie Campbell* or *The Miller of Drone*, this strathspey is undoubtedly a favourite in the Cape Breton repertoire. Often played in high-bass tuning, it is an excellent tune for step dancing. There's some dispute over its origin - Dunlay and Greenberg present *Christie Campbell* as a Gaelic version of Nathaniel Gow's composition *The Miller of Drone* (Traditional Celtic Violin Music of Cape Breton, 1996: 124). Others point out that there are many melodic variations in how *Christie Campbell* is played in Cape Breton when compared to published versions of *The Miller of Drone*, and as such it could be considered a different tune altogether (Shears, *Play it Like You Sing It* Vol. 2. 2018, 56-58). There remains some uncertainty as to whether *The Miller of Drone* is an original composition by Nathaniel Gow, or an arrangement of an older anonymous melody (MacDonald, Lamb, *Puirt-à-Beul*, 1901&2012: 86, 163).

Whatever its origins, there are a slew of *port-à-beul* versions of this tune, demonstrating the wide reach and popularity of this melody. Recordings from both sides of the Atlantic of mouth music tunes on this air often have lyrics complimenting, finding fault in, or expressing intentions to marry a 'Cairistiona Chaimbeul'. There seems to be at least one variation recorded in Cape Breton in which *Cairistiona* has nothing to do with the tune, and some contemporary airs of the *port-à-beul* in Nova Scotia differ quite significantly from the melody of the fiddle tune version.

John Shaw recorded this version from Malcolm Angus MacLeod of Skir Dhubh in 1975 (The Music of Cape Breton Vol. 2: Cape Breton Scottish Fiddle, Topic Records):

Pòsaidh mi 'nuair thig an t-Samhainn,
Cairistiona Chaimbeul,
Ged a tha do chasan caola,
'S e mo ghaol gun taing thu.

I will marry at Hallow-tide
Christy Campbell,
Though your legs are thin,
You are my love nonetheless.

Interestingly, there is a recording of Lauchie MacLellan of Dunvegan on *Sruth nan Gàidheal* singing a *port-à-beul* which seems to be on the same air as the first turn of *Christie Campbell*, but with distinctly different words:

(A') fìdhlear a bha 'n ceann na drochaid,
seo am port a rinn e (x3)
Cuir e chorrach am beul na piseag
is thug a' phiseag greim às

The fiddler that was at the end of the
bridge, this is the tune he made (x3)
He put his finger in the kitten's mouth
and the kitten took a bite out of it

There are a number of verses for *Cairistiona Chaimbeul* published in Keith Norman MacDonald's *Puirt-à-Beul*. Of the recordings in the Scottish *Tobar an Dualchais* archive, Will Lamb notes that most of the versions of *Cairistiona Chaimbeul* there have at least these 2 stanzas in some variation (*Puirt-à-Beul*, MacDonald, Lamb, 2012, 163):

Tha i tighinn air an rathad,
Cairistiona Chaimbeul, (x3)
Cairistiona Ciorstaidh Anna,
Cairistiona Chaimbeul.

She is coming down the road,
Christina Campbell, (x3)
Christina Kirsty Anne,
Christina Campbell.

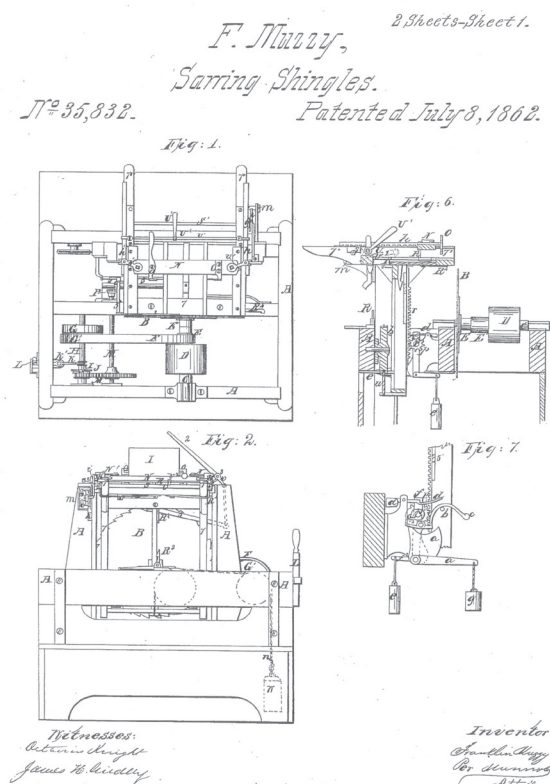
Tha i bòidheach 's tha i laghach,
Cairistiona Chaimbeul, (x3)
'S cuimhir dìreach a's an ruidhl' i 's
cinnteach a's an dawns i.

She is beautiful and she is kind,
Christina Campbell, (x3)
She has a straight posture in the reel
and is confident in the dance. ©

Hannah Krebs,
Ban-chleasaiche | Cultural Animator

Fo na Cabair | Under the Rafters

NAIDHEACHD A' MHUILINN | THE STORY OF THE CASH SHINGLE MILL



brook, built with water 21 feet deep, a head or vertical drop of 18 feet to the turbine which was closed in the evening and opened in the morning. The turbine supplied power and a weight ran the sawing process. Tom, Frank's father, made the box to hold the weight. The weight could not be too heavy, or too light, to keep the carriage from banging. It took several tries to adjust it at the Village.

Frank told us the story that when his father was working, he would stop for lunch. There were fish in the dam and if his father wanted a fish lunch, he kept at rod handy, caught and cooked it on the spot. "You can't get fresher than that."

In 1918, there was a storm that broke the dam and washed away the sawmill, but the shingle mill did not wash away. Tom moved it down, closer to home, and ran it with an engine that came from Eskasoni.

Shingles were checked for size by lining 10

shingles side by side butt end down. The distance across the bottom and the top should be the same to give square shingles. Frank says with conviction: "They were always square." Joe Neil MacNeil, in the book *From the Cove to the Glen*, speaks about the Cashes and said "I think it is fair to say that the shingles made in that mill were among the best, if not the best, in Cape Breton."

The shingles were bundled and tied with shingle wire purchased by the roll in Sydney. They put 1000 shingles in each bundle to sell to the boat. Frank says they got "three and a quarter" for 1000 shingles, called a square, at the boat. The merchants got more but mostly dealt by barter with customers who bought them. People would send lots of wool on the boat too. A couple of months later a cheque would come from the merchant for the wool. The lake boats came three times a week and picked up wool, shingles, and people. Lots of shingles were shipped to Cape North as there was no good road at the time.

The Cash Shingle Mill, donated by the late George Cash & the Cash family, has been set up at *Baile nan Gàidheal*. With the help of Frank and Charlie Cash, it is now running and is sawing shingles. ©

Pauline MacLean,
Collections Manager & Genealogist.

The story of the Cash shingle mill starts with Franklin Muzzy, a machinist and iron founder, who came to Bangor, Maine, in 1832. He built his business around craftsmanship. The Cash mill was patented in 1862 by Muzzy and is said to be one of four made before the factory burned down. It was on a sailing ship which entered the Bras d'Or Lake through the St. Peter's Canal, on its way to Newfoundland. The family story is that the ship sank on a shoal in St. George's Channel. The ship was under the water for some time before the machine was salvaged. A man from Loch Lomond purchased it and took it to his land. In an interview, Frank Cash tells us the fellow that bought it and set it up could not get it running and eventually went bankrupt.

Frank's grandfather bought it around 1890 and took it home. Charlie Cash added that they used a wagon with a drop axle to carry it home as the machine was very heavy. Now this grandfather, also Frank, could do just about anything around machinery and he got it going. The mill was powered by a water turbine. There was a dam on the



(L-R) Rodney Chaisson, Charlie Cash, Frank Cash and M.A. MacPherson at the official opening of the Cash's Shingle Mill

Mar Chuimhneachan | In Memory

MÀIRI NÌ'N ALASDAIR BHIG ALASDAIR ÒIG | MARY (MACDONALD) MACKINNON

On February 16, 2021, the community of Gillisdale lost a very special mother, grandmother, and tradition bearer. *Màiri nì'n Alasdair Bhig Alasdair Òig* | Mary (MacDonald) MacKinnon, passed away peacefully in her home surrounded by family only a little more than a year after the passing of her beloved husband, Vincent. She was known for her kindness, generosity, and vast knowledge of Gaelic language and culture. Her passing leaves an enormous void in her family and community.

"Mary Vincent", as she was affectionately known, was born and brought up in MacDonald Glen, Gillisdale, not far from where she married and spent her adult life. She was the youngest of the 14 children of Catherine "Cassie" MacDonald, née MacLellan, and *Ailig Beag Alasdair Òig* | Alexander MacDonald. The community of Gillisdale was very close knit when Mary was growing up and being a good neighbour was of utmost importance. She often said, "*Bha an t-seann fheadhainn riamh math dha chèile*." | The old people were always good to each other." She learned the value of community early in life and it continued to be one of her guiding principles. Whether it was tending children for neighbours, working at community suppers, or baking for funerals; helping others was second nature to Mary.

Mary spoke only Gaelic until the age of 6 when she attended school at the one room schoolhouse in Gillisdale and began to learn English. Gaelic remained the main language spoken in the home and community and Mary recalled people who had little English

as late as the 1950s. She continued to speak Gaelic throughout her life and retained a high level of fluency. Even though Gaelic was seldomly heard outside their home, Mary and Vincent continued to speak it to one another, flowing seamlessly between Gaelic and English so that one might not even notice there were two languages being spoken. Her depth of knowledge of the Gaelic language and local history drew many to visit and learn from her including many of the fluent learners in Nova Scotia today. She shared her knowledge with characteristic generosity and delighted in the fact that young people were assuring the continuance of her native language.

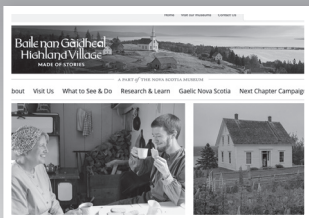
Mary was famous for her hospitality and had a wonderful way of making people feel welcome in her home. She had an amazing memory for names and genealogy and was able to make a connection with everyone she met. No matter how distant the relationship, Mary was always able to place people in a larger context. She was deeply dedicated to her large extended family, many of whom continue to live close-by. It was not hard to see how important family was to Mary. Her home was a bustling centre for family who came in and out at all hours, talking, laughing, and most importantly eating! There was never a shortage of food in the MacKinnon household.

Central to Mary's hospitality was her love of feeding people. She baked nearly everyday and one of her favorite sayings was, "*Bha mi 's a' bharaile fhlùr an-diugh*." | I was in the flour barrel today." She made cookies and

biscuits by the hundreds and every visitor was not only treated to a cup of tea and plate of sweets but usually went home with a bag of her baking. A visit with Mary and Vincent usually started with some time chatting in the living room, but before long Mary would jump up from her chair saying, "*Cuiridh mi air an coire* | I'll put on the kettle", followed by "*Tiugainn airson tì*." | Come in for tea." Traditional Gaelic foods made up a large part of part of Mary's repertoire. She made *maragan dubha* | black pudding, *maragan geala* | white pudding and *iosban* (a dried sausage containing meat, oats, and onions). There was a rhythm to their lives that revolved around seasonal food. Gasperaux was fished in the spring, they grew potatoes and a few other vegetables in summer, fished eels and picked blueberries in late summer and early fall. *Maragan* and *iosban* were usually made in early winter around butchering time. Mary even had her firearms license and was responsible for harvesting at least one moose! She was an expert at cooking and preserving traditional foods and enjoyed sharing this bounty with others.

Many who knew Mary would comment on the close relationship she had with her husband, Vincent. They seemed to have a balance where each had a role, but also helped each other. Vincent supported Mary even more when her eyesight began to fail. He would check the biscuits in the oven when she couldn't see well enough to tell if they were done or help her fix a knitting project gone awry. Mary made sure that hot tea and hearty meals were ready for Vincent and the family especially during

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times of hard work like gasperaux fishing season. Mary adored Vincent. She used to say, “*Cha cheannaicheadh an t-òr e. | Gold wouldn't buy him.*” Mary and Vincent went to school together, their birthdays were only days apart and it's not surprising that when Vincent left this world Mary followed not long after.

It is difficult to describe a woman as special as Mary MacKinnon in a few short paragraphs. She had a huge impact on so many people and did so while barely leaving home. In fact, when I think of Mary, “home” is a word that easily comes to mind. Not only did she love her home and community, but everyone felt at home in her presence. She was more than friendly. She treated you like you belonged; you were part of the fabric of her life. Every visit I spent with Mary left me ten times happier than before I arrived. On my way out the door I would often say, something like, “*Thig mi a-rithist ann an ùine goirid | I will come again soon,*” to which she would reply “*Bidh sinn aig baile. | We'll be at home.*” There is no replacing someone like Mary, but its comforting to know that she is “*aig baile*” now and always.



Carmen, Màiri, and neighbour Janet Gillis making maragan dubha.

When first I darkened your door we travelled back in time
I met people more real than flesh and bone
Seonaidh Mhìcheil, Dòmhnall Alasdair Mhóir, Iain Aonghais Fhearchair
Their names like magical incantations, I asked you to repeat them again and again
Your people dotted the hillsides and filled the glens
They cut hay with horse drawn mowers, winnowed oats in the wind,
planted and butchered by moon
I saw planting frolics, wood frolics and millings
No-one worked alone
I saw Sunday visits and evening prayers
Fished the rivers and filled barrels with gasperaux and salt
We travelled the storied landscape together where each hill and stream had a name
An Glamhasg, Am Barren Mór, An Tobar Grod
Walked barefoot to Egypt bringing cattle to summer grazing
Listened to Hussey regale children in Gaelic with ancient hero tales
This was your world and it became mine too,
one I could visit from time to time at least
When Vincent left, your world became cloudy and vague
The hills grew quiet and so did you
I could see you becoming lonesome for your people
But without you where are they now,
a Mhàiri nighean Alasdair Bhig Alasdair Òig?
Are the glens still full of characters?
Do the hills still have names? ©

Carmen MacArthur,
Community Educator

Cuid dha na h-Abairtean a bh' aig Màiri | A Few of Mary's Gaelic Expressions

Cho snog ri putan. | As cute as a button.

Dé do dhol an-diugh? | What's going on today?

A bheil thu air dòigh an-diugh? | Are you in good form today?

Chan eil math dhuinn a bhith talach. | It's not good for us to be complaining.

Bròinean bochd! | Poor soul!

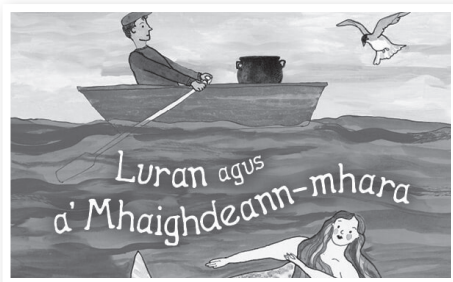
Tha e 'fas air a chaathach! | He's growing like crazy! (usually referring to a child)

An t-ionnsachadh òg, an t-ionnsachadh bòidheach. | Young learning is beautiful learning.

Cho cruaidh ri cròicean féidh. | As hard as a deer's antlers.

Dean ealamh e! | Do it quickly!

Aig Dia mór tha brath! | God knows!



Gaelic culture, like the cultures of so many other natural societies, is informed by a deep sense of place. Its toponymics (place names), traditional songs, proverbs, tales and more, explain its worldview, formed by the place that surrounds them. Children growing in this knowledge can feel an attachment, a fondness, and perhaps even a sense of security that holds them to their place or sustains and draws them back in spirit or in person when they venture beyond their home.

Small wonder that Gaels leaving rolling landscapes, never far from the mysterious siren's call of the ocean, often found their way to places like *Alba Nuadh* | Nova Scotia, elsewhere in Atlantic Canada, or along the eastern seaboard of the US, to Australia or New Zealand.

Mickey "John H" MacNeil, a Gaelic-raised elder, is the teller of the tale *Luran agus a' Mhaighdeann-mhara* | *Luran and the Mermaid*. His ancestors were Barra people. Tradition in his community of *Baile Sheumais*

| Jamesville, near *Sanndraigh* | Iona and *Baile nan Gàidheal* | Highland Village, tells how two Barramen, serving in the Royal Navy of the mid-eighteenth century, returned to their island and told those being cleared from their homes or leaving by choice about the beautiful land we now know the Mi'kmaw people call *Unima'ki*, Cape Breton Island.

Mickey John H's home looks out on the "big lake," the main basin of Cape Breton's Bras d'Or, a large saltwater lake. When Mickey was a boy, his own father farmed the land, and fished those waters for cod, mackerel and the poor man's lunch—lobster! At home with his mother, the boy heard many tales brought from an *t-Seann Dùthaich* | the old country including this, likely Hebridean, one. It sets a scene of a young fisher-farmer, Luran, some pesky fairies, and a helpful mermaid.

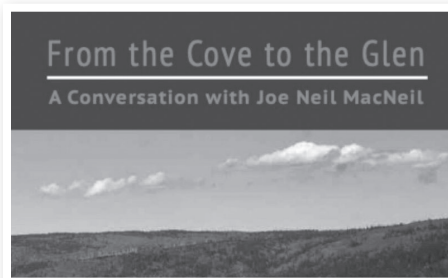
As well as entertainment, folktales for children are often instructive in the ways of a healthy, happy life, the value of vital work, proper

nutrition, and the norms of the community—such as honesty, respect, and cooperation. So Mickey's mother made sure she included the Mermaid's advice to young Luran about eating his oatmeal porridge everyday to grow strong.

Told in clear, vernacular Gaelic as spoken in Nova Scotia, the book's editor, Dr. Shamus MacDonald, has thoughtfully included a small glossary of local, non-standard words and orthography. *Luran* is Emily MacDonald's second fully-illustrated children's Gaelic storybook. She employs simple, clear watercolours that draw in young and adult non-readers and the Gaelic-literate. The drawings also help the reader's understanding of any Gaelic text that intermediate language learners might not have yet mastered.

Luran agus a' Mhaighdeann-mhara (32 pp.), available in separate, all-Gaelic and all-English editions, is a welcome addition to the ever-expanding catalogue of Bradan Press, the Gaelic-focused, Halifax, NS publishing house founded and headed by linguistic anthropologist, Dr. Emily MacEwan-Fujita. Support from the Nova Scotia Gaelic Council and the Gaelic Books Council (Scotland) speak to Bradan Press's professionalism in this and other publications. ©

Joe Murphy



From the Cove to the Glen, A Conversation with Joe Neil MacNeil, is an important and significant resource for anyone interested in tracing the genealogy of the families from the Irish Cove, Middle Cape, Glengarry, and Big Pond areas of Cape Breton. In the 1980s and '90s, Jack MacNeil, a retired teacher from Big Pond, recorded a series of conversations with renowned Gaelic storyteller, Eòs Nill Bhig | Joe Neil MacNeil, who was well versed in the genealogy of the people of the area. The book features a transcription of Joe Neil's reflections concerning these families and their histories.

Many readers of Cape Breton folklore are familiar with the stories of Joe Neil MacNeil which are featured in *Sgeul gu Latha* | *Tales Until Dawn, The World of a Cape Breton Gaelic*

Story-Teller, translated and edited by John Shaw. This book clearly highlights Joe Neil's knowledge of genealogy, as he often gives the reader the patronymics of the storytellers mentioned in his reflections. Jack MacNeil's book, *From the Cove to the Glen* emphasizes Joe Neil's genealogical knowledge and builds on Shaw's work wonderfully, highlighting Joe Neil's exceptional memories of the people of the area.

Jack MacNeil has transcribed Joe Neil's reflections, recorded as they drove through the countryside by car during a series of trips, so clearly that at times it's as if Joe Neil is speaking directly to the reader. There are also sections of the book that deal with a review of the families listed on the census of 1891 and also sections dealing with specific families. Joe Neil's recollections of the many MacNeil, MacDonald, Gillis, MacLean, Campbell, MacKinnon, Johnston (and so forth) families is truly amazing. His memory of their patronymics takes the reader well beyond the paper trail and we learn personal stories about individuals at times as well. Additionally, the book contains important commentary by Jack MacNeil concerning the recordings and Joe Neil's recollections.

From the Cove to the Glen is of particular interest to readers who are concerned with the genealogy of families from Barra and South Uist as many families from these parts of Scotland settled in this part of Cape Breton. Consequently, this book is an excellent complement to Father MacMillan's *To the Hill of Boisdale, A West Wind to East Bay, The Mackenzies' History of Christmas Island Parish* by Archibald MacKenzie, and *All Call Iona Home* by S. R. MacNeil. Jack MacNeil's book is as significant to genealogical researchers as these books are.

Credit must be given to Jack MacNeil of Big Pond for recognizing the importance of the knowledge possessed by Joe Neil, for having the wisdom to record him, and for sharing this work with the rest of us. The patronymics of many of the people of the Irish Cove to the Big Pond area, which was predominantly settled by Scottish Highlanders, would have been forgotten had it not been for this book. Joe Neil MacNeil and Jack MacNeil are truly two great MacNeils and are a credit to the Clan MacNeil and Highlanders everywhere! *From the Cove to the Glen, A Conversation with Joe Neil MacNeil* is a must have for everyone's collection! ©

Vince MacNeil,
President and Genealogist for Clan MacNeil Canada



Comunn Ar Rùin | Our People

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & ACCOLADES

Tapadh Leibh-se Gu Mór

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Congratulations & Thank You

To board of director, Hector MacNeil on the birth of his twin grandchildren.

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To the families of Angie Farrell (past board member and tradition bearer); Mike Pruski (husband of board member Dena), Chris Kaiser (son-in-law of staff member Pauline Campbell), Catherine MacNeil (tradition bearer); Kenzie MacNeil (brother of board member Wilf), Catherine and Harry Steele (sister and brother-in-law of board member Roland Thornhill), Georgina Betts (stepmother of staff member Pauline MacLean), and James MacDonald (father of staff member Shamus Y.).

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