

Baile nan
Gàidheal
Highland Village
MADE OF STORIES



The Highland Village
Gaelic Folklife Magazine

an rubha

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VOLUME 18 • NUMBER TWO



Mar is Léir Dhomh Fhìn | As I See It
An Rubha agus An Acair | The Headland and The Anchor

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

An Gàidheal Portmhor | Scotch Music
Janet Cameron's Strathspey

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

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

Since 2014, the Highland Village has distributed \$15,500 to 17 youth to help them with their cultural journey. For more information see treasuresofyouth.ca

The 2022 recipients were Taya MacDonald, fiddler, pianist, and Gaelic speaker of Mabou (\$1,000), Mya Ehler, a dancer and fiddler of Whycocomagh (\$1,000), and Amelia Parker of Central West River, a fiddler, champion highland dancer, a step dancer, and pianist. (\$500)



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

STÉIDHEACHADH A SHEASAS RIS AN ÀM | A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

This coming June will mark 30 years since I began my journey as Director/Manager of the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society and Baile nan Gàidheal | Highland Village. Being a part of the team that has grown and evolved this institution over the past three decades into what it is today has been truly and deeply rewarding.

Baile nan Gàidheal is a special place - one that brings together not only our community, but visitors from all over the world, to have a céilidh with us, and experience the richness of what is distinctly Nova Scotia Gaelic culture. In a picturesque natural setting like no other, we are widely recognized as a place to discover, explore, and celebrate all that is Gaelic Nova Scotia, and our ancestors who have entrusted us with those gifts.

Over six decades ago, this museum was a merely a dream - a stage in a field on an abandoned farm overlooking the beautiful Bras d'Or Lake. Today, we are part of the Nova Scotia Museum system - an integral institution, internationally recognized, for Gaelic storytelling and community building, a significant visitor attraction for Cape Breton Island, and one of the largest employers in Central Cape Breton. I am proud of what we have accomplished together.

I am also very thankful to everyone who has supported or assisted me in this role - our tradition bearers and knowledge keepers, our staff, our board, our volunteers, our partners, and our community. I have learned so much from all of them and continue to be inspired by their love and pride in our culture, our identity, and our community.

This reflection also comes on the heels of our most recent accomplishment - the completion of our very ambitious \$6.8 million site development program. After years of planning and preparation, we broke ground in the fall of 2019 with the first element of the project - our new washroom building on the top of the hill. Since then, in spite of all of the challenges COVID threw at us, we advanced the full program, transforming our site so that we can better achieve our mission, including: enhancing the visitor experience, growing programming and community outreach, providing year round programs and offerings, and developing new revenue streams to support the operation. The other new structures in the program

include our new passive house designed centre-piece, the Welcome/Cultural Centre, as well as Cash's shingle mill, and the maintenance workshop. We have renovated two other buildings: the little barn into a programming space, and our old visitor centre into a curatorial centre for artifact storage and costuming. We have designed, fabricated, and installed new permanent exhibits in the new Welcome Centre to provide pre- and post-tour interpretation for visitors and are preparing to install an outdoor interpretive kiosk on the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere behind the church. We are also advancing a project to address and enhance interpretation of the Mi'kmaq people and the Mi'kmaq-Gaels story on site. We officially opened the Cash's Shingle Mill last September. We will be officially opening the new Welcome Centre and exhibits this coming summer.

We have so many to thank for their support on this project. All three levels of government have supported the project



including the Municipality of Victoria County, who believed in the project so much they committed \$100,000 to the project before the proposal was completed; the Government of Canada who came to the table early on with a \$1.2 million contribution from ACOA and \$270,000 from Canadian Heritage; and the Province of Nova Scotia who started out with a \$1.2 million commitment, and increased that support with further investments through COVID stimulus and funds to offset cost escalations due to COVID. The Nova Scotia Museum and the Nova Scotia Department of Public Works have been incredibly supportive of

this project.

In addition to investments from all three levels of government, we have also received tremendous support from our community and private sector supporters. We launched our Next Chapter fundraising campaign to connect with our community and friends during one of the most challenging times for philanthropy in Canada. Despite these challenges, the support and encouragement we have received, from old friends and new, has been extremely humbling.

I do want to make special note of two donations: \$100,000 from Debbi and Frank Sobey who not only gave us our first significant donation, but also the confidence that we could make our fundraising goal a reality; and \$100,000 (in US funds) from David and Abbie Rumsey, a donation made to recognize and remember the great contributions of Jim St.Clair to not only the Village but also the history and culture of Cape Breton Island. As a result, our library/archives has been named "The Seanchas Centre: In Memory of Jim St.Clair." We will be recognizing everyone who provided financial support to the project, and our vision for the Baile nan Gàidheal site, on the donor wall in our new Welcome Centre.

With our new facilities in place, and COVID restrictions behind us, we will be turning our energies back towards our mission, in particular how we leverage our new operational and physical capacities to enhance our visitor experience and grow our impact to our community. We'll have more on this in future issues of An Rubha.

Before signing off in this issue, I want extend my deepest appreciation to M.A. MacPherson, who stepped down as President of the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society this past November. I cannot thank him enough for the unwavering support, contributions, and counsel that he has provided me over the past eight years. The time, energy, and enthusiasm he has contributed to our organization, especially our Next Chapter fundraising campaign, is incredible. Through his leadership and assistance, we have accomplished the most significant site development project in our history and are on the cusp of achieving our first capital campaign. That legacy speaks for itself. ©

Rodney Chaisson,
Director of the Highland Village.

Mar is Léir Dhomh Fhìn | As I See It

AN RUBHA AGUS AN ACAIR | THE HEADLAND AND THE ANCHOR

A people who have lost their past will not be able to reconcile it. They cannot anchor themselves in the wisdom gleaned from the collective experience of their community, nor can they correct their course from the follies and shortcomings of past missteps. They will only flounder on the sea of forgetfulness lured by the siren songs of other peoples, regardless of the degree to which they have any bearing on their own journey.

The Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship booklet provides a social and historical overview of the country. When I studied it in 2014 in order to prepare for the exam and become a Canadian citizen, I noticed some interpretations and assumptions that differ from my own. There are several images of people in kilts and tartans, and the Scots as a whole are mentioned as an immigrant group, but they are lumped together with everyone from the British Isles into an artificially unified Anglophone bloc: "The basic way of life in English-speaking areas was established by hundreds of thousands of English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish settlers, soldiers and migrants from the 1600s to the 20th century. ... This helps explain why Anglophones (English speakers) are generally referred to as English Canadians."

The section on the Rebellions of 1837-38 conveys a very different tone regarding cultural and linguistic distinctions. "Lord Durham also said that the quickest way for the *Canadiens* to achieve progress was to assimilate into English-speaking Protestant culture. This recommendation demonstrated a complete lack of understanding of French Canadians, who sought to uphold the distinct identity of French Canada."

At this same time period, there were large immigrant communities of Scottish Gaels from Ontario to the Maritimes, and many Gaels spoke nothing but their own native tongue. English was foreign to them but had been increasingly imposed for over two centuries in the expansion of anglophone empire (see, for example, the 1616 Education Act which aimed to build schools for the explicit purpose of eradicating Gaelic). Lord

Durham's report reflects the anglophone world's presumptions of superiority in relation to all Celtic communities: their languages and cultures were claimed to be obsolete relics of a primitive people who needed to abandon them in order to progress by assimilating to anglophone norms. Those pressures and attitudes have scarcely relented, even outside of the original homelands.

While the British Empire provided a ladder of opportunity and reward for those who would advance its agenda, and thus complicates any sweeping generalizations of entire ethnic groups, it is at least true to say that the vast majority of Scottish Gaels who came to British North America did so as refugees, fleeing the ruination of their native communities as they were swept aside by the tide of empire. They sought sanctuary from those oppressive conditions, but their flight to freedom often made them unwanted guests of the First Nations who



already called these lands home.

Those familiar with Gaelic tradition know that there is a strong emphasis on hospitality and the virtues and responsibilities of the host. Bheirinn cuid-oidhche dha ged a bhiodh ceann fir fo achlais | I would give him a night's hospitality even if he had a man's head under his arm, is one proverb offering a graphic depiction of these cultural expectations.

What are less well articulated are the

obligations of the guest, perhaps because such manners would be implicit and instilled at an early age, but a couple of traditional maxims should serve to illustrate them. Is e duine gun nàire a shuidheas ann an cathair bean an taighe | Only a shameless person will take the chair of the woman of the house, expresses the respect due to the woman who manages the household in which they enjoy their stay and ensures that its inhabitants can thrive. Is olc an t-aigh as misd' an taigh | He is a bad guest who causes the home to become worse, overtly communicates the need to be considerate of one's hosts and to help make their household sustainable rather than drive it into destitution through selfishness.

We could extend the meaning of these proverbs to understand our obligations to those native peoples whose lands we now inhabit: how can we live responsibly to help them to recover and revitalise their own place of honour in their native home? We could extend the analogy even further to frame our responsibilities as human beings on a planet that has become increasingly damaged and traumatised by over-exploitation and greed.

Considering the Scottish Gaelic community to be merely another white, European or British settler group denies a nuanced history of how they were colonised and lost their sense of self and what the consequences of that have been. Gaels came with a very specific identity and set of communal norms and experiences that were vastly different from so-called Anglophone Canada. Gaels understood what it meant for them to be indigenous in their own lands and some still do. Descendants of Gaelic refugees will be much better allies for Truth and Reconciliation if they can understand the authentic experiences and perspectives of their ancestors, and tap into the sense of loss that they endured, rather than having that substituted with the shallow stereotypes created by empire that are commonly presented as Highland heritage today. ©

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Heritage. To learn more, please visit Hidden Glen Folk School
www.hiddenglenfolk.org

Naidheachd a' Bhaile | The Village News

AITHISG NA RÀITHE | A SEASON REVIEW



As we continue to settle into our new space in the Welcome Centre and put the finishing touches on our exhibit spaces, you might stop and ask, what's next? To that we may answer by saying, the work has only begun!

It has been a wish for some time now to acknowledge the story of the first peoples of Mi'kma'ki before the Gaels arrived in Nova Scotia. We have been working in partnership with our friends at Eskasoni Cultural Journeys on Goat Island for some time now. Faye Paul and staff are always willing to have knowledge keepers visit with us to share their cultural traditions. It is our hope one day to extend this experience to all visitors, not just the ones who arrive on those special days.

Over the last two years, we have worked closely with John Sylliboy of Eskasoni, and now more recently with an expanded group of knowledge keepers from neighbouring Mi'kmaq communities, to form an L'nu advisory committee. With their guidance, we want to make space for Mi'kmaq stories and perspectives at Baile nan Gàidheal. Over the last few months, we have met, shared ideas and have begun to understand each other's unique culture. Through this process, we

hope to enhance interpretation onsite. From the beginning, we wanted this initiative to be led by Mi'kmaq voices. Therefore, it is important to us that the advisory committee leads this process so that the narrative is told through their voices. At this time, it's unclear what exactly this interpretation will look like, but we are excited to continue this journey with our friends.

The new Welcome Centre has always allowed for the expansion of our library and archival space. In late August of 2022, in honour of a long-time supporter and friend of the Village, Jim St.Clair, the library was named in his memory for his lifetime spent collecting the history of Cape Breton Island. The library will become a year-round space that visitors and researchers alike can use to explore and see what we have in our collections. As well, this space will increase our capacity to grow our collections and receive new materials. In the previous Visitor Centre, we were limited by both storage space, which reduced our ability to collect, and the lack of room for people to access the material we housed. It is already evident that the new space will facilitate our growth. The Municipality of Victoria County's archival collection, which was previously stored in the Courthouse in Baddeck, needed to be relocated last fall.

Councillors saw our new library facility as the perfect home for their documents. Books, records, and images were boxed and brought to Iona. This is just one example of how this new space will benefit everyone for years to come. You can read more about our library in this issue on page 18, Fo na Cabair | Under the Rafters.

Moving forward, we will shift our focus and work diligently to ensure our visitors continue to have authentic experiences when they visit Baile nan Gàidheal. To do this, our next task will be to update our content framework which guides our interpretation.

We will also look at creating new programs that visitors will be able to participate in. Due to Covid, all of our programming was put on hold. It is our objective to create new, meaningful, hands-on experiences that will leave our visitors with lasting memories for years to come. It's an exciting time here at Baile nan Gàidheal and we're looking forward to welcoming you all for a visit. ©

*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

This is the second part of the sgeulachd | tale told by the late Eòs Labhrainn mac Iain J. 'ic Iain 'ic Lachlainn a' Bhuachaille | Joe Lawrence MacDonald of Boisdale. In the first half of the tale (see *An Rubha 18-1*), Iain acquires magical items from an old man he trades cows with to get food for himself and his mother (International tale type ATU563 The Table, the Donkey & the Stick). The items include a magical table cloth which will produce any food Iain can think of, a mouse who plays the fiddle with a bee who dances, and a magical stick. In his travels, the items were stolen from him, but heeding the advice of the old man, he recovers the items and he and his mother are living happily together. In the conclusion, Iain learns that a king is seeking a husband for his daughter and sets off on an adventure to win her hand.

Agus an uair sin, bha beagan do dh'ionnsachadh aige agus fhuair e pàipear. Agus chunnaic e anns a' phàipear gu robh nighean rìgh a's an àite agus gu robh i 'coimhead airson fear. Agus thuirt a' rìgh duine sam bith - bha i tùrsach - agus duine sam bith a bheireadh gàire oirre trì turais gu faodadh e 'pòsadh agus leth a rìoghachd fhaighinn.

"Uill," ars' Iain, "smaoinich cho math 's a bhiodh seo."

Agus bha e 'smaointinn air airgead agus leth a' rìoghachd agus dh'fhàg e biadh gu leòr aig a' mhàthair agus thog e rithe coiseachd. Bha e 'coiseachd ùine mhór, mhór gus an dàinig e gu taigh mór, caisteal. Agus chunnaic e nighean 'na seasamh a's an uinneig. Agus shuidh esan air an talamh 's dh'fhosgail e 'n tubhailte. Agus thòisich e air ithe na thàinig air an tubhailte. Agus rinn ise gàire. An uair sin, thug e 'm bogsa às a' phòca agus thòisich a' luch ri seinn na fìdhleadh 's a' seillean air dannsa. 'S rinn i gàir' eile. An uair sin, bha 'm bata 'na laighe air an talamh. Agus thuirt e, 'Stand up, a laochain!' ris a' bhata is rinn am bata ceumannan a-null far a robh e agus rinn i gàire trì turais.

Bha na daoine a's a' chaisteal a' gabhail ealla air a' seo agus chaidh iad gu - dh'innse iad dha 'n rìgh agus dh'iarr a' rìgh 'dol a-mach agus an duine a thoirt a-staigh.

And then, he had a bit of learning and he got a paper. And he saw in the paper that a king's daughter was in the area and she was looking for a husband. And the king said - she was sorrowful - and any man who would make her laugh three times could marry her and would get half of his kingdom.

"Well," said Iain, "think how good that would be."

And he was thinking of money and half of the kingdom and he left plenty of food with his mother and he took off walking. He was walking a long, long time until he came to a big house, a castle. And he saw a girl standing in the window. And he sat on the ground and he opened the tablecloth. And he started eating what appeared on the tablecloth. And she laughed. Then, he took the box out of his pocket and the mouse started to play the fiddle and the bee to dance. And she laughed again. Then, the stick was laying on the ground. And he said, 'Stand up, a laochain!' to the stick and the stick took steps over to where he was and she laughed the third time.

The people in the castle were watching this and they told the king and the king asked them to go out and bring the man inside.

The Nova Scotia Highland Village Society gratefully acknowledges the support of its government partners. In addition to our core funding from the Province of Nova Scotia through the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage (Nova Scotia Museum), support has also been received from:

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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

Agus chaidh Iain a-staigh agus thuirt a' rìgh ri Iain, "Thug thu gàire air a' nighean agamsa trì turais. Ach a-nist, feumaidh tu cadal còmhla rithè trì oidhche mu faigh thu i ri pòsadh. 'S ma chòrdas thu rithè, faodaidh tu 'pòsadh agus gheibh thu leth a' rìoghachd."

"Glé cheart," ars' Iain.

Agus bha diùc ann agus bha a shùil air a' nighinn. Agus a' chiad oidhche mu 'n deachaidh Iain gu tàmh, thàinig an diùc agus thuirt e gun toireadh e dha pòc' òir na fuiricheadh e socair a's a' leabaidh gun a dhol an comhair nighean a' rìgh.

"Tha seo glé mhath."

Nuair a dh'éirich nighean a' rìgh 's a' mhadainn, dh'fhoighneachd a' rìgh dé mar a chòrd an gille bha siud rith' a-raoir.

"Cha do chòrd idir. Bha e 'na stumpa 'na chadal air aon taobh na leapadh."

"Uill," ars' a' rìgh, "tha dà oidhche eil' aige ri dhol throimhe."

Ach 's an [darna] oidhche, thàinig an diùc 's bha pòca do dh'airgid aige. Thug e 'n t-airgead do dh'Iain agus bha Iain a' smaoineach cho math 's a bhiodh an t-airgead 's an t-òr. Agus chaidh e thro 'n aon rud an darna oidhche.

Ach an treas oidhche, thàinig e - an oidhche mu dheireadh aig Iain. Agus bha pòca daoimean aige. Agus bha Iain glé chùramach gu fanadh e ann an oisean na leabadh fad na h-oidhcheadh airson gu faigheadh e na daoimean.

Agus làrna-mhàireach, chaidh 'ad a choimhead air a' rìgh agus dh'fhoighneachd e dha 'n nighean, "Dé mar a chòrd e riut a-raoir?"

"Cha do chòrd idir. Cha chòrd idir."

Bha leòmhann ann an céids' agus an t-acras oirre is thog 'ad Iain agus thug 'ad sios e agus dh'fhosgail 'ad an céids' is chaith 'ad Iain a-staigh dha 'n a' leòmhann. Agus bha 'm bat' aige is bha 'n tubhailt' aige is bha 'm bosga 's an fhìdheall aige. 'S an uair sin, chaidh an diùc a choimhead air a' rìgh ach an toireadh e dha-san na tests a thug e do dh'Iain.

Agus a' chiad oidhche nuair a chaidh an diùc 's a' nighean dha 'n leabaidh, thuirt a' luch ris an t-seillean, "'S bochd dhuinne 'bhith seo 'nar tàmh agus bean ar maighstear a' cadal còmhla ri duin' eile."

And Iain went in and the king told Iain, "You made my daughter laugh three times. But now, you must sleep with her for three nights before you can marry her. And if she enjoys you, you may marry her and you'll get half of the kingdom."

"Very good," said Iain.

And there was a duke and he had his eye on the girl. And the first night before Iain went to bed, the duke came and told him that he'd give him a bag of gold if he would stay quiet in bed without going near the king's daughter.

"That is very good."

When the king's daughter got up in the morning, the king asked her how she enjoyed the fellow that was with her last night.

"I did not enjoy him at all. He was a stump, sleeping on the other side of the bed."

"Well," said the king, "he has two more nights to go through."

But on the second night, the duke came and he had a bag of silver and he gave the silver to Iain and Iain thought how good the silver would be and the gold. And he went through the same thing the second night.

But the third night, he came - the final night for Iain. And he had a bag of diamonds. And Iain was very careful that he stayed in a corner of the bed all night so that he'd get the diamonds.

And the next day, they went to see the king and he asked the daughter, "How did you enjoy him last night?"

"Not at all. Not at all."

There was a lion in a cage and she was hungry and they picked Iain up and took him down and opened the cage and threw Iain in to the lion. And he had his stick and his tablecloth and his box and fiddle. Then, the duke went to see the king to see if he would give him the same chance to take the tests that Iain had.

And the first night when the duke and the daughter went to bed, the mouse said to the bee, "It's a pity for us to be sitting here resting and our master's woman sleeping with another man."



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

Agus dh'fhalbh 'ad agus rinn 'ad suas gun cuireadh a' luch a h-earball suas ann an sròn an diùc agus gun rachadh an t-seillean am pòca-thòineadh agus gun cuireadh e gath a's an diùc. Agus nuair a thachair sin, bha an diùc a' leum às an leabhaidh is e 'ruith feadh an t-seòmbar agus e 'g éigheachd nach e a' rud a bha 'na thòin ach a' rud a bha 'na shròin.

Chaidh sin air n-aghaidh fad dà oidhche agus mu dheireadh thuit i nach robh gnothach a' dol a bhith aice air an diùc idir, nach robh e ach às a cheann a' leumadaich air feadh an ùrlar fad na h-oidhcheadh ag éigheachd chan e a' rud a bha 'na thòin ach a' rud a bha 'na shròin.

Ach co dhiubh, thuit a' rìgh, "Bheir a-mach agus cuir a's a' chéids' e còmhla ri lain agus an leòmhann."

Agus nuair a chaidh 'ad a-mach, bha lain 'na shuidhe air carcass dha 'n a' leòmhann agus bha a' luch a' seinn na fìdhleadh agus a' seillean a' dannsa. [Chuir am bata crìoch air a' leòmhann.] Agus chaidh 'ad air n-ais agus dh'innse 'ad dha 'n rìgh a' rud a chunnaic 'ad. Uill, cha robh an còrr air a' chùis ach b' fheadar do dh'lain a dhol air n-ais dha 'n chaisteal agus dh'innse e dha 'n rìgh a' rud a rinn an diùc.

Agus, "Glé cheart," ars' a' rìgh, "faodaidh tu cadal còmhla ri a nighean a-nochd agus dé mar a chòrdas i."

Agus chaidh 'ad a chadal. Agus tha t-seansa gun do chòrd e glé mhath rith' an oidhche sin. Agus bha banais mhór éibhinn aighearach aca a mhair latha agus bliadhna. Agus cha robh muc a's an dùthaich nach robh ruith mu 'n cuairt - is sgian is corran 'na dhòrn ach có bheireadh greim aiste.

And they left and they decided that the mouse would put her tail up the duke's nose and the bee would go into his arse pocket and sting the duke. And when this happened, the duke jumped out of bed and he was running all around the room yelling that it wasn't the thing that was in his arse but the thing that was in his nose.

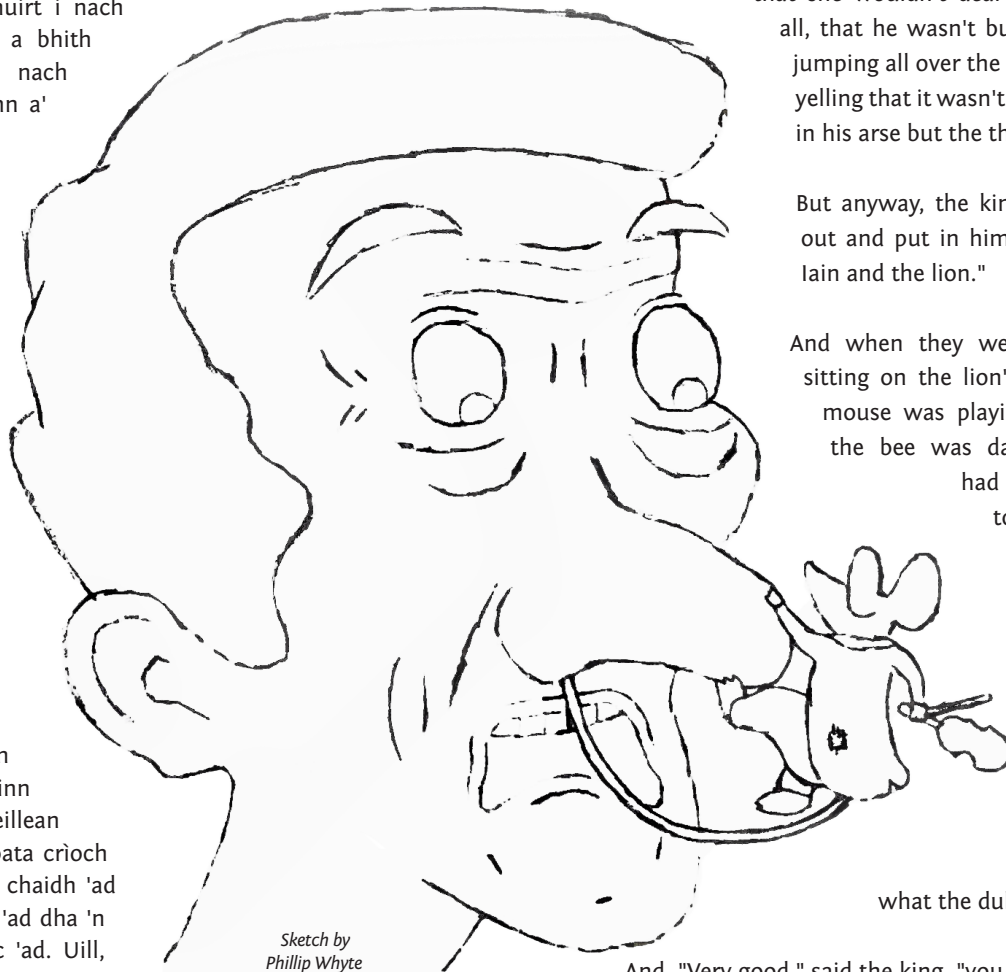
This went on for two nights and finally she said that she wouldn't deal with the duke at all, that he wasn't but out of his mind jumping all over the floor all night long yelling that it wasn't the thing that was in his arse but the thing in his nose.

But anyway, the king said, "Take him out and put in him in the cage with lain and the lion."

And when they went out, lain was sitting on the lion's carcass and the mouse was playing the fiddle and the bee was dancing. [The stick had beaten the lion to death.] And they went back to tell the king what they saw. Well, there was no more to the matter but lain had to go back to the castle and tell the king what the duke had done.

And, "Very good," said the king, "you can sleep with my daughter tonight and see how she enjoys it."

And they went to sleep. And it seems she enjoyed that night very much. And there was a big, happy, festive wedding that lasted a year and a day. And there wasn't a pig in the land that wasn't running around - and a knife and a sickle in hand to see who would catch it. ©



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Transcribed & translated by Shannon MacMullin,
Ban-chleasaiche | Cultural Experiences Coordinator.
To view the video recording of this sgeulachd, visit
<https://youtu.be/rXAYyOeUsw?t=3430>

Mar-Talla.

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

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BHO MHARGAREE GU SYDNEY

Air an t-seachdamh là deug do 'n mhìos ma dheireadh an t-samhraidh, dh'fhalbh Calum 'us mi fhéin air chuairt gu ruige Sydney. Thug sinn leinn each agus carbad agus ghabh sinn sios taobh Abhuinn Mhargaree gu ruige Coinneachadh nan Uisgeachan no na Forks. Thog sinn as deigh sin ar cùrsa suas an Abhainn Rosach, null Lake O'Law agus sios an Abhainn Mheadhonnach gus an d' ràinig sinn Baddeck.

Bha 'n latha anabarrach briagha,—a' ghrian a' soillseachadh gu 'r miann; na pàircean feòir, gràin, agus buntàta le 'n dreach àluinn air gach taobh; gach preas 'us craobh fo bhlàth agus a' deanamh cùbhraidh 'na tlàghaioth shamhraidh 'bha 'g iathadh mun cuairt dhuinn. A bharrachd air a' sin, bha 'n rathad tioram, cruaidh, còmhnaidh; bha 'n t-each a bha 'gar giùlain sunndach, aigeannach, gleusda agus bu ghoidid an ùine gus an robh sinn a' toirt ar cùil ri gleannan Mhargaree 's a' toirt beannan àrda siorrachd Victoria ma 'r fradharc.

Bha sinn a' seanachas a' chuid bu mhó dhe 'n ùine mu àilleachd 'us maise na dùthcha mu 'n cuairt,—mu na beannan móra 'tha 'g éiridh an sud 's an seo air an còmhach le coille ioma dhathach a dh'ionnsaidh a' bhinnein a 's àirde; mu na sruthanan fonnmhór 'tha ruith tro na glinn agus a' brùchdadh gu suigearach, brisg-geal ma na rathaidean agus mu na h-eòin bheaga, bhòidheach a bha seinn gu ceòlmhor, sòlasach am bàrraibh nan craobh.

Thachair móran de Gheancaich agus de dhaoine-uaisl' eile oirnn a bha 'g iasgach bradain 'an aibhnichean Mhargaree aig an àm seo. Bha na h-uisgeachan glé ìosal le meud an turaidh, dh'fhàg sin am bradan gann agus mar seo cha robh turus nan coigreach cho taitneach na idir cho saibhir 's a dh'fhaodadh e bhith nam biodh cùisean cho freagarrach 's is minig a bha iad.

An deigh dhuinn Margaree fhàgail, thàinig sinn a-staigh air Gleann Lake O' Law. Ged nach robh mise riamh anns an t-seann dùthaich, 's i mo bharail gu bheil an gleann seo glé choltach ri pàirt de na Garbh-chrìochan. Tha e mu chuairt de trì mìle air fad ach chan eil ach beagan cheudan slat far am mó a leud. Tha trì lochan bòidheach as deigh a chéil' ann, agus tha na beannan ag éiridh gu dìreach na ceudan tròigh air àirde 's a' tilgeadh an cuma 's an dreach cho nàdurra air an uisge chiùin aig am bonn.

"Gur saoil an t-sùil gur ann 's a' ghrund
Tha dealbh gach ioghnadh àghmhor,
Am bun o cionn nan luibh 's nan crann
'S na bheil 's a' ghleann 'gan àrach."

FROM MARGAREE TO SYDNEY

On July 17th, Calum and I left on a trip to Sydney. We took a horse and wagon with us and we went down beside the Margaree River as far as the Forks. Then we went along the "Ross River" (Northeast Margaree?), over to Lake O' Law, and down Middle River until we reached Baddeck.

It was an exceptionally beautiful day—the sun shining to our satisfaction; the hayfields, fields of grain, and potatoes with their handsome figures on each side; every bush and tree in bloom sweetly scenting the gentle, summer breeze that blew around us. Beyond that, the road was hard, dry and flat; the horse was bearing us happily, spirited, neatly and it wasn't long before our backs were to the glens of Margaree and we were taking the high mountains of Victoria County into our sights.

We were conversing much of the time about the beauty of the countryside—of the big mountains rising here and there covered with multicoloured woods to the highest mountain peak; about the babbling brooks that run through the glens and pour cheerfully with a white liveliness around the roads and the lovely little birds that were singing melodiously illuminating the tree tops.

We met many Yankees and other gentlemen who were fishing salmon in the Margaree rivers at this time. The waters were very low due to the long dry spell, and that left few salmon and so the strangers' visit wasn't as pleasant or fruitful as it could have been if conditions were as favourable as they often were.

After we left Margaree, we came into the Lake O' Law Valley. Although I was never in the old country, it's my opinion that this valley is very much like parts of The Rough Bounds. It's about three miles in length but only a few hundred yards at the most in breadth. There are three beautiful lakes, one after the other, and the mountains rise directly upwards hundreds of feet reflecting their natural shape and appearance on the calm waters at their feet.

"The eye supposes that the image
of each magnificent wonder is below,
With the plants and trees turned upside down,
Along with everything else in the glen that nourishes them."



In this issue, the first half of the letter Bho Mhargaree gu Sydney is printed. See our next issue for the conclusion. This letter first appeared in Mac-Talla Vol II No 27, dated January 6, 1894, and was submitted by a "Dòmhnall". It can't be said with certainty who he was, but didn't the bard Dòmhnall MacPhàrlain | Donald MacFarlane come to our mind, and the other bard, Calum Eòghain | Malcolm Gillis. Perhaps it's them that took this trip together. Who knows? Mac-Talla, published in Sydney, Nova Scotia, was the longest running Gaelic weekly paper, ending as a bi-weekly (1892-1904). Eòin Aonghais Chalum | Jonathan G. MacKinnon, editor, was a life-long promoter of Gaelic and was involved in other publications including Gaelic translations of English literature.

'Nuair a chuir sinn an gleann seo às ar deigh, theann na beannan bho chéile agus thàinig sruth bòidheach na h-Abhuinn Mheadhonnach 'nar sealladh. Bha na tuathanaich a' toiseachadh air spealadh an fheòir; bha iad a' gearain gun robh e glé aotrom le tiormaid na side, ach bha coltas glé mhath air gach bàrr eile. Tha àiteachan briagha aig na tuathanaich an cois na h-aibhne seo, agus tha e coltach gu bheil a' mhór chuid dhiubh gu math air an càradh. Is Gàidheil gu beag an sluagh; tha iad fialaidh, caoimhneil; agus ma bhios deireas air coigreach 'na measg, gu dearbh 's ann aige fhéin a bhios a' chuire.

Dh'irich sinn Beinn t-Sealgair tràth 's an fheasgar. Tha móran de rathad na beinne seo garbh, clachach, ach tha roinn de thalamh math ann agus tha e coltach gu bheil na daoine 'tha tàmh ann ro-thoilicht' às an crannchur. Ràinig sinn Baddeck mu dh'orch na h-oidhche. Chuir an dotair agus an gobhain, dithis Dhòmhnallach gasda 'tha fuireach anns a' bhaile, fàilt' 'us furan oirnn. Eadar iad fhéin 's a' Frisealach is MacIlleathain bha 'n "tìm dol seachad air sgiathan solais," agus thàinig meadhon oidhche uair gu leth na bu luaithe na bha dùil againn. 'S e baile beag a th' ann am Baddeck ach tha e fìor bhòidheach. Tha e air a shuidheachadh air sliabh 'tha 'g éiridh gu socrach bho thaobh meur de dh'uisge a Bhras d'Òir.

Tha 'n Ceann Dearg a' dìreadh suas glé àrd às an uisge air an darra taobh agus tha gnùis ghruamach Washabuck a' tighinn an uachdar ma choinneamh air an taobh eile. Tha beannan móra 'na seasamh mar fhreiceadain ann an astar air a chùl-thaobh agus a' sealltainn sìos mar gum b' eadh le tlachd agus cùram air gach nì 'th' aig am bonn. Is ro thoil le luchd-cuairte mìos no dhà 'chur seachad anns a' bhaile seo an àm an t-samhraidh, agus tha taighean-bòrdaidh cho math 's a th' ann an Nova Scotia ri 'm faighinn ann. *Ri leantainn.*

When we put that glen behind us, the mountains parted ways and the beautiful stream of Middle River arrived in our view. The farmers were beginning to cut the hay and were complaining that it was very light on account of the dry weather, but the other crops looked very good. The farmers have beautiful areas alongside the river and it appears that most of them are well situated. The small number of people there are Gaels; they are kind and thoughtful and if there a stranger in want, indeed, it's himself that is at fault.

We climbed Hunter's Mountain early in the afternoon. Much of this mountain road is rough and rocky, but there is some good land there and it appears that the people who live there are pleased with their lot. We arrived in Baddeck around nightfall. The doctor and the blacksmith, two fine MacDonalds who live in the town, gave us a warm welcome. Between themselves and the Fraser and the MacLean, the time passed in a flash and midnight came an hour and a half earlier than we expected. Baddeck is a small town, but it is truly lovely. It is situated on a hillside that rises leisurely from the side of a branch of the Bras d'Or.

Red Head (Beinn Bhreagh) rises up very high out of the water on one side and the gloomy face of Washabuck coming up opposite it on the other side. Behind, in the distance, the great mountains are standing guard and looking down as though with delight and care for each thing at their foot. Travellers would like to spend a month or two in this town during the summertime, and the boarding houses are as good as any to be found in Nova Scotia. *To be continued.* ©

*Edited & translated by Shannon MacMullin,
Ban-chleasaiche | Cultural Experiences Coordinator.*



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 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

A PART of THE NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM

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

partnership with the Nova Scotia Museum (Dept. of Communities, Culture, Tourism & 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.

MÓRAN TAING DHUIBH UILE! | MANY THANKS EVERYONE!

These are exciting times on the Baile nan Gàidheal hill as we put the finishing touches on the most significant site development program in our history. Over the past three years, we have been busy transforming our site so that we can better achieve our mission: including enhancing the visitor experience, growing programming and community outreach, providing year round programs and offerings, and developing new revenue streams to support the operation. Our \$6.8 million program has resulted in the construction of new structures including our new centre-piece Welcome/Cultural Centre, Cash's shingle mill, on-site washrooms, and maintenance workshop; and renovations of two other

buildings including turning the little barn into a programming space, and our old visitor centre into a curatorial centre for artifact storage and costuming. We also have new permanent exhibits in the new Welcome Centre to provide pre- and post-tour interpretation for visitors, an outdoor interpretive kiosk on the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere, and we are working towards enhanced interpretation of Mi'kmaw stories onsite. Here are some pictures of the many changes that have taken place since the fall of 2019. Baile nan Gàidheal is deeply appreciative to everyone who supported our project and enabled it to come to fruition. Most photos by Maxime Brouillet. ©





Dèante le làimh | Handmade

CÒTA-DRÒGAID | A HOMESPUN JACKET

The small jacket was found in the wall of a derelict Cape Breton farmhouse my family was dismantling in the early 1970s. It was a dressy woman's jacket—worn, tattered, and chewed by mice over the years, yet it was still more or less intact. Even though I had a background in weaving, it wasn't until years later that I realized the jacket tells a story. It's a story that neatly encompasses all the processes of handweaving that took place in the homes of nineteenth century Cape Breton Gaels, from the spinning of wool to the weaving and sewing of their own clothing.

The jacket is 'homespun', that is, handwoven with handspun wool. The style and construction indicates that it was made by someone with tailoring skills (but probably not a professional tailor), who was trying to follow the fashion of the time. It's machine stitched, with some hand sewing. The outer layer is made from a plain cotton and indigo-dyed wool cloth, while the lining is a similar cloth, made of cotton and natural brown wool. The jacket was obviously well-worn, as the underarms and sleeves had begun to wear out and were covered with large patches and mends. This would indicate that it had been too valuable to be discarded and that much care had been taken to extend its life.

The availability of a loom, of course, was a necessity for making homespun, and looms were a common sight in the Gaels' homes in the rural areas. Many families had come to Cape Breton from the western Highlands and Islands of Scotland in the early nineteenth century. These isolated areas had not been greatly affected yet by the industrial revolution, with its mechanized cloth production. They arrived with their spinning and weaving skills intact. And a number of the women had been weavers in their own communities, supplying the cloth needed for their families and neighbors.

There are only a few accounts of looms having been brought with the new settlers. Most would be built from local timber as time and space in the new home permitted. The production of the raw materials for weaving

— wool, and flax for linen — was also a necessity. The looms that were built were all similar in design to the looms they had left behind. They were large four-poster frames of wood, with overhanging beaters, front and back roller 'beams', and four foot treadles attached to four pattern 'harnesses'. These looms would produce cloth for the Gaels' textile needs even into the early twentieth century.

The house where the jacket was found was near Ashfield, a small community, which, in turn, was near a long-abandoned farming community on the Barrens Road that used to run between Orangedale and River Denys. The remains of farms — empty houses and outbuildings, open to the weather — lay along this barely-passable road that we had to travel to get to the Ashfield house. One day we noticed that, not far from one of the houses, a beam from a loom had been used in the construction of an outbuilding. It had been a chicken house and as we looked closer, we saw that another loom part, a small cloth beam, had been used as a perch for the hens. Loom pieces were evident in other buildings on the other farms as well—sometimes piled in an attic, sometimes used in building repairs, or outbuilding construction. In one case, a sturdy warp beam in the cellar, turned upright, was holding up a section of the floor above.

In fact, in each of the several abandoned homes there was evidence of a loom having been a part of the household. This would not be surprising, as it was sometimes said from contemporary accounts that in rural Cape Breton there was a loom in every home. At any rate, for many women in the Gaelic communities, weaving was just another domestic chore necessary to fill their textile needs and to keep their families clothed.

It is entirely probable, then, that the jacket had been woven in the Ashfield house where it was found. It was made from a type of cloth known in Gaelic as drògaid | drugget. (Drugget has several definitions, but it's usually used to mean a cloth that is woven with two different types of materials.) In many areas of

Cape Breton, drògaid referred to a cloth made with linen or cotton warp (vertical) threads and very finely spun wool weft (horizontal) threads. This resulted in a strong, warm cloth that drapes well. It was primarily woven to make a good quality fabric that was used for clothing, such as dresses, skirts, petticoats, men's shirts, light jackets, etc.

Sheep, of course, were usually a part of every farm, as their wool was an indispensable part of cloth-making in the home. It had to be washed, picked, and carded before it was spun. As the women in each household had learned to spin at an early age, most of them were capable of producing high-quality thread (often using the 'long draw' technique from the 'old country') on their Saxony-type treadle wheels. By the late nineteenth century, carding mills were common in Cape Breton, thus reducing the need for the tedious chore of hand carding the wool to be spun.

By the 1850s, imported cotton was replacing the need for the home-grown linen threads in home weaving. Purchased, or bartered, from local merchants, the fine single-ply thread was sold in skeined bundles, usually by weight, as the store ledgers show. Because it was used for the warp threads which were stretched under pressure on the loom, it would have been strengthened by 'sizing' it in some sort of starch, usually potato water, a readily-available ingredient in the homes.

Once enough wool was spun and the cotton sized, the preparations for weaving were finally begun. This involved winding the cotton warp threads on a large wooden-pegged 'warping frame' to measure each thread. Then the 'dressing' of the loom began. This meant that each cotton thread would need to be individually pulled through the string pattern heddles. Often there was one woman in a household who did most of the weaving, while the other women and girls worked on the wool preparation and spinning.

Drògaid was not normally fulled, or 'waulked', at a home milling frolic like the blankets or the very thick all-wool clò mór | big cloth. It was,



The Ashfield homespun jacket

however, sometimes sent off to a local mill, like Glendyer, for the ‘finishing’ (softening) of the cloth.

While the wool weft threads of the jacket’s lining material are a natural brown colour, the wool threads of the outer layer are a natural white that has been dyed to a dark navy blue. This colour is indicative of the indigo-dyed wool used so often in homespun cloth of the area. The imported indigo was sold by the ounce in local stores. Numerous accounts from women growing up on nineteenth-century Cape Breton farms include memories of the odiferous urine collection barrel behind the barn which was emptied into the outdoor indigo dye pot in the summer. The aged urine was needed to make the small bags of crushed indigo alkaline. This would enable it

to produce a blue dye strong enough to colour the large number of handspun skeins of wool needed for weaving a length of cloth. It’s very likely that the wool for the jacket was dyed on the Ashfield farm.

The fact that the jacket was sewn by machine, and the use of imported cotton threads in the homespun cloth, would date it to at least the second half of the nineteenth century, if not the early twentieth century. Sewing machines, powered by a foot treadle, were more common in rural areas by the late nineteenth century. The style of the jacket indicates an awareness of the fashion trends. There is a stylish shape to it: a tapering at the sides, with a flare at the waist, and epaulets at the shoulders. The velveteen collar, made from purchased cloth, could have either been

original to the jacket, or a later add-on fashion statement. There was often an attempt to make homespun clothing fashionable, as the latest manufactured styles became more prevalent in the towns.

That the jacket was a valuable item of clothing is shown by the effort to keep it functioning and wearable. There are patches at the elbows and under both arms. They are made of the same original indigo cloth, indicating that it was mended in the same home where it had been woven. The stitching is a more crude hand basting—not machine sewn. Numerous patches and a possible re-working of the collar attests to the difficulty of obtaining an easy replacement. This was a common practice among the Cape Breton Gaels with anything handwoven. Blankets that were worn in the middle were cut along the center seam and flipped over to sew the less-worn edges together where the worn spot had been. Mens’ homespun shirts had their collars or cuffs turned and resewn back on with the good side out. Articles of clothing, blankets, towels, sheets – all handwoven – were patched, then patched again, sometimes with the patches themselves being patched.

It’s often difficult to precisely date handwoven clothing. The materials, techniques of construction, and sometimes even the dyes, stayed largely the same over many years, from the early nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. The many processes involved in cloth production – the wool preparation, the carding, spinning, weaving, dyeing, and sewing skills – were passed down from generation to generation, and are all present in the Ashfield jacket. Handweaving in Cape Breton began to fade in the early twentieth century, but tended to endure in the rural Gaelic communities a while longer. However, the appearance of the loom pieces on the Barrens Road shows that by the mid-twentieth century many households had found other uses for their looms. ©

*Vicki Quimby,
Researcher, textile consultant, animator.*

Clach air a Càrn | Dedication

CEITIDH MAGAIDH NI'N AONGHAIS AILEIN | KATIE MAGGIE MACLEOD

'S e ònair mhór a th' ann dhomhsa beagan do dh'fhaclan a dh'ràdh mu dheidhinn Ceitidh Magaidh NicLeòid, mo charaid agus mo nàbaidh. Tha mi air a bhith eòlach oirre fad mo bheatha. Bha i làidir ach bha i caomhneil. Bha gaol aice air a h-uile beathach - cat, cù, agus each. Nuair a bha mo dhuine, Alasdair, a' dol dha 'n sgoil, bhiodh i 'ga thogail anns a' *bhuggy* agus bhiodh 'ad a bruidhinn mu dheidhinn na h-eich fad na h-ùine.

Chunnaic i iomadh atharrachadh feadh a beatha ach chum i greim air na rudan a bha cudthromach oirre - a creideamh, a cànan, a dualchas. Bha i cuideachail dha 'n teaghlach aice agus dha na càirdean aice. Bha i làn sgeulachdan agus òrain Ghàidhlig agus bha i deònach a' pàirteachadh an eòlas aice do cuideigin eile.

Tha sinn brònach a call ach tha sinn toilichte gu robh sinn còmhla rithe cho fada 's a bha sinn. Tha i 'dol dhachaidh agus théid sinn uile sios an rathad sin. Gus an àm sin, mar a bhios Ceitidh Magaidh ag ràdh, "Bithidh sinn 'gad fhaicinn."

Fois sìorruidh dha h-anam.

It's my great honour to say a few words about Katie Maggie MacLeod, my friend and my neighbour. I've known her my whole life. She was strong but kind. She loved every animal - cat, dog, and horse. When my husband, Alistair, was going to school, she would pick him up in the buggy and they would always be talking about the horses.

She saw many changes throughout her life but she kept a hold on the things that were important to her - her faith, her language, her culture. She was helpful to her family and friends. She was full of stories and Gàidhlig songs and she was always willing to share her knowledge with others.

We are sad to lose her but we are happy we were with her as long as we were. She is going home and we'll all go down that road. Until then, as Katie Maggie would say, "We'll be seeing you."

Anita MacLeod



Photo by Ryan MacDonald

AN DÀ BHOTUL FÌON TWO BOTTLES OF WINE

Eóghann Dòmhnail: shin am fear a chuir an dà bhotul fhìon fo steap an t-sagairt. Bha e thall - bha e 's an *town* 's fhuair e dà bhotul fìon. Cha robh iad an uair sin ach *fifty cents* 'son *quart*. 'S chuimhnich e gur e feasgar Oidhche Nollaig a bh' ann 's gum bu chòir dha tadhal am Broad Cove agus éisdeachd a dheanadh. Chuir e an dà *qhluart* a-staigh fo 'n steap 's chaidh e fhéin a-staigh 's rinn e éisdeachd. Chaidh e a-mach 's chual' a' sagart e a' damnadh 's a' cursadh a-muigh. Chaidh e a-mach 's thuirt e, "Eairdsidh, Eairdsidh [Eóghainn, Eóghainn], dé a Dhia tha ceàrr ort an deaghaidh éisdeachd a dheanadh a' damnadh 's a' cursadh a-muigh?"

"Uill," thuirt e, "nuair thàna mise seo, bha dà *qhluart* do dh'fhìon agam agus chuir mi a-staigh fo 'n steap iad. Agus nuair a thill mi a-mach cha robh ann ach aon fhear. Ach tha seansa gur e Pròstantach a bh' ann: cha tug e leis ach an aon fhear. Ma 's e Catalig a bh' ann, bheireadh e leis an dithist."

Hugh Donald: That's the fella who put the two wine bottles under the priest's step. He was over - he was in town and he got two bottles of wine. They were only fifty cents a quart. And he remembered that it was Christmas Eve and that he should visit Broad Cove and make his confession. He put the two bottles of wine under the step and he went in and made his confession. He went out and the priest heard him cursing and swearing outside. He went out and said, "Archie, Archie [Hugh, Hugh], what is the name of God is wrong with you cursing and swearing outside after making your confession?"

"Well," he said, "when I came here, I had two bottles of wine and I put them under the step. And when I came back out there was only one. But it was probably a Protestant: he only took one bottle. If it had been a Catholic, he would have taken them both." ©

As told by Katie Maggie (née MacDonald) MacLeod.
Recorded and transcribed by Dr. John Shaw, Honorary
Fellow, School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh.
Translated by Shannon MacMullin, Ban-chleasaiche |
Cultural Experiences Coordinator.

Seinn fo Sgàil nan Geugan Uaine | Songs from the Greenwood

'S E CUIDHLE MO DHUNACH I | IT'S THE WHEEL OF MY MISFORTUNE

I first heard verses of this song from Annag ni'n Iain Alasdair 'ic Aonghais Ailein | Anna (MacDonald) MacKinnon of Rubh' an t-Sealaidh | Sight Point. I was very curious about it and went looking for more information.

Fragments are recorded on Sruth nan Gàidheal, from Tena MacNeil of Beinn Eoin ("Na Brògan a bh' aig Alasdair") and Joe Lawrence MacDonald of Ironville ("S e Cuibhle na Dunaich"), where a Sam Cameron is credited as the composer.

On further research, it seems this song was made by a Somhairle Peutan | Samuel Beaton. It was published in Mac-Talla, Vol. 7. No. 41 (May 12, 1899), and later in Teachdaire nan Gàidheal, Vol. 1 No. 12 (December 1925). The introduction to the song in Mac-Talla states that Samuel went "a number of years ago" from Broad Cove to Victoria Mines at Low Point for work. In the mines, he got on "a beast of a pump," though it was such difficult work he only stayed at it for three weeks, during which time he made this song. Apparently the "Alasdair" in the song is his brother.

Coal mining began in the Victoria Mines area in 1865, and the original mine closed in 1878. The "New" Victoria mine was opened in 1883, closed in 1897, and reopened in 1914 as Dominion No. 17 Colliery.

A letter from "Tom Onarach | Honest Tom" of Thorburn, Pictou County, published in Mac-Talla two weeks previous to the song's publication (Vol. 7. No. 39), reveals key information about the bàrd as he sends two of Samuel's songs in to the paper. Some digging in census records, The History of Inverness County, and the Nova Scotia Archives Vital Statistics records helped fill in the gaps.

Samuel was born in Skye around 1834, and immigrated to the Whycocomagh/Skye Glen

area of Cape Breton around 1844 with his parents Jonathan and Margaret Beaton. Samuel first married Catherine Bain from Big Bras d'Or, c. 1859. She died in 1867 at Sydney Mines. In 1869, while living in Low Point, Samuel married Anne MacLeod, from somewhere in Margaree.

The 1881 census lists the family of Samuel, a miner, and Anne Beaton living in Broad Cove Marsh. Birth records for one of their children indicate they were living in the area around 1872. The 1891 census shows they had moved to MacLellan's Mountain, Pictou County, and the returns for 1901 and 1911 list them living in Thorburn. Anne died in 1912, and Samuel in 1913.

Given the references in the song to Samuel's family living in Broad Cove while he went to work in the mines, it is likely the song was composed at some point in the 1870s or 1880s.

Both Tom's letter and the History of Inverness County indicate that Samuel composed a number of songs, though only this one and a local version of "A' Bhriogais Uallach" about a milling frolic in Cape Mabou made it into Mac-Talla.

When learning and researching Gaelic songs, it often strikes me what a wonderful window they are into the lives of Gaels past. This song and Samuel's story demonstrates how mobile many Gaels were in the 19th century in Nova Scotia, how migration from rural to urban areas could happen multiple times in one family, and just how difficult and dangerous mine work was - and how beautifully this can all be recorded and remembered through song. It is always a privilege to be in the company of our Gaelic tradition bearers, and I am grateful to Anna for introducing me to this song, giving me a glimpse into her world, and Somhairle's. ©

Séist:

'S e cuidhle mo dhunach i,
'Ga tionndadh 's nach urrainn mi,
Tha pìob agus *pump* aisde,
'Gam chumail gun mo bhàthadh.

Di-Luain 'n uair rinn mi tòiseachadh,
'S e Éirionnach 'bha còmhla rium;
Cha tuiginn guth dhe chòmhradh,
Cha do chleachd mi 'sheòrsa càinain.

Di-Luain gur mi bha togarrach,
'N uair thòisich mi ri obair ann;
Gum faca mi i bogadaich,
Mar obair muileann sàbhaidh.

Ged fhuair mi fhéin an-asgaidh iad,
Na brògan a bh' aig Alasdair;
Cha fhaiceadh tu 's am factoraidh,
Gach fasan bh' air na sàilean.

Gur robh 'n té dheas is cuaig oirre,
An té cheàrr chan i bu shuaraiche;
An car a chuir i 'nam chruachan,
Bidh mi truadh gu là mo bhàis leis.

Thuirt mi ann an litir,
Ris a' bhean gun d' thug iad *shiftwork*
dhomh,
Gum biodh a cridhe briste,
Nam biodh fios aice air mo chàradh.

Ged a bha mi pianail,
Fad na seachduinn 'ga mo riasladh aca;
Gur h-e 'n rud a liath mi,
Cur 'ga iarraidh air an t-Sàbaid.

'S mór a ghabh mi dh'ìoghnadh,
'Nuair chunna mi na daoine bh' ann;
Cha b' ionnann iad 's na laoich,
A bh' anns an tìr a rinn mi fhàgail.

'S ioma latha brònach,
Bha mise 'n so gun chompanach;
A' cuimhneachadh mo theaghlach,
'Am Broad Cove a rinn mi 'm fàgail.

Gur h-e Broad Cove nan òganach,—
Bu mhath iad 'an seo còmhla rium;—
Ma théid mi dha 'n taigh òsda,
'S mi gun òl ann 'ur deoch slàinte.



*Chorus:
It is the wheel of my
misfortune, I can't turn it,
There is a pipe and a
pump coming out of it,
Keeping me from drowning.*

*On Monday when I started,
It was an Irishman who was with me;
I couldn't understand a word of his speech,
I wasn't accustomed to his kind of language.*

*On Monday it was me who was keen,
When I started working there;
I saw it bobbing,
Like the work of a sawmill.*

*Though I got them for free,
The shoes Alasdair had;
You wouldn't see in the factory,
Every fashion that was on the heels.*

*The right one had an awkward bend,
The left one wasn't any more insignificant;
The twist it put in my hip,
I'll be miserable until the day of my death with it.*

*I said in a letter,
To my wife that they gave me shiftwork,
Her heart would be broken,
If she knew of my condition.*

*Even though I was painful,
All week being torn up by them;
The thing that greyed me,
Was sending for him on the Sabbath.*

*I was very surprised,
When I saw the people who were there;
They were not the same as the heroes,
Who were in the land I left.*

*It's many a sad day,
I was here without a companion;
Remembering my family,
That I left In Broad Cove .*

*It's Broad Cove of the youth,—
I would like them here with me:—
If I go to the hotel,
It's me who will drink to their health there.*

*Hannah Krebs,
Ban-chleasaiche | Cultural Animator.*



Fo na Cabair | Under the Rafters

LEABHAR-LANN & TASG-LANNAN | LIBRARY & ARCHIVES

It is appropriate that this section is titled Fo na Cabair, for under those rafters and deep in the eaves are found many treasures. Boxes of dusty books and trunks with family papers and photos are the beginnings of a library and archives. Baile nan Gàidheal has always valued these records, the knowledge gained from them, and even 35 years ago, had the beginnings of a good library. Over the years, we have purchased Gaelic materials and books and gathered the records documenting the life of Highland Village. Supporters of the Village have donated precious music collections, audio and video files, genealogy files, store records, and lots more books. Each item is valued and adds to our story as Gaels. In 2022, we accepted the Victoria County history collection from their Archives. Needless to say, we outgrew the 16 by 16 ft office in the Visitor Centre.

Now, thanks to the Next Chapter Campaign, we have An Taigh Fàilteachais | The Welcome House Cultural Centre which includes a dedicated, year-round library and archival space. The library is home to about 2,200

books focusing on Gaels in Nova Scotia, Canada, and Scotland. Gaelic journals, material on crafts, agriculture, genealogy, museology, and histories of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia line the shelves. Research space will also be available for visitors and researchers. We will work to have listening stations so our audio collection will be accessible. The Victoria County Archives material will be organized and available for research.

In the secure archives space, we store original documents and ledgers donated to us, along with photos, sound and video recordings, and other delicate material. This space will house the original materials from Victoria County. We continue to receive donations to our archival collection because of public generosity and their recognition of the value of the information that would be lost. We continue to be grateful to these caring donors.

Genealogy and family history is part of the Gaelic way of life and the Roots Cape

Breton research program (which brought me to Highland Village) was the vision of Jim St.Clair. With Jim as my major supporter, teacher, mentor, and knowledge keeper, I learned research skills, where to look for information, the value of listening, and what questions to ask people who were looking for ancestors. He added books to our early collection, recommended new ones to purchase, and instilled in me the value of the dusty treasures under the rafters. The creation of a dedicated library and archival space was always a goal for Jim St.Clair and it is painful that we lost him before he could see it in person. A humble person, Jim did not like being praised for his gifts, but this new space needed an identity. To honour Jim's name and his dedication to history and genealogy, the space is called the "Seanchas Centre in Memory of Jim St.Clair". We invite you to visit the Seanchas Centre and have a look at the library, sign the guest book, and, if you have one, share a Jim story. ©

*Pauline MacLean,
Collections Manager & Genealogist.*

An Gàidheal Portmhor | Scotch Music

JANET CAMERON'S STRATHSPEY



It was with great sadness that we learned Dùghall mac Mairead ni'n Dùghaill 'ic Màiri ni'n 'Illeasbuig Òig | Dougie MacPhee had passed on December 21, 2022. He was one of the greats in the Cape Breton music tradition, and will be sorely missed by many.

Dougie was born in 1937 in New Waterford, and started to play piano when he was 12. His mother Margaret MacPhee was also an excellent pianist, and his grandfather Dougald MacIntyre was a fiddler. Music was a constant in the MacPhee home, whether it was Margaret or Dougie playing, or one of the many visitors who stopped in to share tunes and friendship over the years.

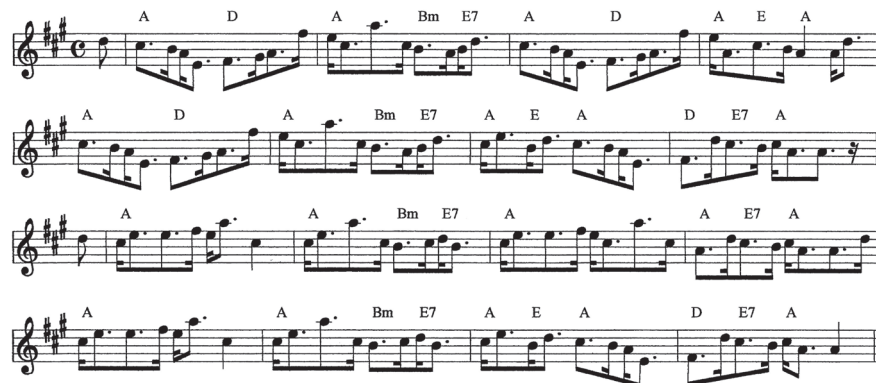
Dougie was one of the foremost Cape Breton style piano accompanists, and a talented solo player. A pioneer of sorts in playing fiddle music solo on the piano, he released six solo albums and has recorded on over 50 others. He's played at just about every concert, céilidh, and dance in Cape Breton over the years, and traveled across Canada and internationally to perform. Dougie often graced the Highland Village stage, accompanying so many fiddlers and dancers throughout the years. He also spoke on several occasions at the Village for our lecture series.

Dougie's knowledge and understanding of Scotch music was vast. He had a story to go with every tune and held the history of this

Strathspey

Janet Cameron's Strathspey

Doug MacPhee



Janet Cameron's Strathspey by Doug MacPhee, as published in "Bits & Pieces: A Collection of Original Music by Pat Chafe with special selections by Doug and Margaret MacPhee".

musical island near to his heart. His work on archival initiatives at the Beaton Institute was invaluable. Dougie was recognized with the Order of Canada, both for his role as one of the foremost tradition bearers in Cape Breton music, and as a music historian.

His musical prowess didn't stop there. Dougie was also an excellent composer and made a good number of tunes over the years. We decided to include a dandy strathspey here that he made for his good friend and fellow pianist, Janet Cameron of Boisdale.

Though he lived away at different times as a young man, his heart was always in Cape Breton, and the music kept him going. In an interview with Mark Wilson, Dougie recounts "I was never really happy away from Cape Breton. Toronto and Boston treated me okay, I guess, for I always had

work and good friends and plenty of music - if it wasn't for the music, I wouldn't have survived - but my heart was always back home...One day I phoned her, "Mother, I'm coming home to die. It might take fifty more years, but I'm coming back." And I've never regretted that - the happiest time of my life was coming back."

Well, that was 1968. Here we are, more than 50 years later now, where it's hard to think of the Cape Breton piano tradition without bringing Dougie to mind, and Dougie not being in Cape Breton. In addition to being one of the great piano players of his generation, he was a kind, generous friend to many, many people near and far. We are so grateful to have known him. Cuiridh sinn clach air a chàrn. ©

*Hannah Krebs,
Ban-chleasaiche | Cultural Animator.*



Mar Chuimhneachain | Dedications

FATHER FRANCIS CAMERON & JEAN (MACKENZIE) MACNEIL



Sine ni'n Iain Steabhain Theàrlaich Alasdair an t-Saoir

It is with sadness we note the passing of Jean 'Columba' MacNeil. Jean was born in Washabuck and was the daughter of the late John Stephen and Mary Anne MacKenzie. Hailing from the multi-talented MacKenzies of Washabuck Bridge, Jean grew up in a musical family filled with fiddle tunes and dancing.

For many years, Jean contributed to our annual Highland Village Day concerts, dancing or accompanying one of the many fiddlers on stage. As a talented musician and dancer herself, Jean and her husband, Columba, passed on their Gaelic culture and traditions to their children who would later form the world-renowned band, The Barra MacNeils.

In 2010, Jean and Columba MacNeil received the Award of Merit for their outstanding contributions to Baile nan Gàidheal and to Scottish Gaelic culture in Nova Scotia.

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

Fransaidh mac Fhionnlaigh 'ic Dhòmhnaill Mhóir 'ic Aonghais Dhuinn

We were sorry to hear of the passing of a long-time friend of the Highland Village, Fr. Francis Cameron. Fr. Francis was proud of his Gaelic roots, growing up first in Mabou with his family before they settled in Boisdale.

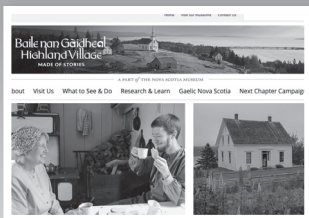
Always up for a tune and a laugh or two, Fr. Francis could often be found playing with the Boisdale Trio, or with the Cape Breton Fiddlers' Association. When he was home, he often spent time on the Highland Village Day stage. With his sister Janet, he was a keen student of the Gaelic language.

He was a great friend of the Village, our community, and our culture.

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



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Fois gu Sìorraidh | Dedication

CATRÌONA NI'N IAIN ÌOMHAIR MHÌCHEIL 'AN SHAOIR
CATHERINE (MACNEIL/MACDOUGALL) MACNEIL



It's been about twenty years since I got to know Catherine MacNeil | Catriona ni'n Iain Ìomhair Mhicheil 'an Shaoir. I first went to see her at the suggestion of Angie Farrell and Murdock MacNeil, tradition bearers who spoke of her fluency in Gaelic. Like other

language learners, I quickly came to value her patience, support, and friendship—in addition to her knowledge of Gaelic. She always seemed ready to help and was a constant presence at language and cultural events in the area, particularly Féis an Eilein.

During her youth in Christmas Island, nearly everyone in the community spoke Gaelic. When folklorist John Lorne Campbell visited the area in 1932, the parish priest reported that all his parishioners had the language. Partly for that reason, Catherine came to know the community through Gaelic. Her everyday speech was peppered with names of people and places in Gaelic. She also became a stalwart supporter of the language—one she was glad to share with the next generation in her family.

Several years ago, I asked her to draw me a map of what the community looked like when she was young. The result was unexpected and unique—a map that featured no roads or buildings, beaches, or brooks. Instead, she wrote down a series of names extending out from a line representing the lake, describing each one in Gaelic. I was initially struck by the way her map replicated the invisible grid pattern of property lines, but maybe I missed the real point. In this map, the most important elements were residents, their names firmly attached to the places they once called home. The landmarks that stood out in her memory were people. No doubt those of us who looked up to her as a mentor and tradition-bearer will remember Catherine that way too. ©

Shamus Y. MacDonald, PhD.

West Alan Carpenter
ma neil

Joe Blacksmith
ma neil

Neil MacKinnon

Rod Mac
Kinnon

Jim
Cooper
ma neil

Maer Neil

Kenny T
MacKinnon

Chit
MacKinnon

Maer Neil
Hector

Steven
MacNeil

Michael
Taylor

Michael
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MacNeil

John MacKinnon

MacDougal
John

John MacKinnon

Alan Douglas

ABR. MacNeil

Sanfmas
MacDougal

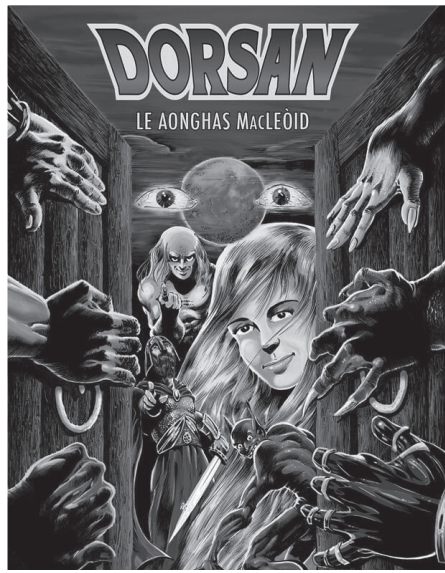
MacDougal

John MacKinnon

John MacKinnon

LAKE.

Catherine Mac Neil

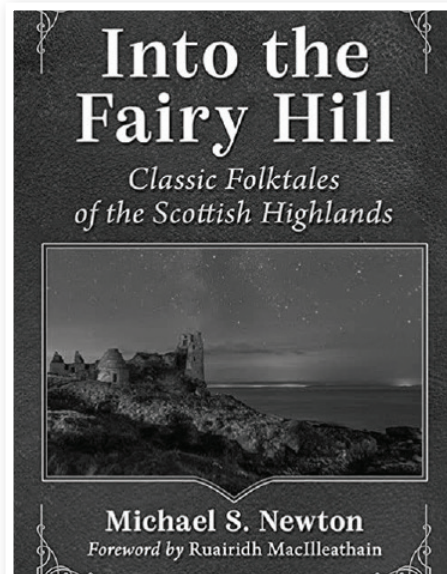


A' chiad oidhche às déidh dhomh Dorsan a leughadh, chuir mi romham gun leughamaid sgeul neo dhà às aig àm leapa mo mhic. Seachd nach eil e ach ochd bliadhna dh'aois, bha piosan ann nach do leugh mi dha ach abair gun do chòrd na chunnaic e ris agus gun do chòrd an leabhar uile gu léir ri 'athair. Chuir e iongantas orm gu bheil sgeulachdan a leithid seo air an sgrìobhadh anns na làithean seo. Tha iad cho math gun smaoinicheadh tu gun tàinig iad á linn eile - linn a tha làn druidheachd. Oir is e sin a gheobh sibh, a chàirdean, ma leughas sibh an obair eireachdail a sgrìobh Angus MacLeod: druidheachd, dorsan, agus dealbhan a bheir inntinn an leughadaire do dh'àite am falach fad air falbh bho 'n t-saoghal 's na làithean an-diugh. Tha stùth ann a bhios gu math aithnichte dha 'n neach-leughaidh oir is ann an saoghal na Gàidhlig a tha na sgeulachdan stéidhichte, agus bidh cuspair neo dhà a' nochdadh a chì sibh an àitichean eile. Ach tha iad air an cuir ri chèile le dòigh is dealbhan a tha sònraichte leis an ùghdar fhéin. Chan fhaigh sibh nobhail grafaigeach a leithid seo taobh a-staigh neo a-muigh na Gàidhealtachd agus tha sinn uile cho fortunach gu bheil Angus MacLeod a' sàs ri draoidheachd ùr agus gur ann tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig a tha e 'g obair.

A welcome gift to readers of Gaelic and lovers of fine drawings, Angus MacLeod's Dorsan is a collection of tales not soon to be forgotten. Fifteen stories of vengeance, monsters, murder, and mayhem are here skillfully told with gripping illustrations that will sear into the mind. From the swamp to the shore to the store, MacLeod takes the reader through

the ages and the ageless across strange vistas that are as haunting as they are singular. And though several themes emerge that will be familiar to those happy readers with a grounding in the Gaelic, they will admit that MacLeod weaves and winds those mighty strands of his culture to produce a striking piece of art that is absolutely his own. And no stranger to the human condition is he, for our foibles and weaknesses are here framed against the author's arresting images, presenting clearly a novel's range of experience in but a few short pages. It is this density of meaning that makes this such a special collection, for though it may be read through in one afternoon, it will certainly illuminate many more as the tales invite revisiting in different light and moods. We are fortunate that Angus MacLeod is producing this exciting Gaelic work and that the entire production from pen stroke to publication is happening right here in Nova Scotia. Às a' Chamhanaich (also published by Bradan Press) is an earlier graphic novel by the author that will entertain readers who are waiting to see what strange tales will next emerge from Goose Cove. ©

*Robert Pringle, Gaelic speaker,
musician, community educator.*



Whether it's passing a dark winter's night, sitting around a bonfire, gathering at the kitchen table, or passing the hours on a long road trip, hearing and sharing stories is one of my favourite pastimes. Stories help us remember, connect us to our culture, remind us of who we are, and help us

understand ourselves. As we say at Baile nan Gàidheal, we are "made of stories." Diving into Gaelic stories, tales, and legends is like looking through a window into the minds and experiences of Gaels and their understanding of the human condition.

It was a thrill to learn that Michael Newton was compiling an anthology of Gaelic folktales and an even greater elation to receive and read the volume. As the author explains, the sidhean | fairy hill can be understood as "subterranean depths of the psyche" and it was wonderful to visit this sidhean through the stories he gathered here. Inside the collection, readers will discover a wide range of stories, in English (new and/or updated translations) and Gaelic, representing a diverse geography across Scotland, including a few from Nova Scotia.

Beginning with an excellent introduction to Gaelic stories including history, social function, mechanics, and more, Newton writes with courage and offers the material in an accessible format for all readers. Each chapter centres a particular tale type, includes an overview, and offers a healthy sampling of stories. The introduction to each story features details about the storyteller or collector, and observations about the story and what meaning can be understood. From wonder tales to origin stories, from heroes to fairies, from historical legends to clan sagas, you will be drawn in to the heart and mind of the Gaels as you read. The volume concludes with an empowering and inspiring epilogue titled 'Reclaiming Our Voices'.

As those familiar with fairy lore will know, one must be wary about entering a fairy hill for you might be there for a year and a day and it would feel like only a moment had passed with all the joy and merriment to be had. That neatly sums up my experience of reading this book - thoroughly enjoyable, barely noticed the time passing, and eager to return. This exceptional, must-have publication would be a most welcome addition to the bookshelf of any who wish to deepen their understanding of Gaels and their culture, any who are on the journey of decolonization and reclamation, and any who wish to strengthen the bonds of connection - to self, each other, and the land. 'S ann a tha sinn fad' an comain Mhicheil. We are far in Micheal's debt. May we all remember and share our stories. ©

*Shannon MacMullin, Ban-chleasaiche
Cultural Experiences Co-ordinator.*



Comunn Ar Rùin | Our People

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & ACCOLADES

Tapadh Leibh-se Gu Mór

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Dell Corbett, Grand Mira ('Mira Jean' Clydesdale horse), Sarah Nettleton, Arichat (sheep), Aileen MacLean (poultry), and Keith Rudderham, Point Edward (cattle).

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Lifetime Memberships

Dr. Margaret Bennett, Perthshire, Scotland and Stuart MacLeod, Northside East Bay.

Financial Contributions (to March 31, 2023)

Includes donations to the Next Chapter Campaign, Treasures of Youth Scholarship fund, in memory of donations, in support of Gaelic programming, and general donations: Dorothy Almon, North Sydney; Forrest Beaton, Charlottetown, PE; Margie Beaton, Mabou; Kevin & Theresa Campbell, Shenacadie (IMO Joe Pius MacNeil); Clan MacNeil Canada; Charles & Marie Cash, Irish Cove; Susan T. Chernin, Toronto, ON; Dan & Nancy Chiasson, Baddeck; Roland Chiasson, Halifax; Marianne Cook, Ajax, ON (IMO Margaret Jimmy Steven); Linda Crockett, Sydney; Ned Crosby, West Barnstable, MA; Denise Davies, Antigonish; Dan DeCoste, Debert; Ricard Demeulles, Sudbury, ON; Stephen Dyke & Nona MacDonald, North Shore; Charles & Sandra Ellis, Little Narrows (IMO Hector MacKenzie); Jessica Farrell, Washabuck; John Farrell, Cobourg, ON; Firinn Investments Ltd. (Frank & Debbi Sobey), Stellarton; Alice Freeman, Inverness; Donna Frizzell, North River Bridge; Frolic and Folk Traditional Music Session Tip Jar, Iona; Henry Fuller, Baddeck; Donna Gartland, Portland, ME; John and Patsy Gibson, Judique (IMO Seumas Watson); Janet Gillis-MacKinnon, Jamesville (IMO Brian Hussey - 20th anniversary of his passing); Tara Hreceniuk, Kitchener, ON; Rev. Ray Huntley, Shenacadie; Miriam Hursey, Arcadia, FL; Marlene Ivey, Queensville; Dennis & Pat Jones, Kempt Head; Murrena Kennedy, River Denys (IMO Jim St.Clair; Ann K. MacIntosh & Mrs. Robert Latimer); Marty Krebs, Blenheim, ON; Frances Langille, Truro; Learn North Inc., Port Hawkesbury; Betty Lord, Howie Centre; Philip Love, Dartmouth; Magdalen Lowe, Antigonish; Anthony MacAdam, Halifax; Erin MacDonald, London, ON; James MacDonald, Dartmouth; Jean MacDonald, Quispamsis, NB; Mary Janet MacDonald, Port Hood; Max MacDonald, Sherbrooke; Quentin MacDonald, Washabuck; John James MacEachern, Sydney; Leona MacInnis, Mabou (IMO Angus Richard MacInnis); Wayne MacIntosh, St. John West, NB; Flora MacIsaac, Sydney; Barry & Allison MacKenzie, Rear Big Beach; Frances & Peggy MacKinnon, Baddeck; Kenzie MacKinnon, Halifax; Hugh & Linda MacKinnon, Benacadie; Joe MacKinnon, Antigonish; John MacKinnon, Godrich, ON; Malcolm MacKinnon Northside East Bay; Michael Angus & Evelyn MacKinnon, Big Beach; Archie MacLellan, St. Patricks Channel; Clarence MacLennan, River Denys; Roderick J. MacLennan, Truro; Angela MacLeod, Edmonton; Stuart MacLeod, Northside East Bay; Frankie MacNeil & Darlene

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Congratulations & Thank You

To animator Marie Chehy, textile consultant Vicki Quimby and custodian Patricia Gaudley for their 35, 30 and 25 years service respectively to the Highland Village.

Sympathies

To the families of Catherine MacNeil (Gaelic tradition bearer and mentor from Christmas Island), Angie Farrell (Gaelic speaker and former Highland Village Board Member from Benacadie), Jessie Gillis MacDonald (tradition bearer), Katie Maggie MacLeod (Gaelic tradition bearer and mentor from Inverness); Dougie MacPhee (traditional piano player and Cape Breton music guru); Jean "Columba" MacNeil (long time dancer, singer and mother of the Barra MacNeils); Fr. Francis Cameron (fiddler and member of the Boisdale Trio); and Jimmy MacNeil (son of former HV president Walter MacNeil). ☹

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

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