

# an Rùbha

*The Highland Village Gaelic Folklife Magazine*

Stòras a' Bhaile

Naidheachd a'  
Chlachain

The Knight of  
the Ring

*The Village News*

***Celebrating 50 Years  
1959-2009***



[www.highlandvillage.ca](http://www.highlandvillage.ca)

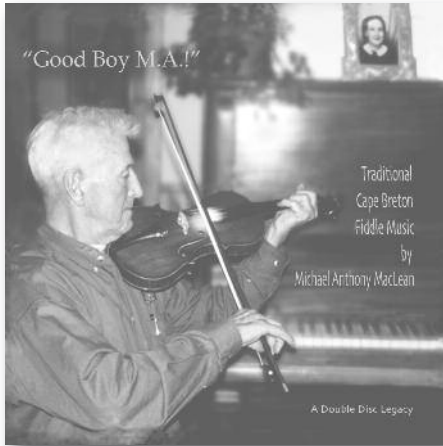
Highland  
Village  
Museum  
an clachan  
gàidhealach

Vol. 11 No. 2: Am Foghar /Autumn 2009



# Dè do naidheachd? What's new?

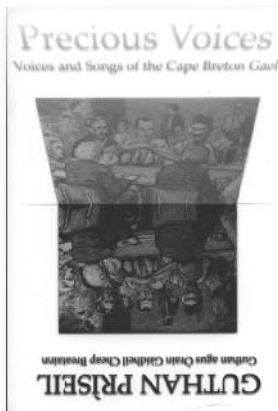
...in our Gift Shop



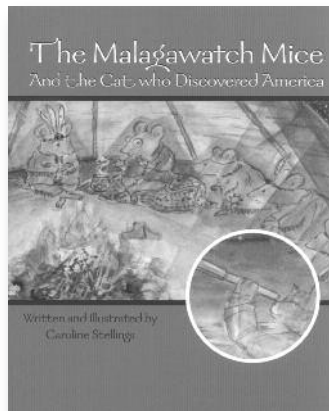
**"Good Boy M.A.!" Traditional Cape Breton Fiddle Music by Michael Anthony MacLean** - 2 CD set with 36 page booklet containing tributes, photos and background and historical notes on over 125 of Michael's old-time traditional tunes. \$20.00 each



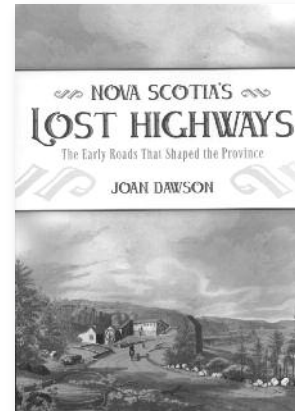
**"Taste of Gaelic"**  
Music CD from Dawn & Margie Beaton  
\$19.95



**Guthan Prìseil/Precious Voices**  
**Voices and Songs of the CB Gael**  
Anne Landin  
\$22.95 each



**The Malagawatch Mice:**  
**And the Cat who Discovered America** - Caroline Stellings  
\$14.95 each



**Nova Scotia's Lost Highways:**  
**The Early Roads that Shaped the Province** - Joan Dawson  
\$18.95 each

## More Great Books!

**History titles:** Grant's *Highland Folk Ways*, John Lorne Campbell's *A Very Civil People*, and others . . .

**Arts & Culture titles:** Effie Rankin's *As a' Bhràighe*, John Shaw's *The Blue Mountains and other Gaelic Stories from Cape Breton*, Siols reprint and CD - *An T-Òranaiche*, and more . . .

**Genealogy titles:** *All Call Iona Home*, *Mabou Pioneers*, *A West Wind to East Bay*, *To the Hill of Boisdale*, "Eoghan Dubh" (Hugh & Mary MacEachen, Mabou), *Cuir is Buan* (Glendale), and more . . .

**Fiction:** *A Forest for Calum* by Frank Macdonald, *Butterflies Dance in the Dark* by Beatrice MacNeil, & others!

Highland  
Village  
Museum  
AN CLACHAN  
GÀIDHEALACH  
GIFT SHOP /  
TAIGH NAN ANNASAN

**Yes! We ship what we sell!**

Phone us at 902-725-2272

Email us at [hvgiftshop@gov.ns.ca](mailto:hvgiftshop@gov.ns.ca)

**AN RUBHA** (*The Point*) is published in Iona, Nova Scotia, Canada twice each year by *Comunn Clachan Gàidhealach na h-Albann Nuaidh*/Nova Scotia Highland Village Society. Comments, suggestions and contributions are welcome.

## Contact:

4119 Rathad/Highway 223  
Sanndraigh/Iona  
Alba Nuadh/Nova Scotia  
B2C 1A3 - Canada  
Guthan/Phone: 902.725.2272  
Toll Free: 1-866-4GAELIC  
Facs/Fax: 902.725.2227  
E: highlandvillage@gov.ns.ca  
W: www.highlandvillage.ca  
www.anrubha.ca

**Editorial Committee:** Rodney Chaisson, Marlene Ivey, Pauline MacLean, Katherine MacLeod & Seumas Watson

**Contributors:** Rodney Chaisson, Dr. Giulia De Gasperi, Marlene Ivey, Carmen MacArthur, John MacLean, Pauline MacLean, Katherine MacLeod, Maxie MacNeil, Tom Pacek, Vicki Quimby, Ellison Robertson, Dr. John Shaw, Jim St.Clair, Dr. Seòsamh Watson, Seumas Watson

**Layout:** Rodney Chaisson

**Printing:** City Printers Ltd, Sydney

**Front cover photo:** Highland Village animator Aileen MacLean (Aileen n'in Aileig Eòin Nill Eachainn) playing the pipes next to Cash's Carding Mill.

Also, on the front is the image for Gaelic Nova Scotia. The image is that of a salmon in the shape of the letter 'G'. The salmon represents the gift of knowledge in the Gaelic storytelling traditions of Nova Scotia, Scotland and Ireland and the Isle of Man. The 'G' represents the Gaelic language and the ripples are the manifestations of the language through its attendant culture: song, story, music, dance and custom and belief system.

ISSN # 1914-6043

Mailed under Canada Post Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement #41257540

# Inside This Issue

<i>From the Director's Desk</i> Celebrating 50 Years at Hector's Point - Rodney Chaisson	4
<i>Mar Is Léir Dhomh Fhìn / My Own Viewpoint</i> A Strategy for Community Engagement & Contemporary Visitor Experiences - Marlene Ivey	5
<i>Mar Chuimhneachan/In Memory</i> Mairead NicGhilleathain/Margaret MacLean - Seumas Watson	6
<i>Fo na Cabair / Under the Rafters</i> An Taigh Dubh/The Blackhouse - Pauline MacLean & Katherine MacLeod	7
<i>Ridire an Fhainne/The Knight of the Ring</i> Collected from Flora MacLellan - John Shaw	8
<i>Naidheachd a'Chlachain / The Village News</i> The Interpretive Season of 2009 at Big Hector's Point	10
<i>A' Tighinn Beò air Tìr/ Making a Living</i> Archie Dan MacLellan at Work in the Woods and Mines of Cape Breton - Seòsamh Watson	12
<i>Excerpt from "Mac-Talla"</i> Deòrsa Taillear 'S Na Teachdairean/George Taylor and the Envoys	14
<i>An Rubha Photo Album</i> Stòras a' Bhaile 2009	16
<i>Ag Éirigh Air Òrain/An Rubha Song Selection</i> Cumha do Dhòmhnaill MacFhionghain recorded from Maxie MacNeil	18
<i>An Gàidheal Portmhor</i> "Hò Rò Ghoid Thu 'n Nighean" - "Jenny Dang the Weaver"	19
<i>Anns a' Ghleann 's a Robh Mi Òg/In the Glen Where I was Young</i> Iain Ruairidh Mhicheil Steaphain Ruairidh 'ic Dhòmhnaill Oig - Seamas Watson	20
<i>Poleasaidh Gàidhlig a' Clachan Gàidhealach</i> The Highland Village's new Gaelic Policy	21
<i>Dualchas nan Canach/Canna Heritage in Cape Breton</i> Cultural & Social Contributions of Canna Emigration to Cape Breton - Dr. Giulia De Gasperi	22
<i>Dèante le làimh / Handmade</i> Gaels and the Knitting Tradition - Vicki Quimby	26
<i>Obair an Taighe - Featured Artifact</i> An Criathair - The Riddle	27
<i>An Rubha Reviews</i> Anne Landin's "Guthan Priseal/Precious Voices" - Seumas Watson Bonnie Thornhill's "An Rathad gu Baile nan Gall/The Road to Englishtown" - Jim. St.Clair	28
<i>Our People - Acknowledgements &amp; Accolades</i>	30

# From the Director's Desk CELEBRATING 50 YEARS AT HECTOR'S POINT

Rodney Chaisson, Director



The Nova Scotia Highland Village Society was incorporated on November 3, 1959, setting in place the foundation for the dream of a living heritage village for Scottish Gaelic culture in Nova Scotia, a concept which had been originally proposed in 1938 by then Premier Angus L. Macdonald after visiting the British Empire Exhibition in Glasgow, Scotland. With the onset of World War II the project was shelved until the mid 1950s when the NS Association of Scottish Societies began promoting it once again.

Communities throughout Nova Scotia expressed interest in having the proposed Highland Village in their area. The Grand Narrows & District Board of Trade was one of those groups. In October of 1955, Hugh F. MacKenzie and Rev. Dr. A.D. MacKinnon presented the case (entirely in Gaelic) for the Iona area to the Association's site selection committee. After considerable debate, as well as lobbying from Pictou County, in March of 1956, the Iona area was chosen.

The original proponents of the Highland Village in Iona became the driving force for its establishment and growth. Later that year, the site was secured. In 1962, the first Highland Village Day Concert was held to raise money to help construct the Village. By the 1970s, as a result of their hard work and tenacity, the Village began to take shape. By the 1980s most of the Highland Village site was in place. None of these achievements could have taken place without the commitment and support of the community and its many dedicated volunteers and supporters.

In 2000, recognising the importance of the Gaelic story in Nova Scotia and the

vision of the Village to interpret and celebrate that story, the Highland Village became a part of the Nova Scotia Museum. Gaelic language and culture in Nova Scotia was now part of the Provincial heritage infrastructure, which would continue to be operated by its founding Society.

In early November, the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society marked its 50th anniversary as a community-based organisation founded "to protect, interpret and further the collection of buildings and artifacts at the Nova Scotia Highland Village site in Iona; and to preserve and promote the Scottish Highland and Island culture as found in Nova Scotia." Today, as a provincial museum site, the Society has become regionally and internationally recognised for its interpretation and promotion of Gaelic language and folklife in Nova Scotia through the Highland Village Museum, as well as community outreach.

The 50th anniversary of incorporation was marked with a special live broadcast of CBC Cape Breton's Mainstreet with Wendy Bergfeldt on November 3rd, 2009. The program reflected on the history of the Society and the role it has played in the lives of Cape Bretoners as well as its contributions to cultural development.

In the months ahead, we will continue to celebrate what we have achieved over the past five decades. The next issue of *An Rubha* will focus on this milestone and our achievements. It will feature details on our year long program to mark our 50th year as a Gaelic heritage organisation.

In the meantime, stay in touch through our website or our Facebook page (search Highland Village Museum). ☺



Highland Village 40th Anniversary on CBC Mainstreet. Host Wendy Bergfeldt watches as Evan Bonaparte leads in Gaelic song at the Milling Table.

Photo by Rodney Chaisson



Nova Scotia  
Highland Village  
Society

The Nova Scotia Highland Village Society (*Comunn Clachan Gàidhealach na h-Albann Nuaidh*) 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.



The vision of the Highland Village Museum/*An Clachan Gàidhealach* is to be internationally acknowledged for advancing research, fostering appreciation, learning and sharing authentic Gaelic language and heritage while serving a vibrant Gaelic cultural community.

The mission of the Highland Village Museum/*An Clachan Gàidhealach*, a living history museum, is to research, collect, preserve and share the Gaelic heritage and culture of Nova Scotia and represent it accurately and vibrantly.

The Highland Village Museum/*An Clachan Gàidhealach* is a part of the Nova Scotia Museum Family of Provincial Museums, Department of Tourism, Culture & Heritage. The Nova Scotia Highland Village Society operates the site on behalf of the Province.

**A PART of THE NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM**

MEUR de THAIGH-TASGAIDH

NA H-ALBANN NUAIDH

**NOVA SCOTIA  
ALBA NUADH**

Tourism, Culture and Heritage  
Roinn na Turasachd, a' Chultair agus an Dualchais

The Society is a member of National Trust of Scotland, CLI Gàidhlig, Gaelic Society of Inverness (Scotland), Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM), Canadian Museums Assoc. (CMA), Iona Connection Heritage Co-op, Council of NS Archives (CNSA), Genealogical Assoc. of NS (GANS), Cape Breton Genealogy & Heritage Society, Interpretation Canada, Costume Society of NS, Assoc. of Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM), American Assoc. for State & Local History (AASLH), Tourism Industry Assoc of NS (TIANS), Baddeck & Area Business Tourism Assoc. (BABTA), Destination Cape Breton Assoc., Sydney & Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce.



Mar is léir dhomh fhìn

# A STRATEGY FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONTEMPORARY VISITOR EXPERIENCES

Guest Column by Marlene Ivey, Coordinator of Strategic Initiatives

As a publicly supported Nova Scotia living history museum and folk life centre, the Highland Village is mandated to interpret, represent and uphold Nova Scotia Gaels' history, language, culture, customs and modern heritage community. At present, Gaelic language students in community-based classes have grown to a significant number over a geographic area extending from Cape Breton to metro Halifax. While sessions and classes are relatively common, there are few opportunities for people to gather with the single purpose of unstructured socializing in immersion settings that encompass everyday type activities that include Gaelic art expressions (song-making, storytelling across genres, music, dance and sub-domains, e.g., comedic take off) traditionally enjoyed at home. Through Gaelic language social programming the Highland Village aims to create frameworks for speaking Gaelic in settings that encourage its natural flow leading to enhanced conversational ability for those engaged in Gaelic learning and providing occasions for purposeful use by native speakers. This community-based initiative is essentially a long-term strategy for human and cultural resource renewal of Gaelic language in Nova Scotia. Cultural recovery, language-community capacity building, cultural autonomy and community immersion are the intended outcomes.

By immersing learners in Gaelic Nova Scotia, he (Seumas Watson) says 'their Gaelic will be infused with colour, culture and humour, which leavens the learning environment and grounds the learner in a people and place. It also better equips them to speak to native speakers, whether they live in Nova Scotia or Scotland' (*Lasag Spring* 2009 p. 8).

As a result of sustaining Gaelic language and heritage the Highland Village acts to underpin, authenticate and accrue value for the cultural identity of the people of Nova Scotia. Investing in and transmitting the cultural identity of the Nova Scotia Gaels is the Highland Village's core business. Strategic planning, a comprehensive plan of action, is essentially a tool kit that can be used to ensure that the organisation is empowered to deliver its core business, address its mission, uphold its values and keep well on the path to meet its vision.

At the Highland Village our strategic plan has us all working together - Board

of Trustees, staff, representatives from the local farming community, opinion/community leaders, youth, visitors, peers, and expertise from external organisations, for example, the Department of Agriculture. We are reflecting deeply on all of our organisational scenarios, making a mindful assessment of the organisation's needs, wants, capacity and capability. By cross referencing the action plan priorities of our five main strategic directions - programming and product development, human resources, maintenance and infrastructure, marketing and finance - with Nova Scotia's Heritage Strategy 2008-2013 and the Nova Scotia

---

*...Investing in and transmitting the cultural identity of the Nova Scotia Gaels is the Highland Village's core business. Strategic planning, a comprehensive plan of action, is essentially a tool kit that can be used to ensure that the organisation is empowered to deliver its core business...*

---

Interpretive Master Plan 2009, we guarantee that we are planning in concert with our Nova Scotia Museum family.

Our strategic plan is coloured by significant milestones in the organisation's history - for example the June 2000 Proclamation between the Nova Scotia Government and the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society - and significant institutional documents. Most recently these include our Gaelic Policy (see page 21) as well as the first publication in the Highland Village Interpretive Research series, *The Gael in 16th to 19th Century Scotland* (see page 7). The former will act to define, advocate and reinforce our commitment to Gaelic language and culture on the site, in Nova Scotia and in national and international communities. The latter signifies our research led approach to site development - an indication that we have started as we mean to go on.

One of our priorities is to communicate a visceral and authentic representation of the Scottish Gaels, and their Nova



Scotia descendents, by focusing on the intangible aspects of the Gael's relationship with the land - substantially how they lived and worked to sustain themselves. By witnessing the lives of the Gaels in relationship to their land and through related experiential opportunities, visitors will achieve an enhanced understanding of the Gaelic experience in Nova Scotia. The socio-linguistic culture of the agricultural Gaels was dramatically different from that of our contemporary consumer society. So, in relaying the physical agricultural story of the Gaels, visitors are given access to their heritage through encounters with a farming environment from pioneer times to early 20th century. Throughout Nova Scotia Highland Village Museum's strategic planning process, assessments have indicated that revitalisation of the farm area is a critical touch point for engendering heritage and community cooperation.

Design and delivery of contemporary museum experience is centred on moments of engagement with visitors and the ideas, emotions and memories that those moments create. By enhancing and developing interpretive content and new methods of delivery, we will improve our ability to instil a higher awareness in our visitors, communicate a more meaningful story of Nova Scotia Gaelic language and culture, become skilled in responding to challenges in the marketplace, encourage repeat attendance and increase our potential to attract new audiences. ☺

*Mar is léir dhomh fhìn (My Own Viewpoint) is a regular feature. Marlene Ivey, Coordinator of Strategic Initiatives, specialises in design and planning. After 23 years in Scotland she returned to her native Cape Breton.*

# Mar Chuimhneachain/In Memory MAIREAD NIGHILLEATHAIN, BAGHASDAL Margaret MacLean, Boisdale

By Seumas Watson

**H**ighland Village marks the passing of Margaret MacLean (nee MacDonald - Mairead bean Ruairidh Iagain Ruairidh), Boisdale, Cape Breton County with much regret. She will be missed by friends and relatives and in the world of Gaelic singing. An outstanding tradition bearer, Margaret was born at Boisdale in 1909. She married Roderick MacLean (Ruairidh Iagain Ruairidh) of adjacent Big Beach

in 1929. They raised a family of five. Margaret spent her life in the area of Boisdale and Big Beach, districts settled primarily from the islands of South Uist and Barra. Margaret passed away on December 31, 2008.

Her extensive repertoire of songs, both traditional and locally composed, was acquired there. In particular, she recalled with great clarity the influences brought to her singing by her grand mother Mary MacKinnon (Màiri Dhòmhnaill Nill), grandfather Donald MacDonald (Dòmhnall Dòmhnallach) and two uncles John MacDonald (Johnny Iain Dòmhnallaich) and Michael MacDonald (Micheal Iain Dòmhnallaich).

Margaret was humble about her excellent Gaelic and remarkable memory for songs. She was proud of her Barra ancestry. Visited by Gaelic scholars from Scotland and Ireland, her contribution to the Cape Breton Gaelic Folklore collection, housed at St. Francis Xavier University, was in the vicinity of ninety songs. The following is a humorous composition reportedly made by a Donald Gillis of Rear Beaver Cove. It was recorded by Jim Watson and Ellison Robertson in 1986 at Margaret's kitchen in Boisdale. She was assisted on chorus by her daughter, Sadie, and Father Allan MacMillan, currently at St. Andrew's Parish, Judique, Inverness County.

SW: Cà 'n do dh'ionnsaich sibh ur cuid òran? Where did you learn your songs?

MN: Dh'ionnsaich mise na h-òrain o mo sheanmhair (Màiri Dhòmhnaill Nill.) Agus bha dà uncle agam, dà bhràthair màthar, a bha glé mhath air òrain. Bha na h-òrain aca 's thog mi poidhle dhiubh siod cuideachd. I learned the songs from my grandmother (Mary MacKinnon.) I also had two uncles who were very good on the songs. They had songs and I got a lot of them there as well.

(Am Fonn)

Gura mise tha fo mhulad on sguir mi dhe 'n òl  
Cha n-òl mi deur tuilleadh fhads a bhios mi beò  
Gura mise tha fo mhulad on sguir mi dhe 'n òl

Photo from John MacLean



Margaret with son John, granddaughter Karen Redden & great-granddaughter Sarah Redden.

(Chorus: I'm disheartened having quit the drink. I won't touch another drop as long as I live. I'm disheartened having quit the drink.)

1. Tha sagart na cléireadh  
Cuir soighneadh an céill dhuinn  
Cha bhi mi 'ga bhléimeadh  
B'e sin fhéin a' chòir

(A priest of the clergy has made us sign the pledge. I won't blame him, since it was his right to do so.)

2. Gura h-e Maighstir Fionnlagh  
A dh'fhàg mise tùrsach  
Nuair a thuirt e rium-sa  
"Tionndaich ris a' Hall

(Father Finlay is the one who left me melancholy when he commanded, "Turn to the (Temperance) Hall.")

3. Gura mis' a tha tùrsach  
On lath' a chuir mi cùl ris  
'S tric na deòir o m' shùilean  
Drùdhadh sios mo shròin

(I've become gloomy since the day I shunned it (alcohol.) My eyes often drip tears down to my nose.)

4. 'S toilicht' tha mo mhàthair  
'S tric a bhios i 'g ràitinn  
"Dòmhnall fhuair na gràsan  
On sguir e dhe 'n òl



(My mother is well pleased. She often says, "Donald is in a state of grace since he parted with the drink.")

5. Nuair théid mi gu bainis  
'S an fhiodhall 'na caithream  
Càch ag òl na dramaich  
'S bidh mise fo bhròn

(When I go to a wedding, and the fiddle is bounding, the rest are drinking drams. I'll be so pathetic there.)

6. 'S mis' a bhios cràiteach  
Nuair a thig là pàighidh  
'S na botuill 'gan traghadh  
'S mi gun làn mo bheòil

(I'll be miserable on payday: bottles drained off and me without a mouthful.)

7. Ma chumas sinn na h-àintean  
Mar a dh'iarr a' Slànuighear  
Saoil am bidh sinn sàbhailt  
Ged bhitheamaid ag òl

(If we keep the commandments as directed by the Savior, don't you think we'll be saved though we should be drinking?)

8. Ach nuair a thig an Nollaig  
'S a thig na fir air Chollaig.  
Òlaidh sinn na galain  
A dh'aindheoin na Hall

(But when Christmas comes and the lads are around on New Year visits, we'll drink it by the gallon in spite of the Hall.)

9. Maggie Cook an creutair  
Bu laghach leam fhéin i.  
Nuair rachainn air chéilidh  
Bhiodh botul 'na dòrn

(Maggie Cook, the old dear, I think she's so nice. When I would go to visit, she would have a bottle in her hand.)

10. Alex Steele ud shuas  
'S e an dram a bhiodh air suarach  
Mac an fhìor dhuin' uasail  
Dha 'm bu dualach bhi còir.

(Alex Steele up yonder, a dram for him was a trifle. Son of a true gentleman, his legacy was generosity.) ☺

© Recorded, transcribed and translated by Seumas Watson.



# Fo na Cabair / UNDER THE RAFTERS An taigh dubh / THE BLACKHOUSE

Pauline MacLean & Katherine MacLeod

*As a provincial museum site that strives for excellence and international acknowledgement, professional research is essential to support quality interpretive presentations, exhibits and programming. The Highland Village is committed*

to base all of its future interpretive and site developments on sound research findings. Fundamental to this process are research reports that authenticate the physical presentation of our living history site and provide our animators with tangible resources on which to base their interaction with visitors.



The first of these reports was completed this past summer - *Rannsachadh Taisbeanaidh a' Chlachain Gàidhealaich: Na Gàidheil an Albainn, 16mh Linn -19mh Linn/Highland Village Interpretive Research: The Gael in 16th to 19th Century Scotland*. This report of life in Gaelic Scotland, specifically the Blackhouse, takes into account material culture representations that should be found in the building and the story of how Gaels lived with the land. As Gaels went about their daily lives, they were completely unaware that they were a unique culture, or that others would find their way of life significant. The various aspects of culture cannot exist alone. Language, religious observances, beliefs, customs and traditions are intimately tied together to constitute the whole story of the Gael.

Over the next few issues of *An Rubha* our *Fo Na Cabair/Under the Rafters* feature

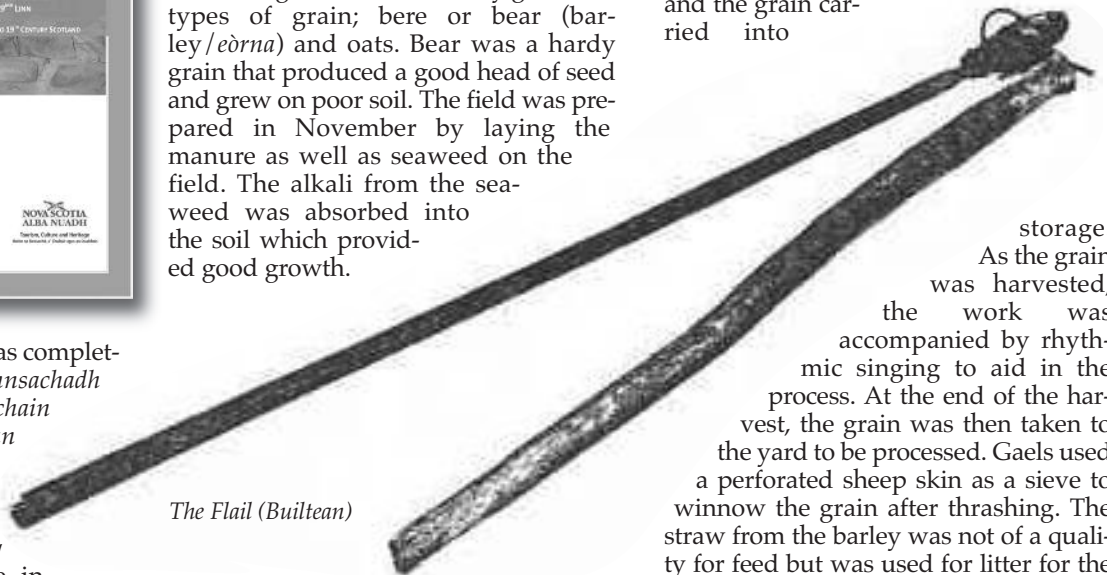
will include excerpts from that research document. The first is the simplicity of life in a harsh environment.

## FOOD STUFFS: BARLEY (Eòrna)

A quote from I.F. Grant, in her book "Highland Folkways" (London: Routledge, 1989) begins the story of our Gaelic speaking ancestors.

*The old houses were built for a different sort of life. They were evolved by a people of "immense ability" to withstand the severe local conditions by means of the limited materials that were available to them and their own unspecialized skills. They gave the nightly warmth and shelter that was craved by men and women who spent their days largely out of doors...*

The Highlands traditionally grew two types of grain; bere or bear (barley/*eòrna*) and oats. Bear was a hardy grain that produced a good head of seed and grew on poor soil. The field was prepared in November by laying the manure as well as seaweed on the field. The alkali from the seaweed was absorbed into the soil which provided good growth.



*The Flail (Builtean)*

Given the name *bigg*, barley was sewn after the field was turned either with the plough or the *caschrom*. It was broadcast by hand, harrowed and left to grow without care. Sewn late in April, it would ripen in eight or nine weeks. When ripe, it was cut with a sickle or as John Lane Buchanan (traveller observer, 1782-1790) stated "they never cut their barley, but pluck it by the root..." and gathered into sheaves, or *sguaib*, then stood them up in stacks. The stacks were often gathered in the evening and measured anywhere from ten feet long, to four feet wide and six feet high. The stack was constructed



in order to dry the grain and keep the air flowing through the stacks while it matured. Thomas Pennant (traveler observer, 1776) says as soon as the grain was cut, sheaves were made and a number stacked in a pile and the top of the pile thatched. When dry weather came, the thatch was taken off and the grain carried into

storage. As the grain was harvested, the work was accompanied by rhythmic singing to aid in the process. At the end of the harvest, the grain was then taken to the yard to be processed. Gaels used a perforated sheep skin as a sieve to winnow the grain after thrashing. The straw from the barley was not of a quality for feed but was used for litter for the byre and as additional thatching. ☺

*Rannsachadh Taisbeanaidh a' Chlachain Gàidhealaich: Na Gàidheil an Albainn, 16mh Linn -19mh Linn/Highland Village Interpretive Research: The Gael in 16th to 19th Century Scotland was researched and written by Pauline MacLean, Manager of Collections and Genealogist, and Katherine MacLeod, Collections Assistant. It is the first in a series of research reports. They are currently working on the second installment which focuses on settlement in Nova Scotia 1770s to the 1850s which will support interpretation of the log house, centre chimney (MacDonald) house and sahbhal (barn).*

## RIDIRE AN FHAINNE

## THE KNIGHT OF THE RING

Collected from Flora MacLellan by John Shaw

Uill, bha siod ann uair, fear aig an robh trìùir mhac, agus 's e Ridire an Fhàinne a bh'air. Agus an uair sin tha seansa nach robh mòran dha' n t-saoghal ac', agus an tigherna aig an robh iad, chuir e far an àit' iad. Uill, thuirt an athair ris na gillean, "Feumaidh sinn falbh as a' seo airson ar beòshlaint a dheanamh an àit' air choireigin eile."

Bha iad a' falbh 's a' falbh 's a' falbh 's a' falbh 's a' falbh 's a' falbh. Uill, mu dheireadh tha seansa gun do bhuail an t-acras iad agus thànaig iad gu abhainn agus studaig iad gun gabhadh iad greim do bhiadh agus thug iad amach na loigh-nichean iasgach agus fhuair iad ... chaidh iad a dh'iasgach agus fhuair iad bradan. Uill, am bradan a fhuair iad, ghlan iad e 's nuair a bha iad a' glanadh a' bhradain nach d'fhuair iad fàinn' òir am broinn a' bhradain. Agus ghlan iad e 's a Dhia, nuair a chuir iad am fàinne 'san uisge 's nach do thionndaidh am fàinne an t-uisge 'na fhìon. O, bha siod gàbhaidh iongantach leo' ach cha do ghabh iad seud orra.

Ach bha iad a' dol a dheanadh beairteas, tha mi cinteach, air a' seo agus dh'fhalbh iad 's dh'fhalbh iad 's tha mi cinnteach mar an tuirt iad fhéin, dh'ìrich iad beinn theine 's thearainn iad beinn ghloine 's thànaig iad an sin gu ruige taigh mór a bha 'n sin. Agus chaidh iad astaigh agus 's e taigh robairean a bh'ann 's bha *crowd* do dhaoine astaigh. 'S o, bha iad a' gabhail bidh 's thug iad biadh dhaibh, ach thuirt an gille ... thuirt an athair ris na gillean, "Tha eagal orm nach e taigh math an seo idir. 'S fheàrr dhuinn a bhith falbh."

Uill, bha iad as deaghaidh am fàinne shealltainn dhaibh agus amach a ghabh iad agus nach do dhìochuimhnich iad am fàinne.

"O, Dhia," thuirt iad fhéin, "bha sinn a' smaoinèachdainn gu robh sinn a' dol a bhith math dheth, ach tha sinn a nist ... cha n-eil ... ach dhìochuimhnich sinn am fàinne."

"All right," thuirt am fear bu shine dhaibh, "cha chreid mi nach dean sinn trì earrannan air an oidhche, agus feuch am faigh sinn am fàinne. Falbhaidh mi fhìn air a' cheud earrann agus falbhaidh an sin an darna mac air an ath-earrann agus falbhaidh an sin am mac òg air an earrann mu dheireadh."

Sin a bh'ann 's dh'fhalbh iad. Bha iad a' fuireach 's dh'fhalbh an gille bu shine air a' cheud earrann dha' n oidhch' agus rànaig e taigh nan robairean agus có thachair air ach an Gille Giobach Glas agus e 'g éirigh air tarraing uisge. Dh'fhoighneach e, "Tha thu coimhead trom, sgìth, airtneulach," thuirt esan.

"Tha," thuirt esan. "Tha mi fad fin fuaineach an lath' a' tarraing uisge."

"'S dé ... carson a tha thu a' deanadh sin?"

"O, fhuair sinn fàinn' òir air a' bhòrd agus chuir sinn am bogadh e ann an uisge agus tha iad 'g éirigh air deanadh fion."

"O, an e sin a bh'ann?" thuirt esan. "Bheir dhomhsa na bucaidean 's bheir mi cuideachadh dhut."

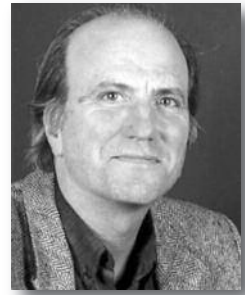
An sin dh'fhalbh an Gille Bochd Giobach Glas [s] shìn e na bucaidean dha 'n ghille - bha e cho coibhneil 's gun tug e cuideachadh dha - bheir an gille air na bucaidean 's thug e sràc dha' n Ghille Ghiobach Ghlas 's spad e e. Agus thug e fhéin leis an t-aodach a bh'air a' Ghille Ghiobach Ghlas agus chuir e air e agus thug e leis na bucaidean làn do dh'uisge. 'S rànaig e 'n sin astaigh dha' n taigh agus iad

... "Is there any means," said the Knight of the Ring, "by which it can be repaired?" ...

uile gu léir a' deanamh an fhìon 's bha iad 'ga òl, neo gu dé bha iad a' deanamh ... Ach co-dhiubh thuirt esan gu robh e fhéin seachd sgìth a' tarraing uisge agus gum biodh e toilichte nan toireadh iad aon bhogadh dha' n fhàinne dhasan, co-dhiubh.

'S o, uill, bha siod ceart gu leòr: thug iad bogadh dha' n fhàinne dha' s bheir esan air té dha na bucaidean agus thilg e an t-uisge fairis air na coinnlean a bh'ann. Chuir e as uile gu léir na coinnlean 's bha iad ... *start* an trod astaigh: 's tusa thug dha e 's cha tug 's tusa thug dha e, 's iad a' leum air a chéile a' spadadh 's chlior esan dhachaidh 's nam b'e c'aithe robh athair 's a bhràithrean eile cha do ghabh e sian air dé dh'éirich dha.

Dh'fhalbh an ath-bhràthair an sin air an darna ceathramh dha' n oidhche agus a' cheud rud thachair e air, an Gille Ghiobach Ghlas marbh. Agus chaidh e astaigh agus cha robh ann ach robair thall 's robair a bhos marbh. Ach chunnaic e 'n sin solus-dan beag taobh an t-simileir agus bha bogha-saighead aige 's loisg e air. Uill, thuirt am fear a bh'ann, "'S tu tha math air a' bhogha-saighead. Tha iad a' gràdhainn an duine a chuireadh an t-sùil as an fhamhair mhór agus a mharbhadh an do-bhar ghlas air a' loch ud thall, gur e a gheobhadh nighean a' rìgh le pòsadh."



All right. Dh'fhalbh esan dhachaidh 's thill e 's cha do dh'inns' e seud dha na thachair air.

Ach dh'fhalbh an sin an treas fear. Dh'fhalbh e 's thachair an aon rud air: dh'ìrich e beinn theine 's thearainn e beinn ghloine 's rànaig e àite nan robairean 's thachair an Gille Glas marbh air agus na robairean agus an t-sùil as an ceann - an fhamhair - is chum e roimhe 's chum e roimhe 's chunnaic e 'n sin an do-bhar ghlas seo air a' loch. Uill, thuirt am fhamhair seo leis, an duine chuireas an t-sùil as an fhamhair mhór 's a mharbhas an do-bhar-chù air a' loch ud thall, gur e gheobhadh nighean a' rìgh le pòsadh.

All right. Dh'fhalbh esan 's chunnaic e ... chaidh e a dh'ionnsaigh a' loch a bha seo is chunnaic e an do-bhar-chù ud ach loisg e air agus mharbh e e. Thill e dhachaidh 's cha do ghabh e seud air dé dh'éirich dha fhéin.

Uill, dh'fhalbh e fhéin an sin 's athair 's a dhithist bhràithrean 's bha iad a' falbh 's a' falbh. Cha robh iad fada gus an d'rànaig iad àit' a' rìgh.

"Dé tha dol air adhart a' seo?" thuirt e.

Bha cruinneachadh mór àlainn a' sin do dhaoine is iad uile gu léir 's a' rìgh [mì-thoilichte]. Ach có thachair orr' ach a' rìgh 's e uamhasach tùrsach agus bha nighean a' rìgh - a' bhean òg - ag éirigh air gal 's air caoineadh.

"O," thuirt esan, "dé tha seo?"

O, thuirt a' rìgh leis mar a th'ann: bha an nighean bh'anns an oighreachd bho thoiseach, gur e ge b'e có chuireadh an t-sùil as an fhamhair mhór a bh'as an taigh seo shios, na ge b'e c'ainm a bh'aca air - cha n-eil cuimhn' agam air - agus a mharbhadh an do-bhar glas air a' loch ud thall, gura h-e gheobhadh nighean a' rìgh le pòsadh. 'S e, an nighean aigesan le pòsadh.

"Agus có a nist a rinn sin?"

"O, 's e am mucair a bh'agam fhìn agus a bh'aig m'athair a chionn leithid seo do dh'ùine - bhliadhnachan - a mharbh an do-bhar-chù air a' loch ud thall 's e tha faighinn na h-ìghinn le pòsadh."

"Uill, tha sin tuilleadh is dona," thuirt esan.

"Ach 's e ur beatha-se tighinn astaigh dh'ionnsaigh na bainneadh."

"O," thuirt esan, "far am bi mi fhìn bidh mo thrìùir mhac, 's far am bi mo thrìùir mhac bidh mi fhìn."

All right. Thànaig iad astaigh 's bha iad a' gabhail am bìdh, tha mi cinnteach, 's chaidh drama a thoirt dha' n mhucair bhochd - tha mi cinnteach nach robh e



eòlach air soithichean briagha sam bith a bhith aige ach biadh nam muc. Agus thug iad soitheach òir a bh'aca - cha n-eil fhios dé cho sean 's a bhiodh i sin - dìreach gus an drama [a riarachadh]. Agus tuille nan tròcaireachd nach do thuit an soitheach 's rinn e trì piosan air an ùrlar.

"O," thuirt a' rìgh an uair sin, "'s iomadh rud a bha cur orm 's tha cur orm ach tha mi uamhasach truagh airson an t-soithich, o chionn tha e cho sean 's cha deach a bhristeadh riamh."

"Bheil seud sam bith ann," thuirt Ridire an Fhàinne, "a chàireas e?"

"Uill, nam biodh triùir astaigh air an àit' a dh'innseadh naidheachd gun fhacal bréigeadh innte bho cheann gu ceann, chàireadh e 'n soitheach."

Uill, tha mi cinnteach gun deach iad feadh na cuideachd uile gu léir ['s] thànaig i 'n sin gu Ridire an Fhàinne. Uill, thuirt Ridire an Fhàinne 'n sin ris a' mhac bu shine, "Nach inns' thusa an naidheachd agad fhéin?"

Uill, start a mhac air innse mar a dh'fhalbh iad 's mar a chaidh iad a chur às an àite 's mar a fhuair iad am fàinne am broinn a' bhradain 'san allt 's mar a rànaig iad àite nan robairean 's an rud a rinn e fhéin: mar a spad e 'n Gille Giobach Glas ['s] mar a fhuair e 'm fàinne. Dhia, nach do dh'éirich pìos dha' n t-soitheach 's chaidh e leis fhéin. Bha 'm mucair bochd a' fàs car excited, tha mi cinnteach, mu dheidhinn seo.

Dh'éirich e a nist 's thuirt e ris an darna mac éirigh. Dh'inns' am fear seo mar a thachair dha fhéin 's gun do chuir e 'n t-sùil às an fhamhair mhór a bha taobh an teine nuair a dh'inns' e dha gur e 'm fear a chuireadh an t-sùil as an fhamhair mhór agus a mharbhadh an dobhar ghlas air a' loch ud thall a gheobhadh an nighean le pòsadh. Ach nach do dh'éirich pìos eile dha' n t-soitheach 's nach do stig e leis fhéin! O, bha a' rìgh a' fàs cuimseach toilichte ach bha 'm mucair bochd a' fàs truagh, tha mi cinnteach.

Dh'éirich an sin an treas gille 's dh'inns' e mar a thachair dhasan: mar a thachair an Gille Giobach ... mar a dh'fhalbh e bho'n taigh 's mar a thachair an Gille Giobach Glas air 's na robairean 's a h-uile sian; mar a dh'ìric e a' bheinn theine 's mar a thearainn e a' bheinn ghloine 's mar a thànaig e gu taigh a' rìgh 's gu àite nan robairean, agus gun do mharbh e 'n dobhar-chù air a' loch ud thall. O, Dhia! Nach robh an soitheach a' stigeadh ris fhéin uile gu léir 's e cho math.

"Agus 's tusa mharbh," thuirt a' rìgh, "an dobhar-chù air a' loch ud thall."

"S mi," thuirt esan.

"Uill," thuirt esan, "tha am fear seo, tha seans', ag innse nam breugan dhuinn."

Agus bheir e air a' Ghille Ghiobach Ghlas. O, dh'fhàs an nighean uamhasach, sòlasach toilichte nuair a chunnaic i an [gille] eireachdail a bha seo. Chaidh an Gille Glas [sic - am mucair] bochd a dhreasadh mar a bha e roimhe 'na mucair

's biadh nam muc a thoirt dha.

Agus sin agad far na dh'fhàg sinn e. ☺

## TRANSLATION

### THE KNIGHT OF THE RING

There was once a man called the Knight of the Ring and he had three sons. At that time they did not have much they could call their own, and the laird who was over them removed them from their home. So the father spoke to his sons saying, "We'll have to depart from here to make our living somewhere else".

*Flòiri n'in Eòghainn Dhòmhnaill  
Aonghais (Flora MacLellan)*



Photo by Tom Packer.

They travelled and travelled and travelled and travelled and travelled until finally they became hungry, and when they reached a river they decided they would have something to eat. So they took out their fishing lines and started fishing and caught a salmon. They cleaned the salmon they had caught, and as they were cleaning it what did they find in its belly but a gold ring! They washed off the ring and by God when they put it into water it transformed the water into wine! This astonished them greatly but they didn't let on about it.

Now I'm sure they intended to make a fortune from this, so they travelled on and as they would have said they ascended a mountain of fire and descended a mountain of glass, and finally arrived at a great house which they entered. Now this was a house of brigands and there was a host of men inside at their meal, and they gave the strangers food. But the lads' father said to them,

"I'm afraid this is not a good house at all, and it's better for us to depart."

Now it happened that they had already shown the ring to the brigands and off they went, but they forgot the ring.

"God help us," they said. "We thought were going to be well off, but now we have forgotten the ring!"

"Very well," said the oldest of the lads, "I think we should divide the night into three watches and try to recover the ring.

I'll go out the first part of the night, the second son will go out on the second part, and the youngest will go on the last watch."

So it was and off they went. They stayed put and the first part of the night out went the oldest lad. He reached the brigands' dwelling and whom did he encounter but the Ragged Grey Lad who was there busy drawing water.

"You're looking tired, weary and listless," he said to the Ragged Grey Lad.

"Indeed," answered the other, "I've been drawing and hauling water all day".

"And why are you doing that?"

"Well, we found a ring on the table and we dipped it in water, and now the others are in the wine-making business."

"Is that the way it was?" said the lad. "Give me the buckets and I'll lend you a hand."

So the poor Ragged Grey Lad handed him the buckets - it was so kind of the other one to help him - and the other lad grasped the buckets, gave him a good wallop and knocked him dead. Now he took the Ragged Grey Lad's clothes, dressed himself in them and took the buckets full of water. He arrived inside the house and everyone there was engaged in making wine and drinking, or whatever else they were up to. Now the lad said he was tired of hauling water and that he would be pleased if they would let him have one dip of the ring anyway.

Well, that was all right with them, so the brigands allowed him to dip the ring, and the lad seized one of the buckets and doused all of the candles with the water. A quarrel erupted in the house - You gave him a thump - No I didn't - Yes you thumped him - with people jumping on each other and laying each other low, so the lad cleared out home to wherever his father and brothers were, and gave no indication as to what had happened to him.

The next brother went out on the second quarter of the night, and the first thing he came upon was the Ragged Grey Lad lying dead. He saw a little gleam of light beside the chimney; he had a bow and arrows with him so he loosed an arrow and the man there said,

"You're very good with the bow and arrow. They say that whoever could put the giant's eye out and kill the grey otter on the loch yonder would have the king's daughter in marriage."

All right. The lad set out for home and when he returned he told them nothing of what he had encountered.

Then the third lad departed. He went on his way and encountered the same things: he ascended a mountain of fire and descended one of glass and arrived at the robbers' den, came upon the Grey Lad dead and the giant with the eye shot out of his head, but he continued on until he spied the grey otter on the loch. Well, the giant had told him, whoever would put the

*continued on page 11...*

## Naidheachd a' Chlachain - The Village News

# THE INTERPRETIVE SEASON OF 2009 AT BIG HECTOR'S POINT

Seumas Watson, Manager of Interpreter

*I*nterpretation of Gaelic Nova Scotia continued apace during the 2009 season as Highland Village introduced second person animation to the guiding approach and innovated through language transmission integrated with intangible interpretation on site. Along with scheduled house céilidhs, milling frolics, tunes, and square set dancing in the school house,

children's programming such as *Spòrs* and *Na Làithean Sona* and *Na Deugairean* remained well attended. Telling the Highland Village's story through the *Sgadan is Buntàta* (Herring and Potatoes) in-school program was delivered to its highest yet number of students during the pre-season Gaelic Awareness Month. (Perhaps not coincidentally, school visitation was substantially up when the Village opened in June.) Community outreach included the *Stòras a' Bhaile* folkschool project which featured a pioneering three days of immersion activity co-ordinated in partnership with the Father Brewer Celtic Collection, Angus L. Macdonald Library, Dr. John Shaw, School of Scottish Studies and Highland Village. (Report available on request. E-mail [watson-jb@gov.ns.ca](mailto:watson-jb@gov.ns.ca)). See also photo album on p.16.

This year's guide staff training took place in April with assistance from Carmen MacArthur, St. F.X. Celtic Department graduate who is now finishing a master's degree on Cape Breton stepdancing at Memorial University. The two weeks training aimed at refreshing Gaelic and cultural skills for use in daily interpretation. We were also pleased to have Mary Jane Lamond and Colin Watson on staff as animators this year. They did a great job in bringing their language and singing skills to the hill for enhanced intangible representations.

In the office, Marlene Ivey, a design & planning professional, has produced a blueprint for advancing Village objectives in tandem with the provincial Heritage Division's newly released Interpretive Master Plan. (<http://museum.gov.ns.ca/en/home/aboutns/mi/p.aspx>) Responding to recommendations for knowledge-based interpretation, Pauline MacLean, Village Collections Manager & Genealogist and Katherine MacLeod, Collections Assistant completed a comprehensive research project on the blackhouse

resulting in the document titled *The Gael in the 16th to 19th Century Scotland*. (see page 7). Its contents will inform material interpretation of the museum's Hebridean style blackhouse in upcoming seasons.

The 2009 season brought forward a new celebration complimenting rural life and culture in Gaelic Nova Scotia. Open Farm Day, a provincial event held on September 21st, was added to our calendar as agricultural places across Nova Scotia opened their doors to visitors highlighting the province's farming industry. The inclusion of this promotion is in keeping with "green" community outreach programming consisting of gardening seminars presented on-site by the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture. Adding to the site's material ambiance, Pioneer Day saw the beginnings of a pre-log cabin shelter for just arrived immigrants led by Donald Beaton and Marlene Ivey. Marlene also conducted a mask making workshop featuring Celtic themes prior to the once again highly successful *Oidhche nam Bòcan* / Halloween tour of skits based on Gaelic folklore.

Talks and workshop presentations during the 2009 season included demonstrations pertinent to cloth production, ably led by Textile Researcher Vicki Quimby, a Celtic Colours song workshop, along with a packed daily animation schedule. The *Seòmbar na Gréineadh* / Summer Room lectures featured Dr. John Shaw, University of Edinburgh speaking on economic benefits of the *Tobar an Dualchais* / Kist O' Riches digitization project and Dr. John Gibson, who delivered the annual Joe Neil MacNeil Memorial Lecture.

September brought the return of John Veverka, of John Veverka & Associates, Interpretive Consultants, who advised Highland Village management and animators on best practices for theme develop-



Vicki Quimby leads a Natural Dye workshop in June.



Liz Rigney and Starr Dobson broadcast CTV Live and 5 live from Highland Village in July.

ment based on his analysis of the Highland Village site and its current animation. Building on a 2008 visit, his suggestions during consultations will help to upgrade and streamline the Village's capacity for telling the Gaels' story in Nova Scotia. Veverka also consulted with Nova Scotia Museum sites Sherbrooke Village, Ross Farm, Fundy Geological Museum, Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic and Le Village Historique Acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Summer students continued to make important contributions to interpretation and daily operations. Student staff for 2009 were Maria MacMillan - who also led the *Spòrs* program, animators Cindy and Crystal MacNeil, Evan Bonaparte and Laura MacNeil, and PR coordinator Shannon MacIver. All did a great job and we wish them the best with their various studies.

Finally, and as always, acknowledgment and sincere gratitude is due to all staff and volunteers whose combined efforts make it possible to tell Nova Scotia's Gaelic story to community and the greater public. ☺



Summer students (left-right): Shannon MacIver, Cindy MacNeil, Maria MacMillan, Crystal MacNeil, Laura MacNeil and to right Evan Bonaparte.







Mary Jane Lamond leads a square set as part of our Fiddles and Feasts learning experience developed in cooperation with the Eskasoni First Nation. The program features Gaelic and Mi'kmaq cultures.



Four Sgoil MhicFhrang/Rankin School students took part in a cooperative work experience program at Highland Village. (L-R) Rodney Chaisson, Evan Bonaparte, Sarah MacSween, Joanne MacIntyre, Katrina MacKenzie, Sarah MacDonald and Marlene Ivey.

### *The Knight of the Ring*

*continued from page 9...*

big giant's eye out and kill the otter on the loch yonder would have the king's daughter in marriage.

All right. So off he went to the loch and he saw the otter, but he loosed an arrow at it and killed it. Then he returned home as well without letting on what had happened.

He and his father and two brothers departed then, and travelled and travelled. They hadn't gone far before they reached the king's dwelling.

"What's going on here?" he said.

There was a large and handsome gathering, and the king and all the rest were [displeased]. So who came to meet them but the king, looking very sorrowful, and the princess – the young wife – weeping and crying.

"O," said the knight, "what is this?"

O, the king told him how things were: the daughter in the estate from the beginning, whoever put the eye out of the big giant in the great house below – or whatever name they had for it – I don't remember – and killed the grey otter on the loch yonder would have the princess – that is his own daughter – to marry.

"And who has performed that feat?"

"The man who has served as swineherd for some time – over a number of years – to myself and my father is the one who has killed the otter on the loch yonder, and now he's getting to marry the princess."

"Well, that's a shame."

"In any case you're welcome to come to the wedding."

Said the knight, "Wherever I am my three sons are there too, and wherever my three sons are, there am I."

All right. They came in and they were partaking of the feast, I'm sure, and the

poor swineherd was presented with a dram; I'm sure he was not familiar with being served with fine vessels, just food for pigs. So they brought him one of the gold vessels they had – I have no idea how old it would have been – just to [distribute] the dram – and alas! The vessel fell and broke into three pieces on the floor.

At that the king said, "Many's the thing that has vexed me before and vexes me now, but I'm truly saddened about the vessel on account of how old it is, and it was never broken before."

"Is there any means," said the Knight of the Ring, "by which it can be repaired?"

"Well, if there were three people present who could recount a story without a word of a lie from one end to the other, now that would restore the vessel."

Well, I'm sure they went through all who were present until they came to the Knight of the Ring, who said to the eldest son,

"Won't you tell your own story?"

So the lad began with how they set out, being put off their place, and how they found the ring in the belly of a salmon in the brook; how they arrived at the robbers' den and his own feat: how he laid low the Ragged Grey Lad and got the ring. And lo and behold didn't one piece of the vessel leap back into its former place! The poor swineherd was getting quite agitated, I think, over this.

The knight arose and told the second son to stand up, so the lad told them what had happened to him: that he had put out the eye of the great giant who was beside the fire, once he was told that whoever put out the eye of the big giant and killed the grey otter on the loch would have the princess in marriage. And then another piece of the vessel rose up and adhered to it! Now the king was becoming quite content, but I think the poor swineherd was growing sorrowful.

The knight's third son arose and

recounted what had befallen him: how he departed from their dwelling and how he came upon the Ragged Grey Lad and the brigands, and how he killed the otter on the loch yonder. And lo and behold, the entire vessel was sticking together so well!

The king spoke, "And so it was you who killed the otter on the loch yonder."

"It was," replied the lad.

"Then," said the king, "it seems this man is lying to us."

So he seized the swineherd, and the princess was so happy to see the [other] fine lad. The lad was dressed again in the garments of a swineherd and given pig-feed to eat.

And that's where I left them. ☺

*A e-mail post on The Tale of Knight of Ring from John Shaw said: Came across the attached story and thought you may not have used it for An Rubha. A couple of things re: its background. Back in the '70s there was a reference to it in the collection in Sydney from a man in Broad Cove called Aingidh Aonghuis Ailein who was still living, but at age 89, or so, could not recall the whole thing. I spent 2 years trying to track it down and finally mentioned it in passing to Flora MacLellan who said 'Oh sure, I know that one'. I sent it on to Alan Bruford (late scholar at the School of Scottish Studies), who was also unable to figure out where it fits in the international tale classification system. So there it is. Anyway, it's a near miracle that the story survived to be recorded at all. The ring in the salmon motif, which Joe Neil (MacNeil) also had, is an old one, connected with Polycrates in ancient Greek and appearing throughout Europe.*

*Recited by Flora MacLellan Broad Cove, Inverness Co.C2B4 15/11/77*

*© Recorded, transcribed and translated by Dr. John Shaw, Senior Lecturer in Scottish Ethnology, University of Edinburgh.*

# A' Tighinn Beò air Tìr / Making a Living ARCHIE DAN MACLELLAN AT WORK IN THE WOODS AND MINES OF CAPE BRETON

Collected by Seòsamh Watson



Dia gar teasraigin, nam faice' sibh na cuitheachan sneachd' a bhiodh a' sin! Chunna mise aon oidhche sin — na *toters* a' dol a-staigh St Ann's. Bha sin *twenty-five miles* bho 'n *depot camp* agus bha na *company teams* ann 's bha *country team*. Thòisich na h-éich air dol far a' rathaid: b'fheudar dhaibh na lòid fhàgail. Chan fhaca sibh a leithid do *go-ahead* riamh aig éich a' dol fodha 's a' tuiteam 's — an t-sneachda.

Gu *lucky*, leum mise — se *company team* a bh'ann. Bha aon each agam, *you know*, a mhacraiche *on horseback*, ach an còrr dhiubh thilgeadh iad thu dheth. Bha corra-theam ann, fhios agaibh, éich nach robh math dhut a dhol — (air an druim). Cha robh iad 'nan *saddle-horses* idir.

**SW:** O, cha robh iad cleachdte ri sin?

Ach cha leig mi às mo chuimhne gu bràch an oidhch' a bha sinn a-muigh. B'fheudar sinn na lòid fhàgail. An sneachd', cha chreid sibh. Bha e còig troighean *solid* a' sin, dìreach. Thòisich na h-éich air dol far a' rathaid.

Mu dheireadh nuair a fhuair na h-éich, bhiodh iad — làidir — dh'fheuch iad — bha'n *track*, fhios agaibh, air a falach leis a' *fall* shneachda a rinn i.

**SW:** Ciamar a fhuair sibh air n-adhart?

O, fhuair sinn — fhuair sinn a-staigh, fhios agaibh. Bha na h-éich, chaich — na h-éich, chaich am fuasgladh às na *sleigh*achan, fhios agaibh, 's chaich an leigeil *loose*, fhios agaibh. Agus bha fear dha na h-éich agamas, fhuair mi dìreach cothrom air, fhios agaibh. Bha e air deireadh air càch 's bha àsan car a' deanadh nan *track* ach fhuair na h-éich mìomhodh a bha gabhaidh. Fhuair. Fhios agaibh, gun *chòrcadh* fhaighinn cuideachd, éich mhòra na *company*, bha miadachd mhór anna. Rachadh iad *eighteen's twenty-one hundred*.

**SW:** Agus an robh Gàidheil còmhla ruibh an sin?

O, bha, bha na Gàidheil ann gu dearbh 's bh'iad shìos bho àite ris an can sinn *Murray* ann an *St. Anns*, theireadh iad. Bha Gàidhlig aca 'ga bhruidhinn 's bha Fraingis aca 's Beurla. Bha a chuile seòrsa cànan aca. Bha, a chuile seòrsa cànan 's daoine — daoine *complete* a bh'annda uile 's iad ag obair cruaidh, bha.

**SW:** Gu dé an seòrsa obair a bhiodh — ri dhèanamh agaibh?

Uell, innsidh mise dhut dé an obair a bhathas a' dèanadh a' siod. Bhathas a'

gearradh *pulpwood*, mar an duirt iad, airson paiper 's bh'iad dol dha na *States* a-mach. Agus bh'iad a' gearradh — na *cords*. Ceithir troighean a dh'fhad agus bha *cord* ochd troighean a dh'fhad 's ceithir — ceithir troighean a dh'àirde. Agus chunna mis' iad a' cur dà fhichead — ceud — ceud mìle *cord* leis an abhainn, iad 'gan draibheadh, fhios agaibh, a' tuigsinn, sìos leis an abhainn. Chunnaic.

Agus sin bhathas — nuair ruigeadh iad an acarsaid shìos — 's e Acarsaid *St Anns* theireamaid leatha — bha *boom* crosach fon acarsaid, maide agus *chainichean* aca. Bhiodh am fiodh, fhios agaibh — seo cumail an fhiodh gun dhol a-mach. Agus sin nuair thòisich iad air lòdadh na soithichean bhiodh — bàta mach 's e *pushadh* an fhiodha agus uidheam eile 'ga thoirt a-staigh, fhios agaibh, gus a —. Bh'iad a' toirt dheth na carta agus an sin bha iad 'ga phoidhleadh air na soithichean móra seo 's iad a' dol dha na *States*.

Bhiodh — mu dhà mhìle *cord* air a chuile *steamer* uamhasach a bha seo.

**SW:** O, sin poidhle — poidhle fiodha.

Bha. O, tha sin ceart.

**SW:** Agus an robh an obair sin cunnartach?

O, bha. Dh'fheumadh duine — an aire thoirt a' draibheadh. Bha mise — bha *job* agam a bhithinn còmh' ris an fhear a bhiodh — bhiodh e — nam biodh *jam* mór aca dh'fheumadh duine dhol a-mach air an *jam* agus — tha cuimhne 'm am fear seo, 's ann a mhuinntir *New Brunswick* a bha e. Cheangladh e — an *dynamite*, còig no sia dha na *sticks* seo, ri chèile agus bha *cord* mór fad' againn. Dh'fheumainn-sa dhol amach, fhios agaibh, air an *jam* gabhaidh a bha seo agus, uell, bha *weight* air a' seo dol sìos ann am pòca 's —. Agus — dh'oibricheadh an *dynamite* na b'fhèarr ann an uisge na dh'oibricheadh e — bha i — agus nuair a rachainn 's leagainn seo bhiodh e cunnartach bhon nach biodh fhios aig duine cò dhiubh *startadh* gus nach *startadh* an — *jam* nuair a bhiodh duine 'ga leagail seo sìos am meadhain an — *jam* a bha seo. Bha mis' a' sin a' teicheadh a-staigh gu tìr agus bha sinn a' sin a' dol ro — fo chraobh mhór uamhasach a bhiodh ann agus bha esan, dìreach, uell, *you know*, ag *explodeadh* seo. Rachadh na *blockan* sin suas, tha mi creidsinn, mu sia — na ceudan troigh san adhar 's pàirt dhiubh dol 'nam pìosan, 's dh'fhalbhadh an — an damba an uair sin

leis an fhiodha. Se obair chunnartach a bh'ann. 'S e.

**SW:** Cha bu thoil liom fhéin a bhi ro-theann orra.

Cha b'eadh. Ach chaidh mi 'n àitichean na bu chunnartaiche nuair bha mi 'g obair sa mhèinn shuas, chaich. Chaich. Àite gabhaidh th'ann am mèinn ghuaill a bhi 'g obair. 'S e.

**SW:** Agus an deach sibh a ghoirteachadh riamh?

Uell, taing do Dhia! chaidh mi gu math teann air ach — theab a' spioraid orm aon là, *fall* a thàinig do ghual. Am fear a bha còmhla rium bha e air an taobh staigh agus bha mise air an taobh mach 's cha b'urrainn dhomh faighinn às gus an dàinig cuideachadh. Agus chaich — uell, chaich gearradh a dheanadh air mo cheann a' là seo, ach cha robh guth agam. Bha mi *lucky* nach dàinig a' *fall* ceart orm, bha. Bha. Ach tha mi beò fhathas air a shon. Chaich mise thoirt *seventy-five miles* air *sleigh*ich an àm a' gheamhraidh agus mu dhà throigh — ceithir troighean sneachda ann agus mo thoirt-sa do dh'ospadal suas aig *Inverness* agus gu robh *surgery* — an oidhche sin. Agus b'fheudar dhomh dhol dha 'n dàrna *surgery* agus tha mi beò fhathas.

**SW:** Thàinig sibh throimhe. Chaidh innseadh dhomh gu robh sibh 'nur ceud *phatient* ans an osdabal.

Bha. Mise a' cheud duine chaich ann. 'S e, dìreach.

**SW:** Dé a' bhliadhna bha siod?

*Nineteen twenty-four*, an *nineteen* — *teenth of January*, *nineteen twenty-four* agus 's mi 'cheud duine agus chaich ioma' duine ann bhuaith sin.

**SW:** O, 's ioma' sin!

'S ioma'.

**SW:** Ach bha 'n t-astar sin fada.

Bha, *seventy-five miles* air cùl *sleigh*achan. Bha.

**SW:** An e éich...?

Eich. Éich a bha 'ga tharrainn. Éich a bha 'gam tharrainn. Bha mi, uell, *seventy-five miles* a' tighinn a-mach eadar a' choille 's *Inverness* shuas — ó, 's e *strip* do dh'astar a bh'ann.

**SW:** Dé 'n ùine — a thug sin? Dé cho fada?

*Start* sinn aig seachd uairean sa mhadainn anns a' choillich agus — *land* sinn shuas an *Inverness* mu ochd uairean feasgar agus chaidh an *surgery-work* sin a chur ormsa — aig naoidh uairean a dh'oidhche. Agus — agus cha robh fhios 'am nuair bha mi dùsgadh às a — *you*



know [SW: anaesthetic?]. Cha robh fhios 'am càit an robh mi. Thòisich mi air coimhead mu chuairt.

'Uell, chan eil mi aig an taigh againn fhéin,' thuirt mi. 'Ach — chan eil — chan eil mi an *St Ann*,' thuirt mi, 's a' champ.'

SW: — na's motha.

Chan e. A' seo mar a bha mi. *Studaig* mi orm fhéin: bha mi san ospadal. Tha. Bha ceithir nursaichean 'nan seasamh aig an leabaidh 's an t-eagal orra gun leumainn aisde. Dh'fhaighneachd mi dhaibh a' sin a' robh mi dol a bhi *all right*? 's thuirt iad gu robh.

'S dh'iarr mi deoch an uisge. Cha robh math dhaibh sian...(a thoirt dhomh) Thigeadh iad agus uisge aca ann an tube bheag 's dh'fheumainn-sa balgam thoirt às. Ach bha 'n sin té a-staigh 's thuirt mi rithe, 'An ainm a Dhia their dhomhsa glaine mhath do dh'uisge!'

'O, chan eil math dhomh! chan eil math dhomhs!'

'Their e nuas 's chan innis mi idir e!'

Dh'òl mise glaine uisge 's 'a d'rinn e sian orm. ☺

#### TRANSLATION

God save us, if you'd seen the snow-drifts that would be there! I saw one night there — the toters going in to St. Anns. That was twenty-five miles from the depot camp and the company teams were there and a country team. The horses started to go off the road: they had to abandon the loads. You never saw such a commotion with horses going under and falling in — the snow.

Luckily I jumped [for it] — it was a company team. I had a single horse, you know, as a rider, on horseback, but the rest of them would throw you off. There was the odd team there, you know, horses that ... They weren't saddle-horses at all.

SW: Oh, they weren't used to that?

But I'll never forget the night we were out. The loads had to be abandoned. The snow, you won't believe [it]. It was five feet solid there, exactly. The horses started going off the road.

Finally, when the horses got — they were strong — they tried to — the track, you know, was hidden by the fall of snow that came.

SW: How did you get on?

Oh, we got — we got in, you know. The horses were — the horses got — released from the sleighs, you know, and they were let loose, you know. And one of my horses, I just got a chance on him, you know. He was behind the rest and they were sort of coming in a track but the horses suffered abuse that was dreadful. They weren't wearing corked shoes, the big company horses. They were very sizeable. They would weigh eighteen & twenty-one hundred pounds.

SW: And were there Gaels along with you there?

Oh, yes, the Gaels were there, certainly and they were down from a place we call Murray in St Ann's, [as] they'd say. Gaelic was spoken by them and they spoke French and English. They had every sort of language. They had, every sort of language and they were — 'complete' people and hard-working. Yes.

SW: What sort of work had you — to do?

Well, I'll tell you what work was being done there. Pulpwood was being cut, as they said, for paper and they were [it was] going out to the States. And they were cutting — the cords. Four feet long,



Gilleasbuig Eòghainn Dhòmhnaill 'ic Aonghais (Archie Dan MacLellan)

and a cord was eight feet long and four — four feet high. And I saw them putting forty — a hundred — a hundred thousand cords down the river, driving them, you know, you understand, down the river. I did.

And then they were — when they'd reach the bay below — St. Ann's Bay we call it — they had a boom across under the bay, a beam with chains. The lumber, you know — this would be preventing the lumber from going out. And then, when they began to load the ships there would be — a boat out and it would be pushing the wood and another machine bringing it in, you know to — . They would take the bark off and then they'd pile it up on these big ships headed for the States.

There would be — about two thousand cords on every huge steamer here .

SW: Oh, that's a pile of — lumber.

Oh, that's right.

SW: And was that work dangerous?

Oh, yes. A person had to be careful

driving. I was — I had a job where I had to be along with the man who'd be — he'd be — if they had a big jam a person had to go out on the jam and — I remember this man, his people were from New Brunswick.

He would tie — the dynamite, five or six of these sticks, together and we had a big, long cord. I had to go out, you know, on this dreadful jam and well, there was a weight on this going down into a bottle and — . And the dynamite would work better in water than it would work [out of it] — it was — and when I'd go and set this it would be dangerous because a person wouldn't know whether the jam would start [break up] when he'd be setting this in the middle of the jam. I'd be making off to the shore and then we'd go through — under a huge big tree that was there and then, hed, well, just explode this [the charge]. The blocks would go up then, I believe, about six — hundreds of feet into the air and some of them go into pieces and the dam would go then with the wood. It was dangerous work. Yes.

SW: I wouldn't like to be too close to them myself.

No. And I went into more dangerous places when I was working up in the mine. I did. Yes. A coal-mine is a dreadful place to work in. It is.

SW: And did you ever get hurt?

Well, thank God! I came fairly close to it, but — my spirit failed me one day. A fall of coal came. The man who was with me was on the inside and I was on the outside and I couldn't get out till help came. And my head was, well — cut that day but I wasn't injured. I was lucky the proper fall didn't come [down] on me. Yes. But I'm living yet in spite of it. I was taken seventy-five miles on a sleigh in winter-time in about two feet — four feet of snow and I was brought up to the hospital in Inverness and there was surgery — that night and I'm living yet.

SW: You came through it. I was told that you were the first patient in the hospital.

I was the first person to go into it. Yes, indeed.

SW: What year was that?

Nineteen twenty-four, the nineteenth of January, nineteen twenty-four and I was the first person and there have been many since then.

SW: Oh, many a one!

Yes.

SW: And that was a long journey.

Yes, seventy-five miles on the back of sleighs. Yes.

SW: And horses? Was it horses?

*continued on page 15...*

# MAC-TALLA.

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

Vol. I.

SIDNI, C. B., DI-SATHAIRNE, MAI 28, 1892.

No. 1

## Deòrsa Tàillear 'S Na Teachdairean

*Bho Mhac-Talla, Vol. 1, No. 1,  
Sidni C.B.,  
Di sathairne, Mai 28, 1892*

Nuair a bha Seumas I na rìgh air Sasuinn 's air Alba, thàinig trì teachdairean ionnsaichte á dùthaich chéin a dh'fhaicinn ciamar a bha Breatuinn a thaobh sgoiltean agus cholaistean. An déidh dhaibh gach fiosrachadh a bha dhith orr' fhaotainn, chaidh iad a shealltainn an rìgh, a ghabh riu gu suilibhir, 's aig an robh còmhradh mór riu. Anns an t-seanachas a bh'aca, thuirt na teachdairean gu robh iad a' meas Oilthighean Bhreatainn os ceann tighean-foghluim an t-saoghail uile, 's gun deanadh rìoghachdan eile gu math nan leanadh iad a dòigh. Cha d'fhuair iad coire ach do aon nì, 's b'e sin nach robh Oilear Chomharaidhean (*Professor of Signs*) anns na h-oilthighean. Nam biodh sin ann, bha gach nì ceart.

Cha robh an rìgh deònach gum faighte dad ceàrr 'na rìoghachd, agus thuirt e ris na teachdairean gu robh a leithid sin do chathair ann an Oilthigh Obar Dheathain, am baile a b'fhaide air falbh anns a rìoghachd. Chuir seo ioghnadh mór orra agus thuirt iad gu feumadh iad an t-Oilear fhaicinn mum pilleadh iad dhachaidh. Cha robh fhios aig an rìgh dé 'dheanadh e, ach ghabh e lethsgèul gum b'e seo toiseach an t-samhraidh, 's nach biodh an t-oilthigh cruinn gu treis a' gheamhraidh, agus nach biodh na h-Oilearan aig an tigh gu sin. Fhreagair iadsan gum bu mhath a b'fhiach dhaibh feitheamh fad shia mìosan, airson nì cho iongantach seo fhaicinn. Chunnaic an rìgh nach robh dol às dha, 's air dha bhi cinnteach nach robh a leithid de chathair anns a rìoghachd, sgrìobh e le làimh fhein litir gu Oilearan an Oilthigh, ag innse mar a bha, 's a' guidhe orra an dìchioll a dheanarh air duine fhaotainn airson na cathrach.

Air do na h-uaislean sin a' chùis a reusanachadh eatorra fein, dh'aontaich iad an ònair a thairgse do Dheòrsa Tàillear,

greusaiche Obar Dheathain, duine nach d'rinn iomrall riamh ann an càs air bith, 's a bha air aon suil. Thurt iad ris gum faigheadh iad gun 's bannan Oileir dha 's gu robh e ri suidhe 's a' chathair gun e ràdh facal airson na chunnaic e riamh, ach gum faodadh e comharra sam bith a dheanamh a fhreagairt an comharraidhean-san.

Ghabh Deòrsa ris na cumhdachan seo gu toilichte. Thàinig toiseach a' gheamhraidh, 's thàinig na teachdairean gu Obar Deathain. Air an latha shuidhichte, chaidh an toirt astigh do thalla 'n Oilthigh. Bha Deòrsa Tàillear, le ghùn 's le bhannan, 's le lethshuil na shuidhe 's a' chathair. Chrom na teachdairean an cinn gu modhail ri Oilear nan Comharaidhean. Chrom an t-Oilear a cheann rìusan. Shìn a' cheud teachdaire amach aon mheur ris an Oilear. Shìn an t-Oilear amach dà mheur ris an teachdaire. Shìn an dàrna teachdaire trì mèirean amach ris an Oilear. Chrath an t-Oilear a dhòrn ris na teachdairean. Thug an treas teachdaire *orange* às a phocaid 'ga cumail suas fa chomhair an Oileir. Thug an t-Oilear pìos de dh'aran coirce' as a phocaid 's chum se e fa chomair nan teachdairean. Chrom na teachdairean an cinn gu modhail arithist, agus chaidh iad amach. Lean na h-Oilearean eile iad, dh'feuch de bhàrail a ghabh iad air Oilear nan Comharaidhean. Thuirt iad gu robh iad air an deagh phàigheadh air son feitheamh fad leth-bhliadhna ris na chunnaic iad an diugh.

Ars a cheud fhear, "Thog mise aon mheur, a' ciallachadh nach eil ann ach aon Dia. Shìn esan dà mheur a' ciallachadh gu robh dà phearsa ann, an t-Athair 's a Mac."

Thuirt an dàrna teachdaire,—"Thog mise trì mèirean a' ciallachadh gu robh trì pearsa ann—an t-Athair, a Mhac agus an Spiorad Naomh. Dhùin an t-Oilear a dhòrn, a' ciallachadh gu robh na trì pearsa sin 'nan aon."

Thuirt an treas teachdaire, "Thug mise mach *orange*, a' nochdadh maithreas Dhé ann a bhi toirt dhuinn measan cho briagha 's cho fallainn. Thug esan amach

pìos de dh'aran coirce, a shealltainn gum b'e aran os cionn gach nì, taice na beatha."

Thriall na teachdairean còire air an turus dhachaidh, ag aideachadh gum faca iad an latha sin ioghnadh an t-saoghail!

Bha na h-Oilearan a nis ro- thoileach air bàrail Dheòrsa fhaotainn air a' chùis. Nuair a chaidh iad astigh, dh'fheòraich e gu feargach gu dé na daoine thug iad dha ionnsaidh mar sid.

"Bha fhios aca glé mhath gu robh mi air lethshùil, 's chan fhoghnadh leis a' cheud thoirmeasg ach a mheur a shineadh rium, ag innse, dhomh nach robh agam ach aon sul! Shìn mise mach mo dhà mheur a dh'innse dha-san gu robh m' aon shùlsa cho math ris an dà shùl aige-san. Shìn an dàrna fear amach trì mèirean a dh'innse dhomh nach robh againn ach trì sùilean eadarainn. Dhùin mise mo dhòrn a dh'innse dha gu spadainn e."

"Mar nach biodh sin gu leoir, thug an treas fear *orange* as a phocaid a shealltuinn nan nithean matha bha fàs 'nan dùthaichean a tha fad air toiseach air an dùthaich bhochd againne. Thug mise mach pìos de dh'aran coirce a shealltuinn dha gu robh sid móran nì b'fheàrr na gach *orange* 's meas eile dh'fhàs riamh 'nan dùthaich-san." ☺

## TRANSLATION

### George Taylor and the Envoys

*From Mac-Talla, Vol. 1, No. 1  
Sydney, C.B.  
Saturday, May 28, 1892*

When James the First was king of England and Scotland, three scholarly envoys from a foreign nation came to see the state of universities and schools in Britain. Having garnered all the information they sought, they went to see the king who merrily greeted them and engaged them in much conversation. During their talks, the envoys stated that they considered British universities superior to other



schools anywhere in the world and that other kingdoms would do well to follow their example. They found no fault except for one thing, there being no Professor of Signs in the universities. If that was corrected, all things were fine.

The king wasn't pleased that anything should be seen lacking in the kingdom, and he told the envoys that there was a chair of such at the University of Aberdeen, the city at the furthest extremity of the realm. This surprised them greatly and they said that they must see the professor before returning home. The king didn't know what to do, but he made the excuse that, since it was early summer, the university wouldn't resume until later in winter and the professors would be at home until then. They replied that it would be worth their while to wait six months to witness something so novel as this.

The king seeing no way around it, and ascertaining no such chair existed in the kingdom, he wrote, with his own hand, a letter to the university's professors describing the situation and requesting them to do their best in finding a person to fill the chair.

After considering the matter among themselves, the learned agreed to award the honour to George Taylor, an Aberdeen cobbler: a man who had never erred in any situation and who had only one eye. They informed him that he would get a professor's gown and sashes and that he was to sit in the scholar's chair without uttering a word of anything he had ever seen. George happily took to the offices.

Winter came and the envoys arrived in Aberdeen. On the appointed day, they were taken to the university's hall. George Taylor, with gown, sashes and one eye was sitting in his chair. The envoys politely nodded their heads to the Professor of Signs. The professor nodded in return. The first envoy held up one finger to the professor. The professor held up two fingers to the envoy. The second envoy put up three fingers to the professor. The professor shook his fist at the envoys. The third emissary took an orange out of his pocket, holding it up to

the learned one. The professor took a piece of oatcake out of his pocket, displaying it to the envoys. The envoys bowed their heads politely once again and departed. The other professors followed them to try and get their opinion of the Professor of Signs. The envoys declared that they were well rewarded for having waited half a year given what they had seen today.

The first one said, "I indicated with one finger, meaning that there is only one god. He held up two fingers, meaning there were two personages: the Father and the Son."

The second envoy said, "I put up three fingers, meaning there were three personages: the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. The professor closed his fist, meaning the three personages are one."

The third envoy said, "I took out an orange, demonstrating God's mercy in giving us fruits so beautiful and healthy. He took out a piece of oatcake that showed bread, above all else, is the staff of life."

The three cordial envoys continued on their way home acknowledging that they had seen that day one of the world's wonders.

The scholars were now anxious to get George's opinion on the matter. When they went inside (the hall), he angrily asked them what sort of men were those they had brought to him?

"They knew very well I am one-eyed, and it was undeserved rudeness to hold up his finger to tell me I only have one eye! I held out my two fingers to tell him that one eye was as good as both of his. The second fellow held up three fingers to say that we only had three eyes between us. I made a fist to let him know that I would flatten him."

"If that wasn't enough, the third fellow took an orange out of his pocket to show off the good things that grow in far off lands far in advance of our own poor country. I produced a piece of oatcake to show him it was a way better than any orange, or other fruit, that ever grew in their country. ☺

*Translated by Seumas Watson.*

**Archie Dan MacLellan**

*continued from page 13...*

It was drawn by horses. I was drawn by horses. I was, well, seventy-five miles coming out from the wood to Inverness, you know. Oh, it was bit of a journey.

**SW:** What time — did that take? How long?

We started at seven in the morning in the wood and — we landed up in Inverness about eight in the evening and I had that surgery-work [appendectomy] done on me — at nine o'clock at nine. And I didn't know when I was waking out of the — you know — [SW: anaesthetic?]. I didn't know where I was. I started looking round.

'Well, I'm not at our own home,' I said. 'But I'm not in St. Ann's,' I said, 'in the camp.'

**SW:** — either.

No. Here's were I was. I thought about it: I was in the hospital. Yes. There were four nurses standing at the bed and they were afraid — that I'd jump out of it, I asked them if I was going to be all right and they said I was. And I asked for a drink of water. They wouldn't give — they <couldn't give me> any. They'd come with water in a little tube and I'd have to take a drop out of it. But there was an old[er] one in there and I said to her,

'For God's sake give me a good glass of water!'

'Oh, I can't, I can't~'

'Bring it up and I won't tell at all!'

I drank a glass of water and it didn't do me any harm at all. ☺

*Archie Dan MacLellan (Gilleasbuig Edghainn Dhòmhnail 'ic Aonghais) lived in Broad Cove, Inverness County. Watch for more of Archie Dan's stories in the next issue of An Rubha.*

© Collected, transcribed and translated by Dr. Seósamh Watson, a recently retired Professor of Modern Irish at University College Dublin. Author of numerous articles and books on Gaelic language topics, he has collected folklore and samples of dialect extensively in the field throughout Cape Breton. Along with similar work in Ireland and Scotland, he is a founding member of the International Society for Dialectology and Geo linguistics, and joint editor of the multi-volume UNESCO Atlas Linguarum Europae, published by the University of Florence. A long time advocate for Gaelic at the community level, Dr. Watson is also a co-founder of Oideas Gael, Gleann Cholm Cille.



Each issue of AN RUBHA features an excerpt from Jonathan G. MacKinnon's MAC-TALLA (Echo) with translation. MAC-TALLA, published in Sydney, Nova Scotia, was the longest running Gaelic weekly (ending as a bi-weekly) 1892-1904. MacKinnon, born in Dunakin in 1869, published his first issue at 22 years of age. He was a life-long promoter of Gaelic and was involved in other publications including Gaelic translations of English literature. Digital copies of MAC-TALLA can be found on the Sabhal Mòr Ostaig website at: <http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/en/leabharlann/mactalla/>



## An Rubha Photo Album: Stòras a' Bhaile 2009

*Stòras a' Bhaile* 2009 convened three days of workshops, July 29, 30 and 31, focusing on language acquisition through living Gaelic culture. During this time, sixteen individuals registered to participate in activities based in the experience of Gaelic Nova Scotia's tangible and intangible cultures. In addition *Stòras a' Bhaile* drew attention to technical support for Nova Scotia's Gaelic culture through *Sruth nan Gàidheal*; the online portal containing a comprehensive representation of the province's Gaelic tradition in story, song and local history.

*Stòras a' Bhaile* philosophy is grounded on the concept that Gaelic language renewal in Nova Scotia depends on restoring a group identity based in shared cultural expressions. For emerging secondary-bilinguals expecting to use Gaelic as a natural medium for social affirmation, the supporting environment must offer an associated identity culturally and linguistically distinct. The mission for *Stòras a' Bhaile*: 2009 was to encourage common Gaelic usage in ways which have typified Gaelic world view to the present.

Overall objectives for *Stòras a' Bhaile* 2009 were as follows: Inform on and transmit Gaelic arts and folkways indigenous to Nova Scotia; Educate on uses of the *Sruth nan Gàidheal* website that compliment and reinforce Gaelic folklife skills and language transmission through the medium of a social environment; Identify, explore and experience Gaelic cultural expressions relevant to Nova Scotia; Encourage participation in Gaelic cultural expression by individuals, community groups and educational institutions; Bring detailed awareness to specifics of Nova Scotia Gaelic language and culture in a social environment designed for transmission of arts such as music, dance, singing, storytelling and home culture; Celebrate and share Nova Scotia's Gaelic traditions as a social resource owned by its inheritors and community of interest. Encourage the maintenance of Nova Scotia's Gaelic cultural assets as a renewable resource for community economic and social development.

*Stòras a' Bhaile* is a partner-based initiative. Coordination of resources and event planning was carried out by Highland Village staff members Seumas Watson, *Eòsag Nic an t-Saoir* (Joanne MacIntyre) and trustee Hugh MacKinnon along with Susan Cameron, librarian for the Father Brewer Celtic Collection, St. Francis Xavier University, Dr. John Shaw, Senior Lecturer, School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh and Gaelic singer Mary Jane Lamond. Funding support from the Office of Gaelic Affairs is gratefully acknowledged by the Highland Village Museum/ *An Clachan Gàidhealach* and the organizing committee. ☺







*Photos (Clockwise from far left)*

1. A' deanamh mharag le Catriona NicNill-  
Making maragan with Catherine MacNeil

2. Céilidh `s an taigh-sgoil - Céilidh in the  
schoolhouse (left to right: Mary Jane Lamond,  
Rod C. MacNeil, John Shaw, Allan MacLeod  
and Tiber Falzett.

3. A' seanachas le Anna NicFhionghain - In con-  
versation with Anna MacKinnon

4. Gabhaibh comhairle an t-seann tuathanaich -  
Ailean MacLeod tells how to best thin the  
turnips.

5. Togail an teine `s an t-seann nòs - Allan  
MacLeod demonstrates fire building in the open  
hearth.

6. An fhùirinn ghlan! - John Shaw teaches a tall  
tale to the group.

7. Bruidhinn air ceòl - Eòs Peadar discusses fid-  
dle music with John Shaw.

8. O bheul gu beul - Catherine MacNeil makes  
point on marag making to Carmen MacArthur.

9. Suas e! - Joe Peter MacLean playing tunes.

All photos taken by Shannon MacIver.



# Ag Èirigh Air Òrain / An Rubha SONG SELECTION (FROM Nòs is Fonn Collection)

## Cumha do Dhòmhnaill MacFhionghain

Collected from Maxie MacNeil

(Fonn)

Hò air ill a bha hò  
Hò air ill a bha hò  
Èiribh `illean `s òg i ò  
Mo chridhe trom `s cha neònach

(Chorus)

Hò air ill a bha hò  
Hò air ill a bha hò  
Rise up lads `s òg i ò  
My heart is heavy and no wonder.

1. Fhuair sinn sgeul an diugh bha bochd  
Gun deach Dòmhnall a chuir fo `n phloc  
Dh'fhàg siod do chàirdean fo sprochd  
`S do dhachaidh bho chd fo dhòrainn

(We received wretched news today that  
Donald was buried under the sod. It left your  
relations desolate and your household abject.)

2. Cha n-urrainn dhomhs' an diugh dhol  
ann  
Bhon a tha `ad sileadh dheòir  
Fechaidh mi le cridhe fann  
Ri rann a chur an òrdan

(I can't visit today and face their weeping.  
With a faint heart, I shall attempt to compose  
a verse.)

3. Tha do phàrantan `ad dhéidh  
Gun a h-aon aca glé threun  
Cha n-eil leigheas air an creuchd  
`S annad fhéin bha an dòlas

(Your parents who remain have lost their  
courage. There is no healing balm for their  
wounds. You were all in their hopes.)

4. Chaidh an sgaradh tric air thùs  
`S goirt a' lot tha `seo as ùr  
Nach fhaic `ad gu bràch do ghnùis  
No `n ùir a chaidh `gad chomhdach

(Often felt the first renting and sore the  
newest wound that they will never again see  
your face, or the dirt that covered you.)

5. `S i `r n-ùrnaigh ri Rìgh nam Feart  
Gu faigh iad gràsan `s neart  
`S suarach an ùine ri teachd  
Gun téid `ad dhachaidh

(Our prayer to almighty God is that they will  
be forged in grace and brief the time before  
they return to home.)

6. Choisinn thu iomadh clù  
Thuit thu ann an airm a' Rìgh  
`S iomadh òigear tha ri d' thaobh  
Air raointean na Roinn Eòrpa

(You won for them much  
reknown. You fell in the king's  
army. Many a lad lies by your  
side on the fields of Europe.)

7. Cha chuir mise teud air  
ghleus  
A sheinneas dhomh do  
chliù `s do bheus  
`S iomadh fear a bha `n éis  
A dh'fhairich feum do  
thròcair

(I can't tune a string that can  
sing your praise and virtue.  
Many is the one in time of  
need who felt the aid of your  
compassion.)

8. Cha bhiodh do chridhe  
dhaibh am foill  
Chleachd thu carrantas le  
loinn  
Théid iomadh ùrnaigh dha  
na neòil  
do chaoimhneas thoirt  
dhut sòlas

(Your heart held for them no  
deceit. You practiced charity  
by preference. Many prayers  
will travel to the skies that  
your benevolence will bring  
you happiness.)

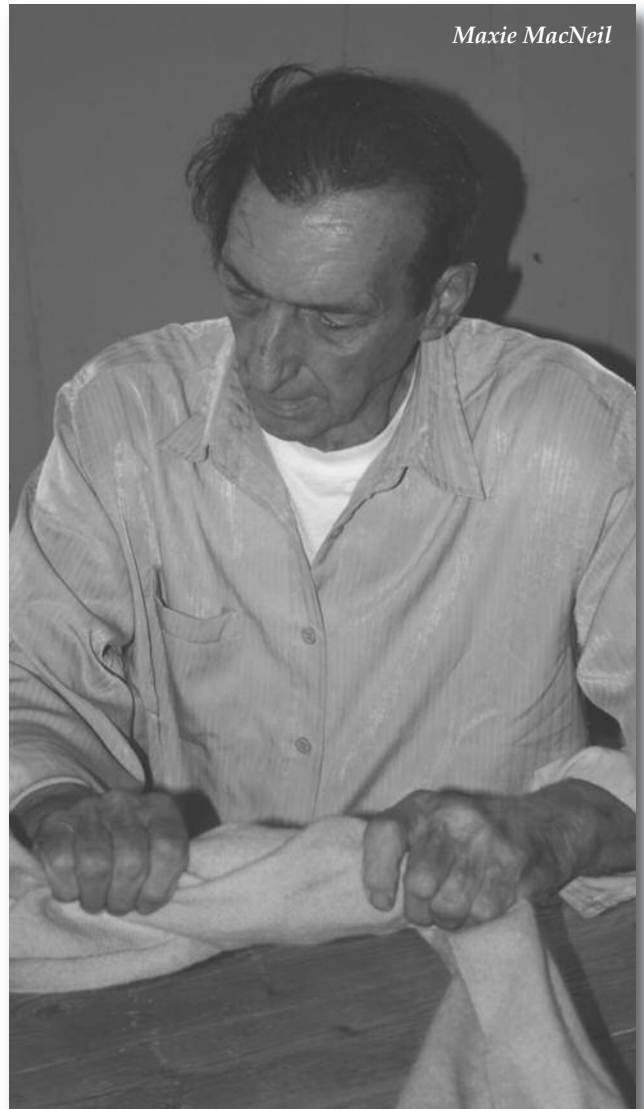
9. `S bochd nach robh mo  
theanga geur  
Mar na bàird a bha  
romham an dé  
Mholainn-sa do chliù `s do  
bheus  
`S an spéis thug mi dha `n òigear

(It's a pity that my tongue wasn't sharp like  
the bards who came before me. I would pro-  
claim your virtue and excellence and my  
fondness for this young man.)

10. Bho nach fhaic sinn thu air thalamh  
Guidheamaid tròcair dha t'anam  
Nuair a bhios ar cruadal seachad  
Tachraidh sinn ri Dòmhnall

(Since we won't see you on this earth, let us  
pray for mercy on your soul. When our trials  
are over, we will join with Donald.) ☺

This touching lament is the composition of  
the late Big Neil MacNeil (Nìall Mòr  
Mhìcheil Nill `ic Iain Mhóir) of Highland  
Hill, Victoria County, Cape Breton. It was  
made on the occasion of the death of Donald



Maxie MacNeil

Highland Village Library photo.

MacKinnon (Dòmhnall mac Ruairidh Lùsaidh) from nearby MacKinnon Harbour, who was killed in action shortly after his arrival in France during World War II. Well liked by his neighbours, Donald had kept a store in the Harbour prior to joining the army. Donald was tragically preceded by his brother, who died prematurely of illness.

The air to the song is well known as Mo chridhe trom `s cha neònach. It was recorded by Seumas Y. MacDonald for the Highland Village Nòs is Fonn project from the singing of Maxie MacNeil (Calum Dan Angus Iain Èoin) of Highland Hill. The words are also reported in the Nova Scotia Highland Village Song Collection, compiled by Susan MacNeil, Maxie's daughter, in 1985. Transcription and translation by Seumas Watson.



# HÒ RÒ GHOID THU `N NIGHEAN - JENNY DANG THE WEAVER

**W**ell known among Cape Breton, Scottish and Irish musicians, Jenny Dang the Weaver is one of the most readily identifiable reels played on the fiddle. The Gaelic words to the tune, as reported here, are from Mary Jane Lamond's CD *Suas E!*, track nine (available on-line through iTunes). Its CD title is *Hò Rò Ghoid Thu `n Nighean*.

Màiri Sine based her setting on the words and singing of the late Lauchie MacLellan (*Lachann Dhòmhnaill Nill*) of Broad Cove, Inverness County. Lauchie's singing of this port can be heard online at the Gael Stream website for the Cape Breton Gaelic Folklore Collection ([www.gaelstream.com](http://www.gaelstream.com)) Mary Jane tells us that in this setting the of turns is in reverse of the usual sequence.

Hò rò ghoid thu `n nighean  
Hò rò shlaod thu i  
Hò rò ghoid thu `n nighean  
Thug thu leat fo 'n aodach I

Hò rò you stole the girl  
Hò rò you dragged her off  
Hò rò you stole the girl  
You took her with you under the covers

Shiod agad mar ghoid thu `nighean  
Shiod agad mar shlaod thu i  
Shiod agad mar ghoid thu `n nighean  
Thug thu leat fo 'n aodach I

That's the way you stole the girl  
That's how you dragged her away  
That's the way you stole the girl  
You took her with you under the covers

This common tune is found in at least seventeen of the music books in Highland Village's Joe MacLean Collection, including *The Athole Collection of The Dance Music of Scotland*, 1883, Mozart Allan's *Second Collection of Dance Music for the Violin*, (no year given) and *Gow's Repositories - Part First of the Complete Repository of Original Scots Slow Strathspeys and Dances*, (no year given).

The oldest setting of Jenny Dang the Weaver in the MacLean Collection is reported in Robert MacIntosh's last collection dating to 1796. For further information see *The Fiddler's Companion*, © 1996-2009 Andrew Kuntz:

<http://www.ibiblio.org/fiddlers/JENN.htm> ☺

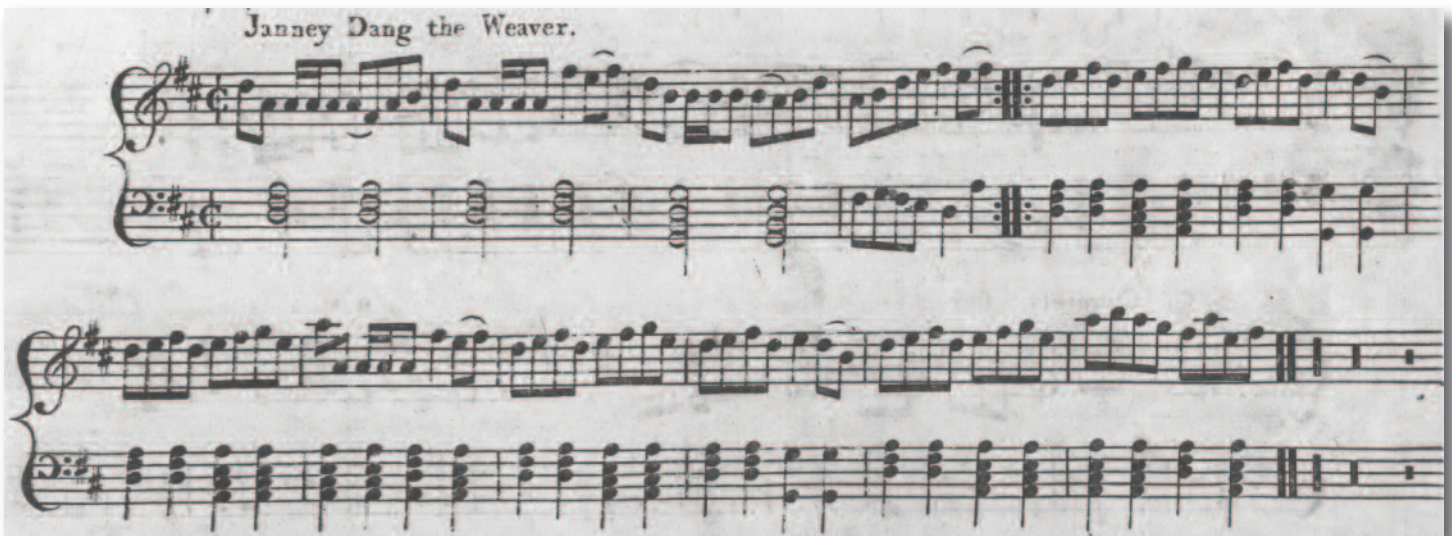


Image taken from the Robert MacIntosh Collection published in 1796, printed by A. MacGowan, Glasgow & Lengman & Brodrip, London.

## Tapadh leibh-se gu mór

The Nova Scotia Highland Village Society gratefully acknowledges the support of its government partners. In addition to our core funding from the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture & Heritage (Nova Scotia Museum/Heritage Division), support has also been received from: the **Province of Nova Scotia** through the Tourism Division of Tourism, Culture & Heritage, Departments of Agriculture, Transportation & Infrastructure Renewal, Economic & Rural Development, and the Office of Gaelic Affairs; the **Government of Canada** through Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation & Service Canada; and the **Municipality of Victoria County** through District 1, and the Recreation and Tourism Department.



# Ann's a' Ghleann 's a' Robh Mi Òg / In the Glen Where I was Young Iain Ruairidh Mhìcheil Steabhain Ruairidh 'ic Dhòmhnaill Òig

Recorded by Seumas Watson

*John Rory MacNeil was a native of Barra Glen, Victoria County. He lived his life and worked variously on the land as a farmer and woodsman. He concluded his working career as an attendant on the Iona-Grand Narrows car ferry. He and his wife*

Betty (Ealsaid Ruairidh Dhòmhnaill Ruairidh) raised a family of four. He was known as an exceptional Gaelic singer being much in demand at local milling frolics and *céilidhs*. John Rory was also known for his scalpel wit and a concise historical memory. His great grandfather "Dòmhnall Òg," a Barra man, fell with Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham. He vividly recalled a time when life was seasonal and tempered by Gaelic custom.

Is mise Iain Ruairidh MacNìll. Iain Ruairidh mac Mhìcheil 'ic Steabhain 'ic Ruairidh. Rugadh mi ann a' Gleann Bharraigh ann an naoidh ceud deug s'a cóig. B'e mo mhàthair Catrìona Chaimbeul: Catrìona Eòin Chaluim 'ic Eachainn. Nuair chaidh is' a bhreith gur e Gleann Mòr a bhiodh 's an àite seo.

Chan n-e Gleann Bharraigh a bh'air idir. Chaidh atharrachadh a chuir anns an ainm, agus b'fheàrr leam fhìn nach do chuir iad an t-atharrachadh seo ann. Cha chreid mi nach biodh Gleann Mòr glé mhath mar ainm air. Ach dh'atharraich 'ad an t-ainm nuair a thàinig a' cheud taigh-posta mach a' seo 's chuir iad Barra Glen air – Gleann Bharraigh. Iain Dòmhnallach a bha 'na mharsanta astaigh aig Idhe ann a' seo, tha mi 'smaointinn gur e a' fear, a chuala mise co-dhiù, a thug an t-ainm air a' seo.

**SW** - Cò as a bha ur cuideachd?

**IRM** - Bha iad á Barraigh. 'S ann às a sin a thàinig mo dhaoine-sa.

**SW** - Robh Beurla aca nuair a thàinig iad dhan taobh seo?

**IRM** - Sin ceist nach do chuir mi riamh.

**SW** - An e Gàidhlig a' chàinain a bha air a bruidhinn anns an taigh agaibh-se ...?

**IRM** - 'S e Gàidhlig a bh'againn astaigh gus o chionn ghoirid, faodaidh mi cantail.

**SW** - Dé an connadh a bha sibh a' cleachdadh astaigh?

**IRM** - 'Se connadh a bha iad ag ùsàideachadh a chumal blàths anns na

taighean. 'S ann 's a' gheamhradh a bhiodh sibh 'ga fhaighinn sin dha 'n taigh. Aig an àm a bha mise fàs suas 's a bhiodh sinn deanamh na obrach sin. Cha robh ach each 's sleighe na dà each 's sleighe a' dol dh'an choillidh-tuagh 's sàbh. Dh'fheumadh tu a h-uile nì aca sin obrachadh. Cha robh *power* idir ann. Dh'fheumadh a' sneachd a bhith ann air son gu faighteadh an aghaidh 's a choillidh, 's tarriung a dheanamh. Cha robh fàs math air fiodh a' seo idir. Gu h-àraidh connadh cruaidh. Cha robh sin goirid a làimh ri mo linn-sa. Cha mhór cha dugadh e mach fad a' gheamhraidh a

...*He was a recognised fiddler, story teller, singer and historian.*

*John Dan MacNeil was a man who never forgot where he came from.*

bhith cumail connadh ris an taigh. Ma fhuair thu a chuir ma seach, bha thu deanamh poidhl' air. Dh'fheumadh tu sin a shàbhadh agus a'sin a ghearradh mar a chanamaid 'na *bhlogan*, agus a'sin a spleatadh suas airson gun loisgeadh e 's a' stòbh. Bha obair gu léor ann 'na linn, nan gearradh tu 's a' choillidh e, agus an uair sin a'deanadh deiseil airson teine a thogail leis anns a'stòbh. Bha obair mhór ann am blàths a'chonnaidh. Na faigheadh tu connadh cruaidh mar a chanas sinn; beithe, na uinnseann, o 's e glé bheag do dh'uinnseann a bh'ann, ach 's e beithe 's meabail. Meabail geal, cha robh e uamhasach math air son connadh idir. Tha uamhas de *sap* ann: sùgh. Ach am meabail dubh, bha am fear sin math. Bha a' fear sin math gu teas, beithe-buidhe chanamaid ris.

**SW** - Am biodh sibh 'ga chòmhdach aig an taigh?

**IRM** - Cha bhitheadh. Dìreach 'ga thilgeil am miosg a chéile mar a rachadh e. Bha sinn a' feuchainn ri tighinn ro 'n t-saoghal le beagan do dh'obair air a'

bhaile. Dh'fheumadh tu curachd a dheanamh. Dh'fheumadh tu curachd a dheanamh aig àm na curachd 's bha 'n uair sin a'feur ri dheanamh. 'S bhiodh iad a'coimhead as deaghaidh a' bhuntàt' a chaidh a chuir. Dh'fheumte cumail glan na luibhean. An uair sin togail a' bhuntàta airson a gheamhraidh.

**SW** - Robh cleachadh àraid aca m'àm na curachd? 'S an àm a bha sin, ann an Eilean na Nollaig, thugadh iad a' sìol chun na h-eaglais gus beannachd fhaighinn air.

**IRM** - Bha sin ann nuair a bha mise gu math òg. Tha fiosam gun dug mi-fhìn sìol mar sin dha 'n eaglais air Là Bealltainn. Là Bealltainn a bha sinne 'ga thoirt. Cha b'ann Di dòmhnaich idir. Tha mi 'creidsinn nam biodh Di dòmhnaich a'tuiteam air Là Bealltainn. . . cha n-eil fhiosam a nisd gum biodh 'ad ann a' là sin, ach cha do dh'amaid sin ri m'linn-sa gu robh 'ad ann a' là sin. . . gu robh an Dòmhnach air Là Bealltainn. Ach 'se Là Bealltainn a bh'sinn a'toirt astaigh, o, sìol ge b'e dé bha dùil agad a chuir: coirce, eòrna, buntàta, salann. Bha salann ri bhi ann cuideachd air tàilleabh ... 's ann airson brìgh. Tha thu ag ùsàideachadh salann. Air son 's gum biodh sin math a chuir air, o, biadh a bhios tu a' toirt dha 'n chrodh na a leithid sin ... 's gum biodh e toradh le linn.

## TRANSLATION

I am John Rory MacNeil. John Rory son of Michael, son of Stephen, son of Rory. I was born in Barra Glen in 1915. My mother was Catherine Campbell. Catherine, daughter of John, son of Malcolm, son of Hector. She was from here about half a mile away.

I believe Barra Glen was called Great Glen about the time I was born. It wasn't called Barra Glen at all. The name was changed and I personally would prefer it had been left as it was. I think Great Glen would be perfectly suitable as a name. The name was changed when the post office was established out here and they named it Barra Glen. I believe it was the merchant John MacDonald in Iona





Iain Ruairidh Mhicheil Steabhain Ruairidh `ic Dhòmhnaill Oig (John Rory MacNeil)

that gave that name to this place, that's what I heard anyway.

**SW** - Where were your antecedents from?

**JRM** - They were from Barra. My people came from there.

**SW** - Did they speak English when they arrived here?

**JRM** - That's a question I never asked.

**SW** - Is Gaelic the language you spoke in your house?

**JRM** - I can say Gaelic was the language at home until just recently.

**SW** - What fuel did you use to keep your houses warm?

**JRM** - They used fire wood to heat the houses. You would bring it home in the winter. We did that work when I was growing up. There was only a horse and sleigh or two horses and a sleigh going to the woods, an axe and saw. These were hand operated. There was no power. It was necessary to have snow in order to get along in the woods and for hauling. Wood didn't grow very well here at all, especially hard wood. It wasn't near to hand during my time. It nearly took the best part of the winter keeping the house supplied with wood. If you got anything to put by you made a pile of it. You had to pile it and cut it into blocks, as we would say. It was then split up for burning in the stove. It was a lot of wood in its day. If you cut it in the woods and then

got it ready to make a fire there was a lot of work in producing fire wood heat. If you got hard wood as we say ... birch or ash ... oh there was very little ash ... but birch or maple ... white maple wasn't very good at all; there's too much sap in it. Black maple was good. That one was a good heat maker and birch, yellow birch, as we would say.

**SW** - Did you cover it over at the house?

**JRM** - No, we just threw them together whatever way they fell. We were trying to come through the world with a little work on the farm. You had to sow. You had to sow at the time of planting, and then there was hay to make, and they would look after the planted potatoes. The weeds would have to be cleaned out. Then the potatoes were lifted for winter.

**SW** - Did they have a special custom at planting time? In Christmas Island they took the seed to the church to be blessed.

**JRM** - That was done when I was very young. I know I took seed to church myself ... on Beltane Day (May 1st). We took it on Beltane day, not on Sunday at all. I believe if Sunday fell on Beltane Day ... I don't know if they would do it on Sunday, but it didn't happen in my time that Beltane Day fell on a Sunday. But it was Beltane Day we were taking in seed (to the church), whatever you expected to plant: oats, barley, potatoes and salt. Salt had to be included to ensure potency during its life expectancy. ☺

© Collected and translated by Seumas Watson.

## POILEASAIDH GÀIDHLIG *Highland Village's new Gaelic Policy*

**T**his past June, the Board of Trustees of the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society adopted the Highland Village's first Gaelic Policy. It is the first such policy for any Gaelic related institution or organisation in Canada. A fully bi-lingual version of the policy document is available in pdf format for download from our website (vision & mission page). Below is an excerpt from our Gaelic Policy:

**Introduction:** Thus this policy defines and establishes the guiding principals that underpin the fundamental role of Gaelic language and culture in the mandate and operations of the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society and its relationship with the Nova Scotia and international Gaelic heritage communities. Nova Scotia Highland Village Society is the local management group responsible, on behalf of the Nova Scotia Museum, Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture & Heritage, for the stewardship of the Highland Village Museum / *An Clachan Gàidhealach*, a provincial Gaelic folk-life museum.

Nova Scotia Highland Village has prepared a Gaelic Policy for three essential reasons: (a) to ensure that NSHV is at all times engaged in meeting expectations for its institutional mandate as a Member of Nova Scotia Museum as described in its inaugurating proclamation of 2000; (b) to develop a consistent approach to authentic interpretation of the Scottish Gaels and their descendants in Nova Scotia by means of their Gaelic language and culture; and (c) to represent and communicate Nova Scotia's Gaelic language and culture through best practices on-site and in the founding community.

This policy has been created in recognition of the public trust placed in Highland Village to interpret and uphold the Gaelic heritage of Nova Scotia by means of its language, culture and historical presence.

**Policy Aims:** The aims of this policy are to: (a) ensure that Gaelic language and culture are a fundamental and priority component in the interpretive and community-based activities of Highland Village; (b) ensure that Highland Village provides cornerstone support for on-going development of Gaelic language initiatives in the province of Nova Scotia; (c) prioritize understanding that Gaelic language and culture distinguishes the Scottish Gaels and their descendants as a major ethnic group in Nova Scotia; and (d) facilitate understanding of Gaelic Nova Scotia past and present through the language and culture of its founding and extant community. ☺

By Dr. Giulia De Gasperi



age population has always been around 200, with the exception of the boom years of the kelp industry when the population reached more than 400 inhabitants, we can see how the number after the Clearing had halved. Although no record of the names of the emigrants survives, we know from other sources (written and oral) that many people of Canna arrived in Nova Scotia and eventually settled in Cape Breton Island.

The families from Canna of which we have data available, settled mainly in Inverness County, on the west coast of Cape Breton, with the exception of one family who settled along the eastern shore of the Bras d'Or Lake, in Cape Breton County. These families brought with them their language, Scottish Gaelic, and their customs and traditions, all of which greatly contributed to shaping the cultural context of Cape Breton's newly found *Gàidhealtachd* or Scottish Gaelic-speaking community. This article aims at exploring and gathering together the cultural and social contributions of some of these Canna families to the Gaelic-speaking communities of Cape Breton Island.

#### THE KENNEDYS OF BROAD COVE

Memory of Canna-people in the Broad Cove Parish survived in the use of the adjective, *Canach* for a Canna-person, plural *Canaich*, among local residents in the twentieth-century and well-known *seanchaidh* Lauchie Dan N. MacLellan, known for his large repertoire of songs and tales, could trace his ancestry back to a Murdoch Kennedy, who emigrated from Canna in the late eighteenth century, through his mother Catherine MacLellan, née Kennedy. The Kennedys of Broad Cove in Inverness County are the first family of *Canaich* to be discussed here. They were known for their musical talents, especially in step-dancing and fiddling. Pioneer John Kennedy who first emigrated to Prince Edward Island from Canna in 1790 and eventually settled in Broad Cove began dancing classes. His son, Archie continued the tradition up to 1900 teaching the steps to dances such as the Flings, the Swords, *Seann Triubhas*, Flowers of Edinburgh, Jacky Tar, Duke of Fife, and The Girl I Left Behind Me. Ranald Kennedy (1870 – 1958), Archie's son, also knew how to dance. He had learned from watching his father teaching other people, then going to the barn to practice the steps by himself. He is,

however best known for being an excellent fiddle player, as Margaret Ann Cameron Beaton remembers:

*Ranald Kennedy of Broad Cove was a cousin of my father's, and what a violin player he was! And there was this Angus Campbell of Glenora Falls, and Ambrose Beaton. Well, every winter those three would come to our place twice, just to get my father dancing. ... oh, my goodness, but you couldn't hear any music like that now – just the old tunes, the very best!*

Indeed, musical talent ran in the family; Mary Kennedy, one of Ranald's daughters was also remembered as a good step dancer.

#### DR. KENNEDY OF MABOU

Another descendant of Canna families was Dr. Alexander E. Kennedy, a descendant of Red John Kennedy who came from Canna to Nova Scotia in 1791 and eventually settled in Broad Cove Marsh. Born in Kenloch, he had practiced medicine in Mabou until he died in 1940. He was a famous dancer and local accounts say he had participated in the very first Mabou picnic held in 1897. He had learned some steps from the aforementioned Archie Kennedy of Broad Cove as Tina Kennedy, Ranald's daughter, relates:

Dr. Kennedy of Mabou was a good dancer and he had a very hard step. My father (Ranald Kennedy) asked him once where he got it and Dr. Kennedy said, "I got it from your father (i.e., Archie) and it's the hardest step I know!"

His grandchildren are notable dancers as well, who are often praised as having a bit of the doctor's talent in their dancing!

#### THE JAMIESONS OF PIPER'S GLEN

The Jamiesons were another family of Canna background who emigrated to Cape Breton and settled at Piper's Glen. One of the sons, Neil, had a large family of boys and girls, all pipers, including Neil. The Jamiesons were a very well known and respected family and are mentioned in several works for their musical talent, including the following note:

An anonymous Antigonish Casket writer noted of South West Margaree in 1896 that '[t]here was

never any scarcity of musicians here. Violinists and bagpipe players could be counted by the dozen, and many of them excellent performers at that. I have often seen as many as eight, then and twelve musicians at a wedding.' The article lists fiddlers and pipers, dividing them by instrument and into earlier and later categories. (Gibson, 2002, p. 218)

Amongst the earlier pipers, the article lists Neil Jamieson and Gibson gives his patronymic, *Niall mac Lachlainn*, of Piper's Glen, of Canna stock. Amongst the later pipers, the Casket article cites John and Charlie Jamieson.

It is uncertain if piping was transmitted through the mother's or father's side. To add to this mystery, there is a family tradition that links the Jamieson's musical ability to supernatural influence of the fairies. The family is also mentioned in Clara Denis' *Cape Breton Over*, a travel log of her journey to the island, published in 1942:

'I found myself entering a lovely Glen and it took its name from a family of Jamiesons who lived here and who all played the bagpipes – the girls of the family as well as the boys.'

'I remember them,' said an aged man. 'There was a big family o' them and every last one o' them played the pipes. I can hear their music yet when they'd be playing in the open, here in the Glen.'

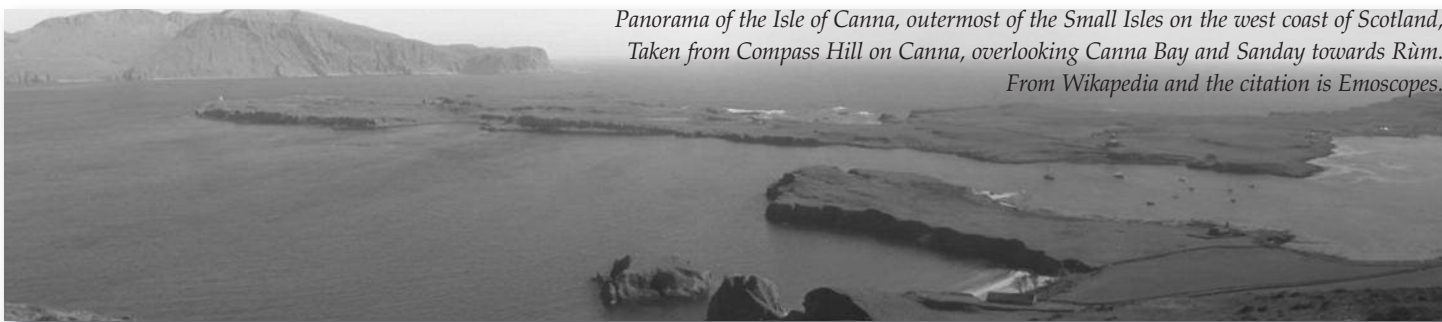
Unfortunately, economic hardship made life difficult and the family eventually decided to move to Glace Bay to work in the coalmines. On this occasion, a local bard, Angus Ban MacFarlane, composed a lament in their honour:

*Nuair a rainig mi an clireadh  
Anns an robh thu, Neill, a' tamhachd,  
Fhuair mi 'n fhardach air a dumadh;  
Shil mi shuilean, 's cha bu nar dhomh.*

*Nuair a chruinnicheadh na h-eolaich  
Staigh 'nad sheomar, mar bu ghnath leo,  
Gu'm biodh cridhealas gu leor ann,  
'S gheibhte ceol us orain Ghaidhlig.*

*Dh'fhalbh thu bhuainn a Gleann a' Phiobair';  
Chuir sin mighean air mo nadur.  
'S ann ort fhein 's air do chuid cloinne  
'Chaidh a shloinneadh, tha iad ag raitinn.*

*continued on page 24...*



Panorama of the Isle of Canna, outermost of the Small Isles on the west coast of Scotland,  
Taken from Compass Hill on Canna, overlooking Canna Bay and Sanday towards Rùm.  
From Wikipedia and the citation is Emoscopes.

*Seinnidh Iain grin a' phìob dhuit;  
Seinnidh Sin' i agus Tearlach,  
Eachann, Flòiri, agus Seumas,  
Mary Jane, us May, us Searlot.*

When I reached the clearing where you were living, Neil, I found the House locked up; the tears came to my eyes, as well they might.

When friends would gather in your room as they used to like to, There would be merriment a-plenty and music and Gaelic songs

You have gone away from us from Piper's Glen, and that sheds Gloom on my spirits; it was after you and your children that the glen was named, they say.

Handsome John can play the pipes for you; Jean can play them and Charlie;  
Hector, Flora and James, Mary Jane and May and Charlotte.

Family members eventually dispersed, with some emigrating to the States. However, John (1868-1944) and Charlie Jamieson (b. 1874) who remained in Cape Breton, relocating to Glace Bay, were able to maintain their role as performers in the community. John was also noted for his ability at telling Gaelic stories and playing tunes on the fiddle.

#### THE KENNEDYS OF MIDDLE CAPE

Middle Cape lies on the eastern shore on the Bras d'Or Lake, in Cape Breton County. It was home to another Kennedy family of Canna background known for their extensive and varied repertoire of tales (*sgeulachdan*) and lore (*seanchas*). They were brought to the academic and non-academic attention through the research of John Shaw. During his extensive fieldwork carried out in Cape Breton between the 1970s and 80s he collected

oral material from several Gaelic-speaking tradition-bearers throughout the island. One in particular, Joe Neil MacNeil of Middle Cape, styled *Èds Nill Bhig*, proved to be a source of infinite lore, portions of which have published in *Sgeul gu Latha: Tales until Dawn*, transcribed, translated and edited by Shaw and published in 1987. In the volume Joe Neil speaks of the several families he knew in his home district of Middle Cape, including the Kennedys. Local accounts stated that this family was from the Isle of Canna. Although exact information about the arrival of this family in Canada is missing, the name appears in land grant records of the area as early as 1821. It is possible that this family may be related to the same Kennedys of Inverness County, although to this date it is still uncertain. At a closer look, the family stands out in Middle Cape not only because it was the only family of Canna origin in a community where the majority of the population was of Barra and South Uist origin, but mostly because of their incredible and unique repertoire of stories. Joe Neil MacNeil recalls the following concerning the family:

*Le m'fhiosrachadh fhéin, bha triùr ghilleann aig Murchadh. Bha Seamus is Dòmhnall is Gilleasbuig ann. Bha triùr pheatraichean aig Seamus 's aig Gilleasbuig 's aig Dòmhnall. Bha Mór (agus Anna) agus Catrìona, neo Ceit Mhór mar a bheireamaid rithe. Agus b'e sin i dha rìreabh; 's e boireannach mór, foghainneach a bh'innte – boireannach éibhinn, aighearach agus boireannach aig a robh sgeulachdan mar a thuirt iad, beag agus mór. Agus bha i gu math iasgaidh gus a bhith 'gan aithris.*

*Bha e (Iain Mac'Illean) 'g innse dhomh latha a chaidh e dha 'n sgoil. Agus bha rudeigin ceàrr anns an taigh sgoil. Cha robh dòigh aca air blàthas a bhith ann, co-dhiubh 's e pìob a bheireadh amach an deachach a bhris*

*'s a thuit na gu dé a thachair, b'fheudar dha tilleadh dhachaidh. Agus nuair a bha e a cheum dhachaidh bha Dòmhnall Ceanadach ag obair amuigh faisg air an taigh agus dh'éibh e air suas chon an taighe.*

*'Trobadh anuas, a laochain,' ors' esan, 'agus gum faigheadh tu tea agus gun gabhainn sgeulachd dhut.'*

*"Agus chaidh mi suas a thaigh a' Cheanadaich agus fhuair mi cupa tea bho Pheigi agus ghabh Dòmhnall a' sgeulachd dhomh. 'S e seo Dòmhnall Mhurchaidh Cheanadaich. Agus thug mi greis gun tighinn dhachaidh. Agus dh'fhoighneachd m'athair dhìom nuair a thàna mi gu dé thachair: gu robh mi aig an dachaich nab u tràithe na b' àbhaist dhomh tighinn dhachaidh as a' sgoil. Agus dh'innis mi dha nach robh sgoil idir ann 'ga teagasg an diugh, agus dh'innis mi dha mar a thachair.*

*" 'S e gu dé,' ors' esan, 'a bha 'gad chumail cho fada gun tighinn dhachaidh bho nach robh sgoil ann an diugh 'ga teagasg?'*

*" 'Bha,' ors' mise, 'gun do dh'éibh Dòmhnall Mhurchaidh orm suas dh'ionnsaidh an taighe airson 's gum faighinn cupa tea agus dh'innis e sgeulachd dhomh.'*

*" 'Agus dé 'n sgeulachd a ghabh e dhut?' orsa m'athair - b'e seo Calum Iain Mac'Illean.*

*" 'Dh'innis,' orsa mise, 'dh'innis e dhomh sgeulachd air Fear a' Chòta Liathghlais.'*

*Agus rinn m'athair gàire agus thuirt e, "Nach nèdnach leam,' ors' esan, 'thu bhith air tighinn dhachaidh cho tràth 's a thàinig thu ma 's e sin a' sgeulachd a chuala tu.'*

*Ach 's ann air Gilleasbuig a b'èolaiche mi dhiubh uile agus 's ann aige bu mhotha fhuair mi obair sgeulachdan. Bha e sònraichte air sgeulachdan na Féinneadh agus a h-uile rud a bhuineadh dhaibh sin.*

*Agus 's fheudar dhomh a ghràdh anns an am seo gu bheil mór-bharail*



*agam ri toirt air na Ceanadaich gu sònraichte a thaobh iad a bhith cho math air gnothaichean nan sgeulachd.*

To my knowledge Murdock (pioneer Murdock Kennedy) had three sons: James, Donald, and Archie. James and Archie and Donald had three sisters: Sarah, Anna, and Catherine, or *Ceit Mhor* ("Big Kate") as we used to call her. And she was a big strong woman indeed – an amusing, cheerful woman and one who had, as they would say, both big and small tales. And she was more than willing to tell them.

John (a friend of Joe Neil) told me about one day when he went to school and something was wrong in the schoolhouse. They had no way of heating it – it may have been the pipe that took out the smoke that broke and fell – and he had to return home. And as he was on his way home Donald Kennedy was out working near the house and he called him to the house.

" 'Come on up, boy,' said he, 'and have some tea and I will tell you a tale.' And I went out to the Kennedys' house and got a cup of tea from Peggy, and Donald told me the story. That was Donald, son of Murdock, Kennedy. And it was a while before I reached home. When I arrived my father asked me what had happened that I had arrived home earlier than usual from school. So I told him there was no school taught today and related to him what had happened.

" 'And what,' said he, 'kept you so long from coming home since there was no school taught today?'

" 'It happened,' said I, 'that Donald, son of Murdock, called me up to the house for a cup of tea and told me a tale.'

" 'And what tale did he tell for you?' said my father.

" 'He told me the tale of the Man in the Light Grey Coat.' I answered. My father laughed and said, 'It's strange,' said he, 'that you should be home so early if that's the tale that you heard.' "

Of all of the Kennedys I was best acquainted with Archie and it was from him that I got the most tales. He was an outstanding

reciter of Fenian tales and everything that had to do with them.

I must say here that I have a great regard for the Kennedys; particularly because they were so good when it came to tales.

The Kennedys of Middle Cape are discussed in more depth by Shaw in his article "Observations on the Cape Breton *Gàidhealtachd* and its relevance to present-day Celtic Studies," where he points out the unique pedigrees of some of the tales that were in the family's repertoire. Three fragments in particular stand out amongst their rich store of tales: *Brid Mhór Each* 'Great Brid of the Horses', *Bàs Chù Chulainn* 'The Death of Cù Chulainn' and *O Cròileagan nan Each* 'O Cròileagan of the Horses', all of which trace their history back to several oral versions in Ireland and Scotland and finally to early manuscript tradition. These fragments are also important because they represent variants of tales that have not been recorded anywhere else in Cape Breton. One speculation made concerning the uniqueness and rarity of the Kennedys' repertoire suggests that the Kennedys before leaving the Isle of Canna could have become familiar with the stories housed in the lost manuscript *Fear o'n Gharbh-thìr* that made its way to the island through the eighteenth-century Jacobite poet and Baillie of Canna Alexander MacDonald (*Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair*). Whatever the truth may be, the Kennedys will always be known for their excellence in storytelling and for their uniqueness and richness of repertoire.

### The MacArthurs of the Codroy Valley

Another family from Canna that, like the Jamiesons, had to face secondary migration were the MacArthurs of Canna who left the island around the early 1800s and who are discussed in detail in Margaret Bennett's *The Last Stronghold*. Angus MacArthur first came to Nova Scotia, and after getting married, moved to Cape Breton. Unfortunately the situation around landownership was not promising and eventually the family decided to leave for Newfoundland and settled in the Codroy Valley. What is important in the economy of this article is the invaluable amount of lore and traditions that the MacArthurs brought over with them. The family married into the MacIsaacs

who had come to Newfoundland a few years earlier than the MacArthurs. They were of Moidart and Glengarry origins, another family of strong tradition-bearers. Allan MacArthur, grandson of Angus, was the main informant for *The Last Stronghold*, who gave plenty of detailed information about life in the New World describing how old traditions from the Old World *Gàidhealtachd* were carried on in Newfoundland. He was himself a piper, a storyteller, a singer and a dancer and his house was the place for many a *céilidh*. Unfortunately Allan died in 1971; the last descendant of his family who lived in the Codroy Valley was Charles who died in 1946. *The Last Stronghold* is thus an invaluable work because it preserves traditions and customs that would have been otherwise lost forever.

### CONCLUSION

This article introduces a selection of families of Canna origin that were known throughout Cape Breton and beyond for their talent and for being excellent tradition-bearers of a culture that was a vibrant and living one; thanks to the memories of people who knew them or who are related to them or to the works of academics, we are able today to appreciate their contributions and efforts at preserving and disseminating knowledge of various cultural forms in their New World context. We are also able to open a window on what Canna was like in terms of its cultural background in the pre-emigration period. People from Canna, as this article has shown, proved to be talented musicians, step-dancers and storytellers. We can only imagine at this stage of research, how wealthy the island must have been in terms of various genres of traditional performance culture. Further studies and research will hopefully illuminate further our understanding of the role of *Canaich* or Canna people to the New World *Gàidhealtachd*, which will help, on one hand to shed more light on their cultural contributions and on the other to demonstrate the rich legacy of Canna's cultural heritage Old World and New. ☺

*Dr. Giulia De Gasperi is an independant researcher currently residing in Edinburgh. Her An Rubha article contains a lengthy list of citations which have been precluded due to space limitations. They are available upon request.*

## GAELS & THE KNITTING TRADITION

Vicki Quimby

*The handcraft of knitting is often thought of as being particularly well developed in Scotland. Argyll socks, Shetland lace shawls, and Fair Isle sweaters are well known even today for their distinctive styles and patterns. As early as 1615, a traveler to the Shetland Island recorded stockings and mittens being knit with a fine local wool and sold to foreign traders and fishermen. Why, then, did the emigrant Gaels*

of the Highlands and Islands seem to arrive in the new land, skilled in weaving, yet largely unfamiliar with knitting?

Weaving in Scotland undisputedly has a long history, from Viking-age stone-weighted looms to the more complex horizontal looms upon which the 17th and 18th century plaiding and 19th century shawls of Paisley were woven. By the early 1800s, the Industrial Revolution had put an end to much handweaving in England and the neighbouring Scottish Lowlands. However, the Highlands and Islands had up to this point escaped its full effect. At the time of emigration, many communities were still supporting village weavers and tailors, with individual families spinning the wool from their own sheep.

Knitting was little known in Scotland until knit clothing began to appear with regularity in a few Lowland areas by the late 15th century. It was to take centuries before the new technique was common in all areas of the country. Initially used to supplement loom-woven cloth, it provided a form-fitting elastic material well suited for mittens and stockings. Knitting was at first a man's job and developed into a profession. Gradually, though it was taken up by women and used as means to supplement a family's income. Whereas Scotland as a country would become known for several distinctive styles of knitting over the next few centuries, there is little evidence to show that any of these techniques were known in the western Highlands and Islands at the turn of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries.

But some areas excelled early on. The earliest professional knitters in Scotland were the bonnetmakers of Lowland towns, such as Aberdeen, Perth, Stirling, Kilmarnock and Glasgow. In Dundee, bonnetmakers were plentiful enough to form a trade guild by 1496. Knit in one piece, often dyed blue, the bonnet was "heavily waulked," or felted into a tight fabric which was durable and offered protection from the damp Scottish weather. They were no longer fashionable in Europe by 1600, yet it still

remained popular in Scotland. In the 18th century these bonnets, slightly altered, became a part of the uniform of the army troops recruited in the Highlands and even today they are thought of as being synonymous with Highland dress.

By the 17th and 18th centuries, it seems that most caps and bonnets were knit. Although commonly worn in the Highlands, they were not produced there. A man's blue wool bonnet, dated around 1715, is pictured in Dr. Helen Bennett's book, *Scottish Knitting*. Although it was found on Lewis in the

---

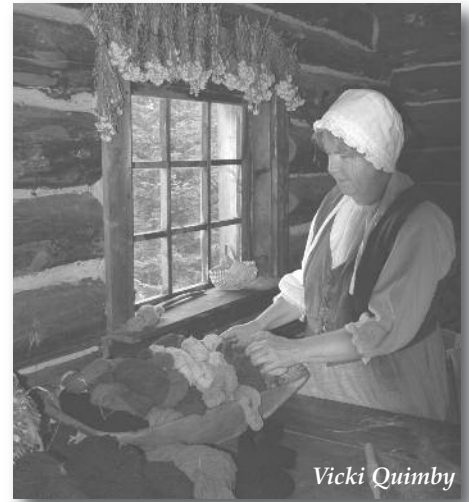
*...why then did the emigrant Gaels of the Highlands & Islands seem to arrive in the new land, skilled in weaving, yet largely unfamiliar with knitting? ...*

---

Outer Hebrides, it was imported from the Lowlands, not knit locally.

The guilds had lost their monopoly on the market by the 17th century and knitting was shifting from a male profession to a female domestic occupation. This paved the way for the knitting of stockings to take hold in some eastern areas of Scotland. Knit socks had the advantage of being shaped to fit the leg better than woven ones. The Shetland Islands, blessed with native sheep having a particularly fine wool, were a natural place for some of the earliest examples of this industry. A court book dated 1615 for Orkney and Shetland tells of the theft of a black sheep, valuable because its wool had been used to knit wool stockings. Many more accounts throughout the 17th and 18th centuries recorded the sale of stockings and mittens to German traders and foreign (often Dutch and German) fishermen.

On the mainland, Aberdeen was recorded in 1636 as having residents (women and children) listed as "shankers" or stocking knitters. Throughout the 18th century the stock-



Vicki Quimby

ing trade in Aberdeen continued, with Thomas Pennant reporting in 1769 that 69,333 dozen pairs were being sold annually. Merchants were also supplying imported wool to women in rural areas to be knit into stockings. These were then sent to England or Europe. By 1745 some hosiery coming from Aberdeenshire was even patterned with squares, for sale to the Dutch market.

The enthusiasm for knit stockings was widespread: "Stockings in many parts of Scotland are knit much cheaper than they can anywhere be wrought upon the loom." (Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 1789.) However, by the end of the 18th century, knitting was still rarely seen in many areas of the Highlands and Western Isles. Stockings were made from handwoven material. Woven hose were knee-length, with the fabric cut on the bias and sewn together. In the 1790s the first Statistical Account tells us that hose made from handwoven tartan fabric were the principal products of Comrie parish in Perthshire (Tayside).

Attempts were made to introduce knitting into the Highlands in the latter part of the 18th century. However, according to Dr. Helen Bennett, these efforts were seen by the population in a negative light. "Unlikely as knitting may seem as a vehicle for subduing an insurgent population, there had been continuing attempts to introduce the technique to the Highlands among measures to quash support for the exiled Stuarts in the wake of the 1715 and 1745 risings. The Gaelic-speaking inhabitants, who preferred droving and hunting to more settled occupations, were regarded with suspicion by those living further south. There was a long-held view that by establishing schools to instruct the children in English and useful manufactures (such as stocking making) the Highlanders could be transformed into obedient subjects of the Hanoverian monarchy."



So it was woven cloth and weaving skills that were predominate at the start of the 19th century as emigration from the Highlands and Islands began to become widespread. For those who stayed, the potato famines of 1846-8 resulted in a greater effort being made by benevolent landlords to teach knitting as an alternative source of income for Highland families. These efforts met with greater success than previous attempts. Knitting now became a widespread cottage industry, even in the Highlands. Stockings, jerseys, and even the occasional patterned bed quilt, began to appear with more frequency. By mid-19th century a hand knitted shawl might be worn over a blouse for special occasions, as noted on the Isle of Lewis.

Even though the refinement of machine knitting began producing cheaper goods, the mid-1800s would continue to see the development of handknitting in Scotland. Shetland lace shawls, incorporating the designs of handwoven Paisley shawls, were knit so fine as to be threaded through a wedding ring and were sought after by many. Around this same time, Fair Isle knitting, with its complicated colourful patterns was becoming popular. And in the Highlands, Ross-shire, in the west-coast parish of Gairloch, became known for fancy-patterned knitted stockings to be worn first with kilts, then, later in the century, with knickerbockers for hunting and other outdoor activities. By the end of the century, handknit hose from Argyll finally supplanted the woven tartan hose, mimicking the patterns of the traditional bias-cut cloth.

And what of the immigrants to the new country of Nova Scotia? For those who left the Highlands and Western Isles in the early 19th century, weaving cloth was the standard way of making textiles, and looms were constructed in many of the homes of the new world. But knitting was certainly adopted as the years went on. Whether learned from their new French, American or British neighbours or from later arrivals from the old country, it was knitting that became another domestic task in the homes of Gaels. And it was knitting that eventually outlasted weaving in most households. Spinning wheels were kept busy producing yarn for knitted mittens, socks, and underwear long after the last loom had been put away. ☺

*Vicki Quimby is a textile consultant and animator at the Highland Village. Déante la làimh (handmade) is a regular feature of An Rubha that explores various aspects of textiles and craft production in Gaelic Nova Scotia.*

## Obair an Taighe - FEATURED ARTIFACT An Criathair - THE RIDDLE

Making meal (*min*) by hand was a common practice among Highland immigrants to Nova Scotia and remained so among their decedents into the twentieth century. It was a labourious process first requiring threshing dried heads of grain with a flail (*buailtean*, *sùist*.) The days of threshing are evident in the name for that division of the barn still referred to as the threshing floor (*an t-ùrlar buailidh*.) Flails were instruments made with hardwood sticks attached by a thong (*iall*) of leather, or in some instances, eel skin.

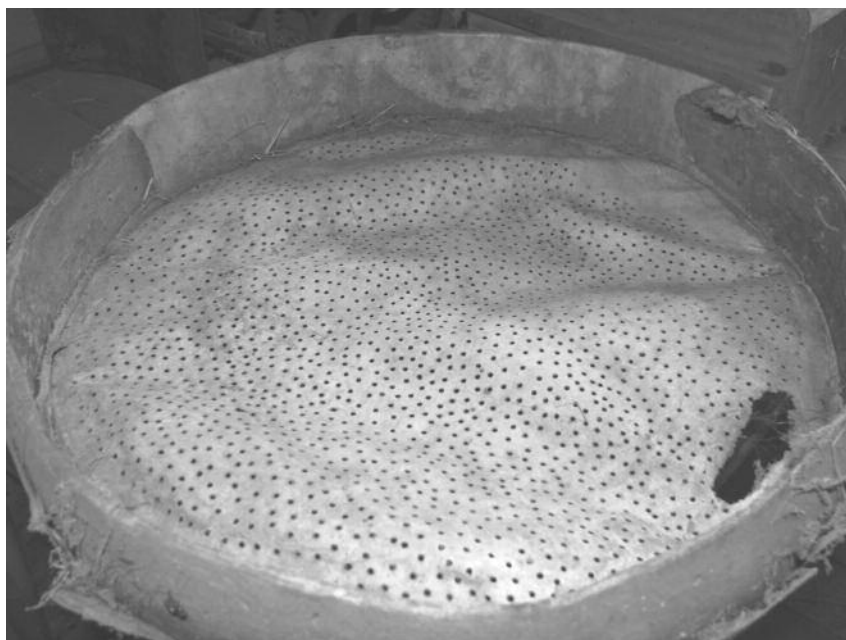
Threshing of grain by flail remains a living memory for an older generation as a common chore performed in their youth. In Gaelic Nova Scotia, grain varieties thrashed to extract the raw material for making meal included oats (*coirce*), barley (*èòrna*) and, perhaps to a lesser extent, wheat (*cruinneachd*.) The late Ena Chisholm (*Ena n'in Iain 'ic Eòin na h-Aibhneadh*), born 1908 and raised in Glencoe, Inverness County, recalled, "*Bhiodh 'ad a' cur beagan do chruinneachd agus coirce agus buntàta. An coirce, bhiodh 'ad 'ga bhualadh le ... 's e buailtean a bheireadh 'ad ris. Bhiodh 'ad 'ga bhualadh le làmhhan...*" (They planted a little wheat, oats and potato. The oats were threshed with a ... they called it a *buailtean* [flail]. They threshed it [oats] by hand.)

*An Rubha's* previous issue looked at the hand quern (*brà*) as an essential implement in home production of meal. Associated with this work is the riddle (*criathair*), sometimes called *rideal*. Having threshed the grains, chaff (*A' chàth*) and kernels (*éitein*) lay jumbled together. The mass was then gathered for fanning with a riddle employed to winnow (*a' càthadh an t-sil*), i.e., separate, the grain's rough outer shell from the kernel contained inside - the portion suitable for making meal.

The process is fairly simple. Working from a spot where there is a suitable breeze, shells and kernels are placed in the riddle and tossed to the air. Chaff - being lighter than the kernels - is blown away by the wind; leaving the kernels behind to be ground by the quern for making meal. Winnowing might take place outdoors, or in the barn between two doors opened to bring about a breeze of the right strength.

Construction of the riddle consists of a narrow band of wood bent in a circle to create a frame for a holed pocket of leather. Riddles at Highland Village are made with a hardwood frame, possibly ash, and covered by sheep hide approximately 2 ½ inches deep and 16-18 inches in circumference. The bottoms are perforated at an appropriate distance to prevent kernels from being lost with the chaff. A Gaelic proverb, speaks to the benefits of being properly equipped: "*'S math cruinneachadh na pille farsaing* (A wide winnowing cloth makes for a good gathering); referring to a special cloth that was spread to catch the riddle's yield. ☺

*Seumas Watson, Manager of Interpretation.*



*Highland Village library photo.*

# *Guthan Prìseal: Guthan agus Òrain Cheap Breatainn* *Precious Voices: Voices and Songs of the Cape Breton Gael*

A review of Anne Landin's book by Seumas Watson

A few recordings over the years have brought the Cape Breton style of singing and samples of its song wealth to public appreciation. Among those are the early LPs *Òrain Cheap Breatainn*, based on Ralph Rinzler's 1950s recordings on the North Shore, Topic's *Gaelic Tradition in Cape Breton Volume I* (lamentably unavailable on CD), *Tribute to the North Shore Gaelic Singers*, and *Cape Breton Gold*. The latter three of which include informative liner notes and words to the songs. *Guthan Prìseil*, with a book and accompanying CD, joins the ranks of these sound publications to further pull back the curtain on Cape Breton Gaelic singing.

Highlighting the voices of singers past and present, *Guthan Prìseil* contains twenty one songs over its 144 pages. Selections are reasonably balanced between male and female singers and include a mix of songs representing local compositions and those from Scotland. The singing style is unaccompanied, as is standard in the Cape Breton tradition. Singers' bios are provided with photos where possible and attention to detail such as their antecedents place of origin in Gaelic Scotland, composers' background and additional information relevant to the song and its history in the community.

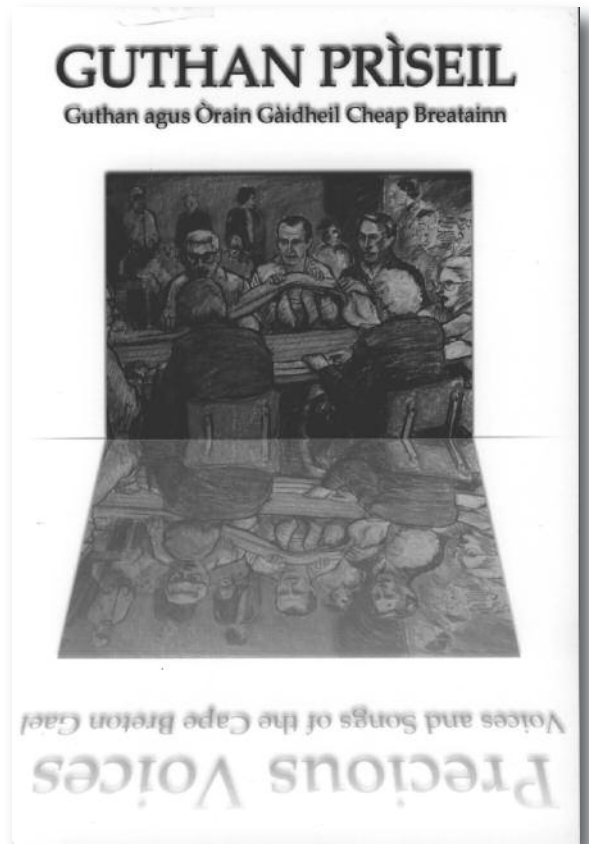
Having had the good fortune to know various of contemporary singers appearing in the pages of *Guthan Prìseil*, the CD tracks provide a solid sense of transmission coming down from older generations. This is particularly evident in the singing of Christmas Island's Peter MacLean (*Peadar mac Jack Pheadair 'ic Caluim Ghobha*) and his late mother Annie (nee MacInnis - *Anna Mhicheil Iain Mhicheil*) born 1889 at Castle Bay in Cape Breton County.

The geography of Gaelic Scotland from which singers' ancestors hailed is of interest, with many having family backgrounds in the Isle of Barra. But there are also representations from Lochaber, Isle of Muck and Canna descendants as heard in dialects accenting the songs' words and influencing song choices. Perhaps most importantly, the songs and singers bear with them a primary tradition resting on the social value of their expressions. That is, an even greater pride is taken in the art than in their own performances, as songs link each singers and communities over generations.

Some exceptional songs are on offer for the learner in *Guthan Prìseil*.

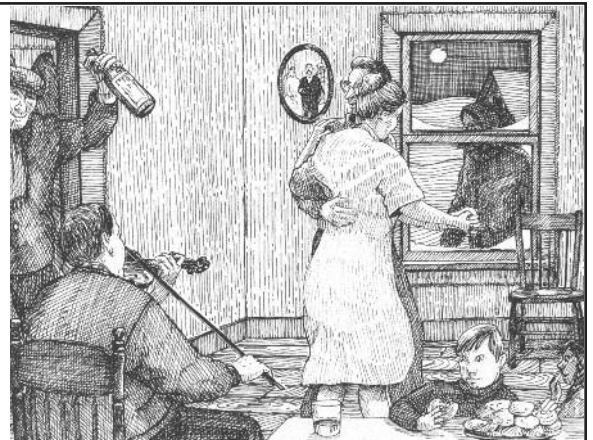
Among them are *Òige gu Aois* composed by Charles MacLean (*Micheal Theàrlaich*) of Washabuck and latterly of Baddeck, known for his wit and political acumen and *Òran Gaoil*, a rare Old Country song more fully reported in Creighton & MacLeod's *Gaelic Songs in Nova Scotia*. Two of my personal favorites are *Tha mulad, Tha mulad*, sung by the late Mary Margaret MacLean (nee MacKinnon - *n'n Nill Lachainn Eòghainn Bhàin*.) Her father was a well known bàrd nicknamed *A' Rìgh* from Ainslie Glen (*Gleann nam Màgan*), Inverness County. Another is *Moladh Mhàbu* sung by Annie (*n'in Dùghaill, Alasdair*) MacDonald. I recall visiting Annie Collie, as she was referred to, in her final years at Port Hawkesbury. A singer of sizable artistry, her physical stature was that of a humming bird.

As Gaelic Nova Scotia engages in its own cultural restoration, *Guthan Prìseil* will contribute to keeping the record straight on local singing styles while supplying a source of attendant *seanchas* necessary for continuing social transmission around the songs. ☺



*Gùthan Prìseil* / *Precious Voices* is bound in soft cover with an audio CD. Copies are available through the Centre for Cape Breton Studies, CBU or through the Highland Village Gift Shop.

**NOLLAIG  
SHONA  
DHUIBH!**  
  
**happy  
CHRISTMAS!**



*From the Board and Staff of the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society*



# An Rathad gu Baile nan Gall/The Road to Englishtown

A review of Bonnie Thornhill's book by Jim St.Clair

With the accounts from the time of settlement to the present of more than a hundred families who lived from South Haven to just beyond Englishtown, Bonnie Thornhill has completed her stories and genealogical compilations of the people of St. Anns Bay and vicinity.

Ms. Thornhill's previous three books brought to life the many people of Tarbot, North River, St. Anns, North and South Gut. The majority of these early settlers were Gaelic speaking from the Hebrides and the western shore of Scotland. Most of them were Presbyterian.

The compiler has not only searched out, through extensive examination of the census records from 1838 to 1911, the names and birth years of the subjects of her history, but has also summarized the histories of the churches, the schools, the post offices, the ferry services and the community activities. Thus the individuals in the family histories are brought to life and are interpreted in a social and economic context.

Therefore, these well documented accounts of the MacLeods, the Carmichaels, the MacAskills, the Kerrs, the Morrisons, the MacRitchies, the Robinsons, the MacDonalds, the Rosses, the Sullivans, the Sellons, the Wilhausens, the Canns and many others will add to the reader's knowledge of Cape Breton life and times over two centuries.

Along the rocky shore line of St. Anns Bay, one will meet not only Angus MacAskill, *An Gille Mór*, but will also see photographs of his house and his family and meet his neighbours. As well, the

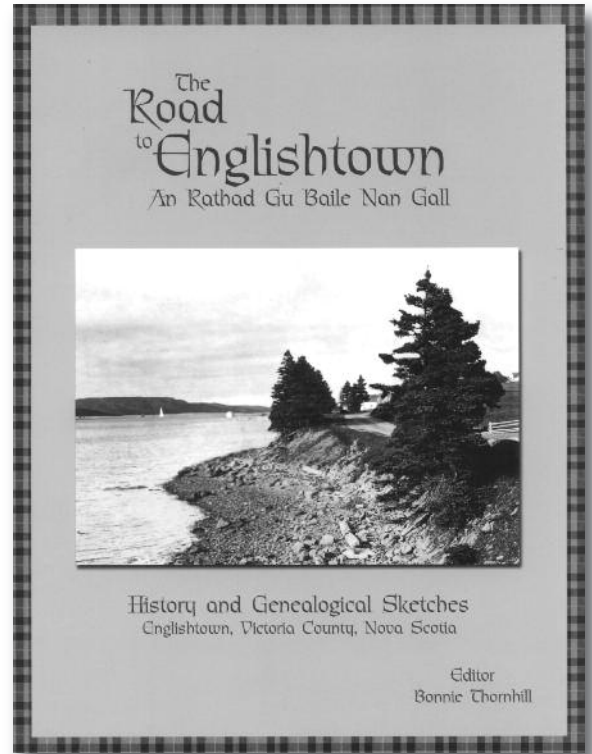
compiler has provided many stories about people with unusual nicknames such as the two sisters, Anne and Kitty MacDonald, who lived far up on the top of Kelly's Mountain on a foot path. Known as "the wools," they went from house to house in the occupation of cleaning the fleeces of sheep of dirt and twigs and thorns in preparation for carding and spinning.

Anybody who likes stories of Cape Breton people and places and is intrigued about how the settlers made their living, and then, they or their children went on to the wider world of New Zealand and Upper Canada and the United States, will find this book a great resource and fascinating reading.

Impressive indeed are the lives of the many young women and men who went from the rocky hillsides and narrow fields along the shore to positions of prominence in medicine, in education, in law, and in the captaining of vessels on the Great Lakes.

Attractive in its design, with a helpful table of contents and listing of numerous references, the book is a fine addition to the well-prepared and well printed histories of Cape Breton communities. It is also of great benefit to those searching for people on their own family trees.

*An Rathad gu Baile nan Gall/The Road to Englishtown, History and Genealogical*



*Sketches, compiled by Bonnie Thornhill of North Gut, St. Anns and Baddeck was issued in the autumn of 2009. Published through the efforts of the St. Anns-Baddeck-Waipu Twinning Society and Victoria County Historical Society it was printed by City Printers, Sydney. The book is available at the St. Anns CAP Site/Twinning Society at the Gaelic College and at Reynolds Book Store, Charlotte St., Sydney. \$40.00.*

*Jim St.Clair is an historian, author, and columnist with CBC Cape Breton. He lives in Mull River, Inverness County.*

**GAELIC NOVA SCOTIA ON-LINE**  
**Nova Scotia Office of Gaelic Affairs**  
[www.gov.ns.ca/oga](http://www.gov.ns.ca/oga)

**Office of Gaelic Affairs**  
**Gaelic Language and Culture of Nova Scotia**  
Gaelic is a Celtic language. Irish Gaelic (commonly referred to as Irish), Manx Gaelic and Scottish Gaelic are the different variations of Gaelic spoken today, and make up the Gaelic or Celtic branches of the Celtic languages.  
The Gaelic language that is spoken in Nova Scotia came with the first immigrants from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, commencing with those who settled here in the year 1773.  
So we've been speaking Gaelic in this Province for over 230 years.

## GAELIC NOVA SCOTIA ON-LINE

Nova Scotia Office of Gaelic Affairs  
[www.gov.ns.ca/oga](http://www.gov.ns.ca/oga)

Comhairle na Gàidhlig/Gaelic Council of NS  
[www.gaelic.ca](http://www.gaelic.ca)

**COMHAIRLE NA GÀIDHLIG**  
**THE GAELIC COUNCIL OF NOVA SCOTIA**  
Comhairle na Gàidhlig

**Comhairle na Gàidhlig**  
Comhairle na Gàidhlig is a non-profit society dedicated to the maintenance and promotion of the Gaelic language and culture in Nova Scotia. The only registered Gaelic body in Nova Scotia, it is the only body with the authority to represent the Gaelic community in Nova Scotia. It is a registered charity and a not-for-profit organization. It is a registered charity and a not-for-profit organization. It is a registered charity and a not-for-profit organization.

**MAC-TALLA**  
**Sabhal Mòr Ostaig**  
Colabairt Ghàidhlig na h-Alba

**MAC-TALLA: the longest running Gaelic weekly now on-line**  
*Sabhal Mòr Ostaig has digitised Mac-Talla ("Echo"), Nova Scotia's weekly Gaelic newspaper/magazine published - later bi-weekly - between May 28, 1892, and June 24, 1904, around 540 issues in all. Its store of news, local, national and international, letters to the Editor, Gaelic proverbs, poetry/song, stories, translations and articles are a repository of Gaelic cultural ideas. Mac-Talla can be found at:*  
<http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/en/leabharlann/mactalla/>

# Our People Acknowledgements & Accolades

## TAPADH LEIBH-SE GU MÓR

The Nova Scotia Highland Village Society gratefully acknowledges the support of many individuals and organisations:

**PROJECT PARTNERS** - Cape Breton University (Centre for CB Studies), and St. FX University (Centre for Regional Studies & Angus L. Macdonald Library).

**DONATIONS** - River & Lakeside Pastoral Charge, Rebecca Newlands, Al Judson, R. J. MacLennan, Ann MacIntosh, & Doris Tinney.

**ARTEFACTS & ARCHIVAL DONATIONS** - Josie (Nash) Kyte (photo of Grass Cove Gypsum Mine); Jeremy White and Melanie Bok (small farm equipment); Annie MacDonald (Dairy items); Naomi Walker (fishing items); Sadie Marie MacNeil (bed and spring); Christine Holmes (potatoe picker); and Dorothy Almon (Cape Breton Magazines).

## CONGRATULATIONS & BEST WISHES

**Congratulations** Highland Village Past President Bruce MacNeil and his partner Elgin on the birth of their son David Francis; to MacDonald House ancestor Norma MacDonald on her 100th birthday; to the Iona

Volunteer Fire Department on their 50th anniversary this past year;

**Best wishes** to staff member Gerry MacNeil, volunteer Juanita MacNeil, & member Catherine Godwin who are a dealing with health issues.

## SYMPATHIES

To families of Highland Village friends who have passed away in the past several months: Joan MacNeil (wife of Gaelic singer and former board member Maxie MacNeil); Sadie MacLeod (grandmother of staff member Katherine MacLeod); Annie Mae MacKinnon (wife of late Howard MacKinnon and mother of Donna MacKenzie); Helene Raymond (mother-in-law of board member Hugh MacKinnon); Hugh MacKenzie (brother of Board member Frank MacKenzie); George MacNeil (son of the late Highland Village supporter Anna "Hector" MacNeil); Roderick MacNeil (husband of former staff member Betty); Sr. Agnes Nash (associated with the MacIver-Nash House on site) and Aggie MacLennan (see below). Our hearts go out to all their families for their loss. ☹

## Aggie MacLennan - 2009 Highland Village Award of Merit Agaidh nì'n Ruairidh Ruaidh 'ic Dhòmhnail 'ic Ruairidh 'ic Lachlain



Aggie MacLennan was chosen by the Highland Village board for our 2009 Award of Merit for her contribution to the Cape Breton step-dancing tradition. Shortly after being notified that she would be receiving the award this year, Aggie passed away. Her daughter Dena accepted her award on Highland Village Day. Aggie danced many a step on our Highland Village stage as well as halls and stages throughout Canada, the US and Scotland. She will be missed. Our sympathies to her husband Neil and all of her family.



## Nova Scotia Highland Village Society

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES (Elected June 2009)

Kathleen MacKenzie, Antigonish (President)  
Hector MacNeil, Sydney River (Vice President)  
Hugh MacKinnon, Benacadie (Secretary)  
Marie MacSween, Ironville (Treasurer)  
Donald Beaton, Little Narrows  
Susan Cameron, Antigonish  
Catherine Ann Fuller, Baddeck  
Madeline Harvey, Estmere  
Steve MacDonald, Whycocomagh  
Burton MacIntyre, Whycocomagh  
Frank MacKenzie, New Waterford  
Jerry MacNeil, Little Narrows  
Walter MacNeil, Sydney / Grand Narrows  
Hugh Webb, Antigonish  
Daniel Chiasson, Baddeck (Legal Advisor)

### Staff (as of November 2009)

#### Administration

Rodney Chaisson, Director  
Marlene Ivey, Coord. Strategic Initiatives  
Janet MacNeil, Administrative Assistant

#### Interpretation

Seumas Watson, Manager  
Joanne MacIntyre, Chief Interpreter  
Colleen Beaton, Animator  
Marie Chehy, Animator  
Catherine Gillis, Animator  
Jamie Kennedy, Blacksmith  
Mary Jane Lamond, Animator  
Hoss MacKenzie, Blacksmith  
Aileen MacLean, Animator  
Beth MacNeil, Animator  
Debi MacNeil, Animator / Costume Coord.  
Jean MacNeil, Animator  
Kaye Anne MacNeil, Animator  
Sandy MacNeil, Farm Hand  
Meagan Quimby, Animator  
Vicki Quimby, Animator / Textile Consultant

#### Collections, Archives & Genealogy

Pauline MacLean, Manager  
Katherine MacLeod, Assistant

#### Visitor Centre Services/Gift Shop

Gerry MacNeil, Senior Visitor Centre Clerk  
Sadie MacDonald, Visitor Centre Clerk

#### Operations

James Bryden, Manager  
Tim MacNeil, Maintenance  
David MacKenzie, Groundskeeper  
Patricia Gaudley, Custodian

#### Volunteer Programmers

Quentin MacDonald, HV Day Producer  
James O. St.Clair, Candlelight Tour Guide



# Interested in Nova Scotia's Gaelic language and heritage?



## Join the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society!



The Nova Scotia Highland Village Society is incorporated as a non-profit Society under the Societies Act of the Province of Nova Scotia, and a registered charity with the Canada Revenue Agency. The Society is made up of a membership which elects the Board of Trustees (from their ranks) to operate the Society on their behalf.

### General Memberships

Individual: \$15.00\* per year.

Family: \$25.00\* per year (one household).

\* *Income tax receipts are issued for general memberships.*

### Membership Plus

Individual - \$25.00\*\* per year.

Family - \$40.00\*\* per year (one household).

Members can attend meetings, elect the Board, sit on committees, receive and approve annual reports including audited financial statements, receive *An Rubha* (semi-annual newsletter), receive notices for events, and feel a sense of pride in contributing to Nova Scotia's Gaelic Culture. Membership is open to anyone.

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

- free admission to the Museum (excludes special events & programs)
- 10% discount in the Highland Village Gift Shop

\*\* *Membership Plus fees are not tax deductible and include 13% HST.*

Membership – Ballrachd  
an Comunn Clachan Gàidhealach  
na h-Albann Nuaidh

Ainm / Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Seòladh / Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Cathair / Baile / City / Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Cód a' Phuist / Postal / Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Dùthaich / Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Fón na Dachaidh / Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fón Àite na h-Obrach / Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fags / Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Post-d / Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Check type: General Membership ☐ Individual ☐ Family Membership Plus ☐ Individual ☐ Family

Return to Highland Village, 4119 Hwy 223, Iona, NS B2C 1A3 | Fax: 902-725-2227 | E: [highlandvillage@gov.ns.ca](mailto:highlandvillage@gov.ns.ca)  
*Eachdraidh, Cànan, Nòs is Dualchas – History, Language, Tradition and Heritage*

# Highland Village On-line Gaelic Resources



## HV Home Page

Event calendar, news, cultural content, genealogy resources, back issue of An Rubha, links to other Nova Scotia Museum sites and resources, and much more...  
[www.highlandvillage.ca](http://www.highlandvillage.ca)



## Anull Thar nan Eilean – From Island to Island

From the Island of Barra to the Island of Cape Breton, we tell the story of the Barra immigrants leaving Scotland and their life in Cape Breton. Part of the Virtual Museum of Canada's Community Memories Program. [www.virtualmuseum.ca](http://www.virtualmuseum.ca)



Become a fan of the Highland Village Museum. Join us on Facebook!



## Céilidh air Cheap Breatunn

A multimedia exhibit on the our Gaelic culture  
 Part of Virtual Museum of Canada.  
[www.capebretonceilidh.ca](http://www.capebretonceilidh.ca)



## Cainnt mo Mhathar - My Mother's Tongue

Unique audio and video recordings of Nova Scotian tradition bearers for Gaelic learners. Features clips from Highland Village's *Nos is Fonn* and *Mar bu Nos* Collections.

A project of Comhairle na Gàidhlig  
[www.cainntmomhathar.com](http://www.cainntmomhathar.com)

## An Rubha

The Highland Village Gaelic Folklife Magazine



4119 Highway/Rathad 223, Iona  
 Nova Scotia/Alba Nuadh, B2C 1A3, Canada

CANADA	POSTES
POST	CANADA
Postage paid	Port payé
Publications Mail	Poste-publications
41257540	



NOVA SCOTIA  
 ALBA NUADH  
 Tourism, Culture and Heritage  
 Roinn na Turasachd, a' Chultair agus an Dualchais