

# Naidheachd a' Chlachain

(THE VILLAGE NEWS)

Nova Scotia Highland Village Society



## Sùil ri buaidh

EXPECTATIONS OF SUCCESS

- Strategic Planning Process
- Trip to Gaelic Scotland
- Eilean nan Òg
- Gaelic Story & Song Selection
- News from 2001, Events for 2002, and more...



Open Daily  
May 18 - Oct. 20



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## 2002 Calendar of Events

May 18	Féis a' Chlachain - Gaelic Song Workshop Festival
July 13 & August 31	Feasgar an Truisg - Our Famous Codfish Suppers
July 28 - August 4	Féill nam Barrach (Barraman's Feast) <i>A celebration of 200 years of Gaelic settlement</i>
August 3	Là Mór à Chlachain - Highland Village Day & Annual Scottish Concert
Sept 7	Là Mór Na Coille Duibhe - Pioneer Day
Sept 28	Cainnt 's Cànan - Gaelic Language Day
October 11-19	Celtic Colours Festival - various events on site
October 30	Oidhche Mhòr nam Bòcan (Night of the Ghosts)
December 7-8	Cèilidh na Nollaig (Christmas Gathering)

*Costumed animators and period buildings trace the Scottish Gaelic experience from the earliest settlement in Cape Breton until the beginning of the 20th century. Roots Cape Breton is also an excellent source for genealogical and historical information along with the many other interpretive activities happening on site throughout the season.*

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of our pioneer ancestors.*

*Visit the Nova Scotia Highland Village -  
where history comes to life.*

*A' Cuir Eachdraidh an Riochd Beo!*

*Ag éiridh air na làithean a dh'aom 's a thig.*

*Actively promoting Nova Scotia's living Gaelic heritage.*

**Highland Village Museum / An Clachan Gàidhealach**

4119 Highway 223, Iona, Nova Scotia

<http://highlandvillage.museum.gov.ns.ca>



**NOVA SCOTIA**  
Tourism and Culture



The Nova Scotia Highland Village Society was incorporated on November 3, 1959 under the Societies Act of Nova Scotia with the purpose of constructing a replica pioneer village at Iona.

The Mission of the Society is: to protect, interpret and further the collection of buildings and artifacts at the Nova Scotia Highland Village site at Iona; and to preserve and promote the Scottish Highland and Island Culture as found in Nova Scotia. (1979).

In June of 2000, the Highland Village became a part of the Nova Scotia Museum Family (Department of Tourism & Culture). The Society will continue to operate the site on behalf of the Province. The site is a 43-acre Museum and Cultural complex including the Highland Village Museum/An Clachan Gàidhealach, Roots Cape Breton Genealogy & Family History Centre, Highland Village Gift Shop, and outdoor entertainment and theatre facility.

The Society is a member of the Federation of Nova Scotian Heritage (FNSH), Canadian Museums Assoc. (CMA), Iona Connection, Còmhairle na Gàidhlig, Alba Nuadh (Nova Scotia Gaelic Council), Council of Nova Scotia Archives (CNSA), Genealogical Assoc. of Nova Scotia (GANS), Nova Scotia Genealogy Network Assoc., Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada, Assoc. of Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums (ALH-FAM), Tourism Industry Assoc. of Nova Scotia (TIANS), Baddeck & Area Business Tourism Association (BABTA) and Tourism Cape Breton.

A PART of THE NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM  
MEUR de THAIGH-TASGAIDH  
NA H-ALBANN NUAIDH



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*On the cover: (Main photo) Baile Gean at the Highland Folk Museum in Newtonmore, Scotland; (Top Inset) 2001 Eilean nan Òg interns; and (Bottom Inset) Attractions Canada 2001 Provincial Award winner logo - Highland Village won the Provincial Award for Developed Outdoor Attraction (under \$1 million). Our sister site, Sherbrooke Village, won in the over \$1 million category.*



## Naidheachd a' Chlachain

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From the  
**DIRECTOR'S  
DESK**

By Rodney Chaisson

Welcome to the Winter 2001/2002 issue of *Naidheachd a' Chlachain*. First up, I want to apologize for not publishing an edition of this newsletter in 2001. In the future, I will strive to ensure that *Naidheachd a' Chlachain* continues to be published twice each year. It is an important communication medium with our members.

This issue of *Naidheachd a' Chlachain* is titled *Sùil ri buaidh* (pronounced sool ree boo-eye). It means expectations of success or an eye to victory. Our vision is to become an international centre of excellence for the promotion, interpretation and celebration of Nova Scotia's Gaelic Culture. Creating a new partnership with the Nova Scotia Museum was the first step in making this happen. The current planning process and other new undertakings will help us succeed in achieving this vision.

This issue will highlight two significant initiatives which will help shape our operation and ultimately achieve this success: (a) a research trip to Gaelic Scotland and (b) the development of a long term strategic plan for the Highland Village.

In late September, Gaelic Coordinator Jim Watson and I undertook a 12 day research trip to Gaelic Scotland. The itinerary took us from the industrial belt of the Scottish lowlands to the Lochaber and Baddenoch regions of the Highlands to the Outer Hebridean Islands of Barra, North & South Uist and Benbecula. For me this trip was a wonderful exposure to a variety of landscapes and peoples in the land from which our ancestors came. More importantly, it was an opportunity to meet with other Gaelic motivated organizations and begin to lay the framework for trans-atlantic initiatives in Gaelic language promotion and preservation. A significant portion of this issue of *Naidheachd a' Chlachain* has been set aside to report on this trip and the potential that will come from it. I want to thank the Society for sponsoring this trip. Thanks also to Jim Watson for being a great travelling companion and for preparing this comprehensive account of our trip. I also want to especially thank

the many people in Scotland that extended to us hospitality second to none. *Tapadh leibh*. The full report begins on page 9.

Also this fall, we embarked on one of the most significant planning activities ever undertaken by the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society. Catherine Cole, Dr. Michael Kennedy and Brian MacKay-Lyons are leading the Highland Village through a strategic planning exercise that will see the development of strategies in five key areas. Their report and recommendations, due this winter, will complement strategic objectives set by the Board of Trustees this past year. There is a full update of this process on page 8 of this issue.

A special issue of *Naidheachd a' Chlachain* will be published this spring with a comprehensive update on this process.

*Eilean nan Òg*, the brainchild of Gaeltalk Communications, is a Gaelic youth apprenticeship program. This past summer saw a third and expanded offering of the program. As you will be able to tell from Frances MacEachen's report and the journal writings from the students (beginning on page 6), this program has had a positive impact on how these youth view their Gaelic heritage. The Highland Village is pleased to have been part of this program and is committed to work with Gaeltalk in keeping it alive.

Other features in this issue include a selection of Gaelic stories and song collected by Jim Watson, an update on the Barra SEARCH project from Keith Branigan, and news from the past year.

As always we welcome your comments and ideas on this and every issue of *Naidheachd a' Chlachain*.

#### AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Also, in reference to *Sùil ri buaidh*, I am very pleased to report that the Highland Village Museum/*An Clachain Gàidhealach* was awarded a Provincial Attractions Canada Award in May 2001 at a gala in Halifax. Our award was in the category Developed Outdoor Sites (under \$1 million). Our sister site, Sherbrooke Village, received the Provincial award in the Developed Outdoor Sites (over \$1 million) - a good night for the Nova Scotia Museum.

Also in 2000/2001, we had the oppor-

tunity to participate in the National Pilot Project of the Museums Achievement Program through Museums Alberta. We were one of five sites from across Canada to participate in this project, the aim of which is to increase museum standards and recognize excellence in museum work. There are four units to the program - Museums & Society, Administration, Collections, and Interpretation. Each museum in the pilot project tested one unit. Ours was administration. I am pleased to report that we passed with flying colours.

#### NEW FACES

Over the past year, we have had a change in leadership on the Board of Trustees, welcomed a new member to the Management Team and expanded our interpretive staff.

Last May, Brian Hussey assumed the office of President of the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society. Brian, a technician with CBC Cape Breton, recently completed the Museum Studies Certificate program of the Federation of Nova Scotian Heritage and has a keen interest in the wider heritage community. His main goal as President is to see the Highland Village grow especially in terms of our interpretive programming. Welcome Brian.

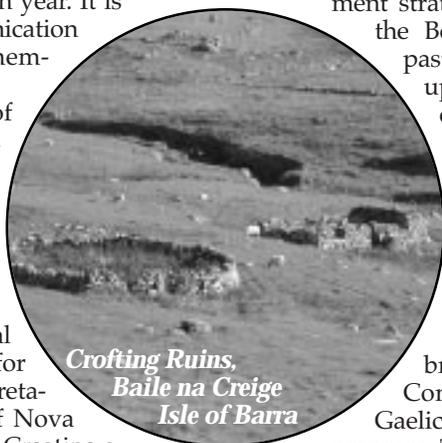
Brian takes over from Bruce MacNeil, who stepped down after 8 years at the helm. During that period Bruce steered the Society through some rough patches and worked hard to achieve a new status with the Nova Scotia Museum. Bruce will continue to sit on the Board. Thanks Bruce.

Keith Ballantyne joined our Management Team last June as the Operations Manager. Keith comes to us with a wealth of experience in property and operations management. Welcome Keith.

Our interpretation was enhanced last season with the addition of two new permanent interpreters - Jean MacNeil of Grass Cove and Debi MacNeil of Big Beach. Welcome to both Jean and Debi.

There is so much information to manage from administrative files, to photographs, to digital files, to publications, to new library books and more. Ian Baker, of North Sydney, who has been with us off and on for the past three years with Roots Cape Breton, has joined us to take control of these areas. He has also been filling in for Patricia MacNeil who has been off on maternity leave. Welcome Ian.

*continued on page 27*





# PASSAGES

## Dedication In Memorium



Jackie MacNeil



Neil John Gillis



Charlie MacCuspig

This issue of *Naidheachd a' Chlachain* is dedicated to three good friends of the Highland Village who passed away this past year - Jackie MacNeil, Neil John Gillis & Charlie MacCuspig.

**Jackie MacNeil**, of Sydney, served on the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee of the Society for many years. He contributed much to the growth of the Society. He worked especially hard on the road to becoming a part of the Nova Scotia Museum.

**Neil John Gillis**, of Jamesville, was a gifted tradition bearer of Gaelic story and song. He was also a dedicated volunteer, a virtue he has passed down through his children.

**Charlie MacCuspig**, of Hunter's Mountain, was an accomplished fiddler and a great friend of the Highland Village. Our Alderwood Ceilidhs will never be the same.

These three individuals will be deeply missed by all of us. We will work hard to ensure that their legacy of dedication and sharing continues on.

Our deepest sympathies go out to all of their families.

### SYMPATHIES

We also express our sympathies to our interpreter Vicki Quimby and her family. Vicki's father recently passed away.

### CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations go out to:

- Gaelic Coordinator Jim Watson and Am Brùighe Editor Frances MacEachen on the birth of their daughter Lilly.
- Administrative Secretary Patricia MacNeil and her partner Shaun Gaudley on the birth of their son Matthew.
- David Newlands, who was Director of the History Section of the Nova Scotia Museum when the Highland Village joined the family, on becoming Executive Director of the Nova Scotia Museum and the Heritage Division of the Department of Tourism & Culture.
- Dan E. MacNeil, Treasurer of the Highland Village, on his election to Victoria County Council.
- Bruce MacNeil, Past President of the Highland Village, on his appointment as Department Head for Business, Health & Human Services at the Strait Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College.
- Jim St.Clair, Past President & Secretary of the Highland Village, on his appointment to the Board of Governors of the Nova Scotia Museum.
- Tunney Betts, Highland Village volunteer, on his recent marriage to Georgie Anderson.



#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES (2001-2002):

- Brian Hussey, Marion Bridge (President)
- Walter MacNeil, Sydney (Vice-Pres)
- Dan E. MacNeil, Iona (Treasurer)
- Jim St.Clair, Mull River (Secretary)
- Bruce MacNeil, Iona (Past President)
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- Fonce Farrell, Washabuck
- Janet Gillis, Ironville
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- Mary Margaret MacLean, Whycocomagh
- Dr. Mary K. MacLeod, Dominion
- Ann Marie MacNeil, Grass Cove
- Hugh Webb, Antigonish
- Daniel Chiasson, Legal Advisor Pro-Bono, Baddeck

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Patricia MacNeil, Admin. Assistant  
Ian Baker, Information Systems

**Museum**  
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John MacDonald, Blacksmith  
Stevie MacNeil, Farm Hand  
Colleen Beaton, Interpreter  
Marie Chehy, Interpreter  
Carmella Farrell, Interpreter  
Kimberley MacIver, Interpreter  
Beth MacNeil, Interpreter  
Debi MacNeil, Interpreter  
Kaye Anne MacNeil, Interpreter  
Jean MacNeil, Interpreter  
Vicki Quimby, Interpreter  
Sylvia Tupper, Interpreter  
See also Student Interpreters

**Gàidhlig (Gaelic Program)**  
James Watson, Coordinator

**Roots Cape Breton Family History Centre**  
Pauline MacLean, Genealogist  
See also Data Entry Clerks

**Visitor Centre Services**  
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Sadie MacDonald, VC Clerk

**Operations**  
Keith Ballantyne, Manager  
Tim MacNeil, Maintenance  
David MacKenzie, Grounds

#### PROJECT STAFF:

**Student Interpreters (Summer 2001)**  
Sharon Boyd  
Anne Louise Campbell  
Shauna Gale  
Tracey Hatcher

Michael MacDonald  
Lisa MacNeil  
Matthew MacNeil.

**Assistant Registrar (Summer 2001)**  
Collette Thomas

**Data Entry Clerks - Since Nov. 2000**  
Ian Baker (Gen Asst), Josie Bonaparte, Donna Burke, Dwayne Ellis, Bill Fiander, David Kucherean, Cheryl Johnson, Joanne Latwaitis, Anna McCrory, Wanda MacDonald, Christine MacInnis, Steven MacIsaac, Breigh MacKenzie, Ken MacKenzie, Joanne MacKinnon, John MacLean, Thomas MacLeod, Beth MacNeil, Charlene MacNeil, Debi MacNeil, Gerry MacNeil, Jean MacNeil, Patricia MacNeil, Tim MacPherson, Don MacRury, Blair Munro, John Peddle, Barbara Ross, Donna Smith, Cheryl Sullivan (Gen. Asst), Tanya Webber, Angela Wiswell, Debra Young.



## EILEAN NAN ÒG

By Frances MacEachen

*Eilean nan Òg*, a Gaelic apprenticeship program for teenagers that was inspired by an editorial in *Am Bràighe* and made possible by a reader's donation, was held this summer for the third year at Highland Village Museum/*An Clachan Gàidhealach*, Iona. Its purpose is to provide a paid learning experience for selected Cape Breton youth who have demonstrated a strong interest in the Island's Gaelic language and heritage.

With financial support from the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society, and individual contributors, the number of 2001 apprentices increased to ten, up from three in 2000. This year, four boys and six girls were employed and paid a weekly stipend to learn Gaelic language, songs, history and culture from guest tradition bearers and their main instructor Jim Watson, Gaelic Program Coordinator at Highland Village.

Writing in his journal about the first day on the job, St. Ann's Bay apprentice Morris MacLeod reported, "Seumas (Jim) taught us some Gaelic. It is a really awesome language."

Increased emphasis was placed on Gaelic instruction this year, with language lessons every morning. Apprentices indicated a strong interest in being fluent Gaelic speakers and in their evaluations some asked that even more time be spent on Gaelic instruction. Afternoons were spent with guest tradition bearers who included Wally Ellison, Rod C. MacNeil, Maxie MacNeil, Mickey MacNeil, Frances MacEachen, Jamie MacNeil, Joe Peter MacLean, Mary Jane Lamond and Jimmy Caluman MacNeil. Their time was given on alternating days as they generously shared their traditions of Gaelic song, storytelling, fiddle music, piping and stepdancing. Apprentices also participated in Village interpretive life by gathering plants and weeds for dying wool and learned about farming, carding, weaving and spinning from Highland Village staff. As well, apprentices brought their own cultural skills to the Highland Village site as they sang Gaelic songs, fiddled, step danced and played the piano and bag pipes to

the appreciation of visitors and staff alike.

The first week of the program focused on historical themes that corresponded each day with a particular time period and building on site. Regular morning discussions centered on a particular artifact chosen for its relevance to everyday life in Gaelic Nova Scotia. Mostly handmade, these items ranged from wool baskets to butter presses. While holding the artifact, the teens had a chance to express themselves on what the object had to say about Gaels and their culture while everyone else listened.

On the first day apprentices were introduced to Gaelic Scotland through a slide show of Scotland by Wally Ellison and an information session in the Black House. The young people had a hard

struggling just to understand a word here and there is not a way to learn."

Anna Watson wrote that she could "completely understand why people learned English as fast as possible . . . the language (Gaelic) was for the uneducated and English was spoken by the smart people." Day five was spent with Jamie MacNeil and fiddler Joe Peter MacLean who participated with the teens in a *céilidh* for seniors from Alderwood Guest Home. The kids also talked about forming their own youth groups, which Jim christened *Na h-Eileanaich* (The Islanders).

Week two focused on the Gaelic arts. Mary Jane Lamond spent a day teaching the apprentices different types of Gaelic song. Joe Peter returned to play for a step-dancing and square dancing session



**Jim Watson, Mickey MacNeil & Maxie MacNeil sharing songs with the Eilean nan Òg interns**

with Frances MacEachen. Jimmy Caluman MacNeil told his famous story and about *Dòmhnail Gorm* and sang Gaelic songs.

As part of *Eilean nan Òg*, apprentices participate in a youth camp that is part of the annual Gaelic festival, *Feis an Eilean*, in Christmas Island. This time they were the instructors to young children.

time comprehending how people lived in such seemingly crude dwellings, but Jim pointed out these buildings were, after all, quite ingenious and highly engineered to meet the demands of the Gaels' climate and lifestyle.

On day two, they visited the log cabin where Rod C. MacNeil told them an emigration story of the Barra soldier, Donald Òg MacNeil. Day three focused on the Gaels' new community in Cape Breton and the *céilidh* (visit), while Maxie and Mickey MacNeil regaled with stories about visiting and sharing songs in their community. Day four examined reasons for the decline of Gaelic. Role play in the school house seemed to impact greatly on the teens. (Jim pretended he was a teacher who in this case only spoke Gaelic.)

"Going to school when our grandparents did would have been frustrating," wrote Samantha MacKinnon in her journal. "It would have been a relief when recess came and you could finally talk Gaelic . . . Sitting there day after day

During the last day of *Eilean nan Òg* the apprentices talked about what *Na h-Eileanaich* should be and do. Apprentices said they would like to raise awareness of Gaelic language and culture in the schools, hold Gaelic immersions, design a website and chat room, hold day camps for children and have youth exchanges. Jim suggested they begin with a day of Gaelic instruction at Highland Village which will be organized by him and the apprentices. Other interested young people will be invited to attend the day.

Asking for an evaluation of the program, apprentices strongly expressed that *Eilean nan Òg* remain dynamic, with lots of opportunity for hands-on activity, Gaelic language learning, and contact with tradition bearers. For improvement they suggested field trips, breaks between language instruction, more information on Gaelic piping and other instruments and more comfortable chairs! The idea of forming their own youth group and reclaiming their her-

itage language was seen as particularly appealing to the group.

Support for *Eilean nan Òg 2001* came from the program's anonymous patron, Nova Scotia Highland Village Society, Gaeltalk Communications and private donors Mabel McCutcheon of Hamilton, Ontario, Laurie MacQuaig-MacDougall and the Oran Gaelic singers in London, Ontario. *Tapadh leibh uile gu mór*. If you would like more information or contribute to *Eilean nan Òg* or the formation of *Na h-Eileanaich*, please contact gaeltalk@auracom.com or Gaeltalk Communication, 175 MacIntyre Road, Queensville, NS B9A 1S6.

**Comments from Participants**

Day One - August 13  
**Megan O' Handley**  
Boisdale, Cape Breton County

Today was such an interesting day. It was exactly what I had hoped it would be like. We started off the day by learning how to say simple phrases and many interesting facts -- like there are only 18 letters in the Gaelic alphabet and that you can't say yes or no in Gaelic. We also watched an amazing slide show of pictures of Scotland and learned all about the glaciers and how they formed the land. After that we took a walk up to the Black House where Morris played the pipes for us and Seumas told us everything there was to know about the house along with a rather funny story about the king of Ireland and fairies and how the king wanted to walk on water. Then we all met in the entrance to the village and listened to Wally Ellison and Morris play the pipes. Jessica Farrell and I step danced to Wally. It was a fun day.

Day Two - August 14  
**Emily Redden**  
Iona, Victoria County

The time went quickly today, or at least it did for me. First we passed around a pulley from a loom in the log house. At first I had no clue what it was, actually I didn't have a clue what it was for a while. Also today, Roddy C. came in and told stories about what things were like for settlers when they arrived and about why they came here in the first place. What I kind of found interesting was the story about Iona's name and St. Columba. Later we did a lot of Gaelic. I was surprised because I could actually read some. My favorite part was when

we went up on the hill and sang songs. Something that was mentioned today that made me think, was where I might be able to continue learning Gaelic when I'm done here.

Day Three - Aug. 15  
**Samantha MacKinnon**  
Washabuck, Victoria County

Today was fun! We learned some sentences in Gaelic about the weather and such. We saw a thing to stretch the yarn today also. We thought it was hand-carved. We also worked on Gaelic pronunciations. In the afternoon we had Mickey MacNeil and Maxie MacNeil in singing songs they learned as kids, as well as stories. They talked about a man who was very good at tricking people to get this own way. I love hearing Gaelic songs and the older singers have an added magic when they sing them.

Day Four - Aug. 16  
**Kim MacLean**  
East Lake Ainslie, Inverness County

The discussion today was good. People back then lived so differently. It shows you that the English (speakers) have had the influence over the Gaels in the area. The school house talk was good. Learning how the schools worked and how the children were treated. It's terrible that these kids had to sit through the whole day and they didn't know any of the work being taught because it was in English. I think that



**Frances MacEachen step dancing accompanied by Joe Peter MacLean on fiddle**

the Gaels received the same treatment from the "superior" English as the natives did. The discussion about Gaelic in the schools was good. If everyone in Cape Breton would talk to the school boards, something could be done to change the school system for the better.

Day Five - August 17  
**Justin MacKenzie**  
Big Beach, Cape Breton County

Today in the morning we looked at an old book that was full of Gaelic songs. In the morning we also helped clean up the stage for the little concert we had for the old people from Alderwood Guest



**Eilean nan Òg interns (Front to Back - Left to Right) Row 1 - Emily Redden, Megan O'Handley, Jessica Farrell & Samantha MacKinnon. Row 2 - Anna Watson, Justin MacKenzie & Kim MacLean. Row 3 - Morris MacLeod, Curtis MacNeil & Michael Farrell. Row 4 - Am Bràighe Editor Frances MacEachen, Highland Village Gaelic Coordinator Jim Watson & Highland Village Director, Rodney Chaisson.**

Home. We also worked on Gaelic speech in the morning and in the afternoon. Also, Jamie MacNeil was singing and Joe Peter played the fiddle. We may also start a Gaelic activist group.

Day Six - Aug. 20  
**Morris MacLeod**  
Goose Cove, Victoria County

Today we talked about an old-style hook used in the houses. I was very efficient and looked really cool. Mary Jane was in to talk to us and she taught us, like, 10 songs. It was amazing. She has to have the best voice that I've ever heard. The songs that she taught us were really nice and one or two were on her CD, so it was cool to hear her sing them in person. We went up on the hill and sang some *puirt-a-beul*. They are my favorite kind of songs and she makes them come alive. I hope that she will come some time to teach us again, if we get our group together. We finished the day with a milling frolic. That was awesome.

Day Seven - August 21  
**Curtis MacNeil**  
Washabuck, Victoria County

Today we learned how to dye wool and weave and spin the wool. It was very interesting. Then we learned some more Gaelic and then Jimmy Calaman came and we sang some Gaelic songs. It was a very interesting day.

*continued on page 27*



## An Update on Our STRATEGIC PLANNING

By Rodney Chaisson

In June 2000, an exciting new partnership began between the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society and the Government of Nova Scotia through the Nova Scotia Museum. The underlying goal of this new partnership is to grow the Highland Village Museum into an international centre of excellence for Gaelic language and culture.

It is very clear that in order for the Highland Village to realize this goal, a well-articulated, concise, achievable and measurable plan needs to be prepared and implemented.

Discussions concerning strategic planning were actually set in motion in the fall of 1998, when a joint board/staff/community partners planning session was held. That session along with subsequent discussions at the Board and staff levels as well as discussions with Nova Scotia Museum representatives formed the basis for a discussion paper that set the foundation for a strategic plan. That paper, adopted by the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society Board of Trustees, identifies four guiding principles and supports eight strategic directions/objectives with strategies.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In the execution of the strategies outlined in this plan, it is important that the following guiding principles be kept in mind:

- The highest standards of museology.
- Comprehensive knowledge of the Gaelic language and culture in Nova Scotia.
- Excellence in the accurate representation of the Gaelic language and culture.
- A positive contribution towards the economy of the Cape Breton Island community.

### STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The following have been identified as the eight (8) strategic directions for the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society; (1) Gaelic Language & Culture, (2) Interpretation & Educational Outreach, (3) Research & Collections, (4) Genealogy & Family History, (5) Community Leadership, (6) Human Resources, (7)

Financial Resources, and (8) Infrastructure.

Based on the directions listed above, the strategic objectives for the Society are that by 2006...

1. the Highland Village will be a fully functional bilingual Gaelic-English site with authentic representation of Nova Scotia's Gaelic culture, as well as on and off-site activities that encourage growth of the language and culture;
2. the Highland Village will have a fully developed interpretive program with interactive and experiential opportunities for visitors, and an education program that complements and assists the public school curriculum;
3. the Highland Village will have a strong research capacity including types of materials to support its activities in Gaelic language & culture, interpretation, educational outreach, collections management, library and archives and music;
4. Roots Cape Breton Genealogy & Family History Centre will be operating as a viable enterprise that provides accurate, quality information to its customers and serves as the family history centre for Cape Breton Island;
5. the Highland Village will, in partnership with other organizations, develop initiatives to strengthen, culturally and economically, the Central Cape Breton community; as well as the wider Cape Breton Island heritage community;
6. the Highland Village will have in place the human resources necessary to implement the objectives outlined in this plan;
7. the Highland Village will ensure that adequate financial resources are available to carry out the operations of the Highland Village and to support the objectives outlined in this plan;
8. the Highland Village will have in place the infrastructure necessary to support the objectives outlined in this plan.

Some of the strategies outlined in the paper include:

- ✓ To increase the number of staff that can speak Gaelic fluently. (Gaelic)
- ✓ To offer a superior living history interpretation program with active interaction between staff and public. (Interpretation)

- ✓ To develop, implement, and evaluate a program for quality control, measuring excellence in customer service. (Interpretation)
- ✓ To enhance the Highland Village's research and library resources. (Research)
- ✓ To formulate Roots Cape Breton's unique product and service offerings. (Roots)
- ✓ Develop and implement a marketing program designed to increase annual visitation to 50,000 and earned income to \$ 400,000 by 2006 through increased visitation, gift shop sales, fundraising events and new programming. (Financial)

The full discussion paper including all fifty-three strategies can be found on our website.

### DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

In the next phase of the planning process all of these strategies will be supported with an action plan. A plan for Gaelic language and culture has been drafted. Other areas are currently being investigated and developed.

However, it was felt that five key areas required external expertise. Those areas include interpretation, site development, music centre, marketing and fundraising. Terms of reference were developed to address these areas. Nova Scotia Tourism & Culture and Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation agreed to provide financing for the project.

A team led by Catherine Cole & Associates was chosen for the task. Catherine is an Edmonton based museum consultant and has done work with other living history sites. Her team consists of Dr. Michael Kennedy, an historian specializing in Gaelic culture based in Mabou, Brian MacKay-Lyons, a Halifax based architect, and Mandi Wisheu, an Edmonton based research associate.

Catherine and her team have been busy researching, conducting focus groups and workshops, interviewing stakeholders, and preparing a preliminary report.

Following a Board of Trustees meeting and a public open house to get feedback on the preliminary plan, the consultants will present the final report to the Board for approval this winter. The information provided in the report will be used to prepare the strategic plan to guide the Highland Village Museum through the next five years.

The next issue of *Naidheachd a' Chlachain* (due this spring) will focus on the findings of this important report.



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*'Ga chuir an gnìomh an co-roinn le  
Comunn Clachan Gàidhealach  
na h-Albann Nuaidh*

*Operated in partnership with the  
Nova Scotia Highland Village  
Society*

A PART of THE NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM

MEUR de THAIGH-TASGAIDH  
NA H-ALBANN NUAIDH

  
NOVA SCOTIA  
Tourism and Culture

  
ALBA NUADH  
Roinn Turasachd 's Cultur



# *Turas Rannsachaidh dha 'n Albainn:*

## RESEARCH TRIP TO GAELIC SCOTLAND

Highland Village Museum/An Clachan Gàidhealach  
Rodney Chaisson, Director  
Jim Watson, Gaelic Coordinator  
September 25 - October 4, 2001





*Loch Laggan*

## INTRODUCTION

Rodney Chaisson, Director and Jim Watson, Gaelic Coordinator, in pursuance of the Highland Village Museum's objectives for enhancing its Gaelic program, undertook a nine-day research trip to Scotland. The trip's purpose was to acquire information pertinent to Gaelic development on the site. This was done by contacting institutions and resource persons that could potentially partner in that development.

The research and networking conducted during the time in Scotland can be considered as having been inspired by a groundbreaking earlier visit of Tourism and Culture Minister Rodney MacDonald, when initial contacts with Gaelic Scotland were made for the Province. The details of our venture are given in chronological order to reconstruct the trip for the board, staff and government and elicit any remarks, or questions they may have.

The primary objective of the visit to Scotland was to gain first-hand knowledge of institutions, agencies and individuals currently involved in the research, maintenance and promotion of the Gaelic language and culture. Of particular interest to the Highland Village Museum were the contacts made at *Sabhal Mór Ostaig*, the Skye-based Gaelic medium college, the Highland Folk Museum in Badenoch and the Highland Council Offices of Cultural and Leisure Services.

In addition to acquiring a general picture of the present status of Gaelic in Scotland, the visit was undertaken with specific attention to investigating opportunities for enhancing the Gaelic interpretation at the Highland Village Museum. This was accomplished through extensive travel throughout the Highlands and Islands and in Edinburgh and Glasgow through visits with professionals and institutions concerned with Scottish Gaelic culture and its preservation.

Given the short duration of the trip, the expectations and objectives set out in the planning process were met and exceeded in nearly all instances. Clearly, as the following chronology of our route will show, our research provided a useful introduction to a range of contacts involved with language and culture development in Scotland. The success of the trip was enhanced considerably by a comprehensive itinerary, our contacts' willingness to correspond and meet and the sincerely warm response, wherever we went, to our presence as bearers of good-will from Gaelic Cape Breton.

We covered a considerable amount of terrain, and institutional and human geography over the space of nine days that saw

## TURAS RANNSACHAIDH DHA 'N ALBAINN: RESEARCH TRIP TO GAELIC SCOTLAND

*Text - Jim Watson*

*Photos/Layout - Rodney Chaisson*

*Cover Photos: [Top] Blackhouse ruins, Baile na Creige, Isle of Barra  
[Bottom] - Replica of Hebridean Style Blackhouse at Highland Folk Museum, Kinguissie*



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*Loch Lochy*

us travel from Edinburgh to the Outer Hebrides, return to the Highlands and finally continue on to Glasgow. During that time, we were able to begin discussions with Scottish institutions about forming partnerships with the Highland Village Museum, gain fresh insights and perspectives on Gaelic culture as a significant resource for community building and formulate new questions as to the best way forward in our efforts to represent the historical Gael at the center of Gaelic Cape Breton on the Bras d'Or.

## THE TRIP

SEPTEMBER 24, 2001

HALIFAX TO GLASGOW VIA ICELAND

Departure from Halifax Airport with Icelandair. Current regulations required that we go through security check three hours prior departure. The flight landed for a brief time in Iceland and we continued on to Glasgow.

DAY I - SEPTEMBER 25, 2001

GLASGOW TO EDINBURGH

Arriving in Glasgow and having cleared customs, we traveled by bus to the Queen Street train station and commuted to Edinburgh where we were hosted by Rob Dunbar for the night. Rob Dunbar, a member of the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society, is a Lecturer in International Law at the University of Edinburgh. Rob is also a Gaelic speaker and high profile activist on Scotland's Gaelic development scene. That afternoon and evening were spent collecting a rented car and in discussion with Rob Dunbar and Dr. Wilson MacLeod, lecturer with the Department of Celtic, University of Edinburgh. Wilson spent the previous two years as an instructor through the medium of Gaelic with *Sabhal Mór Ostaig* before accepting a post with the University of Edinburgh. (Actually, all courses at *Sabhal Mór* are taught in the Gaelic lan-

guage). Discussions resulted in a briefing on the college's programming, and helped us better understand its potential as a partner in training Highland Village staff. The evenings remarks were useful during the following day's discussions with administrators at Skye's Gaelic College.

DAY II - SEPTEMBER 26, 2001

EDINBURGH TO SKYE VIA LOCHABER

Leaving Edinburgh shortly after rush-hour had subsided, we continued northward, passing through various districts of the Highlands from which Cape Breton received many of its Gaelic-speaking settlers during the nineteenth century. Rodney recorded the journey to the west coast, and indeed the entire trip, with many digital photos of landscapes and historical sites. These are available for viewing at the Highland Village Museum visitor centre.

Cutting cross country to the west coast of the Highlands and traveling on through Lochaber, Glen Moriston and Lochalsh, we made stops at the Clan MacPherson Museum in Newtonmore and Eilean Donan Castle in Dornie. We crossed the bridge to Skye, over the Kyle of Lochalsh, and steered for the Sleat Peninsula. (According to Highlands and Islands Enterprise documentation, Sleat is the only area of population and job growth in the Highland region.) Arriving at *Sabhal Mór Ostaig's* old wing in the late afternoon, College Director *Tormad Mac'Illosa* (Norman Gillis) escorted us to *Arainn Chaluim Chille* (The St. Columba campus), the college's new residential and learning centre built in a magnificent setting looking across to the coastline and mountains of Knoydart on the nearby mainland.

*Arainn Chaluim Chille, Sabhal Mór Ostaig*

Along with Norman Gillis, we were also met with by *Iain Tormad MacLeòid* (John Norman MacLeod), Head of Educational Programming, *Niall Frisealach*, (Niall Fraser) Communications Director and *Alastair MacGill-eain* (Alec

MacLean), Director of Training for Radio Broadcasting. Discussion of a working relationship with the Gaelic College focused on the three following areas of institutional interaction (see inset).

Excellent hospitality was to the fore throughout our visit. *Sabhal Mór* was no exception, as we were taken out for dinner that evening and provided gratis with a night's lodging and breakfast before leaving for the Uig ferry to Lochmaddy in North Uist.

### DAY III - SEPTEMBER 27, 2001

#### SKYE TO THE WESTERN ISLES

Following breakfast at the *Arainn Chaluum Chille* centre's cafeteria, Neil Fraser toured us through the campus's facilities which included class rooms, library and auditorium. Before leaving *Sabhal Mór Ostaig*, Jim spoke briefly in Gaelic to students studying cultural tourism in the North Atlantic Studies program, describing the Highland Village Museum and our interpretive goals. (Sine MacKenzie of Mabou was a student in that class.)

Leaving *Sabhal Mór* and the Sleat Peninsula, we traveled up the island to the port village of Uig in North Skye. Caledonian MacBrayne's ferry is boarded here to cross over to Lochmaddy in North Uist, the Outer Hebrides. Allowing enough time to make the ferry, we continued to on to Kilmuir to tour a private museum owned and operated by Eòin Dòmhnallach (Johnathan MacDonald). The Skye Museum of Island Life is comprised of seven thatched buildings representing village life in Skye, circa 1900. The buildings include a barn, forge, weavers house and dwelling. A good many artifacts are to be seen here that pertain to crofting, but also memorabilia from the era of land clearances, items used by Prince Charlie and Flora MacDonald and pre-historic axe-heads made by ancient inhabitants of Skye.

Johnathan MacDonald is an excellent Gaelic speaker and graciously refused to charge visitors from Nova Scotia admission. (Since returning, we have sent a variety of brochures to

Johnathan pertaining to the Highland Village Museum, along with field recordings of Cape Breton Gaelic singing. His nephew, *Eachann MacCoinnich* (Hector MacKenzie), visited the Highland Village Museum two weeks later just to hear Gaelic

spoken on the site. Jim was able to have a lengthy conversation with him and *Gilleabuig MacFhearghuis* (Archie Ferguson) from Portree. They are both in their early twenties)

Sailing from Uig on the afternoon ferry, we disembarked in Lochmaddy and drove directly to *Colaisde Bheinn na Faoghla* in Benbecula. The college is affiliated with the Lews Castle College and offers a diploma (National Certificate) for a one year course made up of units in Gaelic music, Gaelic song and Gaelic language. The program's inspiration is *Ceòlas*, (a week long teaching festival held in South Uist where Cape Breton style stepdancing and fiddling is taught by some of Cape Breton's best exponents). The college focuses on Gaelic language and the cultural skills that were part of traditional house gatherings, where friends and family would take part in storytelling, singing, dance and music. *Colaisde Bheinn na Faoghla's* administration and staff members are all Gaelic-speaking.

While there, Jim gave a late afternoon workshop on the subject of Cape Breton Gaelic songs and singing styles to a gathering of staff and students. Will Lamb, the college's director, arranged for us to spend the night at a Gaelic-speaking bed and breakfast, Heisgir House. Will and a student joined us for a dinner paid for by the college. *Colaisde Bheinn na Faoghla* serves a clientele from Britain and the U.S.

### DAY IV - SEPTEMBER 28, 2001

#### NORTH UIST, BENBECULA & SOUTH UIST

While waiting for the evening ferry from Lochboisdale to Castle Bay, the fourth day of our visit to the Outer Hebrides

## S a b h a l M ó r O s t a i g

1. Opportunities for Highland Village Museum staff to participate in short-term language courses at *Sabhal Mór Ostaig*;
2. Summer work placements for *Sabhal Mór* students as Gaelic-speaking animators and staff tutors at the Highland Village. Provision for teaching traditional skills in Gaelic singing, storytelling and oral history would be made for students by Jim Watson. These tutorials would be included on the site as Gaelic educational and interpretive activities.
3. The Highland Folk Museum in Kingussie is already engaged with *Sabhal Mór* in plans to receive Gaelic instruction for its staff through the medium of a graded module developed at the college. It was therefore suggested by John Norman MacLeod that Highland Village may want to participate in the same program. In view of a possible institutional relationship with the Kingussie museum, and the seeming merit of the training program itself, it was agreed that the specifics of such a relationship would be examined to decide on its feasibility. Further information on the *Sabhal Mór* distance program is forthcoming. Once we've had an opportunity to study the program more closely, details of its applications will be provided for the board.



*Skye Museum of Island Life*



*Sollas, North Uist*

was spent backtracking from Benbecula in the morning to Lochmaddy. There we visited a small museum named *Taigh Chearsabhadh* (Cearsabhadh House) located near the ferry terminal. *Taigh Chearsabhadh* is a two story building containing a gift shop, dining area and three galleries. A display explaining the origins of the Lordship of the Isles and Norse presence in the Isles from circa 900 AD was particularly appealing by way of replicated artifacts and well-written information panels employing English supported by Gaelic quotes and poetry.

Leaving *Taigh Chearsabhadh*, we traveled down the west coast of North Uist. Observing the *machair* (fertile flat lands near the shore) side of the Island, we passed through the township of Sollas. Sollas was cleared in the 19th century. Many of its inhabitants settled in Cape Breton. (In fact, the Woodbine area of Cape Breton County was originally called Sollas). Returning to Benbecula on our way southward, we stopped for lunch at the Linaclate School and Community Centre. We had hoped to visit *Museum an Eilein*, a section in the complex, but it was



*MV Clansman, Castle Bay, Barra*

closed at the time. All the kitchen staff, save one, were Gaelic speaking and obviously enjoyed a high degree of lively repartee while serving the public and school children meals at lunchtime.

Continuing on to South Uist, we visited at the home of Alastair and Annabel MacEachen in How Beg. (The MacEachens are acquainted with a number of Inverness County people.) We made arrangements to spend the night at the MacEachens on our return from Barra.

On the road to the Lochboisdale ferry terminal, we visited another local museum called Kildonan Museum in Kildonan,

*Highland Village Museum / An Clachan Gàidhealach*

South Uist. Kildonan is a small community museum displaying items germane to the island's crofting life, circa late 1800s to the present. Included in the exhibition were artifacts, black and white photos and replications of interior house scenes. These were presented to a good affect and complimented by interpretive panels employing Gaelic poetry and quotes along with English texts. Leaving from Lochboisdale that evening, we arrived at Castle Bay in the dark and continued on to the Isle of Barra Hotel.

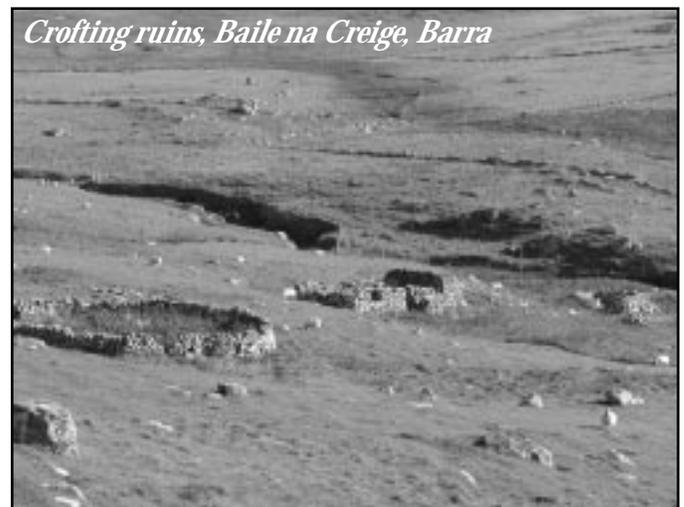


*Kismul Castle, Barra*

## DAY V - SEPTEMBER 29, 2001

### ISLES OF BARRA & VATERSAY

Having spent the night near Castle Bay (the island is only twelve miles around), our first activity was a morning tour of Kismul Castle. The rest of the day was spent exploring the island. We visited *Tràigh Mhór*, the famous cockle strand airport, Barra Golf Course, *Cille Bharra* (St. Barr's Church). We also visited the Craigston Museum in *Baile na Creige*, a thatched cottage. Getting there involved a half mile walk through an inland glen. The surrounding countryside was quite lovely with large numbers of sheep being herded in the distance. The ruins of black houses were a frequent sight throughout Barra, as they are on the mainland, in Skye and the



*Crofting ruins, Baile na Creige, Barra*



*Castle Bay, Isle of Barra*

rest of Hebrides. Our tour of Barra ended with an excursion via causeway to the thinly populated Isle of Vatersay. Unfortunately it wasn't possible to make social contacts in Barra, despite efforts to arrange meetings with cultural organizers there by e-mail and phone. The *Dualchas* Barra Heritage and Cultural Centre closed on the day before our arrival, and an appointment to meet with Helen McInteer, the centre's administrator, failed to materialize.

The evening ferry from Castle Bay returned us to Lochboisdale. From there we went straight to How Beg where we stayed the night with the MacEachens.



*Urquart Castle, Loch Ness*

#### DAY VI - SEPTEMBER 30, 2001

##### OUTER HEBRIDES TO INVERNESS VIA LOCH NESS

Most of day six was spent in transit as we retraced our original route to the Kyle of Lochalsh on the way to Inverness. Coming to Portree in Skye, we stopped at the Aros Centre. The centre is partly owned by Arthur Cormack, better known to Cape Bretoners as a Gaelic singer in the band Clìar. A multi-media interpretive tunnel is featured as part of the centre. Narration through individual head-phone sets introduce manikins and interpretive displays as an explanation is given of the Gaels origins in Scotland, their political decline, the crofters' wars and emigration.

*Highland Village Museum / An Clachan Gàidhealach*

Traveling beside Loch Ness on the way to Inverness, we stopped to tour Urquart Castle, an ancient fortress overlooking Loch Ness. The castle is now undergoing renovation and in the care of Historic Scotland. (There was no sign of the Loch Ness monster.) Getting to Inverness late in the afternoon, we lodged with Peter MacKenzie, a surpassing host, at his bed and breakfast near the Highland Council Offices.



*Baile Gean, Highland Folk Museum*

#### DAY VII - OCTOBER 1, 2001

##### KINGUSSIE & NEWTONMORE

Following breakfast, we proceeded to Highland Council Offices in Kingussie. We were met by Judi Menabney, officer with Area Cultural and Leisure Services. Together we went to the Highland Folk Museum site at Newtonmore. The outdoor museum encompasses 400 hundred years of Highland material life and is now adding a Gaelic cultural dimension to its authentication efforts. (For a lengthier description of the museum go to website: <http://highlandfolk.com/main.htm>)

Checking in with Ross Noble, who became our guide for most of the day, we began by touring the *Baile Gean* township, a recreation of a Highland farm dating to circa 1700. Buildings in this part of the museum are constructed of traditional mate-



*Baile Gean, Highland Folk Museum*

rials and built by the methods of the time. A Gaelic-speaking guide from the Isle of Harris greeted us in the main dwelling house and we exchanged songs. Attention to detail in the reconstructions was very exacting and explained with great relish by our guide Ross Noble. Breaking briefly for lunch, we then moved to the agricultural section of the museum which dated up to 1935 as a modern working croft.

Having completed the Newtonmore leg of our tour, we moved on to the Kingussie Museum which interprets the social life of the Highlands through an extensive collection of everyday objects that includes furniture, household objects and machinery.

Since Jim had mentioned earlier in the day that an oral version of the Black Officer and the Disaster of Gaig had been collected in Cape Breton, Ross Noble took him to the grave side of the Black Officer in the village of Kingussie. As legend has it, the officer, a John MacPherson of Badenoch, was notorious for pressing young Highlanders into military service. Reputedly, he was in league with the Devil. MacPherson was killed in a freak avalanche while hunting in the nearby deer forest of Gaig in December of 1799. Although his gravestone is re-erected once a year, it is leveled within a night, or so, and has mostly lain on the ground for more than two centuries. Highlanders have a long memory for transgressions.

On that note our thoroughly informative day in Badenoch ended. We returned to Inverness with some time to spare before joining representatives from Highland Council at dinner that evening.

Judi Menabney picked us up at the bed and breakfast around 7 pm. We were joined by Graham Watson, Cultural and Leisure Services Manager, Stuart Brownlee, Head of Libraries and Archives for the Highlands Council and elected Councilor from Skye Allan Beaton. Supper and the evening were enjoyed over general conversation and Stuart Brownlee explained in brief a new on-line Gaelic project *Am Baile* (formerly known as Gaelic Village.com).

*Highland Village Museum / An Clachan Gàidhealach*

## DAY VIII - OCTOBER 2, 2001

### INVERNESS TO EDINBURGH

After leaving MacKenzie's bed and breakfast, we re-convened at the Highland Councils Offices with Judi Menabney and

Graham Watson. The morning was spent in discussion as to the ways in which the two museums can share and develop resources to each others mutual benefit. The following areas of initiative were agreed upon as the potential basis for establishing an enhanced relationship between the two museums (see inset).

In concluding our discussion of the ways in which future partnerships might occur, it was agreed that follow-up on these suggestions would begin in the form of a cross-edited proposal drafted by the Highland Village Museum and submitted to Highland Council and Leisure Services. This proposal has been completed and has been submitted for review.

Leaving Inverness and turning southward to the industrial belt, we arrived in Edinburgh in the latter part of the afternoon. Along with Rob Dunbar, we met later with Hugh Cheape, Historian at the Royal Museum of Scotland. Hugh, a Gaelic speaker, is currently designing a course on Highland material culture for *Sabhal Mór Ostaig* and is a frequenter advisor to the Highland Folk Museum in Kingussie. He is also executor for the late Gaelic scholar John Lorne Campbell's estate on the Isle of Canna. John Lorne Campbell and his wife, Margaret Fay Shaw, have had a long standing relationship with Nova Scotia. One of John Lorne's last publications was *Songs in Exile*. Based on field recordings made in the 1930s, this excellent book contains a large number of waulking songs from the Barra tradition of Christmas Island and area.

Hugh toured the Highland Village Museum in 1987, and has corresponded sporadically since that time. He offered assistance to Village programming in whatever ways that he could.

### Highland Council & Highland Folk Museum

1. sharing information on methods and approaches to Gaelic interpretation;
2. peer review;
3. assistance in material interpretation;
4. exchanging staff on a term basis to learn Gaelic and develop educational skills;
5. exchanging Gaelic mentors (tutors) working with staff/students through the Sabhal Mór distance course;
6. focus group exchanges;
7. establishing partnerships with other Canadian institutions and agencies: possibly Unesco and Parks Canada;
8. employing university affiliated external examiners to assess programming.



*Blackhouse, Highland Folk Museum*

## DAY IX - OCTOBER 3, 2001

## EDINBURGH &amp; GLASGOW

Our final day continued apace. Jim was interviewed (live in Gaelic) by Kenny MacIvor for Gaelic BBC from the Edinburgh studios. The radio conversation focused on expansion of the Highland Village Gaelic program and the purpose of our visit, on behalf of the Highland Village Museum, to Scotland. Following the *Radio nan Gael* broadcast, Jim returned to Rob's flat, where Rodney gave an update on our activities to CBC over the phone. (Various people reported having heard Rodney's interview and have expressed interest in the trip's outcomes.)

We continued on to the School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh, where we were introduced to staff and given a thorough tour of the School's holdings of photos, books, manuscripts and recordings by Dr. John Shaw. While there, we purchased for the Village library a set of *Tocher*, the School's folklore quarterly and back volumes of *Scottish Studies*, an academic journal of Scottish ethnology currently edited by John Shaw. (Issues of *Tocher* have already been used at the Highland Village Museum to research Gaelic customs on Halloween for presentation during an evening tour.)

The afternoon of this last day was spent re-visiting the Scottish emigration section of the Royal Museum and traveling to Glasgow by train where we purchased various Gaelic materials at the Gaelic Books Council. The trip concluded with an evening at an Edinburgh pub in the company of Rob Dunbar, Wilson MacLeod and antiquarian Donald MacCormack, the largest seller of antique books pertaining to the Highlands and Scotland's Gaelic literature.

## OCTOBER 4, 2001

## GLASGOW TO HALIFAX VIA ICELAND

Returning to Nova Scotia from Glasgow via Icelandair, we arrived at Halifax in the early evening.

## SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Drawing hard and fast conclusions on the effectiveness and depth of institutional efforts being made to preserve Gaelic language in Scotland based on a nine-day visit would be difficult to do. However, our many conversations with a cross-section of people representing domains of activity ranging from community development and education, to folklore, academic research and historical representation has led to some impressions. The following observations may be helpful

towards building productive links with Gaelic Scotland and enhancing Nova Scotia's share of Gaelic culture through the means of the Highland Village Museum.

It could be said that Gaelic Scotland is now in a process of reconstruction to meet the needs of a modern world. Since the 1980s there has been a phenomenal expansion of sophisticated Gaelic enterprise in the Highlands and Islands. There also has been a good deal of improvement in educational initiatives, though some would say not enough. Gaelic-medium schooling is also available in the industrial belt, where over half of Scotland's Gaelic speakers live. Documentation of outcomes tells us that progress in Gaelic development has been accomplished by improvements in three main spheres of performance:

*Gaelic singing in Baile Gean,  
Highland Folk Museum*



1. Co-ordination of initiatives between government and organizations combined with skills upgrading for cultural workers;
2. Educational planning and program implementation;
3. Public and private sector investment in social and cultural development.

The successful intensification of Gaelic-related activities throughout Scotland can be largely attributed to structural changes resulting from the foundation building efforts of *Comunn na Gàihdlig* (The Gaelic Agency), *Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Àraich* (The Association for Gaelic Pre-Schools) and *Sabhal Mór Ostaig* (The Gaelic College).

Through the employment of teachers, broadcasters, planners and much evidence of cultural industries, it was plain to see that Gaelic development has become a major sector in the Highlands and Islands regional economy (figures should be available through CNAG). Attitudes towards the importance of Gaelic were also impressive. A significant consideration in the promotion of Gaelic based employment is the now conventional view that vigorous upkeep of a community's language, tradition and culture exercises a direct affect on the social cohesion essential to its economic development. It was fairly clear to us throughout the visit that Scottish development agencies and Gaelic organizations have found grounds for collaboration on mutual goals in this factor.

It also appears that these influences are augmented by well-researched strategies that reflect long-range planning and coordinated efforts in building infrastructures conceived for optimal results. Such an integrated approach has the ability to center wide cross-sector involvement in achieving desired outcomes for cultural and community advancement.

Despite the historical and cultural ties joining Nova Scotia to Gaelic Scotland, differences between the two regions are many. Governmental structure, composite population and the basis for economy are among those contrasts. Nevertheless, the similarities are considerable when examined generically. For example, corresponding negative circumstances are endemic to both regions: high rates of unemployment, outward migration of educated youth and skilled workers, cultural disenfranchisement, failure of mega-projects and a fragile economy coupled with rural decline.

On the positive score, comparable local resources for the development a Gaelic infrastructure with a capacity to impact cultural enterprises and community development are manifest on both sides of the Atlantic: an appealing environment, a distinctive, cultural base and a robust arts community. It is in this commonly held context that the Highland Village Museum's Gaelic assets have the most to offer in forming partnerships with akin Scottish institutions.

## A PILOT PROJECT PROPOSAL

On a scale of comparison to Nova Scotia, one cannot help but be impressed by the funding circumstances enjoyed by Gaelic development groups in Scotland. At a glance, monies for building cultural infrastructure come from a number of sources that include the Scottish Office, the National Lottery, the EU (European Union), local councils (forms of municipal government as we know them), HIE (Highlands and Islands Enterprise), Highlands Council Offices and a variety of trusts.

With scant resources available for Gaelic development in Nova Scotia, the degree to which the language and culture have remained intact should be seen as a measure of its depth and the internal tenacity by which its continuity has been maintained. Wherever we went in Scotland, the quality of Cape Breton's Gaelic culture was strongly acknowledged by those having visited the Island, or experienced Cape Breton culture in Scotland. It isn't surprising that Scottish institutions perceive the ongoing presence of Gaelic language and culture in Cape Breton as the island's primary asset for establishing exchanges of research and training opportunities.

On this basis, the Highland Village Museum enjoys a central, and affordable, position in exploiting these overtures of goodwill with the Old World. Highland Council has made it clear that the Highland Folk Museum shares a similar goal with Highland Village in planning to become a bilingual site. A number of suggestions for initiatives were made during conversations with Highland Council Cultural and Leisure Services officers in Inverness. While certain of these can be examined more closely in the future, the predominant issue at present is the design of a training program to instill a high degree of

Gaelic ability in the interpretive staffs at the two museum sites.

The Highland Folk Museum has already set up a training project with Sabhal Mór Ostaig, intended to make its workers fluent in Gaelic through the *Cùrsa Inntrigidh: Gaelic Assess* program. The course is, unfortunately, in the development stage and not available for investigation at the present. It is, apparently, designed as a distance course arranged in graduating lessons that will take the adult learner to a fluent level over a two year period. The medium of instruction is CD-ROM reinforced by periodic group meetings with a tutor, or mentor, who will explain points of confusion and make clarifications.

In discussions with John Norman MacLeod at Sabhal Mór and Judi Menabney and Graham Watson with Highland Council, it was mutually agreed that a proposal for a pilot project designed to teach Gaelic language and interpretive skills to both museum staffs be drafted by Highland Village. It is at this juncture that the follow-up on our trip to Scotland rests. The proposal will be forthcoming before the end of November.



## THE PRINCIPAL INSTITUTIONS CONTACTED

### *Highland Council: Comhairle na Gàidhlig, Cultural and Leisure Services*

Contact persons:

**Graham Watson**, Area Cultural and Leisure Services Manager - Badenoch and Strathspey

**Mòrag Anna NicLeòid**, Gaelic Officer, Cultural and Leisure Services

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Highland Council is the local sector of government whose responsibility it is to provide cultural and leisure services to the Highlands. Its experience in the management of heritage projects is extensive and its collections are of national importance.

Cultural and Leisure Services, as a sector of Highland Council, provides a wide range of opportunities for participation in cultural and recreational activities in the Highlands. These include Gaelic development, museums and heritage, libraries and library support services. The service is "committed to the development and promotion of the Gaelic culture and language and works closely with Gaelic organizations to achieve this aim across all Service activities."

To this end, Highland Council employs a Gaelic Strategy based on the conviction that it is within their mandate, "To promote and support the indigenous heritage and cultures of the Highlands and to recognize the importance of heritage and culture in underpinning our place in the contemporary world."

The Highland Council's Gaelic Development Strategy identifies education, arts and culture and the economic significance of Gaelic language and culture within the Highlands region as its key charges.

The vision for the Highland Council's Gaelic Development Strategy embraces the following objectives:

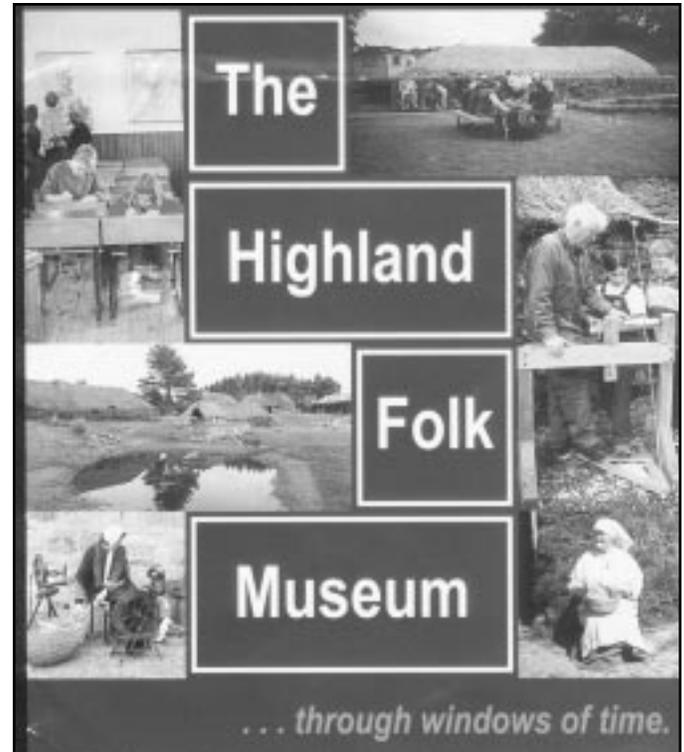
- To promote and support developments which will lead to increasing the number of people who are able to speak Gaelic;
- To encourage people to take advantage of the opportunities provided in relation to Gaelic and also through Gaelic;
- To support and promote strengthening Gaelic as a community language;
- To support, strengthen and provide opportunities for traditional and contemporary Gaelic culture through the medium of Gaelic;
- To encourage and facilitate co-operation and information exchange among public and private sector groups and individuals involved in the development of Gaelic in The Highland Council Area.

## *Highland Folk Museum*

Contact Person:  
**Judi Menabney**

E-mail: judimenabney@highland.gov.uk

Highland Folk Museum is owned and under the management of the Highland Council. Its collections and holdings make it Scotland's foremost museum relating to the people of the Highlands. It is mandated to "preserve, interpret and promote the material culture of the Highlands and to interpret for vis-



itors and locals alike, the life of the people of the Highlands through three centuries to the present day."

The museum is located at Kingussie in the Central Highlands. It is constituted by twin sites about four kilometers apart. The Newtonmore section is an open air museum similar in its presentation to that of the Highland Village Museum. Its focus is on a living history approach, using animators who help inform on eras of Highland history as represented by period buildings spanning some four hundred years of material life in the Highlands. The Gaels' experience here is portrayed through a number of time windows that include an early eighteenth-century farm steading complete with rare breeds of domestic animals, and a mid-twentieth century working croft with modern animals and field systems. Interpreters are dressed in period costume and antique buses convey visitors over the 85 acre site, which also provides a gift shop, cafe, audio visual centre and play area for children.

The Kingussie component is comprised of exhibits displaying domestic objects, furniture, machinery and implements pertaining to rural life. Kingussie's outdoor area includes reconstructions of a Black House, clack mill and smoke-house.

The present approach to enhancing both sites in the Highland Folk Museum fold is to bring a respectable level of Gaelic language presence to its interpretation. This is especially crucial for Newtonmore as a living outdoor museum in a historically Gaelic-speaking region. According to the Highland Council

document *Baile Fàilte*, "The primary motivation in developing a Gaelic interpretation context at Highland Folk Museum is the recognition that interpreting the material and social culture without the language is historically inaccurate, culturally incorrect and interpretively inadequate."

To address this concern for Gaelic representation in a museum for and about the Gaels, the Highland Council is presently committed to its, "aim to create a true, Gaelic interpretive context at Highland Folk Museum, accessible to and adding value to the experience of all visitors, whatever their linguistic and cultural base."

## *Sabhal Mòr Ostaig*

Contact Person:

**John Norman MacLeod**, Head of Educational Programming

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SMO is a Gaelic medium College located on the Sleat Peninsula in the Isle of Skye. It was established in 1973 as a summer school offering piping and Gaelic language instruction. From those early days, it has evolved into an accredited centre of advanced education in business training and community studies, featuring courses in Gaelic Access, Gaelic and Communications, Language and Culture, North Atlantic Studies and TV and Multimedia. Along with full-time accredited courses, an extensive schedule of short courses is offered that teach skills in Gaelic language, music, Highland genealogy and even Cape Breton stepdancing and fiddling.



SMO was formally inaugurated as a College for Further Education in 1983. It has since upgraded its facilities for students and instructors by the addition of Arainn Chalum Chille. The growth of SMO educational programming has been in direct response to the socioeconomic needs of the Highlands and Islands region. Certification for its systematically designed courses was granted at the national level in 1989.

SMO's library was founded in 1976 with a gift of 150 Gaelic texts. Current holdings comprise a multi-media collection of over 6,000 volumes. The collection has recently been increased substantially with the purchase of a large number of related books from Donald MacCormack, Edinburgh antiquarian and Gaelic book seller.

The college is presently entering on a course of dynamic expansion through its participation in the University of the Highlands and Islands Project, a university-without-walls concept based on technology applications. It is expected that *Sabhal Mòr* will move from College of Further Education



*Highland Folk Museum*

*Above: Map of Newtonmore site*

*Below: Map of Kingussie site*





Status to University Status in the near future. Current full-time enrolment is approximately eighty five students, two of whom are from Cape Breton.

**The Language Course: An Cùrsa Inntirigidh**

Discussion with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and the Highlands Council on Gaelic language training for workers at Highland Folk Museum and Highland Village centered on the idea of placing both groups in the same program. An Cùrsa Inntirigidh (Gaelic Access), is a new course for novice learners designed and administrated by Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. It is intended to be used as a distance program to reach people who otherwise have little access to regular Gaelic classes. The course's focus is on building confidence in the speakers language ability. It emphasizes speaking and listening skills with less weight placed on being able to write. When the course has been successfully completed, a certificate is awarded qualifying the holder to enter the Cùrsa Comais program, which is level 1 of the Gaelic and Related Studies degree programs. The course is comprised of 14 units. It is structured to provide telephone tutorials once a week, a monthly group tutorial and is further supported by a web site backup. Each of the units take two to three weeks each to complete.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS - TAPADH LEIBH**

We are very appreciative of the hospitality we received while in Scotland. We send special thanks to Rob Dunbar & Christene MacLeod, Wilson MacLeod, Norman Gillis, John Norman MacLeod and the staff at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Johnathan MacDonald, Will Lamb and the staff at Colaisde Bheinn na Faoghla, the MacEachens in How Beg, Peter and Caroline MacKenzie in Inverness, Judi Menabeny, Graham Watson, Ross Noble and the staff at the Highland Folk Museum, Allan Beaton, Stuart Brownlee, Hugh Cheape, David Forsythe, John and Jill Shaw, staff at the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh and Donald MacCormack. - Jim & Rodney

Report written by Jim Watson. Photos and Layout by Rodney Chaisson. November 2001.

<p><b>Support the Highland Village! Join today!</b></p>	<p><b>Take Out A Membership</b> Join the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society</p>
<p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>City/Town: _____</p> <p>Province/State: _____</p> <p>Postal/Zip Code: _____</p> <p>Country: _____</p> <p>Home Phone: _____</p> <p>Work Phone: _____</p> <p>Fax: _____</p> <p>E-mail: _____</p> <p>Want to become more involved? Serve on a committee? Volunteer for a special project? What are your areas of interest?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Museum Interpretation &amp; Education Programming</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gàidhlig/Gaelic      <input type="checkbox"/> Genealogy &amp; Family History/Research</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment      <input type="checkbox"/> Fund-raising      <input type="checkbox"/> Site Development</p>	<p>The Nova Scotia Highland Village Society is a non-profit Society registered under the Societies Act of the Province of Nova Scotia. The Society is made up of a membership which elects the Board of Trustees (from their ranks) to operate the Society on their behalf. Members can attend meetings, elect the Board, sit on committees, receive and approve annual reports including audited financial statements, receive <i>Naidheachd a' Chlachain</i> (bi-annual newsletter), receive notices for events, and feel a sense of pride in contributing to Nova Scotia's Scottish Gaelic Culture.</p> <p>Membership is open to anyone. Individual memberships are \$15.00 per year. Family memberships are \$25.00 per year.</p>



# 2001 GAELIC MATTERS

By Jim Watson

Since last February (2001), the Highland Village Museum Gaelic Program has been very busy in a process of program documentation and training activities for staff and affiliated persons. Progress in identifying Gaelic initiatives on site can be quantified in the completion of a five year development plan. It's a good sign that programming is to be multi-faceted and comprehensive in making the Village a Gaelic place. The plan's variety of themes has also taken into account the development of Highland Village Museum as an interpretive centre responsive to community needs.

In June 2000, Nova Scotia Highland Village was conferred with Nova Scotia Museum branch status and a new mandate to become a Gaelic place with strong representations of language and culture. Over the past months, the Village has progressed towards its goal to become a centre of Gaelic interpretation in Nova Scotia. This year's initiatives to date include public outreach projects such as a Gaelic song day and information sessions for the Village's governing board and Nova Scotia Museum staff.

Employees at the Village launched on a long-term training initiative that took place over a three week period during the spring of this year. Programming



Fr. Angus Morris

with a focus on regional Gaelic culture and its historical backdrop was implemented by a series of informed speakers on topic matters that examined Gaelic history, music, dance and the song and story tradition of the Nova Scotia Gaels. The following guest presenters were on hand to speak to staff on these aspects of Gaelic culture in Nova Scotia: singing and story telling, Donald MacDonell, Maxie MacNeil, Jamie MacNeil, Jimmy Caluman MacNeil; history of the Gael in Nova Scotia, Professor Donald MacGillvray, Dr. Mike Kennedy; Angus MacLeod, Alex Smith, Gaelic music in Cape Breton, John Gibson, Marianne Jewel, Father Angus Morris and Gaelic stepdancing, Frances MacEachen.

Week long sessions for staff were broken into three segments during the months of March and April. Instruction and presentations were augmented by field trips to Mabou and the North Shore. The intent of the out-trips was to introduce staff to Cape Breton's Gaelic speaking areas that differ in culture content and perspective. Local representatives spoke to staff at halls in both locales. Gaelic training for Highland Village staff is ongoing and will commence once again during the winter of 2002.

Highland Village celebrated Gaelic Awareness Month by facilitating and hosting a special afternoon of Gaelic song workshops and evening milling frolic. Local Gaelic singers having a long-standing familiarity with Cape Breton's Gaelic song heritage organized the event, titled *Féis a' Chlachain*. The committee was comprised of Beth MacNeil, Maxie MacNeil, Peter MacLean, Micky MacNeil, Johnny and Joan Gillis, Neil John Gillis and Jamie MacNeil, all well known tradition bearers from the districts of Iona, Jamesville, Christmas Island and Boisdale.

During the session committee members became instructors as they presented a range of local compositions and songs preserved



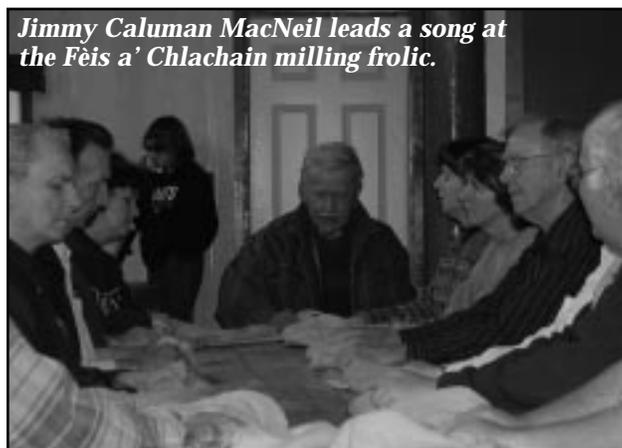
Féis a' Chlachain

from Gaelic Scotland. The songs represented the types that remain popular to the present such as milling and sailing songs, humorous compositions and love songs. *Féis a' Chlachain* committee brought an extra dimension to the songs as they drew on their own familiarity with the tradition to explain the song's meanings and history to the group being taught in the old Cape Breton way of Gaelic singing

Gaelic activities continued into the summer and fall at Highland Village and include the very successful *Eilean nan Og*, with ten teenage apprentices, *Baile nam Fonn* (Village of Song) Gaelic song tuition for adults with Mary Jane Lamond. Cultural learning opportunities were made available on September 8th in the form of an excellent presentation on Gaelic fiddling styles made by Fr. Angus Morris, Mabou and Maryann Jewel, Scotsville and a class teaching the Scotch Four headed by internationally known dance master Harvey Beaton.

Reported on elsewhere in *Naidheachd a' Chlachain*, Jim Watson and Rodney Chaisson traveled to Scotland to make contacts with Gaelic College *Sabhal Mór Ostaig* on the Isle of Skye and administrators with Highland Folk Museum, Kingussie and Highland Council. The purpose of the trip was to research liaisons and possible partnerships with Scottish institutions fostering Gaelic development in their own institutions and communities. The outcome of our discussions hold promise for new and increased Gaelic programming at Highland Village. We look forward to proceeding with negotiations with *Sabhal Mór Ostaig* and Highland Folk Museum in the near future. In the meantime, winter and spring training in Gaelic language and culture is being scheduled.

Finally, a day of Gaelic instruction was held on the site October 27th. Instructors for the day were Angus MacLeod, Goose Cove and Jeff MacDonald, Kingsville and Miramachi, along with Jim Watson. Classes were structured for beginners, intermediates and those interested in Gaelic folklore.



Jimmy Caluman MacNeil leads a song at the Féis a' Chlachain milling frolic.



# GAELIC STORY & SONG SELECTION

Collected by Jim Watson

## CHUALA MI SIOD REIMHID

The late Malcom Campbell (*Calum mac Ghilleasbuig 'ic Caluim an Tàilleir*) tells a story of early immigration to Jamesville (*Baile Sheumais Mhóir*), Victoria County. Malcolm was an excellent tradition bearer, whose oral accounts of his native Woodbine (originally *Sollas*) and stories of forerunners have appeared in *Am Bràighe* and *Cape Breton's Magazine*.

Following is a reminiscence from Barra Glen and a rare song, all from the recitation of the late John Rory MacNeil (*Iain Ruairidh Mhicheil Steabhain*). Selections recorded, transcribed and translated by Jim Watson.

### Naidheachd Air Banais agus Bàs

Tha thu 'g iarraidh na naidheachd air banais agus bàs. Bha fear Calum Caimbeul, bha e 'fuireach ann am Barraidh. 'S e saor a bh'ann. Chaidh e null gu Uibhist-a-Tuath a shaoirsneachd. Agus nuair a bha e ann a sin, thachair e ri nighean: Catriona NicLeòid. Agus bha 'ad a' falbh còmhla 's rinn iad suas gum pòsadh 'ad. Agus dh'fheumadh 'ad a dhol anull gu Uibhist-a-Deas 'son a' bhanaid - 'son am pòsadh co dhiubh. Agus dh'fhalbh iad ann am bàta, bha e mu aon mhìle do dh'astar.

Agus chaidh a h-uile sìon gu math aig an eaglais 's phòs 'ad. Nuair a bha 'ad a' tilleadh gu Uibhist-a-Tuath, thànaig stoirm uamhasach anuas. Dh'èirich an fhairge 's a' ghaoth 's bha am bàta ... b'fheadar dhaibh fear mu seach a bhi taomadh às a' bhàta. 'S nuair a bha fear na bainnseadh a' taomadh, thànaig an fhairge astaigh 's dh'fhalbh e mach a's an t-sruth. Dh'fhiach e, sgiobar an t-soithich, dh'fhiach e ràmh a chuir dh'ia ionnsaidh fiach am faigheadh e greim air. Dh'fhairlich air 's dh'fhalbh e á sealladh.

Co dhiubh, chaidh 'ad dhachaidh agus bha a h-uile duine gu math brònach as deaghaidh a' rud a thachair. Agus chaidh a h-uile duine a bha 's an taigh a chadal ach a' bhean òg. Bha i 's a' chidsin 's bha i 'faireachdainn cho dona mar a dh'èirich dhi air oichche na bainnseadh agus chuala i farum aig an dorus. Agus thànaig seòrs' do dh'eagal oirre 's dh'èibh i amach cò bha seo?

"O," ars 'a' guth, "tha do chompanach.

Fosgail an dorus 's leig astaigh mi." Agus chuir siod barrachd eagail oirre 's dh'èibh i amach, "'N ann dha 'n t-saoghal seo a tha thu?"

"'S ann," ars 'e san. "Fosgail an dorus 's chì thu fhéin".

Agus dh'fhosgail i an dorus 's thànaig e staigh. Agus rinn i toileachadh mòr ris 's dh'èirich na daoine. Thòisich a' bhainnis 's bha a' bhainnis ag obair fad trì là 's trì oidhche.

'S dh'fhuirich 'ad ann a Uibhist-a-Tuath fad dusan bliadhna 's thill 'ad air n-ais a Bharraidh. Agus cha robh cùisean a' dol ro mhath dhaibh agus bha feadhainn bràthair athair Chaluum a bha anis... falbh gu Ameiriga bho bhliadhnaichean roimhe sin. Agus thuir Calum ris nach robh e 'dol ann dha 'n dùthaich ùr gu bràch, nach tigeadh e ann idir. Ach rinn e suas 'na inntinn, mar a bha cùisean a' dol dha ann a Barraidh, gu falbhadh e 's thog 'ad rithe. Chruinnich 'ad an teaghlach... agus thug 'ad leotha cuibhle-shniomh 's cas-chrom agus dh'imich 'ad anull gu Ameiriga. 'S chaidh 'ad gu... ann am Pictou a land 'ad an toiseach. Agus an uair sin thànaig 'ad gu Antigonish. 'S às a' siod, cha chreid mi nach dànaig 'ad dh'an cois dha 'n Bhéigh an Iar agus fhuair 'ad soitheach na bàta air choireigin a bheireadh anull chon a' Chaolais Mhóir 'ad.

Bha an oidhche 'tighinn, dìreach feasgar, nuair a rànaig 'ad. Chunnag 'ad solus shuas ann an taigh 's rinn iad dìreach air an t-solus. Agus nuair a thànaig 'ad gu tìr, thachair gu robh nighean a' coiseachd shios aig a' chladach agus chual 'i a' tighinn iad. Agus dh'aithnich i guth mac bràthair a h-athar. 'S chaidh i dhachaidh 's dh'inns' i dha h-athair gu robh mac a bhràthar a' tighinn anuas on a' chladach. Agus thuir e rith' nach robh sion a leithid sin a' tachairt idir. "Thuir e riumsa nach tigeadh e gu bràch dha 'n dùthaich seo." Ach thuir i ris gu robh e 'tighinn.

Thànaig 'ad 's rinn 'ad toileachadh gu mòr ri chéile. 'S rinn iad amach àite-fearainn dha 's bha 'ad 'fuireach ann a siod fad bhliadhnaichean. 'S tha cuid dha 'n fheadhainn a bhoineas dha a' fuireach ann fhathast, ann a Baile Sheumais. Sin agad e.

### A Story about a Wedding and a Drowning (Translation)

You want the story about the wedding and the drowning. There was a fellow Malcom Campbell who was living in Barra. He was a carpenter. He went over to North Uist to work at carpentry. While he was there he met a young woman, Katharine MacLeod. So they were going out with each other and they decided to

get married. They would have to go over to South Uist for the wedding reception, or rather, the marriage. They went in a boat and it was about a mile distant.

Everything went well at the church and they were married. When they were returning to North Uist, a terrible storm descended. The sea and wind rose up and the boat... They had to take turns bailing the boat. When the groom was bailing, the sea swept in and he went out into the current. He, the boat's skipper, tried to get an oar to him so that he might get a grip on it. He failed to do so and Calum disappeared.

So they went home and everyone was very downcast about what had happened. Everyone in the house went to sleep except the young woman. She was in the kitchen feeling so forlorn about what had happened on her wedding night, and she heard a clamour at the door. A kind of fear came over her and she called out asking who this was?

"Oh," said the voice, "it's your husband. Open the door and let me in."

That made her even more frightened, and she called out, "Do you belong to this world?!"

"Indeed, he replied."Open the door and you can see for yourself."

So she opened the door and he came inside. She was overjoyed to see him and the rest of the folks got up. The wedding reception began and it carried on for three days and three nights.

They lived in North Uist for twelve years and they returned to Barra. Things weren't going well for them and some of Malcom's father's brother's people had left for America years before that. Calum said that he would never emigrate to the New World: he would most certainly not go there. But he made a decision, based on the way affairs were going in Barra, that he would go. Off they went. They gathered the family together and they took a spinning wheel and a *cas-chrom* (spade for turning the ground where a plough can't go) and moved over to America.

The first place they landed was Pictou. From there they came to West Bay, by foot I believe, and got a vessel or boat of some kind that would take them over to Grand Narrows.

Night was coming and it was just evening when they arrived. They saw a light up in a house and they made straight for it. When they landed, they came upon a girl walking down at the shore and she heard them coming. And she recognized the voice of her father's brother. So she went home and told her father that his nephew was coming up from the beach. He told her that nothing of the sort was happening at all. "He told me that he would never come to this

country." But she said that he was coming.

They arrived and they joyfully greeted each other. They found a piece of land for Calum and there they lived for many years. Some of his descendants still live there, in Jamesville.

And there you have it.

### Uair Gu Robh Saoghal

But mhath leat an treòbhadh a bhi air a dhianamh anmoch as t-fhoghar a chaidh seachad, mun dànaig an geamhradh. Cha n-e nach rachadh agad air an treòbhadh a dheanamh null mu Bhealtainn no greis as deaghaidh Bhealtainn, ach bha e na 's deisle 's bha e na b'fhurasda ma chaidh an treòbhadh a dhianamh as t-fhoghair s' chaidh.

Dh'fheumadh tu todhar a chuir air, a chliathadh 's an nuair sin an siol a chuir ann 's a chliathadh arithist le éich - each no éich, ge b'e dé thachair a bhi ann.

### Am biodh 'ad a' cuideachadh le bantrach no a' leithid sin?

Rachadh sin a dhianamh. Rachadh sin a dhianamh. Ach mar but trice bhiodh cuideigin car càirdeach dhi a bha... dha 'n bhantraich sin, aig a rachadh air an obair a dhianamh. Ach bhiodh sin aca, 'toirt cuideachadh seachad. Bha na daoine math airson cuideachadh a dhianamh.

Bha gnothach eile ann uaireannan ... gum biodh froilaig aca. Chanamaid froilaig ris. 'Se sin gu rachadh na nàbaidhean cruinn air latha àraid. Ma dh'fhaoite, co dhiubh bha 'ad a' geàrradh connadh, no 'geàrradh props, no geàrradh fiar no a' leithid sin. Ach bha dùil an uair sin taoim a bhi 's an taigh an oidhche sin. Bha, gum biodh taoim ann: dannsa mar a chanas sinn.

### In conversation with the late John Rory MacNeil of Barra Glen (Translation)

You would want to do the plowing late the previous fall, before winter came. It's not that you couldn't do it in around May first or shortly after the first

of May, but it (the ground) was better readied and easier if the plowing was done the previous fall.

You had to put fertilizer on it, harrow it and then seed it and harrow it again with the horses - horses or horse, whatever was available.

### Was there help for widows or the like?

That was done. That was done. But there was usually a relative that would do that for the widow. Oh, they would be doing that, helping out. The people were good to help out.

Occasionally there would be something else, they would have a frolic. We called it a frolic. That's when the neighbours would get together on a special day: whether they were, maybe, cutting hardwood, pit-props, cutting hay or that kind of thing. Then it was expected there would be a "time" in the house that night, a party: a dance as we would say.

### John Rory MacNeil's Rare Song

#### Mo Nighean Donn Ghuanach (My Giddy Brown Haired Girl)

Ho rò mo nighean donn ghuanach  
Hi rì mo nighean donn ghuanach  
Mo chailin chruinn dubh ghuanach  
Mo luaidh air mo nighean dubh

*Ho rò mo giddy brown girl  
Hi rì mo my giddy brown girl  
Mo plump, giddy black haired girl  
I love the black haired girl*

Gur mise th'air mo sgeulad  
Nach cluinn mi 'n crodh a' geumraich  
Tha piobaichean 'gan gleusadh  
'S am beus air an dròn a' cluich

*(My tidings are that I will not hear the cattle lowing: the pipes are tuned and the drone plays in harmony.)*

Ged bhithinn-sa 'nam chòirneal  
'S réiseamaid fo m'òrdugh  
Cha ghabhainn bean ri pòsadh  
Le m'dheòin ach an nighean dubh

*(Though I should be a colonel commanding a regiment, I would choose for marriage no other than my black haired girl.)*

Nisd innsidh mis' a dealbh dhuibh  
Tha bilean tana, dearg oirr'  
Deud air dreach an airgid  
An carbad na h-ighean duibh

*(Now I shall describe her for you. She has delicate red lips. There are teeth like silver in the black haired girl's mouth.)*

Nuair a dh'fhalbhas ghuainn an geamhradh  
'S a thig astaigh a' samhradh  
Ged chosgainn càraid ghamhna  
Bidh danns' aig mo nighean dubh

*(When winter leaves us and summer advances, although it should cost a pair of steers, the black haired girl shall have a dance.)*

Mar bhliadhna tha gach latha leam  
Bho sheachdain gus am màireach  
Gu 'n ruig mi Ceann Loch Sàil'  
Far na dh'fhàg mi mo nighean dubh

*(Each day is for me like a year, a week until tomorrow until I reach Ceann Loch Sàile, where I left my black haired girl.)*

Gur ann aig Ceann Loch Ile  
A dhealaich mi ri m'nigheig  
Gum b'fheàrr leam agam fhìn i  
Na mìle té eile 'n diugh

*(I parted with my girl at Ceann Loch Ile. I would rather her today than a thousand other girls.)*

\* This is the only version known to have been recorded in Cape Breton. It would appear to be a Barra song. A similar song appears in the School of Scottish Studies publication *Tocher*. It was recorded from Nan MacKinnon (*Nàn Eahchainn Fhionnlaidh*) of Vatersay.

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Visit our Gift Shop, located in our Visitor Centre, for a full range of high quality gifts and local crafts. You will find the Island's largest collection of Gaelic and East Coast Music and Gaelic books. Open year round. Shipping available.

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# NAIDHEACHD

News from 2001

We have been quite busy, here on Hector's Point, since the last issue. Our strategic planning exercise, developing new relationships with Gaelic Scotland, Eilean nan Òg, and other activities reported in other parts of this newsletter have kept us hopping. Here is a selection of some of our other activities.

## ROOTS CAPE BRETON UPDATE FROM PAULINE MACLEAN

The saying goes that a picture is worth a thousand words. Roots Cape Breton and Highland Village received several thousand words in the form of pictures recently. Dr. Newton E. Hislop of New Orleans, Louisiana, a great-great-grandson of Alexander Ross who was born in Stornaway, Scotland, donated several large framed pictures of work done on the grave stone of his ancestor, John Ross. John Ross was a first generation Cape Bretoner. His father began the ferry service at Little Narrows and John took over the service until he died in 1895. He and many of his descendants are buried at Little Narrows. The marble stone erected for John deteriorated over the years and may have been split by a falling branch. John's grandson, Duncan Ross, noted the sad condition of the stone. With the help of his nephew Newton E. Hislop and grand-nephew, N. Whitney Hislop, they loaded the pieces of the stone into a car and took them to J.D. Steeles of North Sydney. The pieces of the stone were set into a granite frame, the marble cleaned and repaired and re-set on a foundation in the cemetery. Clan members contributed to the cost of the repairs and funded the full costs. On June 7th, 1992 a re-dedication ceremony was held with over 50 descendants of John Ross attending. The Clan John Ross is indebted to J.D. Steele and Sons for their work on this project. Dr. Hislop donated 5 framed pictures 17 by 14 of before and after restoration. Two other frames contain the history of the Ross family and the obituary of John Ross from the North Sydney Herald in 1895. These photos will be mounted at the Village for viewing. We wish to thank Dr. Hislop for his generosity and dedication to the past.



*Living History Program  
Gardening with Stevie MacNeil*

Another donation we have received is a copy of the Boston Globe Magazine from February of this year. It contains an article entitled The call of the Highlands by Brian MacQuarrie. His father had been in my office years ago and found some information on the family. Brian took it further and visited South Uist to see the land and speak to MacQuarries. Though he didn't find his ancestors home, he found himself in the spirit of the people and in the land.

Dr. Norma Jean Coon has sent us two more volumes of her family histories, one entitled *It all started here: The MacIver Family*, the other *The MacInnis Family*. These are in addition to the volumes on Ferguson and Strachen families sent pre-

viously. The histories are well researched, noted and full of stories and even recipes.

Our data entry project is going well. Over 740,000 records are entered and we have nearly completed the 1891 census. We are continually amazed by the variety of names and cultures found on the Island.

## OTHER NEWS

### 2001 VISITOR SEASON

Our 2001 season was a great success. Our site users were up 1% over the 2000 season. Individual museum visitors were up 8% and visitors arriving via motorcoach and cruise ships were up 5%. Unfortunately, the numbers of school children visiting the site was down by over 40%.

## Kaye Anne & Beth MacNeil, HV staff, demonstrate crafts at the Rankin Winter Feis



On site revenue was also up over 2000. Our admission revenue was up 7%, gift shop 15% and our programming revenue was up a whopping 124%. Revenue from special events was up 1%.

## PROGRAMMING

Both new and existing programs have been well received by the public. Participation in our Living History Program for Children and Candlelight Tours with Jim St.Clair continue to grow.

New programs this year focused on language related learnings - *Baile nam Fonn* (Village of Songs) with Mary Jane Lamond, *Feis a' Chlachain* (Village Festival) song workshop, Gaelic Day and others. These programs have gotten off to a successful start.

Also new this fall was a special Halloween program feature *bocan* stories. We also expanded our successful Christmas Open House program.

For more information on our programs check our website. Some of the dates for our 2002 programs can be found inside the front cover of this issue.

## RANKIN SCHOOL

We have been working hard with Rankin School, in particular their Gaelic teacher, Dawn MacDonald-Gillis, over the past year to enhance the Gaelic program at



*Highland Village President Brian Hussey signs an MOU with Rankin Principal Georgina MacNeil in front of the mural created by Gaelic students.*



the school, here in Iona. This resulted in increased language instruction at the elementary and junior high school levels; a Rankin Winter Feis with cultural workshops; a puppet show based on one of Joe Neil MacNeil's stories; a cultural mural to hang at the school and other activities. As well, in June we signed an letter of agreement to work together on Gaelic related activities. We also worked with the school to host a group of high school students from Portree on the Isle of Skye in Scotland. We are hoping to work with the school to organize a trip to Scotland for our Gaelic students. We also support the concept of Rankin developing into a school of excellence in Gaelic language and culture.

**PINE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Another school with which we have an important relationship is Pine Ridge Middle School in Kingston in Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley. The students, with their teacher Don Hyslop, have performed on site, raised over \$1,000 for the Highland Village through their own Gaelic concerts. In recognition of their contribution, we presented them with an honorary membership last May.

**DIGITAL GAEL**

We have entered into an exciting relationship with the Iona CAP Society to

create the Digital Gael project. Through this project we hope to provide information on Gaelic culture in Nova Scotia on an interactive website and CD-ROM. The first phase of the project, funded by HRDC, focused on preliminary research - themes, potential partners and technology. Essentially, a strategy was developed. We are presently seeking funding for the next phase. Thanks to Gerard MacNeil, Stacy MacNeil and Eddie MacKenzie for their contributions to this exciting project.

**AWARD OF MERIT**

The 2001 Highland Village Award of Merit was presented to our own Vince MacLean of Washabuck. Vince was a member of the Board and President for many years. He also served as the producer for our annual Highland Village Day concert for over 20 years. Congratulations Vince.

**HORSES**

Last summer the Highland Village purchased two French Canadian horses from the Fortress of Louisbourg - Keston a foal and Betina a mare. Both of these animals were well received by visitors and staff. They have also settled into their new home quite well. They will complement our interpretive program, especially our farm area.

**MACKINNON'S BROOK SUITE**

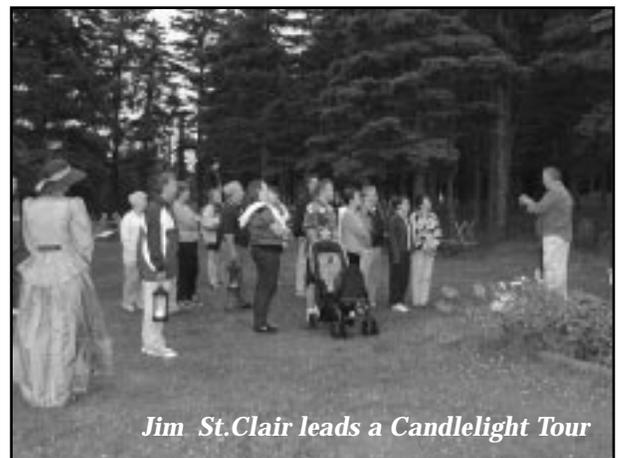
This past fall Scott MacMillan, Ian McKinnon and Symphony Nova Scotia launched an exciting new composition tracing the journey of the MacKinnon family from the Isle of Barra in Scotland to a new life in MacKinnon's Brook near Mabou. The MacKinnon's Brook Suite will also be made into a television special next fall on CBC-TV. Much of the footage for this special was taped here on site. We are pleased to have been a part of this project.

**FÉILL NAM BARRACH BARRAMAN'S FEAST**

We are busy working with a community based committee to organize a special event to recognize 200 years of Gaelic settlement in Central Cape Breton. Féill nam Barrach (Barraman's Feast) will be a week long celebration throughout the area from July 28 to August 4. There will be concerts, *ceilidhs*, workshops, dances, a dramatic presentation, a reenactment and many other events. Watch the next issue of *Naidheachd a' Chlachain* for more information or check our website.

**KEEP UP TO DATE**

For more information on news at the Highland Village check out the news section of our website. It has a complete posting of our press releases.





## FROM BARRA TO NOVA SCOTIA

By Keith Branigan

The SEARCH project (Sheffield Environmental and Archaeological Research Campaign in the Hebrides) has now completed thirteen years of fieldwork on the Isle of Barra and the other islands which make up the parish of Barra. We have discovered and recorded almost 2,000 sites and monuments, ranging in date from 4000 BC up to the Crofting Commission of 1883. In addition to excavating many prehistoric and medieval sites, we have also examined several blackhouses of the period from c. 1750 to 1850. This is the century when thousands of people left Barra and its islands and emigrated to North America, and particularly to Canada. Inevitably, excavating these sites, we have been led into studying the historical documents for the period, and into a search for the emigrant families both at their points of origin on Barra and their points of arrival and settlement in Canada. The following is a brief summary of what we have achieved so far.

Working through the land petitions, shipping lists, family records, obituaries, and cemetery records in Nova Scotia, Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island we have now collected the names of 504 migrants from the Isle of Barra, between 1770 and 1850. The vast majority of these migrated between 1790 and 1830. Of the total, 214 are adult males (over 16 years of age), 79 are adult females, and 179 are dependent children. We have records of another 181 individuals (mostly children) whose names we do not (yet) know, and we know of other groups of Barra migrants whose names and numbers are unrecorded. For example we know the names of 13 heads of family from Barra who arrived in Nova Scotia in 1790, but we have neither the names from their dependents nor the details at all of a further 15 Barra families who arrived on the same ship. Often we have only the names of the head of family and no information about even the number of his dependents that travelled with him. Nevertheless, we expect to add to names of the emigrant children when we have completed our collation of information from the Canadian records and the BPR (Barra Parish Records). Of the ships

that carried these emigrants, for the period 1770-1821 we now know the names of at least ten for certain, and probably another thirteen. Of these the most notorious are The Sarah and The Dove of 1801. Passenger lists for these two ships are available and include not a single native of Barra, yet there are very strong grounds for believing that after leaving Fort William with their 'official' passengers, the two ships called at Barra and took on between 150 and 300 Barra migrants.

The vast majority of Barra migrants are, not surprisingly, MacNeils. Over 60% of our named migrants are MacNeils, followed in descending order by the MacKinnons, the MacLeans, the MacDonalds and the Gillises. Altogether 20 different surnames are represented

already arrived in PEI at an earlier date. The first retired soldiers of Barra origin that we can trace are veterans of the 82nd regiment which was disbanded in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1784. Soldiers who wished to take a land grant were given land at Merigomish east of Pictou. Privates received 100 acres, corporals 200 acres. Some subsequently moved to Malignant Cove further up the coast, and here and at Cape George further around the headland, we find veterans who had originally come from Barra.

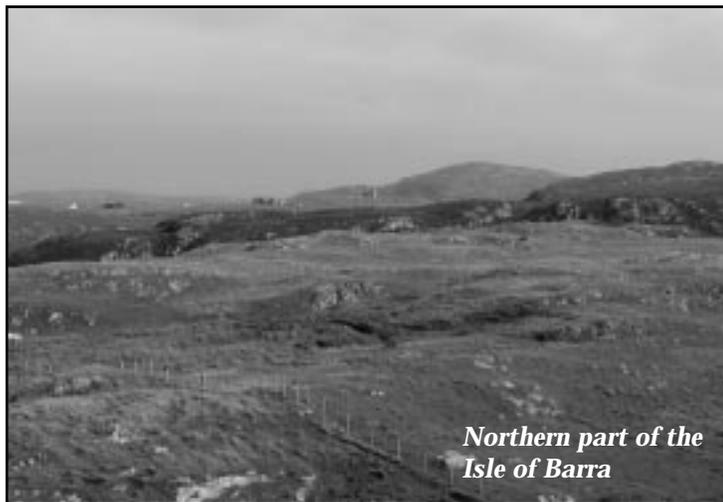
Although many of the ships which brought Barra emigrants to Canada disembarked their passengers at Pictou, it is recorded in contemporary documents that many of these immigrants then moved northwards and eastwards into Cape Breton. There is definitely a well-

known cluster of descendants of Barra immigrants around the Bras d'Or Lakes today, and the majority of our recorded Barra migrants come from the Cape Breton archives and sources.

The land registry maintains a record of the original land grants in Nova Scotia, including Cape Breton, and where we know the name of a grantee, the general location of the grant, and the year of the grant, then we can identify the specific plot of land which was acquired by these immigrants. We are still very anxious to add to

our list of emigrants to Cape Breton and Nova Scotia and if any readers of *Naidheachd a' Chlachain* know, or believe, their ancestors came from Barra we'd love to hear from them. In several cases we have been able to provide further information for them -tracking down dates of marriages and births, and tracing them back to the specific township in which they lived on Barra before emigration. Please send your enquires, and any relevant information to me at the Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield, Sheffield S10 2TN, England. We shall be devoting several chapters of our final volume on Barra to the emigrations, and publishing a list of all the emigrants we've identified and we'd hate to miss someone out!

Dr. Keith Branigan BA, PhD is a professor in the Department of Archaeology at the University of Sheffield in Sheffield, England. In our Autumn 1997 issue, he wrote two articles "The Isle of Barra: Clearance & Emigration 1800-1851" and "Excavation of a Blackhouse at Balnabodach, Isle of Barra, 1996." SEARCH is sponsored by the Scouloudi Foundation, the Society of Antiquaries, and the University of Sheffield.



Northern part of the  
Isle of Barra

amongst the Barra migrants. Where we have been able to trace them back in the BPR, they come from all parts of the island, including off-shore islands like Fulay, and from the island to the south as well - Vatersay, Sandray and Mingulay. We have been particularly pleased to find at least two families who were living in the settlement at Gortein, on the Tangaval peninsula and who emigrated around 1822-26. This ties in with the evidence from the BPR that Gortein was being gradually abandoned by its inhabitants between 1820 and 1835.

The earliest natives of Barra to settle in Canada, on present evidence, were not veteran soldiers released from service in Canada (as is often assumed), but the eight Barra men and unspecified dependents who sailed on the Alexander in April/May 1772, to Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, where they landed on June 25th. They rented land on Lot 36 from John MacDonald of Glenaladale, with a lease which would run for 3,000 years. Since several of them paid a fee to leave their plots and move to Indian River, PEI to be near relatives, we must assume that some Barra migrants had



## Eilean nan òg continued from page 7...

Day Eight - Aug 22

**Anna Watson**

Valley Mills, Inverness County

Today was our first day with the kids from the Gaelic camp in Christmas Island. I enjoyed it. I like the excitement the kids have to learn. I think they have lots of fun when we combine kids games like Simon Says with Gaelic. They definitely love musical chairs with the fiddle and pipes played by Morris and Meghan. It's great that kids have an opportunity to go to this stuff if things work out for na h-Eileanaich.

Day Nine - Aug. 23

**Jessica Farrell**

Washabuck, Victoria County

I can't believe that there is only one day left of the program. I have had a lot of fun. I think that it would be great if we could continue to learn to Gaelic language somehow. We have come so far in two weeks. I think another few months (weeks? years?) would be excellent. I really like how we are learning our dialect of Gaelic.

Day Ten - August 24

**Michael Farrell**

Christmas Island, Cape Breton County

What I liked about the program was that I got to learn and understand Gaelic a lot better. I also liked meeting new people and seeing how the settlers used to live. How the program could be improved by maybe spending more time learning the Gaelic language.

Submitted by:

Gaeltalk Communications  
Publishers of Am Braighe  
175 MacIntyre Rd  
Queensville, NS B9A 1S6  
625-0060

## Director's Desk continued from page 4...

### NEW LOGO

You may have noticed a new marketing image containing the words *Highland Village Museum/An Clachan Gàidhealach*. This new image was created to provide the Highland Village with a bilingual identity to reflect our Gaelic mandate. It was introduced in some of our marketing materials and gift shop merchandise last year. You will be seeing more of it as we add it to our signage and update our marketing materials and website. In many circumstances you will see this logo accompanied by images from the Nova Scotia Museum and the Department of Tourism & Culture.

### NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be published in the spring of 2002. The main focus of that issue will be an update on the Highland Village Strategic Planning exercise including the recommendations of our consultants.

We will also have more on the success of the data entry program for Roots

Cape Breton which will be wrapping up in May. This project would not have been possible without the assistance of the Cape Breton Response Strategy (HRDC). They have provided 100% of the financing to cover the labour costs of this project for the past two and a half years.

Another feature will be more information on *Féill nam Barrach* - The Barraman's Feast. This is a week long celebration of 200 years of Gaelic settlement in Central Cape Breton. It will take place in communities throughout Central Cape Breton from July 28th to August 4th. There will be workshops, concerts, dances, ceilidhs, a play, a reenactment and much more. We will have more on this in the next issue.

You can also keep up to date with what is going on by checking out our website. News releases, special events, programming, and more are just a mouse click away. As well the year 2000 issues of *Naidheachd a' Chlachain* are available in pdf format. We are working on ways of digitizing other past newsletters. Bookmark <http://highlandvillage.museum.gov.ns.ca>.

## Tapadh leibh uile gu mór.

### THANK YOU DONORS

*The Society wishes to thank those who have made donations of artifacts, archival material or financial contributions over the past year:*

- Don Hyslop and the students at Pine Ridge Middle School in Kingston, Nova Scotia
- Ken & Barbara Donovan, Sydney
- Ian MacKinnon & the Port Hastings Volunteer Fire Department
- Geneva Landry, Pictou
- Donald Mahoney, Sydney Mines
- James Ross, Ironville
- Lorraine Currie, Sydney
- Christine MacPhee, West Bay
- Laurie Pitre, Creignish Rear
- Hector MacKenzie, Washabuck
- John Joe MacGillivray, Sydney
- Harold Higgins, Marion Bridge
- S. B. Archibald, Ferguson's Cove, NS
- Pat Bates, Sydney
- Rod C. MacNeil, Barra Glen
- Doris Tinney, Mabou
- Jim St.Clair, Mabou
- Catherine MacNeil, Sydney
- Joan Gillis, Jamesville
- Marilyn MacLeod, Whycomagh

- In Memory of Agnes Livingstone
- In Memory of Eddie Bryden
- In Memory of Neil John Gillis
- In Memory of Eddie Kane
- In Memory of Stanley Campbell

### THANK YOU PARTNERS

*The Society wishes to thank the following government departments & agencies, businesses and other organizations that have provided funding or partnered with us on projects: Nova Scotia Museum, Department of Tourism & Culture (Hon. Rodney MacDonald, Minister), Municipality of Victoria County, Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation, Nova Scotia Department of Economic Development, Human Resources Development Canada, Nova Scotia Department of Community Services, Young Canada Works (Canadian Museums Association), Gaeltalk Communications (Am Bràighe), Iona CAP Society, Icon Communications, Highland Heights Inn, Castle Moffett, Atlantic Cruise Ship Services, Sherbrooke Village and Ross Farm.*

# HIGHLAND VILLAGE MUSEUM/AN CLACHAN GÀIDHEALACH PIONEER CHURCH FUND

A Pioneer Church has been for many years a dream of the Highland Village. We are now working towards the fulfillment of that dream. Negotiations are underway with the River & Lakeside Pastoral Charge of the United Church of Canada to acquire the Malagawatch United Church (built in 1874) and relocate it to the Highland Village site. To help the Highland Village achieve this goal, a special fund has been set up. To date over \$22,000 has been collected.



Dec 01 **\$23,000**

Sep 00 **\$10,200**

Mar 00 **\$9300**

Nov 98 **\$6800**

**Help  
realize  
this dream!**  
Please donate to the  
Highland Village  
Pioneer  
Church Fund



## *Naidheachd a' Chlachain*

(THE VILLAGE NEWS)

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