

An Naidheachd Againne

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Nollaig Chridheil agus Bliadhna Mhath Ùr

by Liam Ó Caiside



*Thoir an t-soiridh seo thar chuaintean,
Gu tìr uaine nam beann àrda,
'S fàg aig a' Chladach-a-Tuath e
Ged nach ann a fhuair mi m' àrach.*

Bear this greeting over the seas,
To the green land of the high mountains,
And leave it at the North Shore
Though it's not there I was raised.

When holidays come we all think of home, no matter where that home may be. The Gaels, of course, are no exception, and those living in places as far apart as London, England, and London, Ontario, will probably empathize with the Gaelic bard who wrote the verse above, the Rev. Malcolm Campbell. He was not writing about a home in the West Highlands of Scotland, but about the North Shore of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, where his mother lived. He called the song “Oran na Bliadhna Ùire”, or “Song of the New Year.”

*On tha bliadhna seo aig deireadh,
'S Bliadhn' Ùr eile nise làimh ruinn;
'S còir gun sgrìobh mi beagan facail
Do'n tè dh' altrum mi nam phàisde.*

Since this year is ending,
And another New Year is at hand,
It is fitting that I write a few words
To the woman who nursed me as a child.

Christmas and New Year's aren't originally “Celtic” holidays, of course, but they are two of the most important holidays of the year to all the Celtic peoples.

In Scotland, New Year's Eve has particular importance. In Gaelic Scotland it is called *Oidhche Challainn* — the “eve of the kalends” or first day of the month — while in Scots it is known as Hogmanay (perhaps derived from an Old French word for a New Year's gift, “aguillanneuf”). Christmas is known in Gaelic as *Nollaig* (derived from Latin “Natalicia”), and sometimes *Nollaig Mhòr* or “Big Christmas.” New Year's was sometimes called *Nollaig Bheag*, or “Little Christmas.” In Gaelic Ireland, the same name is applied to Epiphany, also called *Nollaig na mBan*, or “the Women's Christmas” (supposedly because “women's fare” — cakes, tea, and wine — was served that day as opposed to the more manly whiskey and beef served Christmas day).

In This Issue

Rùn Nollaige / A Christmas Wish, 2011	6
Litir bho'n Cheann-Suidhe/Letter from the President.....	7
Froiligean Tar-Sgrìobhaidh / Transcription Frolics	9
Tachartasan Sàraichte Air-Loidhne.....	11
Litir à Dùn Èideann bhon Taigh Agam.....	12
Scary Things About Gaelic (STAG).....	13
Bàrdachd airson ar linn	15
Book Review: <i>Anna Ruadh</i> le L. M. Montgomery	18
Website Review: @gaeligeagusgaidhlig on Instagram.....	20
Banana Bread (Bilingual Recipe).....	21
a-muigh 's a-mach / out and about	22
Criomagan / Bits of This and That.....	24
A Bharrachd	25
Dè Tha Dol?.....	25

Go to <http://www.acgamerica.org> for more on upcoming ACGA events and other Gaelic-related activities.

In Gaelic Scotland, Christmas primarily was a religious holiday – many of the modern secular trappings of Christmas, such as Christmas trees and ornaments – didn't arrive until the Victorian era or later. One correspondent on Gaelic-L, the one-time Gaelic e-mail list-service, pointed this out when asked about Scottish Christmas stories:

*Nuair a bha mi nam bhalach beag, cha robh Bodach
na Nollaig a' tadhal oirnn air Latha na Nollaig.
Bhiodh e a' tighinn thugainn an dèidh Oidhche
Challainn air a' chiad latha den Bhliadhna Ùr, ged
a bha craobh Nollaig againn agus ged a bha par-
taidhean Nollaig ann an talla na h-eaglais againn.*

When I was a little lad, Santa Claus didn't visit us on Christmas Day. He would be coming after Hogmanay Night on the first day of the New Year, although we had a Christmas tree and although we had Christmas parties in the church hall.

There's a reason *Oidhche Challainn* or Hogmanay overshadows Christmas in Scottish tradition. Christmas was actually illegal for much of early modern Scottish history, following the Protestant Reformation. Some Presbyterians rejected, and still reject, Christmas, because the holiday has no basis in Biblical scripture (the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland has an article "Should Christians Celebrate Christmas?" on its website that spells out the argument).

The Scottish Parliament in 1640 passed legislation making it illegal to celebrate the "Yule vacance," and Christmas did not become a public holiday in Scotland until 1958. "The kirke within this kingdome is now purged of all superstitious observatione of dayes" the 1640 act proclaimed. That may have been the case officially, but it wasn't true in all of Scotland, however, especially in areas where Catholicism survived.

There are many Gaelic religious prayers or blessings associated with Christmas and the New Year. Alexander Carmichael collected some of them in the 19th century and published them in his *Carmina Gadelica*. Here's a portion of one:

*Beannaicht an taigh 's na bheil ann,
Eadar chuall, is chlac, is chrann,
Iomair do Dhia, eadar bhrat is aodach,
Slàinte dhaoine gun robh ann.*

Bless the house and that which is in it,
Between rafter and stone and beam,
Give all to God from rug to linen,
Health to those within.

Although caroling at Christmas is an English and not a Gaelic tradition, Gaelic Scotland has produced many beautiful Christmas hymns and songs. One of the best known is "Leanaibh an Àigh" – "Child of Wonder" – composed by Mull poet Màiri NicLùcais, or Mary MacDonald, who was born about 1790–1800 and died in 1872. She was very active in the Baptist church on Mull. The tune to "Leanaibh an Àigh" is well known even to non-Gaelic speakers as Yusuf Islam, then Cat Stevens, adopted it for "Morning has Broken."

*Leanabh an àigh,
An leanabh bh' aig Màiri,
Rugadh san stàball,
Rìgh nan dùl;
Thàinig don fhàsach
Dh'fhulang nar n-àite,
Son' iad an àireamh
Bhitheas dha dlùth.*



Child of wonder,
The child of Mary,
Born in a stable,
King of all;
He came to the desert
Suffered in our place,
Happy is the host
Who are faithful to him.

One of the most famous Scottish Gaelic Christmas hymns is "Tàladh ar Slànair", the "Lullaby of our Savior," composed by Father Ranald Rankin of Moidart in 1855. Here is a brief excerpt from Margaret Fay Shaw's *Folksongs and Folklore of South Uist*:

*Mo ghaol, mo ghràdh, is m'eudail thu,
M' ionntas ùr is m'éibhneas thu,
Mo mhacàn àlainn ceutach thu,
Chan fhiù mi fhèin bhi 'd dhàil.*

*'S tusa grian gheal an dòchais,
Chuireas dorchadas air fògairt;
Bheir thu clann-daoin' bho staid bhrònaich
Gu naomhachd, soilleareachd is eòlas.*

My love, my dear, my darling thou,
My new treasure and my joy art thou,
My beautiful fair son art thou,
I am unworthy to be near thee.

Thou art the white sun of hope
Who will banish darkness from us;
Mankind thou will redeem and from sorrow
To sanctity, light, and knowledge.

Carmichael's *Carmina Gadelica* also contains many traditional Christmas and New Year's songs. "Heire Bannag, hoire Bannag" is a good example. The *bannag* here is a gift – in this case Christ – who is described as the son of all the elements: the dew, the clouds, the rain, the stars, the dawn, the globe, the moon and sun and the light. Catriona Parsons sings a beautiful version of this song on "Nollaig Chridheil: A Holiday Selection of Gaelic Songs, Music and Stories," produced by B&R Heritage Enterprises. Fiona J. Mackenzie sings it on "Duan Nollaig: A Gaelic Christmas" produced by Greentrax.

*Heire Bannag, hoire Bannag
Heire Bannag, air a bheò*

*Mac na niula, Mac na neula,
Mac na runna, Mac na reula*

*Mac na dìle, Mac na dèire,
Mac na spire, Mac na speura*

*Mac na lasa, Mac na leusa,
Mac na cruinne, Mac na cè*

*Mac na dùla, Mac na nèamha,
Mac na gile, Mac na grèine*

*Mac Moire na Dè-mèine,
Is Mac Dè tùs gach sgeula*



Hey the Gift, ho the Gift
Hey the Gift on the living

Son of the dawn, Son of the clouds,
Son of the planet, Son of the stars

Son of the rain, Son of the dew,
Son of the firmament, Son of the sky

Son of the flame, Son of the light,
Son of the sphere, Son of the globe

Son of the elements, Son of the heavens,
Son of the moon, Son of the sun

Son of Mary of the God-like mind,
And the Son of God first of all news

Poetic blessings and rhymes continue to be an important part of Gaelic tradition. This blessing was collected in the last century by Iain Paterson from a Mrs. Dix of Bernaray, Harris, who had heard her father recite it. It was published in *Tocher*, the journal of the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh.

*Air an Nollaig àraidh seo
'S gach là tha tighinn na dèidh
Gun taomadh oirbh de lànachd
Gun fhàillein oirbh fon ghrèin
Ur ceum gun chearb gun tuisleadh
Ach ur slighe dìreach rèidh
Ur cagailt blàth 's ur n-aobhneas làn
'S sibh sona slàn gun èis.*

On this special Christmas
And every day afterwards
May plenty pour over you
Without fail under the sun
Your step be without stumble or sway
But your path level and straight
Your hearth warm and your joy complete
And you fully happy without want.

Religious services played an important part in the celebration of Christmas, particularly Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve in Catholic areas. But the holiday season was not entirely devoted to solemnity. There was certainly a good deal of merriment among families, friends and neighbors. In some places, celebrations once lasted the entire twelve-day season of Christmas. In Scots, the period from Christmas Day to the first Monday

of the new year was known as the Daft Days, celebrated in a poem of the same name by 18th century Edinburgh poet Robert Fergusson:

Let mirth abound: let social cheer
Invest the dawnin' o' the year;
Let blithesome innocence appear,
To crown our joy;
Nor envy, wi' sarcastic sneer,
Our bliss destroy.



Scottish folklorist Margaret Bennett gave a fascinating account of how some Scottish Gaelic settlers in the New World kept the Twelve Days of Christmas in her book, *The Last Stronghold: The Scottish Gaelic Traditions of Newfoundland*. For the Gaels of the Codroy Valley in western Newfoundland, the holiday season began on Christmas Eve and ran through Epiphany on Jan. 6, or “Old Christmas Day.”

One of Bennett’s informants was Angus MacNeill. He described the Twelve Days of Christmas for her: “They would arrange to have a big ‘time’ in a different house every night during the Twelve Days of Christmas ... there would be the biggest kind of a time with Grandpa playing the pipes, and people singing and playing the accordion and the fiddle, and with dancing and step-dancing. And of course there would be plenty to eat; the women would make a big ‘feed’ with bottled meats and pickles and jams, bannocks, breads, pies and Christmas fruit cakes ... of course there would be lots to drink all through.”

Another custom common in the Codroy Valley was mumming – a popular tradition in many parts of Newfoundland. All during the Twelves Days people would disguise themselves in old clothes and masks and go from house to house to play music and dance. The people they visited would have to guess who they were.

Oidhche Challainn, New Year’s Eve, was a special night for the Codroy Valley mummers. This was true in Scotland and Cape Breton as well, and on Rathlin Island off the northeast coast of County Antrim, Ireland. In old times, people would dress in cowhides and sheep skins and go from house to house, circling houses *deiseil* – towards the south or clockwise – beating on the walls and beating sticks, driving the old year out to let the new year in. Then they would go to the door and recite a special rhyme, *Rann na Callainn*, requesting entry and food and drink. Here’s an example that Allan MacArthur of Codroy Valley gave Bennett:

*Oidhche chullainn Challainn chruaidh
Thàinig mise le ’m dhuan gu taigh.
Thubhairt am bodach rium le gruaim
Buailidh mi do chluais le preas.
Labhair a’ chailleach a b’fheàrr na’n t-òr
Gum bu chòir mo leigeil a-staigh
Air son na dh’ithinn-sa de bhiadh
Agus deuran beag sìos leis.*

On a cold frosty Night of the Callainn
I came with my rhyme to a house.
The old man said to me with a frown
I’ll hit you on the ear with a briar.
Said the old woman who was better than gold
That I should be let in
For all the little food that I would eat
And a little drink to go with it.

These types of rhymes were recited on other occasions as well, in Ireland and the Isle of Man as well as Scotland. Folklorist Calum MacLean recorded this traditional Christmas rhyme from Archie Cameron, a native of Ardgour:

*Oidhche Choinnle ’s Oidhche Nollaig,
Dà oidhche bheir loinn na sona:
Maighdeann òg a’ roinn nam bonnach.
Seo an taigh sa bheil mo ghnathach
'S chan eil romham dol nas fhaide.*

The Eve of Candles and Christmas Eve,
Two nights that bring the greatest joy:
Young maidens dividing the bannocks.
This is the house where I belong,
I have no mind to go further.

This rhyme and others may be found on the Gaelic Resource Database, a website maintained by *Comhairle nan Eilean Siar* (the Western Isles Council) in Scotland. They bring to mind the popular traditional Gaelic song “A’ Challuinn”, better known by its refrain: *’S e gillean mo ruin a thogadh oirnn sunnd* (the young men of my love would raise our spirits). The song describes a traditional New Year’s celebration about the time of the Napoleonic wars.

*’S e gillean mo ghràidh a thàinig on bhlàr,
Le ’n còtaichean sgàrlaid ’s bòidheach iad.*

The lads of my love had come from the war,
With their scarlet coats, they were handsome.

*Chualas na duain am briathran nam buadh,
“Thoir botul a nuas ’s an tòisich sinn.”*

The rhyme was heard in words of virtue,
“Bring down a bottle and we’ll begin.”

*Ùrlar math, rèidh, bean-tighe ’g a rèir,
’S cha b’ eagal dhuinn fhèin nach òlamaid.*

A good smooth dancing floor and ready hostess,
There would be no fear we wouldn’t get a drink.

*’S i fìdheall nan teud a sheinneadh gu réidh,
’S gun cuireadh i ceud an òrdugh dhuinn.*

The stringed fiddle melodiously played,
It would put a hundred in good order.

*Thuirt Seumas ’s e thall, ’s e labhairt mu’n dram,
“Gun theirig a’ bhrannaidh, dh’òl iad i.”*

Said Seumas over there, speaking of drams,
“The brandy is finished, they drank it.”

And so on, for many, many verses. You can find a complete version of the song in Helen Creighton and Calum MacLeod’s *Gaelic Songs in Nova Scotia*.

From the poems, songs, and stories recounted in this brief article, we can see that three separate strands of Christmas and New Year’s custom have become tightly intertwined in Gaelic tradition. First, the Christian religious celebration of *Nollaig*, reflected in church ritual and spiritual poetry and hymns. Second, ritual customs related to a seasonal midwinter celebration that aren’t specifically Christian and certainly have pre-Christian roots, including communal celebrations such as house-visiting and mumming and the carousing of *Oidhche Challainn*. And third, we have the customs of the commercialized modern Christmas celebrated in Europe, the Americas, and around the globe, complete with Christmas trees, candies, ornaments and toys, and Father Christmas or *Bodach na Nollaig* – customs now universal, for good and for ill.

Among these customs and traditions there is plenty for all people of good will, regardless of their faith, to celebrate. I’d like to wish you a Merry Christmas, and a Good New Year. *Nollaig Chridheil, agus Bliadhna Mhath Ùr dhuibh uile!*



Jeff Justice

Photo Quiz

Duncan Ban MacIntyre (Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir) was a prominent Gaelic poet who lived first in the Highlands and later in Edinburgh in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Where is he buried?

The answer is on page 23.



Rùn Nollaige, 2011

le Mìcheal MacAoidh

Air oidhche shàmhach gheamhraidh fhuar
'S a' Ghealach shoilleir chiùin
A' coimhead air an talamh foip'
'S na reultan os a cionn
An saoghal umam cho neo-thorach
'S mo smuaintean air an àm:
Na tha romham 'measg mo chàirdean
Is mo charaidean caomha blàth

'Nam smuain thàinig dealbh
'Bh'air a tabhairt dhuinn bho thùs
Leanabh beag sèimh socair
Thàinig thugainn le deagh rùn
Le Naidheachd mhùirneach shòlasach
Bheir faochadh dìonach rèidh
Do mhac-an-duin, is nic-an-duine
Dh'èisdeas, 's dha 'thoirt spèis

Chan urrainn dha a h-aon againn
Bhith cinnteach dè ar dùil
Nuair dhùineas sinn ar sùilean
Gun am fosgladh 'rithist le umhail
Ach fhad's a tha sinn beò tha tròcair
'S maitheas ann, is stàth
Na tha mi-rèidh a shocrachadh
Is strì a chur gu tàmh.

Mar sin, is mar a mhaith E dhuinn
Aig ceann a bheath', le gaol
A h-uile cron a thig nar cois
Nuair a nochdas sinn 'san t-saoghal;
Gabhaibh an cothrom, stadaibh greis
Is tionndaidhibh ri chèil'
Cha trod 's cha bhagar againn ann
Do'n Ghràdh nach dèan gèill

Oir chì sinn oidhche shàmhach fhuar,
A' Ghealach is an speur
'S cha bhi ar càirdean gràdhach ann:
Bi 'n anaman mu rèir
An sin, is ann a bhios ar cridhean
Ris an t-Slànaighear rèidh
Gun do dhealaich sinn 's an àm
Gun chonnsachadh, gun èis



A Christmas Wish, 2011

by Mike Mackay

On a cold, silent, winter night
And the gentle moon with love
Upon the earth her eyes alight
And to the stars above
The world around me bleak and cold
With my thoughts full on the time
I have left with family, young and old
And friends now in their prime

To my thoughts comes the image
Given to us from long ago
A peaceful, calm baby
Come to us with good will
And with the happy, joyful News
That gives salvation
To the men and women
That listen and pay it heed

Not one of us
Can be certain what to expect
When we close our eyes
Never to open them again
But while we're here, there is mercy
Goodness, and worth
In setting straight differences
And calming strife.

So, as He forgave us
At his life's end, with love
Every fault and failing
We bring into this world
Take the time, stop for a moment
And turn to each other
There is no quarrel or squabble
That will not yield to Love.

For we will see a cold quiet night
The moon and the stars
And our loved ones will not be there
Their souls will have fled
There, our hearts will be
At peace with our Savior
That we parted with them
Without contention, without want



Litir bhon Cheann-Suidhe

le Liam Ó Caiside



Letter from the President

by Liam Cassidy

A Chàirdean Còire,

Abair gun robh Mòd againn air a' mhìos sa chaidh (6mh –8mh dhen t-Samhainn). A' chiad Mhòd air-loidhne neo "biortail" a bha aig ACGA riamh. Mòd Nàiseanta Aimeireagaidh aig àm ChOVID, an galar mòr-sgaoilte mallaichte, agus an tritheadamh Mòd Nàiseanta 's a h-aon againn bhon chuir sinn am Mòd air bhonn ann an Virginia an 1988. Cò chreideadh e?

Cha robh e mar Mòd a bh' againn riamh roimhe, ann an dòigh – ach ann an dòigh eile, bha e dìreach mar na mòdan a bh' againn bho thùs. Beòthail, spòrsail, càirdeil, ceòlmhor. Agus bha barrachd dhaoine ann na chunnaic sinn aig fear dhe na Mòdan againn ann am iomadh bliadhna – ged nach robh duine sam bith "ann" san fhìorachd!

Thàinig aon duine deug air fhichead ri chèile tro mheadhan Zoom airson prògram a mhair trì làithean eadar oidhche Haoine agus Didomhnaich. Ged nach b' urrainn dhuinn uile a bhith còmhla ann an aon àite, mar a rinn sinn tro na bliadhnaichean, b' urrainn dhuinn a bhith còmhla "anns an neul dhigiteach." Cha deach daoine chun a' Mhòid, ach chaidh am Mòd chun nan daoine.

Ach, ciamar a bha e? Eadar-dhealaichte, gun teagamh, ach feumaidh mi ràdh gun robh e math. Thòisich sinn mar a b' àbhaist le cèilidh air oidhche Haoine. Ged nach b' urrainn dhuinn seinn gualann ri gualainn, ghabh neach an dèidh neach òran neo sgeulachd cho fada 's a bha an cèilidh a' dol. Agus bha ceithir duine air fhichead ann!

Thàinig ochd duine air fhichead dha na co-fharpaisean, ged nach robh ach seachd farpaiseach deug ann. 'S math gun robh daoine ann dìreach airson a bhith ag èisteachd ris na farpaisich. Thug sin misneachd dhaibh, tha mi cinnteach.

Thòisich sinn le bàrdachd air Disathairne, ag aithris dhàn a rinn Flòraidh Nic Phàil à Tiriodh. A bharrachd air sin, fhuair sinn còig dàin ùra a rinn bàird airson a' Mhòid. Gheibh sibh iad anns an iris seo dhen *Naidheachd Againne*.

Dear Friends,

What a Mod we had last month (November 6–8): ACGA's first online or virtual Mod. A U.S. National Mod in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, and our 31st annual U.S. National Mod since we established our Mod in Virginia in 1988. Who would believe it?

It wasn't like any Mod we've ever held, in a way, but in another way, it was like all the Mods we've held since the beginning. Lively, fun, friendly, and full of music. And more people attended than we've seen at a Mod in many years – although no one attended in person!

Thirty-one people came together through the medium of Zoom for a program that ran three days between Friday night and Sunday morning. Although we couldn't all be together in one place, as we have been for many years, we were able to come together in the digital cloud. People couldn't go to the Mod, but the Mod came to the people.

But how was that? Different, without a doubt, but I must say it was good. We began as usual with a ceilidh Friday night. Although we couldn't sing "shoulder to shoulder," person after person sang a song or told a story as long as the ceilidh continued, and there were 24 people there!

Twenty-eight people came to the competitions Saturday, although there were only 17 competitors. It's good there were people there just to listen to the competitors. I'm sure that encouraged them.

We began with poetry Saturday, reciting poems by Flòraidh Nic Phàil from Tìree. On top of that, we received five original poems submitted to the Mod. You'll find them in this issue of *An Naidheachd Againne*.

Bha sgeulaiche agus sgeulachdan ann cuideachd. Bha caileag nam measg a bha seachd bliadhna dh'aois, agus ghabh i naidheachd àrsaidh mu dheidhinn Labhraidh Loingseach, rìgh Èireann fad air ais aig an robh cluasan aiseil. Bha a h-uile duine toilichte.

Bha dà sheinneadar dheug ann feasgar Disathairne. Agus thàinig ochd air fhichead dha na bùthan-obrach le Gillebrìde Mac 'IlleMhaoil agus Raonaid Walker madainn Didòmhnaich.

An do chòrd am Mòd ri daoine? Chòrd, a rèir coltais. Chuala mi bho dhaoine aig a' Mhòd agus às dèidh a' Mhòid gun robh iad toilichte leis a' chèilidh, na farpaisean, agus leis na bùthan-obrach. Leis an deireadh-sheachdain gu lèir.

Tha sin a' sealltainn dhuinn cho cudromach 's a tha cruinneachaidhean mar seo do dhaoine aig àmanna mar seo. Feumaidh sinn tuilleadh chruinneachaidhean agus mòdan a thogail anns an ath-bhliadhna, a' tòiseachadh leis a' Choinneimh Choitcheann Bhliadhnail san earrach. Thig tuilleadh fiosrachaidh air sin fhathast.

Le dùrachdan,

Liam Ó Caiside

Ceann-suidhe, ACGA

There were storytellers and stories too. One was a girl who was seven years old who told an ancient story about Labhraidh Loingseach, a king of Ireland long ago who had donkey's ears. Everyone was delighted.

There were 12 singers Saturday afternoon. And 28 people attended the workshops with Gillebrìde MacMillan and Rachel Walker Sunday morning.

Did people enjoy the Mod? They did, by all accounts. I heard from people during the Mod and afterward that they were delighted with the ceilidh, the competitions, and the workshops. With the entire weekend.

This shows us how important gatherings like this are in times like these. We must have more gatherings and mods in the new year, starting with the Annual General Meeting in the spring. More information will be coming.

Respectfully,

Liam Ó Caiside

President, ACGA



ACGA to Offer Gaelic Learner Support Grants

In the new year, ACGA will roll out a program offering grants to Gaelic learners who wish to enroll in established online courses or to study with specific teachers. Grants of \$100 each will be awarded to two beginners and two grants of \$200 each will be awarded to two intermediate or advanced learners. Grant recipients need not be members of ACGA.

These funds may be used to pay for courses at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, The Atlantic Gaelic Academy at Colaisde na Gàidhlig, or for study with Jason Bond (Gaelic with Jason), or Ann Desseyne (Sgoil Ghàidhlig Innse Gall, Uibhist a Tuath).

Grant applicants will be asked to write an essay on why they are learning Gaelic. They will also be asked what their current level of Gaelic is and to discuss their future goals and what they might do to help build Gaelic learning communities. Final decisions on the awards will be made in late spring, after interviews conducted on Zoom. The grant application form will be available on ACGA's website early in the new year.

Froiligean Tar-Sgrìobhaidh

le Heather Sparling

Chan eil fhios 'am cò mhead a th' ann – 's dòcha ochdnar no deichnear. Chan eil sinn gar faicinn. Chan eil sinn gar cluinntinn. Tha sinn uile ag obair air an aon "Google doc" aig an aon àm, ach chan eil fhios againn idir cò eil' a th' ann. Tha mi ag éisteachd ris an òran a bha air a chur air leth, beag air bheag. Nuair a tha mi a' cluinntinn rudeigin a tha mi a' tuigsinn, tha mi ga sgrìobhadh anns a' bhileig. Aig an aon àm, tha faclan eile a' tighinn am follais, cha mhòr mar dhraoidheachd. Tha na faclan gan sgrìobhadh le daoine aig a bheil ainmean a thug Google dhaibh, ainmean mar "auroch", "chinchilla", agus "jackal". Tha brìgh an òrain a' fàs nas soilleire dhomh. Tha mi a' tuigsinn loidhneachan an-dràsta nach robh mi a' tuigsinn aig an toiseach. Bho àm gu àm, tha moladh atharrach air a thairgsinn gu suimeil ann an iadhanan. Cò am fear ceart? Cò a shocraicheas? Nas luaithe na bhiodh dùil agam, tha tar-sgrìobhadh againn. Chan eil e coileanta ach 's e rudeigin a th' ann.

'S mise Heather Sparling agus 's e eòlaiche-chiùil-dùthchasach (ethnomusicologist) a th' annam aig Oilthigh Cheap Breatuinn. Tha mi nam stiùiriche dhen phròiseact "Language in Lyrics." Leis a' phròiseact seo, tha sinn a' feuchainn ri clàrachdadh a dhèanamh dhen a h-uile òran Gàidhlig aithnichte ann an Albainn Nuaidh. Chaidh iomadh òran a chlàradh thar nan deicheadan ach nach robh a-riamh tar-sgrìobhte. Bha fios agamsa agus aig an sgioba Language in Lyrics (Màiri Britton agus Mairead Laomuinn) gum biodh e doirbh faclan nan òran sin fhaighinn. Aon latha, nuair a bha sinn a' dian-bheachdachadh air a' chuspair, thàinig sinn suas le smuain "froiligean tar-sgrìobhaidh." Aig an toiseach, chuir sinn froiligean tar-sgrìobhaidh "beò" air dòigh – froiligean far an robh na compàirtichean còmhla anns an aon t-seòmar. Ach nuair a nochd an galar mòr-sgaoilte, chaidh sinn air-loidhne.

Ged a bha dragh oirnn nach obraicheadh na froiligean cho math gun a bhith aghaidh ri aghaidh, tha sinn dhen beachd gun robh iad gu math soirbheachail. Nam bharrail-sa, 's e tar-sgrìobhadh aon dhe na sgilean as duilghe a leasachadh nuair a tha daoine a' feuchainn ri cànan ùr ionnsachadh. Sin air sgàth 's gu bheil òrain a' cleachdadh fhaclan neo-àbhaisteach no gràmar toinnte,

Transcription Frolics

by Heather Sparling

I don't know how many people are here – perhaps eight or ten. We don't see one another. We don't hear one another. We are all working on a Google doc at the same time, but we don't know who else is here. I'm listening to the song that was selected, bit by bit. When I hear something that I understand, I write it in the document. At the same time, other words are coming into view, almost like magic. The words are being written by people with odd names assigned by Google, names like "auroch", "chinchilla", and "jackal". The meaning of the song is becoming clearer to me. I am understanding lines now that I didn't understand at first. From time to time, a different suggestion is offered respectfully in parentheses. Which is the right one? Who will decide? Faster than I ever thought possible, we have a transcription. It's not complete but it's something.

My name is Heather Sparling and I'm an ethnomusicologist at Cape Breton University. I am the Director of the project "Language in Lyrics." With this project, we are trying to make an index of every Gaelic song known in Nova Scotia. Many songs were recorded over the decades that were never transcribed. I and the Language in Lyrics team (Màiri Britton and Mary Jane Lamond) knew that it would be difficult to get those songs' lyrics. One day, when we were brainstorming on the topic, we came up with the idea of "transcription frolics." To start, we organized "live" transcription frolics – frolics where participants were together in one room. But when the pandemic appeared, we went online.

Although we worried that the frolics wouldn't work so well without being face to face, we think that they were quite successful. In my opinion, transcribing is one of the most difficult skills to develop when people are trying to learn a new language. That's because songs use unusual words or complicated



Pre-pandemic transcription frolic.
Heather Sparling

uile nas duilghe a thuigsinn mur eil an clàradh no an seinneadair soilleir gu leòr. Is gann na daoine a bhiodh deònach an ainmeachadh mar speisealaich thar-sgrìobhaidh. Sin far a bheil slugh-thobrachadh a' tighinn a-steach!

Bidh froiligean tar-sgrìobhaidh nas buntainniche do luchd-ionnsachaidh adhartach, ach faodaidh daoine aig nach eil mòran Gàidhlig pàirt a ghabhail cuideachd. Ach nam eòlas, tha e doirbh cothroman ionnsachaidh feumail a chur ri chèile do luchd-ionnsachaidh adhartach. Ro thrì, bidh cothroman ionnsachaidh ag amas air luchd-tòiseachaidh, a chionn 's gu bheil iad cho pailt agus gu bheil a' mhòr-chuid dhiubh aig an aon ìre. Ach nach eil e cudromach cothroman leasachaidh a shireadh do luchd-adhartaich cuideachd, gu h-àraidh do dhaoine a tha ag ionnsachadh cànan ann an cunnart, leithid Gàidhlig?

Seo na rinn sinn. Rinn sinn roghainn de dh'òran no dhà, a' taghadh chlàraidhean a bha soilleir gu leòr. Cha bhiodh e gu feum nam biodh an eacarsaich ro dhoirbh bhon a' chiad dol a-mach! Ma tha cead agaibh, thoiribh cothrom do dhaoine na clàraidhean a luchdadh a-nuas. Mura eil e comasach, cuiribh na clàraidhean air làrach-lìn mar SoundCloud agus thoiribh an seòladh-lìn dha na compàirtichean.



Teasing out the lyrics Heather Sparling

Chleachd sinn Google Docs airson an tar-sgrìobhaidh fhèin air sgàth 's gu bheil e an-asgaidh a chleachdadh agus tha iomadh duine eòlach air. B' urrainn dhuibh froilig neo-shioncronach a dhèanamh, a' leigeil fios do dhaoine cuin a bhiodh am froilig deiseil. Rinn sinn froiligean sioncronach air sgàth 's gu bheil e cho sònraicht e math a bhith a' faicinn nam faclan fhaicinn a' nochdadh fa chomhair ar sùilean. Thug sinn 45 mionaid dhan a h-uile duine, agus às dèidh làimh, choinnich sinn còmhla air Zoom airson beachdachadh air an tar-sgrìobhadh (agus airson faicinn cò bh' ann!).

Thug na froiligean leasachadh air ar cuid Gàidhlig agus air ar sgilean tar-sgrìobhaidh ann an dòigh gu math cofhurtail, càirdeil, agus spòrsail. Ach an-dràsta, feumaidh sinn smaoineachadh air a' ghleus a chleachdas sinn gus crìoch a chur orra. Cò a rèiticheas dè na faclan ceart, agus dè nì sinn mur eil e comasach a h-uile facal no loidhne a thuigsinn? Agus càit an cum sinn na tar-sgrìobhaidhean agus ciamar a gheibh daoine aig a bheil ùidh annta iad?

Às dèidh dhuinn stad airson an t-sàmhradh, dh'obraich sinn le Oll. Iain Seathach (Oilthigh Dhùn Eideann), a chuidich sinn gus na tar-sgrìobhaidhean a bha dèanta mar-thà a cheartachadh. Mhisnichinn neach sam bith a bu toil le froilig coltach ris a chur air dòigh, agus bhithinn gu math

grammar, all more difficult to understand if the recording or the singer isn't particularly clear. Few people are willing to be considered transcription specialists. That's where crowd-sourcing comes in!

Transcription frolics are more relevant for advanced learners, but people without much Gaelic can also participate. In my experience, it is hard to create useful learning opportunities for advanced learners. Too often, learning opportunities are aimed at beginners, since they are so numerous and because the majority of them are at the same level. But isn't it important to seek improvement opportunities for advanced people too, especially for people learning endangered languages, like Gaelic?

Here's what we did. We chose a song or two, choosing recordings that were reasonably clear. It wouldn't be useful if the exercise was too difficult from the very first! If you have permission, give people the option of downloading the recordings. If that's not possible, put the recordings on a website like SoundCloud and give the URL to participants.

We used Google Docs for the transcription itself because it's free to use and because many people are familiar with it. You can do an asynchronous frolic, letting people know when the frolic will end. We did synchronous frolics because it is so magical to see the words emerging in front of your eyes. We gave 45 minutes to everyone and afterwards, we met together on Zoom to discuss the transcription (and to see who else was there!).

The frolics improved our Gaelic and our transcription skills in a comfortable, friendly, and fun manner. But now, we need to think about the method we'll use to finish them. Who will decide which words are right, and what will we do if it's not possible to understand every word or line? And where will we keep the transcriptions and how will interested people access them?

After we stopped for the summer, we worked with Prof. John Shaw (University of Edinburgh), who helped us to correct the transcriptions that had already been done. I would recommend anyone interested in a

deònach bruidhinn ri neach sam bith a dh'iarradh comhairle. Nam bu toil leibh pàirt a ghabhail ann an aon dhen na froiligean againn, cumaibh sùil air ar duilleag "Facebook".

www.facebook.com/LanguageInLyrics

similar frolic to organize one, and I would be very willing to speak with anyone wanting advice. If you would like to take part in one of our frolics, keep your eyes on our Facebook page.

www.facebook.com/LanguageInLyrics

Seanfhacal na Ràithe – Pictured Proverb

Do you know what familiar Gaelic proverb is illustrated here?

Check page 23 to see if you're right.



Photo by ArtTower, www.Pixabay.com

Tachartasan Sònraichte Air-Loidhne

Cèilidh na Nollaige Air-Loidhne / Online Christmas Ceilidh, December 18, 2020, 7:30pm–9:30pm (EST)

For the next and last online ceilidh for 2020, Comunn Gàidhlig Toronto / The Gaelic Society of Toronto, will welcome a very special guest, Cathy Ann MacPhee, renowned Gaelic singer originally from the Isle of Barra. Wear your festive clothes – ugly sweaters, reindeer ears, whatever suits you! – and enjoy an evening of Christmas carols in Gaelic. A PDF song booklet will be emailed to all registrants in advance. We would like to hear stories of your Christmas and New Year traditions in your family or your country and, as always, if you have a story, song, poem etc., we invite you to share in whatever form you choose. At the end of the evening, we'll lift a glass together (what's in it is your choice) and wish each other well into the next year. Please register and join us! The Zoom link will be sent out to everyone in advance, with the song booklet.

Oidhche nam Bàrd / Night of the Bards, hosted by ACGA and Gàidhlig Photomac, Saturday, January 16, 2021, 7pm–9pm (EST)

Oidhche nam Bàrd, an evening of Scottish Gaelic poetry and song celebrating all Scottish Gaelic poets, from earliest times until today, will be held online on Saturday, January 16, 2021. The event was launched three years ago by Gàidhlig Photomac, a Gaelic learning community in the Washington, DC, area, and is spreading to other communities. Comunn Gàidhlig Toronto held their first *Oidhche nam Bàrd* last year.

This year, as our event will be online, ACGA and Gàidhlig Photomac would like to invite members of all Gaelic learning communities to participate, either individually or as groups. We will have special guests to help us celebrate Scottish Gaelic poetry, not just in Scotland, but North America and beyond as well. Gaels took their language and poetry with them wherever they went and continue to do so.

The evening will begin with a poetry reading by our special guests and proceed to an open mic with poems and songs from Gaelic speakers and learners across North America. Let us know if you want to join us and if you want to present a poem or song yourself. The evening will conclude with a toast to the bards. For more information or to volunteer, contact Liam at willbcassidy@gmail.com.



Litir à Dùn Èideann bhon Taigh Agam

by Jeff W. Justice

A chàirdean,

As I write this, the U.S. election has just been called, and now I can finally relax a bit after a relentless week of doing my day job non-stop. I am sitting at home, yet again, in front of my computer, yet again, with Zoom in the foreground (yet again!) as I take part in the U.S. National Mòd for my first time. I feel that we are separated and yet possibly more together than ever, in every sense of the meaning.

I've been going through the impact of the media on the American election in my American government classes this week, and I recounted an anecdote from the 1936 election, when President Franklin Roosevelt ran for his second term. He bought fifteen minutes of air time on the radio shortly before Election Day to do an infomercial. Radio was a brand new technology at that time and not always reliable. Just as he was about to start his broadcast, an aide told him that his opponent bought the fifteen minutes of air time immediately after his. So, FDR spoke for fourteen minutes, stopping abruptly mid-sentence and leaving the last minute full of dead air. Listeners thought the station had gone off the air, turned off their radios, and didn't hear the opponent's speech.

So, after a dramatic week of politics that has turned my stomach and frayed my nerves worse than the most brutal roller coaster I ever rode, I'm now attending the Mòd. This is the first U.S. Mòd to adapt an all-online format, forced onto Zoom just as we were with Beinn Seanair this summer. Sometimes a competitor's song, story or poem is as clear as it would be if we were doing this in the great outdoors under crystal blue Celtic skies. Other times, videos freeze, voices pixellate or "jump" from one place to another. Like FDR's radio, Zoom is a new technology, and we are testing it to its limits.

Those of you who know me know that I am not a singer. I have been politely and impolitely asked to leave choirs in years past. This does not diminish my love of music, and my tastes are quite eclectic and each genre brings its own feelings. Hearing voices raised in Gaelic song brings a warmth to my heart and fills me with joy in ways that other genres cannot do.

Thanks to technology, we are sharing songs with one another. My heart, beating wearily from the stress and strain of this week, has been lifted. The stories that accompany these songs, their origins, singers recounting with love those mentors who taught them to sing them, make this a richer song competition than (forgive me for saying so) Eurovision. I think the fact that Gaelic practically must be sung in order to speak it adds to that warmth. (And, as an aside, it might explain my own struggles with learning it!).

After attending this first online U.S. National Mòd, I yearn to attend in person when we can return to doing that. That said, this pandemic has forced us to find new ways of communicating, and I think it has also shown that these new ways are just as good for the health of our beautiful language. Zoom and its electronic siblings will become more reliable, and perhaps this first-ever online U.S. National Mòd will be the subject of Gaelic songs yet to be written and stories yet to be told.

Tha mi an dòchas, co-dhiù.

Le meas,

Gairidh | Jeff



Oisean a' Ghràmair / The Grammar Nook

by Wayne Harbert

Scary Things About Gaelic (STAG): Dealing with Difficult Relatives

English is such a sprawling language. There's never a single simple way to do anything. For example, one can begin a relative clause with a relative pronoun or one can begin with the clause-introducing element *that*, which is used to start other kinds of subordinate clauses as well, or one can leave out both of them and start right off with the subject of the relative clause. So, any of these is possible:

the boys [to whom] I was speaking
the boys [who] I was speaking to
the boys [that] I was speaking to
the boys I was speaking to¹

Gaelic (and most other languages) are leaner than that. There is no choice here. In such cases, the clause must be introduced by the particle *a*, the so-called relative pronoun, and it is immediately followed by the verb. The verb is lenited where possible (since *a* always causes lenition) and, if it is a present / future verb, it appears in the special "relative future" form, with the ending *-(e)as*:

an t-iasg a ghlacas an duine 'the fish that the man catches'

Simple as that. Possibly too simple, in fact. There's nothing in the Gaelic example here to tell us that the noun coming after the verb is the subject, instead of the object. Unlike English, word order is no help. So if we wanted to say instead "the fish that catches the man" it would come out exactly the same way. How awkward!

English gives us even more choices in relative clauses involving prepositional phrases. One possibility is to simply move the relative pronoun to the front by itself, leaving the preposition stranded at the end. Or, we can begin the sentence with *that* and leave the preposition stranded. Or we can leave the preposition stranded and not put anything at the front. And finally, we can use a relative pronoun and move both it and the preposition to the front of the clause together. So, we can say

the boys [who] I was speaking to
the boys [that] I was speaking to
the boys I was speaking to
OR the boys [to whom] I was speaking

The Celtic languages, in general, frown on such grammatical excess. In Standard Welsh, and in Standard Irish, the only correct construction is 'The boys that I was talking to-them.' (In the Celtic languages, leaving a bare preposition behind won't do; the stranded preposition must be inflected to agree with a pronoun object).

¹ About the only thing you can't get away with in English is using a relative pronoun and a *that* at the same time. As we saw in the last column, though, it was even possible to do that back in Chaucer's day: No drynke **which that** myghte hem dronke make.

Departing from its sisters, though, Gaelic allows an alternative to this construction. As in the other languages, you can leave an agreeing preposition at the end.

na balaich a bhruidhinn mi riutha ‘the boys that I spoke with-them’

But, as in English, you can use an actual relative pronoun, *an*, and move it together with the preposition to the front of the clause. (This is the only circumstance under which the true relative pronoun makes its appearance in Gaelic).

na balaich [ris an] do bhruidhinn mi ‘the boys with whom I spoke’

The preposition changes in front of the relative pronoun *an* in the same way that it would in front of the definite article *an* – not surprising, since they are originally the same form. The *-s* at the end of *ris* was once a part of the relative pronoun itself, but it attached itself to the preposition when the latter ended in a vowel.

The relative particle *a* is followed by the independent / relative form of the verb, while the preposition + pronoun is followed by the dependent form of the verb (*do bhruidhinn*).

It would be natural to suspect that the dueling constructions of Gaelic have something to do with English influence, but in fact both of them have ancient roots, stretching all the way back to an Old Irish dialect division. Standard Old Irish, and the northern dialects on which it was based, had only the “boys to whom I spoke” construction. In southern Old Irish dialects they used the “boys that I spoke to-them” construction. The southern construction became the standard one in Modern Irish, as the northern dialects lost ground. Gaelic latched on to this rising southernism but continued to cling to the old northern construction as well, and so ended up with both.

U.S. National Mòd Returns in Online Format

ACGA’s U.S. National Mòd took place the weekend of November 6–8th with competitors from all over the U.S. and Canada, adjudicators Rachel Walker and Gillebrìde Mac ’IlleMhaoil in Scotland, and all events taking place on Zoom.

After a Friday-night cèilidh, competitions began Saturday morning, with seventeen competitors across a range of six competitions. This year, Bàrdachd Ùr / Original Poems was added to the list, which also included Ag Aithris Bàrdachd / Poetry Recitation, Ag Innse Sgeulachd / Storytelling, Leughadh air a’ Chiad Shealladh / Sight Reading, Òran Neach Tòisichidh / Beginner Song, and Na h-Òrain / General Song. On Sunday morning, Rachel and Gillebrìde each taught a workshop.

Following the model set by this year’s Royal National Mòd, the adjudicators did not award first, second, and third places in each category, but instead named each competitor’s effort as *sònraichte* / exceptional, *air leth math* / highly commended, or *ri moladh* / to be commended. Out of forty individual performances, thirteen were awarded *sònraichte*, twenty received *air leth math*, and seven, *ri moladh*. Meal ur naidheachd dhan a h-uile duine/ Congratulations to everyone!



Among the many excellent performances, the adjudicators singled out several. Gillebrìde Mac ’IlleMhaoil, who judged the original poetry, was particularly impressed with the quality of the poems. You will find his comments on the poetry in general as well as all five of the poems submitted for adjudication in “Bàrdachd airson ar linn,” in this issue. In the under-thirteen category for storytelling, Gillebrìde gave special praise to seven-year old Róisín Newton’s telling of the traditional tale, “Labhraidh Loingseach.” See “Gabh do Naidheachd” on page 17 for a link to a video of Róisín using Legos to illustrate this story of a king with horse’s ears.

Bàrdachd airson ar linn

Introduction by Gillebrìde Mac 'IlleMhaoil
Poems from U.S. National Mòd

Abair gum b' e tlachd a bh' ann dhomh cuireadh fhaighinn gus a bhith nam bhrìtheamh aig Mòd Nàiseanta nan Stàitean Aonaichte air 7mh Samh. Cho math ris an t-seinn, na sgeulachdan agus aithris bàrdachd a bha fìor mhath, bha e gu sònraichte thlachdmhor a bhith a' faicinn gun do rinn còignear bàrdachd ùr airson na farpais. Chan e a-mhàin gun do rinneadh bàrdachd, ach bha a' bhàrdachd aig sàr-ìre – tiamhaidheachd, rannaidheachd, còmharradh, dealbhan agus ìomhaighean eireachdail air an cur far comhair tro bhriathran. Bha na dàin a' dèiligeadh ri farsaingeachd chuspairean – trom-inntinn agus càirdeas, taibhsean ann an taigh-seinnse ann an New York, bàrdachd nàdair eireachdail, faireachdainnean na beatha rè linn Chovid agus gaol is gràdh ann an seallaidhean na cuimhne. Bu mhath leam taing a thoirt do gach bàrd airson an cuid bàrdachd agus tha mi cinnteach gun còrd iad ruibh cho mòr 's a chòrd iad riumsa.

What a delight it was to be invited to adjudicate for the U.S. National Mòd on 7th November. Not only was the singing, tales and recitation excellent, but it was particularly good to see five new poems submitted. All the poems were of a very high standard – poignant, versification, rhyme, lyrical pictures and images created for us. The poems dealt with a wide range of subjects – dealing with depression through friendship, ghosts in a New York tavern, beautiful nature poetry, the meaning of life in Covid times and love and affection through the lens of memory. I would like to thank all the bards for their poems and I am sure that you will enjoy them as much as I did.



Stoirm an Earraich *le Eubha Ghòrdon*

Chunnaic mi an raor sgòthan beòthail, dorch-liath,
fliuchach, a' gluasad 's a' goil,
Ag itealach mar dhealbh-ola Rococo beò;
Speuran greadhnach, gasta, riaslach
Agus a-nis, dealanaich lèirseach ag astar, gu grad
A' toirt leis frasan troma
Loma-làn beatha.
Agus an dèidh sin, chualas còisir nan losgann a'
sèinn
Cho binn 's a bha iad riamh
Mar gun robh Fèill na Bealtaine air tighinn
Agus a' ghealach mhòr làn a' sealltain sìos mu
dheireadh thall,
A' cur draoidheachd dhìomhair dhan t-saoghal seo
fhèin.

Last night I saw clouds – living, dark grey, humid,
moving in a boil,
Flying, as if in a living Rococo oil,
Magnificent, splendid, struggling skies.
And now, distant lightning seen suddenly
Bringing heavy showers
Full of life.
And, afterwards, a chorus of frogs was heard, singing
As sweetly as ever
As if the Feast of Beltane had arrived
And the great full moon looked down at last,
Casting secret magic on the world itself.



Dubhachas is Dòlas *le James MacDonald*

Duine dicheallach, deònach, diadhaidh
Duine cràbhach, naomh – sàr Chrìosdaidh
'S tu bha fearail, frogail, fialaidh
Daingeann an aghaidh àmhghair sam bith.

Ged a bha thu dòchasach làn brìgh
Chaidh do leagadh le leann-dubh gàbhaidh
Eallach trom na laighe air d' inntinn
Tachdadh d' anail is d' anam is d' eanchainn.

Ged a tha thu gun spionnadh gun subhachas
Gun fhois gun urras gun chreideas gun dòchas
Thig an latha nuair gheibh thu sòlas
An latha a thrèigeas dubhachas 's dòlas.

Nuair a bhios fo dhubhar is chùram thu
Cha sheas fulangas fada sìor dhut
Ma chuireas tu earbsa anns a' Chruithear
Falbhaidh èislean, airtneal, is leann-dubh.

Nuair a bhios sinn iriosal foighidneach
Nuair nach bi sinn oirnn fhìn smaoineachadh
Thig gràs Dhè gun fhiosta gun fhiosrachadh
Ged a bhiodh sinn buileach gun airidheachd.

[Bha mi smaoineachadh air Iain Urchardan nuair a sgrìobh mi i.]



Smuaintean
le Iain Grimaldi



Co-cheangailte
le Caroline Bennett

Tha mi nam shuidhe air an tràan,
Is mi a' dol air adhart is mi a' coimhead air ais.

Nuair a bha mi òg
bha agam ris an teine a thasgadh san stòbha mhòr.
Chuir mi beagan gauil ris agus dh'fhalaich mi an
teine fo luathan.

Sa mhadainn cha bhitheadh an stòbha ach caran
blàth

ach fo na luathan bha grìosaichean
agus le gual is m' anail bhitheadh an teine laiste a-
rithist!

Fada fada bhon uairsin. Fada fada bhuam.
Tha cuimhne fàileadh a' ghuaile leam fhathast

Gu trom bha 'n Samhradh a' laighe air mo phàirc.
Bha 'n teas ag èirigh bhon fhrith-rathad
is bha na craobhan a' crith sa chrith-theas.

Chrionaich thu rim thaobh is dh'fhaighnich mi,
"Dè tha dol a ghràidh? A bheil an t-eagal...."
"Chan eil. Tha mi a' cuimhneachadh"

An uairsin mhair sinn sàmhach.
Choisich sinn ri chèile, làmh air làimh.
Thòisich mi a' seinn agus rinn i gàire.
"Stad! Tòisich a-rithist am port seo!"
Chuir i a brògan dhith is ars' ise, "Dannsaidh mi!"
Sheinn mi is dhanns i is bha sinn ri chèile,
srath spè, ruidhle, port-cruinn, mar a b' àbhaist.
Choisich sinn a-rithist làn aoibhneas,
gun fhaclan, gun chùram, le gaol,
is le a làmh cho blàth air mo làimh.

Tha mi a' dol thar abhainn sàil
is a dlùthachadh an stèisean.

Bha mi a' bruidhinn riut an-dè.
'S chuimhnich mise an samhradh nuair bha sinn nas
òige.

'S chuimhnich mise an t-àm nuair a bha sinn nas
fhaisge air a chèile.

'S chuimhnich mise teas do bhodhaig
is sinne ri gabhail anail le chèile.
Fada fada bhon uairsin. Fada fada bhuainn.
A luaidh, a bheil grìosaichean ar gaoil fo na luathan?

Stad an tràan san stèisean-rèile deireannach
ach cha do stad mi a chuimhnicheadh ort, a luaidh.

Co-cheangailte tha sinn le bàrdachd is ceòl
Bho thoiseach na sìorrachd 's o shinns'ran nach beò,
Thar linntean is àiteachan, cròitean 's crò,
An cainnt aig mo mhàthair 's gach cànan gun deò.
O eistibh ri guthannan àrsaidh bhon cheò
Is bheir iad an eòl bho àilean is òb
Is gheibh sinne ar dàimh le tuigsinn am bròin,
An calmachd, shòlais is ghaoil.

Aig beul na h-oidhche bha màthair a' seinn,
'S na reultan a' deàrrsadh 's ise leath' fhéin,
'S sheinn i mu a beatha le tàladh bha réidh
Do phàiste na chadal gu sàmhach gun éigh.
Bha rìbhinn donn òg na seasamh fon speur,
'S ise a' crònadh 's làn cianail a séist
Mu a gràdh is e seòladh do thìrean tha céin.
"O d'fòn mo chéile, mo ghaol"

An saighdear air àrach fo àile gun sìth
Is maraiche is iasgair is iadsan nan sgìos
Gun sgrìobh iad mu'n strìthean is cùisean a' chridh'
Nan duain is iorram, air fìdhill 's air pìob.
Ma bhios sibh nur tuathanach ìosal no rìgh
ó gheibh sibh ur smior, ur taic is ur brìgh
Bho ghliocas tha tìghinn bho linn is gu linn.
Tha spiorad nan sinns'rean ri ar taobh.

Ach dé am bu chòir dhuinn a dhèanamh an dràs'd'
Is sinne mar bhòcain air cùlaibh na sgàil,
Na h-àrasan dùinte is sinne a-mhàin
Is eagal na plàighe a' snàgadh mar sgàth?
Tha dhìth air an t-sluagh air sòlas is àgh
'S bidh sìnnsean is bàird a' sìneadh nan làmh'
'S iad tairgsinn an taice tron òrain 's dàin
A' toirt seachad am bàidhe 'san t-saoghal





Taigh-tàirn Comharra-stiùiridh le B.L. Rice

Tha George Raft fada aig a' bhàr a' gabhail fadachd
Ach càit a bheil an luchd-ceannachd?

Tha an seann reubalach Deasach anns an amar shuas
an staidhre.

Is miste e, agus e a' smaoinichadh a dhol sìos an
staidhre.

Air an treas làr, tha nìghneag Èireannach, aig nach bi
fios a-chaidh,

Gu bheil am fiabhras-mòr aice air a toirt air falbh.

Tha an trìuir thaibhsean ag ionndrainn an ceòl a
chluinntinn, agus na seann ghuthan air an robh
iad cho, mion-eòlach.

An uair sin, thàinig COVID-19 a-steach air an doras,
agus chrìon a h-uile càil is a h-uile duine.

Mar sin, crìonaidh an ceòl, an sluagh, agus na
h-uirsgeulan cuideachd,

Mur bi an leigheas air a lorg, agus gum brist e an
geas sàmhach.

Landmark Tavern by B.L. Rice

George Raft lingers at the bar,
Wondering where all the customers are?

The old Southern rebel is upstairs in the
bathtub,

He's the worst for it and thinking of going
back downstairs.

On the third floor, there's a little Irish girl,
Who will never know that typhoid fever has
taken her away.

The three ghosts long to hear the
music and the old familiar
voices.

Then COVID-19 walked through the door,
and everything and everyone faded.

Like that (so), will the music, the people,
and legends fade as well,

Unless the cure will be found and will
break the silent spell.

Gabh do Naidheachd

Storytelling has a long history among Gaels, and it takes many forms, from hours-long Ossianic tales to ghost stories, to Cape Breton ròlaistean / tall tales, and many Gaelic learners, young and old, enthusiastically take part in the tradition.

At the U.S. National Mòd in November 2020, seven-year old Róisín Newton's telling of "Labhraidh Loingseach" delighted Mòd attendees and impressed the adjudicator, who awarded her a "Sònraichte." In this YouTube video recorded by her father, Michael Newton, we see Róisín using Legos to illustrate this traditional story. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rkghqg1vbxA&t=19s>

Dè Tha Catrìona Ris?

No, Dè *Bha* Catrìona Ris? An fhreagairt: Pìobairean Bhòrnais.

Recently we've been featuring Catrìona NicIleDhuibh's (Black) short iPhone vlogs in this column, but over the years, she's been involved in longer projects. In 2004, she animated, directed, and produced "Pìobairean Bhòrnais." As Catrìona's images move across the screen in this ten-minute film, we hear Donald Archie MacDonald telling the traditional tale in a 1975 recording from the School of Scottish Studies. Rory Campbell (of Deaf Shepherd and Old Blind Dogs) composed and performed the musical score. "Pìobairean Bhòrnais" was commissioned by BBC ALBA and funded by CCG and Scottish Screen National Lottery.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCwVgLUraQ4>



Book Review:

Anna Ruadh le L. M. Montgomery air eadar-theangachadh le Mòrag Anna NicNèill
 Bradan Press, Halafacs, Alba Nuadh, Canada: A 2020 translation of Lucy Maud
 Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* which was first published in 1908.
 ISBN 9781988747323 (hardcover). 9781988747316 (softcover). 314 pages in softcover.

Reviewed by Ted Neveln

Anna Ruadh takes place on Prince Edward Island, which was settled by large numbers of people from Scotland. NicNèill gave this famous novel a Gaelic tincture in her translation. The translation diverges enough that a dictionary will be necessary even if you have *Anne of Green Gables* close at hand. For example: “but this freckled witch was very different” becomes “Ach bha an spideag bheag bhreac-seumach seo gu tur eadar dhealaidte.” Spideag sounds better than witch and the whole phrase scans better. (At first I presumed a *spideag* was a “nightingale” although “a right wee madam” might be the better choice and still others exist). In English the heroine asks for her name to be spelled Anne instead of Ann; here she wants to change it from Annag to Anna.

An obvious strategy is to have the English-language original close at hand while reading. I find that I can read whole paragraphs without resorting to it, but it is good to have when the adjectives pile up like speed bumps and interesting to see when the Gaelic is more attractive, as it often is.

There are many spots where NicNèill declined to use a word-for-word translation even when it would have been easy; rather she chose a more dynamic strategy to render a Gaelic that is very pleasant to read aloud, although sometimes it is necessary to draw a very deep breath before starting.

She leaves little out except where a passage in English refers to a “Parthian arrow” which is a devastating allusion in its context, assuming that one knows what a “Parthian arrow” alludes to. I did not, and my more sophisticated wife Nancy had to explain to me that the ancient Parthians were skilled at covering retreats with deadly accurate arrow shots. It is often misheard as “parting arrow.” The Gaelic just says “arrow”.

On the very first session our reading group puzzled over the equivalence of “great patriarchal willows and the other with prim Lombardies” with “*seann seilich agus air an taobh eile pobhlaran leòmach*,” the discussion went on a bit because some of us did not know what a Lombardy poplar is (and still don’t). Greenhouse nursery workers and forest rangers will have a leg up in this book.

Here are some examples of dynamic translation:

“Handsome is as handsome does,” quoted Marilla.

“*Cha toir a’ bhòidhchead goil air a’ phoit,*” *dh’aithris Marilla.*

Here the Gaelic is easier to understand:

“Talking ... nineteen to the dozen”

“*A’ cabadaich aig na nì i*”; (talking about that which she is going to do).

“...you’re so featherbrained”

“*...chan eil cuimhne circe agad*” (you don’t have the memory of a hen).

When Anna exclaims that she is in the depths of despair, the Gaelic sounds snappier and more in character when Anna is in *dùbhlachd domhainn na dòrainne*. Anna is sometimes admonished to not be *idrisgeach* (fidgety). We puzzled over that word and discovered that it can be a better translation of fidgety than the word *fionasach* that we had used previously. I did not find *idrisgeach* in Dwelly’s dictionary although “Am Faclair

Beag” does have it. We also discovered that fidget is originally a Scottish-English word. One of Anna’s favorite words is “imagination” and NicNeill translated it in multiple ways such as *ruathar* (meaning a swoop), *mac-meanmain*, and *a’ cur an ìre* (which I am still struggling with although Dwelly puts it as make believe!).

The book gushes with loving descriptions of beautiful landscapes and the fountain of Gaelic adjectives is well-utilized, especially when describing nature. Rhapsodies about the beauty of Prince Edward Island are numerous and sometimes lengthy. In previous books we have read from the “Lasag” series, all paragraphs were short enough that it was easy to allocate one paragraph per person. But when a paragraph runs for a full page or two, bowed down under a torrent of adjectives, it becomes a challenge. When one reader runs out of steam in mid-stream then the next reader may need extended navigational directions; and doing this while online is harder than being seated around a table. Post-it notes might be useful with hard copy. Working on-screen might be a challenge. By myself I typically read the English first and that helps me a lot. For our reading group I briefly tried the strategy of reading aloud a sentence or two of the English original first and then the Gàidhlig, but that quickly failed.

The Edwardian English becomes lush Gaelic. I am all the more impressed by the translation when I imagine myself trying to update this novel into current American English. To summarize, Anna Ruadh’s conversations are a good way to pick up lilting Gaelic, but the scenic descriptions seem like reading an old Gaelic poem – beautiful but strenuous.

Since *Anne of Green Gables* is a famous book and since I have not finished it yet, I won’t discuss the plot much, but it follows an orphan girl who has been unwanted and neglected all her life. An aging spinster and her brother adopt her reluctantly because they had requested a boy. Anna seems to have been born under a snafu star but sometimes a snafu works in her favor. She is rough around the edges but less damaged than one might expect because she has a great love of beauty, romance, and story-telling, which she expresses in a geyser of chatter. If nothing else this book will burn the word *cabadaich* into your word-ward. Her chatter emerges not from an empty skull but from quicksilver intelligence and imagination; and it becomes a florid soundtrack that eventually charms the dour grownups and makes them see previously unnoticed beauty in their world. Anna’s ideas about religious devotion challenge the stock assumptions of Edwardian piety and perhaps echo a Celtic religious ecstasy inspired by the glories of nature. A lot of humor springs from befuddled adults trying to keep up with the swooping peregrine gyrations of Anne’s mind.

As frequently happens the first chapter is harder going than the others.

Anna Ruadh makes me want to see Prince Edward Island though I hope I don’t trip over *Anne of Green Gables* knickknacks the whole time.

“Isn’t it good just to be alive on a day like this? I pity the people who aren’t born yet for missing it. They may have good days, of course, but they can never have this one.” “*Nach eil e math a bhith beò air latha dhen t-seòrsa seo? Tha truas agam riuthasan nach deach a bhreith fhathast agus a chall e. S mathaid gum bi làithean matha acasan cuideachd, ach chan urrainn dhan fheasgar seo a bhith aca.*”

The cover of the paperback version has a pleasant texture and the typography and layout are nice. The paper seems fine. It’s too early to tell how well the binding will last. I spotted only one trivial typo out of the fourteen chapters I have read so far. The little illustrations at the head of each chapter are nicely done. A subtle pleasure is how well the cover illustration depicts her as the text describes her.

Anne of Green Gables is in the public domain and is freely downloadable from places like:

Project Gutenberg: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/45> and Planet eBook:

<https://www.planetebook.com/anne-of-green-gables/>

Anna Ruadh can be purchased at:

Colaisde na Gàidhlig: (<https://gaeliccollege.edu/shop/anna-ruadh/>) or Comhairle nan Leabhraichean: (https://gaelicbooks.org/index.php?route=product/product&product_id=1690&search=Anna+Ruadh)



Website Review:

@gaeligeagusgaidhlig on Instagram

Learn Irish & Scottish Gaelic

Reviewed by Jeff Justice

Gaelic has taken advantage of these days we now largely spend inside to expand its virtual presence. Gaelic activity has increased on social media, including multiple accounts on Instagram. One such account, @gaeligeagusgaidhlig, uploaded its first post in March 2020. It presents a colourful and very useful series of virtual posters teaching Scottish Gaelic and Irish vocabulary. Today, the growing account features more than 65 sets of thematic vocabulary lists.

Topics range from everyday basic categories such as colours, animals, and shapes, through thematic or seasonal topics, including terms covering the recent U.S. election or Halloween. One can also find very useful lists such as conjunctions and numbers. Most topic lists are fully illustrated to enable learners of either or both languages to associate the written word with the object described.

The account also includes several interactive stories and short films, and some of these contain useful links to different learning sites for Gaelic, Irish, and the other four living Celtic languages. There is even a short film in Cornish with English subtitles.

This account can be very useful for not only learners but also teachers, as the posts are set up in a way that lend themselves very well to a classroom setting visual aid. One notable drawback, as of this writing, is the lack of audio files to aid learners in how to pronounce correctly the words featured. This could be useful for someone who is learning both Gaelic and Irish, as words that look quite similar – a frequent occurrence, as they are related languages – might yet be pronounced differently. To be sure, Instagram is meant to be a site featuring quickly consumed media, so a companion website might be a future addition to this project which could feature such files or, perhaps, a podcast series.



To view this account, you will need an active Instagram account of your own. Nonetheless, for someone who is looking for a colourful, clever place to learn Gaelic and Irish vocabulary-by-topic, this new account is well-recommended as a place to go.

<https://www.instagram.com/gaeligeagusgaidhlig/>

This yummy banana bread recipe was sent by Sarah MacDonald, a native of South Uist now living in New York City. Sarah previously submitted a recipe for Irish soda bread, which was a big hit, and this promises to be another delicious treat.

Aran banana

Grìtheidean

2 bhanana abaich
2 chupa flùir-èirigh NO 2 chupa flùir, 2 spàin-tì
pùdair-fuine, 1/2 spàin-tì salainn
3/4 cupa siùcair castoir (no siùcair ghile)
1/2 chupa ime no margarain
2 ugh
1 spàin-tì pùdair-fuine
1 spàin-tì sòda-fuine
2 spàin-bùird bainne
1 cupa rèasanan (ma thogras tu)
1 spàin-tì faoineig (ma thogras tu)



Geir gu h-aotrom pana lofa, meud 6 1/2 x 3 1/2 x 3 1/2 òirlich agus air a linigeadh le pàipear-fuine. Ro-theasaich an àbhainn gu 350° F.

Co-mheasgaich na grìtheidhean tioram ann am bobhla mòr. Cuir ann an t-ìm agus na h-uighean air am bualadh còmhla ris a' bhainne, na rèasanan agus an fhaoineag. Buail an taois le inneal-measgachaidh no spàin-fhiodha mu dhà mhionaide gus am bi i co-mheasgaichte gu math. Pronn na bananathan agus cuir seo anns an taois. Measgaich uile le chèile gu math.

Dòirt an taois anns a' phana. Bruich an lofa fad uair a thìde no gus a bheil e air èirigh gu math 's gu bheil e òr-dhonn, agus gun tig dealg bonnach a-mach glan.

Fuaraich an lofa anns a' phana mu chòig mionaidean mus tionndaidh thu a-mach e. Thoir air falbh am pàipear agus fàg e gus fuarachadh aig teòthachd an t-seòmair.

Geàrr e ann an sliseagan tiugh ri ithe.



Banana Bread

Ingredients

2 ripe bananas
2 cups self-raising flour OR 2 cups all-purpose flour, 2 tsp baking powder, 1/2 tsp salt
3/4 cup caster sugar (or white sugar)
1/2 cup butter or margarine
2 eggs
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
2 tbsp milk
1 cup raisins (optional)
1 tsp vanilla (optional)

Lightly grease a 6-1/2 x 3-1/2 x 3-1/2 inch loaf pan and line with baking parchment. Preheat oven to 350° F.

Measure all ingredients into a mixing bowl except the bananas and beat about 2 minutes until well-blended. An electric beater is best for this but of course you can also beat by hand with a wooden spoon. Take the ripe bananas, mash, and add them to the rest of the ingredients, stirring well.



Spoon the mixture into the prepared pan and level the surface. Bake for about 1 hour until well-risen and golden brown. Test with a fine skewer.

Leave the cake to cool in the pan for a few minutes, then loosen and take out. Remove the lining paper and leave to cool.

Slice thickly to serve.

Photos by Janice Chan

Do you have a favorite recipe that you'd like to share with other ACGA members? Submit it in a bilingual format to one of our editors and we'll publish it in a future issue of *An Naidheachd Againne*. Na gabhaibh dragh – we'll pass the Gaelic by a native speaker to be sure your recipe is delicious in both languages!

a-muigh 's a-mach / out and about

Farpais-cheist Air-Loidhne Gàidhlig Photomac

le Hilary NicPhàidein

Bha ballrachd Ghàidhlig Photomac còmhla a-rithist air Zoom feasgar 27 an t-Sultain airson farpais-cheist. Bha naoinear ann is sinne deiseil gus ceistean air rudan Albannach a fhreagairt. Abair spòrs a bh' againn! Bha Liam Ó Caiside na fhear an taighe agus ghlèidh Caitlin NicAoidh na sgòran. Bha còig cuairtean ann agus b' e seo na còig roinnean-seòrsa: àiteachan, daoine, dealbhan, eachdraidh is ceòl. Leugh sinn na ceistean a chuir Liam air an sgàilean agus dh'eadar-theangaich Liam iad air sgàth an luchd-ionnsachaidh a bha ann. Bha trì sgiobaidhean againn agus cha robh cead againn Google no einnsean-luirg eile a chleachdadh. An dèidh gach cuairt chuir na sgiobaidhean post-dealain leis na freagairtean gu Caitlin a bha gan dearbhadh agus a' cur nam puingean ris. Bha dùil againn gum biodh crìoch na farpais-cheist aig 9f ach bha i cho spòrsail 's gun do mhair i gu leth-uair an dèidh 11f.

Càit' a bheil an t-oilthigh as sine ann an Alba? Chì thu an fhreagairt air duilleag 24.

The members of Gàidhlig Photomac got together again on Zoom on the evening of the 27th of September for a pub quiz. There were nine of us ready to answer questions about things Scottish. What fun we had! Liam Cassidy was the Master of Ceremonies with Cathleen MacKay as the scorekeeper. There were five rounds with ten questions and twenty points per round. These were the five categories: places, people, pictures, history and music. Liam put the questions up on the screen and translated them for the benefit of the learners. There were three teams and we couldn't use Google or any other references. After each round the teams sent an email with their answers to Cathleen who verified the answers and tabulated the points. We expected the quiz to finish at 9pm, but it was so much fun that it lasted until 11:30 pm.

Who is the First Minister of Scotland? Find the answer on page 24.



A' seinn ri chèile le Gàidhlig Photomac – an Dàmhair

le Hilary NicPhàidein

Tha Gàidhlig Photomac air a bhith trang an ràith seo. Anns a' chiad dol a-mach bha farpais-cheist spòrsail ann san t-Sultain agus an uair sin, seisean seinn feasgar 17 an Dàmhair. Thuirt cuideigin gur e "World Singing Day" a bh' ann, latha math a bhith a' seinn ri chèile.

An toiseach dh'innis Cam dhuinn sgeulachd ghoirid mu thrì uir chlàrsairean agus an dèidh sin rinn sinn còmhradh fada mu chiall na sgeulachd. An uairsin ghabh sinn òrain duine mu seach agus bha roghainn òrain fìor-mhath a' gabhail a-steach dà phort-à-beul is òran cloinne. A thuilleadh air seinn bhruidhinn sinn air na h-òrain fhèin agus dh'ionnsaich sinn mu dheidhinn nam bàrd is mu chiall nan òran.

Mòran taing do Chaitlin NicAoidh airson an seisean a chur air dòigh is dha na h-uile airson tighinn ri chèile.

Gàidhlig Photomac has been busy this quarter. First of all there was a fun pub quiz in September and now a song session on the 17th of October. Someone said it was "World Singing Day", a good day to be singing together.

First of all, Cam told us a short story about three harpers, and after that we spoke at length discussing what the story meant. Then we took turns singing and there was a great choice of songs, including two *puirt* sets and a children's song. Besides singing, we spoke about the songs themselves, learning about the poets and the meaning of the songs.

A big thank you to Cathleen MacKay for organising the session and to everyone for attending.

A' seinn ri chèile le Gàidhlig Photomac – an t-Samhain

le Hilary NicPhàidein

Choinnich ballrachd Ghàidhlig Photomac air Zoom feasgar 14 an t-Samhain airson seisein eile làn òran is còmhraidh mun dèidhinn. Bha sinn glè thoilichte fàilte a chur air Caroline bho Denver. Fhuair i a-mach o chionn ghoirid gun robh Albannaich na teaghlach agus bha i airson Gàidhlig ionnsachadh.

Thòisich sinn air òrain a tha sinn air a chruinneachadh tro na bliadhnaichean a sheinn agus an uair sin sheinn feadhainn againn òrain eile a chòrd rinn gu mòr. Chuala sinn dà phort-à-beul air an fheasgar seo. An toiseach sheinn Cynthian am port-à-beul a sheinn i cho math aig Mòd Nàiseanta Aimeireagaidh an t-seachdain roimhe. An dèidh sin sheinn Lydia fear eile. Chòrd iad ris a h-uile duine gu mòr.

Fhuair sinn naidheachd air leth cuideachd – dh'innis Caitlin dhuinn gum biodh seisean seinn ann gach mìos fhad 's a bhios sinn a' cumail choinneamhan biortail. Le sin bidh tuilleadh chothroman againn a bhith a' seinn ri chèile nas trice – nach math sin.

Mar as àbhaist, taing mhòr do Chaitlin a-rithist airson an seisean a chur air dòigh is dha na h-uile airson tighinn ri chèile.

The members of Gàidhlig Photomac met on the 14th of November for another Zoom session of singing and conversation about the songs. We were very pleased to welcome Caroline from Denver. She recently found out that she has Scottish ancestors which has prompted her to start learning Gaelic.

We began with singing songs that the Gàidhlig Photomac group has been collecting over the years, and then some of us sang other songs that we really liked and wanted to share. We heard two *port-à-beul* this afternoon. Cynthian entertained us with the one she sang so well the week before at the U.S. National Mòd, followed immediately by Lydia who made us smile with a lively take on “Brochan Lom”. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed these songs.

We got some good news – Cathleen told us that there would be a song session each month while we were having virtual meetings. So, we will have more opportunities to sing together more often – that will be fun.

As usual, many thanks again to Cathleen for setting up the session, and to everyone for coming.



Jeff Justice

Answer to Photo Quiz, p. 5

Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir is buried in Greyfriars Kirkyard, next to the kirk, now home to Edinburgh's only remaining Gaelic language church service.



Photo by ArtTower, www.Pixabay.com

Answer to Seanfhacal na Ràithe, p. 11

Is minig a bha droch bhròg air mnaoi greusaiche.

Often has a shoemaker's wife had bad shoes.

Criomagan / Bits of This and That

Gaelic Literature Awards 2020

The Saltire Society has awarded Wilson McLeod, Professor of Gaelic at the University of Edinburgh, its **Fletcher of Saltoun Award for Contributions to Public Life**. The Society awards six such awards each year for Outstanding Contributions to Scottish Culture and the Arts, Science, and Public Life, with nominations coming from the Society's membership. In presenting the award to Dr. McLeod, the Society stated that his work will ensure that Gaelic not only receives the recognition it deserves, but thrives in Scotland's culture.

Wilson's citation and the video announcing his award can be found here:

<https://www.saltiresociety.org.uk/awards/history-and-heritage/andrew-fletcher-of-saltoun/>.

Comhairle nan Leabhraichean recently awarded the **Donald Meek Prize for Best Non-fiction Book in Gaelic** jointly to Donald Meek for his autobiography *Seòl mo Bheatha: Turas eadar Croit is Eilean is Oilthigh*, and to Wilson McLeod and Michael Newton for their anthology, *The Highest Apple / An Ubhal as Àirde*. Meek's book is entirely in Gaelic and he shares how it was growing up on a croft in Tìree, living in a community of Gaelic speakers, and the changes that have occurred there since his childhood.

McLeod and Newton's edited volume features a wide variety of Gaelic poems, songs, and other genres of literature in the original Gaelic with accompanying English translations.

A video of all the Gaelic Literature Awards 2020 prize announcements can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AIIgMiGyLE>, in Gaelic with English subtitles.

The Gaelic Literature Awards, funded by Creative Scotland and Bòrd na Gàidhlig and administered by Comhairle nan Leabhraichean / The Gaelic Books Council, were established in 2020 to reward excellence in Gaelic writing. The following titles and authors also received awards at this year's online presentation.

- *An Tiortach Beag agus Sgeulachdan Eile* le Mòrag Anna NicNèill
Duais Chomann Gàidhealach Lunnainn / Highland Society of London Prize for best work of fiction
- *Cluaintean Uaine: Bàrdachd le Seòras Moireach agus Dòmhnall MacIllÌosa*, air a dheasachadh le Kenny MacLeòid agus Iain G. Dòmhnallach
Duais Ruaraidh MhicThòmais / Derrick Thomson Prize for best poetry book
- *Mo Ghranaidh agus an Losgann Mòr* le Màiri C. NicAmhlaigh
Leabhar as Fheàrr do Chloinn/Òigridh / Best Book for Children / Young People
- *Ailig agus an Dalek Gàidhlig* le Shelagh Chaimbeul
Làmh-sgrìobhainn as Fheàrr do Chloinn/Òigridh / Best Unpublished Manuscript for Children / Young People
- *Linne Dhomhain* le Alistair Paul
Làmh-sgrìobhainn as Fheàrr do dh'Inbhich / Best Unpublished Manuscript for Adults

Freagairt farpais-cheist air duilleag 22

Càit' a bheil an t-oilthigh as sine ann an Alba?

Oilthigh Chill Rìmhinn stèidhichte ann an 1413.

Answer to quiz on p. 22

Who is the First Minister of Scotland?

Nicola Sturgeon.

A Bharrachd

ACGA members take part in Mòd Nàiseanta Rìoghail

Mòd Nàiseanta Rìoghail / The Royal National Mòd took place online this year due to COVID-19.

As the Mòd was held virtually, the adjudicators did not award a number score for each performer, but instead named each competitor's effort as Sònraichte / Exceptional, Air Leth Math / Highly Commended, or Ri Moladh / To Be Commended.

The following ACGA members took part in the first Virtual Royal National Mòd.

- Sgeulachd: An Roghainn Fhèin / Tell a Story: Own Choice
Liam Ó Caiside, Alexandria, VA (Sònraichte)
- Òran Ùr / New Song
Caroline Bennett, Pawling, NY (Air Leth Math)
- Seinn Aon Neach: Luchd-ionnsachaidh, An Roghainn Fhèin / Solo Singing: Learners, Own Choice
Màiri NicGilleMhaoil (Mary Traywick), Cary, NC (Air Leth Math)
- Seinn Aon-neach: Puirt-à-beul / Solo Singing: Puirt-à-beul
Màiri NicGilleMhaoil (Mary Traywick), Cary, NC (Sònraichte)
- Seinn Aon-neach: Fileanta, Fosgailte / Solo Singing: Fluent, Open
Eve Gordon, Edmonds, WA

Meal a naidheachd air a h-uile duine a ghabh pàirt! Congratulations everyone who took part!

To see a selection of the best of each day's performances, follow the links from this page:

https://www.ancomunn.co.uk/images/uploads/Cuairt-litir_Oct_2020.pdf

The Mòd, which began in 1891, will take place next year in Inverness, October 8–16.

Fuine A-staigh ann an Calanais le Griogair

When you're finished baking the banana bread on page 21, why not try Griogair's Tort Trèigeil is Cnòthan Pecan / Pecan Treacle Tart. Blasda! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=od4kwyMW--o>



Dè Tha Dol? Gaelic Events

An Dùbhlachd 2020 / December 2020

Cèilidh Nollaige Air-Loidhne / Online Christmas Ceilidh, hosted by Comunn Gàidhlig Toronto / The Gaelic Society of Toronto, Friday, December 18, 2020, 7:30pm–9:30pm (EST)

Monthly Friday night ceilidhs continue on Zoom. Fill out the form on the CGT website here:

<https://www.gaelicsocietytoronto.com/friday-night-ceilidh.html>, and you will be sent a link to join in on line, as well as a (toll) phone number to call in.

This month's ceilidh will feature carol singing in Gaelic, with special guest, Cathy Ann MacPhee. All those signing up will receive a PDF song booklet. Questions or inquiries, email gaelictoronto@gmail.com. Please see a fuller description of the event on page 11. All welcome.

Am Faoilleach 2021 / January 2021

Oidhche nam Bàrd / Night of the Bards, hosted by Comunn Gàidhlig Thorontò / The Gaelic Society of Toronto, Friday, January 15, 2021, 7:30pm–9:30pm (EST)

Monthly Friday night ceilidhs continue on Zoom. Fill out the form on the CGT website here

<https://www.gaelicsocietytoronto.com/friday-night-ceilidh.html>, and you will be sent a link to join in on line, as well as a (toll) phone number to call in.

This month's ceilidh will be a celebration of Scotland's great Gaelic poets. Bring along your favourite poem, or just enjoy the evening. Questions or inquiries, email gaelictoronto@gmail.com All welcome.

Oidhche nam Bàrd / Night of the Bards, hosted by Gàidhlig Photomac and ACGA, Saturday, January 16, 2021, 7pm–9pm (EST)

Oidhche nam Bàrd, an evening of Scottish Gaelic poetry and song celebrating all Scottish Gaelic poets, from earliest times until today, will be held on line this year. Launched three years ago by Gàidhlig Photomac, a Gaelic learning community in the Washington, DC, area, this year's evening will be co-hosted by ACGA. Please see a fuller description of the event on page 11.

Cùrsaichean Air Astar / Distance Learning

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, An Cùrsa Inntrigidh / Gaelic Entry Course

An Cùrsa Inntrigidh is a supported distance learning Gaelic course for complete beginners and learners with a little Gaelic. The emphasis during learning is on speaking and listening skills, but reading and writing skills are also an important part of the course. For complete information see

<http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/en/cursaichean/an-cursa-inntrigidh>

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, An Cùrsa Adhartais / Advanced Gaelic Course

An Cùrsa Adhartais is aimed at intermediate level learners whose goal is fluency in the language. It is a Distance Learning course which normally requires a minimum of two years to complete and is broadly equivalent to Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's An Cùrsa Comais. For complete information see

<http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/en/cursaichean/an-cursa-adhartais>

For a description of all distance learning courses offered through Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, see

<http://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/en/cursaichean/cursaichean-air-astar/>

* * * * *

Colaisde na Gàidhlig, Leasanan Bhideo / The Gaelic College, Video Lessons

Six different disciplines are taught by six knowledgeable and experienced instructors who will be sharing tips and techniques to get you playing, dancing, singing and speaking Gaelic the Cape Breton way. Each discipline is offered at 3 levels with 10 lessons per level for a total of 30 lessons in each discipline. Each level can be purchased for \$20 CDN for a 6 month subscription. For a list of lessons and more information, see

<https://gaeliccollege.edu/learn/online-learning/video-lessons/>

Is your Gaelic class or study group planning an event, or are you aware of an event with substantial Scottish Gaelic content that you'd like your fellow ACGA members to know about? You can make submissions to 'Dè Tha Dol?' by sending the following information to naidheachd@acgamerica.org

- Name of event
- Date
- City
- Address of venue
- A short description, or web link and / or contact person's email address

Please keep in mind the following deadlines:

- Spring – February 15 (published March 15)
- Summer – May 15 (published June 15)
- Fall – August 15 (published September 15)
- Winter – November 15 (published December 15)

Directory of Gaelic Classes & Study Groups

Arizona

Tucson

Classes

Muriel Fisher <http://www.murielofskye.com>

California

Sacramento Area

Classes

Donnie MacDonald minchmusic@comcast.com

Colorado

Boulder

Study Group

Sue Hendrix susan.hendrix@colorado.edu

<http://moosenoodle.com/language/boulder/>

Denver

Conversation Group

Monthly at Stella's Coffee Shop

Reese McKay reese.mckay25@gmail.com

San Luis Valley

Daily Gaelic

Skype-based online private lessons and classes,
and email courses

<http://www.gaidhliggachlatha.com>

Find us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/DailyGaelic/>

Illinois

Springfield

Study Group

Bill McClain

217-854-7918

<https://tinyurl.com/SpringfieldILLGaelic>

Maryland

Baltimore

Study Group

<https://tinyurl.com/BaltimoreGaelic>

Rick Gwynallen Rgwynallen@yahoo.com

301-928-9026

New York

New York

Classes via Zoom

New York Caledonian Club

Contact Barbara L. Rice, Chair, Scottish Studies

Barbara.Rice@nycaledonian.org

<https://nycaledonian.org/scottish-studies/>

North Carolina

Triangle / Raleigh area

Study Group

An Phillips fiongeal@gmail.com

Virginia

Warrenton

Local in-person and via Skype

Michael Mackay mackay@progeny.net

Northern Virginia-Washington, DC-Maryland

Gàidhlig Photomac

Gaelic Learning Community

Regular workshops and social events

Join us on www.Meetup.com

Contact Liam willbcassidy@gmail.com

Washington

Seattle

Classes & Study Groups

Slighe nan Gàidheal

Classes are on-site in Lake City neighborhood.

Monthly classes: Sequenced language modules called
Gaelic Intensive Days (GIDs); plan to attend the whole
season (6–8 days total).

January & May: Mixed-level, activities-based Language
Enrichment Day (LED) offered to anyone with a bit of
Gaelic.

<http://www.slighe.com>

Canada

British Columbia

Vancouver

Classes

Comunn Gàidhlig Bhancoubhair

Email Vancouvergaelic@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/GaelicVancouver/>

Ontario

Toronto

Classes

Comann Luchd-Ionnsachaidh Thoronto

Gaelic classes & private tutoring via Zoom

<http://www.torontogaelic.ca>

Québec

Montréal

Study Group & Celtic choir

Linda Morrison linda@lindamorrison.com

FOR MORE information about these resources and for
information on long-distance courses, short courses, and
private instruction, see our web page at
<http://www.acgamerica.org/learn/classes>

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Celtic art © Cari Buziak,
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A Note on ANA's Gaelic and English Orthography

ANA generally publishes articles in Gaelic using the Gaelic Orthographic Conventions published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45356.html). However, articles employing older spelling are welcome, as are articles written in a particular Gaelic dialect (e.g., Cape Breton, Argyll).

For English articles, both British and American orthography are acceptable, as long as usage is consistent within the article.

ACGA Online Faces

Like most organizations in the modern world, ACGA has several online faces, including:

- www.acgamerica.org, our main website, containing a blog for announcements, tips, articles, etc.; an archive of newsletters; detailed information about our major events; information about ACGA and how to join; learning resources; and more.
- <http://forum.acgamerica.org/>, our collection of conversational forums.
- <https://www.facebook.com/ACGAGaelic>, our Facebook page.
- www.youtube.com/user/ACGAmerica, our YouTube channel with video content.
- <https://twitter.com/ACGAGaelic>, our Twitter account, used for ACGA announcements.
- <http://usmod.wordpress.com/>, the ACGA Mòd website, containing information about past, present, and future Mòds.
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1463155417230179/>, a special Facebook page for our Gaelic Song and Language Week at Grandfather Mountain.

An Naidheachd Againne

An Naidheachd Againne is the quarterly newsletter of *An Comunn Gàidhealach Ameireaganach (ACGA)*. The newsletter is published in the Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. It is produced by the Publications Committee of ACGA.

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An Naidheachd Againne welcomes submissions. Contact the editors for more information.