

An Naidheachd Againne

The Newsletter of An Comunn Gàidhealach Ameireaganach / The American Gaelic Society

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'S e sgrìobhadair agus oileanach dotaireil a th' ann an Nathaniel Harrington. 'S ann à Boston a tha e bho thùs, agus tha e ag obair air PhD ann an litreachas coimeasach aig Oilthigh Toronto an-dràsta. Tha a chuid bàrdachd air nochdadh ann an *Dàna*, *Poblachd nam Bàrd*, agus *STEALL*.

Nathaniel Harrington is a poet and doctoral candidate. He is originally from Boston and is currently working on a PhD in comparative literature at the University of Toronto. His poetry has appeared in *Dàna*, *The Poets' Republic*, and *STEALL*.

Cruthan am pailteas

le Nathaniel Harrington

Dh'iarradh orm pìos goirid a sgrìobhadh mun a' cho-chruinneachadh bàrdachd agam, *cruthan*, a dh'ainmicheadh air geàrr-liosta Duaisean Litreachais Chomhairle nan Leabhraichean am-bliadhna, san roinn-sheòrsa "Làmh-sgrìobhainn as Fheàrr do dh'Inbhich".

Nuair a chuir mi an tiotal air a' cho-chruinneachadh, bha mi a' smaoinneachadh air ciallan eadar-dhealaichte dhen fhacal "cruth": (1) cruthan fiosaigeach – cuirp is mar sin; (2) cruthan, mar gum b' eadh, eas-chruthach – cruthan ar miannan 's ar cuimhne; (3) cruthan litreachasail – sonaid, m.e.;

Forms in abundance

by Nathaniel Harrington

I was asked to write a short piece about my collection of poetry, *cruthan* (forms), that was named on the shortlist for the Gaelic Books Council's Gaelic Literature Awards in 2020, in the category "Best Manuscript for Adults".

When I gave this title to the collection, I was thinking about different senses of the word "forms": (1) physical forms – bodies and so on; (2) abstract forms – the forms of our desires and our memories; (3) literary forms – a sonnet, for example; (4) landscapes (*cruthan-tìre*); and (5) Marx's value-form (*Wertsform*), a prime example of the powerful forms



Nathaniel Harrington

Janice Chan

In This Issue

Litir bho'n Cheann-Suidhe/Letter from the President	4
Cuiridh sinn clach air a chàrn	5
Litir à Dùn Èideann bhon Taigh Agam	8
<i>Sgail nan Eun</i> Annotated Cast of Characters	9
Scary Things About Gaelic (STAG)	11
Criomagan / Bits of This and That	12
Book Review: <i>Deirdre agus an Rìgh</i> by Jason Bond	13
Book Review: <i>Gaelic In Your Gob</i> by Michael Newton	14
Bàrdachd airson ar linn	16
Jeff's Stuffed Mushrooms (Bilingual Recipe)	18
Meek Lines	19
a-muigh 's a-mach / out and about	20
Dè Tha Dol?	21
A Bharrachd	22

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

(4) cruthan-tìre; agus (5) an cruth-luach (*Wertsform*) aig Marx – prìomh-eisimpleir nan cruth cumhachdach a bheir structar dhan t-sòisealtas againn. Tha mi 'n dùil gu bheil “cruth-tìre” soilleir gu leòr, ach bheir mi tuairsgeulan beaga a-nis air na cruthan eile a tha seo.

Tha “cruthan fiosaigeach” a’ gabhail a-steach cuid mhòr dhe na dàin a tha a’ dèiligeadh ri fear de phrìomh-chuspairean mo chuid bàrdachd, 's e sin ri ràdh, m’ fhèin-aithne mar fhear gèidh. 'S tric a bhios mi a’ sgrìobhadh air cuirp fhear tarraingeach a chì mi – gam measadh no a’ saoilinn cò ris a bhiodh feis coltach leotha. Bidh mi, cuideachd, a’ beachdachadh air mo dhàimh rim chorp fhìn, cuspair nach eil sìmplidh idir san t-sòisealtas sa bheil sinn beò.

Le “cruthan eas-chruthach”, tha mi a’ ciallachadh gu sònraichte dàin-ghaoil, na dàin a sgrìobhas mi mu agus dha na fir tharraingeach ris an coinnich mi no, uaireannan, nach fhaic mi ach san dol-seachad. A bharrachd air a seo, ge-tà, tha cruthan-cuimhne an ceist cuideachd: na dàin a sgrìobh mi “mar chlach air càrn mo mhàthar” (tìotal a’ chiad fhir dhiubh), m.e. – 's ann leis na dàin seo a thòisicheas an co-chruinneachadh.

A thaobh a’ chrutha litreachasail, gheibhear sa cho-chruinneachadh dàin a tha a’ cluiche le cruthan clasaigeach – sonaidean, geàrr-shonaidean (curtal sonnets, cruth air iasad o Gerard Manley Hopkins), agus haiku agus tanka (cruthan Seapanach). A bharrachd air a sin, tha mi a’ tarraing sna dàin agam air iomadh rud eadar-dhealaichte ann an litreachas an t-saoghail: gu math tric bidh mi a’ cleachdadh às-earrainnean à òrain, dàin, is rosg mar bhun-stèidhean. Tha iomraidhean sna dàin seo air Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair agus Ailean a’ Rids, air seinneadairean gèidh co-aimsireil, air bàrdachd sa Bheurla agus an Gàidhlig na h-Èireann, air nobhailean-fantasachd, agus eile.

Chan eil ach aon iomradh dìreach air Marx sna dàin seo, ach ann an cuid dhen a’ bhàrdachd agam bidh mi a’ toirt sùil – gheur, tha mi 'n dòchas – air cuspairean a tha nas fhollaisiche “poileataigeach”: bàs-cànain, taigheadas, gràin-chinnidh, ach cuideachd an dàimh agam fhìn, mar fhear gèidh nach eil ag iarraidh clann a bhith agam idir, ri ath-bheòthachadh cànain, a tha a’ cur a liuthad cuideim (airson adhbharan ciallach) air togail-chloinne is mar sin.

B’ urrainn dhomh tòrr a bharrachd a ràdh, ach chan eil spàs agam an seo, agus co-dhiù tha mi 'n dòchas gum bi e comasach na dàin agam a leughadh san àm ri teachd, agus gun tuigear (gum mealar, fiù 's, 's dòcha) a rèir an toillteanais fhèin iad an uair sin.

that give structure to our society. I expect that “landscape” is clear enough, but I’ll give brief explanations now of these other forms.

“Physical forms” includes a large portion of the poems that deal with one of the main themes of my poetry, that is, my identity as a gay man. I often write about the bodies of attractive men that I see – admiring them or imagining what sex with them would be like. I also consider my relationship with my own body, a topic that is by no means straightforward in the society in which we live.

By “abstract bodies”, I mean especially love poems, the poems I write about and to attractive men that I meet or, sometimes, that I only see in passing. In addition to this, however, I count forms of memory here, too: the poems I wrote “as a stone on my mother’s cairn” (*mar chlach air càrn mo mhàthar*, the title of the first of them), for example – it is with these poems that the collection begins.

In terms of “literary forms”, there are a number of poems in the collection that play with classical forms – sonnets, curtal sonnets (a form borrowed from Gerard Manley Hopkins), and haiku and tanka (Japanese forms). In addition to these, I draw in my poems on many different things from world literature: very often I use extracts from songs, poems, and prose as starting points. There are references in these poems to Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair and Ailean the Ridge, to contemporary gay singers, to poetry in English and in Irish, to fantasy novels, and more.

There is only one direct reference to Marx in these poems, but in part of my poetry I examine – carefully, I hope – topics that are more obviously “political”: language death, housing, racism, but also my own relationship, as a gay man who does not want to have children, to language revitalization, which puts so much emphasis (for reasons that make sense) on child-raising and so on.

I could say a lot more, but I do not have space here, and in any case I hope that it will be possible to read my poems in the future, and that they may be understood (enjoyed, even, perhaps) on their own merits then.

beul an fhoghair
by Nathaniel Harrington

air chrith-fhuachd san oifis-ìoslaich
ged a chaidh na h-uinneagan a dhùnadh bho chionn uair.

tha sinn aig beul an fhoghair – mo latha-breithe a bh’ ann an-dè –
agus chan eil ar cuirp cleachdte, fhathast, ri bhith neo-bhlàth.

ar cuirp. sinne. chan eil an seo ach an dithis againne:
thusa nad shuidhe aig an deasg, ag obair air aiste; mise
ag ath-luchdachadh na h-aon duilleige eadar-lìn aig a’ bhòrd,
a-rithist.
cùl ri cùl.

chan amhairc mi ort mar bu mhiann leam, is nuair a thèid mi seachad
air mo shlighe dhan taigh-bheag, cha bhean mi ri d’ fhalt.

cha tionndaidh thu gam ionnsaigh, agus cha sheall
thusa ormsa le fiamh-ghàire a’ tarraing air ceàrn do bheòil,
agus cha lùb mi riut
agus cha phòg sinn.

seasaidh mi, a’ cur mo stutha uile nam phoca-choimpiutair.
“guma math thèid leat air an aiste.”
“taing,” their thu le gàire bheag,

agus falbhaidh mi turas a bharrachd,
a’ leigeil osna agus cothrom eile air mo chùlaibh.



mealadh-earraich
le Nathaniel Harrington

coiseachd a-mach dhan adhar bhlàth, a’ ghrèin,
agus a’ dol fodha, fon earrach-fhaireachdainn seo,
cothrom is comas is — seadh — call,
aislingean a’ sèideadh air a’ ghaoith, a’ fighe
tro d’ fhalt, a’ gnagadh air do chraiceann
mar dhealanach, mar gheall *rudeigin* mì-chinnteach
a’ sruthadh tharad, meuran na h-oiteige
a bheanas ri d’ aodann nan tàladh-leannain —

cagar a ghutha na do chluais, fhaclan,
agus thusa, sùil-dhùinte, d’ aghaidh ris an speur
shuthainn-ghorm, do bheul, do theanga, do chorp
rèidh, agus bruadar-fiabhrais na ràithe fiadhaiche seo
ga do chaitheamh



Litir bhon Cheann-Suidhe

le Liam Ó Caiside

Letter from the President

by Liam Cassidy

A Chàirdean Còire,

Nuair a leughas sibh an colbh seo, bidh an Coinneamh Choitcheann Bhliadhnail (CCB) seachad, ach bu toil leam mo smuaintean mun choinneimh agus ACGA a thoirt dhuibh co-dhiù. B' e sin a' cheud CCB air loidhne againn, rud a bha fìor chudromach dhuinn.

Roimhe seo, b' fheudar dhuibh a dhol dhan tachartasan ACGA mar deireadh seachdainn tumaidh neo Seachdainn nan Òran agus na Cànain Gàidhealaich ann an Carolina a Tuath mas toil leibh a dhol dhan Choinneamh Choitcheann Bhliadhail ACGA. Feumaidh feadhainn dhuibh siùbhail astar gu math fada, agus cha robh sibh ann dìreach airson na choinneimh co-dhiù.

Nuair a chaidh ACGA a stèidheachadh anns na h-ochdadan, bha sinn a' cumail an coinneamh bhliadhnail ann an àiteachan mar leabhar-lainn, ach bha na buill (an cuid as motha dhuibh) a' fuireachd faisg air Washington, D.C. aig an àm. An-diugh, tha sinn sgaoilte air feadh na Stàitean Aonaichte agus Canada. Ach thug an coròna-bhioras – cho sgrathail 's a bha e agus 's a tha e – cothrom ùr dhuinn coinneamhan a chumail ann an dòigh ùr, tro meadhan Zoom.

Bha mi an sàs ann an iomadh tachartasan biortail 's a' bhliadhna sa chaidh, tachartasan aig ACGA agus aig na càirdean againn ann an Comunn Gàidhlig Toronto, Slighe nan Gàidheal, Gàidhlig Photomac, Sgoil Gàidhlig Bhaile an Taigh Mhòir, agus An Comunn Gàidhealach fhèin an Albainn. Chòrd iad uile gu mòr rium, agus rinn iad rud a bha bàidhbheil cuideachd: chruinnich iad daoine bho gach àite ann an aon àite nach robh “àite” idir, idir.

B' e sin an dearbh-rud a bha dhìth oirnn, agus tha feum againn fhathast. Ged a tha sinn fad o chèile, tha sinn nas dlùithe ann an iomadh dòigh. Bidh tachartasan biortail cudromach dhuinn anns an àm ri teachd, eadhan nuair a chuir sinn casg air an galar marbhtach mallaichte seo. Dèanaibh fiughair ri tachartasan biortail eile, bhideoan agus tuilleadh bhuainn am bliadhna seo.

A bharrachd air sin, thig cùrsa Gàidhlig ùr agus cudromach a-mach anns an t-Sultain sa tighinn,

Dear Friends,

When you read this column, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be past, but I would like to share my thoughts about the meeting and ACGA in any case. This was our first online or virtual AGM, something very important to us.

Before now, you had to travel to an ACGA event such as an immersion weekend or the Gaelic Song and Language Week in North Carolina if you wanted to attend the ACGA AGM. Some of you had to travel a very long distance, and you weren't there just for the AGM anyway.

When ACGA was established in the eighties, we held the annual meeting in places like libraries, but the members (most of them) lived near Washington, D.C., at the time. Today, we're scattered across the United States and Canada. But the coronavirus - as destructive as it was and is yet - gave us an opportunity to hold meetings in a new way, through the medium of Zoom.

I've attended many virtual events in the past year, ACGA events and events organized by our friends in Comunn Gàidhlig Toronto, Slighe nan Gàidheal, Gàidhlig Photomac, Sgoil Gàidhlig Bhaile an Taigh Mhòir (Baltimore), and An Comunn Gàidhealach itself in Scotland. I enjoyed all of them greatly, and they did something marvelous too: they gathered people from every place in a place that wasn't actually a place at all.

That's exactly what we needed, and the need is still with us. Although we're far apart, we're closer in many ways. Virtual events will be important to us in the time to come, even when we've put a stop to this deadly, cursed disease. Expect more virtual events, videos, and more from us this year.

On top of that, an important new Gaelic course, SpeakGaelic, will be launched this September.

Speak Gaelic, agus chuala sinn beagan ma dheidhinn bho Iseabail Nic an t-Sagairt. Tha mi 'n dòchas gun cluinn sinn tuilleadh ann an ùine nach bi fada.

Chì mi sibh air loidhne,

Liam

Ceann-suidhe, ACGA

We heard a bit about that from Iseabail Mactaggart. I hope to hear more before too long.

See you online,

Liam

President, ACGA

Many past attendees of the Grandfather Gaelic Song and Language Week would be well-acquainted with “Uncle Donald” as they helped at the Gaelic Tent at the Grandfather Mountain Games or participated in the North Carolina Mòd. Here his nephew Jamie MacDonald tells us a bit about his long and interesting life, and his love of Gaelic and Scotland.

Cuiridh sinn clach air a chàrn

Shiubhal Dòmhnall F. MacDhòmhnaill air an ochdamh latha deug dhen Ghearran, 2021 aig 94 bliadhna a dh'aois. Rugadh e aig an taigh ann an Coimhearsnachd an Eaglais Chlàireach Charolana, ann an Siorrachd Dhillon, Carolina a Deas. B' e Dòmhnall an t-seachdamh dhe ochdnar cloinne aig K. MacLabhrainn MacDhòmhnaill agus Màiri NicCuinn. Às dèidh ceumnachaidh bhon àrd-sgoil ann an 1942, chlàraich Dòmhnall ann an Colaiste an Eaglais Chlàireach. Nuair a thòisich An Darna Cogadh, ge-tà, chaidh e dhan Chabhlach. Às dèidh a' chogaidh, chlàraich e ann an Oilthigh Charolana a Tuath. Cheumnaich e ann an Naidheachdas ann an 1948. An uairsin, chaidh e a dh'obair aig paipear naidheachd ann an Charlotte.

Bha Dòmhnall air a bheò-glacadh le Alba seach gur ann a shin a thàinig a shinnsearan. Rugadh is thogadh Dòmhnall ann an coimhearsnachd Ghàidhealach ann an Carolina. Aig aon àm bha Gàidhlig aig a' chuid as motha dhen daoine. Rinn Dòmhnall cèilidh air Alba tràth sna 1950an. Nuair a thill e, stèithich e na Geumaichean Gàidhealach aig Beinn Seanair ann an 1956 còmhla ri Agnes NicRath Morton. San aon bhliadhna, bhunaich e An Comann Chlann Dòmhnail USA còmhla ri Ragnall MacDhòmhnaill Chinnseaborgh.

Donald F. MacDonald passed away peacefully on February 18, 2021 at the age of 94. He was born at home in the Carolina Presbyterian Church Community in Dillon County, South Carolina. Donald was the seventh of eight children born to K. McLaurin MacDonald and Mary MacQueen. After graduating from high school in 1942, he enrolled in Presbyterian College. When WWII began, however, he went into the Navy. After the war was over, Donald enrolled at the University of North Carolina. He graduated from the School of Journalism in 1948. He then went to work at a newspaper in Charlotte.



Donald listening to singers at the North Carolina Mòd
Marta MacDonald

Donald was preoccupied with Scotland because that is where his ancestors arrived from. He was born and raised in a Highland community in Carolina. At one time almost everyone there spoke Gaelic. Donald first visited Scotland in the early 1950s. When he returned, he founded the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in 1956 with Mrs. Agnes McRae Morton. In the same year, he established the Clan Donald Society USA along with Reg MacDonald of Kingsburgh.

Air turas a dh'Alba às dèidh sin, choinnich Dòmhnall an seinneadair Gàidhlig is actair Màiri Oighrig NicLeòid à Leòdhas. Às dèidh suirghe fad-às, chuir iad romhpa pòsadh. Nuair a ràinig Màiri Oighrig Ameireagaidh, chaidh iad a Linville, Carolina a Tuath airson bannse seann-phasanta còmhla ri fèilidhean agus còmhlan pioba. Seach gun robh e na shealladh cho ùidheil, chaidh a nochadh ann an *Life Magazine* le mòran dealbhan.

Ann an 1961, thill Dòmhnall agus Màiri Oighrig a dh'fhuirich ann an Alba. Às dèidh fuireach ann an Glaschu agus Dùn Lùib, shuidhich iad ann an Dùn Eideann, far an d' fhuair Dòmhnall obair aig a' phaipear naidheachd *The Weekly Scotsman*. Às dèidh beagan bhliadhnaichean, chaidh e a-steach don dàmh aig Colaiste Napier, far do theagaisg e fad grunn bhliadhnaichean gus an do leig e dheth a dhreuchd. An uairsin, sgrìobh Dòmhnall an leabhar *America's Braemar: Grandfather Mountain and the Rebirth of Scottish identity Across the USA*. Bha an leabhar seo mar thoradh air ùidh a bheatha ann an cultar na h-Alba ann an Ameireagaidh.

Bha bean Dhòmhnail agus a phiuthar-lagha Ciotaidh ainmeil ann an Alba mar sheinneadairean Gàidhlig agus leasaich e gaol mòr air òrain Ghàidhlig bhuapa. Còmhla ri a mhac-bràthar Seumas, bhunaich Dòmhnall am Mòd Naiseanta Ameireagaidh ann an Bhirginia, a tha a-nis air a chumail ann an Ligonier, PA. A bharrachd air seo, stèithich Dòmhnall agus Seumas teanta Gàidhlig agus Mòd Charolina a Tuath aig na Geumaichean aig Beinn Seanair.

Bha Dòmhnall na sheanchaidh agus seinneadair math agus bha e dèidheil air dram. Bha na partaidhean aige ainmeil ann an Alba cho math ris na Stàitean. Ach bu toil leis a dhol dhan eaglais cuideachd agus bha fios aige air na laoidhean uile. Aig seirbhisean, dh'iarradh am ministear air an coithional a stiùireadh ann an ùrnaigh.

Chaochail a pharantan, a bhean, a shianar bhràithrean Calum, Seumas, Ruairidh, Tearlach, Alasdair, agus Raibeart, cho math ri a phiuthar Floraidh roimhe. Chaidh a mhairsinn leis a mhic-bhràithrean Seumas, Alasdair, Ristead, agus Brus. Tha a nigheanan-bràithrean Jackie, Sandra, Moire, agus Sona fhathast beò cuideachd. Chaochail a mhic-bhràithrean Iain, Calum, agus Ailean cho math ri a nighean-peathar Floraidh Gammon roimhe. A bharrachd air iad seo, tha Dòmhnall air a mhairsinn leis a phiuthar-chèile Ingrid agus tòrr mhic-bhràithrean mòra agus nigheanan-bràithrean mòra.

On a subsequent trip to Scotland, Donald met the Gaelic singer and actress Marietta MacLeod from the Isle of Lewis. After a long-distance courtship, they planned to marry. When Marietta landed in America, they headed to Linville, NC for an old-fashioned Scottish wedding complete with kilts and pipe band. Since it was such an interesting spectacle, it appeared in *Life Magazine*, complete with many pictures.

In 1961, Donald and Marietta returned to Scotland to live. After residing in Glasgow and Dunlop, they settled in Edinburgh where Donald found work at the newspaper the *Weekly Scotsman*. After a few years, Donald joined the faculty of Napier College in Edinburgh, where he taught for a number of years until his retirement. In retirement, Donald wrote the book *America's Braemar: Grandfather Mountain and the Rebirth of Scottish Identity Across the USA* which was self-published in 2007. This work was a culmination of his life's interest in Scottish culture in America.

Donald's wife and his sister-in-law Kitty were famous in Scotland as Gaelic singers and from them he developed a great love for Gaelic song. With the help of his nephew Jamie, Donald started the United States National Mòd in Virginia which is now held in Ligonier, PA. In addition, Donald and Jamie established a Gaelic tent and the North Carolina Provincial Mòd at the Grandfather Mountain Games.

Donald was a great storyteller and singer and he was fond of a dram. His parties were famous in Scotland as well as in the United States. But he was also fond of attending church and he knew all the hymns. At services, the minister would ask him to lead the congregation in prayer.

Donald was predeceased by his parents, his wife Marietta, and his six brothers Malcolm, James, Charles, Roderick, Alexander (Rae), and Robert, as well as his sister Flora. He is survived by nephews Jamie, Alexander (Mac), Richard, and Bruce. Surviving nieces include Jackie, Sandra, Moire, and Sona. His nephews Ian, Malcolm, and Alan as well as niece Flora Gammon predeceased him. In addition, he is survived by his sister-in-law Ingrid as well as grand nieces and nephews.

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.

Shel Browder, one such learner, honed his storytelling skills working for many years as a blacksmith at Colonial Williamsburg. In this short video, he tells a story he calls “An Tuathanach agus an t-Òrd-ladhrach / The Farmer and the Claw-hammer.” Shel invites anyone who wants to tell this story to go ahead. We would suggest that when you do tell Shel’s story, that you follow the Gaelic tradition of including in your telling who you got the story from, and then - *gabh do naidheachd!* Here’s Shel’s story:

<https://youtu.be/LtKOVaRI8m8>



B.L.Rice

Photo Quiz

This 4,000 year old monument can be found close to what Scottish city that was once a Pictish stronghold?

The answer is on page 15.

Seanfhacal na Ràithe – Pictured Proverb

Do you know what familiar Gaelic proverb is illustrated here?

Check page 15 to see if you’re right.



Image by Brigitte, www.pixabay.com



Litir à Dùn Èideann bhon Taigh Agam

by Jeff W. Justice

A chàirdean,

Not only are we meeting virtually in these pandemic-challenged days, but those of us who are in school are also teaching or learning virtually. I am doing my current (and, I pray, my last) degree virtually anyway, so this really does not impose a significant burden on me as far as coursework goes. If anything, it has increased the options I have as to what I take and when I take it. Personally, I hope that these virtual options will continue after we return to “normal”, but at the same time, there is something more to learning in-person than doing it remotely. This is even true when we are meeting in real-time, live over Zoom. Being the glutton for punishment that I am, I have five (!) Celtic language courses going right now: *Gàidhlig Àrd-Ìre 1* through *Colaiste na Gàidhlig*, plus entry / elementary courses in Irish, Manx, Welsh, and Breton. (Yes, I do plan to pick up Cornish at some point. Why not?)

By the time one gets to *Gàidhlig Àrd-Ìre*, you're in with a group who are pretty well committed to the language. The class gets smaller, the questions from learners get smarter, and discussion on the myriad ways to translate something from English gets longer... and longer... and longer... But you still have your teacher to remind you that you forgot to lenite that noun. That ‘H’ has to serve some purpose, right?

After two or three hours of *Gàidhlig Àrd-Ìre*, a whisky an *uisge-beatha* is probably in order. Then it's a couple of hours in *Gaeilge*. Also known as Irish. Well, *Gàidhlig na h-Alba* comes in handy. If you don't know what the word is, sure, go ahead and put in the Scottish Gaelic word. Just be ready for the instructor to correct your pronunciation. Sometimes the word is spelled the same way, but not necessarily spoken the same way! And yes, I get the reminder to lenite. Oh, and then there is ellipsis. It's “*air a' bhòrd*” in *Gàidhlig na h-Alba*. It's “*ar an mbord*” in *Gaeilge*, pronounced “mow-ard” (think “OW” like you stubbed your toe) instead of the Gaelic “vord”.

Now that my head's spinning, it's time for Welsh. Well, the grammar's similar, at least. Sometimes even the words are similar. Are you tired of lenition? No problem! Oh wait. Welsh has mutations. Three sets of them. *Fy nhad, dy dad, ein tad*. My father, your father, our father. My migraine, your migraine

And then Breton comes next. It's related to Welsh, being that both are in the Brythonic branch of the Celtic family. It also happens to be the only Celtic language whose community is still primarily on the European continent. And that community happens to be in France, so knowing some French helps. An English speaker should have no problems figuring out the Gaelic “*an coimpiutair*” It's “*an urzhiataer*” in Breton (French: *ordinateur*. Close enough is good enough, right?). Wait! They do have a second word: “*Kompoeder*”. OK, breathe a bit. Life is good. Oh wait again! Son of a ... FOUR forms of mutations? Where's that bottle of *uisge-beatha*?

Before I get to go to bed, there's the Manx course. Knowing Gaelic, Irish, or both is a huge plus. On a serious note, it's working to re-establish itself after having been ‘revived’, so materials for learners-from-scratch are coming along quickly. Lenitions still causing nightmares? No problem. Wait! It does have them. They just so happen to behave more or less like Welsh, Breton and Cornish mutations. Where's the antacid? And the *uisge-beatha*.

I think I need to go see the *saidhg-eòlaiche / síceolaí / seicolegydd* (a cognate!) / *bredniour / shicklaagagh* (psychologist, in case you missed it) before I see my face in the mirror mutate into a zombie.

In seriousness, this pandemic has cost all of us a lot, but it has also brought together those interested in Celtic in ways until recently that we could only wish would happen. Learning online is difficult. There is yet a sense of being disconnected while still somehow connected. However, people from around the world are taking these courses where I am now a student, providing an opportunity to create a virtual space where learning and communicating are happening as they have not before. Duolingo, among other learning apps, is increasing in popularity. Three of these six Celtic languages are on there: Gaelic, Irish and Welsh. I hope the other three will join them. What I am seeing is a chance, a *real* chance, at a rebound for all of them. And yes, I am going to add Cornish to the list, as soon as I can find a course. I hope I will see you in one – or six! – of these courses. Why not? Because, lenition rules the Celtic world, and mutations ought to be normal! And *uisge-beatha* tastes better when shared.

Le meas,

Goiridh / Jeff

If you enjoy reading Liam Ó Caiside's Gaelic serial adventure, *Sgoil nan Eun*, the next chapter will appear in our June issue. Meanwhile, to help you keep track of who's who, here's an annotated list of some important characters and places.

And if you'd like to know more about some of the inspiration and sources Liam has drawn on for this tale, click here: www.acgamerica.org/organization/newsletters/ to read Cam MacRae's interview with him in ANA 2017-3, on ACGA's website.

***Sgoil nan Eun* Annotated Cast of Characters**

le Liam Ó Caiside

Time period of the story: 1758–1760 (so far)

Characters

Àine: A *bean-sithe* or otherworld woman married at one time to An Draoidh Mòr and then to his Irish rival, Ó Croileagáin. Mother of Dearbhlaith, Fearbhlaith, and Gormfhlaith with An Draoidh Mòr and Nighean an Sgàthain with Ó Croileagáin. She has disappeared.

Aoife: A *bean-sithe* or otherworld woman who tries to enlist the help of the druids in defeating Mac na h-Oidhche. Sister of Àine.

Cailleach nan Cearc: An old woman with magical powers with whom Nighean an Sgàthain lived after her parents' disappearance. She lives at Druim-Alt-na-Muice in Ireland.

Cnàmhan Dubha: A pirate in the service of Nighean an Sgàthain's father, Ó Croileagáin, the Irish druid. Last seen in Dublin.

Coibhidh: The ancient Druid / Wizard who established Sgoil nan Eun and was its master for many years.



Dearbhlaith: An Draoidh Mòr's youngest daughter; she lives at Sgoil nan Eun.

An Draoidh Èireannach / The Irish Druid or Wizard: Also known as Ó Croileagáin. Known as Fearfeasa when he was a student with An Draoidh Mòr at Sgoil nan Eun.

An Draoidh Mòr / The Great Druid or Wizard: The greatest druid of his time in Scotland. He takes Iain to be his student at Sgoil nan Eun, the school of wizardry that he runs on the Isle of Skye. Known as Seòras Bochanan, a rich merchant, when he is at his warehouse in Glasgow.

Fearbhlaith: An Draoidh Mòr's middle daughter; she lives at Sgoil nan Eun.

Fearchar Òg, Iain's father: Believed to have died in the Battle of Culloden, he has been captured by the *Sìthichean* / fairy host.

Gormfhlaith: An Draoidh Mòr's oldest daughter; she lives at Sgoil nan Eun.

Iain Fhearchair Òig: A young druid and protagonist of our story. A tall, thin boy with raven-black hair who is cheerful and said to be terribly skillful at all he attempts. At the beginning of the story he lives with his widowed mother in Scotland.

Iain's mother: A poor widow, whose husband is believed to have died in the Battle of Culloden.

Iain's two brothers: Have left home to seek their fortunes, one as a soldier, the other at sea.

Mac na h-Oidhche: The villain of the story. An evil druid who has stolen powers from the *Sìthichean* / fairy host and wants to take over Sgoil nan Eun.

Nighean an Sgàthain: Daughter of Ó Croileagáin, the Irish druid.

One-eyed Ginger Cat: A mysterious creature Iain encounters in Dublin.

Sgàthach: A figure in the Ulster Cycle of Irish mythology and legendary Scottish warrior woman who built the castle where Sgoil nan Eun is located; mother of Àine and Aoife.

An Sgeulaiche / The Storyteller: An elderly man who tells the story of Iain and Sgoil nan Eun to university students Calum, Eilidh, and Eoghann, who are collecting folklore.

Students at Sgoil nan Eun:

Am Fitheach: Iain's nickname because of his black hair.

Calman Beag

Calum Mo Chreach

Ceann-Cleiteig: His head is covered with feathers instead of hair. A close friend of Iain.

Cù-Eòlais

Fead a' Phìobaire

Glafair

Glagan

Ladhar Beag

Ladhar Mòr: Also known as MacDhòmhnail or MacDonald. He becomes a partner with An Draoidh Mòr in Glasgow and marries his oldest daughter, Gormfhlaith.

Mac Mhanainn: From the Isle of Man, Iain's best friend.

Niall Mo Nuar

Uilleam Dèan Suidhe

Notable Objects

Iain's stone: The Stone of Coinneach Odhar, which enables Iain to see things and events at a distance.

An Lurgan: An Draoidh Mòr's silver-headed magic staff. He disdains the use of *slatan* or wands.

Nighean an Sgàthain's mirror: A magic mirror that lets her see things and people far off, including Iain, but especially her father.

Notable Locations

Cailleach nan Cearc's house: A small house at the edge of the forest near the house of Nighean an Sgàthain's parents.

Dublin: City and seaport where the Irish Druid lives and the site of his mercantile trading business.

Fairy Mound: Home to the *sìthichean* / fairy host. One of these mounds is in Srath Suardail in Skye, but they are all over Scotland and Ireland.

Glasgow: City where An Draoidh Mòr, in his alter ego as Seòras Bochanan, a rich merchant, has his warehouse.

Irish Druid's ship: One of the ships in his mercantile fleet.

Nighean an Sgàthain's parents' house: A large house in an isolated area in the north of Ireland where Nighean an Sgàthain lived when she was young.

An Sgeulaiche's hearthside: Site of the storytelling.

Sgoil nan Eun: Ancient school of wizardry in a castle built by Sgàthach on the Isle of Skye.



Oisean a' Ghràmair / The Grammar Nook

by Wayne Harbert

Scary Things About Gaelic (STAG): Foot-Thumbs, Disappearing Body Parts and other Wonders

The word for 'leg' in Gaelic is *cas*, and the word for 'foot' is... *cas*! Wait a minute. That can't be right. Don't they know the difference between their legs and their feet? Well, when you think about it, the lower limb is a rather complex body part, consisting of three sections connected by two major joints. The English word 'leg' can refer to either of the upper two of these parts (I hurt my leg), or both of them together, or, under some circumstances, it can encompass all three parts (He lost his leg). So it's not all that hard to grant that other languages, like Gaelic, could have a word that could refer to any of the three parts separately, or all of them together.¹ Something like that...we're talking about language, after all, so we can't expect it to make perfect sense. Some languages take this logic even farther; in Russian, the word *ruka* can mean either 'arm' or 'hand'. And the word *noga* can mean either 'leg' or 'foot'.

On the other hand, Gaelic has two different words for finger: *corrag* (F) and *meur* (F/M). And the latter of these has, amazingly, three different acceptable plurals: *meòir*, *meòirean*, and *meuran*.

The individual fingers, in turn, have names – several different sets of them, in fact. One set shows up in the following children's rhyme, from Catriona Parsons.²

An òrdag,	The thumb (literally, 'the little hammer')
A' chorrag,	The index finger (literally, 'the little pointer')
A' mheur mheadhoin,	The middle finger
Màthair na lùdaig,	The ring finger ('mother of the pinkie')
An lùdag.	The pinkie

There are more. Under "Na Meòir" in the Akerbeltz pages we find, for example, that the middle finger can alternatively be *Fionnlagh Fada* 'Long Finlay' or *Màiri Fhada* 'Long Mary'. And the pinkie can be *lùdag bheag an airgid* 'the little money pinkie'.

"An Litir Bheag 163", all about Gaelic finger names, points out that the ring finger is also sometimes called *Mac an Aba* 'the Son of the Abbot'. The letter goes on to explain that this may be a corruption of an earlier *Mac an Fhada* 'the son of the long one'. So the ring finger is a relative of other fingers – either the pinkie's mother or the son of the middle finger.

¹The distinction between 'foot' and 'leg' isn't even all that clear biologically. We plantigrade humans walk on the flattened lower section, but others (digitigrades), like cats and birds, walk on their toes (birds' 'knees' are really 'ankles'). and others (unguligrades), like horses, walk on their toenails. So what we call 'feet' in each of these cases are all different anatomical parts.

²Catriona NicIomhair Parsons. "Ranntaichean is Òran na Cloinne, Rhymes and Songs for Children" in *Brìgh na Gàidhlig: Songs and Poems, Rhymes & Traditions in Scottish Gaelic selected, recorded and translated by Catriona NicIomhair Parsons for Mòd Naiseanta Aimeireagaidh, (An Comunn Gaidhealach Aimeireaga, 2000), Rann mu na Meura page L-9.*

What about toes? It turns out that Gaelic doesn't have them. A toe is referred to as *òrdag-choise* – ‘a foot-thumb’! Well, why not? Toes share with ‘hand-thumbs’ the property of being relatively short and stubby.

And that brings us, finally, to laps. The lap is a curious part of the anatomy in its own right, either existing or not existing, depending on one's posture. Your lap disappears when you stand up. In keeping with that uncertainty, some languages have a word for it, and some don't. English has laps, and so does Welsh. On the other hand, French does not. A French baby sits on her mother's knees. And the same in Japanese. (In one of my Middle Welsh classes, we ran across the word for ‘lap’, and in the ensuing discussion we decided that perhaps words for that concept are needed only after the introduction of chairs, since laps exist mainly when one is sitting in a chair; you don't really have one while squatting.)

Gaelic doesn't have a dedicated word for ‘lap’ either, but finesses that lack by stealing words from neighboring body parts. *Uchd*, whose basic meaning is ‘bosom, chest’ (*Cridhe duine 'bualadh 'n a uchd* ‘the heart of a man beating in his chest’), does double duty for ‘lap’ (*Thuit an cupa nam uchd*. ‘The cup fell into my lap’). And so does *glùn*. Its basic meaning is ‘knee’, as in *chun nan glùn* ‘up to the knees’, but you can also say *Bha pàisde air a glùn*. ‘There was a child on his lap.’ (*Glùn* is always singular in this use, unlike French. Which reminds me of another curiosity; in English we say “I was on my feet early,” but Gaelic uses the singular: *Bha mi air mo chois tràth*, ‘I was on my foot early’, *cas* becoming *cois* when it comes after a preposition.

Uchd and *glùn*, with their stretched-out meanings, seem very much like *cas*, when you think about it, and we can put them beside it on the shelf in our little gallery of curiosities.

Criomagan / Bits of This and That

One of the poets featured in “Bàrdachd airson ar linn”, Marcas Mac an Tuairneir, sings his own original songs in Scottish Gaelic. His latest video, posted January 21st, 2021, “Bruidhinn (Bright Light Bright Light Remix)”, is featured on YouTube.com with lyrics in both Gaelic and English.

To view the video, click on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDkpIZ05opk>.

* * *

Caroline Bennett, a prize-winning poet and singer and member of ACGA, lives in New York State. To hear her singing her poem/song “Co-cheangailte,” click on: www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pBORncpHck.

* * *

The Gaelic Algorithmic Research Group (“News and resources on computational research on the Gaelic languages”) has recently posted an article online, “Automatic Speech Recognition for Scottish Gaelic: Background and Update” by Lucy Evans. Several interviews follow afterwards with Evans and members of the project team, including Michael Bauer. To read the article, click on <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/garg/>.

* * *

SpeakGaelic, a cross-platform learning initiative will be launched in September, 2021, on all BBC Alba platforms, including websites and YouTube channels, allowing free access to content worldwide.

The rollout will take place over three years, with materials based on the proficiency levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) scale of A1, A2, B1 and B2.

The project is funded by the Scottish Government, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the BBC and MG ALBA, with content delivery by MG ALBA, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture in Skye, and the BBC.

* * *

BBC Alba's drama series “Bannan” will be available in March in Canada and the U.S. (with subtitles) on streaming service MHz Choice (<https://watch.mhzchoice.com/>). Skye-based Young Films has produced seven seasons of “Bannan”, broadcast on BBC Alba, and hopes to start production on Season 8 in September, 2021.



Book Review:

***Deirdre agus an Rìgh* by Jason Bond**

Arcos Publishers, 2020. 85 pages (including glossary).

ISBN: 978-94-90824-57-0. Illustrated with black & white drawings.

Reviewed by Ted Neveln

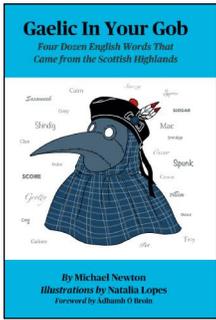
Gripe, Gripe, Gripe. It's perfectly stupid of me to gripe. There is no such thing as a true and original, one and only, version of an Irish myth. Celtic storytellers have been changing major details of the tragic story of Deirdre since her corpse was still warm (assuming she ever lived). Irish royal genealogies and chronicles are as comprehensive and creditable as any in Europe but they don't mention King Conchobhar of Ulster. It's not like Jason Bond needs anyone's permission to tell the story as he sees fit. King Conchobhar is famous in mythology but is not mentioned as a real King in historical chronicles. Still I am not happy with the depiction of this king who wantonly murders hapless servants for almost no reason at all – bad king he may be, but this seems way beneath him. Even worse is when he wields Cù Chulainn just to intimidate another hapless servant. That sort of thuggishness seems way beneath both of them and isn't Cù Chulainn “supposed” to be just a babe at the time?

Deirdre herself is better served as she and her nurse Leabharcham are just about the only people in this tale who know what they are doing or have any real common sense. If Deirdre is an instrument of fate then that really just leaves Leabharcham. Perhaps there is scope to tell some future tale from Leabharcham's point of view. Fate or not, Conchobhar is a tyrant and tyrants bring ruin. There is nothing mythical about that basic truth. Conchobhar's mistreatment of Deirdre and the Clann Uisne alienates one of Conchobhar's key retainers who defects to his enemies. Add to this an injustice done generations earlier to the goddess Macha by the people of Ulster and these two crimes help to open up Ulster to invasion by a third woman – Queen Medb. This novelette ends however with Deirdre's suicide. In his forward, Bond says he crafted his version as a retort to an Edwardian paraphrase he read. I read it too, and see why Bond was annoyed. Deirdre is a far more interesting person than Helen of Troy or most of the other trophies of Bronze-age warriors. She is more instigator than instrument.

However, *Deirdre agus an Rìgh* is designed to help beginners to learn Gàidhlig. As with Bond's earlier novelette, *Ròna agus MacCodruim*, a core idea or word will be repeated in multiple short sentences; it sometimes has more repetition than a typical children's story. By ringing these changes the learner can see that there is more than one way to express an idea. This can also help with listening comprehension when read aloud.

The glossary is very extensive and independently downloadable as a PDF here: www.tinyurl.com/hsnb53s6. It is very detailed and carefully designed for students with a shaky grasp of grammar. The glossary makes a point of underlining key grammatical components, for example, *pòsaidh* – will marry. Or *còmhla rium* – with me, versus *còmhla riumsa* with *me*. So it covers not just words but phrases and even idioms. I spotted no typos, not that I claim to be the last word in lost-word lassoing.

The book has 11 chapters of uneven length but they are all quite short. At 53 pages the text is longer than *Ròna agus MacCodruim*. Tamara NicGrùdair's water color illustration are in black-and-white except for the cover of the creepy raven drinking blood on the snow.



Book Review:

Gaelic In Your Gob: Four Dozen English Words that came from the Scottish Highlands,
by Michael Newton, Illustrations by Natalia Lopes
Saorsa Media/Ingram, 2021
ISBN: ISBN 978-0-9713858-4-9

Reviewed by Liam Ó Caiside

A new book from the author of *The Naughty Little Book of Gaelic* (2014) approaches Gaelic from a new angle: English words that originate in Scottish Gaelic. In *Gaelic In Your Gob: Four Dozen English Words that came from the Scottish Highlands* (2021, Saorsa Media/Ingram), Dr. Michael Newton delves into his topic with insight and humor, illuminating the connections not just between words but between Scottish Gaelic, Scots, and English, and on occasion other tongues.

It's a timely subject. The English-speaking world is fascinated right now by words, thanks in part to the work of Robert Macfarlane, whose books *Landmarks* (2016) and *The Lost Words* (2017) conjure a wordscape that is disappearing, not just from English but from other languages, including Scottish Gaelic, as our society changes and we disconnect from a landscape once vital to survival.

Our vocabulary affects how we see and relate to our environment, and much more. It can shape how we view the world and our own place in it, and imagine our own identity, in profound ways. "Words create and convey history," the authors of *A History of Ireland in 100 Words* (2019) say in the preface to their book (one that Scottish Gaels and Scottish Gaelic learners should read as well as their Irish cousins).

Words also are conveyed from one language to another, especially when several peoples and languages spend centuries or millennia in close proximity, as in Britain and Ireland.

Newton has given us important scholarly works on Scottish Gaelic culture, including *Warriors of the Word: The World of the Scottish Highlanders* (2009), *Seanchaidh na Coille: Memory-Keeper of the Forest* (2015), an anthology of Scottish Gaelic poetry from Canada, and *A Handbook of the Scottish Gaelic World* (2000).

He has also written less academic books to lure those with a more general interest, or potential interest, in Scottish Gaelic, most notably *The Naughty Little Book of Gaelic* and *The Everyday Life of the Clans of the Scottish Highlands* (2020).

As its title suggests, *Gaelic In Your Gob* is in the latter group, but Newton brings the same level of scholarship and scrutiny to bear in this book on words as he did in *Warriors of the Word*. Each of the 48 chosen words is examined in a brief essay that investigates their origins, how they leapt from Gaelic to Scots or English, and how their usage evolved over time. Some of the words clearly come from Scottish Gaelic (*crag*, *cairn*, *slogan*, *loch*). Others may surprise you (shindig, snazzy, croon, blackmail, pet, ptarmigan, and even Scot).

Words are windows into the past, and Newton opens those windows wider to give us a clearer view of the relationships between Scottish Gaelic, Scots, and English (and sometimes Irish, Latin, and Pictish). The essays are illuminating and entertaining, and there's Gaelic galore (another word covered by the book) in many of the essays.

With a nod to *A History of Ireland in 100 Words*, Newton organizes his word histories into categories covering People and Names; Community and Customs; Warfare; Sport and Music; Food and Domestic Life; Landscape and Nature; and Slang and Idioms. This not only helps place words in context, but gives the book a more holistic feel. It's not just about a collection of words, but the peoples and cultures that used and still use them.

Gaelic In Your Gob also is a much needed corrective to presentism - the tendency to interpret the past in terms of the present. There are those who would ignore the historical importance of Scottish Gaelic simply because few people speak it today - despite overwhelming evidence that Gaelic was spoken across Scotland in the past.

There were many more Gaelic speakers, and fewer English speakers, in the not-that-distant past, and much more opportunity to pick up the odd word from another language and add it to your own.

Even so, “We cannot always assume that a word’s origin can be traced in a straight path to a singular source,” Newton says in his preface. Some words may have multiple origins in disparate languages, and meanings change over time.

Shanty is a good example. Newton notes that it probably has origins in both Irish (*sean-tí*) and French (*chantier*). Newton also makes no special claim for Scottish Gaelic in regard to the evolution of English, and there’s no need to. It’s enough to know that interactions took place that allowed English and Scots speakers to adopt some words from their Gaelic-speaking neighbors.

The Gaels themselves were not shy of borrowing words from Latin (*eaglais*), French (*bàillidh*), Old Norse (*laom, bùrn, acair*), and Scots or English (*seòmar, bargan, drathais, lofa*, etc.) Languages are permeable by nature, as Newton points out.

Many Scottish Gaelic words entered Scots and English through popular Scottish literature in the 18th and 19th centuries, thanks to Robert Burns and Walter Scott in particular, who often used anglicized (or “Scotized”) Gaelic terms.

“Various forms of Gaelic and English have been jostling one another for centuries,” Newton writes, though not on a level playing field.

Some readers of *Gaelic In Your Gob* may be surprised by the connections between words they know and use and Gaelic. That awareness may give potential learners a bridge from English to Gaelic and the confidence to cross it. After all, they’ve already got some Gaelic in their gobs.



B.L.Rice

Answer to Photo Quiz, p. 7

Inverness.



Image by Brigitte, www.pixabay.com

Answer to Seanfhacal na Ràithe, p. 7

Bàthaidh toll beag long mhòr.

A small hole will sink a big ship.

Bàrdachd airson ar linn

We love it when Gaelic learners turn into Gaelic poets! Bàrdachd airson ar linn is a new ongoing column to encourage and promote original contemporary Scottish Gaelic poetry. Poets may range from fluent and native speakers to adult learners. Here we have two very different examples: Marcas Mac an Tuairneir (Edinburgh), and Barbara Lynn Rice (New York).

Staid Ana-chreideis 9mh na Samhna, 2016

le Marcas Mac an Tuairneir

Dhùisg mi an-diugh nam bhreislich,
an-fhois anacair de dh'umhas
a' brùthadh air mo chlàibh.

Broslam an t-saoghail na mhànràn fhathast,
sporghail a' mhadaidh-allaidh,
a' cuairteachadh an taighe.

Cha dho dhùraig mi uinneagan
an t-saoghail mhòir fhosgladh,
cùirtearan dùinte nam chochall fhèin.

Ach mu dheireadh thall,
ghèill mi don ghàirm;
sìor-phriobadh nan sgàileanan.

Neo-phaisgte an naidheachd,
cha mhùchadh an dàrna làmh
osna m' ana-chreideis.

Ach le làmh eile air an sparran,
chuala mi tron tost
caoineadh saoirse.

Dh'fhosgail mi e is
solas an là ga sgaoileadh romham,
air gach nì bha atharraichte is mar a bha.

Cheumnaich mi leac an dorais is
chaidh mi a-mach.



1950

le Marcas Mac an Tuairneir

Air oidhche m' fhuadaich,
phaisg mo mhàthair
a falt dubh dualach,
an sìoda dathte ar sgìre -
sìor-uaine, mar dhuilleagan
leathan a' chrainn-bhanàna.

Chuir i cùl
ri bhaile an Kingston,
far an dèanadh ar cinneadh
ar n-àrach
air fearann torrach,
ar seilbh fhèin,
a thug dhuinn
còir a' bhòt,

Far an do sheinn mo sheanmhair
cumha Ashanti:
glaodhraich eachdraidh
is dìleab dàil
a' chuibhrich chruaidh,
a rinn MicAoidh dhinn.

Bho mheadhan a' bhaile
thug mi riag-shlighe
gu mullach nam
Beann Gorma.

Chuala mi tuath is deas
aon ghuth fo èislean,
ri gealladh
a' Co-fhlaitheis
le cead-siubhail Breatnach is
gach lorg ar muinntire
na spìonadh à bun.

Thionndaidh i thugam,
a' togail mo làmh is ag ràdh:
“thig a m' eudail
is teich bhon àite seo.

Cùm sùil ris an Ear.
Cuir fàilte air
gairm a' chuain.”

Do Chuileig

le B.L. Rice

Cò thomhaiseadh,
Gun cuireadh plàigh den t-seòrsa sin loinn,
Air ceann duine ainmeil is neartail?

Ò chuileig bhig!
Fhad's a dh'fhaodadh cogadh-facail a dhol na
chaothach,
A dh'aindeoin cùise, thionndaidheadh thu duilleag
eachdraidh.

Nan tigeadh e a-steach air fir, agus air mnathan,
cuideachd,
Nach biodh gnothach mhòr a-mhàin gu diofar
Ach cuideachd tro mheadhanan ìosal anns an
t-saoghal.

To A Fly

by B.L. Rice

Who would guess,
That such a pest would grace,
On the head of a famous and powerful man?

Oh, little fly!
While a war of words might rage,
In spite of everything, you would turn history's page.

If men would realize, and women, too,
That a great business doesn't only matter,
But also those (of) by humble means in the world.

A Website to Watch



Gaelic Book Trust

You might recognize the Gaelic Book Trust because of the annual Gaelic New Writers Awards they sponsor every year in association with the Gaelic Books Council. Look around their website, however, and you'll find a wealth of helpful material for Gaelic learners. Start with the links to videos and audio files of songs and rhymes for children, and if you only have time to watch one song video today, make it "Mire, Mire, Muig, Muig."

<https://www.scottishbooktrust.com/topics/gaelic>

Dè Tha Catrìona Ris?

What has Catrìona NicilleDhuibh been up to? Well, here she reads you her first children's book, *An Tractar agus an Liobht* / The Tractor and the Lift (Acair), which won the Children's Book Award at the 2011 Royal National Mòd. Enjoy!

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

This is a simple, easy-to-make recipe for stuffed mushrooms. They're great as a side dish or an appetizer. Feel free to add your own embellishments to it; I often add crisped jalapeños to mine when I want to add an extra kick or sometimes some melted cheddar cheese.

Balgain-bhuachair Lìonta Ghoiridh

Grìtheidean

2 charton balgain-bhuachair meadhanach mòr, a tha air an nighe, leis na gasan air an toirt dhiubh
1/4 cupa fion dearg airson còcaireachd
1/2 spàin-tì pùdar creamh
1 spàin-bùird sabhs sòighea
1/2 spàin-tì sabhs Worcestershire
1/2 pasgan / pacaid measgadh brot uinnein tioram no measgadh “dip” uinnein
1 1/2 cupa Fritos brùite

Jeff's Stuffed Mushrooms

Ingredients

2 cartons medium mushrooms, washed and stemmed
1/4 cup red cooking wine
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1 tbsp. soy sauce
1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1/2 pkg. dry onion soup mix or onion dip mix
1 1/2 cup crushed Fritos



Jeff Justice

Ann am bobhla meadhanach mòr cuir a h-uile grìtheid còmhla ach na balgain-bhuachair agus na Fritos brùite. Cuir ann na Fritos brùite agus cuir seo mun cuairt gu math.

Cuir na bonaidean balgain-bhuachair air clàr-fuine a tha air a chrèiseadh leis na bonaidean bun os cionn. Lìon na bonaidean gu h-iomlan làn, a' cleachdadh a' mheasgachaidh gu lèir.

Bruich ann an àmhainn aig teas 350F / 176C. Bi faiceallach nach bruich thu iad cus.

In a medium-sized bowl combine all of the ingredients except the mushrooms and crushed Fritos. Add the crushed Fritos and stir together well.

Place the mushroom caps on a greased cookie sheet with the cap side down. Fill the caps very full, using all of the mixture.

Bake about 10 minutes in a pre-heated oven at 350F / 176C. Be careful not to overcook.



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!

Meek Lines

Professor Donald Meek, academic, editor, writer, and poet shares his poetry on a Facebook page called “Meek Lines,” explaining that he uses Facebook “in the same way our ancestors used the oral airwaves of their own day. Songs were sung and recited far beyond the composer’s original locality.” And as Meek reminds us, “Poems and songs are for sharing, and that is what gives them life.” In that spirit of sharing (and with Professor Meek’s permission) in this issue of *An Naidheachd Againne* we have again asked one of our friends to pick a poem from Meek Lines and tell us about it.

Here, poet and ACGA member Barbara Lynn Rice has chosen one of Donald Meek’s reflective poems.



An Eaglais Fhalamh

le Dòmhnall E. Meek

Bha na suidheachain falamh san eaglais an dràs’d,
far am b’ àbhaist na daoine bhith ’g adhradh le gràdh:
gun seinn is gun fhonn, bu lom bha an t-àit’,
’s am beagan a bh’ againn gun fhacal ga ràdh.

Bha mo chridhe fo smalan, is m’ aigne fo sgàil,
’s mi ’g ionndrainn gach caraid bha taiceil nam spàirn;
le eagal a’ ghalair cha robh anam an làth’r,
ach am beagan a bh’ againn gun fhacal ga ràdh.

Ach an sin thàinig Facal bho labhraiche gràis
le teachdaireachd fhallain is maise on àird’,
mun Abstol bha taingeil anns gach gainntir is càs,
’s am beagan a bh’ againn, fhuair facal nar cràdh.

Ged bha ’n t-Abstol cho fad’ air a sgaradh bho chàch,
bha iadsan tighinn faisg air le coibhneas is bàidh;
na ùrnaigh ’s na chuimhne bha aoibhneas is gràdh,
’s cha b’ e beagan a bh’ aige, ach an talamh ’s a làn.

Sin chunnaic mi ainglean ’s iad a’ tighinn a-bhàn,
’s a’ lionadh gach cathair bha falamh is fàs,
’s na mìltean ’s na ceudan a’ gleusadh an dàin,
’s am beagan a bh’ againn, bha sinne nam pàirt.

Ged tha suidheachain falamh san eaglais an-dràs’d,
tha nèamh agus talamh air an ceangal gu bràth,
is chì sinn an latha bhios an galar dol bàs -
is am beagan a th’ againn gu neartmhor a’ fàs.

Latha na Sàbaid
3.1.2021

“The Empty Church”, that’s not quite empty, is an allegory on the present state of the world in the time of COVID-19. In the poem, the church, once a place of worship and praise, is now without singing and song. The poet’s heart has been grieving and his spirit has been under a shadow, he is missing his friends and in fear of the disease. At the end of the first and second verses, he writes, “...’s am beagan a bh’ againn gun fhacal ga ràdh” (“the few of us who were there without a word to say”).

The poet continues, writing, then came inspiration, the Word, about the Apostle (most likely, an analogy to the life of the Apostle Paul), who had gotten through worse, and yet, kept on going, despite imprisonment, difficulty, and separation from his fellow believers. The Apostle was remembered in prayer and love; far away, yet close to them.

Then the poet saw the angels coming over to fill the empty seats in the church, that people would ordinarily have filled, in the thousands and hundreds, to sing the songs, and as the last line of the fifth verse says, “...’s

am beagan a bh' againn, bha sinne nam pàirt" (“...And the few of us who were there were as one with them (i.e. the angels)”). They may have been only a few, but there were people present in the company of the heavenly host.

Although the seats are empty now, it is here that humans and angels, heaven and earth were and are connected. One day, the disease will die, and the few (in that church), will grow mighty in number, again. Donald Meek’s poem gives hope and inspiration that both the world and his church will return to normality one day.



a-muigh ’s a-mach / out and about

Oidhche nam Bàrd

le Hilary NicPhàidein

Bha an ceathramh Oidhche nam Bàrd againn san Fhaoilleach am bliadhna mar cho-phròiseact eadar Gàidhlig Photomac is ACGA. Chomharraich sinn bàird nach maireann is beò.

An toiseach, dh’innis Gillebrìde Mac’IlleMhaoil (ar n-aoigh sònraichte) dhuinn mu chùl-fhiosrachaidh bàrdachd thradaiseanta is saor-rannaidheachd. Sgrìobh daoine bàrdachd airson bruidhinn air eachdraidh chultarach is shòisealta. Bha cunntasan sùil-fhianaiseil thachartasan ann an iomadh dàn mar eisimpleir *Latha Chul-Lodair* le Iain Ruadh Stiùbhart, a bha air a’ bhlàr air an latha uabhasach sin. Sheinn bàird is an sluagh anns an fharsaingeachd bàrdachd fad linntean gus an fhicheadamh linn. An uairsin sgrìobh na bàird i airson a leughadh.

An dèidh dha Ghillebrìde bruidhinn, dh’èist sinn ri bàrdachd àlainn sgrìobte le daoine buadhach a bha an làthair agus bàrdachd le bàird eile mar Flòraidh NicPhàil is Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir. Sheinn feadhainn againn cuideachd - abair cèilidh! Bha e air leth math ùine a chaitheamh am measg charaidean eadhon ged a bha sinn air Zoom.

Chì sinn an ath-bhliadhna sibh uile aig Oidhche nam Bàrd, ged a b’ ann biortail no beò. Thoiribh leibh na dàin agaibh!

Song Sharing on Meetup

Gàidhlig Photomac hosts a song sharing session every month or so. You can find more information about this informal event at the Gàidhlig Photomac page on Meetup at <https://www.meetup.com>. Point of contact is Cathleen MacKay at amum44@yahoo.com.

by Hilary McFadyen

The Fourth Annual Night of the Bards was held in January this year as a joint project between the Gaelic learning community, Gaelic Potomac, and AGCA. We celebrated poets past and present.

First, our special guest, Gillebrìde MacMillan, told us about the background of traditional and free verse. People wrote poetry to speak about cultural and social aspects of history. There were eye-witness accounts of events in many poems, for example, “The Day of Culloden” by John Roy Stewart, who was on the field of battle that terrible day. Bards and people sang poetry for centuries until the 20th century when poets began to write poetry to be read.

After Gillebrìde spoke, we listened to beautiful poetry by talented people present at the event as well as poetry by other poets such as Flora MacPhail and Duncan Ban MacIntyre. There was singing, too — quite the ceilidh! It was really good to spend time with friends although we were on Zoom.

We’ll see you all next year whether the Night of the Bards is virtual or in person. Bring your poems with you!

Dè Tha Dol?

Gaelic Events

Am Màrt 2021 / March 2021

Cèilidh Oidhche Haoine Bhiortail / Friday Night Virtual Ceilidh, Comunn Gàidhlig Toronto, March 19, 2021

A ceilidh is all about community and coming together. If you have a story, a song, or an instrument you play, you are invited to contribute, wherever you are in the world. Skill level is not the important thing, so simply join and tell, sing or play. Most of all, you are invited to contribute with your presence.

Simply fill out the form at the link below and you will be sent the Zoom link to join in online.

<https://www.gaelicsocietytoronto.com/friday-night-ceilidh.html>

An Giblean 2021 / April 2021

Cèilidh Oidhche Haoine Bhiortail / Friday Night Virtual Ceilidh, Comunn Gàidhlig Toronto, April 16, 2021

See information for March 2021 above.

An Cèitean 2021 / May 2021

Fèis Ìle / Virtual Fèis Ìle, Friday, May 28 - Saturday, June 5, 2021

All Fèis events will be held on line again this year. Details will be posted at <https://www.islayfestival.com/> and <https://www.facebook.com/feisile.islay> as they become available.

An t-Iuchair 2021 / July 2021

Beinn Seanair Bhiortail / Virtual Grandfather Mountain Gaelic Song and Language Week & Mòd, July 5-9, 2021

Due to travel and other restrictions, the Grandfather Mountain Gaelic Song and Language Week will again be held virtually. Instructors are Christine Primrose (song) and Alec (Bhaltos) MacDonald (language). Instruction will be from beginner to advanced. Registration will soon be available at www.acgamerica.org.

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)

A Bharrachd

Nathaniel Harrington, a poet who wrote this issue's lead article, has also been published in the most recent release of the Scottish Gaelic periodical *STEALL 6*, available from the publisher, Clàr, or the Gaelic Books Council.

* * *

Professor Donald Meek, of "Meek Lines" (see page 19), who is also a lay pastor, can be heard delivering a sermon in Gaelic in the YouTube video link below. At the 33:40 mark Bria Mason sings Meek's poem "An Eaglais Fhalamh" / "The Empty Church".

Here is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkt9BtaflWY&feature=youtu.be>.

* * *

Here is more information from Ted Neveln regarding Deirdre: If you want to drink deeper of the Deirdre tale there are PDF and sound files from the *Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh* series by Roddy MacLean (375-83) and the *Litir Bheag* series (71-79) which cover the story itself and some of the related geography. They start at <https://learngaelic.net/litirbheag/index.jsp?l=71> and <https://learngaelic.net/litir/index.jsp?l=375>. Remember that Deirdre's story takes place partly in Scotland as well as Ireland.

If you want more challenging material there are Scottish Gàidhlig prose and poem versions collected from the Isle of Barra by Alexander Carmichael and called *Deirdire Agus Laoidh Chlann Uisne* in 1905. Sìol Cultural Enterprises produced a reprint which now is itself out of print; but a PDF of the 1905 book can be found here: <https://deriv.nls.uk/dcn23/7882/78820776.23.pdf>.

Deirdire is in prose but many passages are so full of rhyme and alliteration that it seems likely to have been derived from an earlier poem. It's a delight but is written in elevated Gàidhlig which is not terribly hard to read but is not terribly easy either. Here is a text note that briefly describes how this version differs from the Irish: http://www.deirdire.org.uk/critical_note.html.

Carmichael translated it into English which makes it possible to flip between the two languages. Alas, they become mis-aligned which makes the flipping more like flapping. Here is where to find an HTML file that does align the two languages: <http://www.deirdire.org.uk/index.html>. The *Laoidh Chlann Uisne* is an actual poem which I have not found to be terribly accessible but I need to try again.

Directory of Gaelic Classes & Study Groups

United States

California

Sacramento Area

Classes

(on pandemic hold, will resume when possible)

Donnie MacDonald minchmusic@comcast.net

Colorado

Boulder

Study Group

(on pandemic hold, will resume when possible)

Sue Hendrix susan.hendrix@colorado.edu

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

Denver

Conversation Group

(on pandemic hold, will resume when possible)

Monthly at Stella's Coffee Shop

Reese McKay reese.mckay25@gmail.com

San Luis Valley

Daily Gaelic

Online lessons & classes; email courses

<http://www.gaidhliggachlatha.com>

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

Kentucky

Louisville

Online Individual Classes

Adam Dahmer atdahm01@gmail.com

Maryland

Baltimore

Online Classes and Conversation Group

Sgoil Gàidhlig Bhaile an Taigh Mhóir

<https://sgoilgaidhlig.org/>

Rick Gwynallen richard.gwynallen@gmail.com

301-928-9026

New York

New York

Classes (online during pandemic)

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 (online during pandemic)

An Phillips fiongeal@gmail.com

Northern Virginia-Washington, DC-Maryland

Gaelic Learning Community (online during pandemic)

Gàidhlig Photomac

Regular workshops and social events

Contact Liam willbcassidy@gmail.com

Washington

Seattle

Slighe nan Gàidheal

Online Classes & Informal Study Groups

<https://www.slighe.org/gaelic-classes>

Canada

British Columbia

Vancouver

Classes (online during pandemic)

Comunn Gàidhlig Bhancoubhair

info.vancouvergaelic@gmail.com

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

Ontario

Toronto

Gaelic classes & private tutoring via Zoom

Comann Luchd-Ionnsachaidh Thoronto

<http://www.torontogaelic.ca>

Québec

Montréal

Study Group & Celtic choir (online during pandemic)

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>

For additions and corrections, contact Janice Chan, naidheachd@acgamerica.org

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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

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