

An Naidheachd Againne

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

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Since 2016, *An Naidheachd Againne* has published a grammar column written by Dr. Wayne Harbert, titled “Scary Things About Gaelic (STAG)”, with topics ranging from “How to Be Somebody in Gaelic” (an explanation of the differences between *bi* and *is*), to “Gray Eyes, Blue Hair” (the Gaelic colour scheme). In those twenty-five columns, Dr. Harbert has managed to take the “scary” out of the equation, with his often humorous yet very helpful explanations. This issue marks the last STAG column, and content editor Janice Chan thought that our readers would like to meet the man behind the grammar.

A Not So Scary Guy – An Interview with Dr. Wayne Harbert by Janice Chan

Janice: First of all, thank you for this opportunity for our readers to get to know a little bit about you. You retired a few years ago from the Department of Linguistics at Cornell University where your main area of interest was the older Germanic languages, as well as Welsh and Scottish Gaelic. What is it about these languages in particular that caught your interest?

Wayne: I was led to the Celtic languages by a route that would only make sense to a syntactician. My basic area of special interest has indeed always been older Germanic languages – Gothic, Old English, Old High German, Old Saxon and the like. I’d been fascinated with these since I spent my lunch money in junior high on a paperback titled *The Story of Our Language*. Back in the late 1980s, though, languages with Verb-Subject-Object order were all the rage, for arcane theoretical reasons, and I decided I should learn one. As my first attempt, I sat through a couple of semesters of a colleague’s course on Hieroglyphic



Wayne spinning on a great wheel at the Ithaca Celtic Games.

In This Issue

Litir bho’n Cheann-Suidhe/Letter from the President.....	7
<i>Sgoil nan Eun neo Sgeulachd Iain Fhearchair Òig</i>	8
Book Review: <i>An Tiortach Beag agus Sgeulachdan Eile</i>	
le Mòrag Anna NicNeill.....	10
Litir à Dùn Èideann bhon Taigh Agam.....	12
Scary Things About Gaelic (STAG).....	13
A Bharrachd.....	14
Meek Lines.....	15
An t-àite agam fhìn.....	17
Bàrdachd airson ar linn.....	19
NEW! Crossword Puzzles.....	21
Clach air a Càrn – Sue Hendrix.....	23
Black Bean and Sweet Potato Burritos (Bilingual Recipe).....	24
Dè Tha Dol?.....	26

Go to www.acgamerica.org for more on upcoming ACGA events and other Gaelic-related activities.

Egyptian, an Afroasiatic language (which I'd always wanted to learn anyway), but the writing system got in the way. So, in 1990, I checked out a grammar of Welsh and a grammar of Irish, and determined in five minutes that Welsh was more user-friendly. I sent off for a book and tape set for Welsh self-instruction. My progress in Welsh after a few years emboldened me to take on Scottish Gaelic, which is a bit further along than Welsh on the scale of scariness. I did eventually publish papers on the topics I was pursuing, but the languages weren't willing to be let go so easily.

Janice: Why did you name your column "Scary Things About Gaelic (STAG)"?

Wayne: The name was taken from a handout I distributed in the second meeting of the Gaelic course I used to teach at Cornell. I always taught my Celtic language courses (Welsh, Middle Welsh, Gaelic, Readings in Celtic languages) as an overload, on top of my offerings in Germanic and general linguistics, so that no one could complain about devoting resources to such 'small' languages. (Swedish, one of the other 'small' languages I supervised, has 10,000,000 speakers, making it one of the smallest languages taught at my university, but that is some 150 times as many speakers as Gaelic has now.) And so it was vaguely embarrassing that my Gaelic course attracted as many students as it did – up to 25 a semester. To warn off the idly curious, I began the course on the first day with a Power Point presentation entitled "The Top Ten Reasons You Should Drop This Course" (mentioning the weather in the Hebrides, the difficulty in getting there, the difficulty in finding occasion to use Gaelic, since the default language in many places there is English, etc.). And I followed that up in the second session with a handout enumerating all of the things that made the language particularly scary. (Neither of these scare tactics had an effect on enrollments.) The title "Scary Things About Gaelic (STAG)" had a nice ring to it, so I stole it for my column. (As a linguist, of course, I find those things not scary, but wondrous. "Wondrous Things About Gaelic" would have been decidedly less alluring as a name for the column, though. And harder to turn into a catchy acronym.)

Janice: The Germanic and the Celtic languages are both Indo-European language groups, although from different branches. Do the two language groups share any common features?



Wayne: These branches of Indo-European separated millennia ago. Though they still share commonalities of grammar and vocabulary on account of their common ancestry, these are more often than not obscured by successive layers of sound change, vocabulary replacement and the like, to the extent that it takes a practiced eye to recognize them. It is still possible to recognize words that both groups have inherited in common. It is easy to see, for example, that *aon* and *trì* are related to *one* and *three* – or even *ochd* and *eight*. It is harder to see the relatedness of *coig* and *five*, or *ten* and *deich*. Yet we know from the fact that they are part of the same series that they are a common inheritance.

Picking out commonalities in grammatical endings is even harder. The verb endings of Old Irish *bir-u* 'I bear', *ber-id* 'she bears' are clearly similar to (non-West Saxon) Old English *beor-u*, *ber-eð*, but these similarities are no longer evident in Modern English and Modern Gaelic. Gaelic still says *beiridh* '(will) bear', with an ending which is recognizably similar to the third person ending of Old Irish, but it has extended this ending to all persons accompanied by an appropriate pronoun: in Modern Gaelic, *beiridh* also means 'I (will) bear' *beiridh mi*, 'you (will) bear' *beiridh tu*, 'she (will) bear' *beiridh i*. And the Old English third person ending has been scrapped in favor of a new ending, *-s*, borrowed from Old Norse. In addition to common inheritance, the two groups have undergone parallel (though apparently independent) changes in later times. For example, the Germanic languages and the Insular Celtic languages both relocated the verb in main clauses from its final position in Indo-European. Germanic has become Verb-Second, while the Insular Celtic languages have become Verb-First.

Janice: Did Scottish Gaelic always have the sentence structure that it has now (verb, subject, object)? Are there other European languages that use the VSO order besides the insular Celtic languages?

Wayne: No other European languages have VSO as the basic order, and not all of the Celtic languages have it – only the Insular Celtic languages – ones historically spoken in Britain. Continental Celtic (Gaulish, Lepontic, Celtiberian) languages are Verb-Final languages, like Latin and the Indo-European parent language. Some people have hypothesized that Celtic became Verb-First when it arrived in the British Isles because it was acquired as a second language there by speakers of an Afroasiatic language – Phoenician perhaps – who carried over grammatical habits from their native language. There

seems to be little independent evidence supporting this hypothesis, but it cannot be dismissed out of hand. Only about 10% of the world's languages are VSO, but that word order is an abiding feature of the extensive swaths of Northern Africa and the Near and Middle East where Afroasiatic languages are spoken – an area connected by ancient sea routes to the British Isles. This is at least a noteworthy coincidence. I have coauthored papers proposing a theoretical account for some strikingly detailed syntactic similarities between Welsh and Arabic. I am still unpersuaded that language contact is a necessary part of the story, though. There are other proposals that attempt to account for these developments solely in terms of initial conditions internal to Celtic, given certain theoretical assumptions.

Janice: In 2008 you co-edited a book about language and poverty, the premise of which is that poverty affects language survival, and the languages people speak (or don't speak) can influence their economic status and limit their access to jobs and education. What does this say about the survival of Scottish Gaelic and Welsh?

Wayne: All of the Celtic languages are endangered, and they are not alone. By some (possibly conservative) estimates, 90% of the languages currently spoken in the world will not be spoken as community languages by the end of this century. This 'Vanishing Languages Crisis' is perhaps the most momentous linguistic development since the advent of human language, and late in my career I developed a new scholarly focus by way of trying to understand it. I started teaching a course on Minority Languages and Linguistics, co-edited the volume on *Language and Poverty* that you mention, and contributed a chapter on "Language and Economic Development" to the *Cambridge Handbook of Language Endangerment* (This is a good volume to start with by way of learning about language endangerment in all its dimensions.) Economic factors play a central role in determining the fates of languages, but the interrelationships are complex and differ from case to case. The main problem has not usually been poverty, but rather forces that disrupt traditional economies. The Celtic languages, and others, have in fact benefitted historically from the topographical / geographical isolation and relative poverty of the places in which they survived – places so inconvenient to get to and meager in resources (until modern times, at least) that their more powerful neighbors left the inhabitants mostly to their own devices. But the 21st century has let loose a perfect

storm of forces that disrupt traditional ways of living, with potential serious consequences for the languages associated with them (already fragile on account of their marginalization). Climate change is proving to be the most consequential of these forces, already making traditional modes of subsistence impossible in some places. Some of the other forces arise as side-effects of changes that yield benefits overall. The increased efficiency of globalized commerce improves access to resources, but sometimes at the cost of displacing garden economies with agricultural monoculture, for example, and to the small shops and groceries that are a mainstay of some communities with Big Box stores and online services. Profound changes in communications technologies have partially levelled the field in access to information – itself a good thing – but at the cost of putting local languages and cultures into more immediate competition with the surrounding dominant language and culture in the minds of young people in the process of constructing their personal identities and aspirations. All of this contributes to language shift. A major recent study of Gaelic language shift, *The Gaelic Crisis in the Vernacular Community / Staing na Gàidhlig anns a' Choimhearsnachd Dhùthasaich* (2020), paints a very sobering picture of the current state of the language. The trajectory of the trends it documents, barring intensive and wide-scale intervention, leads to collapse of Gaelic as a vernacular in a matter of decades. Gaelic will still be spoken by individual families and neighborhoods, and of course in dedicated cultural centers like colleges, and it will still no doubt retain its symbolic value, but where it continues to be spoken, it will be as a deliberate choice, not a default, and not self-replicating, as it was when habitual speakers were simply born into it. And its use will be much more rarified. The process is not unfamiliar; it has already occurred repeatedly throughout the vast majority of the places in which Gaelic was spoken historically. At this point, we not only can but must begin to imagine a 'post-vernacular' future for the language. For most endangered languages, the loss of habitual use in vernacular communities presents an existential crisis, since they have no substantial existence outside these communities. In the case of the Celtic languages, things are not as clear. By accident of a particular history, they have gained visibility and status in the larger world vastly out of proportion to their numbers of speakers, and are languages of widely appreciated literary, musical and artistic cultures. The cultural products linked to these languages, as well as the languages themselves, are cultivated, taught, learned, appreciated and supported in places

far removed from their habitual communities of use, and their centers of gravity have already shifted significantly from the landscapes that nurtured them. If there are endangered languages situated to make the fraught transition to a post-vernacular future, the Celtic languages are surely among them.

The increased connectedness of modern life works in both directions. In addition to enabling people to imagine themselves as parts of a community beyond their local environs, it has created a way for people scattered around the world to coalesce as communities of interest. Organizations like ACGA and the Welsh-American organization *Cymdeithas Madog*, with which I have also been affiliated, have worked hard to realize this potential, by bringing together far-flung Gaelic and Welsh enthusiasts into virtual language communities. These will no doubt have a role to play in the post-vernacular future of Celtic languages.

Janice: Your columns in ANA have always been geared towards the non-linguist. How do you approach writing about syntactic organisation, phonology and other concepts for the non-linguist?

Wayne: Telling people about the marvels of language in entry-level courses, like History of English (or in columns on scary things about Gaelic grammar), is a lot more fun than teaching advanced linguistics classes in some respects. Linguists have their own jargon and theoretical models. These are necessary, as in all sciences, to give our intuitions a sufficiently precise shape that they can guide us to exact and testable hypotheses and predictions. But learning the vocabulary and the theories is kind of boring. And in linguistics, perhaps uniquely among the sciences, you don't need to bother people with these things at the beginning, because you can make use of the fact that we all carry around a private theory of what a language is, and what a language does, in the form of our vast and nuanced knowledge of our native language. It's hard to imagine talking about biochemistry without saying something about the valence of carbon. But I always started my Intro to Linguistics course by building on what the students already knew, at an unconscious level, about their own language (convincing them that they've known all along things about their language so subtle and intricate that they are surprised to realize that they knew them). I used a variation of that trick in my STAG columns. I started out by reminding the readers of how we say things in English. Because we say it that way in English, that seems like the normal

way to do it. But then I pointed out that Gaelic does it in a surprisingly different way. So, for example, in a column titled "Not a Language for Egotists" I pointed out that in English we like to give ourselves the leading part in all of our sentences. "I have a cold," for example, makes it sound as if we have control of the cold, rather than the other way around. Gaelic, on the other hand, expresses this idea, more humbly and accurately, as *Tha an cnatan orm* 'The cold is on me'. And so on throughout the language. When we are being lazy, linguists sometimes lapse gratuitously into jargon. Looking back, I've done that a time or two in my columns. But the really cool stuff about language can be expressed without it.

Janice: There is a video on YouTube that shows you helping a graduate student to construct a warp-weighted loom, like those used in medieval Scandinavia. You also have an interest in growing dye plants and spinning wool. Are these hobbies, if I might use that word, connected in any way to your interest in languages?

Wayne: I've always been fascinated with old time technologies, having dabbled in blacksmithing, bow making, flint knapping, paper making, earthenware pottery, hand spinning, natural dyeing, weaving and the like, and there is probably some connection between those interests and my interest in medieval and endangered languages. But a more specific connection between my exotic language interests and one of my 'forgotten crafts' emerged by a series of coincidences. I'm a handspinner, and the owner of a dozen or so old spinning wheels, some of them dating from the 18th century, and I periodically demonstrate spinning on one of my great wheels at harvest festivals and the like. When the Ithaca Celtic Games started, members of my hand spinning guild were invited to attend. Spinning and shearing demonstrations are standard sideshows at such events. I always brought Gaelic signage and handouts of basic Gaelic phrases to pass around. Early on, a group of us – Kate Cushing, a kiltmaker, piper and one of my Gaelic students, and Bill Cournoyer, a traditional weaver and sheep shearer, and I – were lamenting that the main activities of the games – picking up heavy stuff and throwing it, and parading with bagpipes – painted a rather stereotypical picture of the culture. So we decided to organize a (literally) hands-on "Waulking the Tweed" demonstration, with real tweed fresh off the loom, to introduce passers-by to another dimension of authentic Gaelic culture. Bill spent the winter weaving a massive, hand-dyed length of tweed on a

barn loom (the first year's cloth weighed 75 pounds when wet), Kate learned a repertoire of waulking songs and led the singing, and I worked up a little lecture about the social, artistic and economic dimensions of communal wool waulking, and the unique musical form it gave rise to. We gathered folks around a long table, talked about the tradition, taught them the refrains of a couple waulking songs, and set them loose on the tweed. After doing this for several years at the Ithaca games, we took our act on the road to small history museums in New York and Pennsylvania.



Waulking the Tweed troupe at the Home Textile Tool Museum in Orwell, PA.

Janice: Do you have any other non-linguistic interests that you've been able to pursue since retirement from your regular job?

Wayne: My main activities since retirement have been gardening, photography and spinning, and visiting our daughter in Guatemala. I hope to revive our little waulking troupe, which has been on hiatus during the current health crisis (waulking the tweed – passing wet cloth from hand to hand while singing to each other across a table – is the exact opposite of social distancing!) In the meantime, I've become acquainted with a new language and culture, through visits with my daughter. I am trying to learn Kaqchikel, a Mayan language spoken in the highlands of Guatemala. It has yet a different basic word order (Verb – Object – Subject) than either English or the Celtic languages, found in only 3% of the world's languages, and its grammatical organization consistently surprises me with its internal logic, and its combination of exoticness and occasionally striking familiarity. It is also associated with its own amazing, socially central textile tradition, in the form of Mayan backstrap loom weaving, about which I am also learning.

Janice: And finally, what's your favourite Scottish Gaelic word or phrase?

Wayne: That's a hard question. But I do happen to know one obscure little Gaelic word the story of whose journey through languages and geographies and ages is so grand that it's hard not to marvel at it. The word is *amhaisg* (showing up in Scots as *awisk*). I first encountered it while reading some of Ruairidh MacIlleathain's fine *Litrichean do Luchd-ionnsachaidh* (641, 642) with my students. Ruairidh says about it: "*Tha e air eadar-theangachadh mar as trice anns na seann teacsaichean mar "dwarf" no "pigmy" ach chan eil e a' seasamh airson dìreach duine a tha beag no an treubh Afraganach ris an canar "pigmies". Tha e a' ciallachadh duine beag aig a bheil droch rùn. Bidh e a' nochdadh ann am Beurla mar "awisk" – A-W-I-S-K.*" Though I'd never seen the word before, it seemed somehow familiar. After a bit of research, I discovered that I'd indeed encountered a related form some 50 years ago, when I was starting to learn, of all things, Gothic – the ancient Germanic language on which I would eventually write my dissertation. The Gothic word for 'servant' was *andbahts*. Now this was not a native Gothic word. It was borrowed from one of the Germanic languages' ancient neighbors, Gaulish (a Continental Celtic language). The Gaulish word was *ambi-aktos*, meaning 'one who is sent around (on behalf of another)' (*ambi* 'around' + *ag* 'to send, drive'). Latin borrowed the same word from Gaulish; Caesar uses it in his *Gallic Wars*. The Romance languages got the word from their Germanic neighbors, and in turn it found its way back into English from French, as *ambassador*. It is also the source of German *Amt* 'public office'. The Latin form, *ambactus*, in the meaning 'servant', was also borrowed into various Insular Celtic languages very early on, and underwent further changes of shape and twists of meaning. In Welsh, it became *amaeth*, 'plowman, farmer'. In Gaelic, *amha(i)sg* came to mean 'mercenary', and thence 'boor' (Colin Mark's *Gaelic-English Dictionary*). Mercenaries were understandably not well-regarded. Dwelly lists *amhas / amhusg* – apparently the same word – with the meaning 'wild, ungovernable person'. And it's hard to imagine that Modern Irish *amhas* 'gangster, hooligan, punk' is not related to these. So, there you have it: fittingly, a word that definitely made the rounds. From ancient Gaul it flitted from language to language for centuries, even finding its way back into Celtic eventually, and taking on a new persona at each turn like a true shape shifter: gofers turning into ambassadors and servants and farmers, public officials, mercenaries, boors, wild, ungovernable

people, gangsters, punks, and, finally, wee folk with evil intent! The latter find their way, as *Na h-Amhaisgean*, into folktales gathered in the late 19th century, like the one Ruairidh tells us about.

Janice: Thank you very much Wayne, not only for this opportunity to get to know more about you and

your interests in language, but for the wonderful columns that you provided *An Naidheachd Againne*. I'm sure that Gaelic learners will find them useful for many years to come.

See page 13 for Dr. Wayne Harbert's last "Scary Things About Gaelic (STAG)" column.



Janice Chan

Photo Quiz

What is the name of this famous ruin that overlooks an equally famous body of water?

The answer is on page 28.

A Website to Watch

Facle.

No, that's not a typo, and it's not a website either, but it's just so cool!

Facle is the name of the Gaelic version of Wordle, a word game that's been racing across the Internet lately. We might blame it on COVID, but the truth is, a lot of people enjoy word games. As such, this one is quite satisfying, besides being frustrating at times, because, well, it's a word game after all. The catch is, you only get one shot at it each day. If you can't figure the word out in six tries, you have to wait until tomorrow for a new word.

If you've played Wordle, you can play Facle. If you need help with instructions, however, try this link from NPR.

<https://www.npr.org/2022/01/12/1071840091/wordle-word-game-tips>

Ready to play Facle? Here you go: <https://facle.netlify.app>





Litir bhon Cheann-suidhe le Liam Ó Caiside

A chàirdean còire,

Tha mi 'n dòchas gu bheil sibh uile sunndach, sonasach aig toiseach na bliadhna ùire seo. Tha sinn toilichte soraidh slàn fhàgail aig 2021, co-dhiù. Uaireannan cha robh ach droch-naidheachdan, aige gu h-àraid mu dheidhinn COVID-19, an gùirneal galarach, agus a chlann, Delta agus Omicron. Nach cuir sinn iad air an rathad dhachaigh am bliadhna – gu h-Ifhrinn!

Ach thig maitheas am measg donas, uaireannan, rud a chunnaic sinn an-uiridh. Mar a thuirt mi anns an litir bhliadhnail a thug mi dhuibh o chionn ghoirid, rinn ACGA obair nach bu bheag an-uiridh, agus cha robh sinn nar n-aonar. Thàinig buidhnean Gàidhealach dhen a h-uile seòrsa ri chèile air-loidhne ann an 2021, dìreach mar a rinn iad ann an 2020.

Agus tha iad ann ri chèile fhathast. Feumaidh sinn meal-a-naidheachd a thoirt do Shlighe nan Gàidheal ann an Siatail, aig an robh “Fèis a’ Gheamhraidh” air-loidhne o chionn ghoirid. Air taobh eile nan Stàitean Aonaichte, tha Sgoil Gàidhlig Bhaile an Taighe Mhòir ann am Baltimore glè thrang, agus feumaidh sinn an rud ceudna a ràdh mu Chomann Gàidhlig Toronto.

Bidh sinne nam measg. Ann an ùine nach bi fada, thig “Seachdain na Gàidhlig” oirnn – 21mh gu 27mh den Mhàrt – agus bidh ACGA ag obair còmhla ris an Sgoil Ghàidhlig ann am Baltimore agus an t-Ollamh Micheal Newton ann an Carolina air sreath pod-chraolaidhean mun Ghàidhlig ann an Aimeireagaidh a Tuath, bho Chanada dhan Chairibeach agus California.

'S e seo “Bliadhna Chaluim Cille” cuideachd (rugadh Calum Cille ann an 521), agus cuiridh sinn tachartas air dòigh anns an Ògmhios an urram Chaluim Cille. Agus stiùiridh sinn clasaichean air-loidhne airson luchd-ionnsachaidh a bhios a’ tòiseachadh ris a’ Ghàidhlig as t-earrach. Saoilidh mi gum bi sinn trang gu leòr, agus ag iarraidh cuideachadh.

'S mòr mo dhòchas gum faic sinn sibh air-loidhne, agus aghaidh ri aghaidh cuideachd, ann an 2022.

Leis gach deagh dhùrachd,

Liam Ó Caiside
Ceann-suidhe, ACGA

Letter from the President by Liam Cassidy

Dear friends,

I hope you are all cheerful and happy at the start of this new year. We're happy to bid farewell to 2021, anyway. Sometimes it seemed there was nothing but bad news, especially about COVID-19, the disease that like a guest that overstayed its welcome, and along with its children, Delta and Omicron, wouldn't leave. Let's send them on their road home to perdition this year!

But goodness comes amid misfortune, sometimes, something we saw last year. As I said in the annual letter I sent you recently, ACGA did work that wasn't small last year, and we weren't alone. Gaelic groups of all types came together on line in 2021, just as they did in 2020.

And they're together still. We must congratulate Slighe nan Gàidheal in Seattle, which held its virtual “Winter Fèis” recently. On the other side of the United States, The Baltimore Gaelic School is very busy, and we must say the same thing about the Toronto Gaelic Society.

We will be among them. Not too long from now, “Seachdain na Gàidhlig” or “Gaelic Week” will be upon us – March 21 to 27 – and ACGA is working with the Baltimore Gaelic School and Dr. Michael Newton in North Carolina on a series of podcasts about Gaelic in North America and diverse Gaelic communities from Canada to the Caribbean and California.

This is also the Year of “Calum Cille” (Calum or St. Columba was born in 521), and we'll be putting together an event in honor of the saint who founded the monastery of Iona in June. And we'll be running an online class for new beginners this spring. I think we'll be busy, and we'll need help.

I greatly hope to see you on line – and in person, too – in 2022.

Your steadfast friend,

Liam Cassidy
President, ACGA

Fhad 's a tha Iain agus Nighean an Sgàthain a' leantainn air an turas aca dhan eilean far am faca Iain a' chlach, tachraidh iad air iomadh sealladh neònach, agus ionnsachaidh iad rudeigin iongantach mun chat, Gugtrabhad. Agus bidh cunnart ùr nan aghaidh – Cnàmhan Dubha!

Sgoil nan Eun neo Sgeulachd Iain Fhearchair Òig le Liam Ó Caiside

Caibideil Fichead 's a h-Aon: Air Iomall an Dà Shaoghal

“Access an bith imbith n-ingad os ler lindglass”
“Dh'aithnichear iomadh iongnadh air an lear glas”
– Imram Curraig Máiledúin

“Anns na làithean a lean, ge b' e càite a bha iad anns a' bhàta, bha an cat Gugtrabhad ann, ag èisteachd riutha agus a' coimhead orra,” thuirt an sgeulaiche. “Sin a smaoinich Iain, co-dhiù. Bha Gugtrabhad ri taobh na cuibhle, a' cabadaich ri Mac Glumaig, neo air a' chrann-spreòid a' sgeannadh thar nan tonn, neo aig deireadh a' bhàta, ann an uchd nighinn.

Dh'fhàs na draoidhean òga gu math dèidheil air a' chat, neo “*yn scravera*,” mar a thug Mac Mhanainn air. “Sin an t-ainm a chuireas sinn air a leithid anns an eilean agam nuair a tha sinn air a' chuan,” dh'innis e dhaibh. “Scràbhaire?” dh'fhaighnich Dearbhlaidh dha. “Sgròbadair anns a' Ghàidhlig agaibhse,” fhreagair Mac Mhanainn. “Bhiodh e mì-fhortanach an t-ainm a chleachd sinn air tìr a labhairt aig muir, tha fhios agad.”

“*Scravera*” neo sgròbadair, cha robh Iain cho cinnteach ma dheidhinn. Cha do dhìochuimhnich e an smealt a fhuair a shròn bhon a' chat air doca Bhaile Àtha Cliath. Ach bha Gugtrabhad coma co-dhiù. Mar a theireadh iad, 's ann air a shon fhèin a nì an cat crònan.

Sheòl iad seachad na h-eileanan air am b' eòlach iad, agus bha iad a-nise air a' mhuir dhubh dhomhain. Roinn iad na làithean agus na h-oidhcheannan ann am fairean, agus bha dithis dhiubh an còmhnaidh nan dùsgadh tron oidhche. Bha iad fada air falbh air magh mòr na mara, agus bha a dhoimhneachd na laighe orra gu trom. Cha b' annta, dh'fhàirich iad, ach dileagan ann an sruth.

“Tha sinn a' seòladh air iomall an dà shaoghal a-nise,” thuirt Mac Glumaig riutha, nuair a bha iad

uile air deic madainn. “Cha dèan mapa neo cairt-iùil math dhuinn an seo. Chì sibh rudan a dh'aithghearr nach fhaicear gu tric anns an t-saoghal agaibh.” Agus chunnaic iad.

An latha ud, thàinig iad gu eilean beag gorm a bha roinnte ann an dà phàirt le seann-bhalla cloiche na mheadhan. Bha caoraich dhubha air aon taobh den bhalla, agus caoraich bhàna air an taobh eile. Leum caora dhubh thar a' bhalla, agus ann am priobadh na sùla, bha i na caora bhàn. Leum trì caoraich bhàna thar a' bhalla, agus bha iad nan caoraich dhubha.

“Their iad Eilean nan Caorach Caochlaideach ris an àite seo,” arsa Mac Glumaig.

An ath latha, chunnaic iad carraighean-chloiche a dh'èireadh dìreach às a' chuan, dà cholbh dheug àrd, liath ann an sreath. Bha ceumannan snaidhte ri fhaicinn a' dol fada suas gu mullach gach cuilbh. Chan fhaca iad neach sam bith ach boireannach aosta na suidhe air mullach a' chuilbh mu dheireadh, a falt a' tuiteam a-nuas taobh a' chuilbh. Thog i làmh agus thug i beannachd dhaibh, gun fhacal a ràdh, nuair a sheòl iad seachad oirre.

Bha an t-uisge cho glan a-nise 's gum faca iad iomadh beathach gu soilleir fo uachdar na mara. Chunnaic iad èisg, mucan-stigean, agus mucan-mara a' snàmh fodhpa. Dh'èirich tè dhiubh cho dlùth ris a' bhàta gun robh eagal orra gun cuireadh i car dheth. Ach cha do chuir. Thòisich Dearbhlaidh a' seinn ann an guth àrd, neònach. Leum i anns a' chuan, agus ann am priobadh na sùla chan e boireannach òg a bh' innte ach ròn. Shnàmh i ri taobh na muice-mara,



fathast a' seinn. Chaidh a' mhuc-mhara car mu char agus le cas a h-earball, chaidh i air ais dhan aigeann.

Leum Dearbhlaidh air ais air bòrd na caileig, a h-aodach tioram ach a cuaileanan fliuch. Rinn i an caochladh nuair a bha i eadar stuadh an t-sàil agus an clàr. Ruadhaich a gruaidhean nuair a sgeann na gillean oirre le iongantas. "Dh'ionnsaich tuilleadh na sibhse rud neo dhà ann an Sgoil nan Eun!" thuirt i riutha.

An ath-latha, thàinig iad gu eilean beag. Sheòl am bàta thairis an eilean dìreach mar a bha iad fhathast air a' mhuir. Chunnaic iad fuaran agus lòn am measg clachan liath ann am meadhan an eilein agus shaoil iad gum biodh e math deochan fìor-uisge a bhlasadh. Ach "Fuirichibh!" dh'èigh Gugtrabhad. "Coimheadaibh air na clachan seo. Nach eil iad neònach?"

"Tha iad a' coimhead mar dhaoine a' cromadh ris an uisge gus deoch fhaighinn," thuirt Nighean an Sgàthain. Anns a' bhad, thàinig an t-uamhas orra. "Tha thu glè cheart," thuirt an cat rithe. "Cumaibh a' dol!" Agus tha fhios agaibh gur e sin a rinn iad.

Thòisich iad a' gabhail iongnadh an ruigeadh iad an t-Eilean Uaigneach idir. Feasgar eile, nochd eilean air am fàire, eilean nas motha na chunnaic iad gus an uair sin. Sheòl iad suas slèibhe, gus an do chuir iad am bàta air acair aig a' mhullach. 'S e beul na h-oidhche a bh' ann.

"Chan eil mi eòlach air an eilean seo, agus bu chòir dhuinn fuireach air bòrd gus am bris an latha," arsa Mac Glumaig. "Seasaidh cuid dhinn air fàire, agus chì sinn na chì sinn."

Thàinig an dubh-anmoch. Dh'fhàs e cho dorcha nach fhaca duine aig deireadh a' bhàta a toiseach. Cha robh reul anns an speur. Gu h-obann, chunnaic iad ceudan de shùilean glasa agus buidhe mu thimcheall a' bhàta, mar a bha reultan air tuiteam. Chuala iad fuaim mar a bha durraghan aig mìle cat. Leum Gugtrabhad, a bha anns a' chaibeann, a-mach air a' chlàr. Bha e cho mòr ri leòmhan! Ghabh e beuc àrd, agus chaidh na sùilean uile à fianais. Chuala iad sgiamhail a bha eagalach. Shaoil Iain gun robh faclan ann - "Thàinig an rì-ì-gh!" mar a chuala Iain iad.

Thionndaidh am balach air ais ri Gugtrabhad ach cha b' e ach cat mòr ruadh ga ghlanadh fhèin air a' chlàr, gàire anns an aon shùil mhòr uaine aige.

Nuair a bhris an latha, bha an talamh mu thimcheall a' bhàta air a reubadh mar a gheàrr ìneannan iarainn e. Chuir iad rithe an seòl agus dh'fhalbh iad cho luath 's a ghabhadh.

Sìde mhath a bh' againn às dèidh sin, ach dh'fhàs i gaothach. Sheòl an Saighead Sgàthaich nas maille. "Feumaidh sinn tighinn mun cuairt agus seòladh cruaidh air a' ghaoith," thuirt Mac Glumaig.

Aig toiseach an ath latha, chunnaic iad rud ris nach robh dùil: Seòl eile air fàire nan dèidh. "Marsantach?" dh'fhaighnich Mac Mhanainn. "Air a' chuan seo? Tha teagamh agam," thuirt Mac Glumaig. Lean am bàta iad tron latha, a' teannadh nas dlùithe riutha beag air bheag, gus am faca iad an long gu soilleir. "Tha iad a' siubhal air astar mòr," arsa Mac Glumaig. Bha gloine-amharc aca agus chuir Mac Mhanainn a shùil ris. "Tha dà chrann innte," thuirt e. "Agus tha gach seòl aca air a thogail - jibichean, seòl-toisich, seòl-mòr, seòl-uachdrach. Chan eil mi faicinn a bratach."

"Ciamar a tha i a' tighinn cho luath às ar dèidh agus sinne a' dol an aghaidh na gaoithe?" dh'fhaighnich Iain. "Draoidheachd," fhreagair Nighean an Sgàthain. "'S e bàta m' athar a th' ann. Tha mi eòlach gu leòr oirre. An long as luaithe aige."

"Fada na b' fheàrr dhomh coinneachadh ri muc dhubh Loch Mhòr oidhche dhorcha na coinneachadh ris an draoidh ud ann am meadhan na mara," thuirt Mac Glumaig.

Ach a dh'aindeoin na rinn iad, tharraing an long mhòr nas dlùithe. Chunnaic iad daoine nan seasamh aig a toiseach agus a' dìreadh a crainn. "Tha cleas neo dhà air fhàgail againn fhathast," thuirt Ceann-Cleiteig. "Nach e draoidhean a th' annainn?" Suas leis san speur ann an cruth eòin-mhara air iteal air a' ghaoith chun na luinge. Nuair a bha e dìreach os cionn a clàr, chuala iad fuaim gunna, agus bhuail Ceann-Cleiteig air a' mhuir mar shùlaire.

"Mo chreach!" dh'èigh Dearbhlaidh. Ach ann an ùine ghoirid leum iasg a-mach às na stuaidhean air a' chlàr agus dh'atharraich Ceann-Cleiteig air ais na bhalach. "Donadh aig an donas ud!" thuirt e. "Theab gun do mharbhadh mi! Chaidh am peilear dìreach seachad orm."

"Cò loisg? Cò a bh' ann?" dh'fhaighnich Nighean an Sgàthain.

“Fear ann an seana-chòta mòr le feusag fhada dhubh,” fhreagair Ceann-Cleiteig. “Chan fhaca mi duine cho grannda riamh roimhe. Bha leòn-eàrra uamhasach air a aodann.”

“Cnàmhan Dubha, spùinneadair na mallachd,” thuirt Iain.

“A’ bheil cuimhn’ agad, dè thuirt mi ris nuair a dh’fhalbh sinn leis ann am Baile Àtha Cliath?” arsa Nighean an Sgàthain. “Chuir mi geasaibh air, gun caill e a cheann, a chluas agus a bhith-beò ma chuireas e grabadh orm a-rithist. Agus chì sinn dè thachras dha a-nise.”

Bha an long cho dlùth riutha an uair sin ’s gum faca iad Cnàmhan Dubha gu soilleir aig a toiseach, a’ coimhead orra agus a’ gàireachdainn. “Am faod sibh ceò draoidheil a thogail neo geas eile obrachadh orra?” dh’fhaighnich Mac Glumaig dhiubh. “Chan fhaod, tha a’ ghaoth ro làidir, agus tha iad a’ teannachadh ro dhlùth oirnn,” thuirt Mac Mhanainn.

Bha iad eadar a’ bhaobh ’s a’ bhuarach, gun teagamh. Ach chuimhnich Iain air an tìodhlac a thug a’ bhean-shithe Aoife dha. Pìos snàithlean agus trì snaidhmeannan ann. Bha an snàithlean fhathast na phòca. Thug e a-mach e, agus dh’fhuasgail e a’ chiad snaidhm. Ghobaich gaoth an ear, agus chuir iad beagan astar eadar Saighead Sgàthaich agus long an spùinneadair.

Ach cha d’ fhuair iad mòran ùine. Thàinig an long mhòr air an tòir gu luath.

Dh’fhuasgail Iain an dàrna snaidhm, agus thàinig barrachd gaoithe. ’S e saighead a bh’ anns a’ bhàta ann an dà-rìreabh an-dràsta. Cha mhòr nach deach iad uile thar bòrd. Chuala iad an crann a’ lùbadh. Dh’fhàg iad an long mhòr fada air an cùl treis. Ach mar a thachair roimhe, thàinig an long air ais gus an robh i gu math dlùth riutha a-rithist. Cha robh dol às ann dhaibh.

“Tha m’ athair fhèin anns an long ud!” thuirt Nighean an Sgàthain. “Dh’fhairich mi a dhraoidheachd.”

“Gabhaibh greim air rudeigin!” dh’èigh Iain, agus le a chridhe na shlugan, dh’fhuasgail am balach an treas snaidhm. Leum Gugtrabhad sìos sa chaibean le sgal fiadhaich. Bhuail doineann cho neartmhor orra nach robh fhios aca an robh iad suas neo sìos. Dh’èirich am bàta suas às a’ chuan agus bha iad a’ seòladh le sgud tron adhar, a’ ghaoth agus an t-uisge gam pronnadh.

A’ coimhead air aghaidh, chunnaic Iain gu robh rudeigin ag èirigh às a’ chuan agus an uisge, ged nach robh fhios aige an e creagan, sgeirean, neo eilean a bh’ ann. An uair sin, bhuail am bòm am balach, chaidh a thilgeil dhan uisge, agus cha robh fhios aige dè thachair às dèidh sin.

REVIEWS



Book Review:

An Tiortach Beag agus Sgeulachdan Eile le Mòrag Anna NicNèill
Acair, 2019, 113 pages
ISBN: 9781789070194

Reviewed by Ted Neveln

Mòrag Anna NicNèill is the translator of *Anna Ruadh* and it’s startling to discover that she draws word-picture equivalents to the darkly humorous cartoons of American artist Charles Addams.

These are excellent stories with excellent Gaelic. You will enjoy them all the more if you have a streak of depravity. One story is heartwarming and a couple of others almost are, and the rest have Voodoo dolls, handcuffs, claw hammers, body horror, bodies bouncing off cars, death cap mushrooms, genial ghosts, and

ùruisgean prophesying doom. Dreadful deeds are done to dreadful people, though some delicate souls might question the proportionality of the crime with the punishment. Less delicate souls will wallow in vicarious vengeful glee. Many stories are based on thoughtlessness – to people, to nature, or even basic decency. I get the impression that thoughtlessness is a big sin in Gaelic culture.

Some stories are too long for a group of mixed ability to read in one sitting and the tales will be frustrating to leave unfinished before the Zoom clock runs out. I like to look up each new word in the dictionary (it has to be Dwelly's), note it down, and then continue reading. My strategy works poorly with an eeky, ooky, *aognaidh* page-turner. Most people will just press on past the new words and rush to the appalling or sometimes appallingly funny ending. (What kind of fiend am I to be actually *laughing* at these stories?) Readings should not occur too close to bedtime.

The title story *An Tiortach Beag* is the most innocuous, that is, if you are not easily unsettled by a child remembering a past life.

Mòd Mhic an Tòisich has a protagonist who is competing at a mod against a ruthless, hapless rival who looks like an orangutan in a kilt. What does the villain symbolize? Grendel? Caliban? Sad desperation? Or is this just how all competitors see their rivals? The story is full of mod jokes that will have you rolling on the floor if you get them, but I wish I were more mod-savvy.

In *Fealla-dhà Dha-rìribh* we learn that Gaels in olden times also had something like Voodoo dolls. It left me wanting to see a consumer comparison of the efficacy of Scottish ones versus Afro-American ones. I'll give you the word *Bustrach* (sorcerer) now so you don't have to look it up.

The wretched old woman wasting away in a nursing home in *Fòghnaidh na Dh'fhònas* takes decisive measures to make her corner of the world into a better place. I should pause here to note that these tales have a deficit of sweet little old ladies. There are flashes of sweetness in a couple of these stories but not in the little old ladies so much.

Gabh do Leòr Dheth and *Abair ach Beagan* are connected stories that should be read close together. Meanwhile you will get a chance to ponder a possible Gaelic etymology for the word *kibosh*. It's sinister of course.

While *Cha Tig an Aois Leatha Fhèin* makes your teeth rattle in terror, you can also study the use of *ach* as a synonym for *feuch*.

One of the more mainstream stories is *Turas Ailein* which starts with a lonely boy taking a dark dreary journey to a dark dreary destination and finding an unexpected but eerie light in that darkness. I enjoyed its paradoxes and found it easy to understand. This and the title story might be a good way to ease into this collection.

Slànaighear na Nollaige starts in a morass of hideous Christmas crassness and then emerges into a kind of light, though it is a bumpier journey than you might expect from a Christmas tale.

Rabhadh na Maighdinn features a supernatural revelation and a corresponding revelation about human nature that is all too natural.

As I mentioned earlier I ran into a fair number of words that I had to look up. But there are a lot of useful colloquial conversations to study and lots of lively idioms, sometimes from people who aren't alive. Going back to the title story: *bha maise an àite na thlachd mhòr dhaibh le chèile* - the beauty of the place was a great delight to them both. "*Seadh ma-thà, inns dhomh tuilleadh!*" – go on then, tell me more!





Litir à Dùn Èideann bhon Taigh Agam

by Jeff W. Justice

A chàirdean,

For two years now, I've written each of these *litrichean* with the hopes that each one would be the last to be 'bhon taigh agam'. I'm holding out a glimmer of hope that this will really, *finally*, be the last of its current name. A few months ago, I wrote a tongue-in-cheek commentary on all the language courses this pandemic has given me the chance to take. I've been cooped up at home, more or less, as you have been, so why not take the opportunity? I can now say legitimately that I have at least dabbled in all six of the living Celtic languages.

Recently, a question arose in one of the online conversation and reading circles in which I take part: How helpful is knowing Scottish Gaelic if you want to learn another Celtic language? My knee-jerk answer is 'very helpful'. I learned that when I was in seventh grade, when everyone at my (then) junior high school had to take a semester-long course exposing us to Latin, Spanish, German, and French. On day one, we were taught that learning a second language makes it so much easier to learn a third later. My take on that, some thirty-five years later: Whoever came up with that idea had not tried to learn Gaelic.

I did take three years of Castilian Spanish after that junior high semester. Then I gave French a try later when I went to university. My knowledge of Spanish was a huge help to me, particularly when I was trying to figure out what gender a given noun was when there were no clues to help me. I'm sad to say that my subsequent lack of use of Spanish has left me sorely lacking in being able to use it, save that I can stream Spanish television and understand most of what I'm hearing while I'm watching FC Barcelona beat whomever they're playing.

Fast-forward to today. I've been taking Gaelic courses, entirely online, since the mid-2000s. I'm finally what I would consider an advanced learner. I still don't deem myself fluent, but give me time. I'm getting there. Hey, I still keep an English dictionary on my desk, for what it's worth. My new long-term research project means that I need to know Irish and Welsh in addition to Scottish Gaelic, so I'm doing lessons on those, both online (again) and through Duolingo. (Side note: Hey Duolingo, how about adding Breton, Cornish, and Manx, while you're at it. Memrise has all six Celtic languages. So should you.)

In truth, knowing Gaelic has been of *some* help in learning both Irish and Welsh. This is especially true in the case of Irish, since it is closely related to Gaelic, somewhat like a Spanish speaker can read and generally understand Portuguese, albeit with some help. To be sure, false friends exist between Gaelic and Irish. To wit: *tuirseach* is found in both of their vocabularies. In Irish, it means 'tired'. However, add a grave accent over the 'u', and one gets the Gaelic word not for 'tired' but for 'sad' or 'depressed'. Welsh vocabulary is sufficiently different that there is precious little mutual intelligibility between it and either Gaelic or Irish, but the grammar of all three shows several similarities. The sounds caused by a Welsh soft mutation are quite similar to those produced by Gaelic lenition or Irish *séimhiú*. The rule about putting a definite article only in front of the last noun in a genitive structure also applies in Welsh: *Geata na páirce* is *porth y parc*, not *y porth y parc*. Prepositions 'conjugate' when combined with a pronoun in all three. The same applies to Breton, Cornish, and Manx, as you'd expect by this point.

So yes, knowing one Celtic language is of some help when one looks to pick up a second, but the extent of that help depends on what that second language is. So with that, *chì mi sibh a dh'aithghearr, a bydda i'n ysgrifennu atoch eto y tro nesaf. Slán abhaile!*

Le meas,

Gairidh | Jeff



Oisean a' Ghràmair / The Grammar Nook

by Wayne Harbert

Scary Things About Gaelic (STAG):

A month of the Stormy; a week of the Plover

Month names are boring in Western European languages. For the most part, they are the system borrowed from the ancient Romans, which has only an occasional interesting wrinkle. (November, for example, is etymologically 'the ninth month', for so it was until a couple of caesars butted in line in front of it.) English has January, after the Roman god Janus, for example, and Spanish has *enero*. Even some of the Celtic languages have toed the line – to a point. The Welsh names for the months through May (*Ionawr, Chwefror, Mawrth, Ebrill, Mai*) are the same old Latin month names you find in English or French. But Welsh breaks ranks for the second half of the year, using its own names for the subsequent months (with a lapse in the case of *Awst*, August). The Welsh word for June, *Mehefin*, for example, comes from a word meaning 'Midsummer'. The word for November, *Tachwedd*, means 'slaughter'. Irish takes its leave of the Roman names even earlier: The names of the months through April, *Eanair, Feabhra, Márta, Aibreán*, are clearly derived from the old Roman names, but the name for May, *Bealtaine*, is native (originally meaning 'Fire of Bel', an old Celtic god).

And then there's Gaelic: the Gaels were never ones to fall hastily for foreign fashions, and the Roman month names never caught on in the Highlands and Islands. Instead, they've gone their own way almost entirely. The Gaelic months are *Am Faoilleach* (or *Faoilteach*), *An Gearran*, *Am Màrt*, *An Giblean*, *An Cèitean*, *An t-Ògmhios*, *An t-Iuchar*, *An Lùnasdal*, *An t-Sultain*, *An Dàmhair*, *An t-Samhain(n)*, *An Dùbhlachd* (or *Dùdlachd*). Nary a Roman god nor emperor in the lot – except for *Màrt*. (Could it be that they kept this one around because it is also the basis for the the Gaelic name for 'Tuesday', which just happens to be the third day of the week?) *Faoilleach* / *Faoilteach*, January, may be based on *faol* 'wolf', but McBain suggests an alternative linkage with the notion of 'festival, carnival'. Dwelly lists 'happy at meeting' as a second meaning of *faoilteach* in Gaelic, related to *faoilte* 'delight, joy, joyful salutation at meeting'. I like that better than 'wolf'. *Gearran*, February, means 'gelding', and is related to the verb *geàrr* 'cut'. *Cèitean*, May, probably originally meant 'the first of summer', as *Samhain(n)*, November, meant 'the end of summer'. And so on. One more Celtic deity finds its way into the list: *Lùnasdal*, August, was originally 'the festival of Lug'. My favorite of all is *An t-Ògmhios*, June, which means 'The Young Month'.

But the resistance of Gaelic to foreign notions of reckoning time runs deeper than just the names of the months; they didn't even cotton to the foreign practice of dividing the year into months – chunks of more or less the same size, with fixed dates – in the first place. Before they were usurped by educators and turned into month names, these words had meanings in a system that reckoned the passing of time in an entirely different way. They referred to stretches of time of variable length, which could occur at different times each year, and were defined not by the astronomical calendar but by the weather, and agricultural practices linked to the weather. One can find interesting allusions to these old meanings in Gaelic proverbs, like:

Mios Faoillich; seachdain Feadaig / A month of the Stormy; a week of the Plover

Ceithir là deug Gearrain; seachdain Caillich / a Fortnight of the Gelding; a week of the Old Woman

Tri là Sguabaig – suas e, 'n t-Earrach! / Three days of the brushlet – up with Spring!

Fascinating discussions of these old uses are scattered throughout the older dictionaries, like Dwelly and McBain, as well as Ronald Black (*Cothrom Ionnsachaidh*, p. 52), who comments on their usurpation for modern calendrical purposes that “the use of many... as calendar months is forced...”

Particularly interesting is Dwelly’s long entry for *Màrt*, in which he states that “the old ‘months’ appear to have been moveable and dependent for the time of their commencement on whether the suitable weather had already arrived. If the weather had not come, neither had the month.”

Alexander Nicholson puts all of this together in a fascinating appendix on spring in his *Gaelic Proverbs* (pp. 444 to 449). Nicholson concurs with Dwelly that, before it was forced into the straitjacket of months, spring consisted of stretches of time, of variable length and date, depending on the weather. Some of them approximated the length of a month, but there was a myriad of wee monthlets sprinkled in between. Spring began with *Am Faoilteach*, the stormy period. Nicholson acknowledges the ‘wolf’ word as a possible derivation, but gives a nod to the alternative view that it is the season of ‘joyous salutation’. It corresponds roughly to the month of February (Dwelly says, more specifically, that “in Lewis it begins on the Friday nearest three weeks before the end of January and ends on the Tuesday nearest the end of the third week of February”). Dwelly adds that sometimes the first half was called *Am Faoilteach Geamhraidh* ‘The Winter *Faoilteach*’ and the second half *Am Faoilteach Earraich* ‘The Spring *Faoilteach*’. Then came the week of *An Fheadag* – the Plover or Whistle – perhaps because of the piping winds that heralded it. Then came *An Gearran*, a period of uncertain length, possibly from March 15 to April 11, inclusive. Or maybe it was only two weeks long? Or maybe only one? Then *A’ Chailleach*, ‘The Old Woman’, lasting a week, from the 12th to the 18th of April or so. And the three days immediately following *A’ Chailleach* were the *Sguabag* ‘The Little Brush’, and there followed the *Tri Là nan Oisgean* ‘The Three days of the Ewes’. And then came *Am Màrt*, which now means ‘March’, but as Dwelly notes, once referred to the sowing season, whenever it commenced and however long it lasted. And there was *A’ Ghobag* ‘the Dogfish’, a week or three days long, stuck somewhere in between *An Fheadag* and *An Gearran*. And *Neòil Dhubha na Caisge* ‘The Dark Clouds of Easter’, in the fourth week of March. Followed by *Glasadh na Cuthaig* ‘the Greening of the Cuckoo’.

Now tell me the truth . . . wouldn’t that be a much more interesting way to reckon the passing of time?



A Bharrachd

If Wayne Harbert’s grammar column (see “A month of the Stormy; a week of the Plover,” page 13 in this issue) on Gaelic names for the months and seasons interested you, check out Ruairidh MacIlleathain’s *An Litir Bheag* ## 151 and 152 and *Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh* ## 455 and 456 for more on the topic.

You’ll find them as “The Little Letter” and “Letter to Learners” under “Watch and Listen” at <https://learngaelic.scot/>.

And for Facle fans (see Website to Watch on page 6 of this issue) who want something a little more challenging, here’s Cir-ogham. <https://cadhan.com/beach/gd/>

With this issue, we’re trying out a new feature, Crossword Puzzles, which could become a regular series if it proves popular. This time, we’ve included an elementary version (page 21), which is mostly vocabulary practice with clues in English but answers in Gaelic, and an advanced version (page 22) which is all in Gaelic with more subtle clues. Let us know what you think: rudy@ramsisle.com

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, Duncan Sneddon, to pick a poem from “Meek Lines” and tell us about it.

Duncan holds a Ph.D in Celtic Studies from the University of Edinburgh and is the Gaelic Development Officer for the Church of Scotland. He also is the author of the *Handbook of Biblical and Ecclesiastical Gaelic*.



An Eaglais Fhalamh

le Dòmhnall Meek

Bha na suidheachain falamh san eaglais an-dràs’,
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’,
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

Tha Dòmhnall E. Meek air iomadh òran a dhèanamh. Bidh iad a’ nochdadh air “Leabhar nan Aodann” (mar a chanas e fhèin ris) cha mhòr a h-uile seachdain, agus tha e air dà dhuanair fhoillseachadh gu ruige seo, leabhraichean a tha a cheart cho prìseil agus cudromach ’s a tha a chuid sgoilearachd air eachdraich, litreachas agus cànan nan Gàidheal. Bidh cuid dhiubh èibhinn, cuid smaoinichail, agus a’ suathadh ri iomadh rubha eadar Eilean Uaine Thioraidh agus Rìoghachd Nèamh: eachdraidh, dualchas agus dùthchas, slighe a bheatha fhèin, polytunnels, creideamh agus caran an t-saoghail. Anns a’ chruinneachadh as ùire aige, *Eadar Ceòl is Coròna* (Clàr: 2021), tha cuid de na h-òran a’ meòrachadh air atharrachaidhean a thàinig air beatha an

t-saoghail gu lèir ri linn Covid-19. Chaidh a’ mhòr-chuid de na dàin a dhèanamh mus robh sgeul idir air a’ ghalair sin, ach tha grunn òran ann air a’ chuspair seo, cuid dhiubh èibhinn (“Bursday Party Zoom”, “Cha Chluinn Thu Ach Coròna”) agus cuid eile a’ deileigeadh ris an staing ann an dòigh nas sòlamaite (“Ainglean na Slàinte”, “Na Miltean”). Ach dhomhsa is e an laoidh “An Eaglais Fhalamh” an dàn as fhèarr leam anns an duanaire, dàn a rinn am bàrd anns an Fhaoilleach 2021 (*Eadar Ceòl is Coròna*, td. 192 – 193).

Aig an àm sin bha na h-eaglaisean ann an Alba a’ fosgladh nan dorsan a-rithist, beag air bheag. Bha gu leòr dhiubh fhathast dùinte - agus airson na feadhna a bha fosgailte, bha cuingealachan ann, masgaichean, casg air seinn, a h-uile neach nan suidhe dà mheatar air falbh o chèile agus mar sin air adhart. Aig an àm sgrìobhaidh, An Gearran 2022, tha cuid de na riaghailtean sin fhathast ann. Co-dhiù, b’ e gle bheag de dhaoine a bha a’ frithealadh na seirbheise air an t-Sàbaid anns an deach am bàrd dhan eaglais, agus tha e a’ cur an cèill cho neònach agus dubhach ’s a bha e a bhith ann: *gun seinn is gun fhonn, bu lom bha an t-àit’./ ’s am beagan a bh’ againn gun fhacal ga ràdh.*

Bha e a’ coimhead mu thimcheall air an eaglais, a’ faicinn nan suidheachain falamh far am b’ àbhaist a chairdean a bhith nan suidhe, ag ùrnaigh agus a’ seinn mar bu nòs dhaibh. *Bha mo chridhe fo smalan, is m’ aigne fo sgàil./ ’s mi ’g ionndrainn gach caraid bha taiceil nam spàirn.* Tha mi cinnteach gum biodh cuid am measg an luchd-leughaidh a dh’aithneachas mar a bha e a’ faireachdainn an latha sin, nuair a thill iad dhan eaglais aca airson a’ chiad uair às dèidh àm a’ ghlaisidh, anns an eadar-shaoghal anabarrach sin anns an robh sinn, le cas a’ fuireach ann an linn a’ ghalair, agus cas a’ falbh dhan t-saorsa a bha sinn ag iarraidh agus a bha againn roimhe.

Ach nuair a chuala e searmon a’ mhinisteir, agus Litir gu na Philipianiach 1: 1 – 11 mar cheann-teagaisg, thuig e mun ghràs a tha againn ann an cuideachd na h-eaglaise – faicseannach agus neo-fhaicsinneach, an fheadhainn a tha ann a-nis agus an fheadhainn a chaidh romhainn air an t-slighe, an fheadhainn a tha ri ar taobh (aig astar dà mheatar!) agus an fheadhainn a tha fhathast nan taighean fa-leth: *’s na miltean ’s na ceudan a’ gleusadh an dàin./ ’s am beagan a bh’ againn, bha sinne nam pàirt.* Faisg oirnn no fad às, bidh iad uile a’ seinn agus ag ùrnaigh ann an co-sheirm, agus b’ e an tuigse seo a lion cridhe a’ bhàird le aoibhneas is dòchas. Chan eil Dòmhnall Meek a’ cleachdadh na h-abairte fhèin “co-chomann nan naomh” anns an laoidh seo, ach cha chuala mi agus cha do leugh mi a-riamh an teagasg sin o Chreud nan Abstol air a chur an cèill cho soilleir agus cho brìghmhor ’s a tha againn anns an dàn seo.

Rinn Bria Mason clàradh dhen laoidh seo, agus cluinnear e aig deireadh na seirbheise seo air Eaglais
Air-loidhne: <https://youtu.be/rkt9BtaflWY>

An t-Oll. Donnchadh Sneddon
Dùn Èideann, Alba

Seanfhacal na Ràithe – Pictured Proverb

Do you know what familiar Gaelic
proverb is illustrated here?

Check page 25 to see if you’re right.



Image by Flavionunespt from Pixabay. www.pixabay.com

An t-àite agam fhìn

“An t-àite agam fhìn,” is where you will find short pieces by ACGA members and friends about their families, their homes, and their world. In this issue, Hilary NicPhàidein writes about how she hoped that transcribing stories read in Gaelic by a fluent speaker could help her improve her conversation skills. Cam MacRae describes an innovative way in which she has connected to some of her Gaelic-speaking friends, who have an interest in common, through a new-found community activity.

And if you would like to try your hand at a short anecdotal piece in Gaelic about the place where you live or the people in it, we'd love to publish it in “An t-àite agam fhìn.” Don't worry about making your Gaelic perfect. We'll help you with the editing process.

Tar-sgrìobhadh – gnìomh ionnsachaidh ùr dhomh

le Hilary NicPhàidein

Dihaoine, deich uairean sa mhadainn, bun-sgoil a sia, latha air choreigin ann an 1965:

Thuir Bana-mhaighstir Irene Redford, “Thoir na leabhraichean-sgrìobhaidh às na deasgan agaibh. Nì sinn deachdadh.”

“’S toigh leam a bhith a’ dèanamh deachdadh,” thuir mi rium fhìn. Cha bhruidhneadh duine gun chead anns a’ chlas aig a’ Bh-mh Redford. Chaidh i do cholaiste trèanadh luchd-teagaisg ann an Dùn Dè còmhla ri mo mhàthair anns na ceathradan. Dh’fheumainn a bhith modhail.

An dèidh dhi leughadh fad fichead mionaid thog i na leabhraichean-sgrìobhaidh againn suas. Bha mi ’n dòchas nach biodh cus chomharraidhean dearga air an duilleig an dèidh dhi an oidhirp agam a cheartachadh.

Uill, bha sin o chionn fhada agus chan eil mi buileach cinnteach fhathast carson a rinn sinn deachdadh ann am bun-sgoil. Ma dh’fhaoidte gun robh sinn a’ leasachadh ar comas-èisteachd agus gun robh sinn ag ionnsachadh far am bu chòir dha na cromagan, na cromagan thurach is na stad-phuingean a dhol. Mar a b’ àbhaist bha faclan ùra anns an earrann a leughadh i. Bha litreachadh ceart cudromach cuideachd. Cha robh thu airson cus mhearachdan a dhèanamh.

Mu leth-cheud bliadhna air adhart is mi a’ dèanamh an aon rud, rudeigin coltach ri deachdadh co-dhiù. ’S e tar-sgrìobhadh a tha mi a’ dèanamh. Anns an latha a tha ann, bu toigh leam an comas-còmhradh agam a leasachadh. Nuair a ghabhas mi seachas le cuideigin, feumaidh mi èisteachd, tuigsinn agus freagairt. Tha sin cus dhomh mar neach-ionnsachaidh. Tha mi dhen bheachd gur e clacharan a th’ ann an tar-sgrìobhadh air an t-slighe gu comas-còmhradh. Le sin tha mi ann an clas far a bheil mi ag obair air tar-sgrìobhaidhean.

Tha Aonghas MacLeòid na thidsear agus tha an clas a’ còrdadh rium gu mòr. Rinn Aonghas faidhlichean-fuaime dhan a’ chlas agus èistidh mi ris na sgeulachdan aige agus sgrìobhaidh mi sìos na chluinneas mi.

Feumaidh mi ràdh nach eil e furasta an-còmhnaidh. Uaireannan tha mi a’ cluinntinn deireadh facail mar thoiseach an fhacail a leanas. Nuair a thachras sin tha facal ùr ann agus chan eil mi ga thuigsinn. Cha bhi m’ eanchainn ag obair. Tha cuimhn’ agam air na h-oidhirpean agam o chionn bhliadhnaichean, is iadsan cho doirbh beàrnagach. Tha am briathrachas pearsanta agam nas motha na bha agus ’s urrainn dhomh sreath fhaclan fada nas fhaide a chluinntinn agus a thuigsinn. Tha sin math agus cumaidh mi orm leis a’ chomas-còmhradh agam.

Tha an clas seo fìor-spòrsail. ’S urrainn dhomh bruidhinn rè a’ chlas agus is mise an tè leis a’ pheann dhearg a-nis seach a’ bhana-mhaighstir.

Find out more about this and other Explore Gaelic classes taught by Angus MacLeod and Fiona Smith in this issue’s *Dè Tha Dol?*, page 27.

Fighe aig astar

le Cam MacRae

An t-àite agam fhìn. Sna làithean seo, 's e flat beag ann am meadhan baile ann am meadhan stàit ann am meadhan nan Stàitean an t-àite agamsa. Air sgàth COVID, 's ann tric a tha mi nam aonar nam àite (a bharrachd air cat) ach tha mi air a bhith trang. 'S e figheadair a th' annam, figheadair nam bior. 'S àbhaist dhomh stocainnean is geansaidhean a dhèanamh ach o chionn beagan mhiosan, thàinig smuain orm: Bu toigh leam rudeigin fhighe còmhla ri figheadairean eile, chan ann anns a' flat bheag a th' agam, ach aig astar, air-loidhne.

Dh'fhaighnich mi do thriùir charaidean aig a bheil Gàidhlig agus a tha nam figheadairean am biodh iad deònach "fighe aig astar" còmhla rium. Uill, gu dearbh, bha iad deònach. Lorg mi pàtran air-loidhne agus fhuair mi fear a dhèanadh an gnothach, nam bheachdsa. 'S e "Boneyard Shawl," pàtran le figheadair ainmeil Stephen West a th' ann, pàtran a tha ri fhaotainn saor an-asgaidh air an làrach-linn, Ravelry. 'S e pàtran furasta a th' ann, ach 's e an rud as fheàrr, rinn West am pàtran nuair a bha e a' fuireach sa bhaile agam fhìn, agus chuir e "Boneyard" air air sgàth Boneyard Art Festival, fèis bhliadhnail sa sgìre seo. Carson "Boneyard," uill, tha allt air a bheil Boneyard Creek a' ruith tron bhaile againn.

Co-dhiù, bha ceathrar againn sa bhuidheann, a' fighe còmhla, Janice Chan à Toronto, Annag Landin à Carolina a Tuath, agus Hilary NicPhàidein à Washington, D.C. Is e faighinn a-mach dè am facal airson "shawl" a th' anns a' Ghàidhlig a' chiad rud a bha againn ri dhèanamh. Anns an Fhaclair Bheag, chunnaic sinn beannag, guailleachan, pleata bheag, filleag, guailleag, citeag, ciotag. Agus tha barrachd ann! Chuir sinn romhainn gun do chòrd "beannag" rinn. Agus 's e liosta de dh'fhaclan eile a bhiodh cuideachail dhuinn rud eile a rinn sinn.

Seo an liosta againn:

snàth - yarn, thread

bior fighe - knitting needle

deilbh àireamh de lùban - cast on

lùb - stitch in knitting

lùb cheart - knit stitch

lùb cheàrr - purl stitch

cuir a-mach air - increase

cuir ceann air - cast off / bind off

Agus le sin, tòisichidh sinn, agus nam biodh tu a' smaoinichadh gun robh beannagan air an dèanadh leis an aon phàtran co-ionnan, bhiodh tu ceàrr. Chuir sinn feum air snàth diofraichte agus bioran de mheud dhiofraichte.

Seo agad na beannagan againn. Nach eil iad coltach ri bogha-froise bheannagan? Agus a-nis, is sinne air crìoch a chur orra? An lean sinn ri fighe aig astar? Gu dearbha. A bheil cuideigin ag iarraidh geansaidh ùr?

Ma bhios ùidh agad anns a' phàtran a bha sinn a' cleachdadh, seo an ceangal:

<https://www.ravelry.com/patterns/library/boneyard-shawl>



Janice Chan



Hilary NicPhàidein



Cam MacRae



Anne Landin

Bàrdachd airson ar linn

We love it when Gaelic learners turn into Gaelic poets! “Bàrdachd airson ar linn” is an 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 poems from Àdhamh Dàmaireach (Kentucky/Canada), John Grimaldi (New York City), Nancy Neveln (Washington State), and one of our editors, B.L. Rice (New York City), who was recently published in *Steall* 7.

Òran Loch Laomainn

*Air fonn dualchasach dhen aon ainm
air eadar-theangachadh le Àdhamh Dàmaireach*

'S tu ghabhas an àrd-rathad
Is mise san uaigh
Ach ruigidh mi 'n seann-dùthaich romhad-sa
Ach cha bhi mo ghràdh
Is mi fhìn a-rithist gu bràth
Faisg air còrsachan àillidh Loch Laomainn

Air slèibhtean is leacainnean bòidheach is grinn
Far a thuit deòthan grèin' air Beinn Laomainn
B' àbhaist dhomh tighinn, còmhla ri mo rùn cho binn
Faisg air còrsachan àillidh Loch Laomainn

'S ann an siud rinn sinn sgaradh
An sgàilean a' ghlinn
An car taoibh chais ghleannaich
Bheinn' Laomainn
Far bu chorcar an dath
Air an fhraoch a bha fo bhlàth
'S dheàrrs a' ghealach mar lochran sna craobhan

Bidh an smeòrach a' seinn
Is an loch a' balg ri grèin
Is a' mhaoisleach ag altram a laoghain;
Agus bidh mi nam measg
Ged a bhios mo chorp an easg
Is mo bhean bhòidheach dileas gam chaoineadh

Loch Lomond's Song

*To the traditional air of the same name
Translated by Adam Dahmer*

It is you who'll take the high road
While I'm in the grave
But I'll reach the Old Country before you
But my love
And I won't be again till judgement day
Near the lovely shores of Loch Lomond

On pretty, picturesque slopes and hillsides
Where sun beams fell on Loch Lomond
It was my habit to come, with my wife so sweet
Near the lovely shores of Loch Lomond

It's there that we did part
In the shade of the glen
Near Ben Lomond's steep,
Valleyed side
Where purple was the color
Of the heather that was in bloom
And the moon shone like a lamp in the trees

The thrush will be singing
And the lake basking in the sun
And the doe nursing her fawn;
And I will be among them
Though my body will be in a ditch
And my pretty, faithful wife keening for me

An Dà Eun

le Iain Grimaldi

Chaochail an t-eun beag nam làmh.
Stad a chridhe.
Dh'fharaich mi e a stadadh
nam làimh fhìn.

Bha a anail cho trom
mus do stad e.
Rinn e sabaid son anail
gus àm a bhàis.

The Two Birds

by John Grimaldi

A small bird died in my hand.
His heart stopped.
I felt it stop
in my own hand.

His breath was so heavy
before it stopped.
He fought for breath
up to his time of death.

Bha blàths a bhodhaig
sam bas mo làimh.
Dh'fharaidh mi an stri aige
's a bheatha.

Thiodhlaic mi e air bun chraoibh
san talamh feitheamh.
Rinn mi toll beag is tha e na laighe
gu sàmhach fhathast.

Bha mi fo bhròn nach urrainn
dha itealaich idir.
Bha an speur cho soilleir is gorm
is an talamh cho dorch.

An diugh fhuair mi eun beag eile.
Bha e fo eagal
ach bha e slàn is sàbhailte
nam làmh a laighe.

Cniadaich mi e lem mheòirean
is fàs e sàmhach.
Chuala mi nam inntinn fhìn
a bhuille chridhe.

Bha a anail cho sèimh
agus bha sìth ann.
Chuir mi e air geug an chraoibh
is dh'fhuirich e mionaid.

Nuair dh'itealaich e don geug eile
dh'fhairich mi saor.
Dh'itealaich sinne san speur
le spioradan làn gaol.

The warmth of his body was
in the palm of my hand.
I felt his struggle
and his life.

I buried him at the base of a tree
in the waiting ground.
I made a small hole and he lies there
calmly still.

I was sad that he could not
fly at all.
The sky was so bright and blue
and the ground so dark.

Today I found another small bird.
He was frightened
but he was healthy and safe
lying in my hand.

I stroked him with my fingers
and he became calm.
In my own mind I heard
his heart beat.

His breath was so gentle
and there was peace in him.
I put him on a branch of the tree
and he waited a moment.

When he flew to another branch
I felt free.
We flew into the sky
with spirits filled with love

Dùrachdan na Ràithe / Wishes of the Season

le Nancy (Nanag) Neveln / by Nancy (Nanag) Neveln

Back during the holiday season, one of our members,
Nanag Neveln, read a short poem in the news media,
exhorting people to keep their spirits up during the
COVID pandemic. Here it is:

Stay safe
Stay strong
Stay connected.
We're all in this together.

Nanag decided this verse was rather pithy, too
concise; so she wrote her own version in Gaelic and
English.

Bithibh slàn, sàbhailte, cùramach
Bithibh làidir, treun, seasmhach
Bithibh ceangailte le ur coimhearsnachd.
Tha sinn uile 's a' chruaidh-chàs seo le chèile.

Be healthy, safe, and careful
Be strong, brave, and steadfast
Be connected with your community.
We are all in this emergency together.

Nanag's take on the original verse can surely serve
as a valuable reminder whatever the season.

Còmhradh-Fòn

le B.L. Rice

Bhrudhinn sinn rè na h-oidhche,
Agus uaireannan anns a' mhadainn,
Ged nach fhaca sinn a chèile airson bhliadhnaichean.
Bha e mar gun do shuidh mi ri do thaobh.

Dh'èist thu rium cho foighidneach,
nuair a dh'innis mi sgeulachdan-siubhail dhut,
Agus thuirt mi, dè do chor?,
'S beag a thuirt thu gus iochd a dhèanamh rium
Bhon chràdh, a' cluinntinn crannchur mo Mhàthar.

Thug e tlachd grad-ùineach dhut,
Fios a bhith agad, gun tigeadh bruarad gu buil.

Agus aon latha gu h-obann,
Gun sanas neo gleòthan
Shiubhail thu à saoghal-stri,
Gu Nèamh agus beatha mhaireannach.

Gum biodh sìth maille riut a-nis,
Fhad's a dh'fhanas mi air an Talamh seo
Athair, bidh mi gad ionndrainn,
Mar a chuireas mi m' aghaidh ris an àm ri teachd gu
faiceallach.

Telephone Conversation

by B.L. Rice

We talked in the evenings,
And sometimes, mornings, too.
Even though we had not seen each other in years,
It was as if I were right next to you.

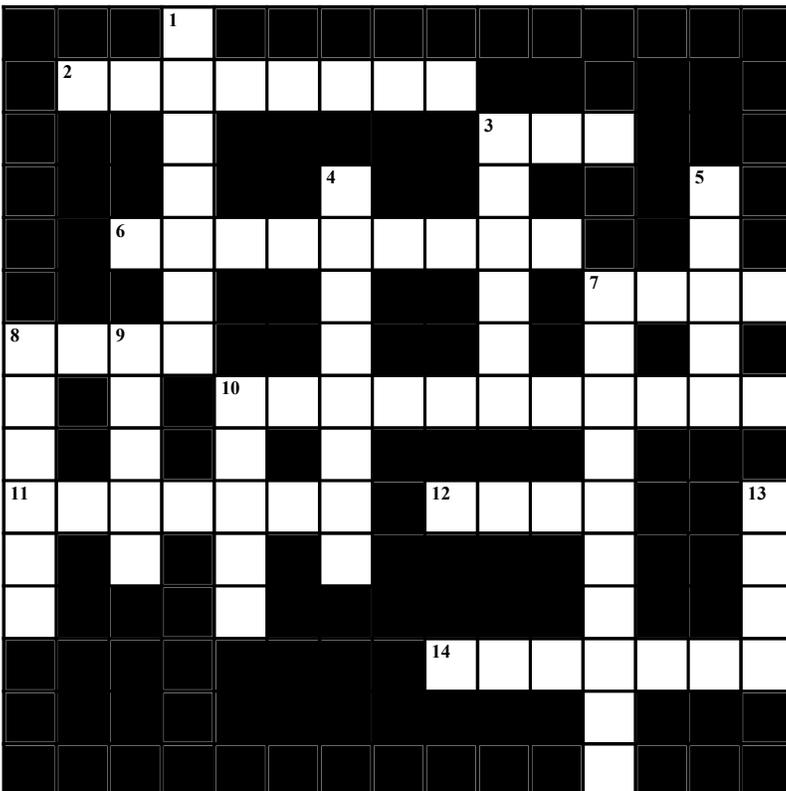
You listened to me so patiently,
when I told stories of adventure [*literally stories
of travel*] to you,
And I always asked how you were.
Little do you say, to spare me,
the pain of hearing Mother's circumstances.

It gave you a momentary pleasure,
To know dreams could come true.

Then one day suddenly,
Without notice or a fight,
You passed from a world of strife,
To Heaven and eternal life.

Peace be with you now,
While I tarry on this earth.
Father, I miss you,
As I face the future warily.

Elementary Crossword: Buill a' Chuirp (Body Parts)



Across

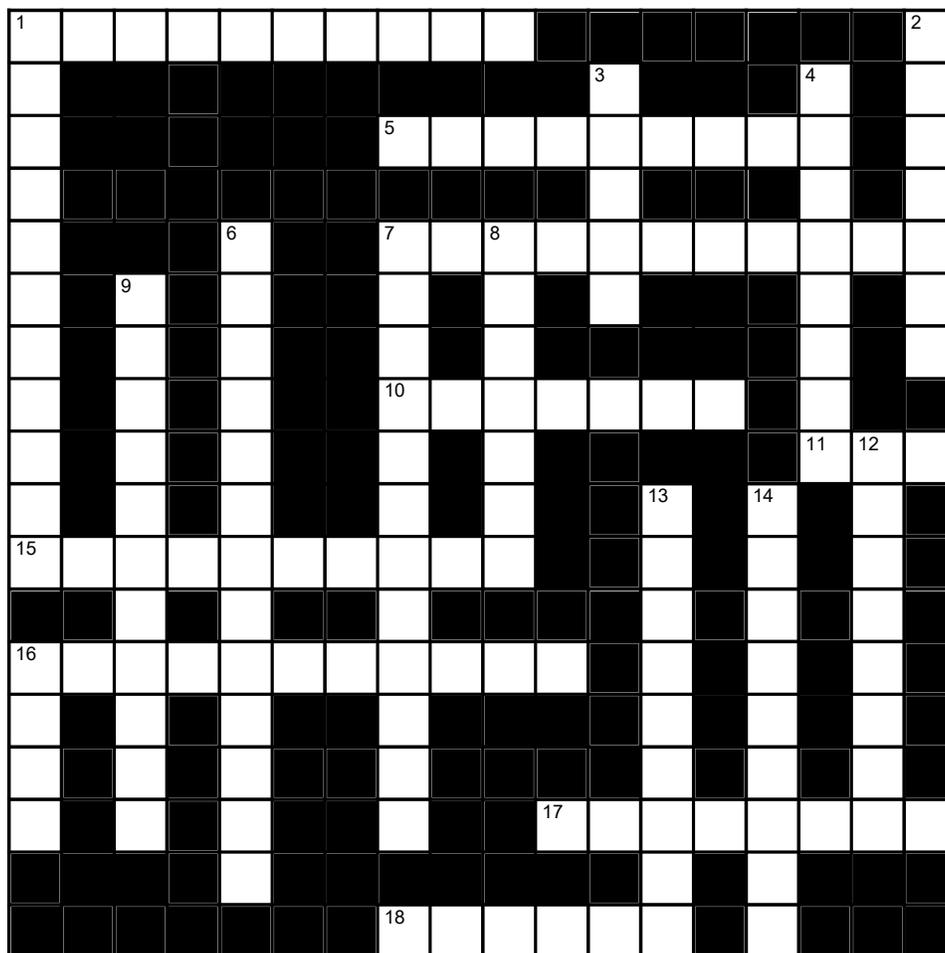
- 2 Arm (8)
- 3 Foot (3)
- 6 Wrist (4-5)
- 7 Mouth (4)
- 8 Nose (4)
- 10 Toe (6-5)
- 11 Shoulder (7)
- 12 Eye (4)
- 14 Neck (7)

Down

- 1 Elbow (7)
- 3 Finger (6)
- 4 Ankle (8)
- 5 Ear (5)
- 7 Chest (10)
- 8 Chin (6)
- 9 Thumb (5)
- 10 Head (5)
- 13 Hand (4)

See page 28 for solution.

Tòimhseachan-tarsainn Adhartach: As t-Earrach



Tarsainn

- 1 Chunnaic Ailis fear geal (10)
- 5 Glanadair nàdarra (4,5)
- 7 Na dathan uile (5-6)
- 10 Sniomhan cunnartach (7)
- 11 Àitichean-chòmhnaidh (3)
- 15 Seinn/òran nan eun (10)
- 16 Dathach agus math ri ithe (3,2,6)
- 17 Biastag le sgiathan brèagha (6-2)
- 18 Rud cinnteach, mar am bàs (6)

Sios

- 1 Biadh sa phàirc (5-6)
- 2 Adhbhar son sreothartan (7)
- 3 Blàth nach eil air fosgladh fhathast (5)
- 4 Flùr a' Ghiblein (8)
- 6 Beart-inneal an earraich (7-6)
- 7 Samhla Iapanach airson ath-ùrachaidh (5,2,5)
- 8 Far a bheil na lusan (7)
- 9 Tàlaidhean-seilleanan (11)
- 12 Gluasad tràthail (8)
- 13 Sealladh de shoillse is fuaim (9)
- 14 Teachdaire iteagach (3-6)
- 16 Creutairean beaga clòimhe (4)

See page 28 for solution.

Clach air a Càrn

The American Gaelic learner community lost a long-time friend and supporter with the unexpected death of Sue Hendrix, on February 15, 2022.

You may recall our recent article here about the Gaelic study group that met in her Boulder, Colorado, home for twenty-five years (*An Naidheachd Againne*, Fall 2021, p. 17). Sue was also involved in many other Gaelic activities over the years. She began studying Gaelic with the classes offered by Glenn Wrightson many years ago in Denver. She attended classes at the Gaelic College at St. Ann's, Nova Scotia, four times. She organized Gaelic tents at the Highland festival in Estes Park, Colorado, for several years. And she was one of several local learners who helped put on ACGA Immersion Weekends in Boulder. Sue's husband, Glenn Blauvelt, was also a Gaelic learner for several years, and participated in some of these activities.



Glenn Blauvelt and Sue Hendrix, 2018

Sue was a lifelong learner, earning a Ph.D. in computer science with a minor in cognitive science after her retirement. Other interests were watercolor painting, STEM education, as well as women and minorities in engineering, history, and music. Her enthusiasm, friendliness, and generosity of spirit will be missed.

 **More Than Kilts and Cabers**
Scottish Gaelic Voices from
North America

A New Podcast Episode Every Day of
Seachdain na Gàidhlig/World Gaelic Week
March 21-27

- Explore a different region of North America in each episode
- Discuss the history of Scottish Highland immigrants to the area
- Learn the songs and stories that attest to their lives and struggles.

March 21: The Atlantic Seaboard From Virginia to Florida and the Caribbean
March 22: New England and the Canadian Maritimes
March 23: New York, Ontario, and Quebec
March 24: The Upper Mid-West States and the Canadian Prairies
March 25: The Pacific West from Alaska to California
March 26: Missing Evidence, Ethnic Myths, and Gaels of Many Colors
March 27: Keeping Gaelic Voices Alive in North America

Click here to listen: <https://open.spotify.com/show/6hS1AHwKrxHCXpJeTYKOG>

A collaboration between three North American organizations serving the Gaelic community: An Comunn Gàidhealach Ameireaganach (the American Scottish Gaelic Society), the Hidden Glen Folk School of Scottish Highland Heritage, and Sgoil Gàidhlig Bhaile an Taigh Mhóir (The Gaelic School of Baltimore).



The recipe for this tasty dish comes to us from our friend Molly MacRae, who has adapted it from one in America's Test Kitchen's *The Complete Plant-based Cookbook*. Molly says, "the original recipe calls these tacos, but we fold them up like burritos for neater eating." She highly recommends this cookbook; in fact, her family has used their copy so much that it has become a loose-leaf book!

Burritothan le Pònairean Dubha agus Buntàta Milis, is Uineannan Dearga Milis-spiosrach Picilte

(leasaichte bho: *The Complete Plant-based Cookbook* from America's Test Kitchen)

Black Bean and Sweet Potato Burritos With Sweet-Spicy Pickled Red Onions

(adapted from *The Complete Plant-based Cookbook* from America's Test Kitchen)



Griitheidean airson nam burritothan:

- 3 spàintean-bùird ola-chroinn-ola
- 3 piosan longan-creamha air an gearradh gu mìn
- 1 1/2 spàintean-tì cumin bleithte
- 1 1/4 spàintean-tì coireamain bleithte
- 1/4 spàin-tì oragain air a thiomachadh
- 1 spàin-tì salainn
- 1/2 spàin-tì piopair
- 1 phunnd buntàta milis air a rùsgadh agus air a ghearradh ann am piosan 1/2 òirleach a leud
- 4 piobairean poblano, gun ghasan, gun sìl, agus air an gearradh ann am piosan 1/2 òirleach a leud
- 1 uinnean mòr, air a ghearradh ann an dà leth, is an uair sin air a ghearradh ann am piosan 1/2 òirleach a leud
- 1 chana (15 unnsachan) de phònairean dubha, air an sgoiladh (no 2 chupa, ma bhruicheas tu fhèin iad)
- 1/4 lus a' choire air a ghearradh le buille dòrlach shiobannan, air an sliseadh (a bharrachd air an uinnean ròiste)
- 8 tortillathan min-fhlùir, 10 òirlich ann am meud, air am blàthachadh

Griitheidean airson nan uinneanan picilte a chuireas tu air mullach nam burritothan:

- 1 uinnean dearg, dà leth air a dhèanamh air
- 1 chupa fiona-ghèir dheirg
- 1/3 cupa siùcair
- 2 phiobair-thilidh jalapeno, gun ghasan, gun sìl, agus air an gearradh ann an fainneachan tana
- 1/3 spàin-tì salainn

Ingredients for the burritos:

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves minced
- 1 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 1/4 tsp ground coriander
- 1/4 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1 pound sweet potatoes, peeled, and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 4 poblano chiles, stemmed and seeded, and cut into 1/2-inch wide strips
- 1 large onion, halved, and then sliced into 1/2-inch thick pieces
- 1 (15 ounce) can black beans, rinsed (or 2 cups that you've cooked yourself)
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 bunch scallions, sliced (in addition to the roasted onion or to help make up for the missing onion)
- 8 10-inch flour tortillas, warmed

Ingredients for the pickled onions that go on top of the burritos:

- 1 red onion, halved and sliced thin through root end
- 1 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2 jalapeno chiles, stemmed, seeded, and cut into thin rings
- 1/3 tsp salt

Stiùiridhean airson nam Burritothan:

1. Cuir na racaichean san àmhainn os cionn agus fon mheadhan. Ro-theasaich an àmhainn gu 450° F.
2. Measgaich an ola agus na spìosraidhean còmhla ann am bobhla mòr. Cuir ann am buntàta, na piobairean, agus an t-uinnean agus measgaich iad.
3. Sgaoil a' ghlasraich gu cunbhalach air dà dhuilleig bèicearachd air an lìnigeadh le foidhle alùmanum. Bruich gus am bi a' ghlasraich meata agus òr-dhonn, mu leth-uair a thìde, a' measgachadh na glasraich agus an dèidh cairteal na h-uarach, a' tionndadh nan duilleagan bèicearachd eadar na racaichean.
4. Cuir a' ghlasraich air ais sa bhobhla. Cuir na pònairean, lùs a' choire, agus na siobannan ris. Measgaich gu socair.
5. Cuir measgachadh air gach tortilla blàth agus cuir na h-uinneanan picilte air uachdar sin. Cuir abhocado air a sliseadh, càise sgrìobte, uachdar goirt, no ge bi dè as toil leat air.

Stiùiridhean airson nan Uinneanan Picilte:

1. Cuir an t-uinnean ann am bobhla.
2. Èarr-bhruith am fion-geur, an siùcar, na piobairean, agus an salann ann am pana aig teas meadhanach àrd.
3. Measgaich bho àm gu àm gus an leagh an siùcar.
4. Doirt am fion-geur air an uinnean, cuir mullach air, agus leig leis fuarachadh gu tur, mu uair a thìde.
5. Drùidh a' ghlasraich ann an sìoltachan.
6. Cuir iad gu feum an ceartair air mullach nam burritothan, no glèidh iad anns an fhrìd cho fad ri seachdain.



Directions for the Burritos:

1. Adjust the oven racks to upper middle and lower middle positions. Preheat oven to 450° F.
2. Whisk oil and seasonings together in a large bowl. Add sweet potatoes, poblanos, and onion to oil mixture and mix to coat.
3. Spread vegetable mixture in an even layer on 2 foil-lined rimmed baking sheets. Roast until tender and golden brown, about 30 minutes, stirring vegetables and rotating sheets between racks halfway through.
4. Return vegetables to now-empty bowl. Add beans, cilantro, and scallions. Toss to gently combine.
5. Spoon burrito mixture onto warmed tortillas and top with pickled red onions. Add sliced avocados, grated cheese, sour cream, or anything else you feel like.

Directions for Pickled Onions:

1. Put onion in a bowl.
2. Bring vinegar, sugar, jalapenos, and salt to a simmer over medium-high heat.
3. Stir occasionally, until sugar dissolves.
4. Pour hot vinegar mixture over onion, cover, and let cool completely, about an hour.
5. Drain cooled vegetables in colander.
6. Serve now or keep in refrigerator for up to a week.

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!



Image by Flavionunespt from Pixabay. www.pixabay.com

Answer to Seanfhacal na Ràithe, p. 16

Cha tèid nì sam bith san dòrn dùinte.

Nothing can get into a closed fist.
(Nothing can be received by a closed hand,
but neither can it give.)

Dè Tha Dol?

Gaelic Events

Am Màrt 2022 / March 2022

Cèilidh Oidhche Haoine Bhiortail / Friday Night Virtual Ceilidh, Comunn Gàidhlig Toronto, March 19, 7:30pm EDT

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 us on the third Friday of the month and tell, sing or play. Most of all, you are invited to contribute with your presence. To register, simply fill out the form at the link below and you will be sent the Zoom link to join in online, 7:30 pm EDT. <https://www.gaelicsocietytoronto.com/friday-night-ceilidh.html>

Seachdain na Gàidhlig / World Gaelic Week, March 21 – March 27, 2022

Seachdain na Gàidhlig / Gaelic Week will be officially recognised in Scotland in 2022 with events between Monday, March 21 and Sunday, March 27. Individuals and groups throughout the world are encouraged to create their own events and list them on the official website. <https://seachdainnagaidhlig.scot/?lang=scg>

Seachdain na Gàidhlig / World Gaelic Week, March 21 – March 27, 2022

Join Michael Newton, Liam Ó Caiside, Rick Gwynallen and Scott Morrison for *More Than Kilts and Cabers - Scottish Gaelic Voices from North America*, a podcast collaboration among three North American organizations serving the Gaelic community: An Comunn Gàidhealach Ameireaganach (<https://acgamerica.org/>), The Hidden Glen Folk School of Scottish Highland Heritage (<https://www.hiddenglenfolk.org/>), and Sgoil Ghàidhlig Bhaile an Taigh Mhóir (<https://sgoilgaidhlig.org/>).

The podcast will be available on the following platforms: Spotify, Google Podcasts, Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music, Podcast Addict, TuneIn+Alexa and Stitcher. See page 23 for a complete schedule.

An Giblean 2022 / April 2022

Cèilidh Oidhche Haoine Bhiortail / Friday Night Virtual Ceilidh, Comunn Gàidhlig Toronto, April 15, 7:30pm EDT

To register, simply fill out the form at the link below and you will be sent the Zoom link to join in online, 7:30 pm EDT. <https://www.gaelicsocietytoronto.com/friday-night-ceilidh.html>

An Cèitean 2022 / May 2022

Cèilidh Oidhche Haoine Bhiortail / Friday Night Virtual Ceilidh, Comunn Gàidhlig Toronto, May 20, 7:30pm EDT

To register, simply fill out the form at the link below and you will be sent the Zoom link to join in online, 7:30 pm EDT. <https://www.gaelicsocietytoronto.com/friday-night-ceilidh.html>

An t-Ògmhios 2022 / June 2022

Fèis Seattle, Seabeck Conference Center, Seabeck, WA, June 21–26, 2022

We bring you together with leading tradition-bearers from Scotland and Cape Breton for an unforgettable event. Whether you are interested in fiddle, harp, whistle, guitar, Gaelic song or language, we have something for everyone. To register, see

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/feis-seattle-2022-registration-262311369367>

An t-Iuchair 2022 / July 2022

Ceòlas Sgoil Shamhraidh 2022 / Ceòlas Summer School 2022, South Uist, July 3–8, 2022

The main focus of Ceòlas is the week-long music and dance summer school featuring expert tuition in piping, fiddling, singing, Scotch reels and quadrilles, step dancing and Gaelic language. Plans are underway for an in-person event for 2022. Details will become available at <https://www.ceolas.co.uk/home/summer-school-2022/>

Beinn Seanair / Grandfather Mountain Gaelic Song and Language Week & Mòd, July 4–8, 2022

Depending on travel and other restrictions that may be in effect, the Grandfather Mountain Gaelic Song and Language Week will be held either in person or virtually this year. Instructors: Jason Bond and Stacey MacLean. More information as it becomes available will be found at <https://acgamerica.org/>.

Cùrsaichean Air Astar / Distance Learning

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Isle of Skye

The distance learning courses offered by Sabhal Mòr Ostaig are designed to enable students to become fluent in Scottish Gaelic and to progress to further study through the medium of Gaelic if desired. They range from *An Cùrsa Inntrigidh* for those with little or no Gaelic to BA(HONS) in Gaelic language and Culture.

For a description of all distance learning courses offered through Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, see <https://www.smo.uhi.ac.uk/distance-learning/?lang=en>

Ongoing

Explore Gaelic with Angus MacLeod and Fiona Smith

The Explore Gaelic classes are 10-week sessions held throughout the year, designed to help learners of all levels to move toward fluency in Scottish Gaelic. Angus and Fiona believe that learning works best when it's fun. They are always trying out new ways to teach and learn. Classes on offer include translation, transcription, conversation, listening, and song. They also drill tricky subjects and plunge into deeper explorations of the nooks and crannies of Gaelic. For more information about upcoming sessions, contact Nickie Polson at nickiepolson@shaw.ca.

Seinn air Loidhne / Gaelic Song Class with Brian Ó hEadhra

Brian is a well-known musician and singer based in Inverness, Scotland. You may know him as one of the members of the Gaelic quartet *Cruinn*. He holds Gaelic song classes on Zoom every so often, sharing great ceilidh and traditional songs. For more information, check Brian's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/brianoheadhramusic> or his new *Seinn air Loidhne* Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/seinnairloidhne>.

An Clas Camelon

Gaelic song and language workshops are offered on Zoom, from complete beginner to advanced / fluent. Ongoing classes include a beginner song class on alternate Wednesday evenings at 7pm GMT / 2pm EST. Each class is one hour, with new songs taught each class, so no need to attend each one. The cost is £6 per class. The instructor is a local musician, Eilidh, who is the singer in the band Madderam (on YouTube and Spotify). The songs and phonetics are sent out in advance and the price also includes a recording sent out afterwards. For more information or to register, email anclascamelon@gmail.com or see their FaceBook page.

Gaelic 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/Gaidhlig-Photomac>. Email Cathleen MacKay at amum44@yahoo.com for more information.

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/>

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

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 Gaelic language and song lessons

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, seonaganna@gmail.com

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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.
- www.facebook.com/ACGAGaelic, our Facebook page.
- www.youtube.com/user/ACGAmerica, our YouTube channel with video content.
- www.twitter.com/ACGAGaelic, our Twitter account, used for ACGA announcements.
- www.facebook.com/groups/1463155417230179, a special Facebook page for our Gaelic Song and Language Week at Grandfather Mountain. Click the "Join Group" button in the main menu to send a request to join.

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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