

# AN RÙBHA

*The Highland Village Gaelic Folklife Magazine*

**Holy Charlie MacDonald**

*Recollections of the late Reverend MacDonald*

**An Teine Mòr**

*The Story of The Great Fire from  
the pages of Mac Talla*

**Rug Hooking**

*A look at this special craft  
in Gaelic Nova Scotia*

**Naidheachd a' Chlachain**

*The latest news from Hector's Point*

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Village  
Museum  
AN CLACHAN  
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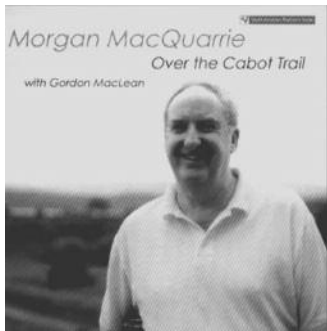
NOVA SCOTIA  
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Tourism, Culture and Heritage  
Roinn na Turasachd, a' Chultair agus an Dualchais

Vol. 10, No. 1: An Samhradh / Summer 2007



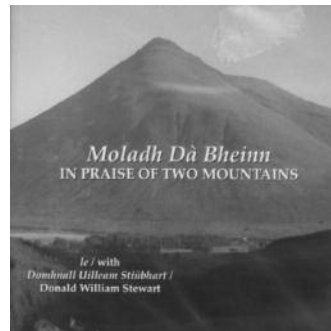
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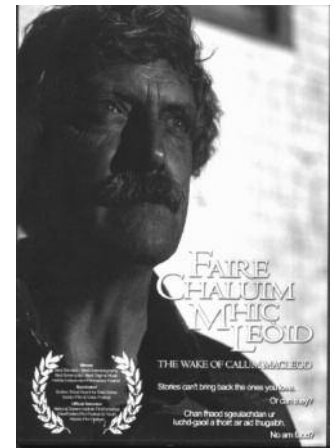
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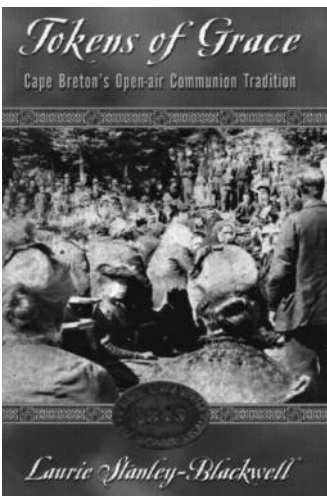
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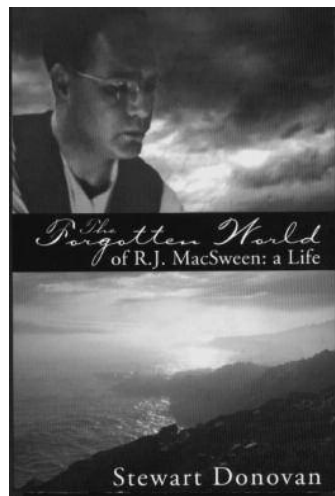
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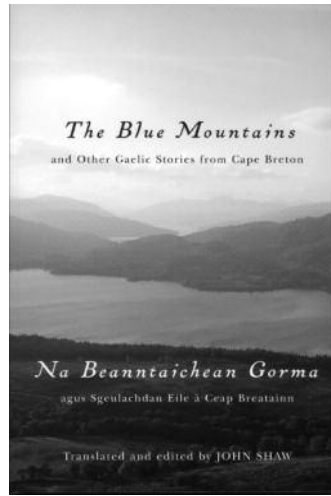
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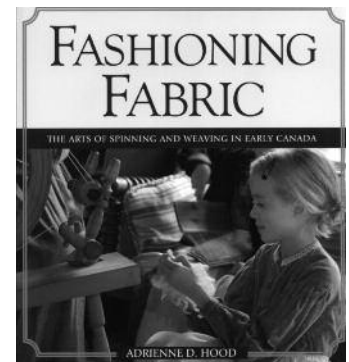
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*Period céilidh in the centre-chimney house: (back row) Joanne MacIntyre, chief interpreter & Meagan O'Handley, "Spòrs" program coordinator; (middle row) Tiber Falzett, curatorial assistant in traditional Gaelic music; Carla Pace, animator; Kyle MacDonald, animator, and Keith MacDonald, animator; (front) Maria MacMillan, public relations assistant. This summer the Highland Village has featured a strong cultural component through céilidhs, milling frolics and other musical presentations.*

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## From the Director's Desk

# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS & DEDICATION

Rodney Chaisson, Director

Shortly after joining the Nova Scotia Museum family in 2000, the Highland Village board and staff embarked on a strategic planning process to renew the vision for the organisation and to set out a plan to achieve that vision.

The vision statement adopted by the Board was to be internationally acknowledged for advancing research, fostering appreciation, learning and sharing authentic Gaelic language and culture while serving a vibrant Gaelic cultural community.

Over the past five years we have moved forward significantly to that end. Here are some highlights: greatly improved and enhanced Gaelic language representation and cultural expression on site; expanded range of animation activities, workshops and other special cultural presentations; authenticated material representations throughout the site including building presentation, artifact placement, costuming & farm animals; relocated & restored the Malagawatch Church; undertaken new marketing initiatives; provided leadership to the wider Gaelic community; developed relationships with other Gaelic related groups in Nova Scotia as well as Gaelic Scotland; and much more.

While we have moved forward on many fronts there are still challenges ahead, namely attendance and revenue generation. A poorly performing tourism industry, declining and aging local population are just two of the factors contributing to those challenges. Other factors requiring attention include infrastructure pressures and availability of skilled labour.

This coming fall the Society's board and staff will sit down to evaluate the past five years and begin to prepare for the next five. This planning cycle will take in to account some exciting developments provincially - the Heritage Division led, Nova Scotia Government-wide Heritage Strategy, the NS government's commitment to provide sustainable funding to the heritage sector, and the new Office of Gaelic Affairs. There is much happening at the provincial level.

Watch *An Rubha* and our website for updates on our planning process.



This issue of *An Rubha* is dedicated to a tireless supporter of the Highland Village and the wider central Cape Breton community - the late Dan E. MacNeil.

Dan E. served as a member of the Board of Trustees, taking on the role of treasurer during some of our most challenging years of the 1990's. He helped out on a number of site improvement projects. Most recently before his illness, he was our main codfish chef. He was always there to help in what ever capacity he was needed. He has very much played a contributing role to our successes over the past several years.

Dan's legacy is evident beyond the Village. For the past six years he served as the municipal councilor for District 1 of the Municipality of Victoria County. He chaired the Board of the Alderwood Guest Home and Victoria County's Broadband committee. As well he was involved with many other groups concerned with the Iona community or the Bras d'Or Lakes. As co-chair of the Rankin Memorial School Advisory Committee, he was a driving force in the construction of the new school for the Iona area. He worked hard for his community.

This past spring, Dan E. lost his battle with cancer, a disease he fought hard for three and a half years. Through his illness, Dan taught us a lot about importance of life and the need to live it to the fullest. He believed that as bad as things were for him, there was always someone else worse off. His attitude and strive for life is an example for all of us.

Our hearts and sympathies go out to Dan's family - his wife Liz, daughter Grace, his siblings, and other family members.

Just prior to his death, Dan was named the recipient of the 2007 Highland Village Award of Merit. The award was officially presented to Liz on Highland Village Day. ☺



Nova Scotia  
Highland Village  
Society

The Nova Scotia Highland Village Society (*Comunn Clachan Gàidhealach na h-Albann Nuaidh*) was incorporated on November 3, 1959 under the Societies Act of Nova Scotia. Its purpose was to construct and operate an outdoor folk museum dedicated to the Scottish Gaelic culture in Nova Scotia.



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

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

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

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

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Tourism, Culture and Heritage  
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The Society is a member of *Comhairle na Gàidhlig* (Gaelic Council of NS), National Trust of Scotland, CLI Gàidhlig, Gaelic Society of Inverness (Scotland), Federation of NS Heritage (FNSH), Canadian Museums Assoc. (CMA), Iona Connection Heritage Cop, Council of NS Archives (CNSA), Genealogical Assoc. of NS (GANS), Cape Breton Genealogy & Heritage Society, Interpretation Canada, Costume Society of NS, Assoc. of Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM), American Assoc. for State & Local History (AASLH), Tourism Industry Assoc of NS (TIANS), Baddeck & Area Business Tourism Assoc. (BABTA), and Destination Cape Breton Assoc.



## Mar is léir dhomh fhìn

# A FIELD WORKER'S REMARKS ON *Cainnt Mo Mhàthar*

Seumas Watson, Manager of Interpretation

Involvement as an interviewer, on behalf of Highland Village, with *Comhairle na Gàidhlig's* (NS Gaelic Council) *Cainnt Mo Mhàthar* project was a chance to renew some old acquaintances, and make new ones, among Gaelic-speaking informants from across Cape Breton Island. While most field recording activity in Gaelic Nova Scotia has been for archival and research purposes, this project's intention is to gather a body of speech that can be transformed into educational materials for use in adult immersion classes around the province. As it happens, in the language planning scenario of eight stages laid out by Joshua Fishman - dean of minority language planning theory - there is symbiosis with the adult immersion approach to Gaelic language renewal in the province and the *Cainnt Mo Mhàthar* recording project (see *An Rubha*, Vol. 9, No. 2 for details).

For those unfamiliar with Fishman's work, let's look at elements of actions recommended by Stages 8 and 7 in brief. The context for these actions is the present state of a language in decline due to cessation of intergenerational transmission. In the case of Nova Scotia, this is generally the situation of Gaelic, and hence the motivation for recent initiatives to implement reversal of that trend from the ground up.

Fishman's Stage Eight recommends linguistic reconstruction for languages lacking in documentation. The lexical and grammatical aspects of Gaelic are reasonably well known on the linguistic side, at least in Gaelic Scotland, but extensive recordings of Nova Scotia's variations for the purpose of creating audio and video learning materials has received little attention until now. *Cainnt Mo Mhàthar* has begun the process of addressing the need for supplementary material of this sort as immersion opportunities become more sophisticated.

The importance of these recordings, from the position of Stage Eight, is that they reflect historical social realities and give a touchstone view of Gaelic Nova Scotia to local learners. Interviews with native speakers brought forth a number of useful outcomes for development of Stage Eight goals, among these are the following foundations for Gaelic recovery:

1. *A regional overview of dialects found in Nova Scotia at present;*

2. *A wide range of idiomatic usages and vocabulary general to the common vernacular;*
3. *A social framework for the domains of Gaelic usage in rural Nova Scotia, including references to material culture, customs, agricultural and fishing practices, Gaelic traditions, religious and secular belief and folklore;*
4. *An historical backdrop to the prevalence of Gaelic in Nova Scotia recalled by speakers of Gaelic as their first language;*
5. *A benchmark for measuring fluency of speech and conceptual expression.*

Stage Seven of the Fishman model speaks to "mobilization" of speakers, in other words, engaging those who can speak the language with its learners. Nova Scotia has progressed on this path as demonstrated by generous contribu-

...they reflect historical social realities  
and give a touchstone view of Gaelic  
Nova Scotia to local learners...

tions made by Gaelic speakers to the *Cainnt mo Mhàthar* project which has recorded a range of dialectal variations typical of districts where the language has been spoken since the nineteenth century. Broadly speaking in a Canadian framework, these representations included Barra Gaelic from the Iona/Christmas Island area, North Uist Gaelic from the Gabarus/Catalone/Loch Lomond/Framboise area, Lewis/Harris Gaelic from the North Shore and a strong flavour of Moidart, Morar and Lochaber Gaelic in Inverness County. Despite slight variations of speech, in accent and vocabulary, it is fair to say that all informants related much the same Cape Breton socio-economic experience in their primary references to life and upbringing in the Island's Gaelic speaking households. That experience, socially and culturally, constitutes a common identity shared by Cape Breton/Nova Scotian Gaels that is complimentary to adult immersion education anywhere it might take place in the province.

It is evident from project results on topics of lifestyle, economy, material culture and the natural environment that vocabulary and idioms recorded from informants are generally similar regardless of dialect. A closer inspection of the recordings will doubtless reveal small differences on a number of lexical items and expressions, some of which are explained by religious affiliations, dietary customs and geographical origins in Gaelic Scotland. These slight variations, however, in no way affect the overall homogeneity of Gaelic spoken in Nova Scotia and can be regarded as an enrichment factor.

At the same time, critical evidence of Gaelic as the medium indispensable to its cultural storehouse is well contained in the project's cross section of informants. For adult immersion instructors and students, recordings provide many insights to longstanding customs, traditions, kinship and social beliefs that define Gaelic heritage. As well, informants supply a living rationale and motivation for individuals and communities engaged in Gaelic language renewal. The presence of Gaelic as the language of hearth, home and family is manifest throughout the interviews. The benefits for learners and instructors using this DVD resource go well beyond being a language tool, providing as it does a persona for the Gaelic cultural model.

A "mobilized" core of speakers as described in Fishman's Stage 7 is clearly present as demonstrated by the number of classes and volunteers coming forward at the collecting level. Gaelic renewal in Nova Scotia has also drawn considerable encouragement from professionals and other language groups within and outside the province. Among those interested are language learners, linguists, minority language educators, institutions, academics, anthropologists and ethnographers. While Gaelic Nova Scotia yet awaits serious language planning to consolidate results from regional immersion initiatives, the compass is being set towards a promising direction by the community itself. ☺

*Mar is léir dhomh fhìn (My Viewpoint) is a regular contribution from Seumas Watson, Manager of Interpretation.*

## Naidheachd a' Chlachain

# THE VILLAGE NEWS - WINTER/SPRING '07

Eòsag MacIntyre, Chief Interpreter

The off-season of 2006 and 2007 proved to be a busy time for Highland Village with a variety of activities and projects beginning after the Christmas holidays, in preparation for the upcoming season.

Staff training over the winter months included Gaelic language lessons and historical background on Highland immigration, while a daylong brainstorming session at the Highland Heights Inn resulted in the framework for a new candle light tour presentation.

The winter months saw Pauline MacLean, genealogist and collections manager, catalogue and re-house the MacLean Collection of manuscripts and music books. As part of the project, she completed a reference index which is now available to researchers in print and on-line. As well, congratulations are due to Pauline on her new appointment as President of the Council of Nova Scotia Archives. In addition, Pauline continues to serve with the province's Collections Management Working Group.

Katherine MacLeod was welcomed to the Highland Village collections unit as a Museum Studies intern from Algonquin College, Ottawa. A native of Iona, Katherine has made a significant contribution to collections inventory and the development of interpretive panels for the Malagawatch Church.

April and May saw Jim Watson travel to Belfast, Northern Ireland to make presentations on Cape Breton Gaelic traditions at the conference *Bho Chuan gu Cuan*, Queens University and *Cultùrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich* (the Falls Road Irish Cultural Centre). Continuing on to Scotland, Jim also made presentations for the Celtic Departments of Edinburgh and Aberdeen Universities.

During off-season, Chief Interpreter, Eòsag MacIntyre assisted in development of a new in-school educational outreach program titled *Sgadan is Buntàta* (Herring & Potatoes) to be launched in the up-coming 2007 - 2008 school year. This special program will send animators to schools which request presentations of Gaelic culture as depicted at Highland Village. Eòsag, along with the Gaelic Council's Shamus Y. MacDonald, were two of six young Gaelic-speaking Nova Scotians selected by the Office of Gaelic Affairs to receive scholarships from the Nova Scotia Department of Economic Development to attend the

Shambhala Institute for Authentic Leadership held at Mount St. Vincent University, Halifax. The week-long program focused on instruction to improve organizational leadership capacity and skills for personal transformation. The institute's modules, headed by outstanding experts in the field of leadership development, brought some 300 people to Halifax from more than 20 countries.

Office space provided for *Comhairle na Gàidhlig* (Gaelic Council of NS) continued to be busy with Shamus MacDonald putting the final touches on the interview phase of *Cainnt Mo Mhàthar* with the assistance of Jim Watson. Shamus also completed the initial groundwork for FIOS (*Forfhais, Innleachd, Oideachas Seirbhisean*), the province's new Gaelic community-based immersion organization. Shamus presently works at the Village in his new role as administrative officer for the *Comhairle*.

Operations staff were busy this spring preparing the site for opening. Tasks included a freshening of the visitor centre interior with a coat of paint and, installation of new windows, replacement of the *taigh beag* (staff washroom next to the MacDonald House which was damaged in a winter storm), cleaning up fallen trees, installing a new floor in the backstage, fencing and much more.

The Soay sheep flock wintered in

Middle River at Brooke and Kate Olands' farm with new lambs this spring numbering two. Highland cattle on loan from Charles MacDonald, Point Edward, are at pasture on the hill again this season, along with Clydesdale workhorse "Dan", on loan courtesy of Del Corbett of Grand Mira.

The Village welcomed one-year replacement animators this year while Aileen MacLean and Debbie MacNeil are on leave of absence. They are Patricia Kibyuk-MacDonald of Glace Bay/Grand Narrows and Meagan Quimby of Orangedale. Highland Village also brought on board nine student employees for the 2007 season, many of whom come with musical talent, including piper Keith and fiddler Kyle MacDonald of Foot Cape, Inverness County; piper and researcher Tiber Falzett, PEI; and fiddlers Carla Pace, Sydney and Meaghan O'Handley, Boisdale (children's program coordinator). Other summer students include collections assistant Katherine MacLeod, Iona; archival assistant Crystal MacNeil, Ottawa Brook; interpreter Holly MacNeil, Washabuck; and public relations coordinator Maria MacMillan, Windsor/Jamesville.

This spring the Highland Village received the Dr. Phyllis R. Blakeley Award from the Council of Nova Scotia Archives for the Cape Breton Céilidh vir-



(left to right) 2007 student team - Tiber Falzett, Kyle MacDonald, Meaghan O'Handley, Katherine MacLeod, Maria MacMillan, Holly MacNeil, Crystal MacNeil, Keith MacDonald and Carla Pace.

Photo by Eòsag MacIntyre





Photo by Maria MacMillan

tual museum exhibition. CAA/AAA have given the Highland Village its prestigious "GEM" rating in its tour guide. We also discovered that the moving of the Malagawatch Church was recognised by the 2006 edition of Ripley's *Believe it or Not!*

Congratulations are due to new grandfather Jim Bryden, manager of operations. His first grandson, Brady James Campbell, was born on June 12 to his daughter Shauna and son in-law Darrell of Abercrombie. All the best wishes are extended to the family from management and staff. *Mealaibh ur naid-heachd!* ☺

Compiled by Eòsag MacIntyre, chief interpreter.

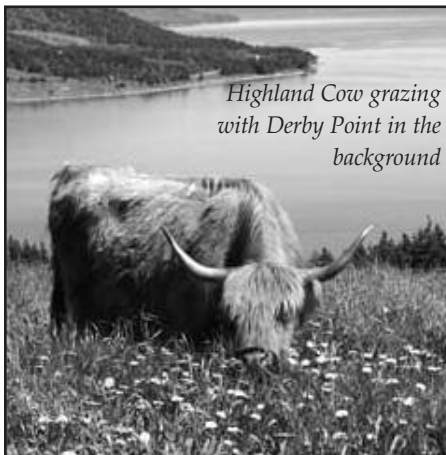


Photo by Maria MacMillan

## Ag Èirigh Air Òrain / An Rubha SONG SELECTION

### "Dh'fhalbh mo rùn is dh'fhàg e 'n cala"

Collected from Margaret MacLean

An Old Country song, this setting of *Dh'fhalbh mo rùn is dh'fhàg e 'n cala* was transcribed from the singing of Margaret MacLean (*Mairead bean Ruairidh Iagain Ruairidh*) of Boisdale, Cape Breton County. Margaret learned this song from the singing of her grandmother, *Màiri Dhòmhnaill Nill* (MacKinnon).

**Dh' fhalbh mo rùn 's dh' fhàg e 'n cala**  
**Dh' fhalbh mo rùn hi, i, iù**  
**Thog e shiùil ris na crannaibh**  
**Dh' fhalbh mo rùn 's dh' fhàg e 'n cala**

*(My darling departed and left the harbour*  
*My darling is departed hi, i, iù*  
*He raised his sails to the masts*  
*My darling departed and left the harbour)*

1. Dh' fhalbh mo leannan bhuam am bliadhna

'S iad 'ga riasladh aig na Gallaibh  
*(My sweetheart left me this year. They have him harried among strangers.)*

2. Dh' fhalbh mo leannan bhuam a dh'Éirinn

'S as a dhéidh cha bhi mi fallain  
*(My sweetheart left me to go to Ireland. Without him my health will fail.)*

3. 'S dh' fhalbh mo leannan bhuam a dh'Ìle

Air long rìomhach nan trì chrannaibh  
*(My sweetheart departed from me going to Islay on a handsome three-masted ship.)*

4. Dh'fhalbh mi ann 'am nighneig ghòraich

'S ghabh mi seòladair mar leannan  
*(I went a foolish lass who took a sailor for a lover.)*

5. A mhnathan na dugaibh beum dhomh

On a thug mi spéis dhan mharaich'  
*(Women do not reproach me because I bestowed my affection on a sailor.)*

6. Chan n-eil taobh dha 'n doir a' ghaoth e

Ma dh' fhaodas e gheibh e leannan  
*(Any direction the wind will take him, if he can, he'll have a sweetheart.)*



Illustration by Ellison Robertson. Used with permission.

Margaret MacLean

7. Thig a' bhonaid ghorm ri fàbhar  
 Air fear àrd nan sùilean meallach  
*(The blue bonnet will complement the tall one of beguiling eyes.)*

8. Chuala mi gun d'rinn thu réiteach  
 Mur e breug a rinn iad aithris  
*(I heard you've become betrothed unless they've lied in reporting it.)*

9. Chuala mi gun d'rinn thu pòsadh  
 'S cha d'dheònaich thu mi gu d'bhainis  
*(I heard that you've married. You did not permit me to go to your wedding party.)*

10. Giomanach a' ghunna bhòidich'  
 Leagadh tu na h-eòin bhàrr mheangan  
*(Hunter of the elegant gun you would fell the birds from the tips of branches.)*

11. Giomanach a' ghunna chaoil thu  
 Nuair a chaogadh tu an t-sùil 's a' mhala  
*(You are the hunter of the slender barrelled gun when you would squint the eye and the brow.)*

12. Ach on a dh' fhalbh thu air a' bhàta  
 Dia 'gad shàbhladh gu cala  
*(Since you have sailed on the ship, God see you safely to harbour.)* ☺

Recorded, transcribed and translated by Seumas Watson.

# Teàrlach Chaluim Iain Dhòmhnail Dòmhnallaich nam Béirichean - "Holy Charlie" MacDonald

Recorded by Seumas Watson

**R**everend Charles MacDonald was born in Tarbot, Victoria County. His father, Malcolm, was a widely respected Presbyterian elder and church scholar. "Holy Charlie" grew up in the Lewis tradition of family prayer, precenting and bible reading. It is no surprise he turned to the ministry as a young man and married a church deaconess, the late Betty Walker from Fife, Scotland.

He was regarded by many as an unpretentious man of the cloth. His powerful hands attested to years of labour in rural parishes as a carpenter, woodsman, trapper and shoer of horses. "Holy Charlie" was known to preach a sermon in a powerful, exacting Biblical Gaelic and render a simple Christian act by cutting a shut-in's hair on the same day. In his time, he was perhaps the strongest living exponent of Cape Breton's once numerous Gaelic-speaking clergy.

## Teàrlach Chaluim Iain Dhòmhnail Dòmhnallaich nam Béirichean

A' cheud nì bu chòir dhomh cantuinn, 's e gu robh mi air mo thogail maille ri muinntir a bha glé dhéidheil air leughadh a' bhìobuill agus bhiodh iad a' frithealadh nan coinneamhan ùrnaigh. Bha iad dìleas dhan eaglais agus air a

sheallas mi air ais, tha atharrachadh mòr an diugh air a' mhuinntir a bha sin. Nuair a bha mis' òg bha iad glé chùramach, gu h-àraidh air Là na Sàbainn.

Tha cuimhn' agam-sa m'athair a bhith dol chon an t-sobhail feasgar Disathuirn', agus bhiodh sinn a' dol còmhla ris. Agus chanadh e rinn, "Well, a-nisd, feumaidh sibh a h-uile nì 's 's urrainn dhuibh a bhith air a dhèanamh air Disathuirn' airson nach feum sibh a dhèanamh air Là an Tighearna, Là na Sàbainn. Tha mi airson an dèanamh air a' là an-diugh. Thoir astaigh an connadh. Thoir astaigh an t-uisge agus cuiribh anuas a' feur bhon a' scaffold dhan a' chrodh." (Agus gu robh oidhirp air a h-uile nì a b'urrainn dhuibh a dhèanamh airson nach bi sibh ag obair am màireach.) "Do bhrìgh am màireach gum bi sinn a' dol a dh'ionnsaidh na h-eaglais." Agus bha m'athair 'na fhear-

teagaisg ainmeil. Bha e 'na eildear còrr 's lethcheud bliadhna anns an eaglais, agus bhiodh e teagaisg na sgoil Shàbainn.

Bha mòran dhan an t-sluagh...bhiodh iad a' seinn anns a' Ghàidhlig. Bhiodh iad a' gabhail nan sailmean agus bhiodh iad ag ùrnaigh. Glé thrì bhiodh sinn anns an taigh-sgoil. Bha Murchadh Moireasdan, bha eisean ainmeil air teagasg, agus m'athair, Coinneach MacLéoid agus muinntir eile. Bhiodh an t-ògradh... bhiodh iad glé dhéidheil air a bhith dol ionnsaidh nan coinneamhan ùrnaigh agus bhitheadh



Photo from The Canadian-American Gael, Gaelic College, 1943



Holy Charlie (left) chopping wood with Ralph MacKay in Lake Ainslie.

Photo courtesy of MacDonald House Museum, East Lake Ainslie



iad sin a' gabhail pàirt ann 's a' seinn tùnaichean Gàidhlig. Bhiodh m'athair a' teagasg na Gàidhlig dhuinn agus bhithheadh e a' dèanamh, mar gum b'eadh, ùrnaigh. Feasgar an uair sin, thigeadh sinn dachaidh agus ghabhadh sinn ar dinneir. Bhiodh sinn aig an taigh aig uair. Agus 's ann mar sin a bhiodh sinn a' cumail na Sàbainn.

Tha cuimhn' agam aon bhoireannach a rinn aran. Fhuair i baraill fhluir mus do thòisich an t-Sacramaid aig an Abhainn-a-Tuath. Rinn i aran dhen a' bharaill fhluir agus bha e air innse nuair a bha an t-Sacramaid seachad nach robh air fhàgail ach gràinne.

Bhithheadh sluagh mòr a' dol dhan t-Sacramaid. Bha na muinntir dèidheil air a bhith dol ann an eaglais anns na làithean ud. Is mór an t-atharrachadh bhon a bha mi òg agus an diugh. Saoilidh mi gu bheil muinntir glé mhi-chùramach, ged a tha airgead gu leòir aca.

Rugadh mi 's a' bhliadhna 1905. Rugadh mi anns an Tairbeart, ach cha robh dotair r'a fhaighinn. Bha an sneachda cho domhain 's a' bhliadhna a rugadh mise, chanadh iad 'Bliadhna an t-Sneachda Mhóir' rith'. Agus Granaidh Chalum Tharmaid, chaidh ise gu mo mhàthair agus boireannach eile agus 's ann a bha iad a' coiseachd air an fheans'. Bha an sneachd' cho domhain. Bha maid' aice 'na làimh. Tha cuimhn a'm mo mhàthair ag innse dhomh, "Agus bha i coiseachd air an fheans', bha an sneachd' cho domhain."

'S e na h-aodaichean fad' a bh' aca-san 's an àm a bha sin agus nuair a rànaig i an taigh, bha casan cho fuar. Bha an sgiorta a bh'oirre air a dhèanamh dhen a' chlà. Tha cuimhn' a'm gu robh mo mhàthair ag innse dhomh. 'S bhiodh i gaireachdainn ag innse mu dheoghainn nuair a rugadh mi agus mu 'n shneachda mhóir a bh'ann.

### "Holy Charlie" MacDonald

The first thing I should say is that the people I was raised with were very fond of reading the bible, and they used to attend prayer meetings. They were loyal to the church and when I look back there is a great change on those people today. When I was young they were very attentive, especially on the Sabbath.

I remember my father going to the barn Saturday evening and we used to go with him. He would say to us; "Well now, you have to do everything you can Saturday so you won't have to on the Day of the Lord, the Sabbath. I want it done today. Take in the wood! Take in the water and put down the hay from the scaffold for the cows!" (An effort was made to do all you could so you wouldn't have to work the next day.) "Because tomorrow you are going to church."

My father was a renowned teacher. He was an elder for over fifty years in the church and he used to teach Sunday school.

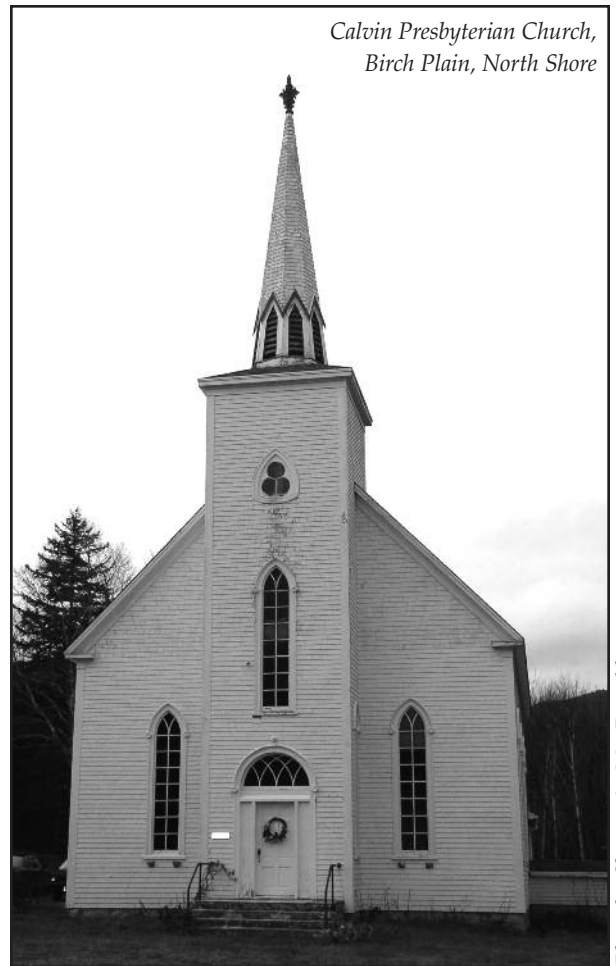
Many of the people...they used to sing in Gaelic and pray. Very often we would be in a school house. There was Murdock Morrison – he was famous for teaching – and my father and Kenneth MacLeod, and other folks.

The young people used to very much like to go to prayer meetings and they used to take part there and sing Gaelic tunes (psalms). My father would teach us the Gaelic reading and he used to, as it were, pray.

That afternoon we would come home and we would take our dinner. We used to get home at one o'clock. And that's how we kept the Sabbath.

I remember one woman who made bread. She got a barrel of flour before the Sacrament started at North River. She made bread from the barrel of flour, and it was said when the Sacrament was over, there was nothing left but a grain.

A big crowd used to go to the Sacrament. People were fond of going to church in those days. There is a great



Calvin Presbyterian Church,  
Birch Plain, North Shore

Photo by Sharnus Y. MacDonald

change today with the cars. You'll hardly see a church that will be half full. I'm attempting to show you the change between when I was young and today. I think people are very uncaring although they have lots of money.

I was born in Tarbot, but a doctor wasn't available. The snow was so deep the year I was born it was called 'The Year of the Big Snow.' Grannie, the wife of Malcolm, son of Norman, and another woman went to my mother. And they were walking on the fence. The snow was so deep. Grannie had a stick in her hand. I remember my mother telling me; "And she was walking on the fence and the snow was so deep." They wore long clothing at the time, and when she reached the house her feet were so cold. The skirt she wore was made of homespun. I remember my mother telling me. She used to laugh telling me about the time I was born and the great snow that was there. ☺

Recorded, transcribed and translated by  
Seumas Watson.

Photo from The Canadian-American Gaelic College, St. Annis, 1943



(left to right) Malcolm MacLeod, Dan A. MacLeod, and "Holy" Charlie.

# Fo na Cabair / UNDER THE RAFTERS

## An taigh dubh - THE BLACK HOUSE

Seumas Watson

**D**r Colin Sinclair, in his book *The Thatched Houses of the Old Highlands*, remarks that "...while providing for simple and homely social activities, the primary function of the house was to give shelter from the cold, wind and rain with the warmth of social converse engendered by the comforting glow of the peat fire. The house of the Gael was not the object of domestic luxury and embellishment; it was a house to shut out the storm.

The *taigh dubh*, also called *taigh-tughaidh*, was the home of a robust people whose lives were mostly spent outdoors. The Gaels ability to withstand extreme weather conditions seems to be reflected in the simplicity of their dwellings, which provided little of comfort by modern standards. Travellers visiting the Highlands in the eighteenth century were unimpressed by the primitive huts they perceived as "dark and dirty."

The origin of the term black house is the subject of some debate. One explanation lies in the comparison between the dark exterior of the black house and the newer white walled houses (*taigh geal*). As a condition of some leases, the *taigh geal* began replacing the older building type with the advent of crofting in the early nineteenth-century. There is also speculation that the more commonly used term *taigh-tughaidh*, meaning thatched house, has been mistaken by English ears as *taigh dubh* because of their similarity in sound.

Ailean Boyd commented on this point of nomenclature in *Seann Taighean Tirisdeach* (Old Tیره Houses).

*'S e taigh-tugha a their muinntir Thiriodh gu nàdarra ann an àite taigh-tughaidh mar a theirear mu thuath. Cha robh am facal taigh-dubh riamh ga ùisneachadh ann an Tioradh na bu mhotha - cha chreid mi nach ann aig Leòdhasaich a-mhàin a chluinnta a leithid.*

Translation:

*Taigh-tugha*, (pronounced *tie too-uh*), a thatched house is the natural pronunciation of the Tیره folk for *taigh-tuaigh*, as it is said in the north. Nor was the term black-house ever used in Tیره. I believe that only the Lewis folk use that form.



Illustration by Ellison Robertson. Used with permission.

### MAR A BHITE 'GAN TOGAIL: DESIGN AND DESCRIPTION

Dr. Colin Sinclair, writing in 1953, attempted to define three architectural variations of the black house. He chose to classify them by their areas of geographic representation: calling them the Skye type, the Dalriadic type and the Hebridean type.

According to Sinclair, the Skye black house was typically found in the Isle of

Skye and the adjacent mainland districts of Morar, Kintail and Ardnamurchan. The distinguishing outward features of the Skye variety include a hip style roof and eaves made of overhanging thatch.

Sinclair describes the Dalriadic black house as a type represented in the territory of mainland Argyll, Appin and Lorn and the Inner Hebridean Islands of Islay and Jura. The term Dalriadic is a refer-

ence to the ancient Gaelic kingdom of Dalriada, the boundaries of which correspond to the general area in which this type of house is found.

As a distinct design, the Dalriadic version of the black house is characterized by end walls extending upward to the roof's ridge to make a gable, a feature facilitating installation of chimneys and fireplaces. Similar style cottages are also found in the Isle of Man and Ireland.

Too conveniently defined by region,



Sinclair's version of black house typification is challenged by Scottish vernacular housing expert Bruce Walker. In a 1995 article appearing in *Highland Vernacular Building*, Walker points out that examples of what Sinclair terms as a Hebridean black house were still commonly in evidence on the mainland as late as the beginning of this century. He further cites instances of this kind of black house as having been present in eastern Highland districts as late as the 1950s.

The black house on-site at Nova Scotia Highland Village is a replication of the Hebridean type, representing as it does the Barra Gaels' dwellings prior to their immigrating to Cape Breton's Iona Peninsula and other parts of the Province. It is of a kind that was regularly found in Tiree, the Outer Hebrides and parts of the mainland into the twentieth century. The distinct feature of the Hebridean building is the *tobhta*: the wide, flat border that forms the outer top of its drystone walls.

The vernacular Hebridean black house was oval shape and of varying lengths. The interior was usually divided into three compartments: the byre (*a' bhàthach*), the living space (*aig an teine*) and the sleeping space (*a' chùllaist*). These general areas of differing functions were sometimes separated by partitions made of wood or hide (*talain*).

In most cases, the Hebridean type boasted a single door at the front of the house, adhering to the axiom *Cùl ri gaoith, aghaidh ri gréin* (Back to the windward, face to the sunward). Entrance through the door gave immediate access to the byre at the house's end. A wall of stone, with an entry gap, led to the inner-compartment and hearth. The third compartment formed a sleeping area and was separated from the hearth by a wooden divider.

Travellers' accounts of the black house depict similar images. In *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, Samuel Johnson commented in 1793,

The wall of a common hut is always built without mortar, by a skilful adaptation of loose stones. Sometimes perhaps a double wall of stones is raised, and the intermediate space filled with earth. The air is thus completely excluded.

Some walls are, I think, formed of turfs, held together by a wattle or texture of twigs. Of the meanest huts, the first room is lighted by the entrance and the second by the smoke hole. The fire is usually made in the middle.

In his 1883 *Reminiscences of my Life in the Highlands, Volume I*, Joseph Mitchell described an Isle of Lewis black house.

Built of turf and thatched with straw or heather, huddled together very irregularly, and generally in villages, the grass growing frequently on the tops of the walls and the roofs. There are no windows; a hole admits the light. The door is low, generally from four to five feet. The house is from thirty to sixty feet long; the greater part appointed to the cattle, and the family part separated occasionally by mere turf partition... The walls were of rough turf and some common boards were put together for two or three beds, one or two cribs on the floor, apparently for children. An old woman lay in some decayed hay in a bed. The fire was in the centre, over which hung the pot, and the children were sitting on the floor around, while two or three large stones appeared to serve as seats for the adults.

The account of Mitchell's visit to a Lewis black house includes these details,

The walls are built of stones gathered from the fields, and fitted roughly together. To keep out the wind, they are made five feet thick,

and both side walls and gable ends are but six feet in height. On the inner edges of these massive walls the roof timbers set. They are covered with a thatch, a foot or two thick, there being no well-defined ridge but a rounded top like an elongated beehive. The houses vary from thirty to sixty feet in length and are fifteen feet wide... If your visit is in March the inside level is higher than the surface of the ground for you step on a thick mass of wet cattle-bedding and dung, which has accumulated since last summer... You make your way over the spongy surface and at length find yourself on firm ground as you approach the large peat fire burning on the middle of the floor, the smoke from which fills the whole house, and finds a partial egress through the thatch for there is no chimney. You receive a hospitable welcome from the host, who courteously invites you take a seat.

In recent times, to live in a black house seems to have carried some degree of stigma. Looking upon the newer houses constructed of cement blocks with slate roofs as a symbol of social advancement, young girls in the Hebrides had their own version of divining their future prospects by plucking the daisy, *Taigh-tughaidh, taigh geal, taigh-tughaidh, taigh-geal...* (thatched house, white house, thatched house, white house...) ☞

Written by Seumas Watson.

*Fo na Cabair/UNDER THE RAFTERS is a regular feature of An Rubha that looks at the buildings of the Highland Village.*

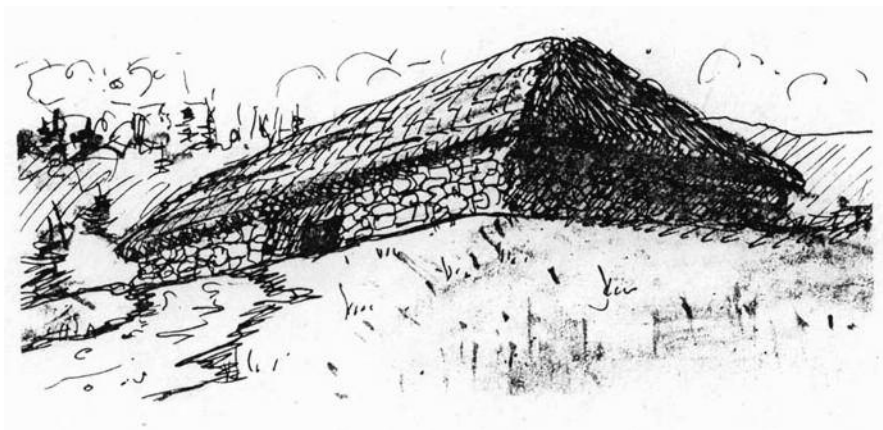


Illustration by Ellison Robertson. Used with permission.

# Seinn fo sgàil nan geugan uaine

## SONGS FROM THE GREENWOOD

Collected by Seumas Watson

**G**aelic songs in Nova Scotia and Scotland alike have often been inspired by the beauties of nature and strong attachments to places of belonging. As a people whose life on the land has been closely attuned to the season's subtle changes, the Gaels have expressed a keen sense of appreciation for their environment through poetry describing land and sea.

The antiquity of such themes is known through anonymous examples in the Gaelic tradition reaching back to eighth century Ireland. Latter day Scottish poets of particular note are eighteenth-century bards Alexander MacDonald (*Alastair mac Mhaighstir Alastair*) and Duncan Ban MacIntyre (*Dunnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir*), both of whom draw continuing interest for their poetic technique and remarkable command of detail in describing flora and fauna. *An Rubha* will look at some of Nova Scotia's song-makers in this and upcoming issues with selected songs that speak to Gaelic life in the New World.

The song titled *Moladh a' Chùil*, as reported here, was composed by the late Hughie MacKenzie (*Eòghan Eairdsidh Sheumais*), well-remembered bard from the Christmas Island area of Cape Breton County. Transcription of the song appears in an unpublished manuscript of MacKenzie's songs compiled by the late John Joe MacKenzie (*Jonaidh Eairdsidh Dhòmhnall Bhig*.) Its melody is reported as *Ciamar a dh'Fhaodas Mi Bhi Beò*. *Moladh a' Chùil* is sung by *Goiridh Dòmhnallach* on track six of *Còmhla Cruinn*, produced by *Comunn Féis an Eilein* and CBC Cape Breton. The CD is available through the Highland Village Gift Shop.

### Moladh a' Chùil

'S truagh a Rìgh nach robh mi 'n dràs'd'  
Air an Tulloch Àrd far am b'èolach mi  
Far na tric a shuidh mi air a' làr  
Air Tìr an Aigh a' mèdachadh  
Gun mi tuigsinn gu dé a' bhàigh  
Thug air an Àrd Rìgh òrdachadh  
Gur e an Cùl againn amhàin  
An gnìomh a b' àill' a dheònaich e

An t-àit a 's bòidhch' an éirich grian  
Le soills' air sliabh nam mòr-bheannan  
'S a gathan boillsgeach tighinn anios



Illustration by Ellison Robertson. Used with permission.

Cuir loinn air fiamh nan ròsannan  
'S a' cur gorm-bhrat air gach blian  
'S breaca-seun do nèdinteanan  
'S a' cumail sùil le gràdh anios  
Gu 'n ruig i 'n iar 's a' ghlomanaich

Gach eunlaidh 's bòidhch' a tha fo 'n ghréin  
Gun do thagh iad fhéin na bruthachan ud  
Thar gach àit' s' a' chruinne-cé  
Gun tug iad spéis dha luachmhorachd  
A' còmhlachadh am measg nan geug  
Gur ceòlmhor séisd an duanagan  
'S mac-tall' a' freagairt as an déidh  
Gu pongail réidh mar a chual' e iad

Tha torram suilbhear thogas sunnd  
Mar choisir-chiùil an còmhnaidh ann  
Fuaim nan allt a 's glainne burn  
A' bruchdadh nuas na mòr-bheannan  
'S a' dol thar easan nan still  
Gu 'n iosal far an còmhlaich iad  
'S fàgaidh iad beannachd air an tìr  
Mar rinn mi-fhìn le gòraiche

Air raointean àrd gum faicear spréidh  
'Nan laidh' 's deudan luasganach  
Tha pailteas lòn an siod dha 'n treud  
Feadh ghlachagan réidh 's chluaineagan  
Gur tric a dh'éisd mi feasgair Céit'  
An uair a dh'éibht chun na buail' orra  
Ri fuaim nan clag toirt buille réidh  
A h-uile ceum mar ghluaiseadh iad

Gheibhte iasg á grunn nan allt  
Tha ruith tro' 'n ghleann gu fuaimeachail  
O lochan mór' air bhàrr nam beann  
Mu bhonn gach meall a' cuairteachadh  
Bu tric bha mi le driamlach ann  
'S air dubhan cam bhiodh buaireadair  
Le slat do dh'fhearna ann 'am làimh  
Cha tugainn taing air uaisleachd

Na daoine còir a thuinich ann  
Ged bha iad trang air uaireannan  
Cha robh biadh na aodach gann  
Ged bhiodh an geamhradh duathalach (?)  
Dhèante gach obair 'na h-àm



Cha robh iad mall mar thuathanaich  
'S ge b'e seòrsa gnìomh bhiodh ann  
Gun cluinnt' ac' srann air duanagan

Nam biodh e comasach dhomh fhéin  
An tìm a thréig ath-nuadhachadh  
'S an òige thoirt air ais gu léir  
An dreach, am beus 's an luathachadh  
Bhiodh mo thaigh air tulloch réidh  
'S sgàil nan geug 'ga chuairteachadh  
Gun cumainn fìdheall 's piob air ghleus  
'S thogainn séisd air duanagan

## Translation

### In Praise of the Backlands

It's a shame that I am not at present on the lofty hill I knew so well. Where I often sat on the ground contemplating this beautiful land, not knowing what motivated God to command its being. For us, the backlands (rear) is the single most lovely deed he wished.

This is the most delightful place that the sun rises on. Shining on the mountain slopes, its rays gleam down to grace the roses' visage; putting a blue (flowered) carpet and happy speckles of daisies on every clearing. The sun lovingly gazes down until reaching the westward at dusk.

Every variety of the most beautiful birds chose those hills to live in. Before any other place under heaven, they esteem its precious value. Gathering among the branches, their songs' refrains are tuneful. Echo repeats their sounds exactly as he heard them.

There is always a friendly, choir-like murmuring there. It is the sound of streams of the purest water bursting forth from mountain hillsides to tumble over waterfalls in spumes as they gather below and bid farewell to the countryside as I foolishly did.

Herds of cattle could be seen laying on upland pastures, their teeth in constant motion. Among the meadows and dells, there is much grazing for the flocks. I often listened on a May evening to the steady sound of their bells, striking at every step when they were called to the paddock

## Obair an Taighe - FEATURED ARTIFACT An Fheàrsaid - DROP SPINDLE

Pictured here is the *feàrsaid*, or spindle, a simple hand-held device for spinning wool and flax. Weighted at the lower end to increase velocity, it is operated by twirling between the thumb and fingers. Many Scottish examples have been preserved from antiquity, some of which date back to the Iron Age. The *feàrsaid* is used to spin wool, or linen, for the purpose of making thread to set looms. Use of the *feàrsaid* in Gaelic Scotland, and Cape Breton, remains in memory to the present. Even at this late date, it is not unusual to hear the days of homespun recalled, a time when women busied themselves spinning with the *feàrsaid* while sitting or walking.

When considering the material culture of Highland immigrants during the early to mid-nineteenth century, it is of interest to note that I. F. Grant, author of *Highland Folkways* states that "In 1820 there was not a spinning wheel in Gairloch and in the Hebrides in 1850 most of the women were still using the spindle."

Emigration from the west Highlands and Islands to Nova Scotia, then including Prince Edward Island, began in the late eighteenth century and peaked in the third decade of the nineteenth century. The absence of spinning wheels in two significant regions of Gaelic Scotland that contributed large numbers of Gaels to Nova Scotia might suggest that knowledge of spinning wheels among Highland settlers was at best limited. Their lack of presence in these areas of the Highlands and Islands also casts doubts on the authentic origins of spinning wheels thought to have accompanied emigrants to Nova Scotia.

It is of interest as well that the Gaelic names of mundane knitted items such as socks, sweaters and mittens are no more than Gaelic forms of their English equivalents. These borrowed terms further suggest that knowledge of knitting was also acquired from outside Gaelic material culture which produced its cloth by way of weaving. ☺



Fish were taken from the beds of streams that run noisily from great lakes on the mountain tops to circle the foot of the hills. I was often there with a line and a baited, crooked hook. With a rod made of alder in my hand, I wouldn't have traded for rank of nobility.

Although those generous folk who settled there were busy by times, food and clothing were never in want. Although winter was difficult (?), every work was done in its own time. They weren't lacking as farmers and, whatever chore was

at hand, their voices could be heard singing songs.

If I could renew the time gone by and retrieve my youth - the hue, modesty and agility - my house would sit on a level hilltop surrounded by the shade of branches. I would keep the fiddle and pipes in tune and raise the airs of songs. ☺

Recorded, transcribed and translated by Seumas Watson.



## Photo Album: *The Faces of Cainnt mo Mhàthar*



**(Top row):** Allan MacLeod, Catalone (*Ailean mac Ruaridh 'ic Aonghais 'ic Dhòmhnail 'ic Iain*), Kathleen (Williams) Boyd, Melford (*Kathleen ni'n Frances ni'n Aonghais Bhig*), and Rod C. MacNeil, Barra Glen (*Ruaridh Iain Dhòmhnail Sheumais Dhòmhnail Òig Iain Ruaridh*). **(Middle row):** Katie Margaret MacLeod, Broad Cove Marsh & South West Margaree, (*Ceataidh Magaidh ni'n Aonghais Ailein*) with a picture of her cat, Catherine MacNeil, Christmas Island (*Catriona ni'n Iomhair Mhicheil 'an Shaothair*) and Hector B. MacIsaac, St. Ninian & Port Hawkesbury (*Eachann mac Aonghais Eachainn 'ic Eòghainn 'ic Dhunnchaidh*). **(Bottom row):** Mary MacDonald, Loch Lomond & Sydney (*Màiri ni'n Eachainn Hughie Raghnaill*), Mickey John H. MacNeil, Jamesville (*Micheal Eòin Chaluis Sheumas Mhòir*), and Jimmy Mick Sandy MacNeil, Benacadie Pond (*Seumas mac Mhicheil 'ic Shandaidh 'ic Dhòmhnail*).

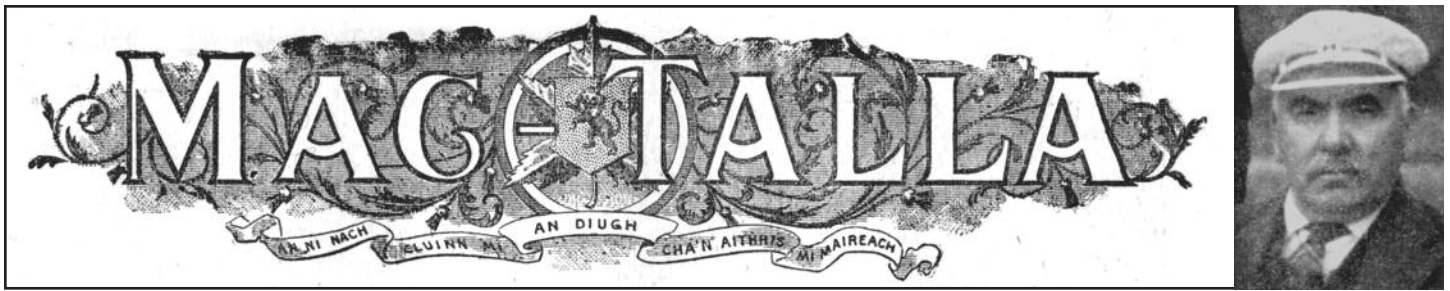
Family photo.





(Top row): Sisters Theresa Burke & Martha Ramey, Rear Big Pond & Sydney (Nigheanan Pheadair Mhòir Steabhain Mhicheil), Mr. & Mrs. Alex MacLean, Gabarus Lake (Alaisdairst mac Sheðraist 'ic Iain 'ic Iain), and Anna MacKinnon, Broad Cove Banks (Annag ni'n Iain Aonghais Ailein). (2nd row): Mr. & Mrs. Willie Fraser, Deepdale (Willie Shaoimein), and Amber Buchanan with her great-grandmother, Sadie May MacInnes, French River, (Mòr ni'n Mhurchaidh Dhòmhnaiill). (3rd row): Joe Peter MacLean (Eòs Peader mac Theùrlaich 'ic Eòis) & Angus Currie (Aonghas mac Dhùghaill 'ic Aonghais 'ic Mhicheil Lachlainn) former residents of MacAdam's Lake (in the background is Mrs. Currie & daughter Florence), and Murdock E. MacNeil, Rear Christmas Island (Murchadh mac Dhòmhnaiill 'ic Sheumais Dhòmhnaiill a' Chùil) with Peter J. MacLean, Rear Christmas Island (Peadar mac Jack Pheadair 'ic Caluim Ghobha). (Bottom row): Jim Watson sings a song to Margaret MacLean, Mabou Coal Mines & Port Hood (Margaret ni'n Gilleasbuig Aonghais a' Chlachair) and Jim Watson and Mary Jane Lamond with Souter Strachan, Framboise, (Iain Souter mac Sheðraist 'ic Iain 'ic Iain). Unless noted, all photos are courtesy of Shamus Y. MacDonald.





Ianuairi 5, 1895

An Teine Mór  
(Will 'o the Wisp)

Òraid a sgrìobhadh do Chomunn Gàidhlig Inbhirnis mu 'n àm seo an uiridh - Le Iain

Is e seo an t-ainm a th'aig muinntir Bheinn-a-Bhaoghla agus an dà Uidhist air an t-solus a bhiodh cuid dhe 'n t-sluagh a' faicinn ré na h-oidhche ann an àiteachan uaigneach, iosal air feadh na dùthcha. Anns an Eilean Sgitheanach, is e, "An Teine Biorach" a theireadh iad ris. Ma bha gus nach robh an solus iongantach seo ri fhaicinn air feadh na Gàidhealtachd gu léir, chan urrainn domh a ràdh.

Chan eil teagamh sam bith nach robh iomadh neach a' faicinn "An Teine Mhóir." Faodaidh cuid a bhith 'g ràdh nach robh a leithid de nì riamh ann; ach feumaidh mi fhéin a ràdh nach urrainn domh gun a bhith 'creidsinn gu robh móran de 'n t-sluagh, sean is òg, a' faicinn an t-solais ris an canadh iad an "Teine Mór."

Fad fhichead bliadhna, bha an solus seo ri fhaicinn aig àmannaan àraidh de 'n bhliadhna. Aréir barail àrd-luchd foghlaim, is e meall de 'n nì ris an abradh fos-

forus a bh'ann. Cha do ghabh mise os làimh ach cunntas a thoirt seachad air an t-solus a bha daoine a' faicinn, agus air a' bharrail a bh'aca mu thimchioll ciod a b'aobhar do 'n t-solus. Agus air an aobhar sin, cha gabh mi gnothuch ri barail àrd-luchd foghlaim. Théid àrd-luchd foghlaim, air uairibh, cho fada ceàrr ri daoine eile, no nì 's fhaide. Air mo shon-sa fhéin dheth, ged a dh'éisdeas mi ris a their iad, agus ged a bheir mi géill do



Illustration from Mac-talla

chuid dhe na beachdan a tha iad ag àrach mu thimchioll móran nìthean, chan urrainn domh géill a thoirt do 'n cuid bheachdan gu léir.

Cha robh an solus ris an abradh iad "An Teine Mór" ri fhaicinn, mar bu trice, ach o mheadhon an fhoghair gu meadhon an earraich. Chan fhacas riamh e ach an uair a bhiodh an oidhche dorcha agus ceò is uisge ann. Tha a' chùis coltach nach b'urraich da cur suas le solus na gealaich, no le fuachd an reòthaidh, no le

sìde thioram sam bith. Cha mhó na sin a sheasadh e ri stoirm. Ach neò-ar-thaing nach deanadh e siubhal gu leòr an oidhche a bhiodh blàth dorcha agus a' ghaoth o 'n deas, no o 'n iar-dheas agus a bhiodh uisge mìn, trom, dlùth a' sileadh.

Anns an àm mu 'm bheil mi sgrìobhadh, cha robh lainntir ri fhaighinn ach ann an taigh gu math ainneamh. An uair a bhiodh daoine a' falbh air chéilidh, no a' dol air cheann turais o bhaile gu baile,

nam biodh an oidhche dorcha, bheireadh iad leò aithinne na dhà ann am beul a' chlobha, no air gob corrain - mura biodh bior aithinne a b'fheàrr aca, a chum solus a dhèanamh dhaibh air an t-slighe. Ach nam biodh "An Teine Mór" air a chuairt air an oidhche sin, bu ghlé thoigh leis a bhith gu math dlùth do 'n àthinne theine. Bi cuimhne agam ri m' bheò air oidhche gheamhraidh o chionn deich bliadhna fichead. An uair a bha sinn 'nar suidhe mun cuairt de 'n teine, leum dithist ghillean tapaidh, òga astaigh do 'n t-seòmbar agus an anail an àird a' chléibh aca. Bha an sùilean gu sgionnadh ás an cinn leis an eagal. Shaoil sinn gur e bha taigh a' dol 'na theine, no gun do thachair ni-eiginn neo-ghnàthaichte anns a' choimhearsnachd. Ciod a bh'ann ach seo: bha na gillean air chéildih agus aithinne teine aca. Sùil gun d' thug fear

Each issue of AN RUBHA features an excerpt from Jonathan G. MacKinnon's MAC-TALLA (Echo) with translation. MAC-TALLA, published in Sydney, Nova Scotia, was the longest running Gaelic weekly (ending as a bi-weekly) 1892-1904. MacKinnon, born in Dunakin in 1869, published his first issue at 22 years of age. He was a life-long promoter of Gaelic and was involved in other publications including Gaelic translations of English literature.



dhiubh agus thar a ghuaille chunnaic e “An Teine Mór” a’ falbh ‘nan cuideachd. Ghlaodh e ri chompanach gu robh “An Teine Mór air an cùlaibh. Ghrad thilg iad uatha an t-aithinne teine agus thug iad ri brùthach i. Cha do stad iad riamh gus an d’ràining iad an taigh againn-ne, agus iad an impis a dhol á cochull an cridhe leis an eagal.

Chan eil ùine agamsa aig an àm seo air cunntas mhion a thoirt seachad air na chuala mi mu ‘n “Teine Mhór”. Bhiodh e gu math tric a’ tachairt ri daoine air bogaichean ‘s aig feur-lochain, agus mun cuairt air na h-òbain agus air na tràighichean a tha cho lìonmhor ann am Beinn-a-Bhaoghla agus an dà Uidhist. Nam biodh fear ‘n ònar ag iomradh eathair anns an oidhche dhuibh, dhuirche, thigeadh “An Teine Mór gu bog, balbh ‘na rathad agus shuidheadh e gu sochrach air sgruig-dheiridh an eathair. Ach cha bu luaithe a bhuaileadh sròn an eathair tìr na bheireadh “An Teine Mór” e fhéin às. Chiteadh e a’ seòladh os cionn na mara agus tarsainn nan òb ‘s nan lochan ‘s e ‘cur soills’ às an usige. Agus an sin, rachadh e às an t-sealadh timchioll gob rudha, no dhìreadh e suas ris a’ mhonadh. Ged nach do rinn e cron air neach riamh, gidheadh bha eagal an cridhe roimhe gach neach do bhrìgh gu robh iad a’ creidsinn nach b’ann á nì math a dh’éirich e. Bheir mi anis cunntas cho geàrr ‘s is urrainn domh air an dòigh gun d’thàinig “An Teine Mór” gu bhith air an talamh.

Cha robh na Gàidheil riamh air dheireadh air slugh sam bith eile ann a bhì ‘toirt cunntas air na h-aobhair airson gu robh nìthan iongantach ri ‘m faicinn air an talamh. Mar bu trice, cha robh na beachdan a bh’aca na bu ghlice no ni b’a-maidiche na na beachdan a bh’aig slugh eile an t-saoghail. Tha a’ chùis coltach gu robh iad riarachta le ‘n cuid bheachdan, agus air an aobhar sin, fàgaidh sinn beachdan nan seann daoine còire far an d’fhuair sinn iad agus mar a fhuair sinn iad. Ged a tha sinn-ne gu math glic ‘nar barail fhéin, is dòcha gu bheil cuid de ar beachdan a cheart cho amaideach ‘s a bha am beachdan-san.

O chionn còrr ‘s dà cheud bhliadhna, bha an àireamh bu mhó de shluagh na Gàidhealtach air am beathachadh agus

an comhdachadh le toradh na dùthchadh do ‘m buineadh iad. Cha robh na marsantan ach glé thearc anns an àm agus air an aobhar sin, dh’fheumadh an slugh a chur suas leis na gheibheadh anns an dùthaich. Bhiodh iad aig an àm ud a’ dathadh le dathan na dùthchadh. Dheanadh iad dath uaine agus dath buidhe cho breagh ‘s a b’urrainn duine fhaicinn le bàrr a’ fhraoich. Ann an àiteachan boga ‘s a’ mhointich, gheibheadh talamh ris an abradh iad “dubhach.” Is cuimhne leam feadhainn dhe na sluichd às am biodh iad a’ cladhach “na dubhcha” fhaicinn. Is minic a chuala mi mu ‘n chothlamadh a bha seana bhean àraidh a’ deanamh uair dha ‘n robh saoghal. Seo na dathan a bh’ann: “dubh na dubhcha,” ciar nan caorach, is glas aotrom is glas trom.

Tha e air aithris gu robh slugh nan Eileannan an Iar déidheil air dathan dearga. An uair a bhiodh na marsantan paca, ‘s an àm a dh’fhalbh, a’ siubhal air feadh na Gàidhealtachd, bu ghnàth leotha a bhith reic dhathan dearga mar a tha “carnaid” agus “màdar.” Bha aon nì ri fhaotainn anns an dùthaich a dheanadh dath dearg, agus b’e sin “ruidh.” Is e freumhan feòir a th’anns an “ruidh.” Chan fhaighear e ach ann am brùthaichean tiorma gaineamhaich. Bhiodh mnathan a’dol a bhuaire an “ruidh” anns an oidhche air eagal gu faigheadh am maor, na aon sam bith eile de ‘n luchd-riaghalaidh fios air. Tha e coltach gu robh an t-uachdaran fada an aghaidh buain “an ruidh” do bhrìgh gu robh móran de ‘n mhachaire thioram air a chladhach an àm a bhith ‘ga bhuaire agus gu robh móran de ghaineamhaich air a siabadh air feadh a’ mhachaire an uair a thigeadh tiormachd an earraich.

Bha tuathanach ann am Beinn-a-Bhaoghla ris an abradh iad gu cumanta “Calum Sagart.” B’ann do Chloinn ‘ic Carmaic a bha e a thaobh cinnidh. Cha chuala mi an t-aobhar airson gun tugadh iad Calum Sagart mar fhar-ainm air, ach ma thachair gu robh e air muinntearas aig sagart, bhiodh e nàdarra gun canadh iad Calum an t-Sagairt ris. An sin, thigeadh an t-ainm gu bhith mar a chuala mi e. Tha e coltach gu robh Calum Sagart cho modhail ‘s cho iomchaidh ‘s gheibhteadh anns an dùthaich gu léir. Ach aréir mar a chuala mi, is ann aige a bha an aon bhean a bu mhiosa a bh’ann an Uidhist. Is baobh a bh’innte. Tha e air a ràdh, ma gheibh baobh a guidhe nach

fhaigh a h-anam tràcair. Aréir choltais gun d’fhuair bean Chalum Shagairt a guidhe aon uair co dhiubh. Bha nighean aig Calum Sagairt a bha, mar a thachair a dh’iomadh té roimhpe, an geall air dathan annasach a bhith anns an aodach aice. Chuir i roimhpe gu rachadh i bhuaire ruidh gus snàth no clòimh a dhathadh. Chan fhaodadh i a dhol ‘ga buaire air an latha air eagal gun tugadh suas do ‘n mhaor i, agus a chum a’ chùis a chumail cho falaichte ‘s a ghabhadh deanamh, chuir i roimhpe gu rachadh i ‘ga bhuaire air oidhche, Luain-Dòmhnach. Is e sin ri ràdh, an déidh dà uair dheug oidhche Dhòmhnach.

Bha a màthair anabarrach an aghaidh dhi a dhol a bhuaire an ruidh, ach cha tugadh an nighean cluas no géill a dh’aon fhacal a theireadh a màthair rithe. Ma bha a màthair ‘na baoibh, tha e coltach gu robh an nighean a cheart cho rag ris a’ mhac-mhollachd. O ‘n a chuir i roimhpe falbh a bhuaire an ruidh, dh’fhalbhadh i ged a thigeadh am muir h-ear thar a’ mhuir h-Iar. An uair a chunnaic a màthair i a’ dol amach air an dorus, thuirt i, “Tha thu nis a’ falbh agus mollachd do mhàthar air do cheann. Nam bu d’thig an là a chithear aghaidh do bhonn.”

Tha e chùis coltach gun d’fhuair a màthair a guidhe, oir cha d’fhuairas beò no marbh nighean Chalum Shagairt riamh, aon chuid air muir no air tìr. Ach an uair a thugadh dùil thairis nach robh i ‘tighinn dhachaidh, dh’fhalbh na càird-ean agus na coimhearsnaich ‘ga marbh-iarraidh agus fhuair iad pàirt de h-aodach air a’ mhachair far a robh i buaire an ruidh.

An ceann beagan ùine an déidh dha seo thachair, chunnacas an solus ris an abrar “An Teine Mór.” Aréir choltais, gun do chreid gach neach a chuala mar a thachair gun d’fhuair bean Chalum Shagairt a guidhe agus gum b’i nighean Chalum Shagairt “An Teine Mór.” Faodar ainmeachadh gu robh móran de ‘n mhuinntir a bha ‘faicinn “An Teine Mhóir” ag ràdh gu robh iad ‘ga shamhalachadh ri teine anns a’ chliabh. Bha seo a’ toirt orra fhéin agus air móran a bharrachd orra a bhith creidsinn gu robh i gu bhith siubhal air an talamh gu là a’ bhreitheanais; araon o chionn gu robh i cho diorrasach agus o chionn gun do rinn a màthair droch ghuidhe dhi.

English translation on page 18...

1. *Ruidh* (*rùth* or *rùgh*), roots of grass for dyeing red found in *machair*. From *Gaelic Words and Expressions from South Uist and Eriskay* collected by Rev. Fr. Allan McDonald.

Saturday, January 5, 1895

## The Great Fire (Will 'o the Wisp)

Speech written for the Gaelic Society of Inverness about this time last year - By Iain

The Great Fire" is the name people from Benbecula and the two Uists have for the light some folks would see during the night in lonely, low-lying places around the countryside. In the Isle of Skye it was called "The Pointed Fire." I can't say as to whether this peculiar light was seen throughout the Highlands. There is no doubt whatsoever that many people were seeing "The Great Fire." Some may deny there ever was such a thing, but I have to say that I can't help but believe that many people, young and old, saw the light they referred to as "The Great Fire."

For twenty years, this light was seen at certain times of the year. According to the scientists' opinion, it was a ball of the substance called phosphorus. I have only undertaken to give an account of the light as seen by the folk and their view on its existence. For that reason, I'll not deal with the explanation of scholars. The learned, by times, can be as mistaken as anyone else, or more so. For my part, although I listen to what they have to say, and accept some of the ideas they foster about many things, I can't subscribe to them all.

The light called "The Great Fire" was usually only seen from mid-fall to mid-spring. It was never seen except at times when the night would be black during the presence of rain and fog. It would seem that it couldn't abide moonlight, the chill of frost, or weather that was dry or turbulent. It would, however, be certain to amply travel about if the night was warm and the wind out of the south, or south-west, with a fine, thick, heavy rain on.

During the time about which I write, lanterns were to be had in very few households. When people went on a visit, or traveled from village to village, if the night was dark they carried an ember or two in a tong, or on the point of a sickle, unless they preferred a torch, to provide light on the way. If it happened that "The Great Fire" was about on that night,

it had a strong liking to be near the ember. I'll remember for the rest of my life one evening thirty years ago. While we were sitting around the fire, two agile, young lads burst into the room breathless. Their eyes were popping out of their heads with fear. We thought that a house had gone on fire, or something out of the ordinary had happened in the neighbourhood. What had taken place was this: the boys were visiting and had taken a torch with them. One of them glanced over his shoulder and he saw "The Great Fire" following along. He shouted to his companion that "The Great Fire" was behind them. They flung the torch away and took to the hills. They didn't stop until they arrived at our house, on the verge of exploding with fear.

I haven't enough time at present to give a detailed report on all that I've heard about "The Great Fire." It would often come upon people in bogs and marshes and around the creeks and shores that are numerous in Benbecula and the Uists. If a man was alone rowing his boat on a dark, murky night, "The Great Fire" would come his way and sit lightly on the transom. As soon as the boat's bow hit the shore, "The Great Fire" would withdraw itself and be seen gliding over the ocean and across inlets and ponds while reflecting on the water. It would then disappear around a point of land, or ascend to the moors. There was never harm done to anyone, but even so, all were terrified as they believed its origins were evil. I will now give an account, as briefly as I can, as to how "The Great Fire" came into existence.

The Gaels were never behind any other peoples in explaining peculiar phenomena found on earth. Their ideas were often no more silly or well thought out than those of other cultures of the world. It seems they were satisfied with their views, and so we'll leave those goodly people of old where and how we found them. Although we may consider ourselves as very sensible, perhaps some of our ideas are just as witless as were their own.

Two hundred years ago, the majority of Highlanders were fed and clothed by

2. *Machair* (-aichean) - Long ranges of sandy plains fringing the Atlantic side of the Outer Hebrides. From *Dwelly's Illustrated Gaelic to English Dictionary*.

the resources at hand in the countryside where they lived. Merchants were rare at the time, and as a result, people had to make do with what they could find on the land. In those days, natural dyes were used. They could make green and yellow dyes as beautiful as one might see from heather tops. In soft places on the moorland, ground could be found that was called "the black place." I remember seeing some of these hollows where they were digging, and I often heard about the colored wool mixtures some special old lady would make once upon a time. These are the colours that were produced: black from "the black place," the sheep's dark brown and light and dark grey.

It is said that the people of the Western Isles were fond of red dyes. When the packmen, in times gone by, were traveling around the Highlands, they sold red dyes called *càrnaid* (cochineal) and *màdar* (wild madder). There was only one thing from the land that would make red dye and that was *ruidh*. *Ruidh* is the roots of a certain grass, and it can only be found in dry sand embankments. Women would go to reap the *ruidh* in the nighttime for fear that the ground officer, or any other officials (of the estate), would find out about it. It seems that the landlord was deeply opposed to gathering the *ruidh*, because a large portion of the dry *machair*<sup>2</sup> was dug up at the time for gathering it. When the spring dry season came much of the sand was blown about the shoreland.

There was a farmer in Benbecula commonly known as Calum Priest. He was a MacCormack by surname. I never heard why he was nicknamed Calum Priest, but if it should have been that he was staying with a priest then, naturally, he would be called that. And so the name I heard would have come into use. It appears that Calum Priest was as gentile as could be found anywhere in the countryside. But, as I heard it, his wife was the worst woman in Uist: a wicked woman. It is said that if an evil woman's curse is met, her soul will get no mercy. Apparently, Calum Priest's wife got her wish at least once.

Calum Priest had a daughter who was, like many a girl before her, desirous of novel colours as part of her clothing.

English translation continued on page 25...



# Tokens of Grace - Laurie Stanley-Blackwell

A review by James O. St.Clair

*Mo shùile togam suas a chum  
Nam beann o'n tig mo neart . . .  
Metrical version of Psalm 121  
I lift up my eyes to the hills;  
Where will my help come from?...*

Imagine being on a hillside, or in a secluded glen, in rural Cape Breton during the mid-1800s and early-1900s as thousands of people, at times as many as six or seven thousand, sang the metrical version of the psalms in Gaelic in an outdoor service of worship in the Presbyterian tradition!

The singing, without accompaniment, led by a worship leader, encouraged people of all ages to praise God in the revered language of their ancestors. Coming from all parts of Cape Breton Island to locations such as Stewartdale, Strathlorne, Mira, West Bay, and Cape North, worshippers listened while fervent preachers urged all to confess the error of their ways and to learn the path of truth and to prepare to receive Holy Communion, the bread and the wine - the *Sacramaid* as it was known in Gaelic. For four days, the participants sang and listened and prayed and hoped that they would be considered worthy to receive the small oval token which permitted them to partake of the elements of the last supper.

Laurie Stanley's well researched book takes the reader to many of those locations, summarizes the various activities of the five day events, considers the relationship of the decline of Gaelic language and the fading away of these outdoor services in the first half of the 20th century. The token comes to be more than just a metal ticket of admission to the table, but represents as well the depth of spiritual experience that many people found.

Since the publication of the book, many people have expressed astonishment that five or six or seven thousand people on Cape Breton Island gathered for the better part of a week for outdoor church services. People who have lived on Cape Breton Island all of their lives are surprised that they had never heard of these times of spiritual renewal and singing psalms in Gaelic.

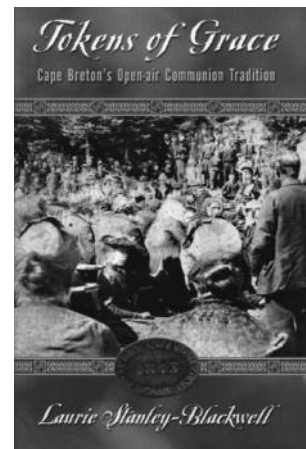
And yet, as the author states in the introduction, "few rituals were as important as the open-air communion which became a central landmark in their spiritual and social lives. This sacramental event with its feast of sermons and harvest of souls was transported from Scotland to Cape Breton in the early 19th century with little dilution."

For people who wish to know more about the lives of some Gaelic-speaking Scots on Cape Breton (and on mainland Nova Scotia, parts of Ontario and the southern U.S. as well), this book is significant reading material. With complete documentation and many illustrations, *Tokens of Grace* is a very readable account of this important social and religious activity which was the highlight of the year for many thousands of Gaels.

The author has followed the pattern established in her earlier book, *The Well Watered Garden*, in sharing with her readers the seriousness and the breadth of her research in a writing style that permits the casual reader to follow the story with great ease. Scholarly but not pedantic, the work will interest many people.

Attractively produced with an interesting cover and many pictures of the communion tokens, and of several of the services, the publication is one more in a promising series brought forth by the Cape Breton University Press. The reader "from away" might like to see a clearer and more complete map. The index might well have been more inclusive for easier reference. A careful editing would have encouraged the writer to shorten some of the paragraphs. It is to be regretted that a number of words are printed with hyphens where no such mark is required.

Although the date of the "Great Communion" held in Whycocomagh in 1853 is stated as having happened in July when it really took place in October, there are few other obvious errors. Perhaps the introductory material on the background of the various branches of Presbyterianism in Scotland and in Nova Scotia could have been developed in greater depth. It would be interesting to know how many (if any) of the Gaelic ser-



mons of the various preachers survive and what they might reveal about the style of Gaelic language and the extent of the vocabulary as used in those addresses.

While the last twenty pages of the book are intended to encourage the reader to see a strong connection between the decline of the use of Gaelic and the end of outdoor services, the chronology is not entirely clear nor are the other factors which brought about change sufficiently identified. But the connection is certainly one which may well encourage further examination.

For those people who wonder why they knew nothing of these religious gatherings and their significance, the book will fill that gap in their knowledge of Cape Breton life in earlier times. The author states very well the importance of her work when she concludes with a lament about the ending of these services: "the special beauty and impressiveness of this sacramental gathering could never be recaptured and would retreat into the shadows of human memory." But Laurie Stanley-Blackwell has helped us to capture a bit of the flavour and the fervour of these occasions when "tokens of grace" were a part of the lives of the participants. We can almost hear the congregations singing in Gaelic *mo shùile togam suas a chum...* ☺

*Tokens of Grace, Cape Breton's Open-air Communion Tradition* is written by Laurie Stanley-Blackwell, Professor of History, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, NS, published by Cape Breton University, Sydney, NS, 2006.

Jim St.Clair is an historian living in Mull River, Inverness County.

# A Guide to the Gaelic Naming System

Goiridh Dòmhnallach

*To those not fortunate or “blessed” enough to speak the Gaelic language of their ancestors, Gaelic names and the name system often make no sense at all. What can actually be a great tool to discover their genealogy often leaves them in confusion.*

The following explanation will, hopefully, clarify some points. Keep in mind that the basic names are often slightly changed when used to describe possession, or in this case lineage.

## Some common Gaelic given names:

Ailean - Allan  
 Alasdair - Alexander  
 Anna - Anne  
 Aonghas - Angus  
 Aodh - Eugene  
 Calum - Malcolm  
 Cailean - Colin  
 Catrìona - Catherine, Kathleen  
 Cairistiona - Christy  
 Coinneach - Kenneth  
 Dàibhidh - David  
 Dòmhnall - Donald  
 Donnchadh - Duncan  
 Dùghall - Dougald  
 Eachann - Hector  
 Ealasaid - Elizabeth  
 Eòghann - Hugh  
 Eòsamh - Joseph  
 Fionnlagh - Finley  
 Flòraidh/Fionnghal - Flora  
 Gilleasbuig - Archibald  
 Goiridh - Jeffrey  
 Iain - John  
 Iseabail - Isabel  
 Maighread - Margaret  
 Màiri - Mary  
 Micheal - Michael  
 Móràg - Sarah, Sally  
 Murchadh - Murdoch  
 Oighrig - Effie  
 Pàdruig - Peter, Patrick  
 Raibeart - Robert  
 Raghnaill/Raonull - Ranald  
 Ruairidh/Ruairi - Roddie, Rory  
 Seumas - James  
 Seas - Jessie  
 Seònaid - Janet  
 Sileas - Cecilia  
 Sine - Jane  
 Sòmhairle - Sam  
 Steaphain - Stephen  
 Teàrlach - Charles  
 Uilleam - William

## The “sloinneadh”:

The use of surnames only came into Gaelic culture a few centuries ago and even today in communities with a few John MacDonalds or Donald MacInnises using the surname to identify them isn't always that practical. In English, in present-day Glendale parish, we have Donnie Roddie (his father was Roddie), Donnie Donnie Roddie (his son), Donnie “Twin” (has a twin brother, Dannie) and Donnie “Propane” (he drives a propane delivery truck). This naming system is simply the Gaelic naming system adopted to English. A person can be identified by who he/she is descended from, by a physical characteristic (*Gilleasbuig Bàn* - Fair-haired Archie), or by occupation (*Sandaidh an Clachair* - Sandy the Mason). Alexander MacDonald's oldest son, Blaise Alexander is recognised in the community as Sandy Alex Dougald. Donnie Donnie Roddie's grandfather was

*The sloinneadh is a great legacy handed down to us from our predecessors. It is an extremely handy memory tool and allows us to always have our genealogy on the tips of our tongues.*



*Rodaidh Aonghais Eòghainn* - Roddie son of Angus, son of Hugh. Thus from the *sloinneadh* (pronounced swun-yug), which usually gives the line of the son of, the son of, the son of, etc., we can see that Donnie's father's name is Donnie; that his grandfather's name was Roddie; that his great-grandfather's name was Angus; and that his great-great-grandfather's name was Hugh. (But we must



*This cenotaph in Castle Bay, Isle of Barra records the sloinneadh of each fallen soldier.*

Photo by Rodney Clatison

keep in mind that although English names can be ascribed to our ancestors they most likely went by the Gaelic, especially the further one goes back.) With a little learning and inquiry the confusion of Gaelic names and the *sloinneadh* is put behind and this extremely useful resource to your genealogical research can be utilized, for which it was intended.

The older system of the *sloinneadh* usually employed the word *mac*, son, and derivations from it. *Mac* can be found at the beginning of surnames as well, such as *MacEachainn* - MacEachen, *MacAonghais* - MacInnis, *MacDhòmhnauill* - MacDonald, *MacEachairne* - MacEachern, *MacAoidh* - MacKay, *Mac an t-Saoir* - MacIntyre, *MacGill'Fhaolain* - MacLellan, *MacGillebhràth* - MacGillivray, etc. In the *sloinneadh*, however, rather than referring to someone in the ancient past, we refer to the immediate predecessors of an individual. A lower case *mac* is used, and this is only in the first generation. The person whose *sloinneadh* you are reciting is a son. For a female you would obviously say daughter - *nighean* (or shortened to *ni'n*). Once



you go back beyond the first generation the *mac* changes to *mhic* which is often shortened to '*ic*.

For example, the late James MacKay was known to all as Jimmy. Jimmy was the son of Angus (*Aonghas*). Angus was the son of John (*Iain*). John was the son of William (*Uilleam*). William was the son of Murdock (*Murchadh*). The *sloinneadh* for Jimmy (*Seumas*) is: *Seumas mac Aonghais 'ic Iain 'ic Uilleim 'ic Mhurchaidh*.

Notice how the spelling of the names are somewhat different. This is because the names have been changed to show possession. If *Dòmhnall* has a son named *Iain* then his son would be known as *Iain mac Dhòmhnail*. *Dhòmhnail* means "of Donald", so even Donald's house (*taigh*) would be *taigh Dhòmhnail*.

More recent forms of the *sloinneadh*, often omit the *mac* and *mhic*/*ic* and more so run the names together. The further back you go in the *sloinneadh*, the better your chances at running into *mac* and *mhic* again.

For example, Patrick MacEachern is known in Glendale as *Pàdruig Aonghais Sine* or Peter Angus Jane. *Sine*, (Jane), was a widow and as is often the case her name came into the *sloinneadh*. *Pàdruig*'s lengthier *sloinneadh*, however, is *Pàdruig Aonghais Iain 'ic Dhòmhnail 'ic Phàdruig Bhàin 'ic Raghnaill* (Patrick son of Angus, son of John, son of Donald, son of fair-haired Patrick, son of Ranald).

*Pàdruig*'s great-grandfather, *Dòmhnall*, (with his brother *Iain*, not the *Iain* in this *sloinneadh*), and his great-great-grandfather, *Pàdruig Bàn*, emigrated from Arisaig, Scotland in 1801, and came to Glendale. *Pàdruig*'s great-great-great-grandfather, *Raghmall*, never left Scotland. But *Pàdruig* knew that he lived and that he himself was a descendant.

The *sloinneadh* is a great legacy handed down to us from our predecessors. It is an extremely handy memory tool and allows us to always have our genealogy on the tips of our tongues.

*Cuimhnichibh air na daoine bho'n d'fhàinig sibh*. Remember the people from whom you come. ☺

*Le Goiridh mac Alasdair Dhùghail Shandaidh Iain Phàdruig 'ic Iain*. By Goiridh Dòmhnallach, a folklorist and Gaelic instructor from Kingsville Inverness County.

# Giseagan Bho Sheumas MacAoidh

Collected by Goiridh Dòmhnallach

**L**ike many rural people, Scottish Gaels believed in folk practices that they felt would ensure their good fortune. Beliefs in evil intent, jealousy, bad luck and tempting fate resulted in customs that informed the Gaels daily actions and routines.

The late Jimmy MacKay (*Seumas mac Aonghais 'ic Uilleim 'ic Iain 'ic Mhurchaidh*) of Kingsville, Inverness County was a noted local historian, genealogist and, as well, widely knowledgeable of folkways practiced by members of his community.

In recording superstitious adages from his home area, Jimmy noted, "*A dh'aindheoin cho daingean 's a bha iad 'nan creideamh, bha na Gàidheil a' creidsinn ann an spiorad, bòcain, ro-thachaireas, eòlas agus rudan mar sin. Cha n-eil teagamh nach eil a leithid do rud ann: droch shùil, farmad 's eile*. (Despite the firmness of their faith, Gaels believed in spirits, ghosts, forerunners, charms and things of that sort. Doubtless there is such as the evil eye, effects of envy and so on).

Here are examples from Jimmy MacKay:

*Geàrr t'fhalt eadar a' ghealach ùr agus a' ghealach làn. Seachain an t-earradhubh no cràthaidh t'fhalt*. – Cut your hair between the new moon and the full moon, but avoid the wane of the moon or your hair will wither.

*Cha'n eil e sealbhach saltart air uaigh, gu sònraichte uaigh leanaibh nach deachaidh a bhais-teadh*. – It is not good to step or tramp on a grave, especially that of an unbaptized infant.

*Na innis t'aois do neach sam bith. Tha e na's fheàrr bliadhna na dhà do dheifir a dhèanadh*. – Do not tell your age, but state a year or two in the difference.

*Ma thig seillein astaigh, tha e 'ciallachadh coigreach a bhith 'tighinn. Na ceap idir e ach fuilig e fàgail le ' thoil fhéin. Tha iad an aghaidh seillein a mharbhadh*. – If a bee enters the house it means that a stranger is arriving. Do not catch the bee but allow it to leave of its own accord. It's considered unlucky to kill a bee.

*Cuir Bioball fosgailte ann an creathail maille ri leanabh gus olc a chumail bhuaithe*. – Place an open Bible in the cradle with a child to keep evil away.

*Na tachair air duine anns a' stàidhir*. – Do not meet a person in the stairway.

*Ma thig cat dubh dh'ionnsaigh an taigh', na saodaichibh air falbh e*. – If a black cat comes to your house, don't chase it away.

*Ma phutanaicheas tu do léine na do dheacaid ceàrr, na ceartaich i idir ach thoir dhiot i agus putanaich i ceart a-rithist*. – If you happen to button your shirt or coat improperly, do not correct it but remove the garment and do it over again.

*Na las coinneal bho theine ach le lasadan no bàsaichidh tu ann am bochdainne*. – Don't light a candle from any fire but with a match or you will die in poverty.

*Na leig le coinneal losgadh amach ach séid fhéin amach i, agus na fàg coinneal a' losgadh ann a' rùm gun duine 'na làthair. Ma dh'fhàgas, thig bàs dha'n taigh gu goirid*. – Don't let a candle burn out but blow it out yourself, and don't leave a candle burning in a room with no one present. If you do, death will come to the house soon.

*Nuair a chì thu a' solust ùr, fiach gu'm bi buinn airgead 'nad phòca agus tionndaidh iad gun an toirt às do phòca*. – When you first see the new moon, see that you have silver coins in your pocket and turn them over without removing them from your pocket.

*Nuair a chuireas tu aodach ùr uimpead (? , umad) a' chiad uair, cuir bonn airgead 'nad phòca agus bidh airgead agad daonnan*. – When you put on new clothes for the first time, put a silver coin in your pocket and you'll always have money.

*Gléidhidh aodach gorm clann bheaga gu aois trì bliadhna bho dhriod-fhortan. Tha dath dearg sealbhach a bhi 'ga chosg. Tha dath donn air a bhacail agus tha glas math cuideachd*. – Blue clothing will protect little children from misfortune to the age of three years. It's lucky to wear red. It's forbidden to wear brown and grey is also considered good.

continued on page 26...

# Dèante le làimh

## RUG HOOKING IN CAPE BRETON - PART I

Vicki Quimby

*Rug hooking has been referred to as a “chore of poverty” by some, but what was drudgery for one was a chance to create an item of beauty for another. Warm coverings for cold drafty floors could be made by using materials that had no other use and without spending money.*

In the early days of settlement in Cape Breton the thought of a covering for the floor made of cloth would have been unthinkable. The limited supplies of wool and linen yarns, woven into cloth on household looms, would have been the result of months of labour in the homes of the Gaels. The resulting linens, *drogaid* (drugget or linsey woolsey) and *clò mór* (heavy, fulled wool cloth) would provide them with warm clothing, blankets, bedding, toweling, and even grain sacks.

But as the 19th century progressed, the idea of carpets and rugs spread from the more prosperous areas of North America. Even as the very wealthy urban dwellers were importing Oriental rugs from Europe, handwoven striped rag rugs begin to appear in some areas of Nova Scotia. The introduction of machine-spun cotton by mid-century had made it less labour intensive to produce hand-weaving after this period, so more extravagant items could now be made if the materials were at hand.

However, even though warm floor coverings were now deemed desirable, most Highlanders' households did not have an abundance of materials with which to weave rugs. Where the idea of hooking cloth rags or homespun yarn ends through a woven fabric base began is not known definitively. However, this method became a simple and economical way to create a useful product from materials that had no other use, in households that otherwise might have gone without. From this point on, the *brat-ùrlair* (hooked mat) was a featured item in almost every Cape Breton home.

Theories as to the origin of rug hooking range from raised-loop embroidery in ancient Egypt and French *tambour* embroidery (which employs a hook and stretched fabric ground) to the more pedestrian English “thrumming,” a method used by poor mill workers, where discarded woolen yarn mill ends were drawn through a cloth foundation. This, and similar techniques (brodded or



File photo.

Highland Village animator Beth MacNeil hooking a rug.

“proddy” mats), where rags were poked up through a backing, were used by the common people of England, Scotland and Ireland. Never were these latter techniques taught in the upper-class finishing schools of Europe and America.

No matter what its origins, rug hooking seems to have begun at about the same time in all four Atlantic provinces and Quebec, as well as in Maine and New Hampshire in the United States. It appeared to thrive where winters were long and cold and where families were thrifty out of necessity. By the 1870's hooked rugs were common in many of these areas.

It is thought that the earliest hooked rugs began to appear prior to the middle of the 1800's in Nova Scotia, although no documented examples survive. The earliest dated Canadian example of a hooked rug is from New Brunswick in 1860. Although this particular example is

hooked on a linen ground, the use of handwoven linen or canvas fabric for hooking was difficult. While linen made a durable backing, pulling rag strips through tightly woven cloth was a slow and tedious task. It is not until loosely-woven burlap becomes a household staple in the 1850's that the craft of rug hooking flourishes.

The development of burlap is key to the development of rug hooking. About 1820, jute samples were sent from India to Dundee, Scotland, a place renowned for its linen weaving. Experimenting for several years, a process was eventually perfected for weaving the plant fiber. Factories were set up in India where jute was plentiful and labour was cheap. The result was an inexpensive burlap cloth that was immediately in demand throughout Europe and North America. One of its main functions was to be made into feed and grain bags, prevalent in



every rural household. From the 1850's on, burlap sacking was a household staple. The loose, open weave of the fabric made the task of hooking much easier and an ideal base for making rugs was discovered.

Materials for hooking were, out of necessity, basic and not difficult to make at home. A hook was traditionally made out of a piece of wood with a nail driven into it. The nail was then filed down into the shape of a blunt hook. The frame was simply four boards, notched, and nailed or clamped together onto which the burlap could be sewn. The end boards could be turned to wind the burlap taut. The sacks were washed, cut, stretched and marked with designs. The pattern was often drawn onto the burlap with charcoal or "firesticks" (sticks burned at one end in the fire).

The rug was hooked from the top of the backing. One hand was held underneath, holding the yarn or rag, while the top hand pushed the hook down through the fabric and pulled some of the material up to form a looped pile.

Strips of rags from worn clothing and other cloth were the preferred materials for hooking into the burlap. But by mid-century much of the Gaels' clothing continued to be sewn from handwoven *dro-gaid* (drugget). This cloth was woven with either a handspun linen or purchased cotton warp and a fine handspun wool weft. It was sturdy fabric that endured many hand-me-downs, much patching or even re-cutting and sewing. Adult clothing was sometimes taken apart and re-sewn into a smaller child's garment using the least worn parts of the fabric. Blankets were routinely taken apart at center seam, where most of the wear was, turned, and re-sewn with the worn parts on the edges. All these, eventually, wore out. For the thrifty Gaels, the chance to re-use what was left of the cloth yet again made sense and these rags formed the basis of the early rugs.

Before hooking was begun, all the old cloth pieces one could find were gathered together and cut into strips. It was not essential to sew strips end to end, but the longer the piece the better. Thick cloth was cut to 1/4 or 3/8 inch wide and pulled through singly, but lighter cloth was cut to 1/2 inch and pulled through folded. No matter which was done, it was important to make certain that the inside of the fabric – or the side least faded by the sun – was the side that would show on the top.

As with cloth, many families considered the wool yarn itself too valuable to be used for anything other than warm



File photo.

Hooked mats on display at the Highland Village.



File photo.

clothing. Again, a sizeable investment in time and labour had been involved in the whole process of rearing the sheep, preparing the wool, then spinning and dyeing it. However, hand-spun yarn was often added to rugs as the sometimes meager supply of worn cloth for rags ran out. In some areas, when yarn was spun for the purpose of hooking, the poorer quality wool was used – the wool from the legs and the belly of the sheep. Better

quality wool was saved for knitting and weaving. (Continued next issue.) ☺

By Vicki Quimby, Highland Village textile consultant and animator.

*Déante le làimh (handmade) is a regular feature of An Rubha that explores various aspects of textiles and craft production in Gaelic Nova Scotia.*

# An Gàidheal Portmhor

## FROM THE MACLEAN COLLECTION - NEIL GOW

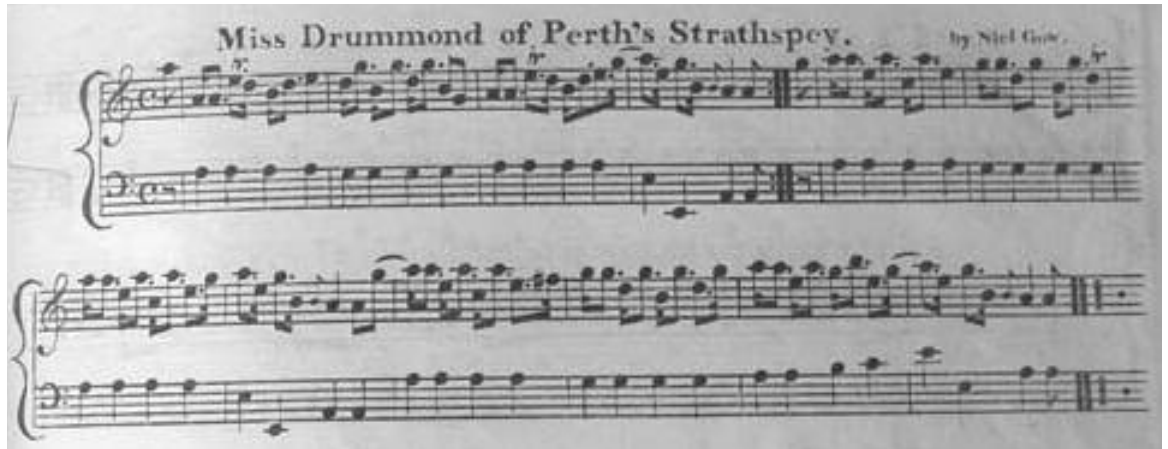
Pauline MacLean

From the MacLean Collection, we feature the strathspey *Miss Drummond of Perth* also known as *Calum Crùbach*. It is attributed to Neil Gow, the noted Scottish fiddler. It appeared in Gow's Third Collection, 1801 and the version here is from *The Beauties of Neil Gow* published in 1819 by his son Nathaniel.

Neil Gow was born in Strathbraan, near Dunkeld, Scotland in 1727. He had a long successful career and was known for his style of playing. He used what is now called the up-driven bow, music played on the up stroke.

"His bow-hand, as a suitable instrument of his genius, was uncommonly powerful; and when the note produced by the up-bow was often feeble and indistinct in other hands, it was struck in his playing with a strength and certainty, which never failed to surprise and delight the skilful hearer." (Extract from the *Scots Magazine* in January 1809, Rev Principal Baird of the Collage, Edinburgh)

Supported by the Murray's of Atholl, he played for dances, balls, weddings and other events and was much in demand. Gow was married first to Margaret Wiseman and had five children. His second wife was Margaret Urquhart. Several of his children also were excellent fiddle players. He composed many tunes but, as was common, did not claim ownership of them. Players learned the tunes by ear and each added his own twist. In his early collections of music, Gow did not often attach authors to the tunes. Fiddlers learned and played tunes they liked without knowing or caring about the authors. From this habit arose the disputes over authorship. The Gow's, in their publications, often used the phrase "as played



From *The Beauties of Neil Gow*, 1819.

by Neil Gow and sons". Gow is said to have excelled in strathspeys but also played beautiful laments including the one made on the death of Margaret Urquhart, *Neil Gow's Lament on the Death of his Second Wife*.

*Miss Drummond of Perth (Calum Crùbach)* is sung as a *port á beul*. *Puirt* are in the typical two part form of dance tunes with each half being 8 or 16 bars long. Each half is repeated, and tunes are sung through twice, with repeats, before going on to the next one. *Puirt* are sung in sets with similar or, more often, contrasting tunes being grouped together. A typical set, for example, would be a strathspey and two reels.



Neil Gow

### Calum Crùbach anns a' Ghleann

Calum Crùbach anns a' Ghleann  
Cum thall na caoraich agad  
Calum Crùbach anns a' ghleann  
Cum a thall na caoraich.

Ged a tha do leth-shùil cam  
Chì thu leis an t-sùil a th' agad  
Ged a tha do leth-shùil cam  
Chì thu leis an aon shùil.

Crippled Malcolm in the glen  
Keep your sheep over yonder  
Crippled Malcolm in the glen  
Keep your sheep there

Though you are blind in one eye  
You can see with the one eye  
Though you are blind in one eye  
You can see with the one eye ☺

Recorded by Dr. John Shaw from recitation of the late Dan MacPherson, Caledonia, P.E.I. Noted in Shaw's report to the Island Institute, Gaelic in Prince Edward Island: A Cultural Remnant (Gaelic Field Recording Project). This report is available on-line at the following URL [http://www.upei.ca/islandstudies/rep\\_mk\\_1.pdf](http://www.upei.ca/islandstudies/rep_mk_1.pdf).  
Transcription and translation by John Shaw.

Selected by Pauline MacLean, collections manager & genealogist.

*An Gàidheal Portmhor (The Big Gaelic Songs)* features selections from the music collection of the late Joe MacLean.



Translation of Mac-Talla Excerpt  
The Great Fire  
from page 18

She decided that she would go to gather *ruidh* in order to dye yarn or wool. She couldn't go when it was daylight for fear of being betrayed to the ground officer, and so to keep things as secret as possible, she planned to reap the *ruidh* on the Monday following Sunday night. That is to say, after midnight on Sunday.

Her mother was extremely against her going to reap the *ruidh*, but the girl wouldn't listen or pay heed to a single word her mother said. If the mother was a wicked woman, it looks like the daughter was as stubborn as the devil. Having decided to gather the *ruidh*, she was going to do so even if the eastern ocean rose over the western ocean. When her mother saw her going out the door, she said, "You are now leaving with your mother's curse upon your head. May I never see hide nor hair of you again."

It seems that the girl's mother got her wish, because Calum Priest's daughter was never seen again, dead or alive. When it became obvious she wasn't going to come home, friends and relatives in the neighbourhood began a death search and they found some of her clothing on the shore where she had been gathering the *ruidh*.

Shortly after this incident, the light called "The Great Fire" was seen. It seems that everyone who heard about what had happened believed that Calum Priest's wife got her wish and that Calum Priest's daughter had become "The Great Fire." It should be mentioned that many of those who were seeing "The Great Fire" said that they compared it to a fire in a creel basket. This (sighting) made them, and many others, believe that she would wander the earth until Judgement Day because of her stubbornness and the curse her mother placed on her. ☺

Edited and translated by Seumas Watson from Mac-Talla, January 5, 1895. An excerpt from Mac-Talla is regular feature of An Rubha.

## Cainnt mo mhàthar - an update

Shamus Y. MacDonald

Completed earlier this year, the second phase of *Cainnt mo Mhathar* resulted in the production of more than twenty hours of video and audio recordings featuring fluent Gaelic speakers from all four Cape Breton counties.

By any estimate, this represents a significant collection and an invaluable primary resource for those designing, teaching and attending community Gaelic immersion courses.

Because the ultimate goal of this project is to foster language renewal, fieldwork with tradition-bearers was focused on everyday topics identified as essential by learners, instructors and course organizers during phase one. At the same time, the informal approach taken to interviews encouraged contributors to fall into the well-established routine of a house visit where so many aspects of oral culture were historically transmitted. In order to prompt natural, candid conversation, fieldwork also allowed for multiple forms of self-expression, highlighting the strengths and interests of contributors. This multi-faceted approach allowed individual personalities to surface while addressing the specific needs of language learners. There is little doubt it also added considerably to the interest of the collection as a whole: revealing as it did a more personal portrayal of Gaelic in contemporary Cape Breton.



Anna MacKinnon with friend

Although not typical of the subject matter *Cainnt mo Mhàthar* set out to collect, the following is a notable contribution made by Anna MacKinnon (*Annag ni'n Iain Aonghais Ailein*) from Broad Cove Banks, Inverness County. In many ways it illustrates the broad range and value of material supplied by contributors and in these ways can be considered characteristic of the collection as a whole. MacKinnon is well-known supporter of



Anna MacKinnon with her late husband Willie

Gaelic in the Inverness area and a knowledgeable and practiced speaker. During her interview she spoke about her childhood at Sight Point (*Rubha an t-Seallaidh*) and discussed the vocabulary associated with certain daily chores. Here she recites a rhyme traditionally used on New Year's Eve.

*Oidhche Chullainn, Chaillainn chruaidh  
Thàinig mise le m' dhuann 'ga reic  
Mhaoidh an bodach orm gu cruaidh  
Gum bristeadh e mo cheann le chloich  
Ach thuirt an té, a' b'fhèarr nan t-òr  
Gum bu chòir mo leigeil a-staigh  
Airson an aon nì a tha bhuam  
'S tha sin suarach a-nochd*

Cold, cruel New Year's Eve  
I came with my rhyme to sell  
The old man threatened me harshly  
That he would break my head with a stone  
But the woman who was better than gold said  
I should be let inside  
For the one thing I am lacking  
And that is little enough tonight

This excellent example of idiomatic language provided by Anna MacKinnon is one of many collected through the *Cainnt mo Mhàthar* project. It clearly demonstrates the resources available to the Gaelic community for self-renewal. No doubt this is one of the greatest lessons *Cainnt mo Mhàthar* has to offer. ☺

Shamus MacDonald is the administrative officer for Comhairle na Gàidhlig (Gaelic Council of NS). Photos have been provided by Anna MacKinnon.

# Our People, Acknowledgements & Accolades

## TAPADH LEIBH-SE GU MÓR

The Nova Scotia Highland Village Society gratefully acknowledges the support of many individuals, organisations and governments for their unwavering support of the Highland Village and its work.

**PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERS - Province of Nova Scotia** through the *Departments of Tourism, Culture & Heritage (Heritage Division - Nova Scotia Museum), Transportation & Public Works, Economic Development, and the Office of Gaelic Affairs.* **Government of Canada** through *Canadian Heritage & Service Canada.* **Municipality of Victoria County.**

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**ARTEFACTS & ARCHIVAL DONATIONS - Neil MacDonald** (organ & chairs), *Elaine MacNeil* (reel to reel player & tapes), *Lucille MacKenzie* (prayer book), *Brian MacNeil* (farm equipment), *Gordon A. Harvey* (store scale), *South Haven Community Hall/Douglas Urquhart* - (organ), *Angus Coffin* - (postal scale, torch, tools and tins).

**RETIRING BOARD** -  
A special thanks to retiring board members *Janet Gillis-Hussey* and *David Newlands* for their support and guidance as members of the Board of Trustees.

**RETIRING STAFF** - Thanks and all the best to blacksmith *John MacDonald* who has retired as a result of health issues.

## CONGRATULATIONS & BEST WISHES

To *Jim St.Clair* on receiving the Anna Hamilton Award for outstanding volunteer service from the Council of NS Archives. To our own *Pauline MacLean* on her election as president of the Council of NS Archives. To *Jim Bryden* on becoming a grandfather.

## SYMPATHIES

In the past year the Highland Village has lost a number of important friends and sup-

porters. Our sincerest sympathies go out to their families: *Dan E. MacNeil*, a long time supporter and former trustee; *Michael Anthony MacLean*, fiddler and supporter of the Village; *Anna "Hector" MacNeil*, former interpreter, volunteer and great supporter of the Highland Village; *Hughena MacNeil*, volunteer and wife of Iona Gaelic singer Mickey MacNeil; *Bea "Peter F" MacLean*, early supporter and volunteer of the Highland Village; *Ronald MacDonald*, a former volunteer; *Roddie Frank MacNeil*, husband of Caddie MacNeil, volunteer, father & grandfather to many Highland Village volunteers; *George Maher*, volunteer & community leader; *James Andre MacKinnon*, son Jimmy MacKinnon, former staff member; and *John Allan Cameron*, HV Day performer & "Celtic Godfather." ☺

### Jimmy MacKay's adages from page 21

*Tha cuid do lathaichean na's fheàrr airson rud sònraichte a dhèanadh:* - Some days are better for doing particular tasks:

*Dèan nigheadaireachd air Di-luain, fairg thu fhéin, nigh t'fhalt agus dèan obair-talmhainn;* - do laundry on Monday, bathe yourself, wash your hair and do cultivation work.

*Air Di-màirt, tòisich saothair ùr;* - Tuesday - begin a new task or undertaking.

*Di-ciadain, faic do lighiche, sgrìobh litir, agus iarr fàbhar;* - Wednesday - see your physician, write a letter and ask a favour.

*Di-ardaoin, diol do pheanas* - Thursday - serve or perform your penance (reward or punishment);

*Di-haoine, danns agus dèan obair-gàrraidh;* - Friday - dancing and gardening.

*Di-sathuirne, dèan rannsachadh cogais agus dèan tàmh;* - Saturday - examine your conscience and rest.

*Di-Dòmhaich, meal thu fhéin!* - Sunday - enjoy yourself! ☺



## Nova Scotia Highland Village Society

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Manager - *Seumas Watson*  
Chief Interpreter - *Joanne MacIntyre*  
Animators - *Colleen Beaton, Marie Chehy, Catherine Gillis, Patricia Kibyuk-MacDonald, Keith MacDonald\*, Kyle MacDonald\*, Aileen MacLean (on leave), Beth MacNeil, Debi MacNeil (on leave), Holly MacNeil\*, Jean MacNeil, Kaye Anne MacNeil, Carla Pace\*, Meagan Quimby & Vicki Quimby (Textile Consultant).*

Farmer - *Sandy MacNeil*  
Curatorial Asst, Gaelic Music - *Tiber Falzett\**  
Children's Prg. Asst - *Meaghan O'Handley\**

#### Collections, Archives & Genealogy

Manager - *Pauline MacLean*  
Collections Asst - *Katherine MacLeod\**  
Archival Asst - *Crystal MacNeil\**

#### Visitor Centre Services/Gift Shop

*Gerry MacNeil & Sadie MacDonald*

#### Operations

Manager - *James Bryden*  
Maintenance - *Tim MacNeil*  
Groundskeeper - *David MacKenzie*

#### Volunteer Programmers

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

\* Denotes student employee.



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



## Join the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society!



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

### General Memberships

Individual: \$15.00\* per year.

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

\* Income tax receipts are issued for general memberships.

### Membership Plus

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

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

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

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

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

\*\*Membership Plus fees are not tax deductible and include 14% HST.

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

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

Seòladh/Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

Check type: General Membership  Individual  Family Membership Plus  Individual  Family

Return to Highland Village, 4119 Hwy 223, Iona, NS B2C 1A3 | Fax: 902-725-2227 | E: [highlandvillage@gov.ns.ca](mailto:highlandvillage@gov.ns.ca)

*Eachdradh, Cànan, Nòs is Dualchas – History, Language, Tradition and Heritage*

# Céilidh air Cheap Breatunn:

*a virtual exhibit on the Gaelic culture of Cape Breton Island*

www.capebretonceilidh.com

WINNER OF THE 2007 DR. PHYLLIS R. BLAKELEY AWARD  
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Céilidh air Cheap Breatunn



VIRTUAL MUSEUM CANADA

HOME

GAELIC CAPE BRETON

SONG

STORYTELLING

MUSIC

DANCE

LEARNING CENTRE

*Cape Breton Céilidh*

*Ur beacha "Céilidh air Cheap Breatunn."*

Welcome to "Céilidh air Cheap Breatunn" a virtual céilidh experience celebrating Cape Breton Gaelic culture. We invite you to come "make a céilidh on us" and experience our proud heritage, unique to North America and indeed the world, as passed on through countless generations.

Come and meet the Gaels of Cape Breton Island and explore our ancient language and its vibrant traditions of storytelling, song, music and dance. This unique virtual exhibit will give you insight into the wonderful legacy our ancestors brought with them from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and preserved here in Nova Scotia.

FRANCAIS SITE MAP CREDITS LEARNING CENTRE

Explore the rich traditions of Cape Breton's Gaels (Storytelling, Songs, Music and Dance) through unique Flash® based documentaries and video clips.

Learn about the céilidh and seanchas traditions. Hear Gaelic phrases, and more.

Produced by the Nova Scotia Highland Village Society. Curated by Jeff MacDonald.

Designed and programmed by Threeton.com.

Funded by the Virtual Museum of Canada Investment Program.



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VIRTUAL MUSEUM CANADA

## AN RUBHA

*The Highland Village Gaelic Folklife Magazine*

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



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