



*Lean gu dlùth ri cliù do shinnsear*

An  
**Teachdaire**  
**Gàidhealach**

Aireamh 49

An Dùbhlachd 1999



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## Secretary's report

In our committee meetings this year we have had many discussions on our web page and you can all see the excellent results at:

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/1879/index.html>. Many thanks to Alex Stewart for maintaining this site. We have also entered the world of email and can be contacted at [ozgaelic@hotmail.com](mailto:ozgaelic@hotmail.com).

For those of you who do not have access to email, we can also now be contacted by regular mail at:

Comunn Gàidhlig Astràilia  
PO Box A2259  
Sydney South NSW 1235

This year we have continued the tradition of a Christmas ceilidh. This was held on Saturday the 4th of December and attended by a small but enthusiastic group of people. We began by singing *Suas Leis a' Ghàidhlig*. This was followed by a reading including a description of a traditional ceilidh and a prayer in Gaelic by Rod McInnes.

Several members sang songs, including a lovely duet by Susan McKerihan and Ian Fraser. Jan Wilson taught us all a Scottish country dance, *Come to the ceilidh*. Ivor Mackay read a couple of poems and we all sang some Christmas carols such as *Oidhche Shamhach*. It was a very pleasant evening and we expect that this event will remain on our calendar for next year.

We are also well under way in our preparations for another Latha Gàidhlig, which will be held on the second Saturday of March, 2000. Keep this date free! The programme will be similar to last year's Latha with group lessons, communal singing and dancing and culminating in a ceilidh in the evening. Next year, we also hope to increase our public profile by attending various Scottish functions such as the Australia Day Celtic Festival at North Sydney, the Bundanoon Gathering and the Highland Games at Drummoyne.

Cheers,

Orin

## Committee members

Elected committee members are as follows:

### Convener:

Ivor MacKay  
✉ [ivormac@ozemail.com.au](mailto:ivormac@ozemail.com.au)  
☎ 02 4285 8801

### Hon. Secretary:

Orin Chisholm  
✉ [o.chisholm@unsw.edu.au](mailto:o.chisholm@unsw.edu.au)  
☎ 9808 4774

### Hon. Treasurer:

Rod McInnes  
✉ [r.mcinnnes@acilconsulting.com.au](mailto:r.mcinnnes@acilconsulting.com.au)  
☎ 041 925 3081

### Members:

Ian Fraser                      Katie Graham  
Susan McKerihan              Alex Stewart

*An Teachdaire Gàidhealach's* editorial committee consists of

Katie Graham, *Editor*  
✉ [jsgraham@ozemail.com.au](mailto:jsgraham@ozemail.com.au)  
☎ 9597 5214

Rod McInnes  
✉ [r.mcinnnes@acilconsulting.com.au](mailto:r.mcinnnes@acilconsulting.com.au)  
☎ 041 925 3081

Graeme MacKeachie  
✉ [bran@gaelic.net](mailto:bran@gaelic.net)  
☎ 9797 0047

Susan McKerihan  
✉ [susan.mckerihan@au.pwcglobal.com](mailto:susan.mckerihan@au.pwcglobal.com)  
☎ 9331 6598

## Comunn Gàidhlig Astràilia

The Gaelic Association of Australia (Comunn Gàidhlig Astràilia) is a non-profit organisation which supports the language and culture of Scottish Gaels in Australia. Members include both native speakers and learners. We welcome contact from anyone with an interest in these subjects. A' Ghàidhlig gu brath !!

The Association produces a quarterly journal, *An Teachdaire Gaidhealach*, which is sent to all members. Membership costs \$20 per year.

Our Latha Gàidhlig 2000 will be held on Saturday 11 March 2000 at North Sydney. The day will cater for Scottish Gaelic learners at all levels — from absolute beginners to advanced conversational Gaelic — and will end with a cèilidh.

Details of the Latha Gàidhlig will be sent to all members directly.



# Dòchas ùr mu sgoil Ghàidhlig do dh'Inbhir Nis

Tha luchd-taic na Gàidhlig ann an Inbhir Nis an dòchas gun tèid an darna bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig ann an Alba a stèidheachadh anns a' bhaile aca ann an ceann ùine nach bi ro fhada. Dh'èirich an dòchas ùr as deidh do Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd sgrìobhadh gu riaghaltas na h-Alba airson faighinn a-mach co-dhiù bhiodh iad deònach cnap mòr airgid a thoirt dhaibh airson sgoil, mar a rinn iad do Chomhairle Ghlaschu. Thoisich a' chiad sgoil Ghàidhlig ann an Alba ann an Glaschu o chionn ceithir mìosan.

Tha an ceum ùr a tha seo a' tighinn as dèidh sia bliadhna bho chuir seann Chomhairle Roinn na Gàidhealtachd am plana airson sgoil Ghàidhlig sìos an liosta air sgàth dìth-airgid (agus, chanadh feadhainn, dìth-mhiann). Ach tha barrachd sgoilearan anns an aonad Ghàidhlig ann an Inbhir Nis, a tha an cois Sgoil a' Mheadhain, anns a bheil clasaichean Beurla cuideachd, na tha anns an sgoil ùir ann an Glaschu. Agus leis cho fàbharach 's a bha aithisg an Ard-Ollaimh Dick Johnstone à Oilthigh Shruighlea mu fhoghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, tha ughdarras-foghlaim Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd air fàs earbsach gu leòr mu bhith ag adhartachadh a' phlana airson na sgoile.

Tha na h-Eireannaich agus na Cuimrich dhen bheachd nach fhiach aonadan a bhith ann, agus gu bheil e fada nas fheàrr do chomas na cloinne anns a' mhion-chànan ma tha gnothaichean na sgoile air fad a' gabhail àite troimhpe. Tha Alba a-nise air tòiseachadh air an dearbh rathad, agus tha dùil, ma bhios Inbhir Nis soirbheachail, gum bi iomart ann airson a leithid a bhith ann an àiteachan eile, gu h-àraid ann am Port Rìgh, far a bheil barrachd sgoilearan a' dol a-steach do dh'aonad Gàidhlig na bun-sgoile na tha a' dol don aonad Bheurla.

## Gaelic numbers

The question often arises of the extent of active Gaelic spoken in the general populace, especially in Scotland and in the question of increasing public funding.

These figures are from a Scottish census in 1991. They show, for key regions of the Gàidhealtachd and then as an overall figure, the total population, those identifying themselves as primarily Gaelic speaking, and that Gaelic figure as a percentage of the total population.

Figures were not readily available for other areas of the world, such as Cape Breton, reflecting perhaps the lack of focus on such matters in the local census.

# New hope for Gaelic school for Inverness

The following is the English version of the original Gaelic article given at left.

Supporters of Gaelic in Inverness are hopeful that Scotland's second Gaelic primary school will be established in the town in the not-too-distant future. The new expectation arose after Highland Council wrote to the Scottish Government to find out if they would be willing to make a special grant available to fund the school, as they did for Glasgow City Council. Scotland's first Gaelic school opened in Glasgow four months ago.

This new step comes six years after the old Highland Regional Council put plans for a Gaelic school on the backburner because of a lack of funds (and, according to some, a lack of desire). But there are more pupils in Inverness' Gaelic unit, which is part of Central School, in which there are also English-medium classes, than there are in the new school in Glasgow. And following the favourable assessment of Gaelic-medium education in the report by Professor Dick Johnstone of Stirling University, the Highland Council education authority has become emboldened about advancing plans for the school.

The Irish and the Welsh reckon that units are of little value and that children's command of the minority language is greatly improved by a total minority language environment in the school. Scotland has now started on the same road, and it is expected, if Inverness is successful, that other communities will lobby for the same, notably in Portree where more pupils are entering the Gaelic unit of the primary school than are entering the English unit.

...continued on page 5

Aite	Daoine	le Gàidhlig	%
Barraigh	1249	968	77.5
Barabhas	3487	3065	87.9
Bracadal	712	359	50.4
Cill Mhoire	707	525	74.3
Diùranais	1363	695	51.0
Na Hearadh	2274	1878	82.6
Na Lochan	1934	1505	77.8
Snìosart	1081	585	54.1
Steòrnabhagh	12528	7254	57.9
Tìr Iodh	739	437	59.1
Uibhist a Deas	3918	2566	65.5
Uibhist a Tuath	1602	1221	76.2
Uig	1599	1276	79.8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>33193</b>	<b>22334</b>	<b>67.3</b>

**A**ch tha ceum neo dhà eile ri gabhail mus ruigear an ìre sin. Feumaidh comhairlichean Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd aontachadh ri sgoiltean Gàidhlig ann am prionnsapal. Agus tha feadhainn ac' ann (mo nàir' orra!) a tha an aghaidh na Gàidhlig. An uairsin, ma gheibhear cead agus airgead, bidh aig Roinn an Fhoghlaim ri làrach a lorg airson na sgoile. Bha Glaschu fada nas fheàrr dheth a thaobh seann togalaichean-sgoile na tha Inbhir Nis.

Ach tha mi-fhìn an dùil gun tig i an ceann ùine nach bi fada agus, gu dearbh, nì Gàidheil ann an iomadach àite gàirdeachas mòr nuair a bhios sgoil Ghàidhlig ann am prìomh bhaile na Gàidhealtachd. Ach chan e a' chiad sgoil Ghàidhlig don sgìre a bhios innte. Anns an 19mh linn, bha tè ann an Clach na h-Aithrigh' aig oir baile Inbhir Nis, coimhearsnachd a bha gu math Gàidhealach suas don linn seo fhèin. Doirbh ged a tha e, tha sinn a' feuchainn ri nàdar de choimhearsnachd a ghleidheadh agus, gu ìre, a chruthachadh as ùr an seo ann an Inbhir Nis.

**Ruairidh MacIlleathain**

*Craoladair is sgrìobhadair neo-eisim*  
macleanr@globalnet.co.uk

**B**ut there are a couple more hurdles to jump before that stage is reached. Highland Councillors must agree to Gaelic schools in principle. And some of them (shame on them!) are anti-Gaelic. Then, if permission and money are forthcoming, the Department of Education must find a site for the school. Glasgow was much better off for old school buildings than is Inverness.

But I think we'll get the school in the not-too-distant future and, indeed, Gaels in many places will be delighted when there is a Gaelic school in the capital of the Highlands. But it will not be the first Gaelic school in the area. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was one in Clachnaharry on the town boundary, a community which was very Highland until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Though it is difficult, we are trying to preserve a Gaelic community of sorts and, to an extent, create one afresh here in Inverness.

**Roddy Maclean**

*Freelance Journalist*  
macleanr@globalnet.co.uk

## Ruairidh Mac'ìlip

**R**uairidh Mac'ìlip was born on the island of Bearnaraidh in 1916 and died gently and full of years in Neringah Hospital on 23rd July 1999. His first and only language was Gaelic until he went to primary school and the maintenance of his language and culture was a passion he never lost. Ruairidh had a wonderful long life, most of it doing the things he enjoyed doing. So we should be celebrating his life-span without undue sadness. Nevertheless, we are human, and some of us who were fortunate enough to be close to him valued his clear mind and sound judgements. He had a great store of knowledge on many subjects, but particularly that of another era in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and I must be forgiven for the element of selfishness in the pain and lamenting of his passing.

For his relatives, in particular his wife Margaret, there are of course special feelings. But for me now there is an emptiness. No more cheery greetings or conversations, no more discussions on our respective children and grandchildren and no more access to his vast reservoir of information. We maintain that Gaelic is the language for fine description of feelings and situations, but it's extremely difficult to describe in any language my feelings when I find that I've lost a very good friend, mentor, and father figure.

With all his store of knowledge, he was a truly gentle, almost humble, man, but with very decided views, and quite dogmatic in his own way. He was in the forefront of Gaelic radio in the early days of SBS; he was crucial to the various Gaelic Associations which were formed at different times, including spending many years on the Committee of Comunn Gàidhlig Astràilia; and he was a keen Scottish Country Dancer in his early days.

Though mentally alert throughout his last years, he knew that his bodily frame was winding down. He accepted that he did not have long to go, but still enjoyed some of the everyday things in life: his family, news of the daily happenings of Highland and Island life and following the activities of An Còisir Ghàidhlig Astràilianach, the choir he was instrumental in training for the 1992 Centenary Mod in Scotland.

Perhaps humble is not the right word for Ruairidh Mac'ìlip, but I think he might have a bit of a frown and an embarrassed shake of the head at this modest oration.

Although he had his roots in Bearnaraidh, the greater part of his life was spent in Australia where he remained a typical Highland gentleman. He was a great family man and spent many a happy day not only with his children but in latter years his grandchildren, who were a constant source of delight and pride to him. Of course we will miss him. But Ruairidh had a good life.

**Robin MacKenzie-Hunter**

## Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

*In September 1999, Susan McKerihan attended Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the Gaelic College on Skye, for a week of language classes. Here is her account of her visit.*

**A**s you walk down the hill to the new college (Arainn Chaluim Chille), the buildings are silhouetted stark and white against the dark grey Sound of Sleat. It's a startling, almost shocking sight — the round "Pictish" tower and the two squat rectangular buildings — no trees or flowers; nothing else in view except some sheep, the water and the hills of the mainland opposite.

I was ready to love everything about Sabhal Mòr, because I was so keen to learn Gaelic in a Hebridean environment, but it surpassed all my imaginings. This was despite the fact that, on arrival on Saturday, there was no-one to greet us or show us where to go — five of us first-time students were obliged to flounder around for a day and a half until classes started on the following Monday. The College virtually closes on the weekend, there's minimal public transport — the sole taxi driver in Sleat had retired a week before — and Sundays are, obviously, a write-off. So if you haven't been before, and so don't know what to do, it's a daunting start.

The language courses are held at Arainn Chaluim Chille, where we were also accommodated. This part of the college is *very* new — in fact it had only been completed a few months before and there were still a few hiccoughs to be sorted out. However, any discomfort in living arrangements was more than made up for by the challenge and enjoyment of the course. There was a phenomenal level of enthusiasm and ability. All the students seemed to be either fluent or determined to be; they worked very hard, and Gaelic was the language of choice most of the time, including leisure time. They took their Gaelic studies very seriously — many of them are studying Gaelic at university — and you feel you are letting the side down if you speak English. I was definitely the dunce of my class, which was a stimulus to try harder!



*Arainn Chaluim Chille*

## The classes

**T**he day was divided into four sessions, and in the evening there was a "conversation circle" at 6.00 then, after dinner, a lecture or some kind of entertainment. The conversation circle was led by the teachers or by the most advanced students. It took a different form each day (small groups of directed conversations; a game of 20 questions; etc). The after-dinner functions were a poetry reading by the College's resident writer, Rody Gorman; a slide-show about St Kilda and the restoration project that is carried out by volunteers each summer; a singing class with Christine Primrose; and a ceilidh. The students were all expected to perform in the ceilidh and each class learnt two songs. This is a regular feature of each course, and apparently the level of talent and ability varies considerably from week to week! I'd say our ceilidh was pretty good though — and I have the video to prove it ...

Having done several classes in Sydney with Alasdair Taylor and Katie Graham, I cautiously enrolled in level 4 (there are 8 levels). On my first day of classes I was shy, excruciatingly nervous and dumbstruck — when I dared to open my mouth I produced only baby-talk. On the second day I felt more confident and managed a complete sentence which some people actually understood! By the end of the week I was chattering away (in what was no doubt pidgin Gaelic) and was even able to recount a "funny story" as required by the teacher. I came away feeling that I had broken the barrier and would make good progress from then on.

The teaching philosophy, of focusing on conversation rather than grammar, seems to be very successful. And there is enough grammar interspersed in the conversation drills to keep traditionalists happy as well.

## The people

**I** met the most wonderful people — talented, interesting, and all determined to learn Gaelic. My teacher, Gordon Barr, had taught himself to near native-speaker level, so he was a perfect role model. In addition to his linguistic talent (he also taught himself French), he can tell never-ending stories and jokes in Gaelic. He is also a keen sailor and has sailed to St Kilda as well as all around the Islands.

My fellow students included a Norwegian university lecturer in Irish; a German Celtic Studies student from Aberdeen University (who danced a mean sword dance at the ceilidh); two Irish students from Trinity College; three Gaelic students from Glasgow University; and several English people who had had little or no contact with native speakers before coming to the College, but had taught themselves very successfully from books or the Speaking Our Language videos. These people were very impressive: although our grasp of grammar was about the same, they were far more fluent than me and could understand everything the teacher said.

There were so many other people I was privileged to meet: the administrators — most of whom were native speakers (and *talented!* — Gavin can sing puirt a beul like a pro, Gordon plays the small-pipes, Caoimhin plays the whistle well enough for people to dance to); Christine Primrose, who presents singing classes; Roddy Gorman, the writer-in-residence, who is Irish and writes the most beautiful poetry in Irish, Gaelic and English.<sup>1</sup> He is very interested in coming to Australia; perhaps we can find him a writer-in-residence spot here?



*The view from the classroom*

## The environment

There was some sun, but most days it was bleak, with constant rain and wind (a gale force wind one day, which not only stopped the ferries but closed the bridge). “If you don’t like the weather on Skye, wait 10 minutes” is quite true. In what seems like a few seconds the weather will change, not just from sun to rain, but from a bright blue sunny day with scarcely a cloud to be seen, to a black pouring windy tempest.

Skye is one of the most beautiful places on earth. Look around you anywhere and you see dazzlingly white cottages, purple-green-brown-gold hills, yellow-white burns, multi-coloured sky. Dozy sheep cluster on the roads ignoring the traffic. You wonder why — as my bus driver said, “There’s not a lot of grass there!” — but apparently it’s warmer on the tarmac than in the fields.

## Aftermath

My overpowering memories are the wild bleak beauty of the setting, the peace, the “soft” weather (and the gale force winds), sheep everywhere including in the warden’s precious garden, the single-lane roads and the rules for passing, the view from the classroom windows (made it hard to concentrate sometimes), the musical voices, the gentle friendly smiles, the magic.

For beginners, it’s worth persevering — you can do it! And there is a high level of interest in Gaelic throughout the Highlands to support and encourage you — everywhere I went (Glasgow, Inverness, Perth, Edinburgh) there are classes, conversation groups,

kindergartens, ceilidhs, newspapers, bookshops, radio programmes, CDs. A real revival.

## Other highlights of my trip

- ◆ the real thing — seeing Charles Rennie Mackintosh’s work in Glasgow (School of Art, Willow Tea Rooms, Mackintosh House in the Hunterian Museum, etc)
- ◆ taking the tiny train from Glasgow to Mallaig — the Rathad Iarainn nan Eilean — it was the milk run and took 5 hours but I was completely transfixed by the scenery every single minute
- ◆ mistaking a jug of water for a jug of apple juice because Skye water is “peaty” and brownish-yellow
- ◆ in Inverness: staying with Ruairidh Mac Illeathain (who visited An Comunn in 1998) and his lovely family; trying to follow his children’s conversation which is all in Gaelic; attending his Monday night Gaelic Club; visiting Balnain House and the second-hand bookshop in the former Gaelic church which still has its pulpit, choir stalls, etc; a shop sign saying *Fàilte gu Marks agus Spencer*
- ◆ CLI’s Latha Gàidhlig held in a former shooting lodge at Crieff, near Perth; discovering Edinburgh’s night life afterwards with Dave and Keith, both fluent Gaelic students

## Some tips if you’re thinking of going

- ◆ be very clear about public transport arrangements; ring the College up beforehand if you’re not sure
- ◆ take all-weather gear, including waterproof trousers and a hooded jacket — there are no covered walkways at the College
- ◆ be prepared to talk in Gaelic from the beginning of Day 1 (you will be asked personal questions such as where are you from, how long have you been learning Gaelic, are you married/have children, etc)
- ◆ visit the pub in Ardvasar for dinner or after dinner — a two-mile walk, and great food
- ◆ there is no time during the week for walking the hills or sightseeing — consider hiring a car and staying for the weekend



<sup>1</sup> Editor’s note: Roddy Gorman has kindly sent us some of his poems; two of them appear on page 3, and there will be more in future issues.

# A' Ghàidhlig

## ann an Astràilia (3)

**B**ha staid na Gàidhlig gu math làidir anns an toiseach, ach bha atharraichean a' tighinn. Bha mì-rùn mhòr nan Gall ann daonnan. Ann an Tasmàinia mu 1850 chaidh triùir an cur am prìosan nuair a chuala constabal iad a' bruidhinn Gàidhlig ri chèile air an t-sràid. Chuir am breitheamh fa sgaoil iad gun dàil, ach bha iad co-dhiù ann am prìosan airson tamall beag. Nach uabhasach sin!

B'è muinntir na h-Eaglaise Saoire a bh'anns a' mhòr-chuid dhe na Gàidheil. Cha bu toigh le na Goill an Eaglais Shaor san tìr seo idir. Thuirt Pàrlamaid a' Chuimrigh Nuaidh dà uair nach robh Eaglais Shaor san tìr seo. Chaidh na reachdan breugach ud tron Phàrlamaid anns na bliadhnan 1878 agus 1881, agus tha iad an Leabhar nan Reachdan gus an là-an-diugh. Mar sin, is iomadh eaglais is mans' a ghoid na Goill bho na Gàidheil bhochd aig an àm ud.

O 1870, mar a bha an Eaglais Shaor a' sìor dhol an laige bha a' Ghàidhlig bhinn a' caochail maille rithe. Ach, cha do dh'eug i gu luath. Aig Grafton, air an Abhainn Chlarence bha an t-Urr. Isaac MacAoidh na mhinistear bhon 24 den Ogmhios 1874 gu là a bhàis air an 3 den Mhàirt, 1900. Thàinig e bhon Eaglais Shaor ann an Albainn Nuadh, agus bha Gàidhlig gu leòr aige. Nuair a thòisich e a' searmanachadh 'sa' Bheurla leig am fear-togail-fuinn dheth a dhreuchd oir bha i "ro dhuilich" anns a' Bheurla.

Ri àm a' Chiad Chogaidh bha long Bhreatainneach le seòlaidearan Gàidhealach aig acarsaid an Sydney airson greis. B' àbhaist do na seòlaidearan a bhith a' meàrrsadh air Sràid a' Chaisteil Riabhaich gu Eaglais Shaor an Naoimh Sheòrais gach Là Sàbaid, agus b'i a' Ghàidhlig am prìomh chànan a-rithist air an sgàthsan.

Thòisich Comunn Gàidhlig Sydney 'sa' bhliadhna 1875 is bha e fhathast a' dèanamh adhartais an dèidh trì fichead bliadhna. Bha e na bhall dhen Chomunn Cheilteach a bha a' cuideachadh leis a' Ghàidhlig is leis a' Chuimris is leis a' Ghaelge. Tha sinn a' cuimhneachadh air Catriona NicIlleathain is Clement Hosking nach maireann. B'è Iain Clugstan nach maireann Rùnaire Eisteddfod Sydney is bha òrain Ghàidhlig aig na h-Eisteddfodau.

Tha iomadh cuimhneachan Gàidhlig ann an Cladh Rookwood an Sydney. Seo an cuimhneachan a th'air an Urr. Uilleam Mac an t-Saoir:

*Ann an cuimhne air duine a bha air leth  
firinneach agus ro-chomharaicht' anns an  
fhianais a thug e mu thimchioll focail Dè agus  
Eaglais Chrìosd air an talamh.*

*Bi-sa firinneach gu bàs agus bheir mise dhut  
crùn na beatha.* Taisbean. 11:10

Tha cuimhneachan eile ann an Eaglais an Naoimh Sheòrais air Sràid a' Chaisteil Riabhaich.

Chan fhaod duine sam bith a bhi a' sgrìobhadh mun a' Ghàidhlig an Astràilia gun iomradh a thoirt air cùis Egoìn Kisch, ach tha a' chùis-lagha sin na sgeul innte fhèin.

Iain Clugstan

## An Còisir Ghàidhlig

**T**he Gaelic Choir has broken for Christmas now and reconvenes on January 27<sup>th</sup>, with a very big year in front of us. Our primary goal for the year 2000 is to attend and compete in Scotland's Royal National Mod, in October, in Dùn Omhain (aka Dunoon, of course!). We'll be singing as a choir in the Margrat Duncan and Puirt-a-beul competitions, with the likelihood of several soloists and smaller groups also entering in other events. The designated pieces for our competition categories are the port-a-beul *Sabhal Ia'n 'ic Uisdean / Theid thu null air a' bheinn*, and a quite complex arrangement of *Bail' Inbhir Aora* (commonly known in English as *The Inverary Wedding*).

To be there in time for the Mod, we've had to book for 30 people to be heading off to Glasgow just a few days after the Olympics closing — so while we may be looking forward greatly to being in Scotland, we're not so thrilled at the thought of the crowds we'll face at Sydney airport! But once that gauntlet has been run, we'll be in good hands: our own Mod Committee has done a great job with our travel bookings, securing us accommodation at two very friendly and comfortable hotels, right next to each other on the waterfront and very near the centre of the town.

But while being at the Mod is obviously a major goal for us, it is by no means our only focus for the coming year. We will be competing in a number of eisteddfods in and around Sydney between now and October, which will of course give us a chance to put our Mod songs through their paces, as well as helping us to consolidate our performance skills and providing us with constructive feedback.

We held a very successful sold-out concert in Killara in August, and are hoping to mount a number more concerts during this year. After all, what else are choirs for? We are faced with the task of raising a large amount of money to finance our trip, so we're on the hunt for ways to make this happen.

Of course, if anyone in the Gaelic community has any ideas or opportunities to help us achieve our goals, or hears of events in which we could participate, we'd truly appreciate hearing from you. Opportunities are all we need — we'll take care of the rest! You can contact our chorusmaster, Robin MacKenzie-Hunter, on (02) 9638 2625, or Graeme MacEachie (contact details on pg 2 at the front of this issue).

# Mo thuras air ais chun na Gàidhealtachd (2)

**A**s dèidh làimh chaidh mi air ais a-steach gu Dùn nan Gall. Bha mi ag iarraidh ìomhaigh nan Ceathrar Mhaighstirean fhaicinn agus Bùth nan Ceathrar Mhaighstirean fhaicinn cuideachd. Anns a' bhùth leugh mi an leabhraichean mòra mu eachdraidh Eire bho àm na Tuile gus an t-siathamh linn deug. Bha e glè inntinneach r'a leughadh, ach aig sia ceud not Eireannach cha do cheannaich mi iad, ged nach robh ach trì lethbhreacan rim faighinn anns an t-saoghal.

Choinnich mi ri Ban-mhaighstir Ghilleasbaig, màthair ministear ann a' Bhictòria, agus chaith sinn ùine mhath a' bruidhinn ri chèile - mi-fhèin 's a' Bhan-mhaighstir Ghilleasbaig is Conal. Thog mi dealbhan is chaidh sinn dhachaigh a-rithist. Chunnaic mi taigh far a bheil an teaghlach a' bruidhinn Eireannach a-mhàin, gun fhacal sam bith 'sa' Bheurla. Chan eil telebhisean aca cuideachd.

An ath latha chaidh mi còmhla ri teaghlach Chonail gu eaglais-taighe aig Ardara. Anns an taigh sin bha sinn uile a' seinn molaidhean Dhè, agus thug mi-fhèin is aoigh eile ar fianaisean ris an Tighearna. Rinn iad ùrnaigh orm airson an còrr dhem thuras.

Bha mi brònach gam fàgail, ach dh'fheumainn a dhol gu Luimneach is a' Chòmhdhail a' tòiseachadh aig naoi uairean 'sa' mhadainn Diluain - an ath latha. 'Se astair fada a bha romham agus mar sin bhuail mi an rathad aon uair eile.

Nuair a ràinig mi Luimneach cha robh fàrdach agam agus bha mi air chall anns a' bhaile mhòr. Threòraich fear-bùtha mi air an rathad chun an Oilthigh is chunnaic mi comharradh ag radh 'Leabaidh is Lòn-maidne' (Sandhurst). Dh' fhan mi an sin trì làithean. Bha a' Chòmhdhail mu dheich mionaidean air falbh anns a' ghluasteach agus chaidh rudan an sin gu math. Thug mi òraid feasgar Diluain ach cha do thuig mòran dhiubh i. Shaoil Dòmhnall MacIllip, Gàidheal ris am bi mi a' bruidhinn gu tric air a' phrogram rèidio, gur e Limerick *Laimrig* 'sa' Ghàidhlig, ach fhuair mi a-mach nuair a bha mi ann (agus cheannaich mi dà leabhar air a' cheist) gur e *àite lom* a tha e a' ciallachadh.

Gus am bithinn tràth gu leòr am Beul Feirt dh'fhàg mi Luimneach ro mheadhan latha. Chaidh mi tro Bheul Feirt agus mu dheireadh thall ràinig mi taigh mo chàirdean - Dàibhidh is Adelaide MacFhraing - air an dùthaich, air rathad Phortaferry. Sin an teaghlach is an ceàrn far an tàinig mo shinn shinnseanair fhèin o chionn ceud bliadhna, dà fhichead 's a seachd. Thàinig mo charaid Dòmhnall Fàidh, is a bhean is a nighean - ise air fàs suas on chunnaic mi roimh' i. Bha oidhche

mhath againn ann an Taigh Ballù, taigh-òsda air taobh eile an loch.

Dh'fhàg mi teaghlach MhicFhraing an ath mhadainn, is thadhail mi an Oilthigh na Banrigh am Beul Feirt far an robh mi ag obair trì bliadhna deug air ais. Thug mi òraid an sin cuideachd. Goirid as dèidh sin shiubhail mi chun na laimrig-adhair agus bha mi a' falbh gu Alba air itealan a-rithist.

Fhuair mi gluasteach eile is àite-còmhnaidh eile. Choisich mi a-steach gu Oilthigh Ghlaschu, a' ceannach thiodhlacan dham theaghlach air an rathad, agus choinnich mi ri daoine a dh'aithnichinn roimhe. Ach bha na Gàidheil, Iain Dòmhnallach is an t-Ollamh Ruairidh MacThòmais, air an Oilthigh fhàgail.

**Seonaidh MacFhraing**

## Gaelic idiom

**T**here are many idiomatic Gaelic phrases based on parts of the body. We begin a series with the word *ceann*, meaning head.

*Ceann* also means the end of something — this usage will be considered in a later column.

*air a cheann dìreach* = head first  
*Thuit e air a cheann dìreach dhan toll.*  
He fell head first into the hole.

*cha do thog e ceann* = it/he never turned up  
*Cha do thog mo leabhar ceann a-riamh.*  
My book never turned up.

*às a cheann fhèin* = of his own volition  
*Rinn e sin às a cheann fhèin.*  
He wasn't asked to do that.

*air a cheann fhèin* = for himself  
(used when a person is self-employed)  
*Tha e ag obair air a cheann fhèin.*

*leig / chuir mi mo cheann fodham* = I had a rest  
= I put my head down

*ceann-cinnidh* = a clan chief

*ceann-suidhe* = a chairman

*leth-cheann* = a cheek (i.e. a half-head)

*ceann-clò* = a naive person (i.e. a tweed-head!)  
*'Se ceann-clò a th'anns an duine sin.*

*duine fada 'na cheann* = a stubborn person  
A good expression to describe a stubborn person is  
*An rud a chuireas e 'na cheann cuiridh e 'na chasan e*  
= what he puts into his head he'll put into his feet!

## New home for Nessie

It may have intrigued visitors to the Highlands for centuries, but the debate over the Loch Ness monster shows no signs of abating. In mid-June of 1999, a further £1 million investment in Nessie's future appeal was unveiled as "Loch Ness 2000", an exhibition on the loch and its famous inhabitant, opened in the village of Drumnadrochit.

Sir Ranulph Fiennes, the explorer, opened the exhibition at the Official Loch Ness Monster Exhibition Centre and declared the explorations on the famous waterway the most fascinating he has come across in 30 years of world travel. He said they struck the right balance between mythology and scientific study, and rejected claims that the exhibition destroyed the Nessie legend. He said, "I think it adds to the mystery because it shoots down all the more obvious sightings and is quite clear there is a lot of room for further research.

"Too many people without any axes to grind have been quite clear they have seen something and a question mark very much remains for me. Having been through the exhibition, there is nothing there that proves there is a monster, but certainly there is nothing there that proves there is not."



*A floating log. Or perhaps it's a swimming cow?*

Designed by Adrian Shine, a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and leader of the Loch Ness Project, the exhibition is aimed at both fans and sceptics, drawing on 1,000 eyewitness accounts as well as hoaxes and illusions. It rules out the idea the creature is a plesiosaur and puts many sightings down to floating trees, boat wakes, rocks and swimming animals but says there are still unanswered questions.

The mystery over Nessie brings 500,000 tourists a year to the area and is worth more than £20 million a year. The first recorded sighting was made by St Columba in 565 AD. In 1868, local tradition mentioned a huge fish in the loch, but the public obsession with Nessie can be traced to a sighting in 1933 when Donaldina Mackay sighted a strange creature. She wanted to keep it quiet but news leaked out, first to the local newspaper — which was first to use the term "monster" — and then to the world. Since then, reports have been made frequently by everyone from locals to tourists.

## New Gaelic music

Music has always been an essential part of Gaelic culture. So in this new column for *An Teachdaire*, we'll be detailing and reviewing new music releases on CD that may prove of interest to Gaelic speakers and learners. For those interested in pursuing these suggestions, we've included the record label and catalogue number.

For Scots, one of the big events of the past year was the re-opening of a Scottish Parliament, after nearly 300 years without one. To celebrate, Greentrax has released *A Clear Day's Dawnin'*, a "rough guide to some of the key landmarks in the long, rich history of Scotland's music". It features well-known artists like Catherine-Anne MacPhee, Mairi Campbell and Tony McManus. As has been suggested about the Parliament itself, the album is more geared towards Lowland Scots than to Highland culture — the only Gaelic among the ten tracks is *Cànan nan Gaidheal* — but it's a fascinating overview of Scotland's diverse musical personalities. (Greentrax CDTRAX 176)

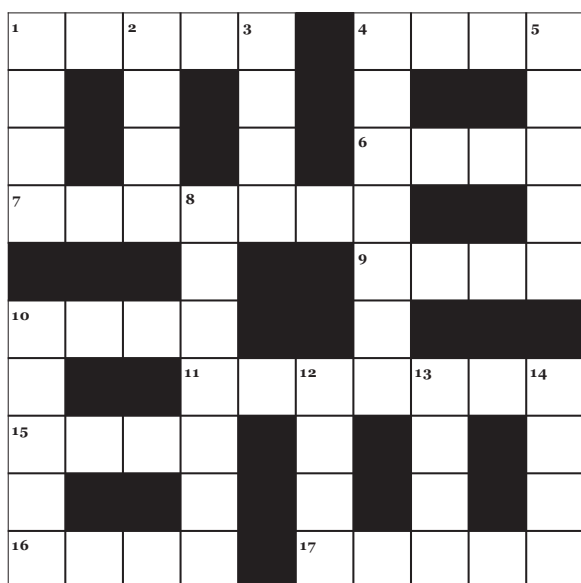
Another very satisfying release from Greentrax, and this time all Gaelic, is *Gaelic Women — Ar Cànan 's Ar Ceòl*. This release features some wonderful singers, ranging from the very traditional Mary Smith (*Tha Caileag A'st-Earrach*) and Ishbel MacAskill (*Soraidh Leis an Ait'*), to the more-often-heard Catherine-Anne MacPhee (*O Teannaibh Dluth 'is Togaibh Fonn*) and Karen Matheson (*Gura Tu Mo Bhean Chomuinn*). Along the way, there's (literally) breath-taking puirt-a-beul from Kenna Campbell and Mary Ann and Wilma Kennedy, waulking songs from Maggie MacInnes, Flora MacNeil and Cairistiona MacInnes and a group called MacKenzie, a beautiful newly-written song from Mairi MacInnes backed by the Glasgow Gaelic choir, and to close the album a rousing joint rendition of *Cànan nan Gaidheal*. The extensive liner notes detail both song and singer and include full lyrics and English translations. Very highly recommended. (Greentrax CDTRAX 172)

And lastly, for Runrig fans ... the boys are back! Breaking the band's hiatus after the departure of Donnie Munro and a protracted search for his replacement, is *In Search of Angels*. The new lead singer for this album is Bruce Guthro, a Canadian, who fits the band very well. While he has a very fine voice, he hasn't quite the soaring tones of Donnie, and since he speaks no Gaelic he would seem to have his work cut out for him in Gaeldom's premium rock band; but this is still a very good album in much the same style as their last, *Mara* — that is, more drive-time than rock. Rory and Calum MacDonald are still writing the band's songs, and Rory handles the lead vocal on the Gaelic numbers very well indeed. Runrig has always had a talent for warm melodies and anthemic ballads, and their latest definitely doesn't disappoint.

(Ridge Records/Polygram RR010)

# Dibhearsan

## Toimhseachan-tarsainn



### Tarsainn

1. Say
4. A verse
6. A boat
7. Sad
9. A satire
10. A girl's name
11. The like
15. Content
16. An animal
17. Herbs

### Sìos

1. A stream
2. A trough
3. This is rolled up
4. A warning
5. When
8. Standing
10. A prepositional pronoun
12. Bald
13. In
14. Follow

How did you do? Answers given on page 12.

## Chintailer ?

Can you re-arrange these letters to make a fairly common 10-letter Gaelic word?

(Hint: it could be the name of a column in this issue.)

And while you're at it, how many other Gaelic words of any length can you make from the letters listed above? You may only use each letter as often as it appears here. Answers given on page 12.

## A Highland quiz

The first quiz was in the last issue of *An Teachdaire*. How did you do? Try your knowledge with this set!

1. What is "camanachd"?
2. What is a "gillie"?
3. Name six Highland clans.
4. Give six English words derived from Gaelic.
5. What was the surname of the poet Donnchadh Ban?
6. What is Patrick Sellar infamous for?
7. Where are the Callanish Stones?
8. What collection of Gaelic lore was edited by Alexander Carmichael?
9. What is Edward Dwelly remembered for?
10. Where would you be if you were in "Cataibh"?
11. Which clan do we associate with a fairy flag?
12. What did Marjory Kennedy-Fraser collect?

## Ainmean nam meur

Here are two finger "naming" rhymes common in Gaelic (similar to the English "This little piggy..." for toes).

In Gaelic, a finger is commonly called *corràg* or *meur*. Toes can also be called *corràgan*, or sometimes *òrdagan nan cas*.

an òrdag	<i>the thumb</i>
an sgealbag	<i>the index finger</i>
an gunna fada	<i>the long gun (middle finger)</i>
Mac an Aba	<i>the abbot's son (ring finger)</i>
's lùdag bheag an airgid	<i>and the little money finger</i>
	<i>(the "pinkie")</i>

seo an tè a leag an sabhal  
 seo an tè a ghoid an sìol  
 seo an tè a ruith air falbh  
 seo an tè a dh'innis e  
 seo an tè bheag a phàigh e.

*this is the one who broke down the barn*  
*this is the one who ate the seed*  
*this is the one who ran away*  
*this is the one who told it (i.e the story)*  
*this is the little one who paid for it*

# Ceòl Gàidhlig

## Leanaibh an Aigh

This hymn was written in Gaelic by Mary MacDonald (c. 1817-1890) from Ardtun on the Isle of Mull. When translated into English by Lachlan MacBean it became the source of the carol “Child in the Manger”. It is sung to the melody “Bunessan”, named after Bun Easan, a place-name in Mull (literally, “foot of the waterfall”); the melody Bunessan is better known to many English speakers for its use in the song “Morning has Broken”.

Leanabh an àigh an leanabh bh’aig Màiri  
 rugadh ’san stabull, Rìgh nan dùl  
 thàinig do’n fhasach dh’fhulang ’nar n-àite  
 son iad an àireamh bhios dha dlùth

*Blessed Child (Child of joy), Mary’s Child  
 who was born in the stable, King of the universe  
 Who came to the wilderness to suffer in our place.  
 Happy are those who will be near to Him.*

Ged a bhios leanaban aig rìghrean na talmhainn  
 ’n greadhnachas garbh ’s anabarr mùirn  
 ’S geàrr gus am falbh iad ’s fàsaidh iad anfhann  
 an àilleachd ’s an dealbh a’searg ’san ùir

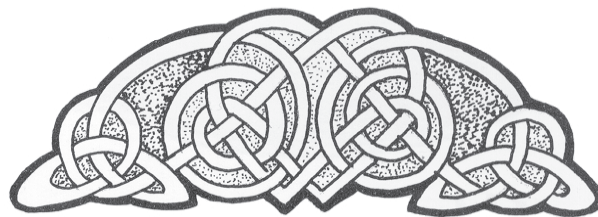
*Although the kings of the earth may have children  
 with great pomp (festivity) and exceeding joy,  
 In a short time they will depart and they will grow weak,  
 their beauty and their form withering in the dust.*

Cha b’ionnan ’s an t-uan thàinig g’ar fuasgladh  
 iriseal stuama ghluais e’n tùs  
 E naomh gun truailleachd, Cruithear an t-sluaigh  
 dh’eirich e suas le buaidh o’n ùir

*Not so the Lamb Who came to redeem us.  
 Humbly and soberly He lived from the beginning.  
 Holy, without corruption, Creator of the people.  
 He rose up with victory over the grave.*

Leanabh an àigh mar dh’aithris na fàidhean  
 ’s na h-ainglean àrd b’e miann an sùl  
 ’se ’s airidh air gràdh ’s ar n-urram thoirt dha  
 sona an àireamh bhitheas dha dlùth

*Blessed Child as the prophets spoke of,  
 And the high angels — He was the delight of their eye.  
 He is worthy of love and of our honour (given to him).  
 Happy are those who will be near to him.*



**Na Freagairtean**  
 Toimhsachan-tarsainn  
 Tarsainn 1 abair; 4 rann; 6 bàta; 7 tursach; 9 aoir; 10 Anna; 11 samhail; 15 sona; 16 each; 17 Iusan.  
 Stos 1 allt; 2 amarr; 3 rola; 4 rabhadh; 5 nuair; 8 seasamh; 10 aisd; 12 maol; 13 anns; 14 lean.  
**Itrichean:** a; ach; aice; airt; aithe; aithne; aì; an; ar; at; aith; cail; cairt; cail; can; car; cat; ceàrn; cha; chi; clann; chr; crath; e; each; eary; iar; it; itean; ith; ià; iach; iann; iar; le; lean; leat; leir; leth; iath; lit; litir; na; nach; neach; ni; rach; rann; ri; rian; rith; taic; te; tha; tir; trèan; tric; ...  
**Highland Quiz**  
 a boy or a man who helps a sportsman in Scotland (from the Gaelic for boy/server); 3 The Macs, Ross, Cameron, Campbell, Sutherland etc...; 4 e.g. brogue, whisky, bog, machair, gillie, caber, dun, mod, slogan etc...; 5 MacIntyre; 6 Sutherland Clearances; 7 Isle of Lewis; 8 Carmina Gadelica; 9 Gaelic-English dictionary; 10 Sutherland; 11 Macleods of Skye; 12 Gaelic songs of the Hebrides.