

The Tartan

The Clan MacDougall Society of North America
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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Christmas Greetings
- A Walk in Kerrera
- MacDougall Gaelic Heritage

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Christmas Greetings from our Chiefs Morag MacDougall of MacDougall and Dunollie

Greetings to all clan members and their families. We hope you have a very HAPPY CHRISTMAS and a peaceful and enlightened NEW YEAR. We hope that you enjoy your group clan activities whatever they may be, with the enthusiasm of your Society in North America. We at Dunollie are so grateful for the help you have given us this year, in particular with the second phase of the consolidation of Dunollie Castle and also (with your President, Tom Ashby's, help and encouragement) Catherine Gillies's Dunollie Guide Book, which should be out next Easter when our new season starts. We are looking forward to people enjoying this Booklet, along with the Excellent D.V.D. MacDougall History Discs with which you have entranced the MacDougalls over here (and others) by your American talent and enthusiasm.

We look forward to meeting those of you who can travel the ocean in 2017. When you arrive at Dunollie, be sure to let us know you are clansfolk!

Morag

Fergus Macdowall of Garthland

We wish everyone a cautiously Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, with love from Fergus and Sandy Macdowall.

Fergus

Ashby McCown Ceann-suidhe // President

Beannachdan na Ràithe dhuibhse. Cha chreid mi nach robh sinn airidh an dualchais againn a' bhliadhna sa' chaidh. Bithreamaid airidh anns a' bhliadhna sa' thighinn.

Best wishes of the Season to all of you. This past year our Society worked hard and successfully in support of our heritage and we enjoyed the fellowship of conversations at Scottish events, in Society gatherings and in burgeoning online communication. Let us continue this work and this fellowship through the coming year.

Leis gach deagh dhùrachd // With best wishes .

Ashby



MacDougall

A Walk on Kerrera: Part I

By Nancy Black

The name “Kerrera” is as familiar to me as my own name. I have known it all my life; my parents, grandparents, great grandparents, and more distant ancestors have had connections with this island, and as children, visiting it was our idea of heaven. All my school holidays and many Sundays throughout the summer were spent on it and we walked, for during most of that time there was no other means of transport, apart from the ferry boat, which carried us across the Sound and, at times, my uncle’s motor launch.

I would like to take you with me, if you have time to spare, to share the peace and tranquility which Kerrera will instill into your senses providing you leave the loudness of the modern world behind you at the ferry. If you do not enjoy the sensation, then I pity you!

Scandinavians started invading about the end of the 8th century. Kerrera (a Norwegian name) belonged to Norway at the time of Alexander II in 1249. There are various spellings of the name – as a controversy in the Oban Times 11/5/1918 discloses.

KERRERA – In the Sagas (circa. 1394 AD) the name is spelt ‘Kiarareyiar’. In Speed’s map (1610) it is ‘Carverei’. In 1461 it appears as ‘Carbery’. In Donald McPherson’s map (1796), which is stated to be adapted to the year 1400 from authentic materials, we find ‘Kerwaray’. In Gordon of Straloch’s map (1653) the present spelling appears and, no doubt, other versions can be quoted. If Gaelic, it could be formed of two words, Carr = rocky and Area = tract of country, which would perfectly describe the island, or Carrogs = little rocks. Alex McDougall, in reply on 18/5/1918 to Dr McBean, Inverness, agreed that the name was from the Norse, ‘KJARBAREY’ – probably signifying ‘copse or brush wood island’.

George Henderson, PhD found in the Icelandic ‘Book of Settlements’ a place called ‘Kiarra-dale’, Cear or Kerr = Dale, where it was expressly told that it was named from the brushwood and small shaws between ‘Kearr.. ar’, Tear or Kerr = water and another stream.

Blund Cetill, a wealthy man, had the ground cleared and took up his residence there. Dr Henderson regarded the ‘C’ as a mistake in the Norse script and ‘Kerrera’ was ‘Kiarr-ar-ey’ = copse, water, island.

There are numerous small streams round the island, the largest at Glen More, close to Gylen where there was a mill. A Gaelic origin has been suggested but has, in every case, been dismissed as improbable.

It is rather curious that so many people are opposed to admitting that Kerrera is a Norse place name when we have, in the vicinity, ‘An t ob’, ‘An-t-Oban’ and other names of undoubted Norse origin.

From Argyll Square in Oban follow Albany Street past the Police Station, taking the right-hand fork after the railway bridge and, passing the South Pier and Portbeag where the lifeboat normally is moored, follow Galanach Road to the ferry. On both sides of the Sound of Kerrera, Stranraer, Sunderland, and Catalina flying boats were moored during the last war. The north end of Kerrera was used as a repair base by the Royal Air Force for the seaplanes. The bay was a hive of activity at that time with destroyers, minesweepers and pilot boats. Ex-fishing drifters were supply vessels for the convoys which gathered in the Firth of Lorne along the eastern coast of Lismore. Sometimes there were well over a hundred vessels awaiting their escorts to shepherd them across the seas. The only traces left of that era are bomb bays and shelters at Ardentrive and the hard for hauling up the seaplanes. You may come across large bales of disintegrating rubber in odd corners of the shoreline, the last remains of a sunken ship’s cargo. Early in the morning of the 30th May, 1944, the block ships for Operation Overlord were to be seen slipping down the firth on their way to Normandy.

At the end of Dungallon Park there is a very large boulder on the shore known as the Brandy Stone where smugglers landed their goods until the Revenue officers put a stop to their lucrative trade. There is a reef,

A Walk on Kerrera: Part I (cont)

south of the small lighthouse in the Sound of Kerrera, known as the Cutter rock onto which the Revenue Cutter was led by smugglers who took advantage of their local knowledge to lead the pursuers onto the rock and evade capture. Shorewards from the Brandy Stone, and a few yards down the road, there is an old rhododendron bush which is at least one hundred years old and every Spring is covered with blossom. Along the road on the next corner beside the burn you will see a modernised house which was a carding mill at the end of the last century. My great-grandfather called in there on business one day but ceilidhed (talked) too long, for when he emerged he found his horse had disappeared. She had a foal awaiting her at the farm on Kerrera and the Sound was no obstacle to her mother love.

The road from here to the ferry is narrow so take care to walk carefully on the corners. We have always walked on the sea side of the road as it is safer. On arrival at the ferry you will see a board which may be turned to indicate to the ferryman on the Kerrera side that his services are required. The road going up the hill is the old drove road over which cattle, shipped from Mull to Kerrera then swum across the Sound, made their way by Lochawe to markets in Falkirk and other distant towns. My grandparents would walk from Ardmore and, crossing over by boat from the Horseshoe Bay, would go over the hills to the church service at Kilbride, Lerags.

When I was young I would take one oar to help Lachie McPhail, the ferryman, who charged me 2d each way for rowing across the Sound. The ferryboat, of a modern type, now only takes a few minutes to cross over the water. Though he also had the ferry croft it was not enough for Lachie McPhail, and he emigrated, with his family, to the south island of New Zealand to engage in farming a more fertile soil.

Arriving on the island, take the road from the slipway past the telephone box and turn right up the hill to the school cum church cum dance hall (now, sadly, at present disused for any community usage) which was built by the MacDougalls of Dunollie in 1873 and let to the School Board at £6 per year. Go past Bailiemore, on the southern side of which can be seen the old school on the hill, now a cottage, which some of my mother's brothers and sisters attended, walking over the hills in their bare feet in summer. Then you come to a gate from which there is a view of the Sound of Mull with the bulk of Morvern to the right and the long, low, island of Lismore.

Going through the gate, climb still further and the view opens up to include the sweep of Mull from Duart to Lochbuie. With the light in the right direction Duart Castle can be seen standing out on the promontory at the entrance to the Sound of Mull. On Slaterich farm at the foot of this road is the site of a bronze age burial. Remember that farmers have to make their living on the island and close all gates as you go, avoid walking among crops, and try not to disturb any animals. Dogs should be kept on a leash and kept under control at all times, especially in the spring when any disturbance can make a ewe abort its lamb.

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MacDowall

A Walk on Kerrera: Part I (cont)

From this point you can strike up the hill to the highest point on the island, Carn Bregach (hill of deception), from which there is a view comparable with any in the world.

Facing north you are looking at the hills of Morvern; slowly turn right and you are looking up the fault line of the Great Glen, next to Ben Nevis and the Glencoe Hills. Behind Oban the twin peaks of Cruachan appear.

Following the sun, you look over to the hills of Gallanach and the islands of Luing, Scarba, Jura, then the Garvelochs appear. On one of these, Eilean Nan Naoibh, St. Columba's mother established a nunnery and there may be seen one of the best remaining examples of a beehive cell. The scene then moves on to a view of Colonsay, on a clear day, and back to the Isle of Mull.

If you are walking in Winter or early Spring when the bracken has died back, you will see, only a few yards from the summit, the regular lines of lazy beds. At one time the island supported over 600 people and every inch of the ground was utilised. As much of the ground is underlaid by rock, the turf was dug back, seaweed was carried up from the shore and laid in rows, underneath which potatoes were planted, and all over the West Coast one will see these indications of the ingenuity the population had to apply to survive. The road leads you to Barnamboc (Goat's point) Bay where, below what was once an inn, there are green fields, called stances, where, in the droving days, the cattle were pastured after the ferry crossing from Mull. To the South of the bay are the remains of the slipway where they were landed. Two thousand cattle would be moved over this route via Lochawe to the tryst at Falkirk. My great-grandfather walked there with cattle. From here the road deteriorates into a path which can be easily followed, though side trips to the shore are of much interest for there is a proliferation of interesting rock formations to be seen. The rocks are a mixture of quartz, feldspar, basalt, schist, slate and granite, some in unusual and interesting formations. On exploring the Maiden Island between Kerrera and Dunollie I found a piece of olivine.

On then to Ardmore where there is a striking example of a Tertiary dyke in front of you as you descend the hill. On the hill above, to the right, there is a lonely grave where are buried some children who died of a fever while waiting for a boat to take them over the water to Mull. There had been a gale lasting for several days, so their people buried them where they could see the spot from Mull. There is also another graveyard on the hill above Fuinden at Ardmore, where a Norwegian princess is supposed to have been buried, having died on the journey to be married in Scotland.



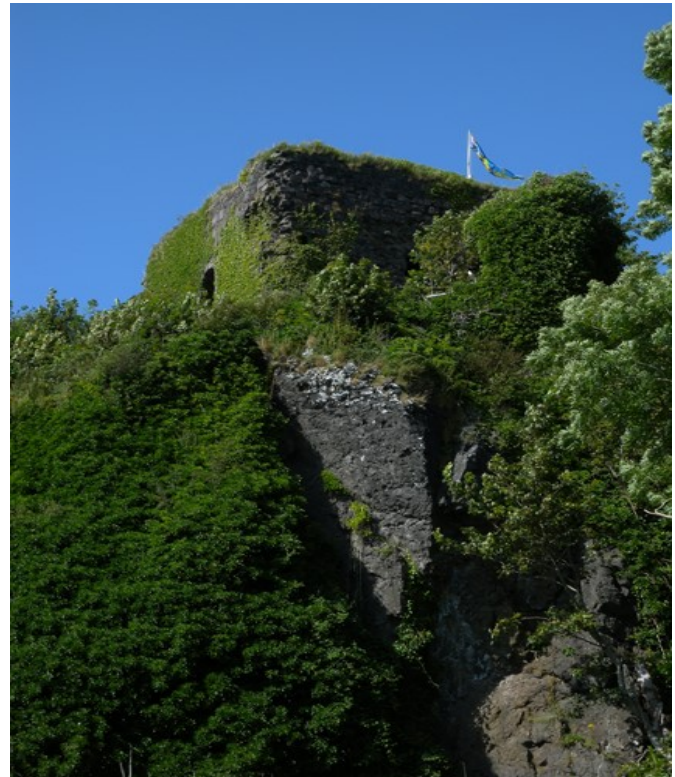
Merry Christmas

The MacDougall Gaelic Heritage

Gaelic has at some point in the last two thousand years been used in almost all parts of Scotland. It was the language of Galloway until probably the 17th century. Those who came to newer lands from southwest Scotland carried cultural links that bear the historical imprint of Gaelic culture. In Lorn and the islands Gaelic was the dominate language through the end of the 19th century. The last point of contact of those who immigrated from these areas was Gaelic Scotland.

Clan MacDougall and its associated families in Scotland were born and raised in, and were an essential part of, this Gaelic milieu. Our genealogies, our stories, our poetry, our histories are part of the larger Gaelic cultural fabric. Dunollie Castle, first built in or before the seventh century AD, was one among the line of forts including Dun Add used to defend Gaelic Scotland. It overlooks the passage into the Great Glen, through which the Gael, their trade and their language, streamed to the fertile lands on Scotland's East Coast. Loch Etive, a part of what Walter MacDougall calls "MacDougall Country" and probably "...the most splendid and serene place in all Scotland", is closely associated with the story of Dierdire and the Laoidh Chlann Uisne (Lay of the Children of Uisne), one of the world's most beautiful poems. There are extant Gaelic laments to the Lords of Lorn, Gaelic descriptions of the court of MacDougall of Lorn, Gaelic medical manuscripts written at Dunollie Castle, Gaelic poetry attributed to Ian Ciar, Gaelic hymns written by MacDougalls in the nineteenth century, a description of the 1905 MacDougall Clan gathering by Dugald Gordon MacDougall (the Clan's last Gaelic poet), Gaelic plays written by a twentieth century MacDougall playwright.

The history and adventures of individuals and families of this area are preserved in Gaelic stories, collected in the 19th century and recorded in, for example, the Dewar manuscripts housed in Cherry Park on the grounds of Inveraray Castle or in publications like of



Dùn Ollaigh, Dìon nan Gàidheal

Katherine Grant White's *Aig Tigh na Beinne* (1911). The book, *Sgeul no dhà às an Lios* // A tale or two from Lismore (2006) by Dòmhnall MacIlleDhuibh // Donald Black continues this tradition.

At the turn of the twentieth century, 80 percent of the population of Lower Lorn and over half of Oban were Gaelic speakers. In the mid-nineteenth century, before the policy of English-only education was introduced, Gaelic was used for technical and other instruction in the region around Oban. An Comunn Gàidhealach, perhaps the oldest and most prominent institution supporting Gaelic culture in Scotland, was founded in Oban in 1891 and the first Gaelic Mòd was held in Oban in 1892 -- Hugh



MacDougall

MacDougall Gaelic Heritage (cont)

MacCowan, one-time Provost of Oban and a regular attendee at MacDougall Clan Gatherings, was instrumental in establishing both.

Many of those who left the Highlands and Islands in the 18th and 19th centuries left in groups, taking their language and traditions with them. The Scottish settlement along the Cape Fear in North Carolina was Gaelic speaking and the language could be heard in this region up until the time of the Civil war -- and by some accounts longer. Presumably those McDougalds arriving in North Carolina from Jura in the mid-18th century were Gaelic speakers, as were the McDougalds arriving from Isle and settling in Argyll Township in Upstate New York. There were several Gaelic speaking communities formed in Canada and New Zealand, with perhaps the largest concentration in north eastern Nova Scotia. Gaelic stories, poems, and song, and traditional music and dance are enjoyed in Nova Scotia to this day. These are found in homes, in the halls, on stages, and in the pubs. The MacDougalls of Cape Breton and Antigonish County have been and continue to be a vital part of this heritage. Although the number of Gaelic speakers declined over the last half of the twentieth century there is a vigorous regrowth of the spoken language and its associated culture. One of the principle figures in this revitalization is Lodaigh MacFhionghain, or Lewis McKinnon, who was awarded the Bardic crown by An Comunn Gàidhealach in 2011. Lodaigh, who is Executive Director of Gaelic Affairs in the Province of Nova Scotia, began his Gaelic education learning from, then conversing with, his great uncle, Dougald MacDougall, who ignited in him his great passion for the language. Alasdair Seumas Mac Dhùghaill, or Alexander James (AJ) MacDougall. of

Judique was an important Gaelic seanachaidh (tradition bearer) and teacher who passed away this last August.

The period following the Jacobite defeat at Culloden was characterized by a systemic attempt to disrupt the highland culture, affecting those who supported Bonny Prince Charlie, those who opposed him, and those who were neutral. It was in this period that James MacPherson began to publish, beginning in 1761, his Ossian poems. This work, along with the work of Sir Walter Scott, was instrumental in reviving international respect of our Gaelic heritage. James McLagan was a minister in Gaelic speaking Perthshire who came to serve as chaplain to the Black Watch. He was stationed with the Regiment at Fort Pitt during the French and Indian wars, on Long Island during the American Revolution, and in Ireland and on the Isle of Man. These roles allowed McLagan to collect Gaelic poetry and song from those with whom he served and from some of the communities in which he lived. He maintained active international network of correspondents, including those that were sources of material and those with a strong interest in his work. He was gathering Gaelic poetry and song long before the publication of James MacPherson's Ossian works and is thought to have supplied MacPherson with some of his material. [There was a conference at Glasgow University last September which presented investigations into the large extant volume of McLagan manuscripts, a great deal of which is in the care of the University. These details of his life noted above are snatched from information gleaned at that conference.] Importantly, our 23rd Chief, Alexander MacDougall or Alasdair Dubh, was one of McLagan's correspondents. Jean MacDou-

MacDougall Gaelic Heritage (cont)

gall's Highland Postbag reproduces a long letter that McLagan wrote to Alasdair Dubh from Belfast in December 1771. The original is presumably still held in the Archives at Dunollie. In the letter McLagan, discusses some of Alasdair Dubh's connections with the island (via Somerled); the geography, climate and economics of the island; Celtic place names; and the relation of Manx to Scottish Gaelic. With respect to the difference between Manx and Scottish Gaelic he writes: "There is no great Difficulty in understanding them, tho' they differ in their orthography from us and the Irish."

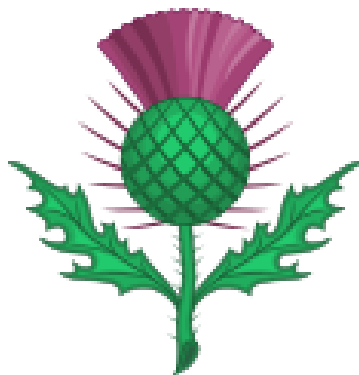
In the 19th century Gaelic was the language of everyday life in Lorn and the Islands. It was used in the market, the fields, the workshops and the churches. We still hear some of the church music today. Some MacDougalls, for example, were deeply involved in the Baptist revival on the Ross of Mull in the early 19th century, Mary MacDonald among them. Mary was the daughter of Duncan MacDougall, born in Brolas near the Ross of Mull in 1789. Mary's brother Duncan MacDougall was

the first minister of the Tiree Baptist church founded in 1838. A poet as well, he published a volume of Gaelic hymns, which can be found on the internet.

Mary MacDonald composed a hymn, "Leanabh an àigh", or "Child of Glory", setting the words to an old air, "Bunessan". Bunessan is the major village on the Ross of Mull. On the outskirts of the town there is a memorial cairn to Mary MacDonald. Tourist buses point it out as they pass on the A849 on their journey to Fionnphort and Iona. The hymn became very popular and was translated by Lachlan MacDean around 1900, with an opening line "Child in the Manger". The translation was naturally taken as a Christmas carol, although there are scholars that doubt that this was the intent of the poet. The air, Bunessan, was used again in Eleanor Farjeon's 1931 hymn, "Morning has Broken".

Tòmas MacCòmhghan

Betesda, Tìr-Mhàiri



MacDowall

Overview of the Gaelic Language

Gaelic is the language of Scotland's founding fathers. The language, shared with the whole of Ireland and the Isle of Mann, was the language of the people living on the western coast of Scotland in the early years of the first millennium AD. Although there were roughly six major languages spoken in Scotland during this period, Gaelic spread from its west coast base throughout Scotland supplanting or diminishing the other tongues, while Gaelic-speaking kings assembled Scotland, as we know it today, from the lands of its different population groups – at first Gaels, Picts, and Bretons and then Norse and Angles. At one time or another Gaelic was spoken in almost all parts of Scotland.

Gaelic is part of the Celtic family of languages, which were once spoken over a large part of Europe. In the last half of the first millennium BC, these were spoken (and to a certain extent written) from what is now Britain to Galatia in what is now Turkey. This language group, identified principally by Edward Lhuyd in 1707, is one of the major language groups of Europe. The group includes the living languages of Scottish and Irish Gaelic, Welsh, Manx, Cornish and Breton, and the more ancient languages of Brythonic (spoken throughout a very large part of Britain in the first half millennium CE, and surviving in the Welsh language), Gaulish, perhaps Pictish, Lepontic (evidence from inscriptions between 550 and 100 BCE in Northern Italy and Switzerland) and others. This large group is often divided into q-Celtic languages, such as Scottish and Irish Gaelic and Manx and p-Celtic languages such as Welsh, Cornish and Breton. These labels are based on the use of p-like sounds in p-Celtic lan-

guages in words that use k-like sounds in q-Celtic languages. For example, "son" is "mac" in the q-Celtic languages and "mab" in Welsh, Cornish, and Breton. The differences in the two groups are wider than this however.

The place and time when the Celtic languages first emerged is a subject of active current research. A traditional view, originating around the turn of the 18th and strengthening through the 19th century, was that a people, identified as the "Celts", spread east and west from a homeland in central Europe carrying a Celtic language and distinctive, and quite beautiful, art forms with them. There are references to Celts as a people by Greek and Roman writers. These "Celts", or "Kelts", are not well defined but very concrete, with bloody clashes between these "Celts" on the one hand and Greeks, Romans and others on the other. A sequence of distinctive art forms, termed "Celtic", began to appear around 600-800 BC. The earliest of these was labeled "Halstatt", after finds in the cemeteries around the salt mines in Halstatt, Austria. Currently the oldest evidence of what we identify as Celtic languages is found on inscriptions from northern Italy and south-west Iberia in the 6th to the 8th centuries BC. There is active work to extend these dates to earlier periods. Recent scholarship, at variance with the traditional view of the origin of the Celtic languages, distinguishes between the spread of material culture, populations and languages. A hypothesis, which has elicited a fair amount of discussion in the past couple of decades, is based on writings of Barry Cunliffe and asserts that Celtic languages emerged as a lingua franca of trade along

Overview of the Gaelic Language (cobnt)

the Atlantic Face of Europe [seen as the western edge of the Iberian peninsula, Brittany, Ireland, (at least western) England, Cornwall, Wales and Scotland] in the Bronze age and spread by trade along the rivers into mainland Europe. Interesting variations of this newer view have emerged from extensive discussions and research.

The q-Celtic languages, Scottish Gaelic, Irish Gaelic and Manx are descended from a common language and culture that has lasted at least two millennia, a large part of which is documented in Irish sources. [A popular perception that a large migration from Ireland around or just before 500 AD brought the Gaelic language and culture from Ireland has been largely discounted by archaeologists.]. The history and culture of Scotland, particularly of the Highlands, is part of this Gaelic culture. Gaelic place names are scattered throughout the country. Scottish Gaelic hero stories, family histories, law and poetry have common roots with those of Ireland. The cultures share some music and art forms. [Everyone has pipes, but the great highland bagpipe, though perhaps new, is rather distinctive.] Descriptions of traditions and indeed of everyday life of early clan societies have been handed down over centuries through oral Gaelic transmissions that were

fortunately written down now and again. The conflicting assertions of rights voiced during the Clearances reflect fundamental conflicts of view expressed in Gaelic Brehon law and Norman legal practice. The Gaels on Scotland's west coast were seafaring peoples and their Gaelic would have encompassed astronomy, maritime technology and trade. In recent centuries, Scotland has created a large body of lyric Gaelic poetry of extraordinary beauty. Truly great Gaelic poetry has, in fact, been composed to bagpipe tunes.

Although Gaelic traditions were, in the main, transmitted orally there is valuable surviving written material as well – for example 150 volumes of late medieval Gaelic manuscripts on many subjects in the National Library of Scotland. A great deal of earlier written material was lost in Viking raids. Among the manuscripts in the National Library is a large collection of Gaelic translations of Greek and Latin medical writings, by such traditional medical families as the Beatonas and the Conachers, some of which were translated at Dunollie Castle.

Le Tòmas MacCòmhghan

... Betesda, Tìr-Mhàiri

Interview with Mike Mackay

1. What stimulated your serious interest in Gaelic, and how long have you been at it?

It was music that really started my serious attempts to learn the language; specifically, a CD made by a woman from the Isle of Lewis, Eilidh Mackenzie. As I listened to the CD, the words seemed to draw me to them and I wanted to learn what they meant, and how to say them myself. This was about in 1995, and later that year I sought out the help of Nick Freer in Alexandria.



MacDougall

Interview with Mike Mackay (cont)

2. How did you go about learning it, since there are few formal courses available?

I found Nick through the ACGA [An Comunn Gàidhealach Ameireaganach, the American Scottish Gaelic Society] tent at one of the Scottish games, and asked to be included in his classes. If it weren't for Nick, I would not have been able to learn at all at that time, and I'm very grateful for the opportunity he gave me. We had Can Seo, Speaking Our Language, and Teach Yourself Gaelic, as well as connections with Gaels from Nova Scotia. Nothing like what's available today, though these sources were useful enough to get a good start. I was in Nick's classes until he told me that there was nothing more he could do for me. After that I went out on my own and got to what I considered to be a good level of fluency.

3. In terms of courses, did you attend the schools in far-away Nova Scotia or Scotland?

I took one summer course at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, which is actually where I discovered that I could indeed be somewhat fluent in conversation. It was an opportunity afforded me by ACGA, again, very useful and helpful in my Gaelic development.

4. What parts of Gaelic were the hardest for you? The pronunciation? The spelling?

The most difficult part by far was being fluent – that is, being able to say what you want when you want. Not necessarily knowing all the words, but just being able to let your thoughts flow freely into words. That's a combination of having the words and structure plugged into your "speaking brain", and having the relaxed attitude that, if you make a mistake, it's no big deal.

5. Is singing Gaelic songs helpful to learning?

Very much so. I've found that, besides the clear advantage of presenting you with new vocabulary and phrases, learners get a real sense of the natural rhythm of the language. With song and poetry, when it's done "right", the ebb and flow of Gaelic comes through in a very clear and pleasant way.

6. Do you have some advice for beginning learners?

Learn first, and understand, in what ways you best learn. Is it by listening? Then get into an immersion course like "Gaidhlig aig Baile", in which you spend most of your time hearing the words as they are associated with things and people. Get books on tape, and download content like "An Litir Bheag" as you learn the grammar and vocabulary. If it's by reading, then read along as you say the words with others or with recordings. In short, adapt your learning approaches to the ways you absorb and commit information to memory.

Also understand your goals! If you want to become fluent, then focus your activities on what will take you to that goal. Others may give you advice on how to learn, but if it's not taking you toward your goals, seek out other advice.

Most importantly, don't give up! Over 60% of your efforts will seem like you're going uphill, with more and more information to absorb. Once you hit a certain level, though, it gets progressively easier. Just believe

Editorial Note

It is a rare occasion to have an issue of the Tartan follow so closely on the heels of another. The opportunity to offer you an article by Nancy Black is surely too good to be missed. Nancy Black grew up in Oban during the Second World War. Later on she owned a successful and well-known shop of Scottish articles; her shop window was always the most attractive in the town. She has always been active in town affairs and a strong supporter of Dunollie. As you will note in her article, she has it all at her fingertips.

By devoting the remainder of this issue to the Gaelic, I salute the continuing efforts of the Scottish Government and of many Scots at home and abroad to revitalize the language. Until just after the First World War, Gaelic had a strong presence in Argyll. It was in Oban that the Gaelic Society, An Comunn Gàidhealach, was formed. Our President, Ashby McCown, was on the founding board of the American version of An Comunn; few non-native speakers have the profound command of the language that he has. His scholarly contributions to this issue are much appreciated.

There are others who have attained a similar fluency. Our interviewee, Mike Mackay, is a current president of the Gaelic Society of America. He has the music in his heart.

But what about yourself? Surely a little or even a lot of Gaelic study would enhance your feelings of clan heritage. The past fifteen years have seen a renaissance of the language, with a growth of private and public support. There are now wonderful materials on the Internet. American students can interact with Scottish tutors by means of Skype. There are also fine immersion summer schools in Nova Scotia and Scotland.

A Gaelic Carol for You with Best Wishes for the New Year

Leanabh an àigh

An Leanabh aig Màiri,

Rugadh san stàball

Rìgh nan dùl

Thàinig dh'an fhàsach,

'S dh'fhuilig 'nar n-àite

Sona dh'an àireamh

Bhitheas dha dlùth

The Child of glory

The Child of Mary,

Born in the stable

The King of all,

Who came to the wilderness

And in our stead suffered;

Happy they are counted

Who to Him are near.



MacDowall

**Clan MacDougall Society of
North America**

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